



## **Draft Lake Center District Corridor and Placemaking Study Revisions**

The following revisions were made to the Draft Lake Center District Corridor and Placemaking Study at the request of Council and/or Steering Committee:

### **Executive Summary**

- Removed “canal walk” and added “connections” in fourth paragraph.
- Removed “boat docks” in fourth paragraph.

**Page 5** – Updated the “By the Numbers Graphic” to reflect outreach activities since April 2021.

**Page 20** – Added notation that the Steering Committee’s unanimous endorsement is related to the current study only.

**Page 25** – Removed graphs and charts from retail analysis report, noting the types of retail that may be feasible in the Lake Center District and references boat/jet ski rentals.

**Page 37** – Added yellow arrows (west facing) to indicate commercial frontages on both sides of Portage Road north of the isthmus.

**Page 39** – “Paved Shoulder Bikeway,” “Multi-Use Trail,” and “Proposed Trail” removed from legend (not shown on map).

**Page 56** – Replaced “flows” with “flow” in third paragraph.

### **Page 79**

- Replaced Ames Drive intersection with “park entrance.”
- Removed #7 – “Raise Portage Road as required to accommodate water / trail connection underneath. Install bollards in the waterway to maintain water quality and restrict large boats entering West Lake.”

### **Page 90**

- Clarifying text added to Corridor Improvement Authority section:  
*“Act 280 of Public Acts of 2005 of the State of Michigan, commonly referred to as the Corridor Improvement Authority Act, was created in part to correct and prevent deterioration of business districts and to promote economic growth and revitalization. It helps accomplish this goal by providing communities with the necessary legal, monetary and organizational tools to revitalize these corridor business districts either through public-initiated projects or in concert with private development projects. It makes use of the increased tax base created by economic development within the boundaries of a business district. This tool would be created and operated in a similar manner to the City of Portage’s existing Downtown Development Authority (DDA).”*
- Text removed from the Corridor Improvement Authority section:  
*“this will allow for the capture of newly generated tax increment – from within the designated district – to reinvest back into the district.”*

**Pages 93, 96, 97, 98 & 100/101** – Modified content to reflect move of “Create a canal riverwalk” to Future Moves. **Pages 92, 93, 98, 100/101** – Modified content to reflect “Future **Potential** Moves (**20+ Years**)”

**Dock removal from Maps/Legends/Renderings**

(Request of Steering Committee)

- Page 21 – removed docks from map
- Page 69 – removed docks on map and legend.
- Page 74 – removed dock on map.
- Page 76 – removed docks on map.
- Pages 84/85, 86/87 – removed docks.
- Page 93 – remove docks from map
- Page 95 – removed rendering bottom right

**Study Appendix** – Added an appendix section to include all public comments received on the Draft Final Study.

**Every Page** – Added clarifying language: “*The images and renderings in this planning report are for conceptual and illustrative purposes, and may not be to scale.*”



# LAKE CENTER DISTRICT CORRIDOR AND PLACEMAKING STUDY

## PORTAGE, MI

This study was unanimously accepted by the Portage City Council at its regular meeting on July 13, 2021.

FINAL JULY 2021

FARR ASSOCIATES

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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## SOURCES FOR IMAGES ON COVER.

1. STACK HOUSE, SEATTLE, WA. BERGER PARTNERSHIP
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# STEERING COMMITTEE LETTER OF SUPPORT

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April 2021

Dear Lake Center District Stakeholders,

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

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

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

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

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

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

Respectfully,  
Lake Center District Steering Committee Members

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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

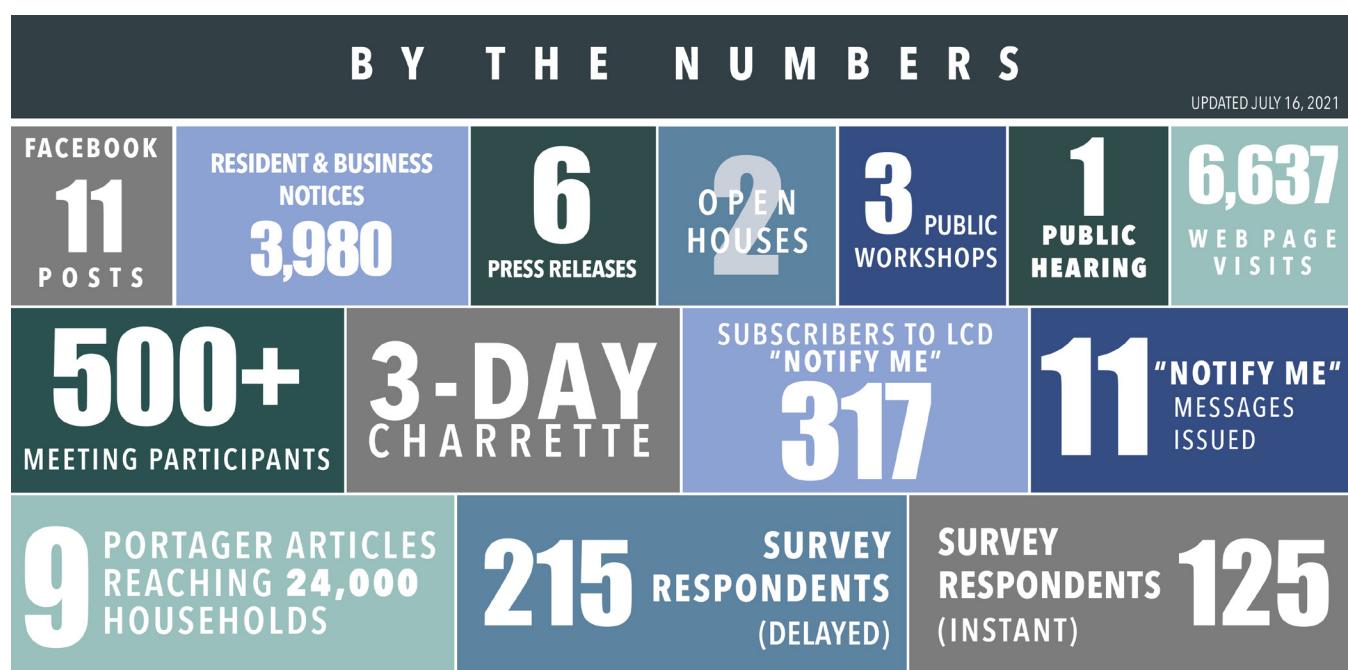
This plan tackles Portage Road's challenges, opportunity and illustrates the trade-offs that occur within the public right-of-way as we consider a variety of uses – and users. It shows what can be gained by rebalancing the right-of-way. It also shows how designing a corridor around people will best respond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

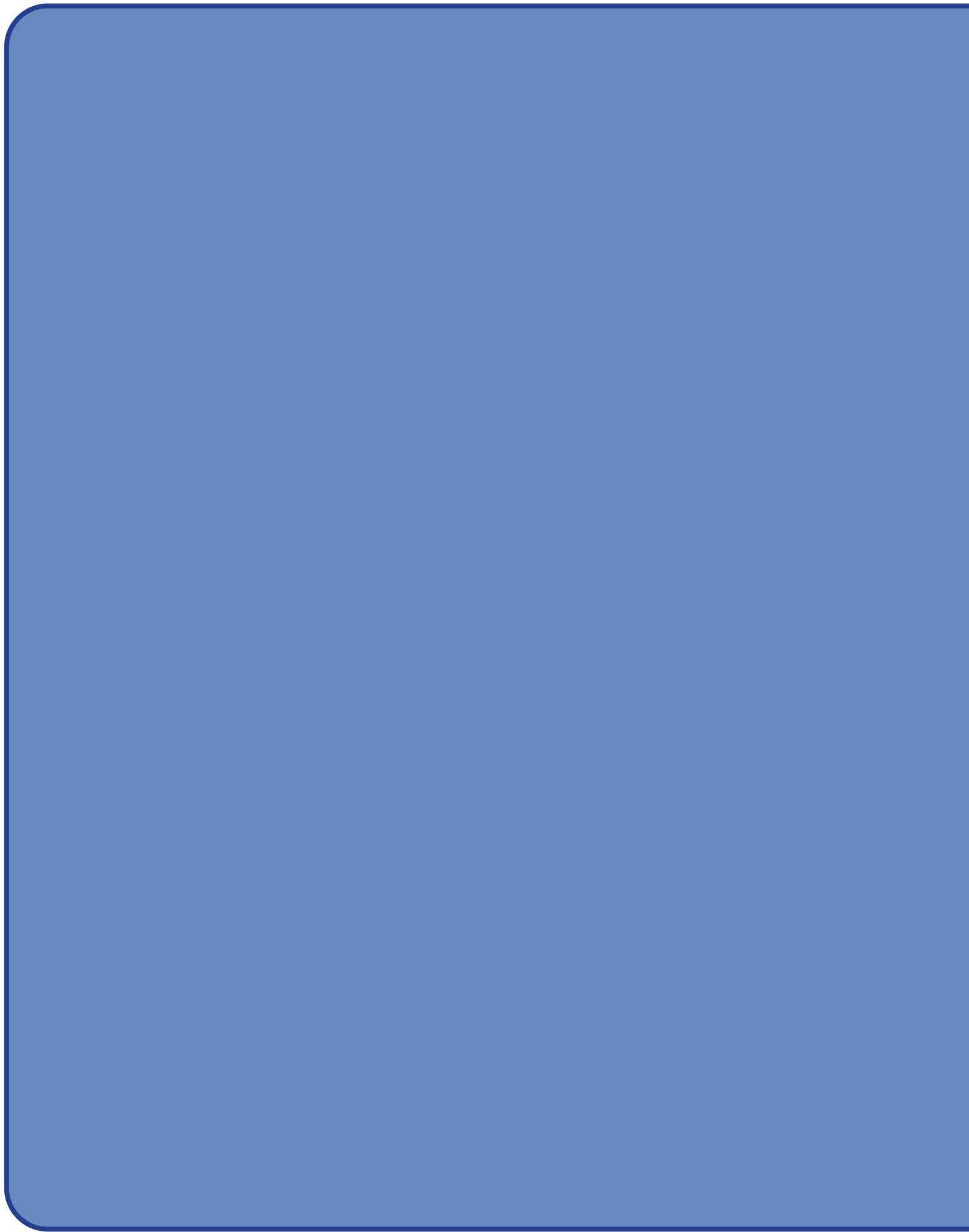
The vision of a more attractive, multimodal Portage Road anchored by a vibrant Lake Center District for residents, businesses and visitors, is made clear in this plan, and provides the "why" for why the City should act to rebalance and re-envision Portage Road.

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

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

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





# CHAPTER 1

# BACKGROUND

# 1.1 THE STUDY AREA

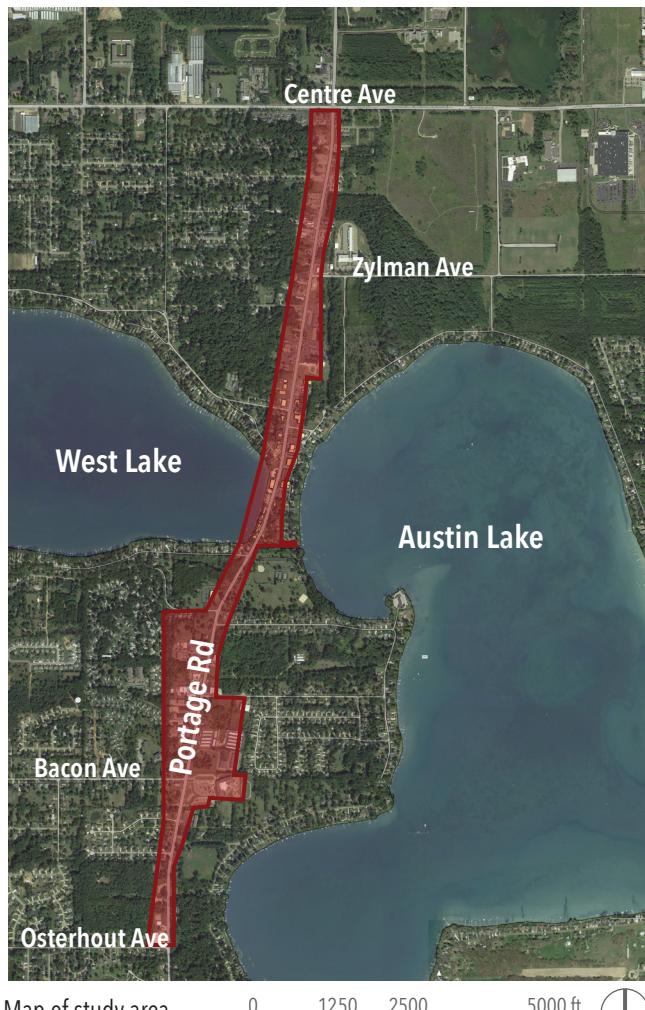
## Portage

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

## The Study Area

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

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



# VICINITY MAP

## The study area in context



Map of Wider Vicinity of Study Area

Source: Farr Associates

0 0.5 1 2 mi

# 1.2 STUDY PROCESS

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## EXISTING CONDITIONS ANALYSIS

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

The analysis covered the following topics:

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

## STEERING COMMITTEE

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

## SCHEDULE

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

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

## PROJECT FOCUS

The initial components of the project included:

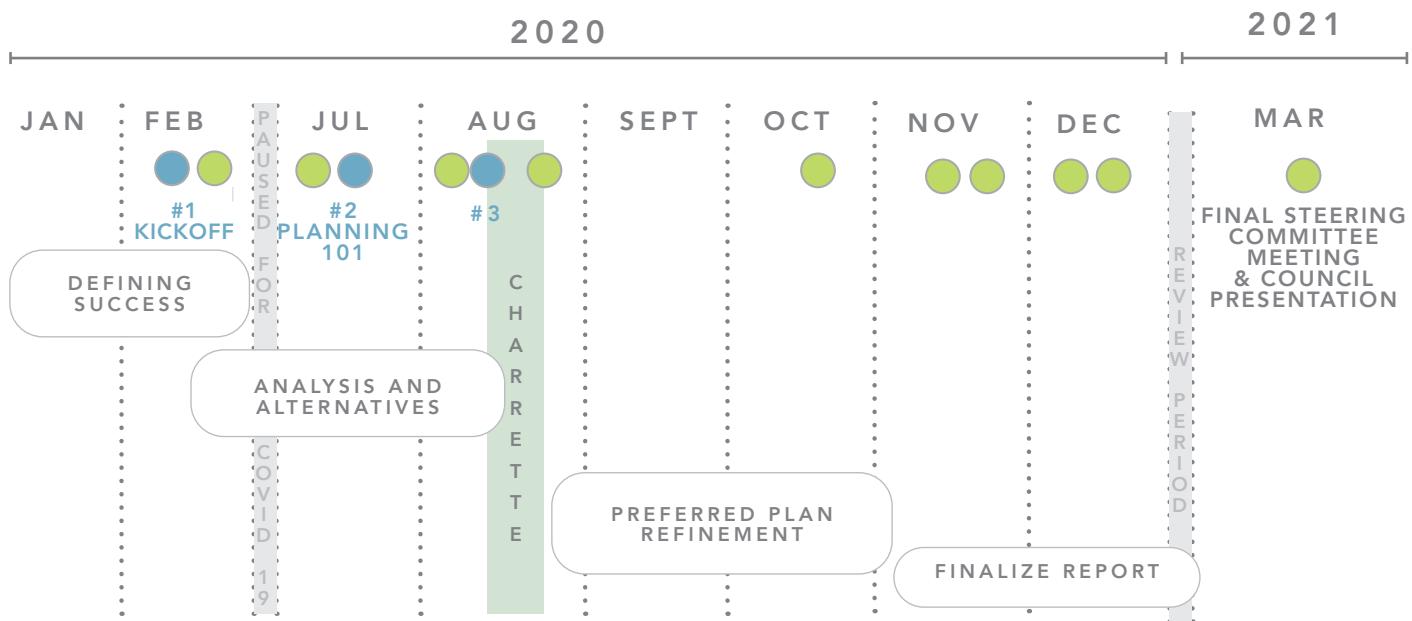
- Portage Road right-of-way and urban design analysis
- Placemaking and development opportunities for Lake Center District
- Multimodal connectivity to, from, and within the Lake Center District

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

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

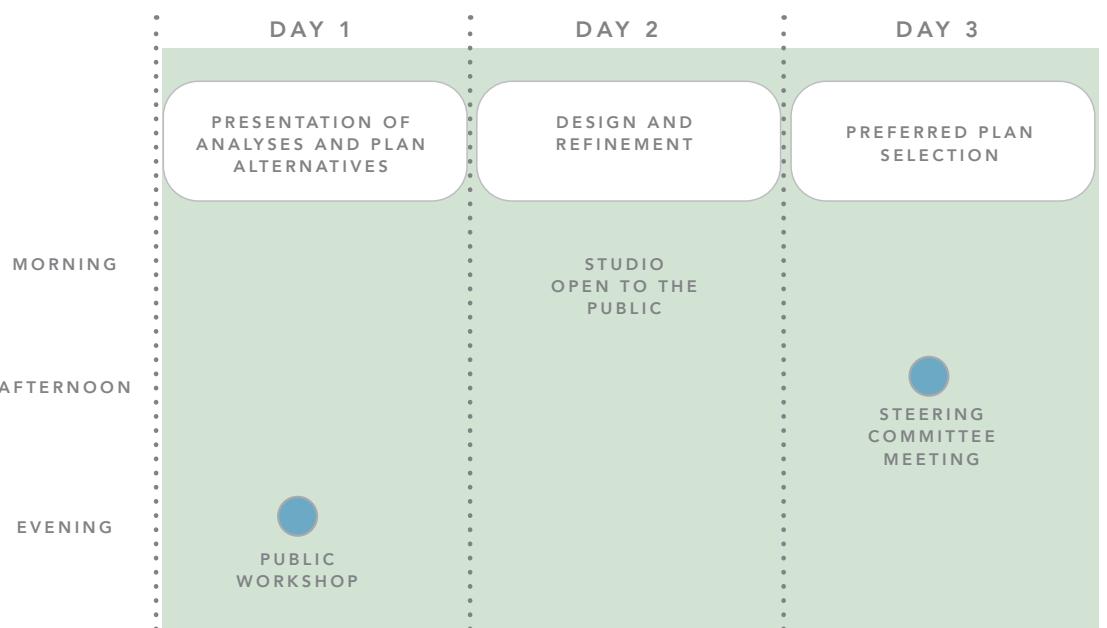
Using expertise in urban design and placemaking, as well as public and city administration the team created several alternatives that were then refined and adjusted into the preferred plan. The next few pages detail the public process and plan alternatives that were developed. The majority of the remainder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

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



PUBLIC WORKSHOP  
 STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING

### CHARRETTE



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

# 1.3 PUBLIC MEETINGS

## PUBLIC MEETING 1 - PROJECT KICKOFF

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

## PUBLIC MEETING 2 - PLANNING 101

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

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

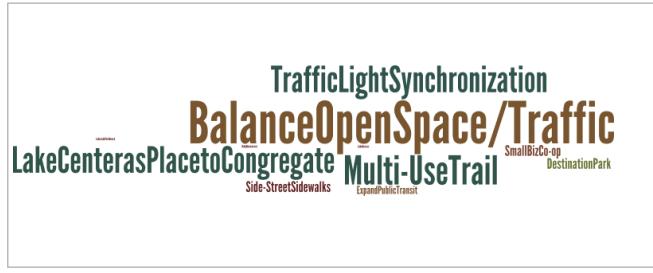
### What strengths does the Portage Study Area have?



### What weaknesses are currently hindering the Portage Study Area?



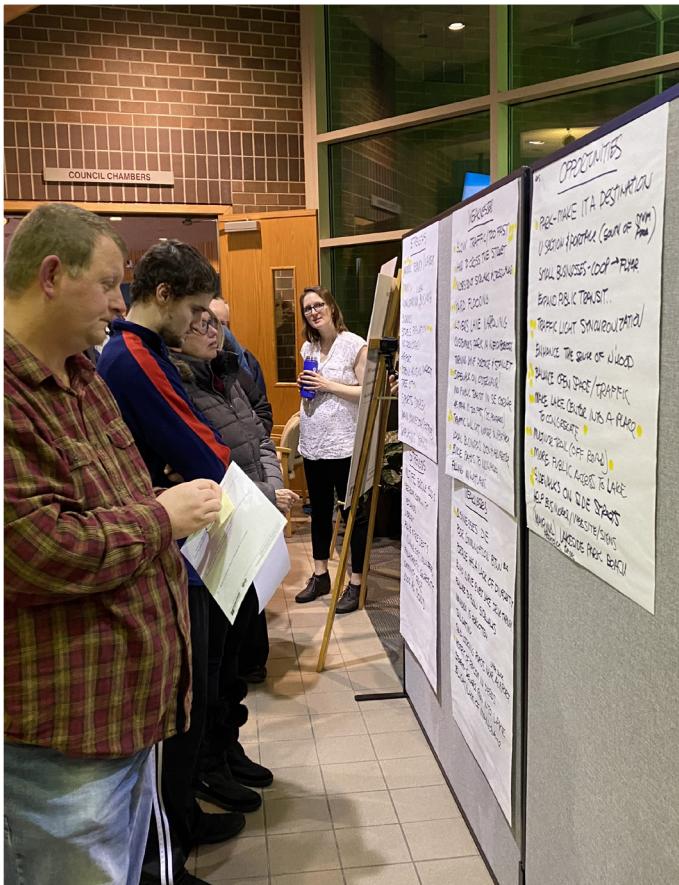
### What opportunities can the Portage Study Area pursue to reach its full potential?



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



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



Photos from Kickoff Meetings, February 2020

The images and renderings in this study are for conceptual and illustrative purposes, and may not be to scale.

13

Source: Farr Associates

## 01 Background

# 1.4 CHARRETTE

## THREE ORGANIZING CONCEPTS

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

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

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

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

Photo of Charrette Workshop .

Source: Farr Associates



# 1. THE HEART OF THE DISTRICT

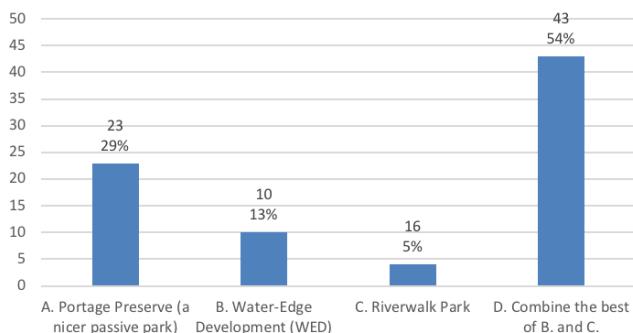
The first approach proposed at the charrette was the creation of a "heart" for the LCD. Where can the community come to gather? Given that the name of the City means "transport between two bodies of water," the design team chose to focus on the canal and current waterfront park at the center of the isthmus/district.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

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



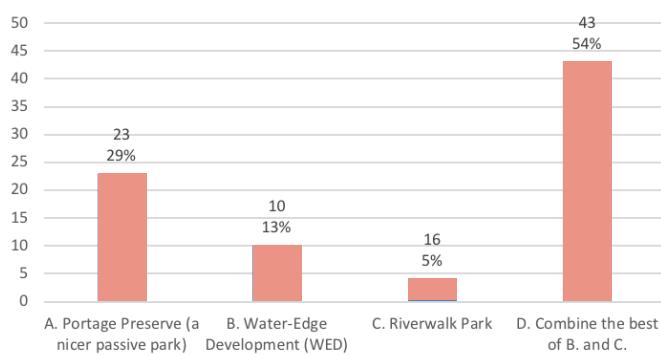
**Results from respondents to the Instant Survey (80 respondents).**

Which option would make the best "Heart"



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

Which option would make the best "Heart"



Source: Farr Associates

## 2. ENHANCING NETWORK SAFETY & CONNECTIVITY

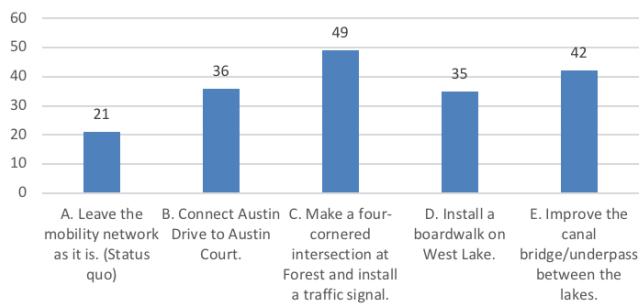
The second approach proposed at the charrette examined ways to improve the mobility network on the Isthmus. These options addressed unsafe intersections/ limited traffic movements; minimized traffic on Portage by promoting alternate routes; and optimized the complete mobility network (walk/bike). These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

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



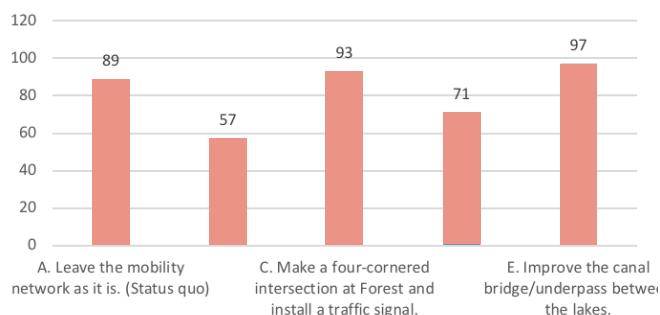
**Results from respondents to the Instant Survey (82 respondents).**

How to enhance the mobility network on the Isthmus (Select as many as you like.)



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

How to enhance the mobility network on the Isthmus (Select as many as you like.)



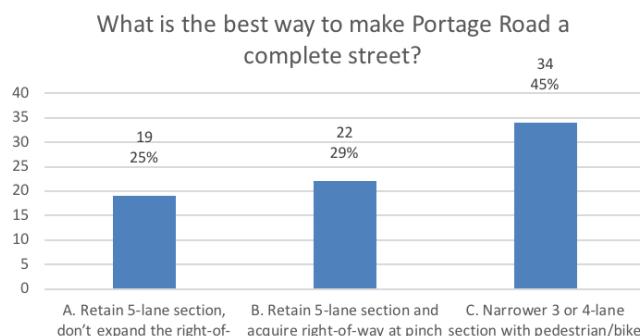
### 3. A BEAUTIFUL & SAFE PORTAGE ROAD

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

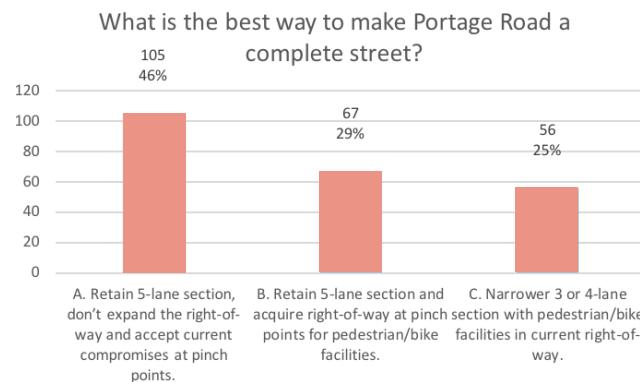
Importantly, the team asked the public two questions: "What is the best way to make Portage Road a complete street?" with the following options:

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

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



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

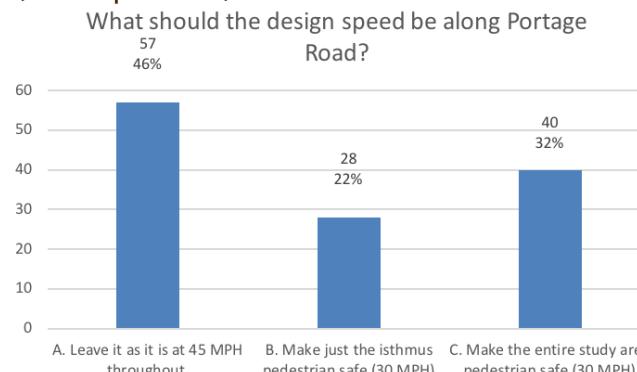


The other question was: "What should the design speed be along Portage Road?" These options included:

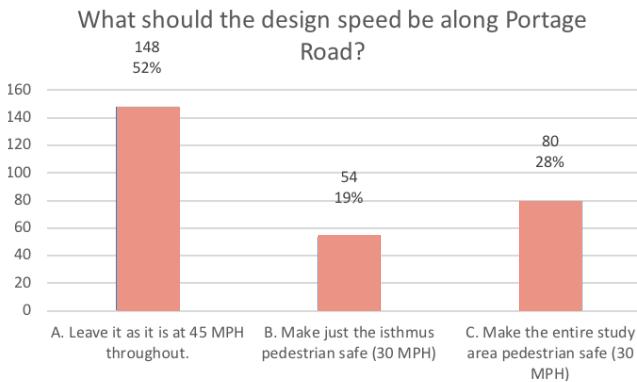
- A. Leave corridor speed limit as is throughout (45 MPH)
- B. Make just the isthmus ped safe (30 MPH)
- C. Make the entire study area ped safe (30 MPH)

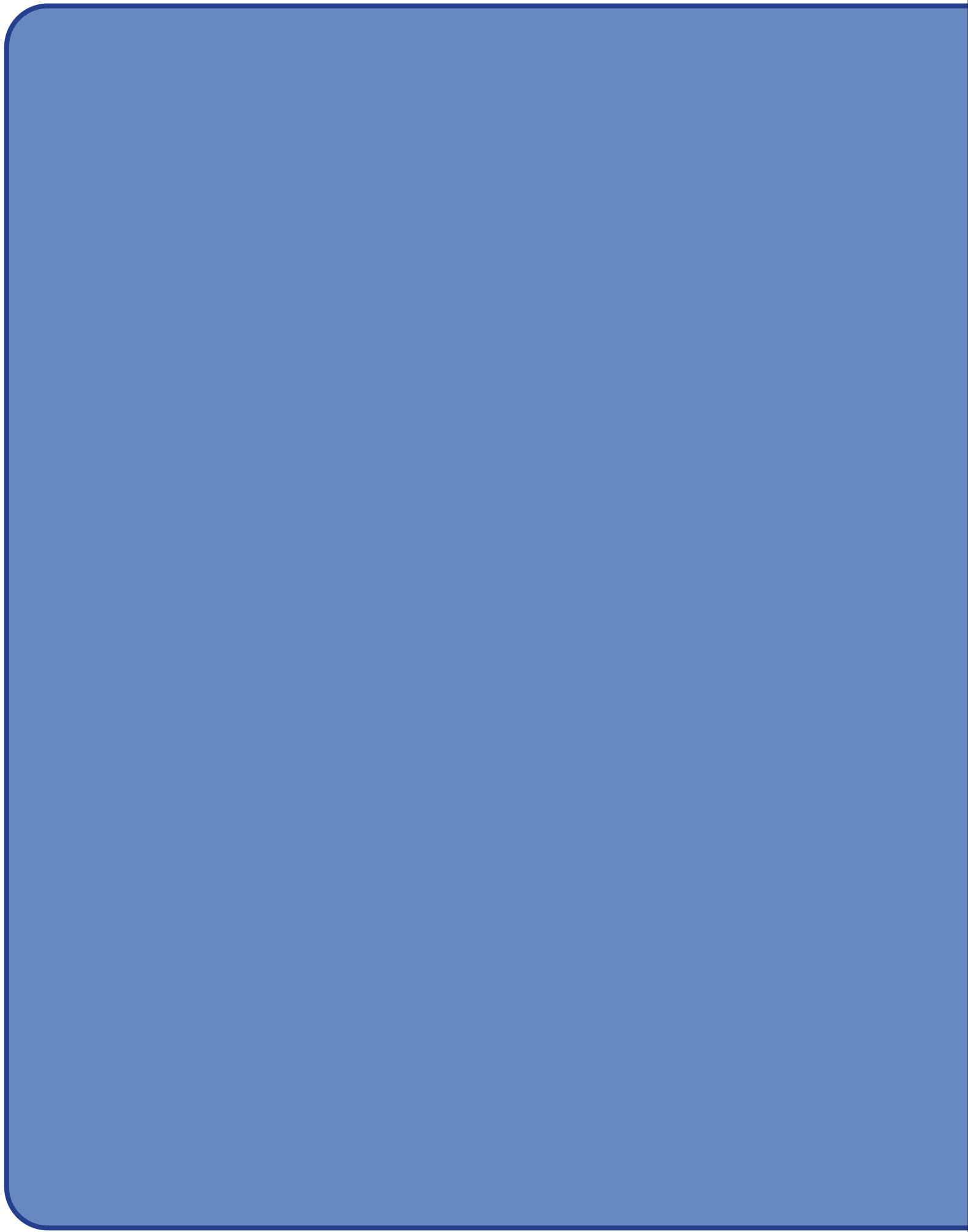
While all three approaches represented viable scenarios for walkable, bikeable, sustainable, urban development, with a focus on the canal that connects Austin and West Lakes, the schemes tested variations of the following planning elements: street grids, allocations of open space, allocation of land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

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



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





# CHAPTER 2

# PLANNING CONTEXT

## 2.1 PRIOR STUDIES

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

# CITY OF PORTAGE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

June 2014

*LSL Planning*

## Lake Center Subarea

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

### Key Conclusions

#### Strengths of the Lake Center Subarea:

- Many locally owned and operated businesses
- Interest of business owners to improve character
- Proximity to lakes and Lakeview Park
- Several eclectic mid-20th century buildings
- Unique commercial corridor

#### Issues and Opportunities in the Lake Center Subarea:

- Lack of architectural and site cohesion
- Inconsistent streetscape, sidewalks and landscape buffers
- Lack of consistent identity
- Lakefront commercial properties are underutilized
- Brownfield redevelopment sites
- Narrow lot sizes
- Narrow right-of-way for non-vehicular users
- Multiple owners make large-scale redevelopment challenging
- Nonconformities related to building setbacks, off-street parking, billboards, sign setbacks, green strip, site access and older single-family homes.

#### Market Strategies for the Lake Center Subarea:

- Create a destination development that leverages current strengths at the West Lake waterfront area and views of West and Austin Lakes
- Bolster the small business atmosphere through complementary businesses and by enhancing Portage Road's unique commercial flavor
- Reinforce key market niches of locally owned-restaurants, family recreation and entertainment, adventures and sport-themed businesses, nautical/marine theme and businesses.



Master Plan for Lake Center Subarea

Source: Farr Associates

# CITY OF PORTAGE RESIDENTIAL MARKET ANALYSIS

September 2020

LandUseUSA/ Farr Associates

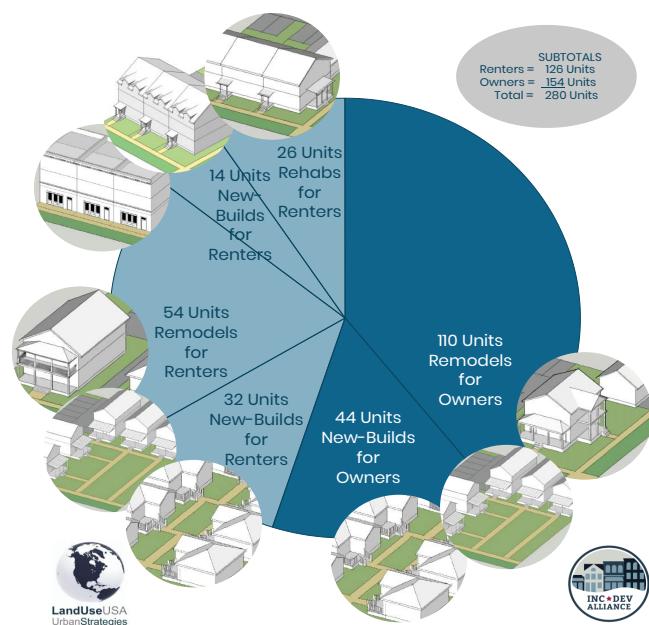
## Key Conclusions - Citywide

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

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

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

## Annual Market Potential Remodels & New-Builds | Lake Center

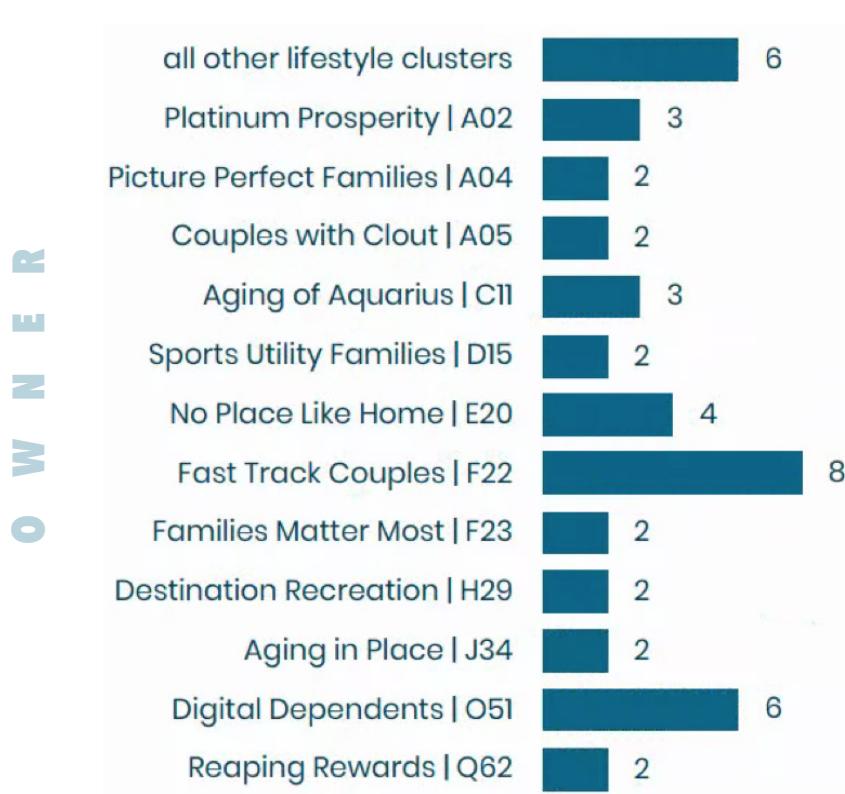


## Estimated Property Assessment Values for Key Properties

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

## Key Conclusions - Lake Center District

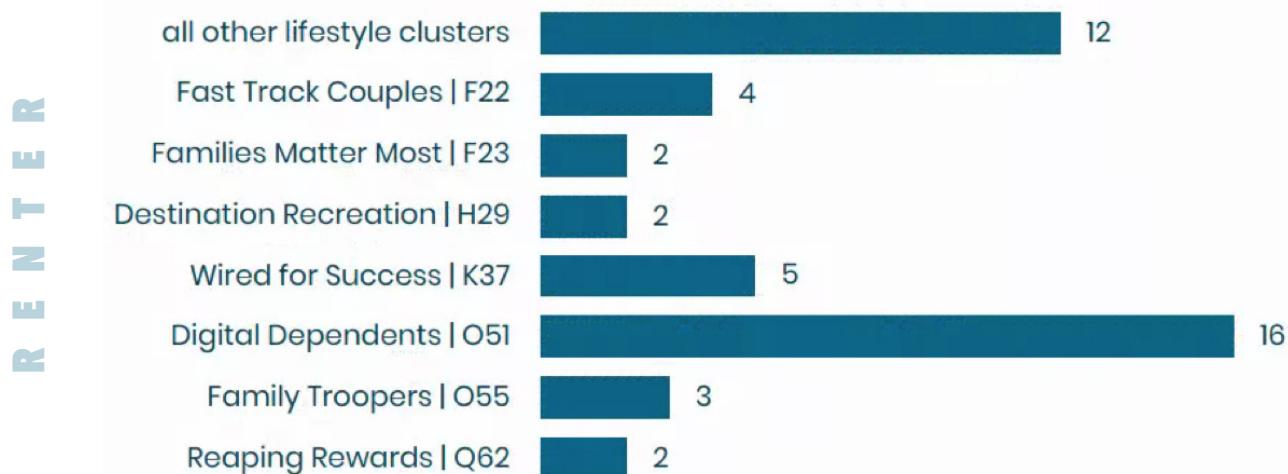
### Annual Market Potential for New-Builds OWNER -Occupied Detached Houses by Target Market



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

OWNER

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



Source: LandUse USA, City of Portage Residential Market Analysis

# CITY OF PORTAGE RETAIL MARKET ANALYSIS

April 2020

*Gibbs Planning Group/ LandUseUSA*

## Key Conclusions

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

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

**General Retail Market Conditions** - According to CoStar, the City of Portage has a total of 5.9 million sf of retail space. The current retail vacancy rate is 4.3 percent, which has increased by 2.1 percent over the past year but is still below the city's 10-year historical average of 5.5 percent. The average retail market rent in Portage remains stable around \$14.44/sf. No new retail space has been delivered in Portage over the last year, nor is any currently under construction. However, during the past year there was significant retail investment sales activity in Portage, and properties sold at an average cap rate of 8.6 percent (which was \$99/sf).

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

**Future Retail and Restaurant Demand** - This study estimated that existing or new commercial businesses located in the City of Portage can realistically expand by up to \$34.0 million in additional sales in 2020, potentially growing to as much as \$35.7 million by 2025. If achieved, this growth would support 71,600 sf of new retailers and 14,700 sf of new restaurants, for a total of 86,300 square feet. This growth could be absorbed with the opening of 25 - 35 new businesses or by existing stores through expanded operations and marketing. If managed per industry best practices, these new stores could generate sales of \$378 per square foot per year.

**Economic Impacts** - The City's primary trade area is estimated to have 203,000 employees; roughly 45,000 of them are office employees who are known to expend at much higher rates, often eating out for lunch and shopping on the way to and from work. The annual impact of 45,500 workers within a 10-minute drive time of the center of Portage is \$215.7 million. This expenditure breaks down to include \$73.4 million in prepared food and beverage establishments, \$36.7 million in grocery purchases, \$23.0 million in convenience items and \$82.6 million in other retail goods.

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# TRAFFIC STUDY

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

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

The study reviewed two scenarios:

## Scenario 1 – Public Right of Way Distribution

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

## Scenario 2 – Public Right of Way Distribution

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

# PORTAGE ROAD FEASIBILITY STUDY

Forest Drive to E. Centre Ave

*February 2020, Abonmarche*

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

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

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

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

## 2.2 GUIDING TOOLS

### 2.2.1 Complete Streets

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

#### WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

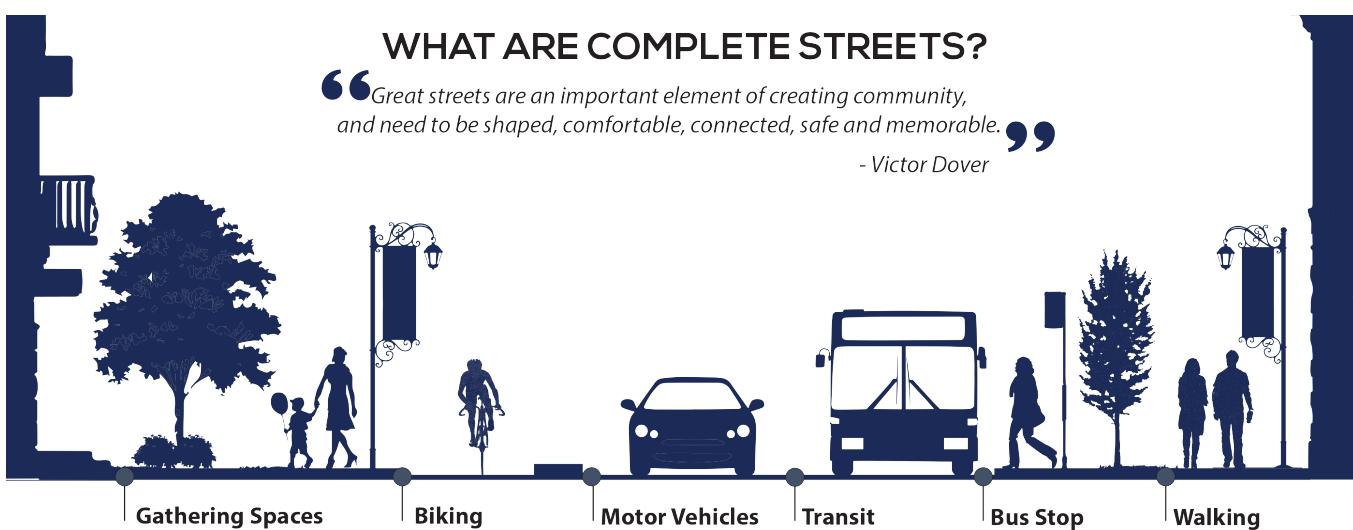
*"Complete Streets are streets for everyone. They are designed and operated to prioritize safety, comfort, and access to destinations for all people who use the street. By adopting a Complete Streets policy and approach, communities integrate people and place into the planning, design, construction,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

#### WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS?

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

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

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



Source: City of Boulder CO Complete Streets

## HEALTH & QUALITY OF LIFE BENEFITS OF NON-MOTORIZED FACILITIES

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

## ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF NON-MOTORIZED FACILITIES

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

Source: 2020 Southwest Michigan Non-Motorized Transportation Plan

## WHAT WE HEARD FROM THE COMMUNITY:

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

## 2.2.2 Placemaking

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

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

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

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



Source: Project for Public Spaces



Source: Placemaking Chattanooga



Source: Placemaking Chattanooga



Source: Brookings Institution, Photo credit: Selavie Photography

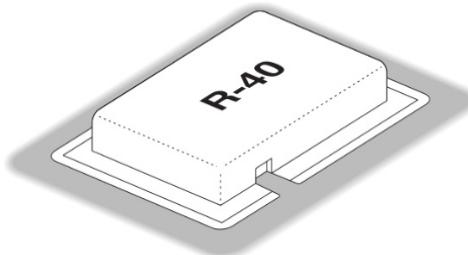
## 2.2.3 Zoning and Form-Based Code

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

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

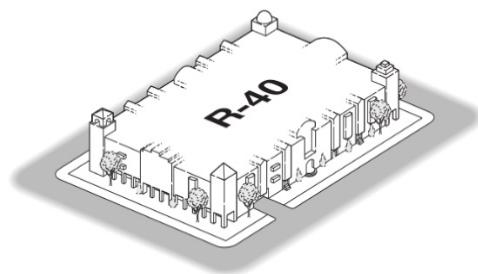
### DEFINING FORM-BASED CODE

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



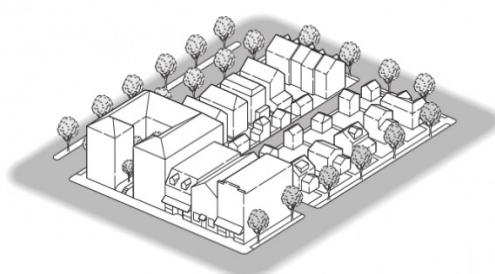
### Conventional Zoning

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



### Zoning Design Guidelines

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



### Form-Based Codes

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

Source: Form Based Code Institute



# CHAPTER 3

# EXISTING

# CONDITIONS

# 3.1 EXISTING CONDITIONS

---

## Site Analysis Overview

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

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

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

## Presenting the Analysis

The analyses are presented in two parts:

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



# LAND USE



## Importance

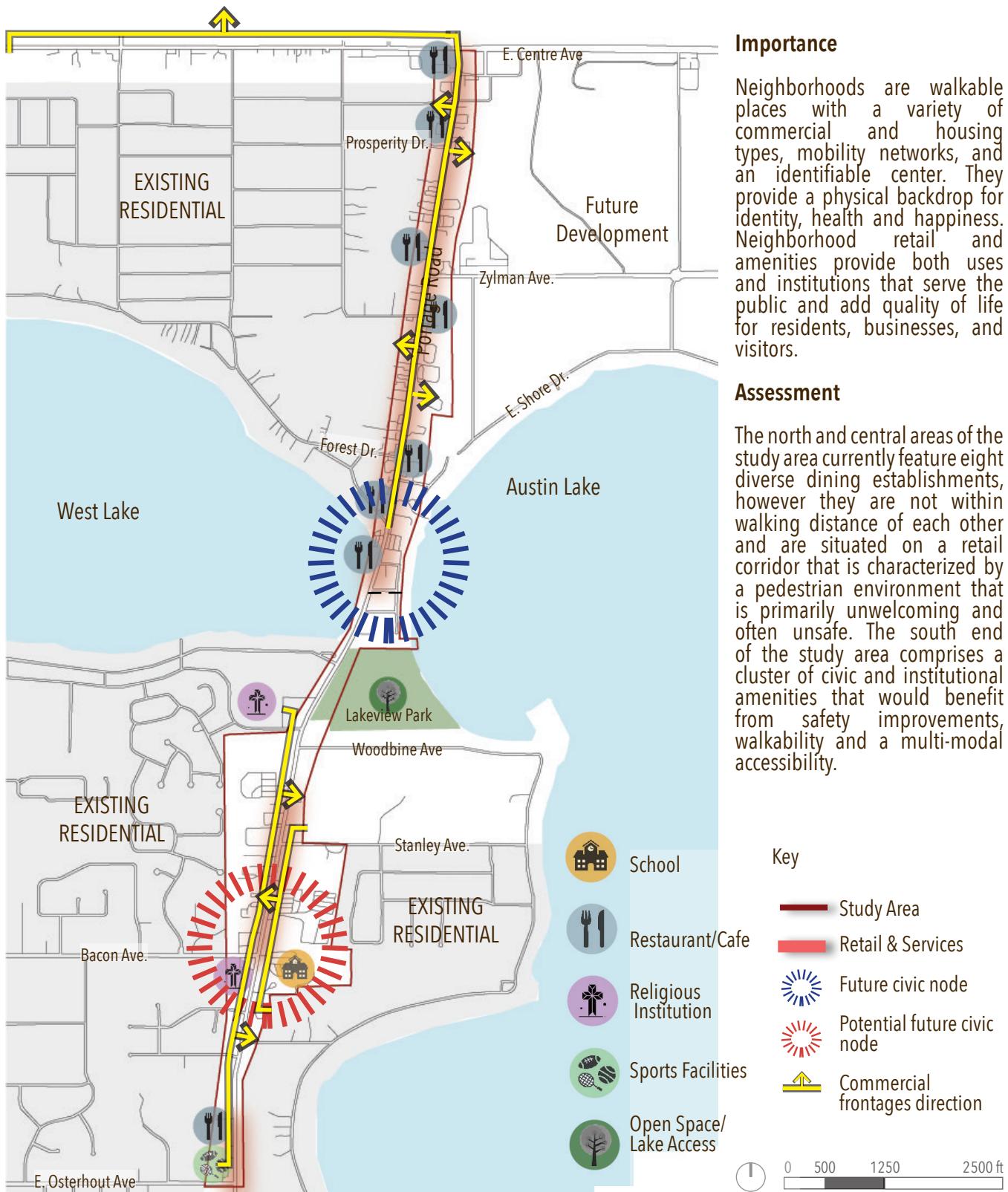
Ideally, neighborhoods should have commercial and civic nodes, gateways, parks within a 5 minute walking distance, and a diverse range of housing and building types. A diverse range of activities and land uses adds to the vibrancy of the Portage Road corridor in the Lake Center District.

## Assessment

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

Source: Farr Associates

# NEIGHBORHOOD RETAIL & AMENITIES WITHIN THE STUDY AREA



Map of neighborhoods & amenities within the study area.

Source: Farr Associates

# PUBLIC OPEN SPACE & LAKE ACCESS

## Importance

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

## Assessment

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

## Key

- Site Boundary
- Public Green Spaces
- 5 minute walk radius
- Public lake access



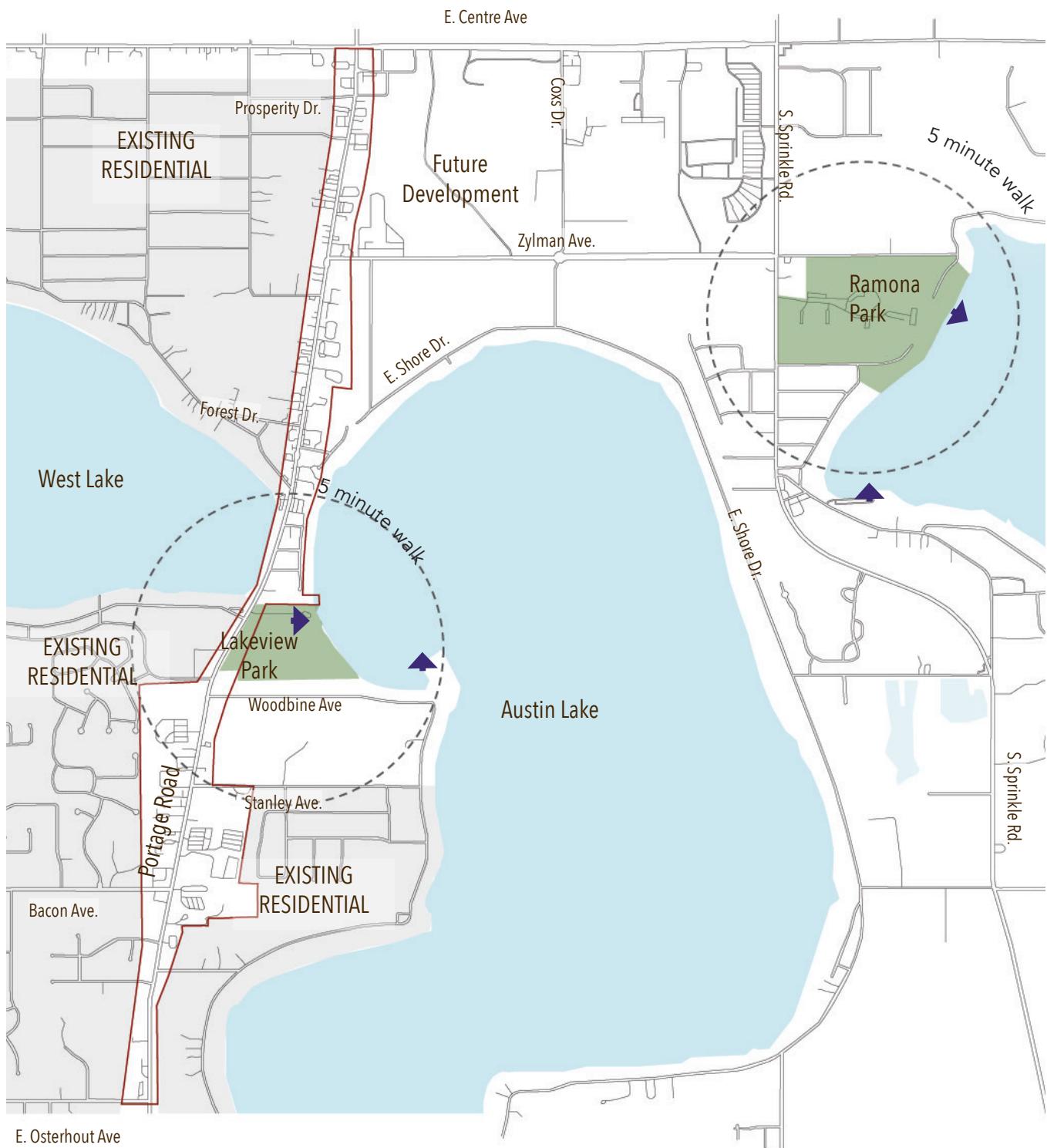
**LAKEVIEW PARK**

Source: Google Photos\_Jason Forbush



**RAMONA PARK**

Source: Google Photos\_Lauana Santos



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



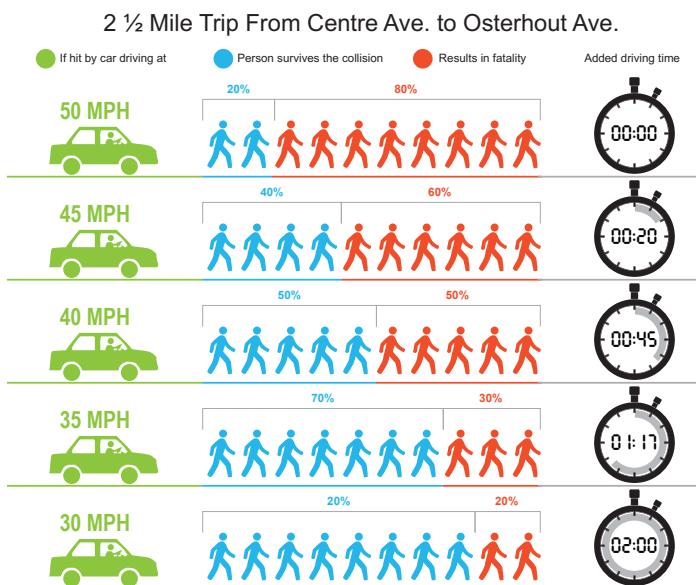
# SAFETY & SPEED

## Importance

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

## Assessment

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



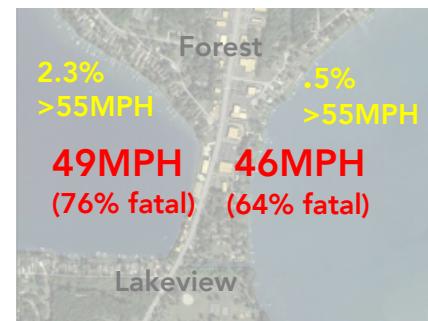
Relationship Between Speed & Fatality Along Portage Road.  
Source: Institute of Transportation Engineers

## Posted Speeds



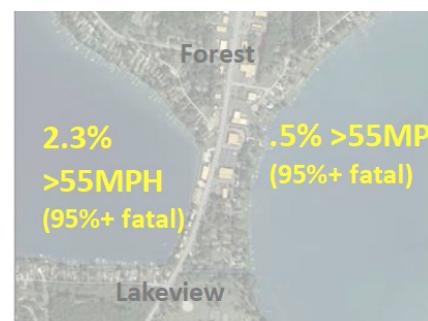
The corridor has a posted speed of 45 MPH

Travel Speeds  
(2015 Traffic Study 85% percentile driver)



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

Travel Speeds  
(2015 Traffic Study %>55MPH)



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

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## 3.2 THE SITE TODAY - SEGMENTS

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

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

### Key Themes

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



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



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



- Public Parks
- Public Lake Access
- Canal Connection



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



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

### Pedestrian Environment Analysis

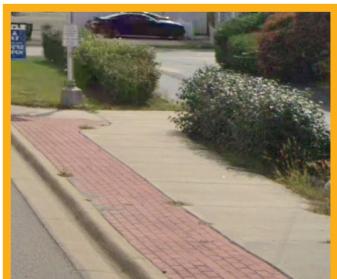
Each segment analysis classifies the pedestrian facilities and environment into four categories, which also illustrate the overall pedestrian infrastructure needs for the full corridor.

#### Safe & Rewarding



Source: Google Street View

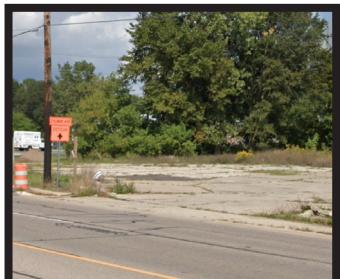
#### Safe & Unrewarding



#### Unsafe & Unrewarding



#### Curb cuts/No sidewalk



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

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

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

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



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

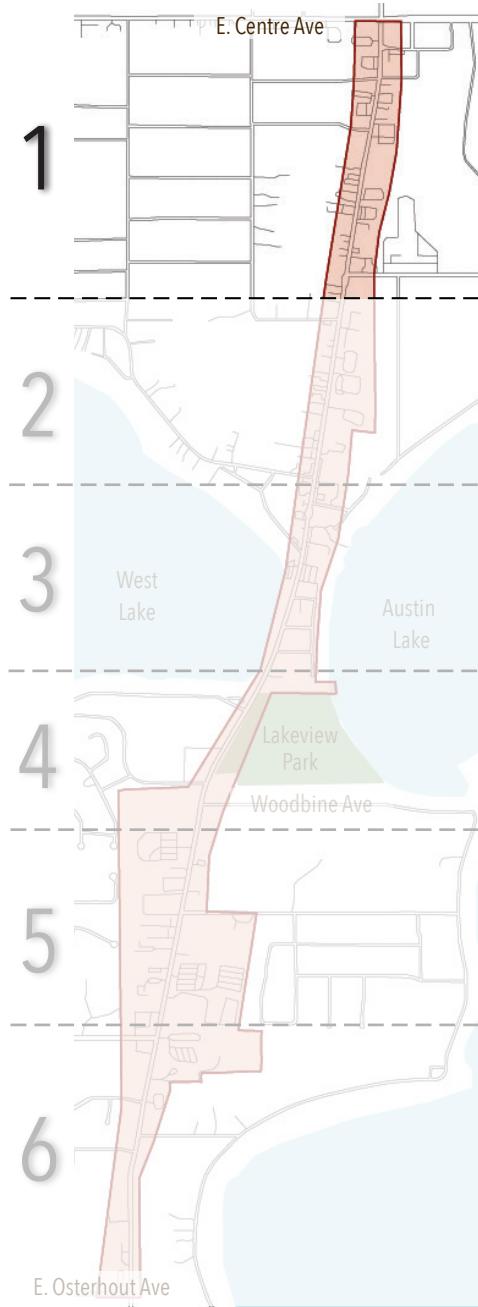
### Key

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

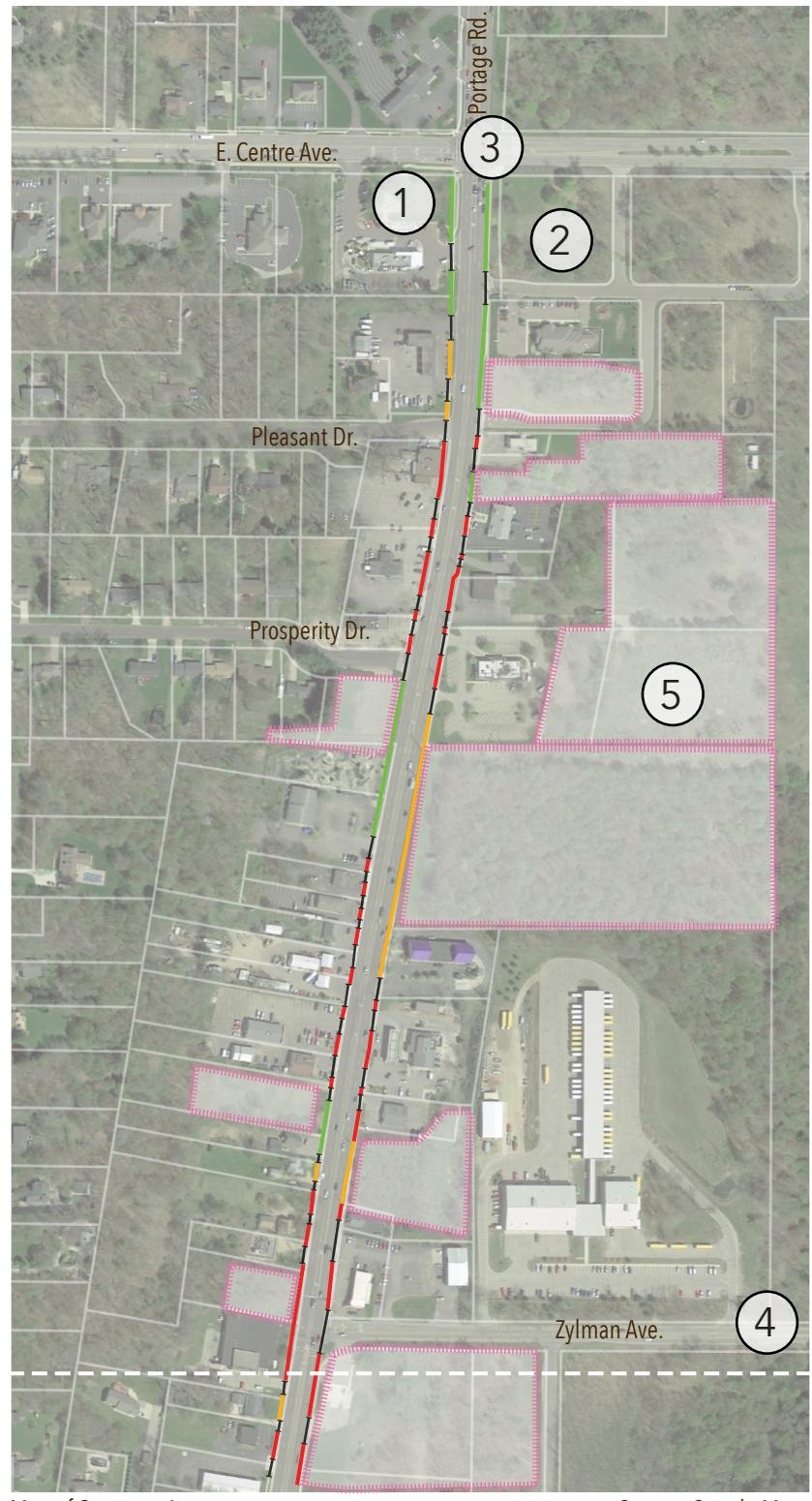
This key applies to the diagrams over the following pages, analysis of opportunities and challenges.

# SEGMENT 1: CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

## 1 E. Centre Ave. to Zylman Ave.



Location Key Plan



Map of Segment 1

Source: Google Maps

# SEGMENT 1: CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

## Opportunities



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



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



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



Proposal sketch of Centre Port extension



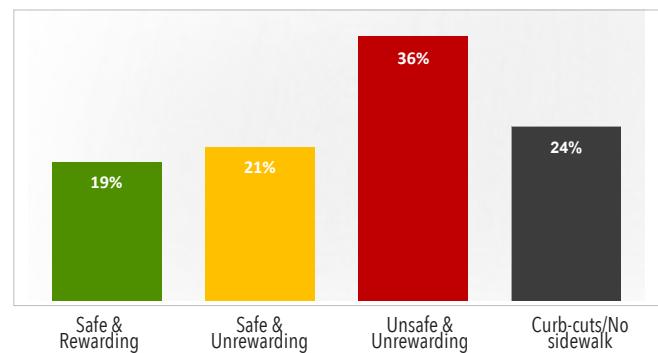
Planned multi-use trail along the north side of East Shore Drive connecting to Zylman Ave and Sprinkle Road utilizing easements acquired from Pfizer in 2018.

## Challenges



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

## Pedestrian Conditions

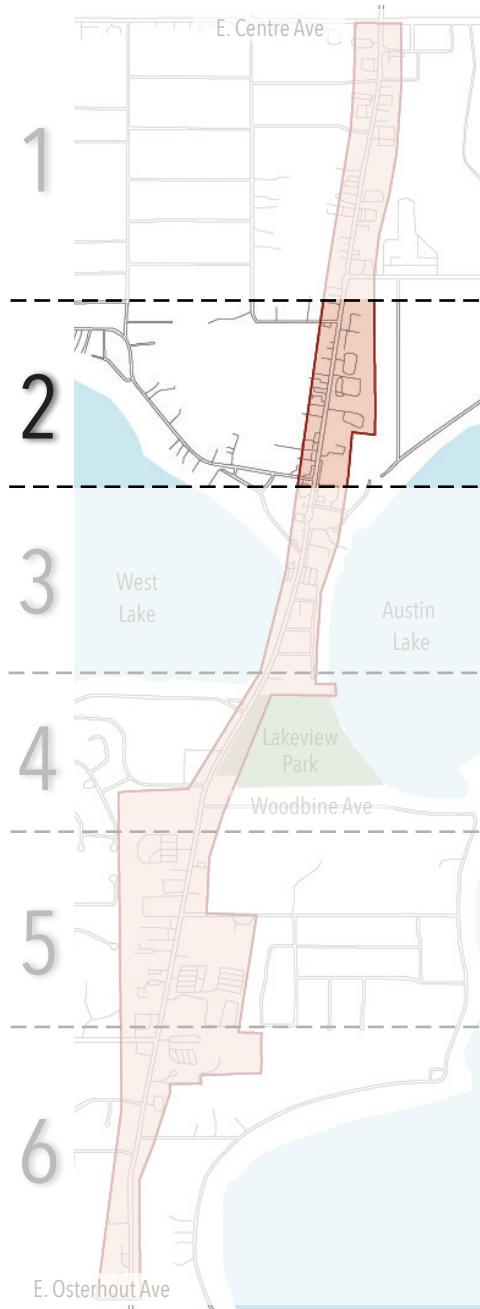


## Key Segment Issues

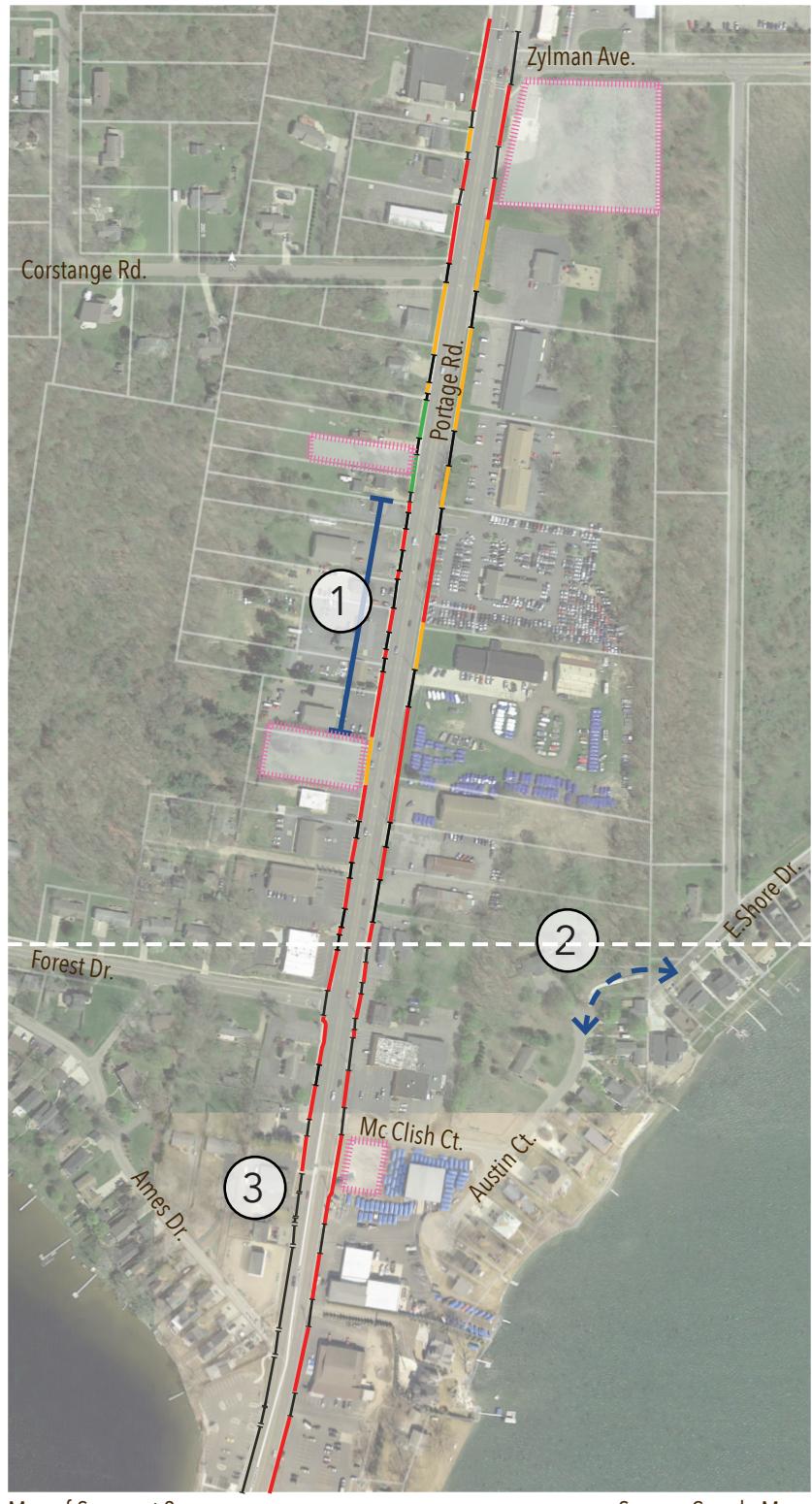


## SEGMENT 2: CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

### 2 Zylman Ave. to Forest Dr.



Location Key Plan



Map of Segment 2

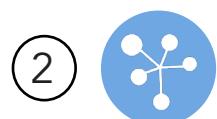
Source: Google Maps

## SEGMENT 2: CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

### Opportunities



Opportunity for "access management" improvement i.e. coordination of driveways and potential rear service alley.



Opportunity to strengthen connection between Austin Ct. and E. Shore Dr.



Opportunity to continue currently dead-end sidewalk along the western side of Portage Road.



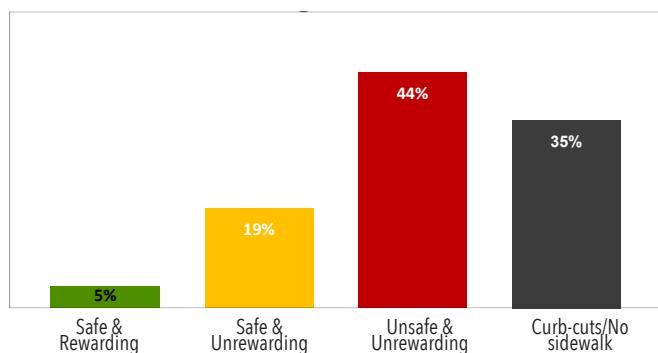
### Challenges



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

Source: Google Street-View

### Pedestrian Conditions

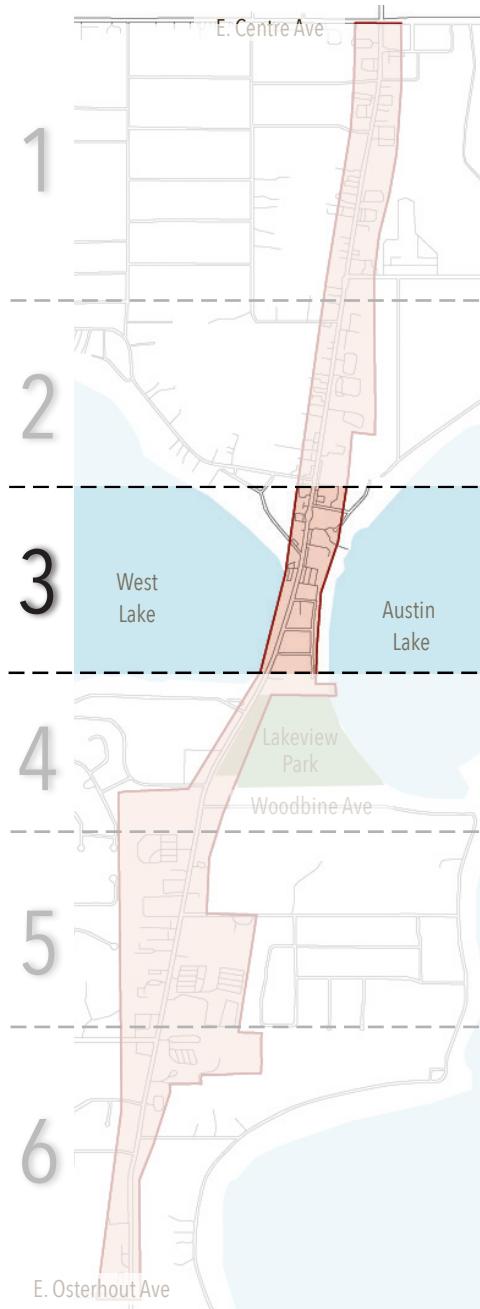


### Key Segment Issues



## SEGMENT 3: CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

### 3 Forest Dr. to Lakeview Dr.



## SEGMENT 3: CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

### Opportunities

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



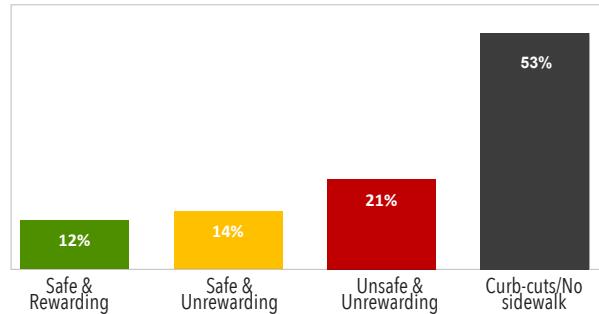
### Challenges

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

Source: Google Street-View

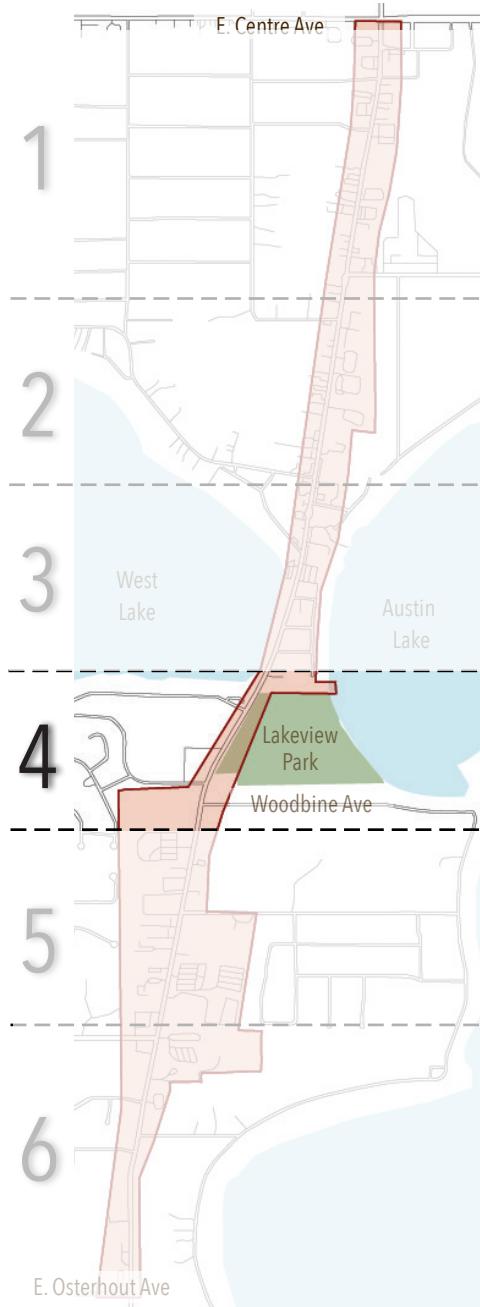
### Key Segment Issues

#### Pedestrian Conditions

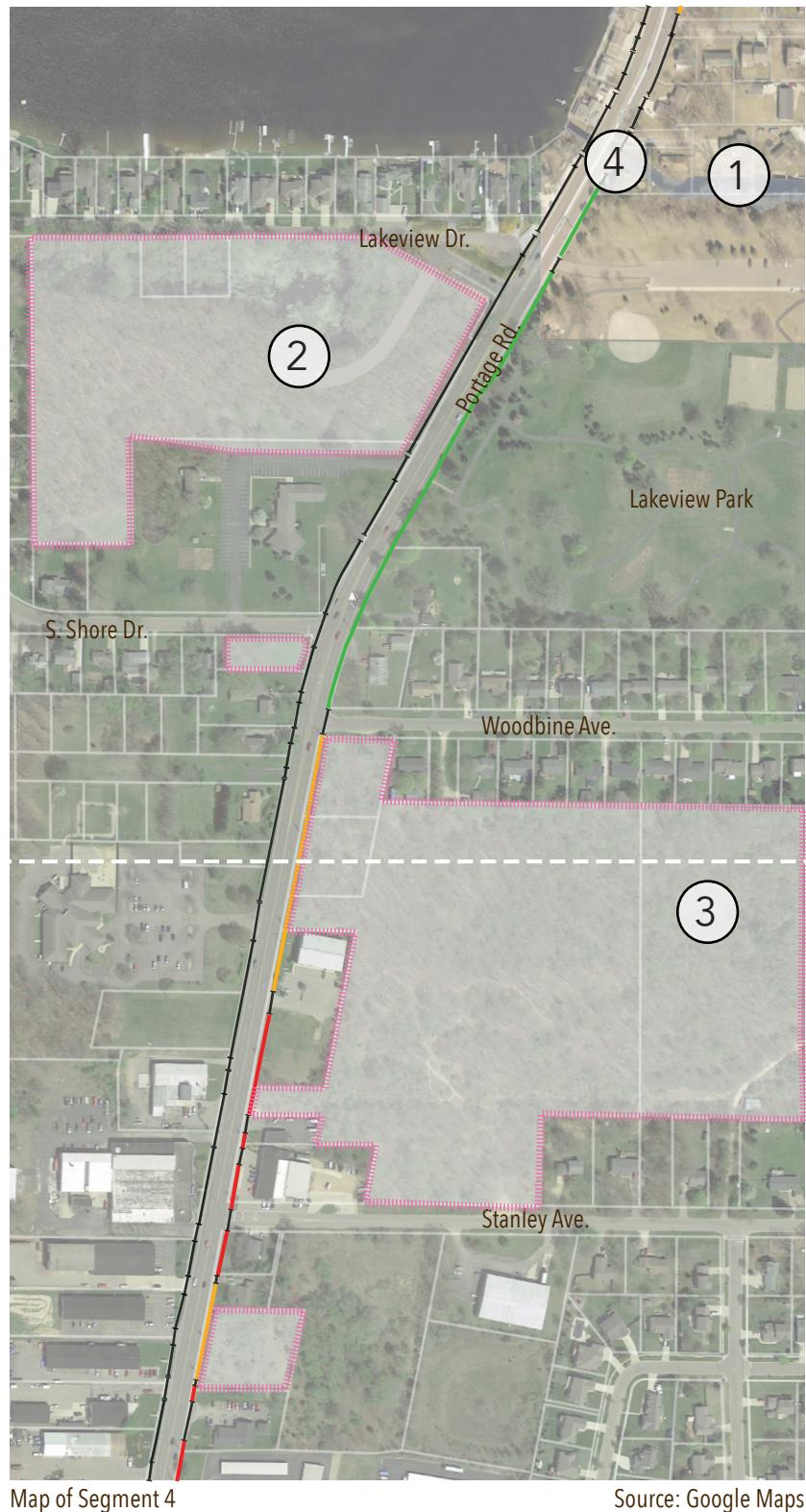


## SEGMENT 4: CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

### 4 Lakeview Dr. to Stanley Ave.



Location Key Plan



Map of Segment 4

Source: Google Maps

## SEGMENT 4: CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

### Opportunities

1   Opportunity to enhance the canal and provide public access.



2  New West Lake Estates subdivision between Lakeview and S. Shore Dr. is under construction.



3   Opportunity for further development

Source: Google Street-View

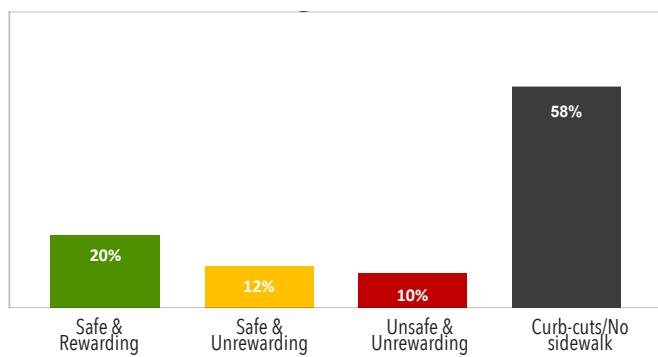
### Challenges

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



Source: Google Street-View

### Pedestrian Conditions

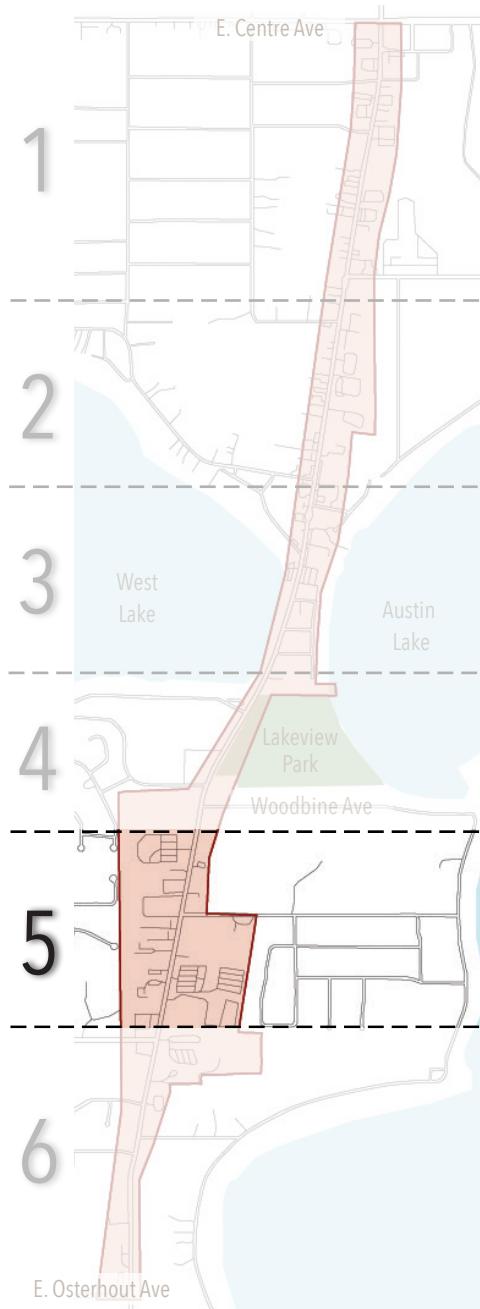


### Key Segment Issues

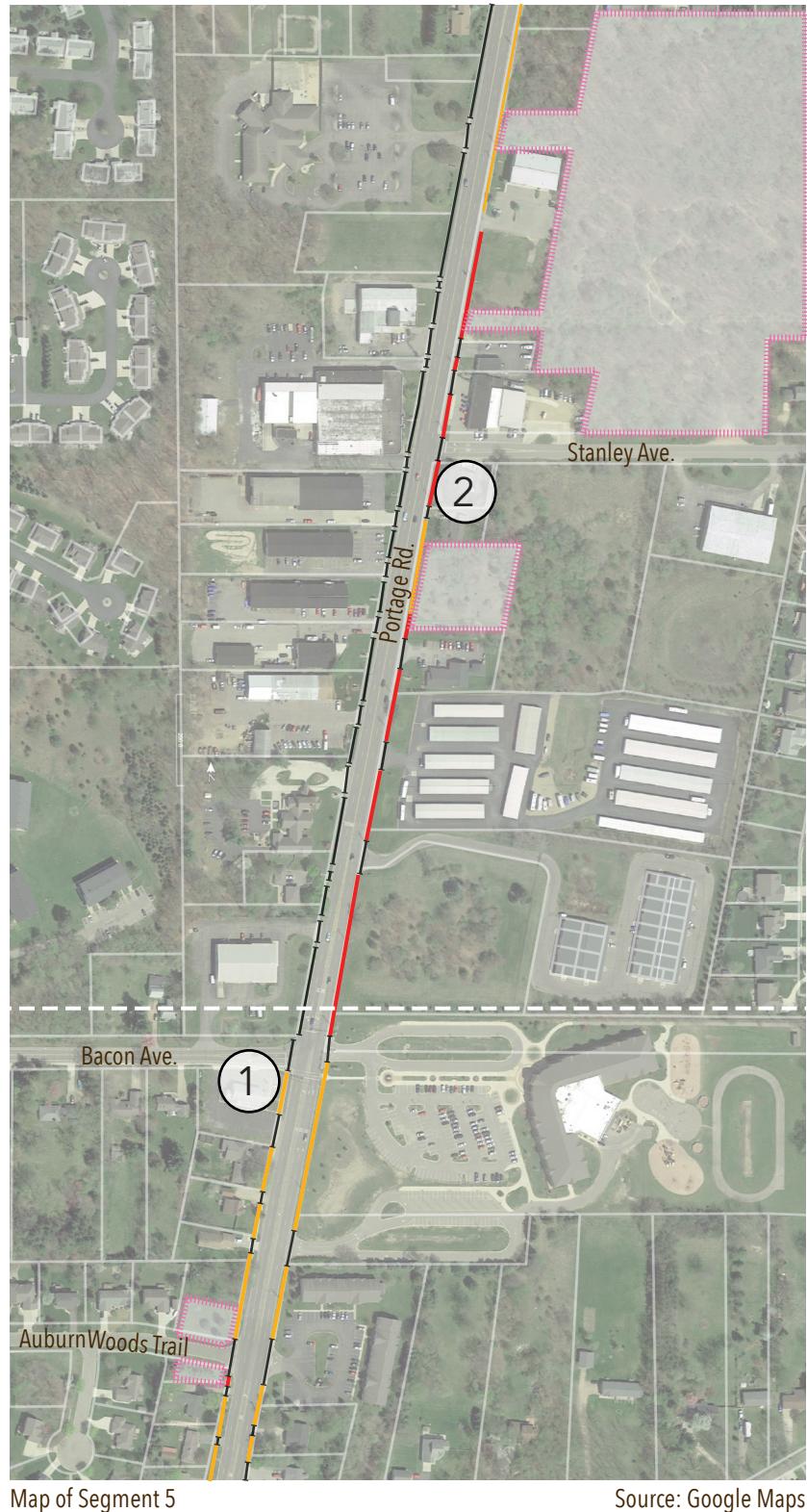


## SEGMENT 5: CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

### 5 Stanley Ave. to Bacon Ave.



Location Key Plan



Map of Segment 5

Source: Google Maps

## SEGMENT 5: CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

### Opportunities

1



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



2



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



Source: Google Street-View

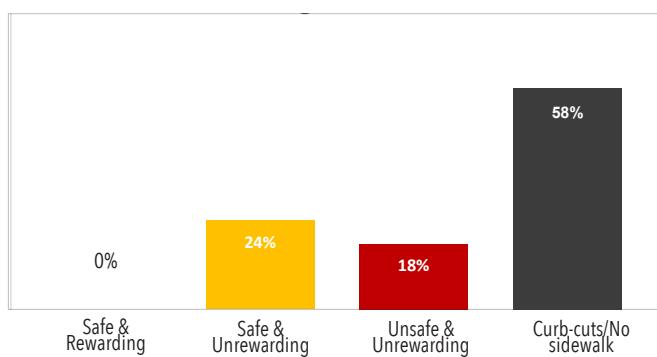
### Challenges

3



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

### Pedestrian Conditions

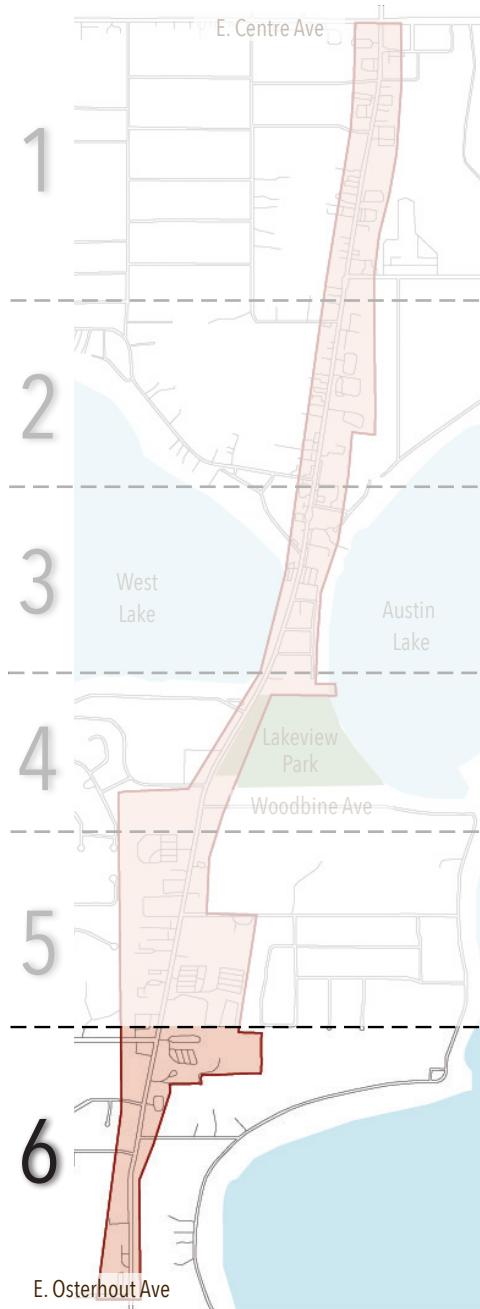


### Key Segment Issues

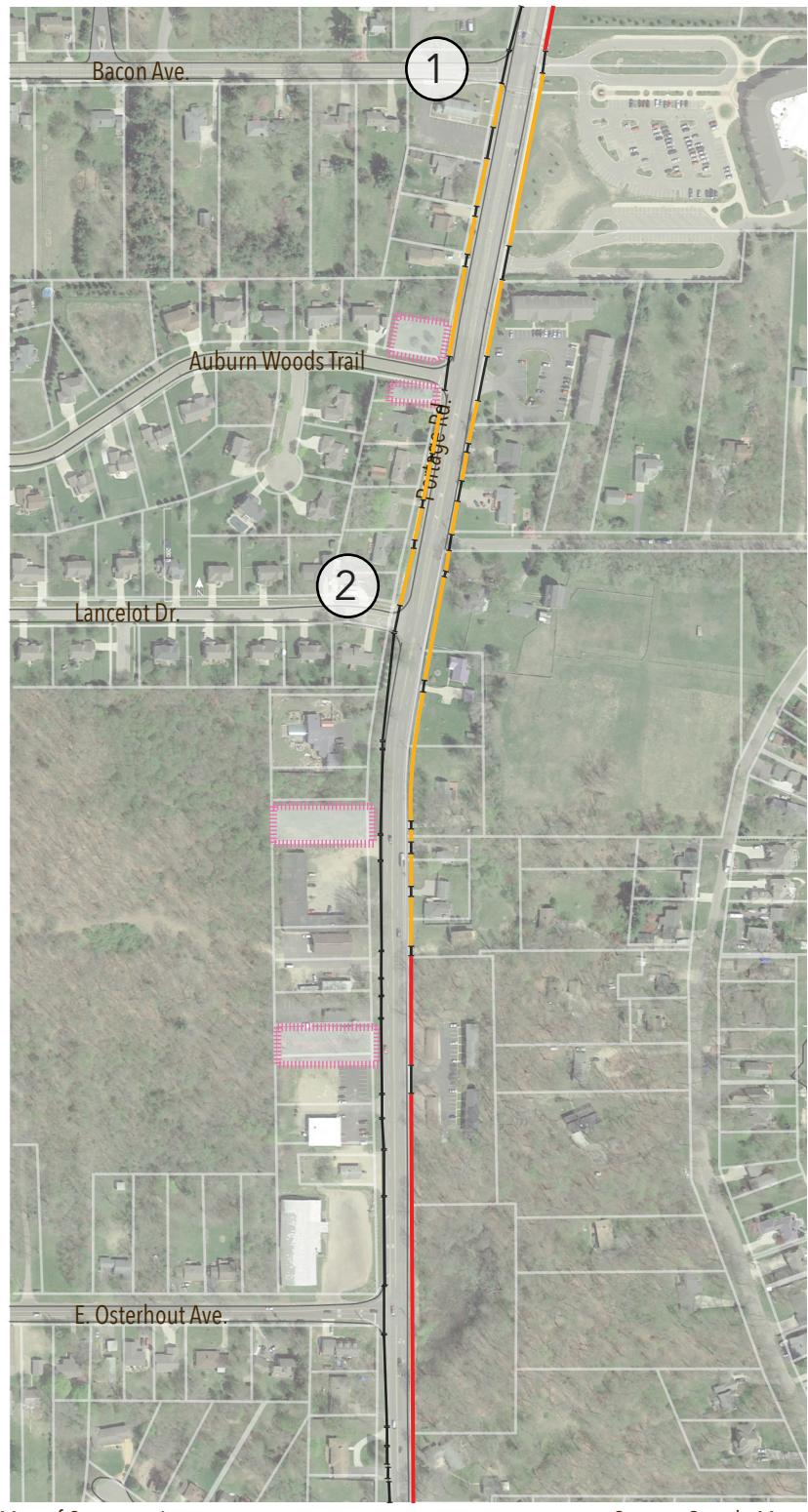


## SEGMENT 6: CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

### 6 Bacon Ave. to Osterhout Ave.



Location Key Plan



Map of Segment 6

Source: Google Maps

# SEGMENT 6: CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

## Opportunities

1



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



2



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



Source: Google Street-View

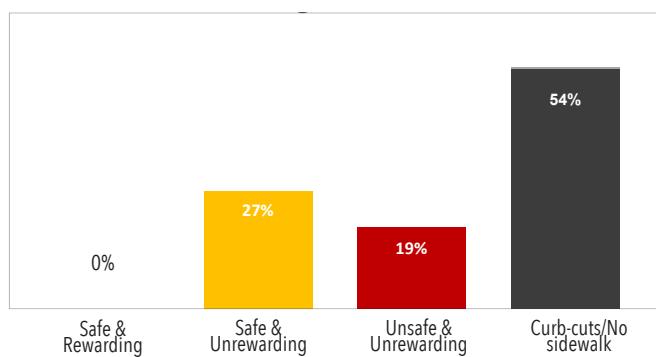
## Challenges

3



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

## Pedestrian Conditions



## Key Segment Issues



# 1.5 THE FUTURE OF PORTAGE ROAD

## DEVELOPMENT OF SCENARIOS

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

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

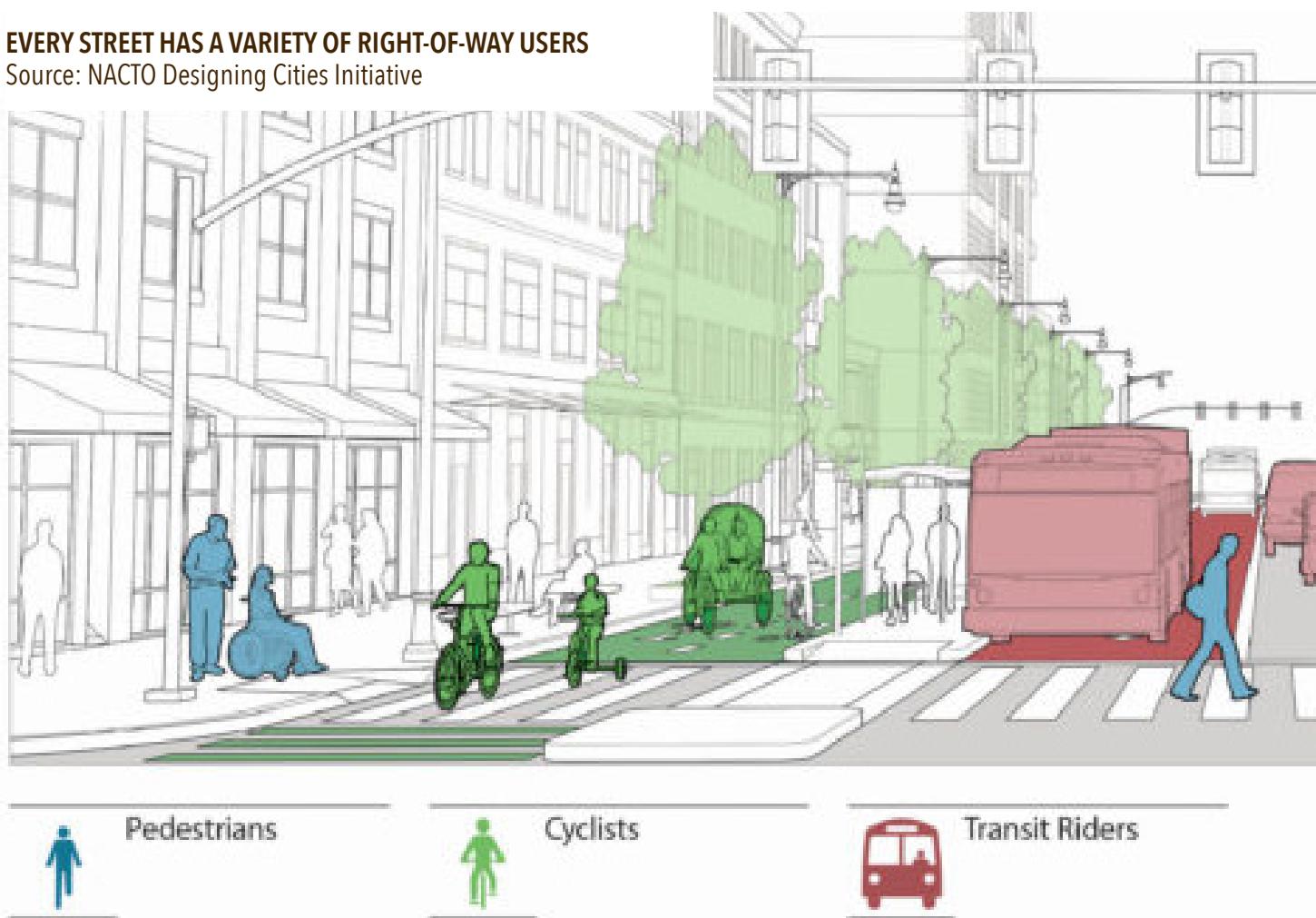
## FINDING THE RIGHT-OF-WAY BALANCE

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

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

### EVERY STREET HAS A VARIETY OF RIGHT-OF-WAY USERS

Source: NACTO Designing Cities Initiative



more vibrant and multimodal.

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

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

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



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#### Motorists



Freight Operators  
and Service  
Providers

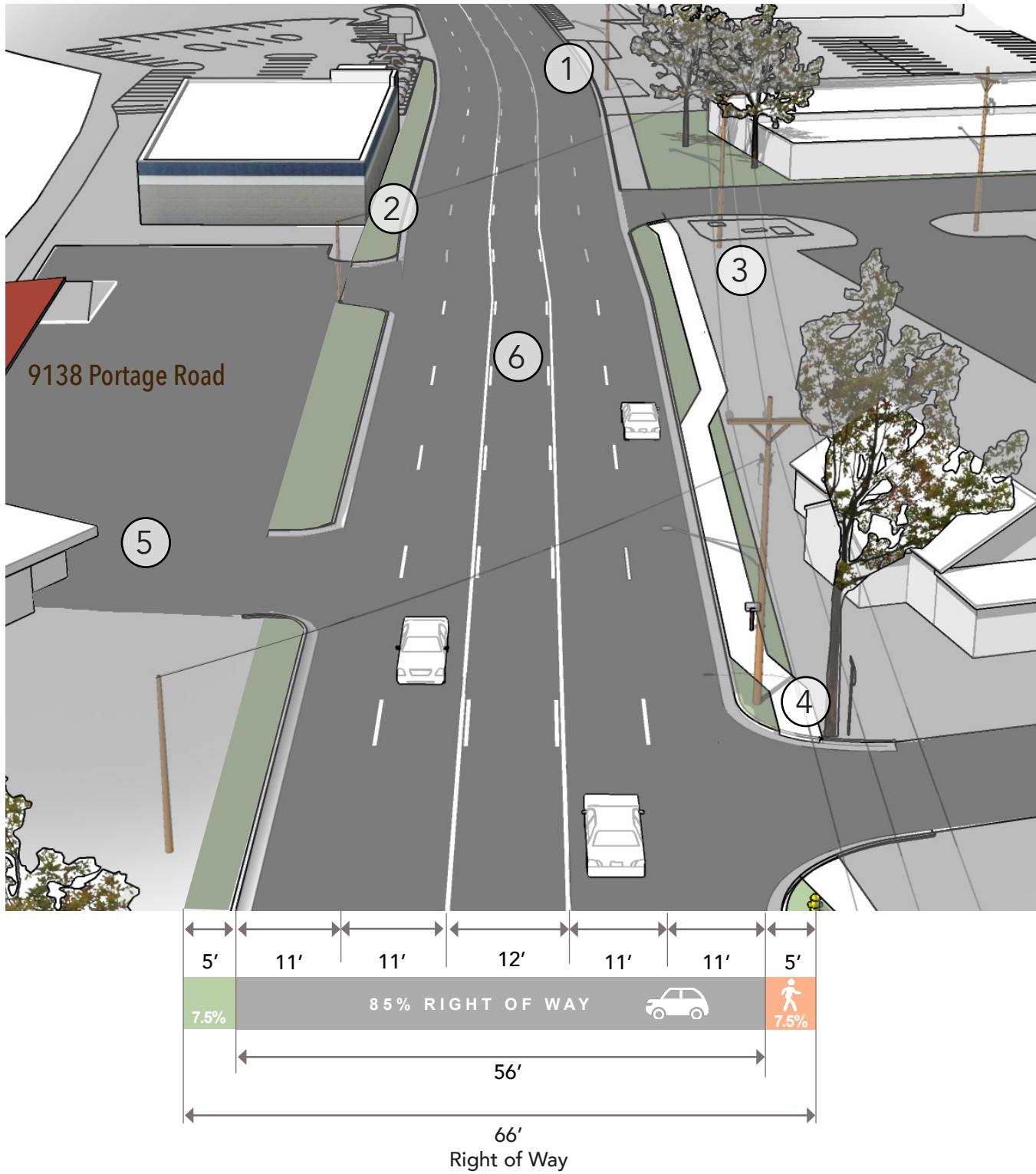


People Doing  
Business

## EXISTING RIGHT-OF-WAY CONDITIONS (66')

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

Source: Farr Associates



1



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

2



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

3



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

4



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

5



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

6



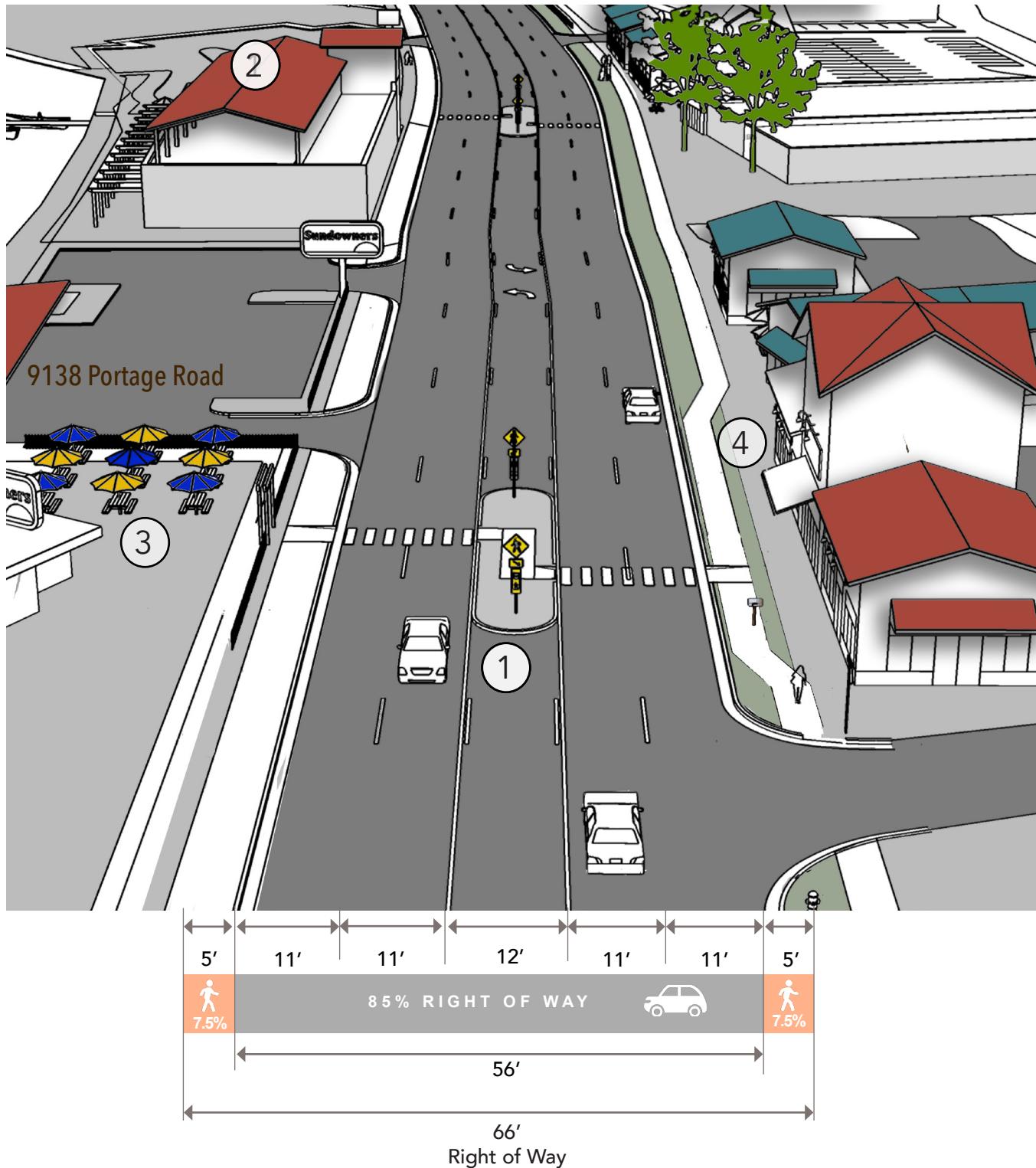
The absence of crosswalks in the isthmus area, across five lanes of high-speed traffic, presents a difficult environment for pedestrians and cyclists to cross.

Source: Google Street-View

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

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

Source: Farr Associates



1



Source: Mid-Block Crosswalk Ramsey, County

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

2



Source: Sand Bar, Nashville. NashvilleGuru.com

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

3



Source: Sundowners, Florida. USArestaurants.info

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

4



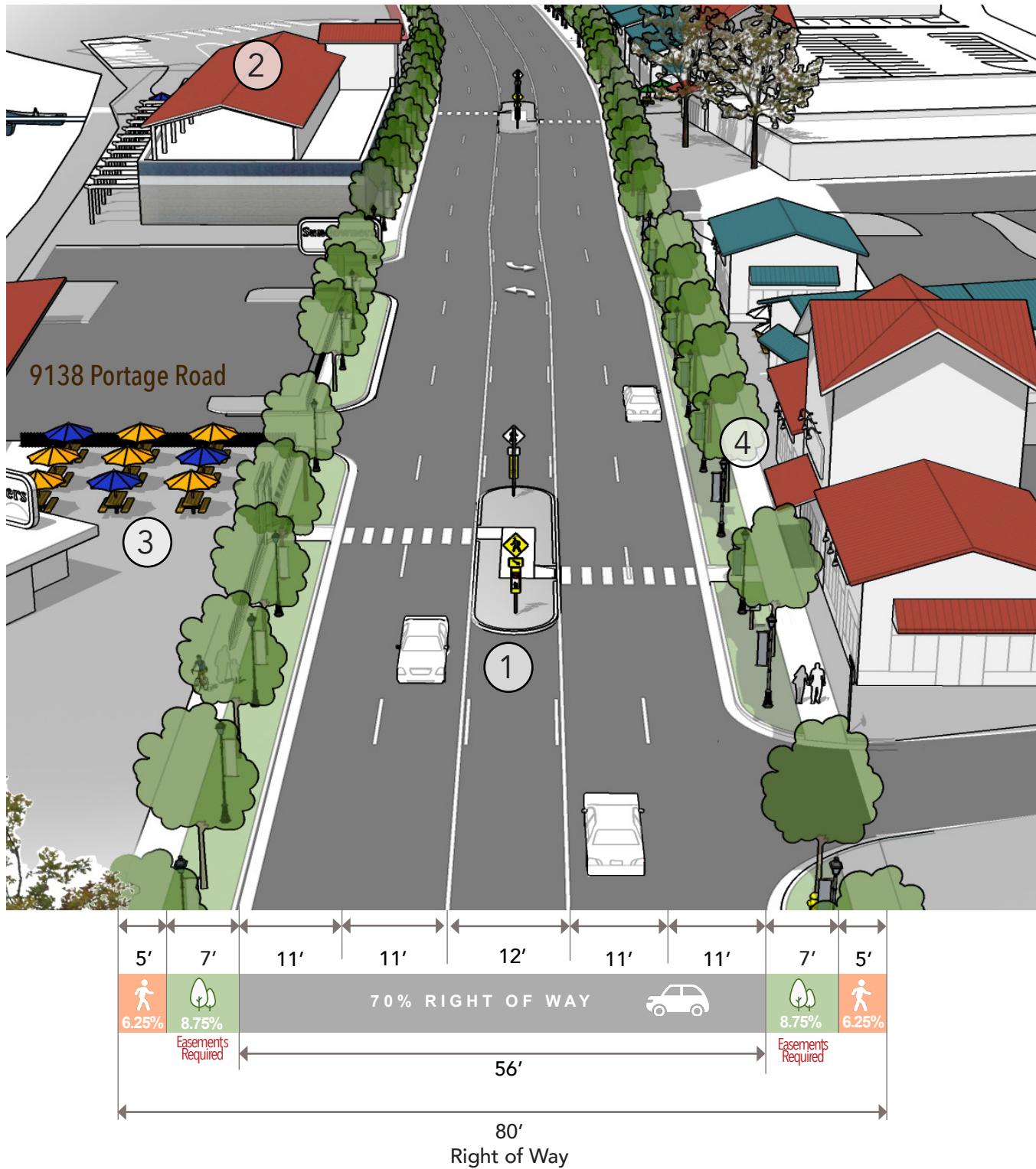
Source: Pop-up Shop, Muskegon, MI. StrongTowns.com

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

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

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

Source: Farr Associates



1



Source: Mid-Block Crosswalk Ramsey, County

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

2



Source: Sand Bar, Nashville. NashvilleGuru.com

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

3



Source: Sundowners, Florida. USArestaurants.info

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

4



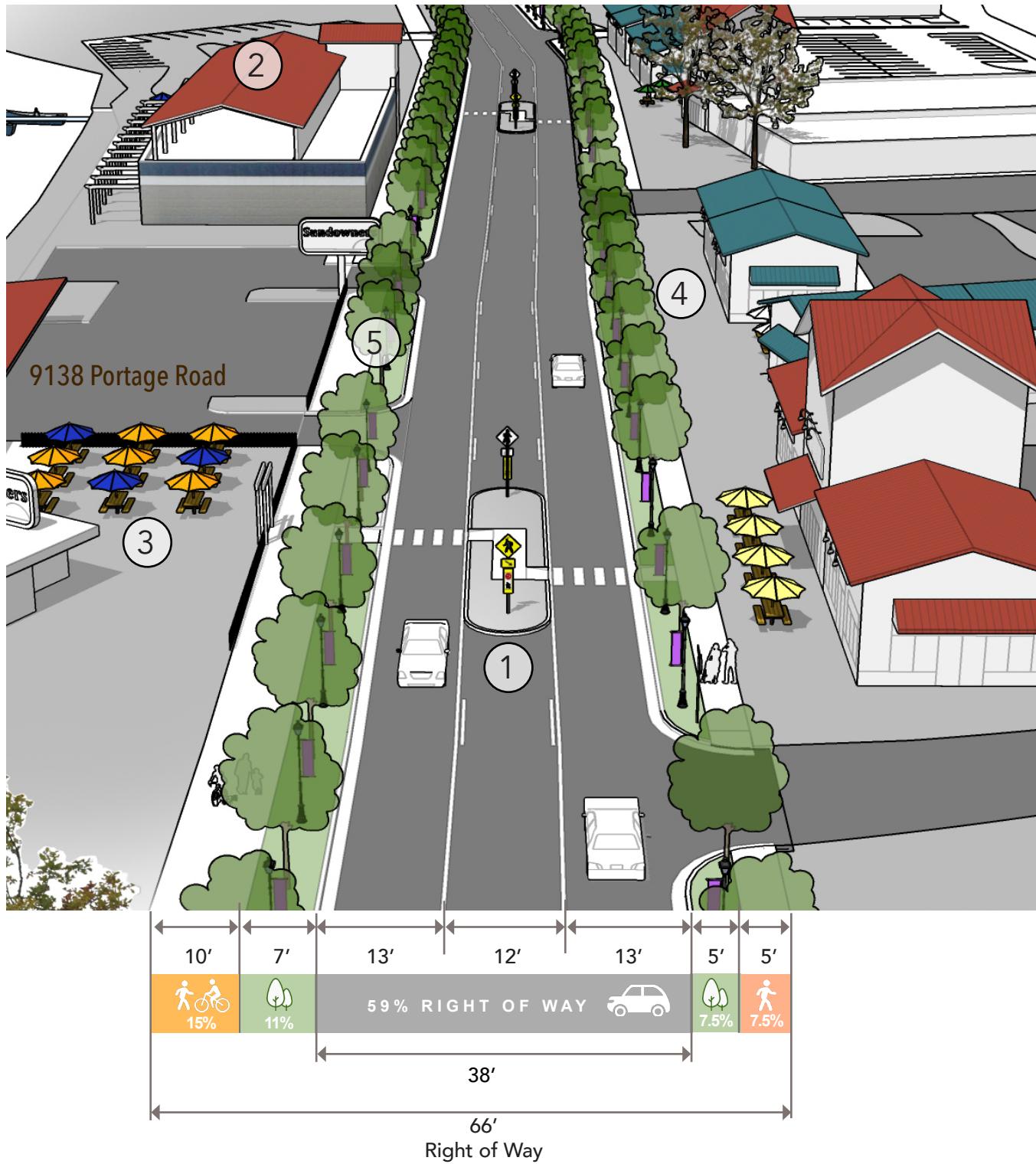
Source: Pop-up Shop, Muskegon, MI. StrongTowns.com

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

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

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

Source: Farr Associates



1



Source: Mid-Block Crosswalk Ramsey, County

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

2



Source: Sand Bar, Nashville. NashvilleGuru.com

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

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Source: Sundowners, Florida. USArestaurants.info

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

4



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

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

5



Source: Atlanta BeltLine Eastside Trail. Ryan Gravel.

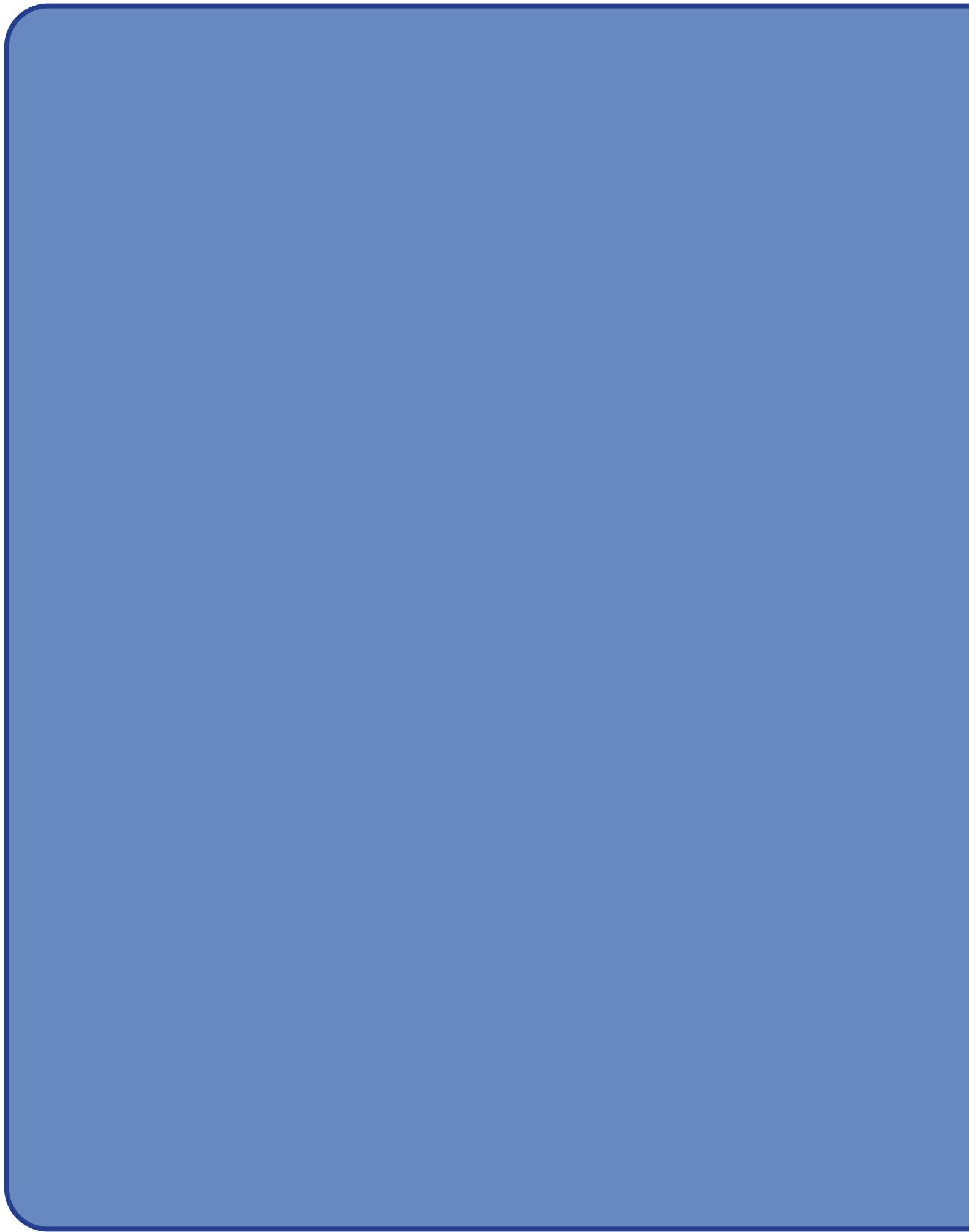
A proposed 10' wide multi-use path on the west side of Portage Road, buffered by landscaping and trees, provides pedestrians and cyclist of all ages a dedicated space to safely and comfortably explore the area.

6



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

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



# CHAPTER 4

# PROPOSED

# IMPROVEMENTS

# 4.1 PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS

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## Proposed Master Plan Overview

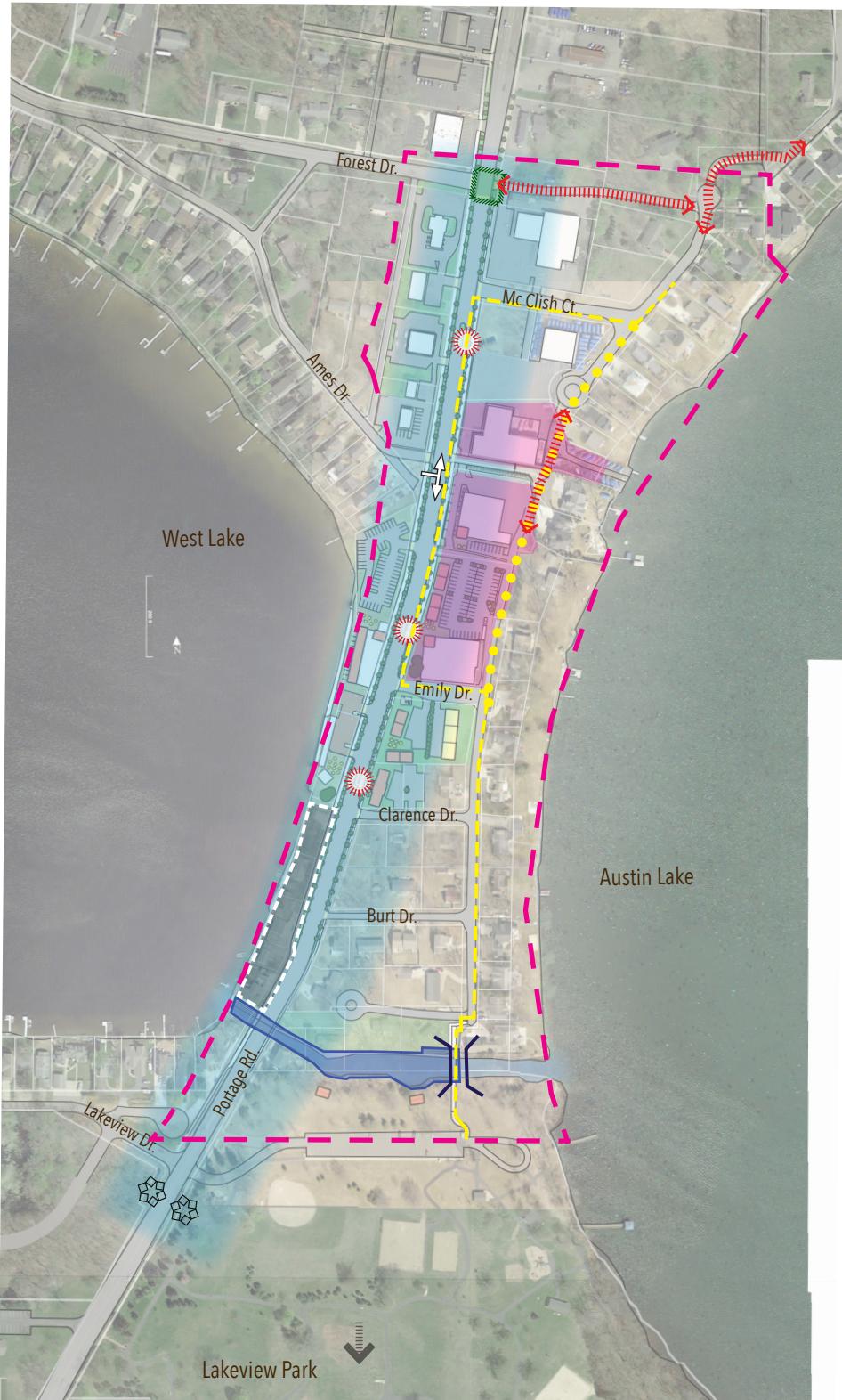
This chapter provides an overview and detailed segments of the proposed improvements of the study. These were developed from the public outreach process, public feedback, collaboration with the Steering Committee, and the expertise of the consultant team and city administration. The proposed master plan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

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

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

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

# PROPOSED MASTER PLAN - Isthmus



Lake Center District Master Plan

Source: Google Maps

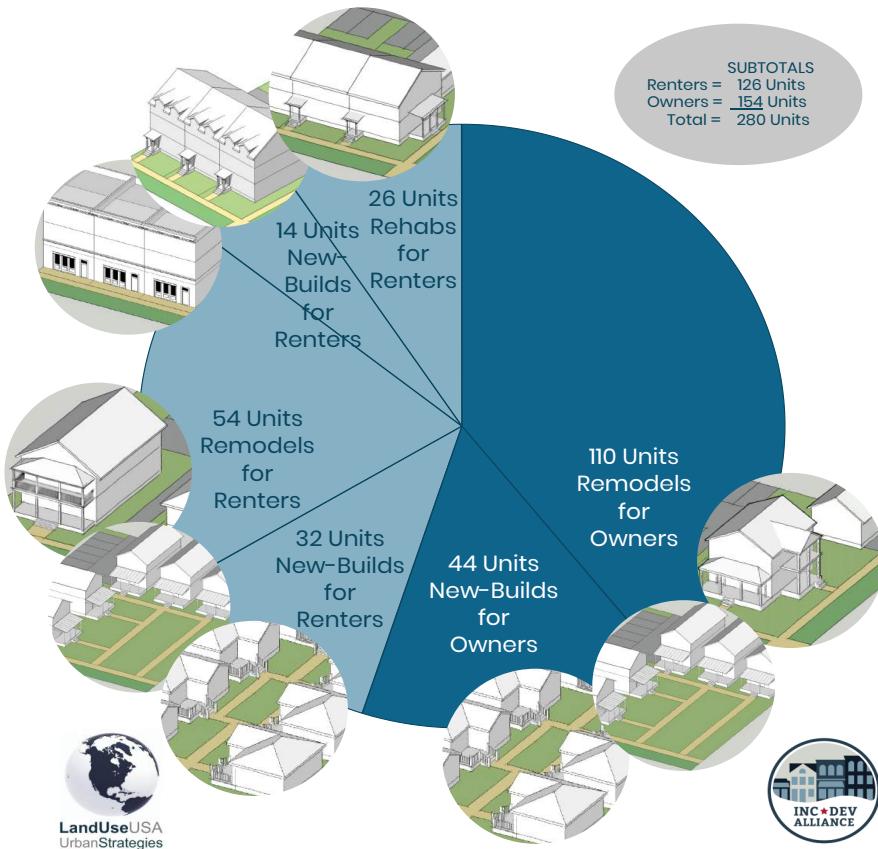
## Key

- Building Improvements
- Streetscape Improvements
- Proposed Crosswalks
- Canalwalk & pedestrian/cycle route under Portage Rd
- Gateway Entrance Features
- Proposed Pedestrian/Bicycle Bridge over canal
- Proposed Traffic Signal
- Potential for Future Commercial Development
- Proposed Intersection Improvements
- Proposed Form Based Code
- Bike path
- ● Long Term Direct Bike Connection
- ◀▶ Future street connections

0 125 250 500 ft

# RECOMMENDED RESIDENTIAL MASTER PLAN

## Annual Market Potential Remodels & New-Builds | Lake Center



## Estimated Property Assessment Values for Key Properties

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

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

Number of units is conceptual possibility

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

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

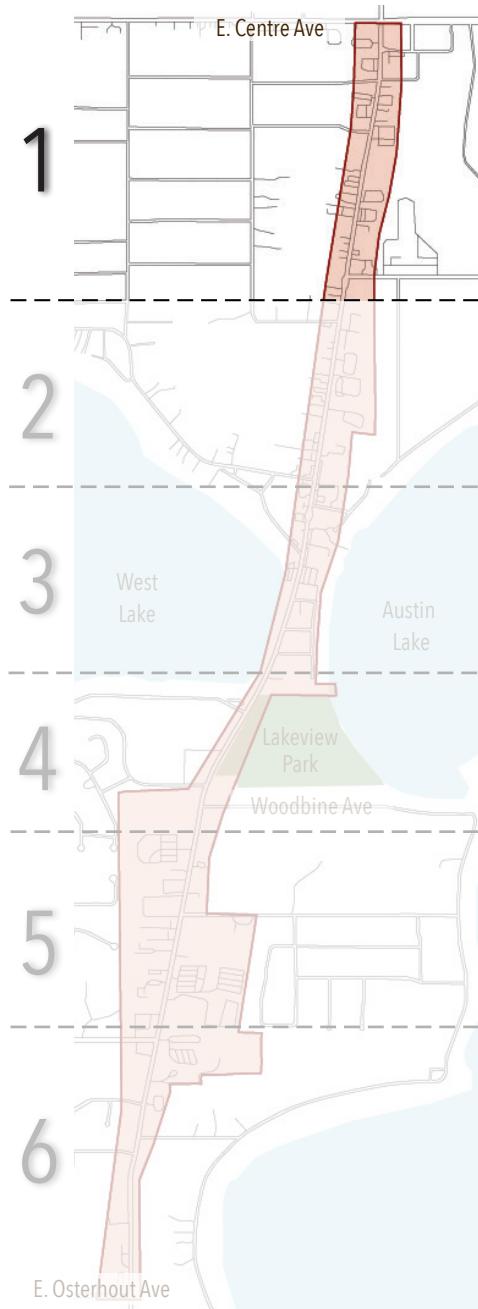
The table provides indications of the number of units that could be provided on each identified parcel.



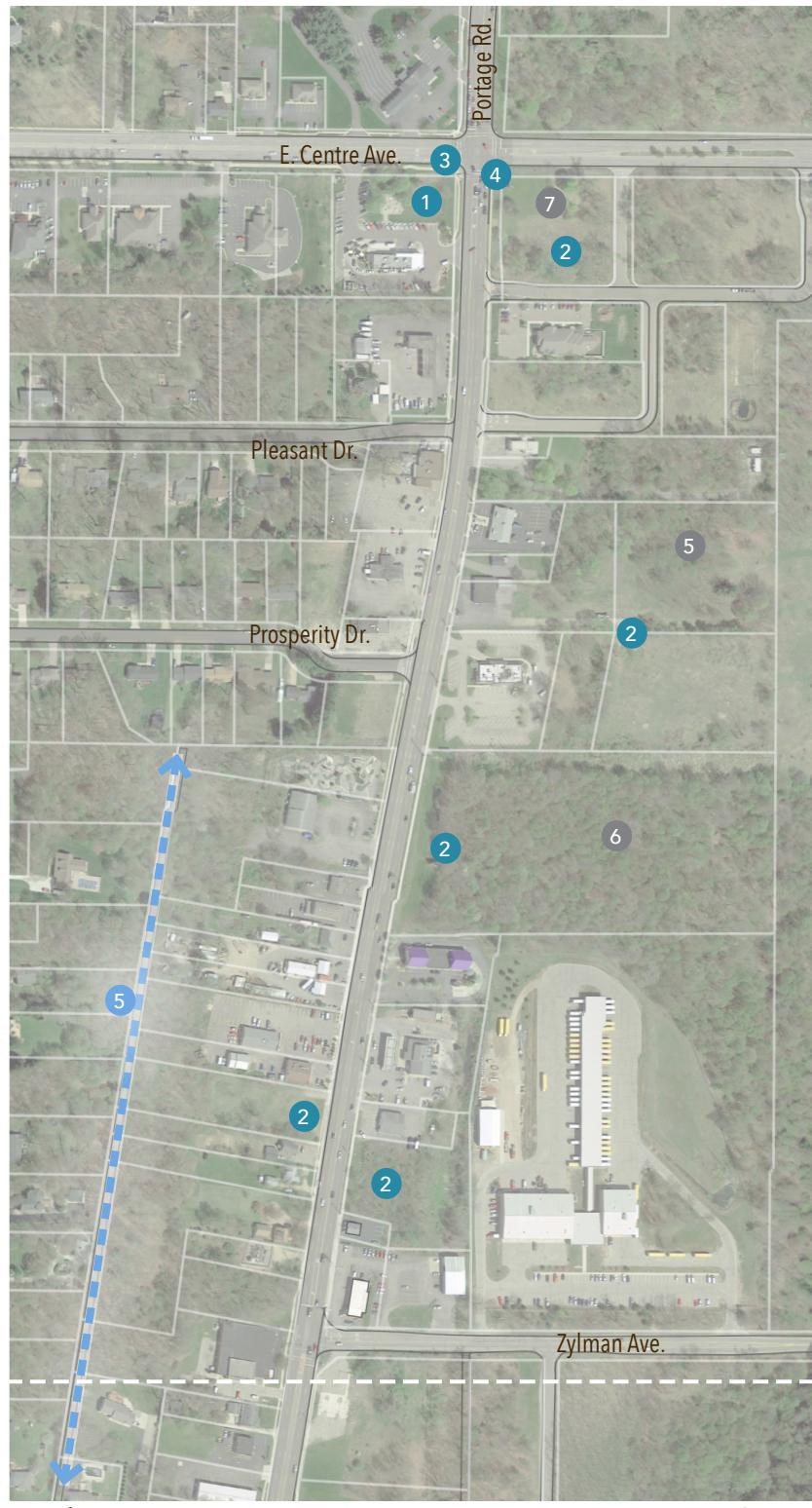
The images and renderings in this study are for conceptual and illustrative purposes, and may not be to scale.

# SEGMENT 1: RECOMMENDED IMPROVEMENTS

## 1 E. Centre Ave. to Zylman Ave.



Location Key Plan



Map of Segment 1

Source: Google Maps

# SEGMENT1: RECOMMENDED IMPROVEMENTS



## DESIGN & PLACEMAKING

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



## MOBILITY & CONNECTIVITY

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

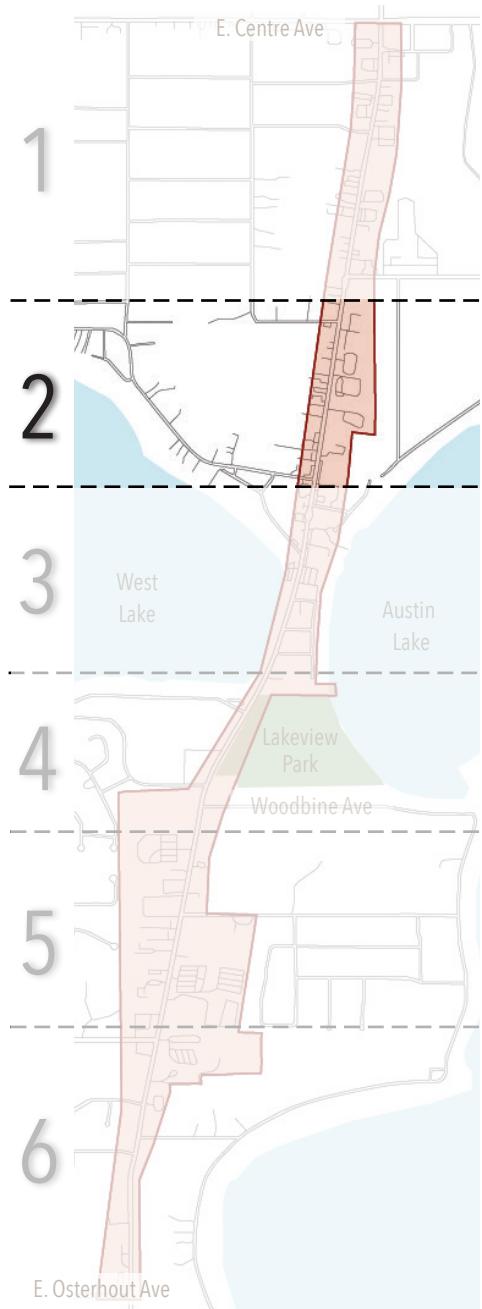


## CORRIDOR DEVELOPMENT

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

## SEGMENT 2: RECOMMENDED IMPROVEMENTS

### 2 Zylman Ave. to Forest Dr.



Location Key Plan



Map of Segment 2

Source: Google Maps

## SEGMENT 2: RECOMMENDED IMPROVEMENTS



### DESIGN & PLACEMAKING

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



### MOBILITY & CONNECTIVITY

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

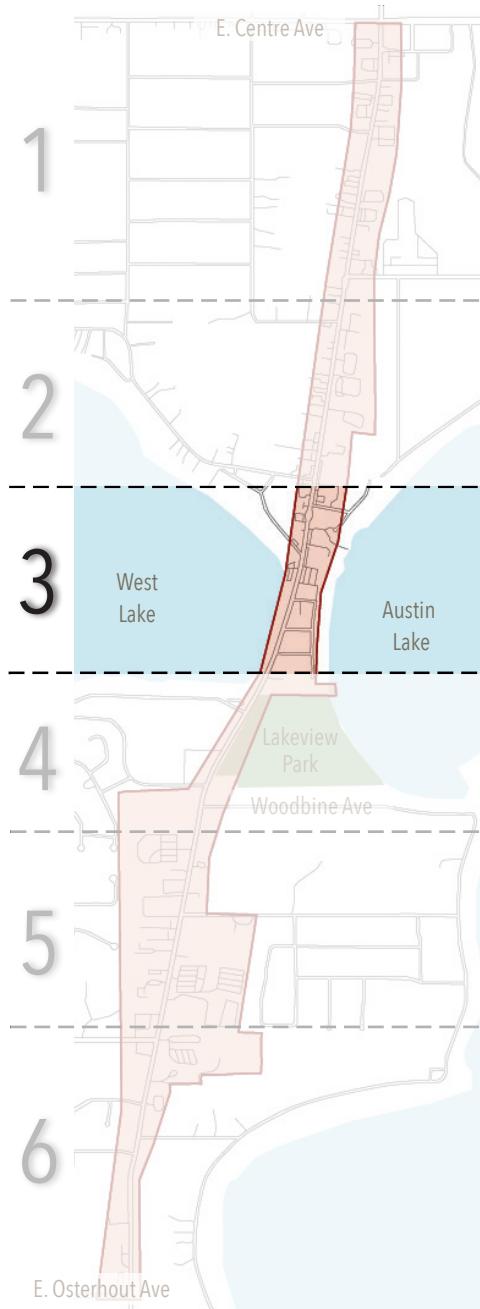


### SAFETY & ACCESSIBILITY

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

## SEGMENT 3: RECOMMENDED IMPROVEMENTS

### 3 Forest Dr. to Lakeview Dr.



Location Key Plan



Source: Google Maps

# SEGMENT 3: RECOMMENDED IMPROVEMENTS



## DESIGN & PLACEMAKING

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



## MOBILITY & CONNECTIVITY

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



## SAFETY & ACCESSIBILITY

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



## CORRIDOR DEVELOPMENT

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



## OPEN SPACES & LAKE ACCESS

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

**Planned City Investments:**

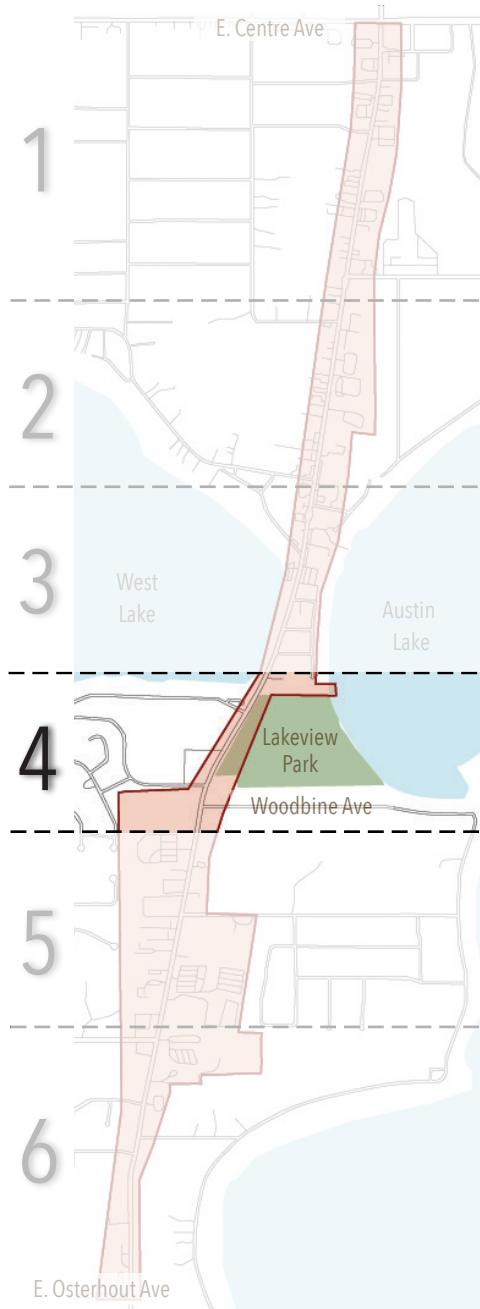
Portage Road/ Emily Drive Lift Station Force Main Replacement (FY24-25)



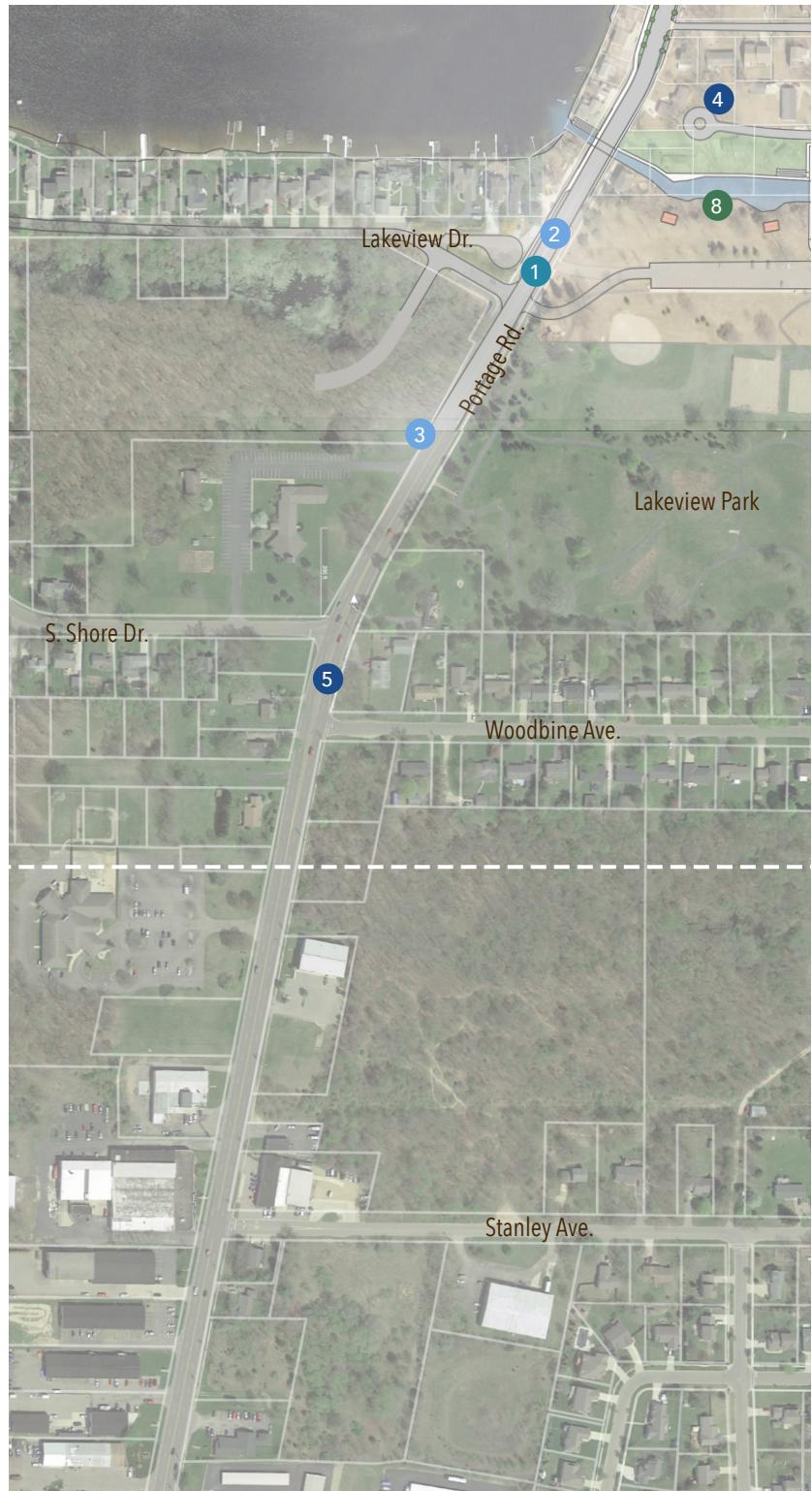
Source: Google Street-View

## SEGMENT 4: RECOMMENDED IMPROVEMENTS

### 4 Lakeview Dr. to Stanley Ave.



Location Key Plan



Map of Segment 4

Source: Google Maps

## SEGMENT 4: RECOMMENDED IMPROVEMENTS

-  **DESIGN & PLACEMAKING**
  - ① Update geometry of park entrance to improve safety, alignment and sight lines.
-  **MOBILITY & CONNECTIVITY**
  - ② New mid-block crosswalks at Lakeview Drive to coincide with LCD gateway.
  - ③ Continue sidewalk on west side of Portage Road from Lakeview Drive to Woodbine Ave.
-  **SAFETY & ACCESSIBILITY**
  - ④ Close Dixie Dr. intersection to accommodate required slope of Portage Road bridge.
  - ⑤ Align South Shore and Woodbine and install stop signs.
  - ⑥ Re-balance right-of-way between Lakeview Drive and Woodbine Ave to accommodate all uses. (Not shown)
-  **OPEN SPACES & LAKE ACCESS**
  - ⑧ New "canalwalk" boardwalk improvements.

### Planned City Investments:

#### Lakeview Park Improvements (FY22-23)



NEW PARK ENTRY

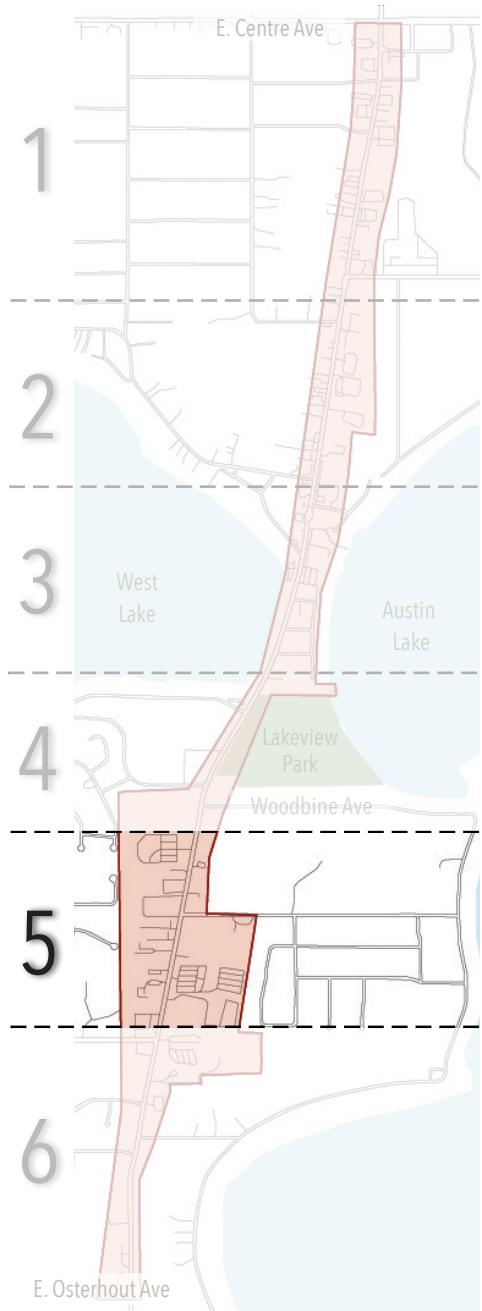


NEW PAVILION AND PARKING

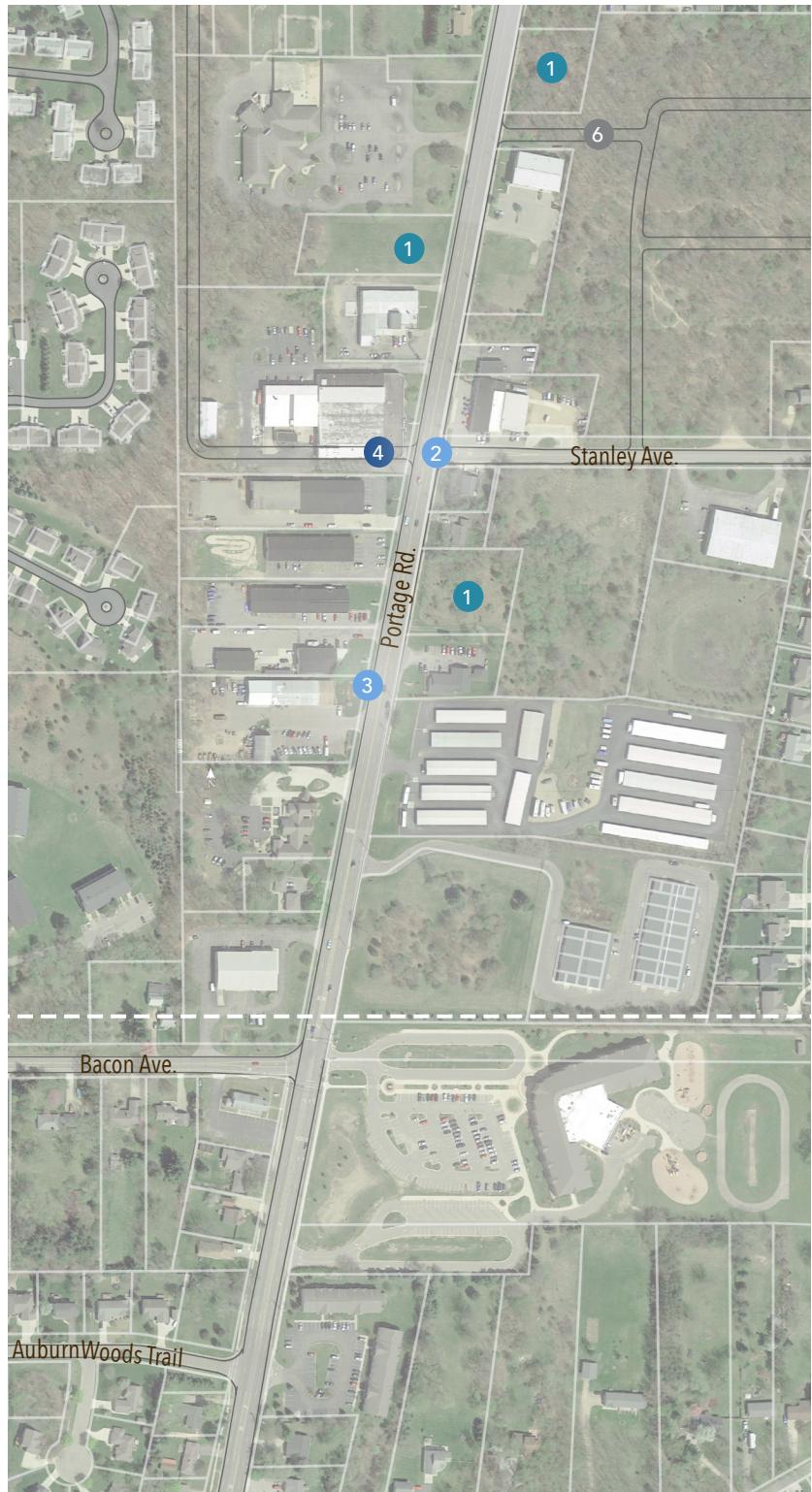
Source: Portage Parks & Recreation Department

## SEGMENT 5: RECOMMENDED IMPROVEMENTS

### 5 Stanley Ave. to Bacon Ave.



Location Key Plan



Map of Segment 5

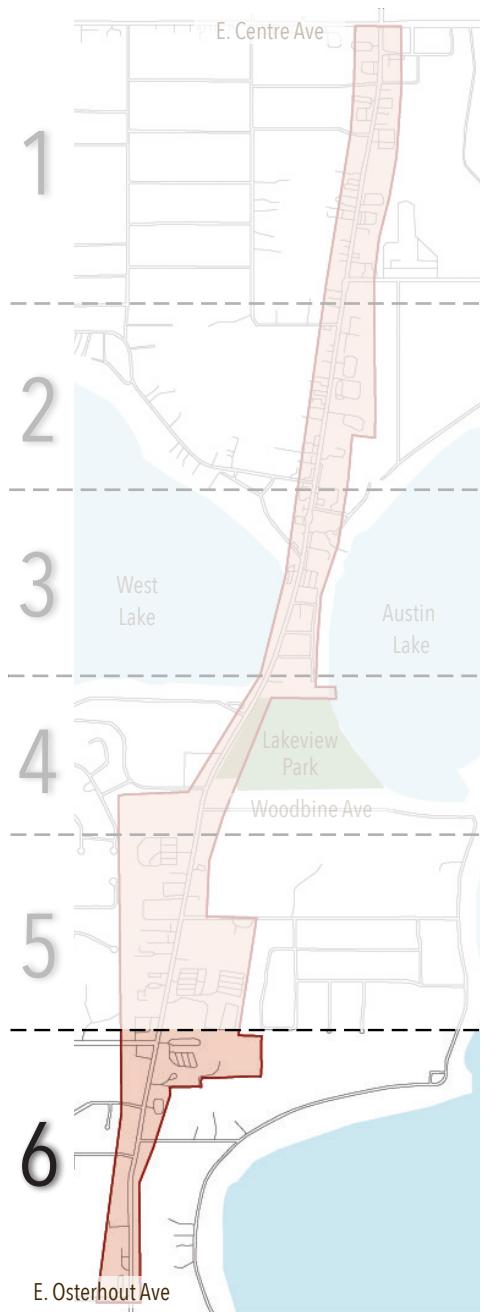
Source: Google Maps

# SEGMENT 5: RECOMMENDED IMPROVEMENTS

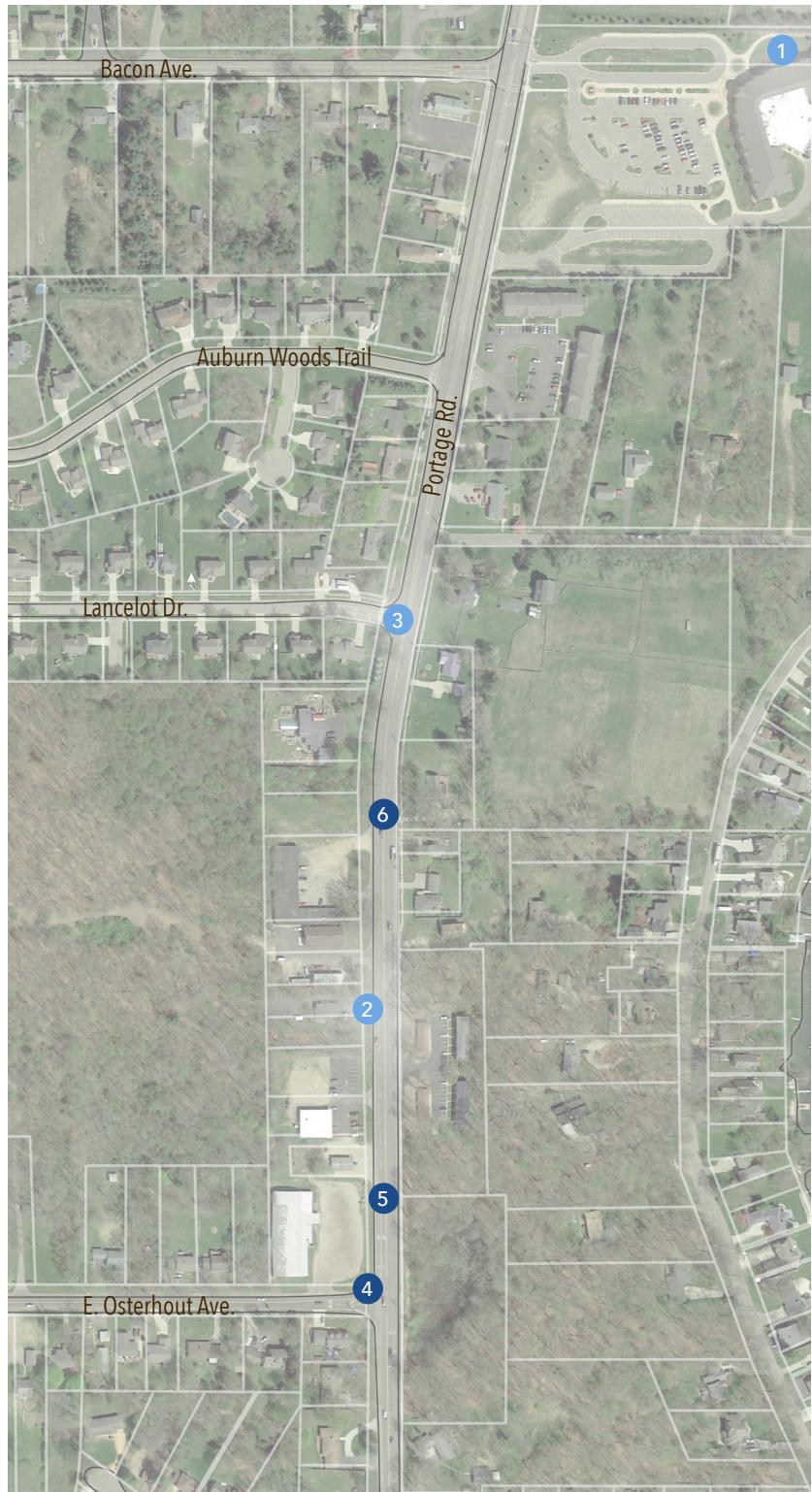
-  **DESIGN & PLACEMAKING**
  - ① Ensure that future developments conform to future form based code regulations and design guidelines for the District.
-  **MOBILITY & CONNECTIVITY**
  - ② New signalized crosswalk at Stanley Ave, if traffic signal is installed.
  - ③ Extend sidewalk on west side of Portage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

## SEGMENT 6: RECOMMENDED IMPROVEMENTS

### 6 Bacon Ave. to Osterhout Ave.



Location Key Plan



Map of Segment 6.

Source: Google Maps

## SEGMENT 6: RECOMMENDED IMPROVEMENTS



### MOBILITY & CONNECTIVITY

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



### SAFETY & ACCESSIBILITY

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

## CURRENT CONCEPT: Condominium Project under consideration for Dr...



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

## live-in Property



Source: Farr Associates

## PROPOSED CONCEPT: Condominium Project on City-owned Property,



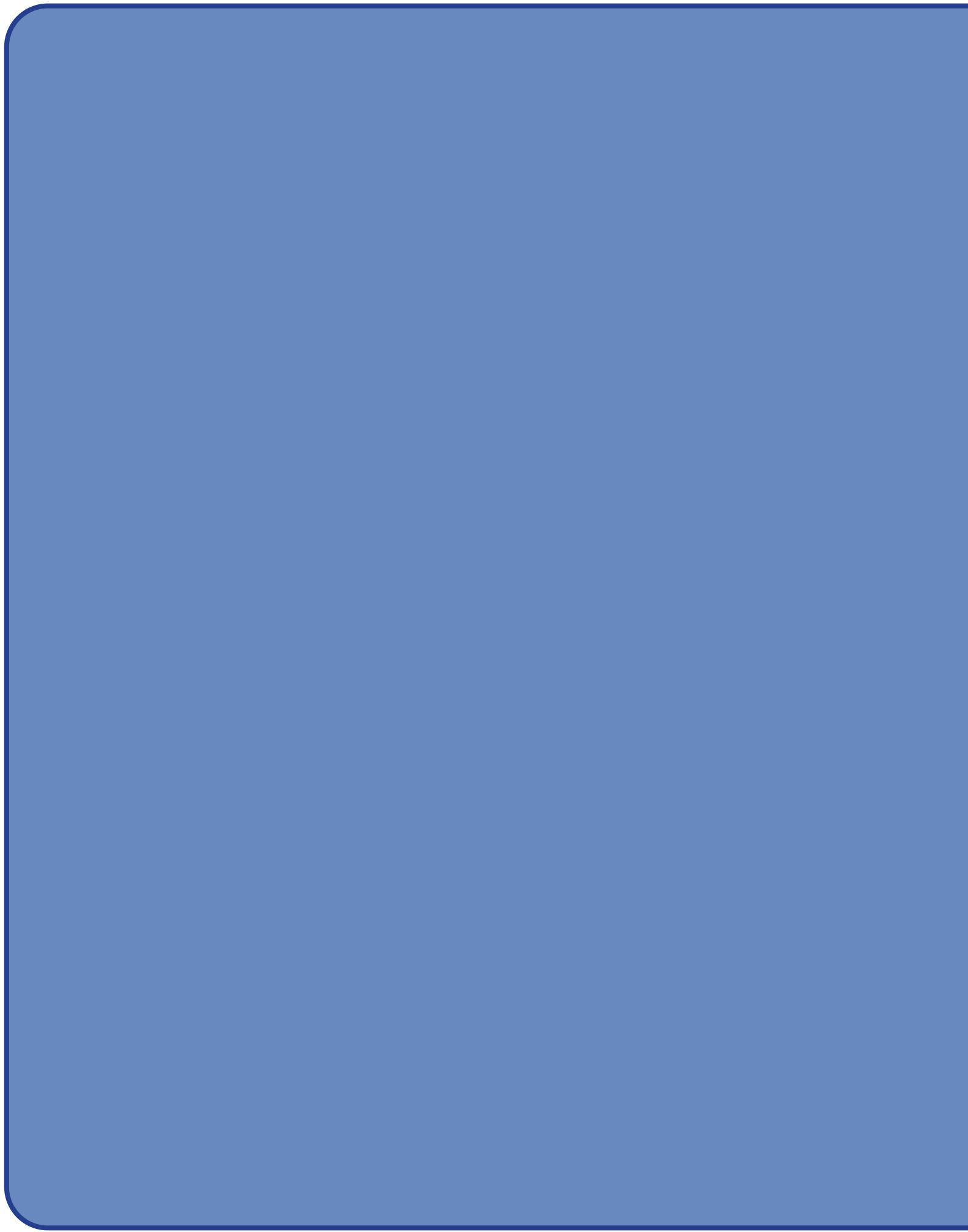
Preserve Views to  
West Lake

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

## Public Lakefront Access



Source: Farr Associates



# CHAPTER 5

# REALIZING THE PLAN

# 5.1 IMPLEMENTATION TOOLKIT

---

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

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

## CORRIDOR IMPROVEMENT AUTHORITY

One of the key implementation steps for the Lake Center District is the creation of a Corridor Improvement Authority (CIA). Act 280 of Public Acts of 2005 of the State of Michigan, commonly referred to as the Corridor Improvement Authority Act, was created in part to correct and prevent deterioration of business districts and to promote economic growth and revitalization. It helps accomplish this goal by providing communities with the necessary legal, monetary and organizational tools to revitalize these corridor business districts either through public-initiated projects or in concert with private development projects. It makes use of the increased tax base created by economic development within the boundaries of a business district. This tool would be created and operated in a similar manner to the City of Portage's existing Downtown Development Authority (DDA). Recognizing that the cost of mixed-use, traditional development is higher than it is for undeveloped sites, the City may, at its own discretion, commit project-specific future tax increment capture back to private projects for a specified period of time. The goal is to provide funding to close the "gap" that prevents the project from becoming a reality due to financial feasibility. This funding is aimed at projects that will improve the district to residents and visitors, thereby providing a public purpose. These projects may include, but are not limited to:

- Building Façade and Sign Improvement Program
- Property Acquisitions
- Demolition

- Public and Private Infrastructure Improvements
- Environmental Activities, such as wildlife habitat restoration
- Development of public spaces and facilities
- Marketing and promotional activities

## ZONING AMENDMENTS FOR THE LAKE CENTER DISTRICT

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

## PLACEMAKING STRATEGIES AND DEPLOYMENT

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

## DESIGNING COMPLETE STREETS

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

## CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN (CIP)

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

## COMMUNITY COLLABORATION

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

## COMMERCIAL CORRIDOR REDEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIPS

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

## 5.2 IMPLEMENTATION PHASING

---

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

### **One-Year Action Plan**

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

### **Mid-Term Implementation (2-5 years)**

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

### **Long-Term Implementation (5-10 years)**

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

### **Future Potential Moves (20+ years)**

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

# IMPLEMENTATION PROJECTS

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



Map of Implementation Projects. Source: Farr Associates

## ONE-YEAR ACTION PLAN

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

## MID-TERM IMPLEMENTATION (2-5 YEARS)

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

## LONG-TERM IMPLEMENTATION (5-10 YEARS)

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

## FUTURE POTENTIAL MOVES (20+ YEARS)

- 13 Create a canalwalk
- 14 Establish full pedestrian & trailway connections under Portage Road along the Canal

## 5.2.1 1-YEAR ACTION PLAN (FY21-22)

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

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

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



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



### 2 GATEWAYS & LANDSCAPING IMPROVEMENTS

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



Example of Gateway Feature. Source: Gateway Walk, Oregon. [Gazettetimes.com](http://Gazettetimes.com)



### 3 PROPOSE NEW ZONING AMENDMENT FOR LAKE CENTER DISTRICT

- Form based code drafted and submitted for Isthmus area



### 4 EXPLORE PRIORITY LAND ACQUISITIONS

- Negotiation discussions for land acquisitions proposed in the study.



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

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



## 5.2.2 MID-TERM IMPLEMENTATION (2-5 YEARS)

### 6 INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENTS AT AMES/PORTAGE ROAD

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



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



### 7 FAÇADE IMPROVEMENTS ALONG PORTAGE ROAD

- Coordinate facade improvements with business owners along Portage Road



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



The images and renderings in this study are for conceptual and illustrative purposes, and may not be to scale.

### 8 IMPROVE PEDESTRIAN CONNECTIVITY ACROSS PORTAGE ROAD

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



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



### 9 FEASIBILITY ANALYSIS FOR PUBLIC DOCK ON WEST LAKE

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



## 5.2.3 LONG-TERM IMPLEMENTATION (5-10 YEARS)

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

### 10 CREATE PEDESTRIAN/BIKE ROUTE ALTERNATIVE PARALLEL TO PORTAGE ROAD

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



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



### 11 UNDERGROUND UTILITIES

- Underground utilities from Forest Drive to Lakeview Drive



### 12 MAKE A BIKE CONNECTION BETWEEN AUSTIN COURT & AUSTIN DRIVE

#### 1. Create a Bike Connection Between Austin Court and Austin Drive

- Negotiate an access easement across the existing business land between the building and Austin Lake
- Proposed acquisition of adjacent driveway
- Reconfigure driveway area to assure access and privacy

#### 2. Create a Vehicular Route Parallel to Portage

- Create a street connecting East Shore Drive to Austin Court

#### 3. Connect Portage Road to East Shore Drive Austin Court

- Proposed acquisitions of land to the east to extend Forest Drive to Austin Court



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## 5.2.4 FUTURE POTENTIAL MOVES (20+ YEARS)

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

### 13 CREATE A CANAL RIVERWALK

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

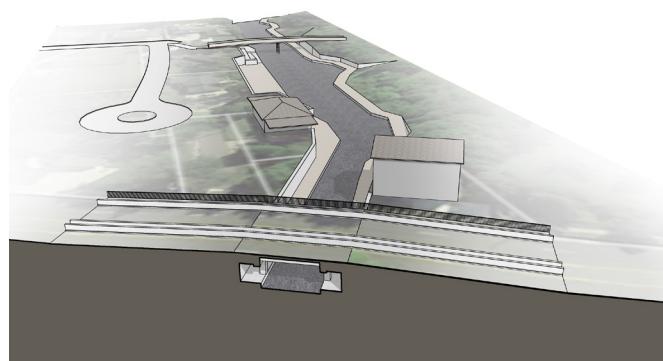


Rendering of canal riverwalk. Source: Farr Associates



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

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



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



## 5.3 IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX

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

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

## 5.3.1 IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX TABLE



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



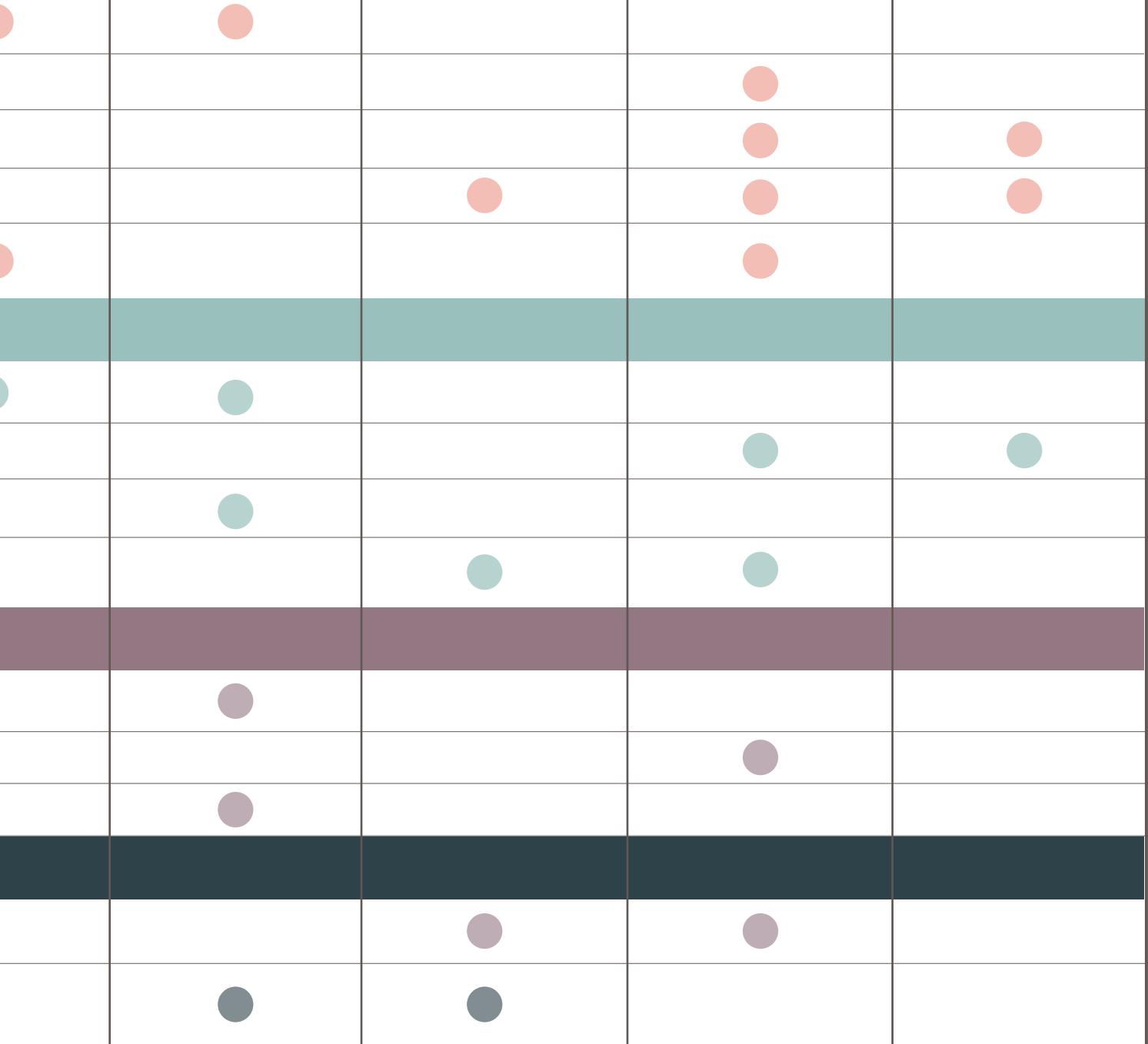
ACCESSIBILITY

## MOBILITY & CONNECTIVITY

## OPEN SPACE & LAKE ACCESS

## DESIGN & PLACEMAKING

## CORRIDOR DEVELOPMENT





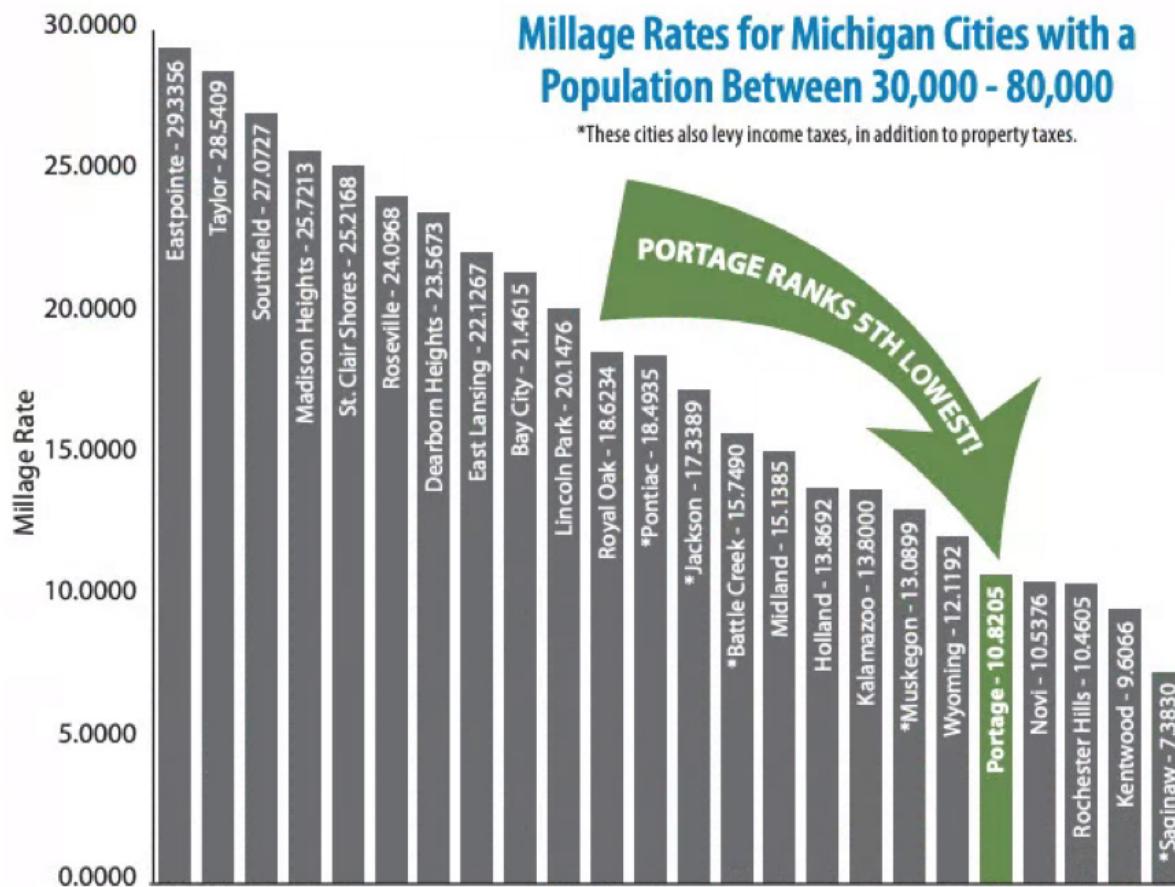
# APPENDIX

# APPENDIX: CITY MILLAGE RATES

## One of the Lowest Tax Rates Around

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

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



## APPENDIX: RECENT LAKE CENTER DISTRICT IMPROVEMENTS

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

### 2015:

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

### 2016:

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

### 2017:

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

### 2018:

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

## APPENDIX: PUBLIC COMMENTS

The City of Portage held a public comment period regarding the draft Lake Center District Corridor and Placemaking Study from April 28 through May 23, 2021. The following pages contain all of the written public comments submitted during that period. In addition, a public open house was held at Lakeview Park on Saturday, May 15, 2021, which was attended by approximately 200 people.

**From:** [Joseph La Margo](#)  
**To:** [City Council](#); [Jim Pearson](#); [Kelly Peterson](#); [Mary Beth Block](#)  
**Subject:** FW: Lake Center District Placemaking Study feedback  
**Date:** Thursday, May 27, 2021 2:18:18 PM

---

FYI

**JOSEPH S LA MARGO MA, ICMA-CM, City Manager**

City of Portage | 7900 S Westnedge Ave | Portage MI 49002  
708.277.3209 cell | 269.329.4400 office | [lamargoj@portagemi.gov](mailto:lamargoj@portagemi.gov)



---

**From:** Robert Winstanley [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Thursday, May 27, 2021 2:14 PM  
**To:** Joseph La Margo <[lamargoj@portagemi.gov](mailto:lamargoj@portagemi.gov)>  
**Subject:** Lake Center District Placemaking Study feedback

**CAUTION: THIS EMAIL IS FROM AN EXTERNAL SENDER**

Do not click on links or open attachments unless this is from a sender you know and trust.

Joseph,

Good afternoon! I am writing to provide feedback on the Lake Center District placemaking study. I have been unable to attend scheduled community open houses and forums over the past year. I understand I am providing this feedback outside of the designated public comment period. I feel it is important to provide a perspective from a young family in the Lake Center District community that does not live directly on the lakes, a viewpoint I feel is under-represented in the available public comments.

My name is Rob Winstanley, and I live near Lake Center Elementary school with my wife, Jessica, and our 3 children, ages 8, 12, and 14. We have lived in Portage for 6 years, and have worked in the area for 2 decades. I am employed at Stryker and Jessica works for Portage Public Schools. We chose to live in the Lake Center District because we love the neighborhood feel, the proximity of great parks, the strength of the teaching staff at Lake Center Elementary School, and the small-town feel of the businesses along Portage Road.

I am in complete support of any and all efforts to improve the Lake Center District/Portage Road corridor. I will provide specific areas of input below, however I strongly believe it is very important to select some key project areas that have broad support and move forward at pace - "progress, not perfection".

1) Portage Road Pedestrian/Bike Safety: I agree with the data-based assessment that the road speeds are too fast and the sidewalks are unsafe for pedestrian and bike use. Our family regularly walks and rides along the corridor, and I worry for the safety of my children if they stray 2 feet from the center of the sidewalk and end up in the road. We enjoy riding to Lakeview park, H&B Market, and West Lake Drug. If the conditions were better, we would frequent more business by foot and bike.

Additionally, I plan to begin biking to work with the new trails established to Stryker's facility on Portage Road. The only safe way to do this right now is to avoid Portage Road south of Centre St. I love the idea of walking and riding lanes along a narrowed Portage Road. I would gladly accept the increased vehicle transit time for the safety of reconfiguring the roadway.

2) Lake Access: While I do not live directly on a lake, I see the lakes as an integral part of the community. I view West Lake and Austin Lake as resources that should be broadly accessible to public. I agree with efforts to increase access in a way that is respectful of private property owners on and adjacent to the lakes. There is quite a change curve the community needs to overcome here, so I understand that this will take time.

3) Underground power and utilities: This seems like a small change, but in my opinion will have huge visual implications for the entire corridor.

In short, I am in full support of the ongoing efforts to improve the Lake Center District. I sincerely appreciate the efforts that you, the Steering Committee, and the City Council are making to improve our community.

Rob Winstanley

Dear Council Member NAME: JIM PEARSON AND PATRICIA RANDALL  
our ~~are~~ are DAVE THOMAS we  
~~My name is~~ JUDY THOMAS and I have lived at 1811 LAKVIEW DR in the City of Portage since  
2015. As a voting citizen of Portage, I STRONGLY object to the proposed Draft Final Lake Center  
District Corridor and Placemaking Study (the "Study") that was developed by a biased Steering  
Committee (the "Steering Committee") and in particular, that part of the Study that relates to the  
proposed widening of the Channel/Drain (the "Channel") between West Lake and Austin Lake.

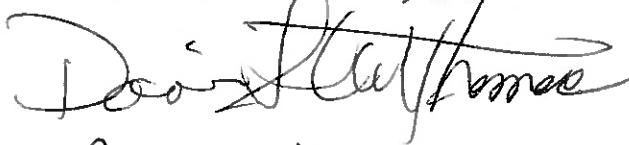
Please note that I AM PARTICULARLY CONCERNED about WATER QUALITY and SAFETY issues on West  
Lake.

- The "channel" between West Lake and Austin Lake is a DRAIN, designed by civil engineers and controlled by the Drain Commission, to regulate the flow of water between the two lakes and several other lakes. More accurately, Austin Lake and West Lake are part of a chain of lakes, and the flow of water from one to the other affects all of the lakes. The proposal to alter the ecosystem and water flow by widening the Channel IGNORES THE DELICATE ECOSYSTEMS involved and illustrates the lack of thought put into this ill-conceived proposal. Empty promises to undertake environmental impact assessment in the future are just promises – and we cannot count on the City of Portage or any developer to undertake the required efforts, particularly if the Study is accepted by the Portage City Council (the "Council").
- In addition to water quality issues, the Steering Committee IGNORED SAFETY CONCERNS related to increased boat traffic on West Lake, and even proposed adding a boat/jet ski rental facility (and docks that extend out into the lake) where the West Lake Drive In is currently located.
- West Lake cannot support increased boat traffic. West Lake is a 330-acre lake, and West Lake residents specifically bought homes on West Lake because of the small, quiet nature of the lake. The size of West Lake makes it safe for swimming, kayaking, and boating. Widening the Channel will effectively require West Lake to accommodate boat traffic for a 1,400-acre lake (when combined with Austin Lake's 1100 acres). It will have a negative impact on water quality and threaten the safety of West Lake riparians.
- For decades, West Lake riparians have paid thousands of dollars in fees and assessments in order to carefully plan and implement programs to manage the weeds and water quality issues on West Lake. The introduction of invasive species from Austin Lake riparians or other non-resident boaters will negatively impact the many years and thousands of dollars that have been invested by West Lake riparians.
- The Steering Committee was STACKED AGAINST WEST LAKE.
  - City Council Members who served on the Steering Committee MUST RECUSE THEMSELVES from the City Council vote. The chairperson of the committee is a member of the City Council WHO LIVES ON AUSTIN LAKE – Lori Knapp. Another member of the City Council and member of the Steering Committee is Jim Pearson – WHO LIVES ON AUSTIN LAKE.
  - In addition to the above, the Vice-Chairperson of the Steering Committee is a lawyer WHO LIVES ON AUSTIN LAKE – Danielle Mason Anderson.
  - In addition, the President of the Austin Lake Riparians – AJ Spicer – is on the Steering Committee.
  - One "representative" of West Lake actually is from the group that owns the Cove Bistro, and clearly the restaurant does not share the same perspectives/goals as West Lake residents. Another West Lake "representative" is a REAL ESTATE SPECULATOR, who is only looking out for

his investment in the West Lake Drive-In property. He has never lived on or owned a residence on West Lake.

Although there are a number of thoughtful ideas about traffic calming, pedestrian safety, and business corridor improvements included in the Study, the widening of the Channel is not one of them. As a Portage citizen, taxpayer, and West Lake riparian, I object to the widening of the Channel and ask that the Study be rejected in its entirety unless the Study is amended to remove any and all references to the widening of the Channel.

Thank you for your attention to ~~our~~<sup>our</sup> concerns.

  
Judy Thomas

Dear Council Member NAME: Burns / Pearson / Knapp / Leibetter / Reig / Urban

My name is Jill Liby and I have lived at 809 Lakeview Dr in the City of Portage since 2000 / 2001. As a voting citizen of Portage, I STRONGLY object to the proposed Draft Final Lake Center District Corridor and Placemaking Study (the "Study") that was developed by a biased Steering Committee (the "Steering Committee") and in particular, that part of the Study that relates to the proposed widening of the Channel/Drain (the "Channel") between West Lake and Austin Lake.

Please note that I AM PARTICULARLY CONCERNED about WATER QUALITY and SAFETY issues on West Lake.

- The "channel" between West Lake and Austin Lake is a DRAIN, designed by civil engineers and controlled by the Drain Commission, to regulate the flow of water between the two lakes and several other lakes. More accurately, Austin Lake and West Lake are part of a chain of lakes, and the flow of water from one to the other affects all of the lakes. The proposal to alter the ecosystem and water flow by widening the Channel IGNORES THE DELICATE ECOSYSTEMS involved and illustrates the lack of thought put into this ill-conceived proposal. Empty promises to undertake environmental impact assessment in the future are just promises – and we cannot count on the City of Portage or any developer to undertake the required efforts, particularly if the Study is accepted by the Portage City Council (the "Council").
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- For decades, West Lake riparians have paid thousands of dollars in fees and assessments in order to carefully plan and implement programs to manage the weeds and water quality issues on West Lake. The introduction of invasive species from Austin Lake riparians or other non-resident boaters will negatively impact the many years and thousands of dollars that have been invested by West Lake riparians.
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  - Only two members of the Steering Committee LIVE ON WEST LAKE. One "representative" of West Lake actually is from the group that owns the Cove Bistro, and clearly the restaurant does not share the same perspectives/goals as West Lake residents. The other West Lake

“representative” is a REAL ESTATE SPECULATOR, who is only looking out for his investment in the West Lake Drive-In property. He has never lived on or owned a residence on West Lake.

Although there are a number of thoughtful ideas about traffic calming, pedestrian safety, and business corridor improvements included in the Study, the widening of the Channel is not one of them. As a Portage citizen, taxpayer, and West Lake riparian, I object to the widening of the Channel and ask that the Study be rejected in its entirety unless the Study is amended to remove any and all references to the widening of the Channel.

Thank you for your attention to my concerns.

Print

**Draft Lake Center District Corridor and Placemaking Study - Public Comment - Submission #8264**

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**Date Submitted:** 5/23/2021

**Name\***

Michael G Cartier

**Email Address\***

[REDACTED]

**Address\***

1127 Lakeview Drive

**City\***

Portage

**State\***

MI

**Zip Code\***

49002

**Phone Number\***

[REDACTED]

## Submit a Public Comment\*

Dear Madame Mayor, City Council Members, and City Administrators:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Draft Lake Center District Corridor and Placemaking Study (the "Study"). As you are by now acutely aware, numerous stakeholders had not been heard from during the entire drafting process, and this was clearly evidenced by the strong and enthusiastic turnout at Lakeview Park on May 15.

My letter addresses the following topics:

- Widening the channel/canal (what I will refer to by its proper name, the "Drain");
- Proposed changes to West Lake access/activities along Portage Road;
- The flawed process used to develop the Study; and
- The upcoming consideration of the Study by the Council.

### Widening the Drain

Late on May 14, the City issued a statement that "[a]fter receiving feedback from residents concerning the proposed improvements to the canal between Austin Lake and West Lake, the city has chosen to remove the project from the Long-Term Implementation Plan (5-10 years) section of the Draft Lake Center District Corridor and Placemaking Study. The proposed project will be moved to the Future Potential Moves (20+ years) section of the study, which represents projects considered during the study visioning process, but that are not currently included in the implementation plan and may be considered by future leadership." This statement, while a step in the right direction, does not go far enough.

The City Council should insist that any reference (in writing or in renderings), with the exception of the following, be DELETED from the Study. (See, for example, sections 1.4, 2.1 (renderings) and text on pages 38, 69, 76, etc.) After removing all renderings and text, the City Council should insist that the Study include a specific brief statement along the following lines: "Based on extensive community input, the Study specifically rejects the idea of widening the Drain between West Lake and Austin Lake."

### Proposed Changes to West Lake Access and Activities

Although the Study addresses generally the idea of enhancing public access, there are a number of issues that need to be addressed. As way of background, the Study references (in renderings and in writing) "boat docks," "public docks," and "a vendor to operate a seasonal business."

- The Study fails to address any safety/environmental concerns associated with these proposed changes. Moreover, nowhere in the Study is there any reference to any safety or environmental concerns. In fact, the only input in that regard came in a letter to the City Council from Dr. Jennifer L. Jermalowicz-Jones from Restorative Lake Sciences. The Study needs to reflect her strong statement about "significant concerns related to the West Lake ecosystem". One suggestion is that the Study include language that the "City Council recommends that the City not allow any vendor to operate a seasonal business on West Lake that would involve the renting of any motorized watercraft, including but not limited to jet skis or power boats."
- The Study suggests that Portage undertake economic development by taking properties from private landowners who live on the east side of West Lake, from the Drive-In to the Drain. As an initial matter, the taking of private property for purposes of economic development is unconstitutional. And the City cannot hide behind the fact that it would be city-owned land leased to businesses that would create "opportunities to gather, dine, and recreate." It is a fundamental principle of law that what cannot be done directly by one party also cannot be done indirectly by another party to benefit the first party. Under no circumstances should the City of Portage seek to take property from private homeowners.

### The Process Used to Develop the Study

In a word, the process used to develop the Study was flawed. The City Manager retained a consultant who was completely unfamiliar with Portage and then sought to stack the Study Committee with persons the City Manager believed would rubber-stamp the original Draft Study. Several examples of where the process went awry:

- The Study Committee did not include any homeowner whose property would be taken by the City in order to implement the Study.
- The Study Committee did not include anyone focused (in whole or in part) on water safety and lake ecosystems.
- The Study Committee did not include anyone from the neighboring communities (for example, Sterling Oaks residents) who might have a more taxpayer (or commuter) focused point of view.
- The Study Committee DID include at least one real estate investor (who would benefit from the implementation of the Study) and a representative of the Cove Restaurant (which would receive taxpayer subsidies to install boat docks according to the Study).

It is safe to say that the people who turned out at the meeting on May 15, as well as those who have submitted comments, want to do what is right for the City of Portage. But, when the process of drafting the Study is NOT TRANSPARENT, then distrust develops and the process breaks down. Perhaps the City Council and City Administration can use this as a learning opportunity going forward.

### The Upcoming Consideration of the Study by the City Council

Although the City hosted an "Open House" at Lakeview Park on May 15, the environment did not permit concerned citizens to address the City Council as a whole. Unfortunately, several City Council members could not attend the Open House. More importantly, individual citizens were required to meet with individual City Council members and City Administrators. This clearly is insufficient.

The City Council (as a whole) needs to hear from the numerous residents of Portage who have opinions and thoughts about the Study. And the City Council needs to hear from these various stakeholders in person. As vaccination rates increase and public health mandates (masking, social distancing, etc.) are relaxed, the City Council should invite the citizens of Portage to attend an in-person meeting so that the City Council can hear directly from all interested stakeholders.

Thank you for your time and consideration of these comments.

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## Draft Lake Center District Corridor and Placemaking Study - Public Comment - Submission #8266

Date Submitted: 5/23/2021

Name\*

Julie Cartier

Email Address\*

[REDACTED]

Address\*

1127 LAKEVIEW DR

City\*

Portage

State\*

MI

Zip Code\*

49002

Phone Number\*

[REDACTED]

Submit a Public Comment\*

Mayor Randall, City Council Members, and City Manager LaMargo,

I am writing to you to express my overall unhappiness with the way the Lake Center District Corridor and Placemaking Study was handled. Due to the lack of transparency on behalf of the City Manager and the Steering Committee and the complete ineptitude of the consultant that you hired, you ended up with a flawed plan and disillusioned and angry constituents. As such, you have wasted an opportunity to focus on needed improvements to calm traffic and enhance business accessibility along Portage Road:

1. Steering Committee Chair/Council Member Knapp repeatedly stated during the Committee of the Whole that the Steering Committee unanimously approved the study. This is untrue. Specifically, two members of the Steering Committee by the last names of Pastor and Ahlberg, did not attend a single meeting of the Committee, according to the minutes that were belatedly posted only after citizens demanded their release. Were there other meetings that haven't been acknowledged or were the Steering Committee members rubber stamps for the desire of a few to push through this ill-advised plan?
2. I doubt that Consultant Farr has ever been on either of these lakes. If he had, he would realize just how out of touch and outright ridiculous his comparisons to Chattanooga, San Antonio, Walloon Lake, and other places he named are in relation to Austin and West Lakes. My guess is that he slapped the same plan he has made for other cities on a new proposal for West Lake. The unfortunate part is that taxpayer dollars have been wasted on this work.
3. I am tired of hearing the explanation that this is "just a vision" and not to worry about the specifics of the plan. A vision describes the future aspirations of an organization. When the centerpiece of the vision, to widen the drain between West and Austin Lakes in this case, is flawed from taxpayer, safety, and environmental perspectives, it cannot and should not be part of the "vision." Your consultant could have figured this out in less than 1/2 hour of his high hourly rate with a phone call to the Drain Commission and a phone call to Dr. Jennifer Jermalowicz-Jones, the environmental consultant the city has worked with for years to address water quality on these lakes.
4. Your City Manager, Mr. LeMargo, refused to answer basic questions that were posed to him, including the names of the Steering Committee and how it was appointed, until the request for this information had was finally submitted by a FOIA request and the public outcry became a cacophony of voices. Minutes as well as your website FAQ's were belatedly posted, again only after public outcry. By the way Mr. LeMargo, when you say the Steering Committee was chosen "administratively," I realize this is "government speak" for "I chose them myself."

There are many other issues, including the taking of property and the proposal to have watercraft rentals on West Lake, that are concerning and troubling. While I am relieved that the drain expansion has been taken out of Study's plans, the City Council and City Manager need to examine just how this debacle unfolded to prevent it from happening again. You are accountable to all of the citizens of Portage, not just to the select few who want more access to lakes than they already have and yes, you are accountable to the "emotional" residents of West Lake, who are concerned about safety, the environment, and the misuse of taxpayer dollars.

Sincerely,  
Julie E. Cartier  
Portage Resident

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**Draft Lake Center District Corridor and Placemaking Study - Public Comment - Submission #8267**

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**Date Submitted:** 5/23/2021

**Name\***

Paul Selden

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**State\***

MICHIGAN

**Zip Code\***

49081

**Phone Number\***

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**Submit a Public Comment\***

Dear Members of the Lake Center District Steering Committee and Portage City Council,

I am respectfully submitting these comments in regards to the Draft Lake Center District Corridor and Placemaking Study as the Chair & President of Bike Friendly Kalamazoo, but I am also a long-time resident of the City of Portage who lives just outside the Lake Center District Corridor Study area and who is very familiar with the corridor. I have attended or participated remotely in all the public meetings related to the Study.

In my comments I first want to thank the Portage City Council for commissioning the Study. You have rightly identified this Corridor as being full of potential, and at the same time lagging behind much of the rest of the city in terms of realizing that potential. Thank you also for allowing all those interested in the area to express their opinions, around the area's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, which are very clearly presented on page 12 of the Study. Thanks go as well to the Steering Committee, who faced the difficult job of balancing the pros and cons for the various options for revitalizing the corridor and forming their recommendations, and to all those who took the time to present their comments on the Study.

Second, I applaud the Steering Committee's unanimous decision when it writes, "Rebalancing the right-of-way to three vehicle lanes in the isthmus area enables our community to gain significant benefits including sidewalks, a multi-use trailway, street trees, landscaping, lighting, and placemaking along Portage Road. As members of the Steering Committee, we strongly recommend that the City Council and City Administration advance implementation of this recommendation...."

Bravo! This is the logical and human-centric conclusion in the sense that the expressed primary desires of the community lead to "Option 3" with regard to lane reconfiguration when considering the facts of the matter, which must also include the City's long-standing Complete Streets Policy and placing a higher value on human life and the quality of life in the corridor, than saving a few minutes time when driving a motor vehicle through it.

Yours is a courageous conclusion in the sense that there will be those who will still vociferously ask for "A and not A," thinking this somehow makes sense the louder they yell. One cannot keep the status quo and simultaneously overcome the previously identified weaknesses of the area, such as dangerously fast traffic, the lack of safe Portage Road crossings, the inconsistency of sidewalks and the lack of non-motorized facilities.

Third, while supporting the Steering Committee's decision to recommend a three vehicle lane reconfiguration on Portage Road north to Zylman but stopping there, I am not ignoring the need to develop supplemental recommendations that address factors pertaining to traffic speed, volume and flow. An approach that takes into account the big picture, including all the surrounding roads and streets vs. a narrow focus on Portage Road will likely be needed. The Study presents a very clear picture on page 40 that "speed kills." My respectful recommendation is that eventually, serious consideration should be given to reducing speed limits on Portage Road by a combination of lowering the speed limits AND lane reconfiguration, and, that the speed limits should be reduced all the way to the southern border of Portage. Speed reductions would also make it safer to turn when there is oncoming traffic, since the time to react to a safe break in traffic and complete a turn increases dramatically when overall traffic speeds slow down.

Fourth, regarding setting safer speed limits it is worth noting that Portage Road is already a two lane road at the City's southern border. Thanks to earlier improvements, Portage Road already has a sidewalk on one side of the road and bicycle lanes on either side. To maximize the feeling of neighborhood and to improve the quality of life of those who live in this "other" but connected residential lake area, reducing speeds throughout this part of the corridor to that of comparable residential areas in Portage that border a school zone is worth serious consideration. Doing so could precondition motorist behavior and slow the traffic entering the Study corridor boundary at Osterhout. In any case, it would not seem logical to successfully slow speeds in the Study corridor north of Osterhout, then immediately release it into a 45mph zone when there are only two lanes between Vickery and the City's southern border at Mandigo.

Fifth, on page 40 of the Study we learn that the Institute of Transportation Engineers states that there is an 80% chance that a motor vehicle moving at 50mph striking a pedestrian will be fatal to the pedestrian, but that the odds of survival improve by a factor of four when the motor vehicle is moving at 30mph. In the case of traveling the distance of Osterhout Avenue to Centre Avenue, reducing the speed to 30mph would only add 2:00 minutes of travel time. Not reported, but relevant, is that the National Safety Council estimates the Average Economic Costs of Motor Vehicle Death in 2019 at \$1,704,000. In this sobering calculus it is obvious the trade off for reducing speeds in the Lake Center Corridor is for a little inconvenience in exchange for saving both lives and money.

In conclusion, if the Steering Committee's recommendation with regard to the Portage Road reconfiguration is approved by the City Council, I have confidence that the slow and deliberate process that would unfold from plan to reality will result in a safer Portage Road and an increased quality of life. I have no doubt that maintaining the status quo would do neither. It also seems to me that public safety is a factor that justifiably supersedes all other portions of the Study, and hence should be the first priority.

For all these reasons I respectfully request that the Portage City Council accept the Steering Committee's "Option 3" to reconfigure the lanes on Portage Road in the near term, while taking into account the many other factors mentioned above en route to achieving the goals expressed by the community.

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**Draft Lake Center District Corridor and Placemaking Study - Public Comment - Submission #8268**

**Date Submitted:** 5/23/2021

**Name\***

John Knowlton

**Email Address\***

**Address\***

6677 Belgian Ave

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Kalamazoo

**State\***

MI

**Zip Code\***

49009

**Phone Number\***

[REDACTED]

**Submit a Public Comment\***

I support the 3 lane redesign of Portage Rd. I own commercial rental property on Centre in Portage.

**Upload File**

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**Draft Lake Center District Corridor and Placemaking Study - Public Comment - Submission #8271**

**Date Submitted:** 5/23/2021

**Name\***

Sara VanderVeen

**Email Address\***

**Zip Code\***

49002

**Address\***

1021 Lakeview Dr

**City\***

Portage

**State\***

MI

**Phone Number\***

[REDACTED]

**Submit a Public Comment\***

Members of the Lake Center District Steering Committee and Portage City Council,

We commend the efforts of the City to step back from the original road diet planning and reassess the future of the Lake Center District. While we are disappointed with the general lack of public awareness about all the aspects of the planning until late in this effort, we recognize it is likely, in part, an impact of the pandemic.

We would urge the City to make the next steps of this plan highly visible, particularly the formation of the new Corridor Improvement Authority and the adoption of the new form-based zoning code. Because there is so much interest and these are new concepts for our community, please provide community education opportunities to explain and answer questions.

Our family has enjoyed living at West Lake for over seventy years. Both West Lake and Austin Lake are unique and together create the isthmus. This is a community asset, but not just the isthmus - both the adjoining lakes. The act of placemaking is to be commended. It IS the way we should be planning, designing and managing public spaces. However, the study misses the opportunity to draw on the existing benefit and future potential of what both lakes have to offer current residents and community as the anchors of the Lake Center District. Please consider addressing the lake ecosystems, the established parks (not just Lakeview Park), and at least give a nod to the appropriate activities given the unique size and physical attributes of these assets. The additional definition would establish more solid ground for future Authorities to formulate recommendations and decisions regarding development.

We are certain that safe pedestrian access across Portage Road will be the beginning of many positive outcomes for the District and for a more connected and healthy community. With that in mind, we support this plan.

Thank you for your consideration of our recommendations.

Sara & Alex VanderVeen  
John & Amy Temple

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**Draft Lake Center District Corridor and Placemaking Study - Public Comment - Submission #8272**

**Date Submitted:** 5/23/2021

**Name\***

Jim Beaudoin

**Email Address\***

**Address\***

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**City\***

Portage

**State\***

Mi

**Zip Code\***

49002

**Phone Number\***

[REDACTED]

**Submit a Public Comment\***

I am writing to oppose reducing Portage Rd to 3 lanes. The Indians used this as a trail to portage their canoes between the St Joe river and Kalamazoo river. Then came the auto and a two lane rd. The Portage becomes a city. More residents more business more traffic. Portage Rd was constructed to its current configuration to handle traffic volumes. Reducing lanes will make it harder to pullout into on coming traffic from the businesses along this very busy stretch of roadway. From talking with "staff" at the open house sounds like minds have already been made up. I asked if the design would handle the current traffic counts the answer I got was there are no current traffic counts. What??? Your proposing a road design with out traffic counts? Another problem a council member was over heard saying the he doesn't want traffic on Portage Rd wants them to drive Sprinkle Rd. I am sure the business owners appreciate that statement. Here your wish is to restrict traffic on a main thoroughfare from the south to I94 might as well tell MDOT you donut want their fancy interchange. Please don't go back. It won't work

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**Draft Lake Center District Corridor and Placemaking Study - Public Comment - Submission #8273**

**Date Submitted:** 5/23/2021

**Name\***

Michael Krischer

**Email Address\***

[REDACTED]

**Address\***

2719 Pfitzer Ave

**City\***

Portage

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**Zip Code\***

49024

**Phone Number\***

[REDACTED]

**Submit a Public Comment\***

I support any plan that will improve the ability of non-motorized to move freely along Portage Road. West Lake Drive In (now closed) & Erbelli's are two of my favorite stops when bicycling in the area..

**Upload File**

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**Draft Lake Center District Corridor and Placemaking Study - Public Comment - Submission #8274**

**Date Submitted:** 5/23/2021

**Name\***

Nicole Reedy

**Email Address\***

[REDACTED]

**Address\***

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Portage

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MI

**Zip Code\***

49002

**Phone Number\***

[REDACTED]

**Submit a Public Comment\***

I am in very much in favor of the improvements to the Lake Center District Corridor and Placemaking plan! I am a resident of the corridor area, I commute daily on Portage Road, and my child attends Lake Center Elementary school. I would like to see improvements on Portage Road to:

- + improve safety for cars and pedestrians
- + reduce speed on the most congested portion of the road
- + update the appearance and offerings in the business district
- + safety for pedestrians and cyclists must be improved at the entrance to Lake View Park

I am not in favor of any plan that would add add jet-ski rentals on Austin Lake due to safety concerns and noise pollution.

While new traffic patterns and other changes may seem radical at first, improvements to this area will make this stretch of Portage Road more in line with other improved areas in the city of Portage that residents enjoy. This area needs attention to improve safety, usability, and to fit the interests of current residents.

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**Draft Lake Center District Corridor and Placemaking Study - Public Comment - Submission #8257**

**Date Submitted:** 5/21/2021

**Name\***

Patti Taylor

**Email Address\***

**Zip Code\***

49024

**Address\***

10421 LLOY STREET

**City\***

PORTAGE

**State\***

MI

**Phone Number\***

[REDACTED]

**Submit a Public Comment\***

I'm glad we're taking steps to improve the area. I'm offering suggestions as starting points before we accept the development plan as it is.

1. Bury the utilities. That is a HUGE easy button to beautify the area.
2. Utilizing the existing sidewalk on the east side of Portage Rd., make a slightly wider sidewalk/multipurpose trail. (See Lovers Lane.) Safe and enjoyable. Oh, and a safe walkway if Lake Center Elementary wants a field trip to Lakeview Park.
3. Reduce speed on Portage Rd. to 35 MPH while adding sequenced traffic signals to promote movement of traffic. Signal location suggestions: Osterhout, South Shore, Lakeview Ave & Lakeview park (align new park entrance to Lakeview Ave), Forest, Other? I think this is a reasonable start to create a safer traffic flow and pedestrian crossings while retaining 5 lanes for ease in and out of businesses. Also, this would eliminate the construction plan of an underpass via the channel to cross Portage Rd. Portage Rd is the last north/south route for many residents to travel to and from our wonderful area that hasn't been "dietet". IE Oakland Drive and Lovers Lane – potentially another reason for increased traffic on Portage Rd.
4. Keep Lakeview Park green! Upgrade the courts, docks, bathrooms, but to have a green space to walk on the grass or sit under a tree and read, etc. is a rare gem these days and it's ours.
5. Channel - I think plenty of comments have been made here. Let it be.

Again, I am happy to see we are looking at making improvements to the area. Let's start with some basics.

Patti Taylor

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**Draft Lake Center District Corridor and Placemaking Study - Public Comment - Submission #8259**

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**Date Submitted: 5/21/2021**

**Name\***

Mary and Dave LAGER

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**Address\***

2008 AMES DR

**City\***

Portage

**State\***

MI

**Zip Code\***

49002

**Phone Number\***

[REDACTED]

**Submit a Public Comment\***

May 21, 2021

Dear Mayor Patricia Randall, City Manager Joe LaMargo and Portage City Council;

We are writing regarding the Lake Center District plan. We bought our home on West Lake because it is a small peaceful lake close to the city, which makes it difficult to imagine that you want to open up our lake to be a destination for all.

We are blessed in Portage to have many beautiful parks, nature preserves and trails, with amenities of swimming, fishing, and boat access available at nearby parks; Ramona, Prairievie, and Lakeview. It is a pleasure to have some uncrowded green space, which the city is unfortunately steadily losing, such as the woods across from the park and proposed 'middle market housing' (800 units) in place of wildlife-filled forests surrounding Austin Lake and the wetlands by Woodbine (70 units).

We are strongly opposed to the plan to significantly enlarge (widen and deepen) the "channel" (actually a drain) between Austin and West Lakes, which is something that most of us on West Lake and along the drain do not want to happen, for many good reasons. If this happens, boat traffic will increase on West Lake, coming from Austin Lake and the public access, increasing the danger for swimmers and boaters. There are also risks to water quality from weeds and invasive species.

West lake gets deep very slowly so boats and swimmers sometimes occupy the same space, which is not a safe situation.

Just last summer, a swimmer on Gull Lake was killed when hit by a boat, which would become more likely to happen here. Although city planner Mr. Farr seems to enjoy denigrating the 'channel', as seen in his words: "dirty ditch, tunnel, overgrown, exhaust in your face...", it's doubtful he's ever actually been in it. In reality, many generations have enjoyed the adventure of traversing the six foot wide drain, whether in kayaks, fishing boats, jet skis or paddleboats, which is the perfect, manageable amount and size of watercraft to go between the lakes. The addition of bollards to the widened drain was put in the plan in attempts to assuage West Lake homeowners' concerns. Per steering committee notes: Mr. LaMargo: "reminded the committee that the idea is to create the larger opening for watercraft but obstruct it with bollards for the time being/until the Council determines to open up the larger waterway." Mr. Farr has said to West Lake homeowners (8/5/2020 meeting); "You give a little, you get a lot.", while we actually have much to lose; lake water quality, safety, quality of life, and decreased property values. There is no upside. These concerns are valid and substantiated in the report by Dr. Jermalowicz-Jones from Restorative Lake Sciences, which concluded: "RLS discourages proposed changes to West Lake for health of the West Lake ecosystem." Also mentioned are: "increased public safety hazards" (due to increased boat traffic) and also the fact that: "the channel to Austin Lake is technically a "drain" which is regulated by the Kalamazoo County Drain Commission as well as under jurisdiction of the state Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) that must permit any changes to this drain." It is puzzling why the city has not contacted these entities about the drain widening, yet "property acquisition" (buying up people's homes along the drain, Portage Rd.) is slated for the first year of the plan. Please respect and heed these concerns by not widening the drain, ever.

We also have serious concerns about the two proposed lengthy public/commercial piers, which would take over surface water and impede navigation on West Lake. Even if the renderings are not to scale, they are many times longer than riparians' docks and should not be. If the purpose of the pier is for people to drive to the restaurant in their boats, this is not necessary. Diners can drive in their cars or walk as they do now, at no additional cost or liability, while the feasibility study alone is over \$150,000. A super-long public dock is not needed on West Lake since water access is already available on nearby lakes, as mentioned earlier. According to Portage ordinance sec. 42-130-Riparian access, section C.; a planned development shall consider that it; "will not lead to ..additional water surface overcrowding." Under Michigan law, "an installed dock must be reasonable in size and scope as to not interfere with traffic upon the lake." We are a highly residential inland lake area with limited space; therefore, the size and scope of these projects need to fit who we are. No matter how much Mr. Farr or the city tries, we are not and never will be Chicago, Lake Michigan, the Atlantic Ocean, the San Antonio Riverwalk nor other unrealistic examples presented.

We want safer streets and sidewalks, with strong businesses. We believe in supporting local businesses and feel that the shops, possible condos, small park area or food venues on the east end of West Lake seem reasonable, although it's hard to imagine what could fit on the isthmus and in that narrow strip of land where West Lake Drive In was, where seasonality is a factor. We agree that Portage Rd. is too fast, busy, and unsafe, so we appreciate your looking at options to address the safe, efficient flow of 22,000 vehicles per day. Traffic is only going to increase, due to added volume from Fed-Ex, Pfizer, and Stryker, along with the many new housing developments along Portage Rd. together with growth in Vicksburg and Schoolcraft. Slowing down the speed limit, like to 30/35 near the isthmus makes sense, as does a pedestrian bridge and/or timed traffic lights at or near Lakeview Park and Forest Dr. (crosswalks with a push button for pedestrians; 'walk/don't walk') to allow for safe crossing or turning to access the park and Portage Rd. These traffic light crosswalks or pedestrian bridge are the perfect, sensible solution because they would eliminate the high, unnecessary cost of the proposed river-walk/trail connection/under-road walkway that would require raising the road, etc. Mr. Farr rationalizes the expensive and insensitive acquisition of home or property in this area because in his view: "the river-walk provides a more immersive experience...and would allow commercial establishments along it", even though you can walk along part of the drain now as it is, and even better, you can walk along the beautiful expansive Austin lake instead just a few feet away.

The "road diet" seems to have worked on Lovers Lane, but Portage Rd. gets much more traffic and studies show that they are not effective with higher traffic volumes and as seen by recent congestion on Centre St., where a lane was closed. Portage Rd. was widened some years back for needed lane additions due to increasing traffic loads, as is now happening on I-94, which the city has lauded. If the city is intent on the "road diet" plan for traffic calming, it would be smart to run a pilot of this first, with barrels/cones, before embarking on this costly option, which may not prove to be the best answer. Because Portage Rd. is the efficient straight shot into town for those from the south, it is not reasonable to suggest diverting traffic off of it to parallel routes of Sprinkle and Westnedge. Forest Dr. cannot handle added traffic as it winds through a densely packed residential area with speed limits of 25 so please drop the consideration of making this a thoroughfare to East Shore Drive. Lastly, all of the discussion of a public park at the drive-in, preserving the vista, etc. begs the question: "Do you want motorists on Portage Rd. at the isthmus to focus on driving safely or to ogle West Lake, thereby causing accidents?" Even if traffic is slowed down, this will still happen. If safety is really the concern here, then maybe Portage Rd. should instead be blocked (fencing, houses...) from West Lake, which would also be appreciated by those of us who live on the lake!

It is difficult not to feel that much of this Lake Center District process and plan was pre-determined at the onset to yield the desired outcome. It's like buying yourself a birthday present then acting surprised when you open it! Case in point: Why does the city website list 9 people on the steering committee, while the meeting notes often list 20 people, including planner Doug Farr and city manager Joe LaMargo? How can the steering committee be considered unbiased when members of council are planted on it, including as chairperson (yes, maybe that happens, but why are they the two who live on Austin Lake and not ones who don't?, along with the lawyer who also lives on Austin Lake), while the 2-3 residents of West Lake on the committee have vested interest of financial or personal gain. Even though it was stated that the steering committee was chosen "administratively", it seems that members were hand-picked, in one way or another, by the city manager, Joe LaMargo, so those involved should recuse themselves from the Council vote. It is unsettling to read in steering committee minutes that in order to accomplish plan goals: "offering incentives...holding their hands...Committee members must have the courage to stand up for what's right (referring to their study)." Also, the discussions of "acquiring land/parcels" in pursuit of the goal does not acknowledge nor care that these are people's homes on the water that mean a lot to them and they should not have to lose their homes due to a few people's vision/dream for this small area. When reading the notes, it eerily feels like the steering committee is playing SimCity, except with real-life implications and at the expense of people's lives and feelings. We suggest that Mr. Farr, the steering committee, and Council should go meet some of the targeted property owners, as we did at the park. These innocent homeowners should not be pawns sacrificed for the sake of enhancing Mr. Farr's marketing portfolio, Council's legacy, or lining developers' pockets. At the very least, West Lake and 'channel' residents should have had a weighted say from the start since we stand to be most impacted, however, we were never asked directly what we thought or

how we felt. Mr. Farr is a smooth operator, slyly skewing data to solidify his points, as in the millage chart of "neighboring Michigan communities", comparing Portage to many cities on the east side of the state, where cost of living is higher. Our taxes are not low, especially on the lake, and we also pay these current/potential taxes/millages: KRESA, senior, library, new Portage elementary schools, and Kalamazoo county housing aid. There are no definitive and few estimated costs of the plan, just a lot of TBDs, and no real answer on how it will be paid for. It will likely be an astronomical amount, which will be felt by all, while encompassing a small area to be used by few relative to the population of Portage. Residents should be able to vote on this. Please be good stewards of our hard-earned money.

We appreciate the public comment period being extended to May 24th, as many had requested. We also appreciate that council has 'pushed back' the "improvements to the channel" (widening the drain) part of the plan from 5-10 year implementation phase to "future visions", maybe 20 year plan, but ask that it be removed all together, because things could always be moved forward, as has been stated. There is not a valid reason that it has to be included if city council actually plans to not do this at some point. The point is that we don't ever want this to happen, not now, not 5-10 years, nor 20 years from now, not for "our children's children", as council likes to say, and it is not a "non-issue" now, as Mr. LaMargo stated at Lakeview Park. As long as it exists in the plan/vision, it is an issue, hanging over our heads; no thanks!

Since meetings have gone virtual, it is apparent that awareness, attendance, and engagement have all suffered, which is unfortunate because the plan stands to impact many, some of us more than others, and it is important that citizens are informed and allowed to give input. In view of this, please wait to hold the final council vote on the plan until it can be a face to face meeting with the public. Hopefully, the July 13th date you've chosen will accomplish that since it could be held outside or even inside in the high school auditorium. If not, it should be postponed. The May 15th Open House at Lakeview Park was appreciated, but is not a substitute for being able to hear others' questions and councils' answers in a public forum, with video and minutes available for later reference. Thank you for listening,

Please answer these questions that are not in the F & Q. Some had been asked in our May 4th letter or at the park, but have not been answered yet:

1. The proposed piers: Who will own, operate, and use, and for what purpose?
2. Parking: Where do you expect people to park coming to this destination corridor? Lakeview Park lot is usually full, as are H & B and The Cove lots, who already do a great business.
3. What is the cost estimate for the city's property acquisition along the drain/channel and Portage Rd. and which houses do you plan to buy?
4. If the river-walk does happen, what commercial establishments are envisioned to be along it?
5. The city's survey had asked if residents would be willing to pay more taxes to support the Lake Center District Plan; what was their response?

Sorry for writing a book, but thank you for listening,

Mary and Dave Lager

#### Upload File

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**Draft Lake Center District Corridor and Placemaking Study - Public Comment - Submission #8254**

**Date Submitted:** 5/20/2021

**Name\***

Charles Nelson

**Email Address\***

[REDACTED]

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Portage

**State\***

Michigan

**Zip Code\***

49002

**Phone Number\***

[REDACTED]

**Submit a Public Comment\***

Page 16. Although the study states that larger boats will not be allowed to use the widened tunnel, the drawing on this page shows two pontoon boats passing in the tunnel. I recommend omitting this drawing to avoid confusion.

Page 25. Retail Strategy

Remove the boat/jet ski rental and the charter boating services from the list. These uses are detrimental to West Lake and West Lake riparians.

**Upload File**

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**Draft Lake Center District Corridor and Placemaking Study - Public Comment - Submission #8253**

**Date Submitted:** 5/20/2021

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Stephen C Drag

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1615 Sarasota Trail

**City\***

Portage

**State\***

MI

**Zip Code\***

49002

**Phone Number\***

[REDACTED]

**Submit a Public Comment\***

Keep Portage Road 4 lanes. Reduce speed to 35 m.p.h. Install traffic lights so as to provide entry/exit to all businesses. Resurface Portage Road. Install bike/walk pathway from Centre Street south to Osterhout Ave. Improve the existing walk/bike pathways in Lakeview Park. No canal, no bridge, no new docks.

**Upload File**

No file chosen

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**Draft Lake Center District Corridor and Placemaking Study - Public Comment - Submission #8246**

**Date Submitted:** 5/19/2021

**Name\***

Michael Reedy

**Email Address\***

[REDACTED]

**Address\***

9982 Sea Breeze Ct

**City\***

Portage

**State\***

Mi

**Zip Code\***

49002

**Phone Number\***

[REDACTED]

**Submit a Public Comment\***

I am very excited about the planned upgrades to the Lake Center District Corridor. I love the area, but many of the properties along Portage Road look run down, cars travel too fast, and it isn't safe to walk or ride bikes in many sections. Before we moved to Portage eight years ago we lived in Chicago and saw firsthand how improving a boulevard can transform a neighborhood for the better.

In general, I am in favor of most of the improvements laid out in the proposal. Specific improvements that I am very interested in are:

- Making Portage Road safe for pedestrians and cyclists
- Making the properties along Portage Road more beautiful and prosperous
- Making left hand turns on and off of side streets such as Stanley Road safer
- Connecting E Shore Drive with safe bike lanes to Lakeview Park
- Investing in the area around West Lake Drive-In
- Making upgrades to Lakeview Park

I am concerned with the harsh push back that many of these proposals have been given. I believe the proposals are all done with positive intent and that while there may be some uncomfortable change, the investment in the Lake Center District Corridor will ultimately be beneficial to all residents, their property value, and their enjoyment of the area.

Respectfully,

Michael Reedy

**Upload File**

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Draft Lake Center District Corridor and Placemaking Study - Public Comment - Submission #8240

Date Submitted: 5/18/2021

Name\*

Judy Kangas Salters

Email Address\*

Address\*

9240 Portage Road

City\*

Portage

State\*

Michigan

Zip Code\*

49002

Phone Number\*

[REDACTED]

Submit a Public Comment\*

After reviewing the plans I have concerns. 1) The road reduction ends heading south, just between 9210 and 9220 Portage Road, the road reduction will need to be extend past 9240 Portage Road (residential driveways), because all these driveways will be caught up in the merging traffic traveling one way or another making it more dangerous. Portage Road should widen going south on 9240 Portage Road past the south-side of the Lakeview Park. If stripping need to take place over the drain it should still be at only 3 lanes. There is plenty of room to create right turn lanes so the traffic doesn't have to slow for right turns from a right lane and there should be no issue creating a wide center turn lane to keep traffic moving, yet providing the slowing of traffic down. Bicyclers will still be using the road and they will be caught in a pinch point at the overpass over the drain. 2) Object to the bike bridge from Lakeview Park over the drain will cause too many problems for the homeowner where the bike lane enters Lakeview Park. Having to take someone's home to make a bike bridge doesn't make any sense when other plans using public space can be done to provide a bike or multi-purpose lane. Just because the park gates will be close to automobiles there is concern with people entering the park at night when it is closed because they are still using that bridge. There is also many road safety issues with this road also as a bike lane. 3) Object to extending the road behind H&B and the Edge will not have enough impact on traffic control to make it necessary to obtain land to make this happen. If there is a 3-way light at Forest Drive this should help control traffic. The traffic from behind H&B have several areas they can get out to Portage Road from their property 4) Object to any new commercial development in the corridor where existing home are on the east-side of West Lake. It would cause a variety of issues for any lake home owner and commercialization that space would create even more traffic issues in this corridor. 5) Object to any boat rentals with motors on either Austin or West Lake. The lakes are already too busy and many people who rental do not know the boat laws. 6) Object to any changes to the drain system between Austin and West Lake at any time. It is part of a multi-drainage system and should not be altered in anyway. 7) Object to private home becoming public space in the Lakeview region.

A) new signage is needed in this corridor B) redo the sidewalks C) provide tax dollar to the business in the Lake Centre District for upgrades (have a palette choices to choose from) D) get rid of the overhead power line in the Lake Center District E) Zone this Lakeview corridor to prohibit truckers to use Portage Road as their gateway to HWY 131. The amount of semi-trucks using this corridor has tripled in the past 1 1/2 years. There isn't anything prohibiting them from using Portage road daily to get to HWY131. F) Make right turn lanes from the right lane wide and long enough to keep the traffic flowing. G)Don't overbuild Lakeview Park.

Upload File

No file chosen

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**Subject:** FW: Lake Center Meeting  
**Date:** Tuesday, May 18, 2021 at 3:16:37 PM Eastern Daylight Time  
**From:** Joseph La Margo <lamargoj@portagemi.gov>  
**To:** Mary Beth Block <blockm@portagemi.gov>, Kelly Peterson <petersok@portagemi.gov>  
**CC:** Patricia Randall <randallp@portagemi.gov>, Lori Knapp <knappl@portagemi.gov>, Jim Pearson <councilmemberjp@portagemi.gov>  
**Attachments:** image001.jpg

**JOSEPH S LA MARGO MA, ICMA-CM, City Manager**

City of Portage | 7900 S Westnedge Ave | Portage MI 49002  
708.277.3209 cell | 269.329.4400 office | [lamargoj@portagemi.gov](mailto:lamargoj@portagemi.gov)



---

**From:** Kim Ferris [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 18, 2021 3:07 PM  
**To:** Joseph La Margo <lamargoj@portagemi.gov>  
**Subject:** Lake Center Meeting

**CAUTION: THIS EMAIL IS FROM AN EXTERNAL SENDER**

Do not click on links or open attachments unless this is from a sender you know and trust.

Mr. La Margo,

My husband and I were at the meeting last Saturday at Lakeview Park and I wanted to say I was impressed with the way you handled all the questions about the Portage Road project. It was a tough crowd. I think there was a lot of misinformation on the neighborhood site. Portage Road does need to be updated so it looks more attractive and the traffic needs to be slowed down. I have lived in Portage my entire life and now my grandkids go to Lake Center, like my daughter did. Portage is a wonderful community, and I know some want to keep it the same, but it needs to grow in order to stay vibrant.

I now understand more clearly why this decision doesn't go up for a public vote, and we depend on the City Council to make the right decisions for the greater good of the community. I was happy to hear that this would not be paid for with tax payers money, and that public opinion is taken into consideration.

My husband also had the opportunity to talk with Mayor Randall, and we think the leadership we currently have in Portage is the right one.

Thank you.

Kim Ferris

Print

**Draft Lake Center District Corridor and Placemaking Study - Public Comment - Submission #8232**

**Date Submitted: 5/16/2021**

**Name\***

Resident

**Email Address\***

N/A

**Address\***

N/A

**City\***

Portage

**State\***

MI

**Zip Code\***

49002

**Phone Number\***

N/A

**Submit a Public Comment\***

West lake now has an opportunity for a boardwalk/dock for citizens - this would be an added feature to the district.

Portage road and pedestrian/bike safety is definitely a concern and should be addressed but a road diet does not seem like the answer with the businesses and traffic that utilize Portage Road. A safe place to cross at the lights and sidewalks for bike and pedestrian on both sides where feasible would be a possible solution. The streets around the lakes are very busy - there's a lot of bike and pedestrian traffic.

The widening of the canal and any chance of bringing in more boat traffic to either lake is concerning (already busy, especially on the weekends) so I'm happy that we have an opportunity to be heard. These lakes are shallow/weedy and could use some attention as we want to keep our lakes safe, beautiful, and clean.

**Upload File**

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Draft Lake Center District Corridor and Placemaking Study - Public Comment - Submission #8231

Date Submitted: 5/16/2021

Name\*

MARK L GRATTAN

Email Address\*

[REDACTED]

Address\*

9481 SEBRING DR

City\*

Portage

State\*

Michigan

Zip Code\*

49002

Phone Number\*

[REDACTED]

Submit a Public Comment\*

Please do not do this to the people who live on or near Portage road. We can't get on the road from South Shore Drive now. The traffic is already out of hand. Lakeview Park is so nice and within walking distance, but traffic already makes it difficult when crossing the road to it. Adding more cars will make it worse.

You need to fill the buildings that are already there, before you add new ones, and let the businesses pay the taxes, not the people. I have never had property taxes as high as I do in Portage. You have multiple open buildings empty now. Don't add more to your problems; take care of the ones you have. Fill them, sell them. Support the businesses you have now. You say this will not cost the tax payers, but if you add more businesses, you're going to need more Police and Firemen, and that will cost the tax payers more. Someone has to stand up and say NO!! This out of control spending has to stop! If this does pass I will work as hard as I can, so that anyone who votes for this will not be elected again.

Mark Grattan  
9481 Sebring  
Portage, MI. 49002

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**Draft Lake Center District Corridor and Placemaking Study - Public Comment - Submission #8230**

**Date Submitted:** 5/16/2021

**Name\***

carol eddy

**Email Address\***

**Zip Code\***

49002

**Address\***

10071 woodlawn dr

**City\***

Portage

**State\***

mi

**Phone Number\***

[REDACTED]

**Submit a Public Comment\***

Thank you for the extensive work on this project. I have a few comments to consider.

-If building improvement funds are to be available, please consider the commercial property across from Stanley..

-I believe the open vista should be retained on the drive-in property, A condo complex could be moved to other property.

-Please discuss the reasons for moving the boat canal project to a longer term plan. Requests for a quiet, safe lake apply to Austin Lake also. As mentioned by others, please define what 'larger boats' thru the canal would mean.

-I believe a pedestrian signal would be an improvement on Stanley. I support Scenario 1 or 2 with 5 lanes on Portage Road and 40-45 mph. This would be consistent with other major entry ways to Portage. A left turn lane would be a safety improvement on Stanley; I do not think a traffic signal is needed.

-One of the comments I heard was that vehicles traveling north do not visit the stores on Portage Road. I believe with the right businesses being encouraged to invest in the area, businesses will see an increase in traffic.

Thank you for your consideration.

**Upload File**

No file chosen

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**Draft Lake Center District Corridor and Placemaking Study - Public Comment - Submission #8227**

**Date Submitted:** 5/16/2021

**Name\***

Marc A Irwin

**Email Address\***

[REDACTED]

**Address\***

742 W. Kilgore Rd., Apt 303

**City\***

Kalamazoo

**State\***

MI

**Zip Code\***

49008

**Phone Number\***

[REDACTED]

**Submit a Public Comment\***

I use the corridor on a regular basis and feel that reducing to 3 lanes would greatly enhance the area. As with other lane reductions, vehicle speed is calmed, safety improved, collisions reduced and access to business services along the corridor will be greatly improved. It will help provide a better service atmosphere for businesses to develop and improve property values in the adjacent neighborhoods.

**Upload File**

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Draft Lake Center District Corridor and Placemaking Study - Public Comment - Submission #8224

Date Submitted: 5/15/2021

Name\*

Penelope Brooks

Email Address\*

Address\*

2019 Lakeview Dr

City\*

Portage

State\*

MI

Zip Code\*

49002

Phone Number\*

[REDACTED]

Submit a Public Comment\*

Thank you for removing/postponing the connection of West Lake with Austin Lake via the Riverwalk-style canal. As an owner on West Lake, we are very keen to keep this lake private and do not want all the traffic that this linkage would bring. We are also very happy with the clean and healthy lake eco-system that currently exists here in West Lake and do not want to shift that with the canal opening.

In short, we are happy with the improvements proposed to West Lake but are very much against opening up the connection between the two lakes. Thank you for your consideration.

Upload File

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## Draft Lake Center District Corridor & Placemaking Study – Public Comment

Submit a public comment by:

1. visiting [portagemi.gov/721](http://portagemi.gov/721) or
2. completing and returning this form:
  - to a City of Portage staff member today or
  - by mail to: 7900 South Westnedge Avenue  
Portage, MI 49002

Date Submitted 5/15/21 Email Address: [REDACTED]

Name Bob + Jean AUSTIN

Address 1428 Forest Ave

City Portage State MI Zip Code 49002 Phone Number [REDACTED]

Submit a Public Comment

Bad idea to increase traffic (boat + seadon) on a small lake -  
Nature preserve

PJB

Use other side if more space is needed.



## Draft Lake Center District Corridor & Placemaking Study – Public Comment

### Submit a public comment by:

1. visiting [portagemi.gov/721](http://portagemi.gov/721) or
2. completing and returning this form:
  - to a City of Portage staff member today or
  - by mail to: 7900 South Westnedge Avenue  
Portage, MI 49002

Date Submitted May 15, 2021

Email Address: [REDACTED]

Name Duane Hampton

Cathy Hampton

Address 10098 Woodlawn Dr

City Portage

State MI

Zip Code 49002

Phone Number: [REDACTED]

Submit a Public Comment I do not support reducing the number of lanes for cap traffic on Portage Rd. If you want to put in a couple of traffic lights, I'm OK with that. If you want to lower the speed limit to 35 mph, I'm OK with that. If you want to install crosswalks, I'm OK with that. But I'm opposed to the "road diet." The road diet will NOT make the road easier to cross safely. Instead it would make it harder to cross the road.

We have lived in our house since 1990. If you choose the "road diet", we're out of here.

Cathy Hampton – For me, the main concern is safety. I understand that there ~~are~~ <sup>are</sup> car traffic, bicyclists, & pedestrians to be concerned about.

We live on the west side of Austin Lake. We drive to Portage Rd on Wetherbee Ave. Trying to pull out of Wetherbee onto Portage Rd. can be challenging, whether turning right or left. Left is harder than to right. If the road is changed to only one lane each direction, with a turning lane in the middle, it will be even more difficult to get out onto Portage Rd. There is a fair amount of traffic all day long. Of course, some time periods have heavier traffic.

I agree with my husband that traffic lights, crosswalks, & slower speeds are O.K. But we will only be moving when he retires & we prepare our home for sale. It won't do anything to do with the road diet.

Use other side if more space is needed.



## Draft Lake Center District Corridor & Placemaking Study – Public Comment

Submit a public comment by:

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2. completing and returning this form:
  - to a City of Portage staff member today or
  - by mail to: 7900 South Westnedge Avenue  
Portage, MI 49002

Date Submitted 5-15-2021

Email Address [REDACTED]

Name Dawn R. C.

Address 8048 Portage Rd

City Portage

State MI

Zip Code 49002

Phone Number [REDACTED]

Submit a Public Comment

Let us Vote on this  
Project! Portage Rd Diet Not  
good idea: Fix the pot holes &  
Sidwalks Better using Spuding tax \$

Use other side if more space is needed.



## Draft Lake Center District Corridor & Placemaking Study – Public Comment

Submit a public comment by:

1. visiting [portagemi.gov/721](http://portagemi.gov/721) or
2. completing and returning this form:
  - to a City of Portage staff member today or
  - by mail to: 7900 South Westnedge Avenue  
Portage, MI 49002

Date Submitted 5/15/21 Email Address: [REDACTED]

Name DAVID SAVOY

Address 3520 EAST SHORE DR

City PORTAGE, State MI Zip Code 49002 Phone Number [REDACTED]

Submit a Public Comment I STRONGLY URGE CITY COUNCIL TO  
REJECT THIS PROJECT. NOT IN FAVOR OF REDUCING  
THE NUMBER OF TRAFFIC LANES.

- OPENING UP THE ~~RE~~ CURRENT BIKE/WALKING  
PATH BETWEEN AUSTIN COURT & EAST SHORE DR. WE  
CURRENTLY HAVE PROBLEMS WITH SPEEDING NOW, IT WILL  
ONLY GET WORSE.

E RES

WE DO NEED MORE TRAFFIC CONTROL ON  
PORTAGE, LIGHTS, SPEED BUMPS ETC.

Use other side if more space is needed.



## Draft Lake Center District Corridor & Placemaking Study – Public Comment

Submit a public comment by:

1. visiting [portagemi.gov/721](http://portagemi.gov/721) or
2. completing and returning this form:
  - to a City of Portage staff member today or
  - by mail to: 7900 South Westnedge Avenue  
Portage, MI 49002

Date Submitted 5/14/21 Email Address: [REDACTED]

Name LISA WININGER

Address 1811 Apple st

City Portage State MI Zip Code 49002 Phone Number [REDACTED]

Submit a Public Comment

To Do!

1. reduce speed limit
2. bike lanes & better sidewalks
3. signal at Forest
4. consolidate driveways
5. get rid of billboards
6. beautification & nicer signs
7. screening for car/boat storage, not just chain link fences
8. Yes to pocket park at Westnedge  
~~drive in~~
9. Yes to new development off Zylman
10. Better zoning - no car lots or boat storage

Use other side if more space is needed.

**Draft Lake Center District Corridor and Placemaking Study - Public Comment - Submission #8220**

**Date Submitted: 5/14/2021**

**Name\***

CM Dargitz

**Email Address\***

[REDACTED]

**Address\***

8935 Austin Court, Portage, MI 49002

**City\***

Portage

**State\***

Michigan

**Zip Code\***

49002

**Phone Number\***

[REDACTED]

**Submit a Public Comment\***

I'm planning on attending the open house tomorrow, but I want to be sure to get these questions and comments/concerns to you now for the record:

- 1 - Does the plan include undergrounding utilities throughout the corridor or just a portion? If just a portion, which portion?
- 2 - Form based code - I am extremely concerned that implementation of form-based code could favor new, outside, wealthier investors/developers over existing businesses who have served the district for many years. I'm also concerned about the quality of life for residents, if form-based code allows businesses with commercial traffic to move in directly next door to existing residences that have been in place for 50 plus years. The goal of the improvements to the district from the beginning has been to better serve the businesses and residences that have served and comprised this local community for so many years. How can we ensure that form-based code will not adversely affect these long-time businesses and residents?
- 3 - Is there any further consideration of roundabouts at Osterhout and Center Street?
- 4 - Where is the "potential future commercial development" on the isthmus portion of the masterplan? The grey blocks in the legend for that piece don't show up on the map online.
- 5 - Where are the priority land acquisitions?
- 6 - Where exactly are the proposed connections between Austin Drive, Austin Court, East Shore Drive, Forest Drive, and Portage Rd. and how will they work?
- 7 - In my mind, and one of the primary goals for the business association from the beginning has been to make the corridor safer. Whether it's reducing speed limits, or creating an environment where vehicles naturally slow down, safety is essential, and making the corridor more friendly for all forms of travel (car, bike, pedestrian) will make the district more vibrant as well.

Thank you for all of your work and commitment to making this corridor safer, and more friendly for existing local businesses and residents, alike.

Sincerely,  
C. Miko Dargitz

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**Draft Lake Center District Corridor and Placemaking Study - Public Comment - Submission  
#8157**

**Date Submitted: 5/7/2021**

**Name\***

Mrs. Gerald Comer

**Email Address\***

[REDACTED]

**Address\***

[REDACTED]

**City\***

Portage

**State\***

MI

**Zip Code\***

49002

**Phone Number\***

[REDACTED]

**Submit a Public Comment\***

Excitement is in the air for improving our Lake Center District. I am a Lakefront owner on Austin Lake and welcome some positive changes on Portage Rd. for better visual appeal and offerings. I attended the 1st meeting at City Hall and looked forward to the proposed plan. After viewing it, I like the ideas of the extended bike trail from Zylman area down toward the Elementary School, underpass along the canal, improved landscaping on curbside of Portage Rd., and several other ideas. What I do not support is any building that would go on the Drive-In lot which would block the view of West Lake. I do not like the idea of only 3 lanes for traffic on Portage Rd. During peak hours there is way too much traffic, especially by Lake Center School, it backs up so fast. We do not need another public launch at the Lake View Park in to Austin Lake, we already have one. If any is to be built it should be at West Lake which has none. I do not approve of any developing of Lake View Park that would take away too much of the beautiful land area which is so needed for the pleasure of the Park. No Bandshell, as we already have more than one in the city. My biggest hope is that the city will improve the curb appeal of the corridor that exists now, work on that as a 1st priority. Current businesses and rundown residential properties need better eye appeal, updates. Look forward to revitalization.

**Upload File**

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**Draft Lake Center District Corridor and Placemaking Study - Public Comment - Submission  
#8156**

**Date Submitted: 5/7/2021**

**Name\***

Tom Sielatycki

**Email Address\***

[REDACTED]

**Address\***

[REDACTED]

**City\***

Portage

**State\***

Michigan

**Zip Code\***

49002

**Phone Number\***

[REDACTED]

**Submit a Public Comment\***

We have lived on Austin Lake since 2016 and formerly lived on Long Lake. We are closing on a new residence on West Lake in June of 2021 (Renting temporarily until we close). We are advocates for growing a culture of community for the entire chain of lakes. We should immediately capitalize on the unique opportunity to connect our lakes for boat travel as well as improve the ability for residents to walk and ride safely around the isthmus. Imagine, boating to a dock system at the Cove and enjoying dinner, stopping by the hardware store, or picking up some groceries across the street. How about a farmers market or more outdoor dining? Meeting friends, enjoying lake life, and expanding opportunities for local businesses is good for everyone. This is the energy that we can build for ourselves and our neighbors if we support this initiative together. West Lake and Austin Lake residents will have the option to enjoy friends and amenities of both lakes while keeping the integrity and personality of each. Long Lake and Gourdneck Lake should be included in a long term plan too. Austin Lake will always be known as the socialite and West Lake as sleepy/private and improving the isthmus will put an exclamation point on those reputations! Yes, change is always worrisome, but if we focus on the benefits and continue to support each other the possibilities are endless.

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**Draft Lake Center District Corridor and Placemaking Study - Public Comment - Submission  
#8154**

**Date Submitted: 5/7/2021**

**Name\***

Craig Begeman

**Email Address\***

[REDACTED]

**Address\***

[REDACTED]

**City\***

Portage

**State\***

Michigan

**Zip Code\***

49024

**Phone Number\***

[REDACTED]

**Submit a Public Comment\***

I am a Portage resident and strongly support the City's plan for the Lake Center area. This is the proper use of City planning to emphasize the long term viability of Portage by providing a strong vision and planning for the future.

We are moving into the phase of an aging suburb and have the ability to maintain and upgrade our City so we become a destination, instead of a place people used to live. If we turn a corner to a dumpy, aged suburb, it isn't likely to recover.

GREAT WORK ON THE PART OF OUR CITY GOVERNMENT IN PROVIDING LEADERSHIP AND DIRECTION!!!

Keep it up. This type of planning should be used in other areas of our City to improve and make Portage a place where people want to live.

**Upload File**

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**Draft Lake Center District Corridor and Placemaking Study - Public Comment - Submission  
#8153**

**Date Submitted: 5/6/2021**

**Name\***

Tyler Monroe

**Email Address\***

[REDACTED]

**Address\***

[REDACTED]

**City\***

Portage

**State\***

Michigan

**Zip Code\***

49002

**Phone Number\***

[REDACTED]

**Submit a Public Comment\***

Hello,

I am looking forward to the much needed improvement along the Lake Center district. As a resident on Woodbine since 2013, and now a multi-property owner in Portage, I have a deep investment in our community. I agree with a lot of the projected plans for the development, but I have one big question that seems to be the elephant in the room, who is going to pay for it? Will the funding come from the general tax fund or will there be a special assessment for these improvements? If an assessment is needed for funding will this be equally distributed through out the whole city of Portage residents since the project impacts public spaces and the lakes that all the residents have access to. Additionally, one suggestion to the project plans would be to improve the safety and well being of the local residents on the boat launch road by installing speed reduction devices, ie. removable speed bumps (so they will not impair snow removal). Our road is subject to undue traffic, largely in the summer time, all due to the DNR public boat launch and beach area. Woodbine ave has a long straightaway and is posted as 25 MPH. Our road is always being used by people walking and by kids playing in the yards and the road and I have called the police multiple times on reckless drivers who are hauling their boat traveling over 40 MPH.

Thank you for your time and I look forward to the investment in our community.

**Upload File**

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**Draft Lake Center District Corridor and Placemaking Study - Public Comment - Submission  
#8152**

---

**Date Submitted: 5/6/2021**

**Name\***

Katherine Ensfield

**Email Address\***

[REDACTED]

**Address\***

[REDACTED]

**City\***

Portage

**State\***

MI

**Zip Code\***

49002

**Phone Number\***

[REDACTED]

**Submit a Public Comment\***

To whom it may concern:

This afternoon I have read through the report on the Lake Center District. Although there are many interesting suggestions, some of them cause me great concern.

1. If Portage Road is reduced to three lanes we will have an eternal traffic jam. The problem now is that we have too many cars which go too fast. Reducing the lanes will not decrease the volume of cars because there are so few north-south roads. More houses are being built in Portage and Vicksburg which will add to the traffic volume. Additional jobs at Stryker, Pfizer and FedEx will mean that more people are using Portage Road to get to work.

2. Although bike lanes and additional sidewalks would be nice, the fumes from the stopped traffic will make for a very unhealthy experience.

3. The businesses will suffer also because customers will not be able to get in or out of their parking lots. I live on Forest Drive and shop at H &B grocery store. With a light I would be able to go south, but would not be able to get into the H & B parking lot because of the traffic in the northbound lane. If I finally did get into the parking lot I would not be able to turn right to head towards Forest Drive. It would ruin their business if everyone went to other more accessible grocery stores.

My suggestion is to slow Portage Road down by adding multiple traffic lights. In addition, drop the speed limit to at least 35 mph. The traffic lights should be timed so that drivers going the speed limit pass through the lights without stopping while drivers who speed or drive too slowly would hit the red light. Other communities can do this and we should be able to do so also. On M-24 on the eastern side of the state you can drive ten miles through frequent lights without stopping (personal experience).

I also have concerns for our current businesses on Portage Road. They have put up with the bad conditions for so long that we should be supporting them as much as possible. The upgrades to facades and building improvements look to be quite expensive. Many have very thin margins and would find it difficult or impossible to finance these items.

There is a letter circulating about environmental impacts of widening the channel between the lakes. I support everything in this letter.

Finally, please do not be too provincial in your thinking. Portage is part of a wider community. If you make Portage Road impassable you not only inconvenience the residents of Portage but also the many people who live south of us who work or shop in our city.

Thank you,

Kay Ensfield

**Upload File**

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**Draft Lake Center District Corridor and Placemaking Study - Public Comment - Submission  
#8151**

**Date Submitted: 5/6/2021**

**Name\***

Sandy leet

**Email Address\***

[REDACTED]

**Address\***

[REDACTED]

**City\***

Portage

**State\***

Mi

**Zip Code\***

490992

**Phone Number\***

[REDACTED]

**Submit a Public Comment\***

My main question is what kind of financial responsibility are the citizens of Portage to be responsible for on the new "lake center corridor". I do not live on Portage Road, but I have lived in this area and have utilized that area for many many years. The speed & congestion has grown increasingly over the past years with the growth of Portage & the industries that are now The Sprinkle road industrial area, that just keeps moving South. I do not understand how they were able to build the new Stryker plant along an area that was & is not now residential. The speed limit is to fast for this area. And who goes the speed limit anyway!! Same as Portage Road. I believe the improvements should be based on the problems to make Portage Rd in that area safe & convenient not a Showplace! I am retired & have had my home since the 70's & would like to be able to continue staying here without getting taxed every year with something new. I would like to see some land, where everything isn't getting crammed to where no open space exists any longer, and I don't believe they should open up the channel from Austin to West lake, The lakes around here are getting pretty busy anyway like everything else. We were blessed with these wonderful lakes that I grew up on & people have spent so much money to be on the lakes & built beautiful homes where "cottages" Once were so their time spent in their homes & on their lake aren't cluttered & noisy with lots of extra lake traffic for the 2 with public accesses. People need peaceful & quiet places in this time, & times are bound to be coming.

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**Draft Lake Center District Corridor and Placemaking Study - Public Comment - Submission  
#8150**

**Date Submitted: 5/6/2021**

**Name\***

Martha Simpson

**Email Address\***

[REDACTED]

**Address\***

[REDACTED]

**City\***

Portage

**State\***

MI

**Zip Code\***

49002

**Phone Number\***

[REDACTED]

**Submit a Public Comment\***

I oppose the road diet. I think it will have a negative impact on the lake center business district. If the same amount of traffic continues to use the road, it will be very difficult to get in and out of businesses. It may reduce traffic which means that people will not stop at those businesses as they do now when they are travelling through the corridor.

**Upload File**

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**Draft Lake Center District Corridor and Placemaking Study - Public Comment - Submission  
#8149**

**Date Submitted: 5/6/2021**

**Name\***

Douglas Slager, Debbie slager

**Email Address\***

[REDACTED]

**Address\***

[REDACTED]

**City\***

Portage

**State\***

MI

**Zip Code\***

49002

**Phone Number\***

[REDACTED]

**Submit a Public Comment\***

Correction to comment submitted on 5/4.

Should read: This is an increase of 7' over what we have now. (not 7") from 3'-6" to 10'-6" water to ceiling.

Additionally I would like to point out that the floor of the drain is concrete. During low water small vessel propellers can and have contacted the surface. Any change to the height of the drain to accommodate a larger vessel would also have to be made to the depth as well.

Currently all maintenance/dredging of the drain is done by The County Drain Commission. This has been done 2 times that I am aware of since 1973. It would seem that any major change to the drain and future maint.would have to have a buy-in from the Commission.

Regarding the overall appearance of the district corridor unless the unsightly power poles/wires, mailboxes, and dead trees are totally eliminated not much is going to be visually different...and there goes the beautiful component we are striving for.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment, the attention to and funding for this project.

Doug and Debbie Slager [REDACTED]

**Upload File**

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**Draft Lake Center District Corridor and Placemaking Study - Public Comment - Submission  
#8143**

---

**Date Submitted: 5/6/2021**

**Name\***

Brett Simmering

**Email Address\***

[REDACTED]

**Address\***

[REDACTED]

**City\***

Portage

**State\***

Michigan

**Zip Code\***

49002

**Phone Number\***

[REDACTED]

## Submit a Public Comment\*

Dear Portage City Council Members,

Please accept my comments regarding the Lake Center District Corridor and Placemaking Study. I would first like to share that I am encouraged that the City of Portage is developing long range plans to enhance the Lake Center District. I am in support of the majority of the plan aspects and I am especially happy to see the consideration to enhancing the traffic corridor along Portage Road to make it more accessible and safer to pedestrians and cyclists. I do have a few concerns shared below. The most significant of these is that I am opposed to any changes that will lead to increased boat traffic on West Lake which I believe will have significant safety impact as well as unknown environmental impact.

I have resided in Portage with my family since 2005. In 2019, my wife and I made the decision to relocate our family within the Lake Center to a home on West Lake where we intend to live for the rest of our lives. A primary reason for purchasing on West Lake was the quiet environment here. West Lake has very light boat traffic, making it a safe and serene place to call home. We considered properties on other Portage Lakes but decided against it due to the high volume of boat traffic related to the public access and large parking lot. In my opinion, significant boat traffic leads to higher safety risks. In addition, significant boat traffic in shallow lakes such as West Lake and Austin lakes significantly churns up sediment from the bottom reducing water clarity and potential impacting the environmental conditions of the lake. Furthermore, the significant traffic like that on Austin Lake can lead to wave action that can lead to erosion and make swimming, kayaking, and small boat sailing difficult and dangerous. West Lake is largely free of these concerns in the current state and disrupting these conditions would be a huge effect on West Lake residents and may cause significant damage to a rare natural resource.

Lake Center District Corridor and Placemaking Study I am very concerned that the Lake Center District Corridor and Placemaking Study will make West Lake a dangerous and unpleasant place to for West Lake residents to live. In particular, the widening of the canal will increase boat traffic. The plan is not specific and says "Raise Portage Road as required to accommodate water/trail connection underneath. Install Bollards in the waterway to maintain water quality and restrict large boats entering West Lake." The term "large boats" is not defined in the proposal. While I am encouraged by several potential actions such as making Portage Road safer for bike and pedestrian traffic, I am exceptionally concerned by how this plan will impact our safety. Facilitating additional powered vessels entering West Lake will create unsafe conditions, impact the environment, and diminish quality of life for residents.

The proposal includes widening the channel to Austin Lake, expanding the parking and boat launch facilities on Austin Lake, and adding docks and public access points to West Lake. All these activities will result in significantly more traffic on West Lake. West Lake is a small 330 acre lake. It cannot accommodate a surge in boat traffic. I request that a study is undertaken to assess the safe boating traffic that West Lake can accommodate. The US Army Corps of Engineers has a method for making this assessment and it has been used on other Michigan Lakes. This website provides an excellent overview of the methodology and consideration for making this assessment:

[https://www.swl.usace.army.mil/Portals/50/docs/beaverlake/Beaver%20Lake%20MP%20SMP/Beaver\\_Capacity\\_Study/BeaverLakeCapacityStudy\\_Appendix\\_A\\_Lit%20Review\\_Final\\_20170228.pdf?ver=2020-07-01-022227-297](https://www.swl.usace.army.mil/Portals/50/docs/beaverlake/Beaver%20Lake%20MP%20SMP/Beaver_Capacity_Study/BeaverLakeCapacityStudy_Appendix_A_Lit%20Review_Final_20170228.pdf?ver=2020-07-01-022227-297)

Once adjustments are made to consider the permanent no wake zones close to shore and the large no wake zones surrounding the proposed docks the usable surface area of the lake for boating is greatly reduced and the capacity of the lake is unlikely to be sufficient to accommodate any increase in traffic.

I have been boating in Michigan for nearly 20 years. Before moving to Michigan, I served as an officer in the US Navy. I am very familiar with safe boating practices and rules of the road and even taught classes on this topic. I have observed that there are many Michigan boaters who are either unfamiliar with rules of the road and boating safety or choose to ignore them. Currently, West Lake has low traffic, primarily from the West Lake residents, and as a result it is very safe for power boaters, sailors, swimmers, and kayakers. An increase in traffic will dramatically reduce the safety of operating on the lake, especially when you consider the limited room for maneuverability on a small lake. I would like to request that prior to approving channel widening, increasing boat launch parking capacity, and adding West Lake docks, a formal study is conducted to assess expected increase in traffic on West Lake as well as a formal assessment to determine the safety impact to West Lake users. The results of this study should be compared to the previously requested study pertaining to the maximum allowable safe boating traffic. If the changes to increase boat traffic are made, I request a detailed mitigation plan to ensure that boating traffic does not increase above the safe traffic levels for West Lake.

West Lake is a small, shallow lake that includes West Lake Nature preserve. If the volume of boating is increased, it will inevitably result in churning up the Lake's bottom and decreasing water clarity. Beyond the obvious impact to the quality of the West Lake environment for people, this may have an impact on the riparian environment for aquatic life. Before widening the channel and adding boat docks, I request that an environmental study is conducted to determine the impact on the Lake ecosystem as a result of increase boating traffic. In addition, I would like to ask that any plans to make improvements for the West Lake district also include assessment of current water quality and specifically include mitigation strategies to address storm water impact from water entering West Lake via the Sugar Loaf Drain/Austin Lake Drain extension. The proposal notably failed to include any strategies to make any improvements in this regard.

I also am concerned about the impact that the changes to Portage Road could have on local neighborhood traffic. South Shore Drive is already used as a short cut from Portage Road to Shaver Road and Westnedge Avenue. Reducing the number of lanes and the speed limit on Portage Road will likely result in increase traffic to avoid this chokepoint. South Shore Drive is narrow, has no sidewalks, and no crosswalks. Traffic already moves well above the posted speed limit and there are no

meaningful mitigation strategies to limit the speed of travel. This creates a significant safety risk to residents and is especially concerning since there is a high volume of pedestrian and cycling traffic using South Shore Drive to access West Lake Nature Preserve, the softball fields, the dog park, Bishop's Bog, and Eliason Nature Preserve. I request that prior to moving forward with changes to Portage Road, an impact assessment is conducted on South Shore Drive traffic, mitigation strategies such as stop signs or speed bumps are installed, and pedestrian safety measure are implemented to protect residents.

Lastly, I don't believe that the Steering Committee that leads this initiative has adequate representation from the residents of West Lake. It appears that there is not a single member of the committee that is a West Lake resident with no commercial interest in the development of the Lake and the Lake Center District. Before proceeding with any future plans, I request that the Steering committee be expanded to include multiple West Lake residents to speak on behalf of residential/non-commercial interests. In excluding this voice from the steering committee, many significant challenges seem to have been missed.

Once again, I thank the City Council and the Steering Committee for the long range planning to improve our community. I feel fortunate to live in a city where such bold activities are undertaken. I am supportive of the majority of the plan and I ask for careful assessment before moving forward to the aspects of the plan that will negatively impact West Lake.

Kind regards,

Brett Simmering  
611 South Shore Drive  
Portage MI 49002

**Upload File**

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**Draft Lake Center District Corridor and Placemaking Study - Public Comment - Submission  
#8141**

---

**Date Submitted: 5/5/2021**

**Name\***

Dennis Laskowsky

**Email Address\***

[REDACTED]

**Address\***

[REDACTED]

**City\***

Portage

**State\***

MI

**Zip Code\***

49002

**Phone Number\***

[REDACTED]

#### Submit a Public Comment\*

If I read the draft for the Lake Center Project correctly it said the last traffic study was done in 2015. Since that time I believe Kenco was opened, Stryker built and new facility, Fed Ex has built a new facility that has yet to open and the old Pfizer Office building on the corner of Bishop and Portage has mostly been reoccupied, along with the old Pfizer office complex on Bishop Road between Lovers Lane and Portage Rd is now occupied by Stryker employees. Pfizer is adding 400 new employees in their new expansion. On top of that you have cut Lovers Lane from 4 traffic lanes to two which by the way was supposed to be a reliever for Westnedge Ave. So a significant increase in traffic on Portage Road since the last traffic study.

One of the proposals is to cut Portage road to two traffic lanes in the Lake Center Area. If you want to see what that is going to do the current traffic congestion in that section of Portage Road you just have to look at traffic on Centre Ave right now where the 3 center lanes have been closed due to construction of the new Senior Center. I just waited through 6-7 light changes at each stop light on either side of the construction zone and there is not a prayer of getting in and out of any drives in that area with out a very long wait. The worst part it was 2:30 in the afternoon not even peak traffic time

This is exactly what is going to happen on Portage Road if you cut the travel lanes down to one lane in each direction in the Lake Center area. There is still a lot of property between the airport and Lake Center that will be developed adding even more traffic to this corridor, Portage road is the only 4 lane north south corridor from Kalamazoo and you are considering shutting it down to two lanes. You need to consider the state of minds of the current and additional drivers that will be using this corridor in the coming years. They will not be stopping at the local businesses because of the congestion this will create. You have two boat dealers in that stretch and you will not be able to pull a truck and boat trailer out of their businesses especially during peak hours so they will lose business. The same thing is going to happen to all the other business along this corridor people will go where they don't have to fight traffic. In other words you will be doing the opposite of what you are trying accomplish. That includes getting in and out of the Lake Center Park access

I have lived one block off Portage Rd on Thrushwood in the Lake Center area for 50 years and rarely if ever see any pedestrians, let along bicyclists in the Lake Center area and I use that corridor several times a day. So not sure why the big hub bub about them in this area especially when thousands of cars travel this corridor daily and maybe one or two pedestrians or bicyclist use this area. That fact has been verified by many of the local business people in the corridor that I know personally. They are all afraid of what this will do to their businesses.

A traffic light at Forest Dr. should satisfy the few folks that need to cross Portage especially if it is pedestrian activated or activated by traffic trying to enter Portage Rd from Forest Dr. If it a timed light it will just add to the congestion. Doesn't make sense to cater to a very small minority of folks that are complaining and not considering the 99% + that use this road everyday.

Dennis Laskowsky  
1814 Thrushwood

#### Upload File

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**Draft Lake Center District Corridor and Placemaking Study - Public Comment - Submission  
#8140**

**Date Submitted: 5/5/2021**

**Name\***

Jack & Ellen Neal

**Email Address\***

[REDACTED]

**Address\***

[REDACTED]

**City\***

Portage

**State\***

Michigan

**Zip Code\***

49024

**Phone Number\***

[REDACTED]

**Submit a Public Comment\***

You are making this area too busy, too fast, too gaudy, and we are losing the natural, lovely slower paced beauty of living in that area of Portage. You are much overdoing development! Slow down!!!

**Upload File**

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**Draft Lake Center District Corridor and Placemaking Study - Public Comment - Submission  
#8135**

---

**Date Submitted: 5/4/2021**

**Name\***

Doug and Debbie Slager

**Email Address\***

[REDACTED]

**Address\***

[REDACTED]

**City\***

Portage

**State\***

MI

**Zip Code\***

49002

**Phone Number\***

[REDACTED]

## Submit a Public Comment\*

### Re: County Drain

The proposal drawing of a pontoon boat and walkway traversing E/W under Portage Road is totally unrealistic. Given the average West Lake level (It only varies 6" up / 6" down regulated at Austin Lake dam by Kal County Drain Comm.) we currently have ( on average) 42" of clearance from water to ceiling. Actual total width is 72". The ceiling to road driving surface is now also 42".

In order for a pontoon boat to be able to pass safely with a Captain standing (Top down) allowing 12" overhead will require a water to ceiling distance of 8'-6". (Top up...and Coast Guard anchor lite in place) that distance increases to 10'-6". This is an increase of 7" greater than we now have.

Even reducing a ceiling to road surface to 24" ( min. engr. spec?) means that the driving surface of the road would have to be raised 54". The required gradient change in the road would effectively eliminate any driveway entrance for several hundreds of feet in both directions. One of them is mine. Another is the entrance to Dixie Drive.

In practical terms this means eliminating by purchase or Public domain several of the residences affected for lack of access.

In addition a E/W walkway has been proposed parallel to the drain to get pedestrians from one side of the road to the other. That means that a sidewalk would have to be installed on the west side of the road and a stairs to get down to the walkway on both sides of the road...and a bridge to get from one side of the drain to the other, or at least a bridge on both sides of the road to clear the drain.

Given the required changes to the existing configuration of the curb/guardrail in front of our property at 9310, the change to our existing drive (for the 4th time since 1973 at our own expense when we purchased the property !) and all other impacts to our property we are opposed to any drain modification.

One other thing related. The drawing shows a pedestrian walkway all the way to the waters edge on the west side. In reality that would create a public fishing/swimming/party spot that we, and my neighbor on the north side of the drain, have worked very hard with the Drain commission to eliminate with fencing and enforcement. This parcel is not open to the public and should never be.

Also the thought of additional boating traffic with-in a few feet of my swimming area, especially pontoons circling for their turn to pass under the road, the lack of manuverability of same and no ability to pass side by side or traverse the dogleg in the channel on the east side, and the general disrespect shown by non-resident lake users (mainly jet ski/wave runner occupants) makes a drain mod. undesirable.

Bottom line there is no upside to us as a property owner and the drain mod. not well conceived or realistic.

Lots to consider to achieve vibrant/safe/attractive. God knows it is long overdue. Thank you for recognizing the need and appropriations but the drain mod. needs to be eliminated from the project. Thank you.

### Upload File

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**Draft Lake Center District Corridor and Placemaking Study - Public Comment - Submission  
#8132**

---

**Date Submitted: 5/4/2021**

**Name\***

Victor Moon

**Email Address\***

[REDACTED]

**Address\***

[REDACTED]

**City\***

Portage

**State\***

Michigan

**Zip Code\***

49002

**Phone Number\***

[REDACTED]

#### Submit a Public Comment\*

As a resident of Portage for over 50 years, this is the first time I have felt compelled to make a formal public comment to the city council. I am very much against the portion of the Lake Center District project that deals with any alterations to West and Austin Lakes.

My wife and I bought a home on West Lake in 2018 and one of the reasons we chose this lake is because it essentially is a private lake with very little traffic from non-West Lake riparians. This makes for a quiet and enjoyable experience for all homeowners on the lake. If we had wanted to live on a large lake with a public access and a great deal more traffic, we could have chosen to buy on Austin. After reviewing most of the Farr Assoc. very detailed (and I'm sure very costly draft) and watching some of his presentation, I still do not see any benefit to the residents of Portage by connecting the lakes via a canal. West Lake is not large enough to support two huge docks, additional boating traffic, or fishing. All of this could lead to safety issues in addition to being a nuisance for current West Lake riparians. In addition, you also open West Lake and the West Lake Preserve to a host of negative ecosystem consequences by widening the channel to allow boats that have been on Austin Lake or who knows what other lakes. West Lake riparians have worked very hard and spent a lot of money over the years to manage the weed situation and maintain the water quality. If this plan goes through and causes issues with the lake, will the city step up and spend the money to fix these problems?

In a survey of the West Lake Association, only 15% of respondents were in favor of altering the 'canal' in any way (and I believe the survey was done before anyone saw the final plans or estimated price tag for these changes). In the City of Portage's own survey, less than 50% of respondents were in favor of a boardwalk or 'canal' changes. In my own informal chats with a dozen or so neighbors during the last week, not one person is in favor of boardwalks or canals. There is just no benefit to anyone on West Lake and certainly no benefit to the 95% of Portage residents who do not live on either lake but will have to help pay the enormous cost of this project.

As an avid runner and cyclist, I am very open to any Portage Road improvements to make it safer for pedestrians and people trying to cross the road. Lakeview Park is a gem and already a 'placemaker' for the city. Perhaps minor improvements and cost-effective additions could be made to the park which could certainly benefit all residents of the city (a safer way to cross Portage Rd. from west side of the street would be awesome from a selfish standpoint).

I am sure there are parts of the Farr Assoc. plan that could be implemented to improve traffic, safety, and the overall look of this section of Portage Road which is a rather depressing and tired looking stretch of city road. But please do not tie in the useless canals, boardwalks, and bridges into the plan to satisfy a handful of committee members who might stand to gain something from this project.

Thank you for your consideration.

#### Upload File

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**Draft Lake Center District Corridor and Placemaking Study - Public Comment - Submission  
#8130**

**Date Submitted: 5/4/2021**

**Name\***

Karen Brown

**Email Address\***

[REDACTED]

**Address\***

[REDACTED]

**City\***

PORTAGE

**State\***

MI

**Zip Code\***

49002

**Phone Number\***

[REDACTED]

**Submit a Public Comment\***

I do not believe that narrowing Portage Road is a good idea because of the heavy traffic coming from Pfizer, Stryker, and other new businesses.

Also, the bike lane length is not long enough to warrant changing the road.

**Upload File**

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images or documents.

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**Draft Lake Center District Corridor and Placemaking Study - Public Comment - Submission  
#8127**

**Date Submitted: 5/4/2021**

**Name\***

ken Barrick

**Email Address\***

[REDACTED]

**Address\***

[REDACTED]

**City\***

Portage

**State\***

MI

**Zip Code\***

49002

**Phone Number\***

[REDACTED]

**Submit a Public Comment\***

I am so opposed to this project on so many levels, there is not the time or space to cover all of the aspects. However, three areas I find very troubling, the possibility of shrinking Portage road to three lanes, opening up the channel between the lakes and the overall funding of this project. Portage road is already busy enough, reducing the lanes of traffic in half will double the amount of traffic per lane, making it nearly impossible to make a left hand turn on to Portage road and increasing the accident rate. Secondly, any opening between the lakes will be extremely expensive and will only affect the people that have lake front property and have the opportunity to take their watercrafts to either lake. The burden of this project needs to be directed exclusively to lake front owners, it serves no purpose to non-lakefront, thus, we should not have to bear the responsibility to help pay for this. Treat it like you would when a house gets assessed when switching from well water to city water, the house is assessed an annual payment each year and a new buyer accepts that responsibility. And lastly, from reading the blogs on many chat sites, this project does not sound very popular with the public, so I am curious, is this city going to let the public vote on this proposal before you increase our taxes and force us to pay for something we don't want? Let the voters decide on what they do or do not want, since we will be the ones who will end up paying for it..

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**Draft Lake Center District Corridor and Placemaking Study - Public Comment - Submission  
#8105**

**Date Submitted: 4/30/2021**

**Name\***

Michael Rowe

**Email Address\***

[REDACTED]

**Address\***

[REDACTED]

**City\***

Portage

**State\***

MI

**Zip Code\***

49024-0000

**Phone Number\***

[REDACTED]

**Submit a Public Comment\***

Please put in a decent bike lane in this area, a protected bike lane would be the best case scenario.

**Upload File**

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**Draft Lake Center District Corridor and Placemaking Study - Public Comment - Submission  
#8104**

**Date Submitted: 4/30/2021**

**Name\***

Paul Guthrie

**Email Address\***

[REDACTED]

**Address\***

[REDACTED]

**City\***

Portage

**State\***

MI

**Zip Code\***

49002-7166

**Phone Number\***

[REDACTED]

**Submit a Public Comment\***

I think the proposed plan is excellent. I hope it is fully implemented. It truly is an effort at place making. It's something, like the Celery Flats area, that can become a true community asset. The plan also addresses the excessive unsafe speeds we see on this stretch of Portage Road, a section with an elementary school a park and no safe way to cross the road. No doubt some will complain they can't speed through the area as fast as they want. I think it's worth a couple of minutes transit time to make this a better place for all time. Thank you.

**Upload File**

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**Draft Lake Center District Corridor and Placemaking Study - Public Comment - Submission  
#8089**

**Date Submitted: 4/27/2021**

**Name\***

Richard Nellums

**Email Address\***

[REDACTED]

**Address\***

[REDACTED]

**City\***

Portage

**State\***

Michigan

**Zip Code\***

49002

**Phone Number\***

[REDACTED]

**Submit a Public Comment\***

There are no plans to modify Lakeview Park at all?

**Upload File**

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**Draft Lake Center District Corridor and Placemaking Study - Public Comment - Submission  
#8088**

**Date Submitted: 4/27/2021**

**Name\***

Richard Nellums

**Email Address\***

[REDACTED]

**Address\***

[REDACTED]

**City\***

Portage

**State\***

Michigan

**Zip Code\***

49002

**Phone Number\***

[REDACTED]

**Submit a Public Comment\***

The street layout diagrams still show side streets crossing pedestrian walkways. How do you keep from having turners stopping in the roadway awaiting pedestrians, or pedestrians being imperiled by turners?

**Upload File**

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**Draft Lake Center District Corridor and Placemaking Study - Public Comment - Submission  
#8087**

**Date Submitted: 4/27/2021**

**Name\***

Dave Thomas

**Email Address\***

[REDACTED]

**Address\***

[REDACTED]

**City\***

Portage

**State\***

Mi

**Zip Code\***

49002

**Phone Number\***

[REDACTED]

**Submit a Public Comment\***

- 1) Please move the timing for new crosswalks up from the 2-5yr timeline to the 1-2yr timeline.
- 2) Please make clear where the 3 lane road starts and ends and where the 4 lane road starts and ends.
- 3) Condo with boat slips? That's "key-holing" which is prohibited by law. West Lake doesn't need more boat traffic!
- 4) Will the public get to vote on what amenities are offered at Lakeview Park? 1 or 2 ball diamonds? 1,2,3, or 4 tennis courts? 1,2,3...8 pickle ball courts? 1,2,3,4 volleyball courts, 1,2,..4 picnic pavillions? Pre-school & Elementary school playgrounds? I vote for no amphitheater, especially if it requires us to sacrifice: the sports facilities, and family picnic areas.
- 5) Please insure that no "large boats" can use the canal to access either lake. The lakes are too congested, especially on the holiday weekends. Each can't absorb more boat traffic. Refereeing fights between West Lake and Austin Lake will be difficult. They are administered differently. City run Austin Lake versus Lake Association run West Lake.

**Upload File**

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**Draft Lake Center District Corridor and Placemaking Study - Public Comment - Submission  
#8085**

**Date Submitted: 4/27/2021**

**Name\***

James Bray

**Email Address\***

[REDACTED]

**Address\***

[REDACTED]

**City\***

Portage

**State\***

MI

**Zip Code\***

49002

**Phone Number\***

[REDACTED]

**Submit a Public Comment\***

I live on Ames Dr, close to Portage Rd. I love the idea of taking Portage Rd to 3 lanes. Dead ending Ames Dr. at Portage is a great idea. I don't like the alley behind Biggby and the other businesses, this will dump traffic out onto Ames. My kids are almost run over every time they play Biggby traffic cutting through Ames. Dead end Ames and put a joined entrance off of Portage to decrease traffic down Ames.

Thank you.

**Upload File**

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**Subject:** Fw: Judy and Peter Croden, [REDACTED] are against widening the channel  
**Date:** Tuesday, May 11, 2021 at 6:25:25 AM Eastern Daylight Time  
**From:** Claudette Reid <reidc@portagemi.gov>  
**To:** Mary Beth Block <blockm@portagemi.gov>

Claudette Reid  
Councilmember, City of Portage  
[claudette.reid@portagemi.gov](mailto:claudette.reid@portagemi.gov)  
269-491-9725

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**From:** Peter Croden [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, May 10, 2021 1:50 PM  
**To:** Claudette Reid  
**Subject:** Fwd: Judy and Peter Croden, [REDACTED] are against widening the channel

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Do not click on links or open attachments unless this is from a sender you know and trust.  
Just to follow up. You are the only one on the City Council to have the decency to answer my email.  
Also you might want to ask the rest of the council/committee; why did the Drain Commissioner only  
find out about this proposal about 3 days ago? The questions continue is this proposal being driven  
and pushed through by people that have a personal interest in widening the channel? The more we  
find out the more questions we have.

Please share this with your other members and especially the mayor!

Thanks Peter Croden

Sent from my iPad

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** Peter Croden [REDACTED]  
**Date:** May 9, 2021 at 8:17:59 AM EDT  
**To:** Claudette Reid <reidc@portagemi.gov>  
**Subject:** Re: Judy and Peter Croden, [REDACTED] are against widening the  
channel

Claudette,

Thank you for your response, yes we are opposed to widening the channel, the reasons  
we listed in our email. Also very surprised that the Drain Commission would approve such  
a plan, also the DNR? Would be interesting to see their comments and ask them some  
very direct questions.

Other parts of the plan will have a number of challenges but overall the rest of the plan looks like it could solve some of our major issues.

Thanks again for answering our email and we look forward to seeing a plan that keeps cost down (taxes have and continue to rise in Portage), and stresses and keeps the current environmental conditions that widening the channel completely ignores.

Best Judy and Peter Croden.

Sent from my iPad

On May 8, 2021, at 10:20 AM, Claudette Reid <[reidc@portagemi.gov](mailto:reidc@portagemi.gov)> wrote:

Mr. & Mrs. Croden,

I wanted to thank you for your email. I have read the attached materials and understand your concerns regarding the channel portion of the plan.

My understanding is that you are ONLY opposed to that portion of the plan that relates to widening the channel, and are supportive of the other aspects identified in the plan. Is that accurate?

Thank you again for your input.

Best regards,  
Claudette

Claudette Reid  
Councilmember, City of Portage  
[claudette.reid@portagemi.gov](mailto:claudette.reid@portagemi.gov)  
269-491-9725

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**From:** Peter Croden [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Friday, May 7, 2021 6:53 AM  
**To:** Patricia Randall; Lori Knapp; Jim Pearson; Chris Burns; viv.ledbetter@portagemi.gov; Claudette Reid; Terry Urban  
**Subject:** Judy and Peter Croden, [REDACTED] are against widening the channel

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**WIDENING THE CHANNEL BETWEEN WEST AND AUSTIN LAKES IS A VERY BAD IDEA**

- As detailed below, all Portage taxpayers should be concerned that the Study will endorse the ill-conceived and poorly articulated plan to widen the channel between West Lake and Austin Lake.
- The "channel" between West Lake and Austin Lake is actually a DRAIN, designed by civil engineers and controlled by the Drain Commission, to regulate the flow of water between the two lakes and several other lakes. More accurately, Austin Lake and West Lake are part of a chain of lakes, and the flow of water from one to the other affects all of the lakes. The proposal to alter the ecosystem and water flow by widening the Channel IGNORES THE DELICATE ECOSYSTEMS involved and illustrates the lack of thought put into this ill-conceived proposal.
- In addition to water quality issues, the Steering Committee IGNORED SAFETY CONCERNS related to increased boat traffic on West Lake, and even proposed adding a boat/jet ski rental facility (and docks that extend out into the lake) where the West Lake Drive In is currently located.

**CONCERNS SPECIFIC TO WEST LAKE**

- West Lake cannot support increased boat traffic. West Lake is a 330-acre lake, and West Lake residents specifically bought homes on West Lake because of the small, quiet nature of the lake. The size of West Lake makes it safe for swimming, kayaking, and boating. Widening the Channel will effectively require West Lake to accommodate boat traffic for a 1,400-acre lake (when combined with Austin Lake's 1,100 acres). It will have a negative impact on water quality and threaten the safety of West Lake riparians.
- West Lake is a fragile ecosystem – from the West Lake Nature Preserve – all the way to the Channel – and the Study has FAILED to take into account the impact that a widened Channel would have on that ecosystem. Promises to undertake an environmental impact assessment in the future are just promises – and we cannot count on the City of Portage or any developer to undertake the required efforts, particularly if the Study is accepted by the Portage City Council (the "Council").
- For decades, West Lake riparians have paid thousands of dollars in fees and assessments in order to carefully plan and implement programs to manage the weeds and water quality issues on West Lake. The introduction of invasive species from Austin Lake riparians or other non-resident boaters will negatively impact the many years and thousands of dollars that have been invested by West Lake riparians.

**● The Steering Committee was STACKED AGAINST WEST LAKE.**

- City Council Members who served on the Steering Committee MUST RECUSE THEMSELVES from the City Council vote. The chairperson of the committee is a member of the City Council WHO LIVES ON AUSTIN LAKE – Lori Knapp. Another member of the City Council and member of the Steering Committee is Jim Pearson – WHO LIVES ON AUSTIN LAKE.
- In addition to the above, the Vice-Chairperson of the Steering Committee is a lawyer WHO LIVES ON AUSTIN LAKE – Danielle Mason Anderson.
- In addition, the President of the Austin Lake Riparians – AJ Spicer – is on the Steering Committee.
- One "representative" of West Lake actually is from the group that owns the Cove Bistro, and clearly the restaurant does not share the same perspectives/goals as West Lake residents. Another West Lake "representative" is a REAL ESTATE SPECULATOR, who is only looking out for his investment in the West Lake Drive-In property. He has never lived on or owned a residence on West Lake.
- Gary Goodchild was a representative on the steering committee. He is a West Lake Association Board member.

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**CONCERNS SPECIFIC TO AUSTIN LAKE**

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- Austin Lake is already a heavily fished lake, with multiple contests and tournaments throughout the summer. The negative impact of this constant heavy fishing on the environment, as well as Austin Lake homeowners' privacy and use and enjoyment of their lakefront property is significant.
- 
- To widen the channel is to invite even more anglers, noise pollution, and erosion of the lakefront from the increase in boat traffic of all kinds. For the same reasons, a proposed change to Lakeview Park to add an additional dock would have a negative impact on the water traffic and noise that residents of the Northwest end of Austin Lake have to endure.
- The wetlands area located between Woodbine and Stanley Avenues must be preserved.

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**CONCERNS SPECIFIC TO ALL PORTAGE TAXPAYERS/CITIZENS**

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- In order to widen the Channel, the City of Portage will SPEND MILLIONS OF TAXPAYER DOLLARS to acquire HOUSES FROM OUR NEIGHBORS, FELLOW CITIZENS OF PORTAGE. The Study FAILS to show the HOUSES THAT WILL BE ACQUIRED AND DEMOLISHED but the only way to do that when a homeowner is unwilling to sell is to TAKE THE HOUSE BY EMINENT DOMAIN.
- The many millions of dollars that will be necessary in order to widen the Channel MUST come, in large part, from Portage residents who will be required to pay increased taxes and/or special assessments. A complete picture of these costs is not spelled out in the study. More specifically, hundreds of thousands and perhaps millions of dollars will come from Austin Lake and West Lake residents whose property values will be negatively impacted by this thoughtless proposal to widen the Channel.
- The Steering Committee and the City Council are seeking to BYPASS THE REQUIRED REGULAR PROCESS – REVIEW BY THE CITY PLANNING COMMISSION – in order to avoid any possible objections.
- The Steering Committee DID NOT HOLD OPEN MEETINGS. There has been a COMPLETE LACK OF TRANSPARENCY related to the development of the Study. AT NO TIME did the City of Portage – or the Steering Committee – ever explain in detail or specifically point out – that a major goal of the Study was to widen the Channel.

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Although there are a number of thoughtful ideas about traffic calming, pedestrian safety, and business corridor improvements included in the Study, the widening of the Channel is not one of them. As a citizen of Portage and taxpayer, I object to the widening of the Channel and ask that the Study be rejected in its entirety unless the Study is amended to remove any and all references to the widening of the Channel.

Dear Council Member NAME:

Our names are Peter & Judy Croden and I have lived at 1925 Lakeview Drive in the City of Portage since 2004. As a voting citizen of Portage, I STRONGLY object to the proposed Draft Final Lake Center District Corridor and Placemaking Study (the "Study") that was developed by a biased Steering Committee (the "Steering Committee") and in particular, that part of the Study that relates to the proposed widening of the Channel/Drain (the "Channel") between West Lake and Austin Lake.

Please note that I AM PARTICULARLY CONCERNED about WATER QUALITY and SAFETY issues on West Lake.

● The "channel" between West Lake and Austin Lake is a DRAIN, designed by civil engineers and controlled by the Drain Commission, to regulate the flow of water between the two lakes and several other lakes. More accurately, Austin Lake and West Lake are part of a chain of lakes, and the flow of water from one to the other affects all of the lakes. The proposal to alter the ecosystem and water flow by widening the Channel IGNORES THE DELICATE ECOSYSTEMS involved and illustrates the lack of thought put into this ill-conceived proposal. Empty promises to undertake environmental impact assessment in the future are just promises – and we cannot count on the City of Portage or any developer to undertake the required efforts, particularly if the Study is accepted by the Portage City Council (the "Council").

● In addition to water quality issues, the Steering Committee IGNORED SAFETY CONCERNs related to increased boat traffic on West Lake, and even proposed adding a boat/jet ski rental facility (and docks that extend out into the lake) where the West Lake Drive In is currently located.

● West Lake cannot support increased boat traffic. West Lake is a 330-acre lake, and West Lake residents specifically bought homes on West Lake because of the small, quiet nature of the lake. The size of West Lake makes it safe for swimming, kayaking, and boating. Widening the Channel will effectively require West Lake to accommodate boat traffic for a 1,400-acre lake (when combined with Austin Lake's 1100 acres). It will have a negative impact on water quality and threaten the safety of West Lake riparians.

● For decades, West Lake riparians have paid thousands of dollars in fees and assessments in order to carefully plan and implement programs to manage the weeds and water quality issues on West Lake. The introduction of invasive species from Austin Lake riparians or other non-resident boaters will negatively impact the many years and thousands of dollars that have been invested by West Lake riparians.

● The Steering Committee was STACKED AGAINST WEST LAKE.

- City Council Members who served on the Steering Committee MUST RECUSE THEMSELVES from the City Council vote. The chairperson of the committee is a member of the City Council WHO LIVES ON AUSTIN LAKE – Lori Knapp. Another member of the City Council and member of the Steering Committee is Jim Pearson – WHO LIVES ON AUSTIN LAKE.
- In addition to the above, the Vice-Chairperson of the Steering Committee is a lawyer WHO LIVES ON AUSTIN LAKE – Danielle Mason Anderson.
- In addition, the President of the Austin Lake Riparians – AJ Spicer – is on the Steering Committee.
- One "representative" of West Lake actually is from the group that owns the Cove Bistro, and clearly the restaurant does not share the same perspectives/goals as West Lake residents. Another West Lake "representative" is a REAL ESTATE SPECULATOR, who is only looking out for his investment in the West Lake Drive-In property. He has never lived on or owned a residence on West Lake.

Although there are a number of thoughtful ideas about traffic calming, pedestrian safety, and business corridor improvements included in the Study, the widening of the Channel is not one of them. As a Portage citizen, taxpayer, and West Lake riparian, I object to the widening of the Channel and ask that the Study be rejected in its entirety unless the Study is amended to remove any and all references to the widening of the Channel.

Thank you for your attention to my concerns.

Sent from my iPad

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1986, 18 U.S.C. Sec. 2510, et seq. (the "ECPA"), notice is given that the information or documents in this electronic message are legally privileged and confidential information, intended only for the use of the individual or entity to whom it is sent. If you are not the intended recipient, please be aware that any disclosure, distribution, use or copying of the contents of this message is prohibited. If you have received this message in error, notify the sender immediately by return mail or contact [helpdesk@portagemi.gov](mailto:helpdesk@portagemi.gov) and delete this message and any attachments from your system. Thank you.

**Subject:** Fw: Portage Michigan Lake District Project

**Date:** Tuesday, May 11, 2021 at 7:06:50 AM Eastern Daylight Time

**From:** Claudette Reid <reidc@portagemi.gov>

**To:** Mary Beth Block <blockm@portagemi.gov>

Claudette Reid  
Councilmember, City of Portage  
[claudette.reid@portagemi.gov](mailto:claudette.reid@portagemi.gov)  
269-491-9725

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**From:** Claudette Reid

**Sent:** Tuesday, May 11, 2021 6:56 AM

**To:** Michael Burke

**Subject:** Re: Portage Michigan Lake District Project

Mr. Burke,

I have not decided my action on this plan yet. I do not believe that it will be a situation of "all or nothing" in terms of the many items of action included in this plan.

Here is some additional information on this study, which is online in its entirety at [portagemi.gov/721](http://portagemi.gov/721).

On Saturday, May 15 from 12 - 3 PM, the City of Portage will host a Lake Center District Corridor and Placemaking Study open house at Lakeview Park, in the heart of the Lake Center District. City staff and Steering Committee members will be on-site where interested individuals can view display boards and study details, ask questions and provide public feedback. In addition, you can provide comments online at [portagemi.gov/721](http://portagemi.gov/721). The public comment period will run through May 16.

After this, on a date yet to be determined, the City Council will meet to consider approval of the study, which will include a public hearing.

Thank you again for taking the time to express your opinions.

Best Regards,

Claudette

Claudette Reid  
Councilmember, City of Portage  
[claudette.reid@portagemi.gov](mailto:claudette.reid@portagemi.gov)  
269-491-9725

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**From:** Michael Burke [REDACTED]

**Sent:** Monday, May 10, 2021 10:46 AM

**To:** Claudette Reid

**Page 1 of 4**

**Subject:** Re: Portage Michigan Lake District Project

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Dear Council Member Reid,

I hope by your response that you will reject this plan. While I fully support change that will make the area better, that is not what I am seeing in this plan. I see it as both an economic and environmental disaster in the making.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Michael Burke

On Sun, May 9, 2021 at 9:52 PM Claudette Reid <[reidc@portagemi.gov](mailto:reidc@portagemi.gov)> wrote:

Mr. Burke,

I wanted to thank you for your email. I have read the attached materials and understand your preference is that the Study be rejected in its entirety. You would be supportive of improving pedestrian safety, bike trails, and landscape improvements along Portage Road.

There will be an opportunity on May 15 to discuss your ideas to improve the area at the open house at Lakeview Park. You can also submit your opinions on the Portage website until May 16. I have attached the press release with more information on these activities for your reference.

Please note that this is a recommendation from the Steering Committee and the Consultant, and that it can and likely will be modified based on citizen input. The City Council is the body that will determine if some or all of this proposal is accepted. I do not know when this will happen but it will not be before we get the feedback from the citizens.

Thank you again for taking the time to express your concerns to me.

Best regards,

Claudette

Claudette Reid

Councilmember, City of Portage

[claudette.reid@portagemi.gov](mailto:claudette.reid@portagemi.gov)

269-491-9725

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**From:** Michael Burke [REDACTED]

**Sent:** Saturday, May 8, 2021 3:53 PM

**To:** Claudette Reid

**Subject:** Portage Michigan Lake District Project

**CAUTION: THIS EMAIL IS FROM AN EXTERNAL SENDER**

Dear Council Member Reid:

My name is Michael Burke and I have lived at [REDACTED] in the City of Portage since 2010. I STRONGLY object to the proposed Draft Final Lake Center District Corridor and Placemaking Study (the "Study") that was developed by a biased Steering Committee (the "Steering Committee"). I found your proposal for the Lake Center District project more of a garbage dump of haphazard poorly thought-out ideas that were not based on any realistic data. You started out discussing making the street in the area safer for pedestrians and bicyclists yet that is the last improvement that you are actually proposing to implement. Reading your proposal, it is clear that you have slanted it in the interest of some developer and perhaps one or two business leaders, not the residents of Portage and what their needs and desires are for the area.

These two lakes are not a destination spot for tourists and from an environmental standpoint they are already at risk of becoming an environmental disaster. Adding condominiums, a larger boat ramp, and increasing the size of the canal are ensuring that the current lake residence is going to be living with this environmental disaster created by the greed of a few individuals. Both West Lake and Austin lake cannot handle a large influx of boats. Go visit Pine Lake on a nice weekend and you will see what happens with too much access to the lakes. West Lake in particular is a very small lake.

Please note that I AM PARTICULARLY CONCERNED about WATER QUALITY and SAFETY issues on West Lake.

- The canal between West Lake and Austin Lake is a DRAIN, designed by civil engineers and controlled by the Drain Commission, to regulate the flow of water between the two lakes and several other lakes. More accurately, Austin Lake and West Lake are part of a chain of lakes, and the flow of water from one to the other affects all of the lakes. The proposal to alter the ecosystem and water flow by widening the Canal IGNORES THE DELICATE ECOSYSTEMS involved and illustrates the lack of thought put into this ill-conceived proposal. Empty promises to undertake environmental impact assessment in the future are just promises – and we cannot count on the City of Portage or any developer to undertake the required efforts, particularly if the Study is accepted by the Portage City Council (the "Council").
- In addition to water quality issues, the Steering Committee IGNORED SAFETY CONCERNS related to increased boat traffic on West Lake, and even proposed adding a boat/jet ski rental facility (and docks that extend out into the lake) where the West Lake Drive In is currently located.
- West Lake cannot support increased boat traffic. West Lake is a 330-acre lake, and West Lake residents specifically bought homes on West Lake because of the small, quiet nature of the lake. The size of West Lake makes it safe for swimming, kayaking, and boating. Widening the Canal will effectively require West Lake to accommodate boat traffic for a 1,400-acre lake (when combined with Austin Lake's 1100 acres). It will have a negative impact on water quality and threaten the safety of West Lake riparians.
- For decades, West Lake riparians have paid thousands of dollars in fees and assessments in order to carefully plan and implement programs to manage the weeds and water quality issues on West Lake. The introduction of invasive species from Austin Lake riparians or other non-resident boaters will negatively impact the many years and thousands of dollars that have been invested by West Lake riparians.
- The Steering Committee was STACKED AGAINST WEST LAKE.
  - City Council Members who served on the Steering Committee MUST RECUSE THEMSELVES from the City Council vote. The chairperson of the committee is a member of the City Council WHO LIVES ON AUSTIN LAKE – Lori Knapp. Another member of the City Council and member of the Steering Committee is Jim Pearson – WHO LIVES ON AUSTIN LAKE.
  - In addition to the above, the Vice-Chairperson of the Steering Committee is a lawyer WHO LIVES ON AUSTIN LAKE – Danielle Mason Anderson.
  - In addition, the President of the Austin Lake Riparians – AJ Spicer – is on the Steering Committee.

o Only two members of the Steering Committee LIVE ON WEST LAKE. One "representative" of West Lake actually is from the group that owns the Cove Bistro, and clearly the restaurant does not share the same perspectives/goals as West Lake residents. The other West Lake "representative" is a REAL ESTATE SPECULATOR, who is only looking out for his investment in the West Lake Drive-In property. He has never lived on or owned a residence on West Lake.

o Although there are a few thoughtful ideas about traffic calming, pedestrian safety, and business corridor improvements included in the Study, the widening of the Canal, adding a boat/jet ski rental facility (and docks that extend out into the lake) where the West Lake Drive and Cove are located are not among them. Or, is allowing condominiums on the West Lake Drive-in location.

As a Portage taxpayer, and West Lake riparian, I object to the widening of the Canal and many of the other ideas that will cause permanent damage to the lakes and the wildlife preserve. I ask that the Study be rejected in its entirety and that the city focus is changed to improving pedestrian safety, bike trails, and landscape improvements along Portage Road. I would approve creating a small café with outdoor seating where the West Lake Drive-in is located to start creating an appealing place for residents to gather and enjoy the views and sunset at West Lake.

This project is poorly conceived, it would waste millions of taxpayer's dollars, it would not bring the economic growth suggested in this "FAKE" proposal, and would not create a pedestrian safe and friendly destination. I have many better ideas for the city if they are truly looking to improve this area and wish to create a more appealing place for residents and bring in visitors to the area without causing harm to the lakes.

Thank you for your attention to my concerns.

Michael Burke

Portage, MI 49002

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**Subject:** Fw: Strongly Oppose Widening of Channel Between West and Austin Lake  
**Date:** Tuesday, May 11, 2021 at 7:08:24 AM Eastern Daylight Time  
**From:** Claudette Reid <[reidc@portagemi.gov](mailto:reidc@portagemi.gov)>  
**To:** Mary Beth Block <[blockm@portagemi.gov](mailto:blockm@portagemi.gov)>

Claudette Reid  
Councilmember, City of Portage  
[claudette.reid@portagemi.gov](mailto:claudette.reid@portagemi.gov)  
269-491-9725

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**From:** Claudette Reid  
**Sent:** Monday, May 10, 2021 7:04 PM  
**To:** Amy Susan  
**Subject:** Re: Strongly Oppose Widening of Channel Between West and Austin Lake

Ms. Susan,

I wanted to thank you for your email. I understand your concerns regarding the channel portion of the plan. Are you supportive of the other aspects of the plan?

Here is some additional information on this study, which is online in its entirety at [portagemi.gov/721](http://portagemi.gov/721).

On Saturday, May 15 from 12 - 3 PM, the City of Portage will host a Lake Center District Corridor and Placemaking Study open house at Lakeview Park, in the heart of the Lake Center District. City staff and Steering Committee members will be on-site where interested individuals can view display boards and study details, ask questions and provide public feedback. In addition, you can provide comments online at [portagemi.gov/721](http://portagemi.gov/721). The public comment period will run through May 16.

After this, on a date yet to be determined, the City Council will meet to consider approval of the study, which will include a public hearing.

Thank you again for your input.

Best regards,  
Claudette

Claudette Reid  
Councilmember, City of Portage  
[claudette.reid@portagemi.gov](mailto:claudette.reid@portagemi.gov)  
269-491-9725

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**From:** Amy Susan [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, May 10, 2021 4:31 PM  
**To:** Claudette Reid

Page 1 of 2

**Subject:** Strongly Oppose Widening of Channel Between West and Austin Lake

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Hi Claudette,

I am writing in regard to the proposed plan to widen the channel between West and Austin Lake. I STRONGLY OPPOSE this plan due to the following reasons:

1. West Lake can simply not support increased boat traffic. Our lake is a small 330-acre lake. We purchased our home on West Lake in 2010 because of the peaceful and quiet nature of West Lake. If the channel is widened, West Lake will be required to accommodate boat traffic for a 1,400 acre lake. This will greatly impact our water quality and the safety of West Lake residents.
2. West Lake residents have paid thousands of dollars in fees and assessments to manage the weeds and water quality issues on West Lake. Invasive species from Austin Lake and other non-resident boaters will negatively impact the many years and thousands of dollars that have been invested by West Lake residents.
3. The cost to widen the channel would be astronomical! Austin and West Lake residents would be required to pay increased taxes and special assessments.
4. The Steering Committee and the City Council are seeking to bypass the required regular process-review by the city planning commission- in order to avoid any possible objections. The Steering Committee did not hold open meetings. There has been a complete lack of transparency related to the development of the Study. At no time did the City of Portage, or the Steering Committee, ever explain in detail that the major goal of the Study was to widen the Channel.
5. The “channel” between West Lake and Austin Lake is a DRAIN. The proposal to alter the ecosystem and water flow by widening the Channel ignores the delicate ecosystem.

As a citizen of Portage and taxpayer, I STRONGLY OBJECT, to the widening of the Channel and ask that the Study be rejected in its entirety unless the Study is amended to remove any and all references to the widening of the Channel.

Thank you for your time and attention to this very important matter.

Sincerely,

Amy Susan

Portage, MI 49002

**Subject:** Fw: Widening the Channel between West Lake & Austin Lake  
**Date:** Tuesday, May 11, 2021 at 7:09:25 AM Eastern Daylight Time  
**From:** Claudette Reid <[reidc@portagemi.gov](mailto:reidc@portagemi.gov)>  
**To:** Mary Beth Block <[blockm@portagemi.gov](mailto:blockm@portagemi.gov)>

Claudette Reid  
Councilmember, City of Portage  
[claudette.reid@portagemi.gov](mailto:claudette.reid@portagemi.gov)  
269-491-9725

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**From:** Linda Todd [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, May 10, 2021 7:18 PM  
**To:** Claudette Reid  
**Subject:** Re: Widening the Channel between West Lake & Austin Lake

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Dear Claudette,

Don & I appreciate you responding to our email so quickly. Yes we are very much opposed to widening the channel between West Lake & Austin Lake for the reasons mentioned in our email. The other parts of the study have some concern but mainly in regard to taxes. As you know nothing is free. Again, thanks for your reply. Don & Linda Todd

On Mon, May 10, 2021 at 7:07 PM Claudette Reid <[reidc@portagemi.gov](mailto:reidc@portagemi.gov)> wrote:

Mr. and Mrs. Todd,

I wanted to thank you for your email. I understand your concerns regarding the channel portion of the plan.

My understanding is that you are ONLY opposed to that portion of the plan that relates to widening the channel, and are supportive of the other aspects identified in the plan. Is that accurate?

Here is some additional information on this study, which is online in its entirety at [portagemi.gov/721](http://portagemi.gov/721).

On Saturday, May 15 from 12 - 3 PM, the City of Portage will host a Lake Center District Corridor and Placemaking Study open house at Lakeview Park, in the heart of the Lake Center District. City staff and Steering Committee members will be on-site where interested individuals can view display boards and study details, ask questions and provide public feedback. In addition, you can provide comments online at [portagemi.gov/721](http://portagemi.gov/721). The public comment period will run through May 16.

After this, on a date yet to be determined, the City Council will meet to consider approval of the study, which will include a public hearing.

Thank you again for your input.

Best regards,  
Claudette

Claudette Reid  
Councilmember, City of Portage  
[claudette.reid@portagemi.gov](mailto:claudette.reid@portagemi.gov)  
269-491-9725

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**From:** Linda Todd <[ltodd74@gmail.com](mailto:ltodd74@gmail.com)>  
**Sent:** Monday, May 10, 2021 4:02 PM  
**To:** Claudette Reid  
**Subject:** Widening the Channel between West Lake & Austin Lake

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Dear Councilmember Reid:

We would like to introduce ourselves. We are Don & Linda Todd. We had a home built on West Lake in 2012 in the City of Portage. As voting citizens of Portage, **WE STRONGLY OBJECT TO THE PROPOSED DRAFT FINAL LAKE CENTER DISTRICT CORRIDOR AND PLACEMAKING STUDY.** We are particularly concerned with the Study that relates to the proposed widening of the Channel between West Lake and Austin Lake.

**WE ARE CONCERNED ABOUT WATER QUALITY AND SAFETY ISSUES ON WEST LAKE.**

- The channel between West Lake and Austin Lake is a DRAIN. It was designed by civil engineers and is controlled by the Drain Commission to regulate the flow of water between the two lakes and several other lakes. The proposal to alter the ecosystem and water flow by widening the Channel ignores the ecosystems involved and illustrates the lack of thought put into this proposal.
- The Steering Committee IGNORED SAFETY CONCERNS related to the increased boat traffic on West Lake and even proposed adding a boat/jet ski rental facility with docks extending out into West Lake.

- West Lake cannot support increased boat traffic. West lake is a 330-acre lake. We particularly had a home built on this lake due to the size of the lake and quiet nature which is safe for swimming, kayaking and boating. Widening the Channel would require West Lake to accommodate boat traffic for a much larger lake. It would definitely have a NEGATIVE impact on water quality and threaten the safety of West Lake riparian's.
- For many years West Lake riparian's have paid thousands of dollars in fees and assessments in order to carefully plan and implement programs to manage the weeds and water quality issues on West Lake. The introduction of invasive species from Austin Lake riparian's/other boaters who launch their boats at the public access would negatively impact the money that has been invested by West Lake riparian's.

We are concerned that the Steering Committee was very heavily weighted towards Austin Lake residents.

There are a number of thoughtful ideas about traffic calming, pedestrian safety, and business improvements included in the study, the widening of the Channel is not one of them. As a Portage Citizen, Taxpayer, and West Lake riparian, WE OBJECT TO THE WIDENING OF THE CHANNEL and feel the Study should be rejected unless the Study is amended to remove any and all references to the widening of the Channel.

Thank you for taking the time to read this and hopefully understanding our concerns.

Sincerely,

*Don & Linda Todd*

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**Subject:** Fw: Lake Center District Plan

**Date:** Tuesday, May 11, 2021 at 7:19:43 AM Eastern Daylight Time

**From:** Claudette Reid <reidc@portagemi.gov>

**To:** Mary Beth Block <blockm@portagemi.gov>

Ms. Knapp,

Thank you for your additional information. I am not a road design engineer, but my late husband was. the road diet concept has good research behind it in terms of reducing traffic speeds, even though on the face of it that would not seem to be the case. There are several other traffic calming techniques being included in the plan to help slow the speeds and make the area safer. effective crosswalks will increase safety and make the area more user friendly for nonmotorized mobility and pedestrians.

I am forwarding your comments about Lakeview Drive to see about changes in its use, as this is not included in the proposed plan but is definitely an issue for the safety of the area.

Again, thank you for your comments.

Best regards,  
Claudette

Claudette Reid  
Councilmember, City of Portage  
[claudette.reid@portagemi.gov](mailto:claudette.reid@portagemi.gov)  
269-491-9725

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**From:** Keir Knapp [REDACTED] changes in its use

**Sent:** Monday, May 10, 2021 8:22 AM

**To:** Claudette Reid

**Subject:** Re: Lake Center District Plan

**CAUTION: THIS EMAIL IS FROM AN EXTERNAL SENDER**

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Claudette

Thank you for the quick response. I am definitely in favor of most of the plan other than the canal widening.

But since you asked, I'll relay some of my other concerns with the area, not necessarily just with the plan.

Traffic on Portage rd definitely needs to be addressed. The plan does that somewhat. At certain times the traffic is very heavy and very fast. It is VERY difficult to walk across Portage rd to get to the park. We love the park but often don't go there because of traffic. Perhaps a pedestrian bridge or underpass. It can also be very challenging to drive onto Portage rd while turning left from Lakeview. Sometimes you wait several minutes for a break in traffic. The plan reduces Portage rd to 3 lanes instead of 5. This SHOULD slow things down which is great BUT it may actually make it harder to walk across or drive onto because now all that volume will need to compress down to 3 lanes. I'm not sure how to address the sheer volume of traffic coming from Vicksburg and the south.

**Page 1 of 3**

The other issue that I think is being addressed, but maybe postponed, is the width of Lakeview dr. It is very narrow and passes quite close to several structures. However, widening it and bringing it up to modern standards will only INCREASE the amount and speed of traffic. It is quite concerning how many drivers use it as a thoroughfare to get over to S. Westnedge.

Thank you for following up and further addressing my concerns. We have been VERY happy with the Portage leadership over the years. We absolutely love this city. Love the parks and the bike paths, the schools and the lakes. Especially love the balanced budgets while still making continuous improvements! Please keep up the great work.

Regards  
Keir Knapp

Sent from my iPhone

On May 9, 2021, at 21:35, Claudette Reid <[reidc@portagemi.gov](mailto:reidc@portagemi.gov)> wrote:

Colonel Keir Knapp,

I wanted to thank you for your email. I have read the attached and understand your concerns regarding the channel portion of the plan.

My understanding is that you are ONLY opposed to that portion of the plan that relates to widening the channel, and are supportive of the other aspects identified in the plan. Is that accurate?

Thank you again for your input.

Best regards,  
Claudette

Claudette Reid  
Councilmember, City of Portage  
[claudette.reid@portagemi.gov](mailto:claudette.reid@portagemi.gov)  
269-491-9725

---

**From:** Keir Knapp [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Sunday, May 9, 2021 8:39 PM  
**To:** Claudette Reid  
**Subject:** Lake Center District Plan

CAUTION: THIS EMAIL IS FROM AN EXTERNAL SENDER  
Do not click on links or open attachments unless this is from a sender you know and trust.

Dear Councilwoman Reid

My name is Colonel Keir Knapp (USAF Retired). I have lived at [REDACTED], on West Lake, for 13 years now and in Portage for 23.

I would like to thank you and the council for your work and dedication to the city of Portage. We love it here.

**Page 2 of 3**

I applaud you all for your vision of the Lake District. It is already a great area and can be so much more. Many of the proposed changes and improvements are tremendous.

However, I need to emphasize my concerns with the plans around West Lake. We specifically bought a house on West Lake because of its smaller nature, privacy, and quiet friendliness. My family, and all the neighbors I talk to, want this to stay the same. We do NOT want the "canal" enlarged or the bridge raised. We live three houses away from the canal and do NOT want a parade of boats passing by. The lake cannot handle a huge influx of traffic. We don't want the traffic, the noise, the inexperienced boaters, or the higher chance of invasive species hitching a ride on visiting boats.

Please hear the concerns of the West Lake residents. We are not represented by the Steering Committee. We are not against progress and development but are opposed to "improvements" that will forever change the nature of West Lake.

Thank you for your time.

Regards, Keir Knapp

Sent from my iPhone

Sent from my iPhone

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**Subject:** Fw: West Lake  
**Date:** Tuesday, May 11, 2021 at 7:21:27 AM Eastern Daylight Time  
**From:** Claudette Reid <reidc@portagemi.gov>  
**To:** Mary Beth Block <blockm@portagemi.gov>  
**Attachments:** NEWS RELEASE re LCD.pdf

Claudette Reid  
Councilmember, City of Portage  
[claudette.reid@portagemi.gov](mailto:claudette.reid@portagemi.gov)  
269-491-9725

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**From:** Claudette Reid  
**Sent:** Sunday, May 9, 2021 9:30 PM  
**To:** Scott Boerma  
**Subject:** Re: West Lake

Mr. Boerma,

Thank you for writing to me about your concerns regarding the proposed Lake Center District Corridor and Placemaking Study. I have just received a similar email from your wife as well. I understand that you both are opposed to any change that would bring additional boat traffic onto West Lake. I will bring your concerns to the Council.

I encourage your to review the whole study and its recommendations on the Portage Website and take the opportunity to post your concerns there as well until May 16. Also, there will be an open house meeting at Lake Center Park on May 15 to give citizens an opportunity to review the study and ask questions as well as to state any concerns. I have attached a copy of the Press Release about these activities for your reference.

Thank you again for your email.

Best regards,  
Claudette

Claudette Reid  
Councilmember, City of Portage  
[claudette.reid@portagemi.gov](mailto:claudette.reid@portagemi.gov)  
269-491-9725

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**From:** Scott Boerma [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Sunday, May 9, 2021 3:44 PM  
**To:** Patricia Randall; Lori Knapp; Jim Pearson; Chris Burns; Victor Ledbetter; Claudette Reid; Terry Urban  
**Subject:** West Lake

**CAUTION: THIS EMAIL IS FROM AN EXTERNAL SENDER**

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To Whom It Concerns:

My wife and I bought a cottage on West lake eight years ago and have been carefully up-dating and expanding it to be our dream home on a quiet lake. We never imagined that something might jeopardize the peace, health, and safety on our small lake by opening it to others who have not invested their life savings into creating their dream life on the water.

We have both seen first-hand what happens when a channel is widened between two bodies of water. The same thing was done where my wife grew up, and that lake is now a swamp. The balance of *both* lakes will be affected negatively.

The thought of a jet ski rental on the site of the old drive-in restaurant is absolutely unacceptable. West Lake is too small for that kind of operation, and the noise pollution will be overwhelming. (It's already much worse than it was when we moved in.) Some people on West Lake enjoy swimming across and deep into the center of the lake. It's frightening to think about the safety hazards that will increase dramatically if non-residents suddenly have access to jet skis.

We have serious erosion issues on West Lake as it is. Opening the lake to non-residents is therefore troubling. Will the city of Portage be responsible for financial problems caused if opening the channel damages our lake and therefore drastically lowers the value of our homes? I am overtly opposed to anything that brings additional traffic to the lake onto which we have chosen to invest our life savings. Please reconsider. We pay exorbitant taxes, which we're happy to pay, for the privileges that come with living on our quiet lake. Decisions about our lake made by non-West Lake residents that have potential for damaging our way of life seem highly unethical.

Thank you,

Scott Boerma

[REDACTED]  
Portage, MI 49002

**Subject:** Fw: Channel

**Date:** Tuesday, May 11, 2021 at 7:22:56 AM Eastern Daylight Time

**From:** Claudette Reid <[reidc@portagemi.gov](mailto:reidc@portagemi.gov)>

**To:** Mary Beth Block <[blockm@portagemi.gov](mailto:blockm@portagemi.gov)>

Claudette Reid  
Councilmember, City of Portage  
[claudette.reid@portagemi.gov](mailto:claudette.reid@portagemi.gov)  
269-491-9725

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**From:** Claudette Reid  
**Sent:** Saturday, May 8, 2021 10:21 AM  
**To:** Elaine Lemmer  
**Subject:** Re: Channel

Ms. Lemmer,

I wanted to thank you for your email. I have read the attached materials and understand your concerns regarding the channel portion of the plan.

My understanding is that you are ONLY opposed to that portion of the plan that relates to widening the channel, and are supportive of the other aspects identified in the plan. Is that accurate?

Thank you again for your input.

Best regards,  
Claudette

Claudette Reid  
Councilmember, City of Portage  
[claudette.reid@portagemi.gov](mailto:claudette.reid@portagemi.gov)  
269-491-9725

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**From:** Elaine Lemmer [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Thursday, May 6, 2021 7:06 PM  
**To:** Claudette Reid  
**Subject:** Channel

**CAUTION: THIS EMAIL IS FROM AN EXTERNAL SENDER**

Do not click on links or open attachments unless this is from a sender you know and trust.

Dear Council Member Claudette Reid,

My name is Elaine Lemmer and I have lived at [REDACTED] in the City of Portage since 1981. As a voting citizen of Portage, I

**Page 1 of 3**

STRONGLY object to the proposed Draft Final Lake Center District Corridor and Placemaking Study (the "Study") that was developed by a biased Steering Committee (the "Steering Committee") and in particular, that part of the Study that relates to the proposed widening of the Channel/Drain (the "Channel") between West Lake and Austin Lake.

Please note that I AM PARTICULARLY CONCERNED about WATER QUALITY and SAFETY issues on West Lake.

● The "channel" between West Lake and Austin Lake is a DRAIN, designed by civil engineers and controlled by the Drain Commission, to regulate the flow of water between the two lakes and several other lakes. More accurately, Austin Lake and West Lake are part of a chain of lakes, and the flow of water from one to the other affects all of the lakes. The proposal to alter the ecosystem and water flow by widening the Channel IGNORES THE DELICATE ECOSYSTEMS involved and illustrates the lack of thought put into this ill-conceived proposal. Empty promises to undertake environmental impact assessment in the future are just promises – and we cannot count on the City of Portage or any developer to undertake the required efforts, particularly if the Study is accepted by the Portage City Council (the "Council").

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● In addition to water quality issues, the Steering Committee IGNORED SAFETY CONCERNS related to increased boat traffic on West Lake, and even proposed adding a boat/jet ski rental facility (and docks that extend out into the lake) where the West Lake Drive In is currently located.

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● West Lake cannot support increased boat traffic. West Lake is a 330-acre lake, and West Lake residents specifically bought homes on West Lake because of the small, quiet nature of the lake. The size of West Lake makes it safe for swimming, kayaking, and boating. Widening the Channel will effectively require West Lake to accommodate boat traffic for a 1,400-acre lake (when combined with Austin Lake's 1100 acres). It will have a negative impact on water quality and threaten the safety of West Lake riparians.

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● For decades, West Lake riparians have paid thousands of dollars in fees and assessments in order to carefully plan and implement programs to manage the weeds and water quality issues on West Lake. The introduction of invasive species from Austin Lake riparians or other non-resident boaters will negatively impact the many years and thousands of dollars that have been invested by West Lake riparians.

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● The Steering Committee was STACKED AGAINST WEST LAKE.

- City Council Members who served on the Steering Committee MUST RECUSE THEMSELVES from the City Council vote. The chairperson of the committee is a member of the City Council WHO LIVES ON AUSTIN LAKE – Lori Knapp. Another member of the City Council and member of the Steering Committee is Jim Pearson – WHO LIVES ON AUSTIN LAKE.
- In addition to the above, the Vice-Chairperson of the Steering Committee is a lawyer WHO LIVES ON AUSTIN LAKE – Danielle Mason Anderson.
- In addition, the President of the Austin Lake Riparians – AJ Spicer – is on the Steering Committee.
- One "representative" of West Lake actually is from the group that owns the Cove Bistro, and clearly the restaurant does not share the same perspectives/goals as West Lake residents. Another West Lake "representative" is a REAL ESTATE SPECULATOR, who is only looking out for his investment in the West Lake Drive-In property. He has never lived on or owned a residence on West Lake.

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Although there are a number of thoughtful ideas about traffic calming, pedestrian safety, and business corridor improvements included in the Study, the widening of the Channel is not one of them. As a Portage citizen, taxpayer, and West Lake riparian, I object to the widening of the Channel and ask that the Study be rejected in its entirety unless the Study is amended to remove any and all references to the widening of the Channel.

Thank you for your attention to my concerns.

Elaine Lemmer

Sent from my iPad

**Subject:** Fw: lake center plan  
**Date:** Tuesday, May 11, 2021 at 7:23:37 AM Eastern Daylight Time  
**From:** Claudette Reid <reidc@portagemi.gov>  
**To:** Mary Beth Block <blockm@portagemi.gov>

Claudette Reid  
Councilmember, City of Portage  
[claudette.reid@portagemi.gov](mailto:claudette.reid@portagemi.gov)  
269-491-9725

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**From:** billvandermay@aol.com [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Saturday, May 8, 2021 10:32 AM  
**To:** Claudette Reid  
**Subject:** Re: lake center plan

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You are correct. Thank you for your prompt reply.

William

In a message dated 5/8/2021 9:20:15 AM Eastern Standard Time, reidc@portagemi.gov writes:

Mr. Vandermay,

I wanted to thank you for your email. I have read the attached materials and understand your concerns regarding the channel portion of the plan.

My understanding is that you are ONLY opposed to that portion of the plan that relates to widening the channel, and are supportive of the other aspects identified in the plan. Is that accurate?

Thank you again for your input.

Best regards,  
Claudette

Claudette Reid  
Councilmember, City of Portage  
[claudette.reid@portagemi.gov](mailto:claudette.reid@portagemi.gov)  
269-491-9725

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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Friday, May 7, 2021 6:59 PM  
**To:** Claudette Reid

**Subject:** Fwd: lake center plan

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From: [REDACTED]

Sent: 5/7/2021 6:55:49 PM Eastern Standard Time  
Subject: lake center plan

I am opposed to the Lake center district plan for reasons on the attach file. Thank you, William Vandermay

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**Subject:** Fw: Lake Center Development  
**Date:** Tuesday, May 11, 2021 at 11:20:42 AM Eastern Daylight Time  
**From:** Claudette Reid <[reidc@portagemi.gov](mailto:reidc@portagemi.gov)>  
**To:** Mary Beth Block <[blockm@portagemi.gov](mailto:blockm@portagemi.gov)>  
**Attachments:** pastedImage.png

Claudette Reid  
Councilmember, City of Portage  
[claudette.reid@portagemi.gov](mailto:claudette.reid@portagemi.gov)  
269-491-9725

---

**From:** Rex Cummings [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 11, 2021 9:02 AM  
**To:** Claudette Reid  
**Subject:** Re: Lake Center Development

**CAUTION: THIS EMAIL IS FROM AN EXTERNAL SENDER**

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Claudette,

You have an excellent point. While I don't support the whole plan as is, I do support changes in the area. I think the main changes to the roads are needed and would add a lot to our city. One of the areas that was not specifically addressed in the plan summary was the area just south of the canal. There is a limited sight distance between Lakeview Drive and the curve to the north. Due to high traffic volume during peak hours, it is very difficult and dangerous to turn left (north) at this intersection. Improvements were made a couple of years ago that did help, but didn't go far enough. I would like to see this addressed particularly in light of the additional traffic that will occur at Lakeview Park.

I would urge you to consider improvements to the corridor without creating a canal that can connect the lakes with motor boats. This is not necessary to achieve the safety and economic vitality goals for this area and I would argue that it creates a more dangerous situation on West Lake. Raising the road will inhibit the line of sight south of Lakeview Drive making that intersection even more of a problem. A huge part of the expense of this project also will come with changing the canal. I really think this is a mistake.

Again thanks for listening and I appreciate your attention and work on this project.

Rex Cummings

On Tue, May 11, 2021 at 6:48 AM Claudette Reid <[reidc@portagemi.gov](mailto:reidc@portagemi.gov)> wrote:

Mr. Cummings,

Thank you for your email and for sharing your research in tax rates. I totally understand that taxes

are a combination of home value and millage rate. As a city we have control over only half of that equation.

I encourage you to consider issues such as safety and the economic vitality of the corridor that this entire plan addresses. Also, without an intentional plan on future development in the LCD area there will still be changes in the area but probably not ones that anyone would see as positive. Staying the same is really not an option. That is the reason that the City commissioned this study; to provide the tools to help manage and encourage positive development going forward.

Thank you again for your thoughtful comments.

Best regards,  
Claudette

Claudette Reid  
Councilmember, City of Portage  
[claudette.reid@portagemi.gov](mailto:claudette.reid@portagemi.gov)  
269-491-9725

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**From:** Rex Cummings [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, May 10, 2021 11:18 AM  
**To:** Claudette Reid  
**Subject:** Re: Lake Center Development

**CAUTION: THIS EMAIL IS FROM AN EXTERNAL SENDER**

Do not click on links or open attachments unless this is from a sender you know and trust.  
Good Morning Claudette,

Thanks for the information on the city taxes. I appreciate that Portage has a lower rate, but as you know, the rate is only part of the equation. I was attempting to point out that when people choose to live in Portage, the overall cost can be quite high. Of course, it can be more expensive than living in rural communities surrounding Portage but it is also on the high side when compared to similar sized cities. As a homeowner, I must understand the total cost of taxes, not just the city taxes or the tax rate. The average cost of housing is also high when comparing cities. I did some research with similar sized cities. To illustrate, I looked at the 6 cities that most closely resemble Portage in population. I researched their tax rate as well as the average home value to see how much homeowners in these cities are paying. Below is the total tax rate X average house cost (taxable value is 50% of house cost) = average cost per homeowner.

Georgetown (Grandville)  $26.15 \times \$187,221 (\$93,610) = \$2431$

Kentwood  $38.19 \times \$211,165 (\$105,582) = \$4032$

Battle Creek  $51.33 \times \$82,203 (\$41,101.5) = \$2110$

Portage  $43.46 \times \$193,706 (\$96,853) = \$4209$

East Lansing  $55.25 \times \$195,043 (\$97,522) = \$5388$

Roseville  $52.99 \times \$103,609 (\$51,805) = \$2745$

Redford  $61.14 \times \$138,883 (\$69,441) = \$4245$

To further illustrate that tax rate and taxable value are combined when understanding property tax

expense, here is a real example that happened to me. When I was shopping for a home on a lake, we looked at a home on Barton Lake. While the overall tax rate for Vicksburg and Portage are similar, homes of comparable size cost much less on Barton Lake resulting in the overall tax bill being lower. So, tax rate alone is not a good measure for a homeowner when considering the cost of owning a home. I hope this helps put this topic in my perspective as a homeowner. Also, please understand, I'm not complaining about the tax rate. I chose to live here for a variety of reasons and by doing so, I've agreed to paying the current tax rate based on my home value.

I also want to apologize for not clearly stating my concern for the cost of the proposed project. My point that I intended to convey is that I do not wish to pay for this project as it does not bring me any benefits that are valuable to me as a homeowner. I have not yet seen the cost impact to homeowners particularly those that live on Austin or West Lakes and I do not wish to increase my cost of living in Portage in order to have this area developed.

I wish again to express my thanks to you for listening to my concerns and responding. I've talked to several of my neighbors and have yet to find anyone who is supportive of the canal. I hope the council is mindful and sensitive to the thoughts and needs of the homeowners on West Lake. Please feel free to share these thoughts with fellow council members. If you have questions or wish to share additional thoughts or information, I'm certainly open and available.

Sincerely,

Rex Cummings

Portage, MI 49002

On Sat, May 8, 2021 at 10:15 AM Claudette Reid <[reidc@portagemi.gov](mailto:reidc@portagemi.gov)> wrote:

Mr. Cummings,

I also wanted to respond to your comment that "however the tax rates in Portage are some of the highest rates around". Here is an article from 2019 where Julie Mack compares Kalamazoo County tax rates.

[https://www.mlive.com/news/kalamazoo/2011/11/which\\_kalamazoo\\_county\\_commu.html](https://www.mlive.com/news/kalamazoo/2011/11/which_kalamazoo_county_commu.html)

I would suggest that you cannot reasonably compare small townships in the county to the cities as the level of services provided is significantly different. Comparing the three similar cities in Kalamazoo County (Kalamazoo, Kalamazoo Township and Portage) we have the lowest millage rate.

I also wanted to point out that only 21% of the taxes paid in Portage actually comes to the City.

Percentage of Tax Levy	City Millage
City	21.33%
County	15.63%
Kalamazoo Regional Ed. Services	12.83%
Community College	5.63%
Library	3.96%
Local Schools	40.62%
	100.00%
General Operations	7.3200
Capital Improvements	2.0000
Leaf Pickup/Spring Cleanup	.3440
Curbside Recycling	.3000
Municipal Streets	.6760
	10.6400
	\$14.67
	\$4.01
	\$0.69
	\$0.60
	\$1.35
	\$21.33

Compared to similar sized cities in Michigan we are in the lowest 20% in terms of tax rates. (I have a table for this, but cannot put my fingers on it right now.)

Best regards,  
Claudette

Claudette Reid  
Councilmember, City of Portage  
[claudette.reid@portagemi.gov](mailto:claudette.reid@portagemi.gov)  
269-491-9725

**From:** Rex Cummings [REDACTED]

**Sent:** Friday, May 7, 2021 11:52 AM

**To:** Patricia Randall; Lori Knapp; Jim Pearson; Chris Burns; Victor Ledbetter; Claudette Reid; Terry Urban

**Subject:** Lake Center Development

**CAUTION: THIS EMAIL IS FROM AN EXTERNAL SENDER**

Do not click on links or open attachments unless this is from a sender you know and trust.

Dear Council Members,

I am a resident of West Lake and would like to voice my excitement and concerns with the proposed development. While I'm not thrilled with regard to the additional automobile traffic brought to the Lakeview Park Area, I am excited to see the investment into our city and making our neighborhood attractive to the community. I do have some significant concerns.

I moved here 2 years ago and chose this lake because of it's small size and limited access. I was surprised to find how busy the lake traffic is during the summer, particularly during the weekends. I have not felt entirely comfortable out on the lake when so many boats are utilizing this small space for recreation. That brings me to my first concern. Adding boat traffic by allowing boats to launch at the public access on Austin Lake and traveling through a canal will only add traffic to a small lake that is already near maximum capacity. This is going to cause some seriously dangerous conditions for both residents and visitors. For this reason alone, I do not support the canal portion of the project.

I also have environmental concerns. Residents of the lake have a vested interest to keep the lake healthy and clean, but visitors will not be as diligent. Litter, garbage as well as fuel residue will all impact the lake environment in a negative way. This is the 2nd reason I do not support the canal.

My final concern revolves around cost. I already support the health of the lake with additional tax funds. What will be the impact to me as a homeowner? It has been a dream of mine to live on a lake and it took me 56 years to achieve this dream, however the tax rates in Portage are some of the highest rates around. As I get closer to retirement, I'm concerned about being able to pay the taxes on this property. I have retirees living on both sides of me and are on fixed incomes. I'm worried they won't be able to afford these changes. This project will likely benefit visitors to the

area and business owners most. I haven't seen how this project will be funded and what the impact will be to me and my neighbors. Will the businesses and visitors fund the weed control and additional environmental efforts needed to keep our lakes clean and healthy? Will the homeowners see a reprieve in their taxes when they sacrifice for the more crowded lakes, the additional noise, traffic and people now thrust into our community?

I did not choose to live on West Lake because there was a park, canal and commercial district right up the street. I chose to live here because it's a quiet piece of paradise near all of the amenities that Portage has to offer. Overall, I'm somewhat neutral or perhaps against the whole project, but I am definitely against the expanded canal and negative impact to me and my family living on West Lake.

Please, be considerate of my thoughts while making your decision that will affect me personally. Ask yourself how you would feel if you were in my shoes. Finally, thank you very much for reading and considering my input. Feel free to contact me to discuss my concerns further.

Sincerely,

Rex Cummings  
[REDACTED]

Portage, MI 49002  
[REDACTED]

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**Subject:** Fw: West Lake Response to Channel Expansion

**Date:** Tuesday, May 11, 2021 at 11:22:16 AM Eastern Daylight Time

**From:** Claudette Reid <[reidc@portagemi.gov](mailto:reidc@portagemi.gov)>

**To:** Mary Beth Block <[blockm@portagemi.gov](mailto:blockm@portagemi.gov)>

Claudette Reid  
Councilmember, City of Portage  
[claudette.reid@portagemi.gov](mailto:claudette.reid@portagemi.gov)  
269-491-9725

---

**From:** Orville Smith [REDACTED]

**Sent:** Tuesday, May 11, 2021 8:42 AM

**To:** Claudette Reid

**Subject:** Re: West Lake Response to Channel Expansion

**CAUTION: THIS EMAIL IS FROM AN EXTERNAL SENDER**

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People can already come through the canal on kayaks, jet skis and I have a 14ft Lund fishing boat that can go through so why bother?

Thank you for your attention  
Orville

On Tue, May 11, 2021 at 7:06 AM Claudette Reid <[reidc@portagemi.gov](mailto:reidc@portagemi.gov)> wrote:

Mr Smith,

Thank you for your additional comments. I appreciate the time you have taken to provide your opinion.

The proposed widening of the channel is not specific in the study. In my opinion, if the intent is to allow non-power craft (kayaks and canoes) only, there would be no change to the road but any larger craft would likely require raising the road. We do not currently have specific information on the relative costs for the different options. That will be part of the conversation going forward.

Here is some additional information on this study, which is online in its entirety at [portagemi.gov/721](http://portagemi.gov/721).

On Saturday, May 15 from 12 - 3 PM, the City of Portage will host a Lake Center District Corridor and Placemaking Study open house at Lakeview Park, in the heart of the Lake Center District. City staff and Steering Committee members will be on-site where interested individuals can view display boards and study details, ask questions and provide public feedback. In addition, you can provide comments online at [portagemi.gov/721](http://portagemi.gov/721). The public comment period will run through May 16.

After this, on a date yet to be determined, the City Council will meet to consider approval of the study, which will include a public hearing.

Thank you again.

Best regards,  
Claudette

Claudette Reid  
Councilmember, City of Portage  
[claudette.reid@portagemi.gov](mailto:claudette.reid@portagemi.gov)  
269-491-9725

---

**From:** Orville Smith [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, May 10, 2021 9:43 AM  
**To:** Claudette Reid  
**Subject:** Re: West Lake Response to Channel Expansion

**CAUTION: THIS EMAIL IS FROM AN EXTERNAL SENDER**

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Claudette, first of all thank you for your response. I sent this information to all the commissioners and you are the only one to respond so far.

I am against the widening of the canal for a lot of reasons most of which are in the letter. However, West Lake has other problems that will be made worse by making it bigger. There are at least four drains into West Lake. There is one next to me on the channel. It drains all the area from Westnedge that includes Barberry, Melody, Larkspur and Marigold and dumps the runoff directly into the channel. Note picture attached that represents excess salt that went directly into the lake. Currently there are drains that dump runoff from Portage road into the existing canal they want to make bigger.

Years ago during WPA days the drains were made to connect Long, Austin, West Lake and Gourdneck together so that all the lakes would be the same level, thus avoiding floods. That has worked so if it isn't

broke don't fix it.

They have had bass tournaments held in Austin Lake and the fisherman with smaller boats could get into

West. During that tournament 39 bass were caught in West and weighed in at Austin. Allowing bigger boats to come in is

a no no..Some of the folks in Austin think it is a big deal to run their jet skis in West. We have had them speed

up our channel and they think that is a big deal.

My other question is how do they change Portage Road to allow pontoon boats that are eight feet high

clear the road and at what cost?

Thank you very much for listening.

Orville and Linda

On Sat, May 8, 2021 at 10:18 AM Claudette Reid <[reidc@portagemi.gov](mailto:reidc@portagemi.gov)> wrote:

Mr. and Mrs. Smith,

I wanted to thank you for your email. I have read the attached materials and understand your concerns regarding the channel portion of the plan.

My understanding is that you are ONLY opposed to that portion of the plan that relates to widening the channel, and are supportive of the other aspects identified in the plan. is that accurate?

Thank you again for your input.

Best regards,  
Claudette

Claudette Reid  
Councilmember, City of Portage  
[claudette.reid@portagemi.gov](mailto:claudette.reid@portagemi.gov)  
269-491-9725

---

**From:** Orville Smith [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Friday, May 7, 2021 10:23 AM  
**To:** Lori Knapp; Jim Pearson; Chris Burns; Victor Ledbetter; Claudette Reid; Terry Urban  
**Subject:** West Lake Response to Channel Expansion

**CAUTION: THIS EMAIL IS FROM AN EXTERNAL SENDER**

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Please find attached document which my wife and I approve.

Thank you,

Orville and Linda

--

Orville Smith REALTOR®  
CDPE, SRES, COBOR

[REDACTED]  
RE/MAX Advantage

[REDACTED]  
Portage, MI 49002

**REFERRALS ARE APPRECIATED THANK YOU**

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8\\_6COozINbo&feature=youtu.be](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8_6COozINbo&feature=youtu.be)  
[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8\\_6COozINbo&feature=youtu.be](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8_6COozINbo&feature=youtu.be)

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--  
Orville Smith REALTOR®  
CDPE, SRES, COBOR

[REDACTED]  
RE/MAX Advantage

[REDACTED]  
Portage, MI 49002

**REFERRALS ARE APPRECIATED THANK YOU**

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8\\_6COozINbo&feature=youtu.be](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8_6COozINbo&feature=youtu.be)  
[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8\\_6COozINbo&feature=youtu.be](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8_6COozINbo&feature=youtu.be)

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--  
**Orville Smith REALTOR®  
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[REDACTED]  
RE/MAX Advantage

[REDACTED]  
Portage, MI 49002

**REFERRALS ARE APPRECIATED THANK YOU**

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[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8\\_6COozINbo&feature=youtu.be](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8_6COozINbo&feature=youtu.be)

**WATCH THIS VIDEO**

**Subject:** Fw: Channel

**Date:** Tuesday, May 11, 2021 at 11:26:42 AM Eastern Daylight Time

**From:** Claudette Reid <reidc@portagemi.gov>

**To:** Mary Beth Block <blockm@portagemi.gov>

Claudette Reid  
Councilmember, City of Portage  
[claudette.reid@portagemi.gov](mailto:claudette.reid@portagemi.gov)  
269-491-9725

---

**From:** Julie Hakken [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 11, 2021 8:00 AM  
**To:** Claudette Reid  
**Subject:** Re: Channel

**CAUTION: THIS EMAIL IS FROM AN EXTERNAL SENDER**

Do not click on links or open attachments unless this is from a sender you know and trust.

Our main concern is the channel, however, land use of the WL Drive-In property is also an issue.

JMHakken

Sent from my iPhone

On May 11, 2021, at 6:31 AM, Claudette Reid <reidc@portagemi.gov> wrote:

Mr. & Mrs. Hakken,

I wanted to thank you for your email. I have read the attached materials and understand your concerns regarding the channel portion of the plan.

My understanding is that you are ONLY opposed to that portion of the plan that relates to widening the channel, and are supportive of the other aspects identified in the plan. Is that accurate?

Thank you again for your input.

Best regards,  
Claudette

Claudette Reid  
Councilmember, City of Portage  
[claudette.reid@portagemi.gov](mailto:claudette.reid@portagemi.gov)  
269-491-9725

---

**From:** Julie Hakken [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, May 10, 2021 1:21 PM  
**To:** Claudette Reid  
**Subject:** Channel

**CAUTION: THIS EMAIL IS FROM AN EXTERNAL SENDER**

Do not click on links or open attachments unless this is from a sender you know and trust.

Dear Council Member Reid,

Our names are Rick and Julie Hakken and we have lived at [REDACTED] Dr. in the City of Portage since 2012.

As voting citizens of Portage, we STRONGLY object to the proposed Draft Final Lake Center District Corridor and Placemaking Study (the "Study") that was developed by a biased Steering Committee (the "Steering Committee") and in particular, that part of the Study that relates to the proposed widening of the Channel/Drain (the "Channel") between West Lake and Austin Lake.

Please note that WE ARE PARTICULARLY CONCERNED about WATER QUALITY and SAFETY issues on West Lake.

- The "channel" between West Lake and Austin Lake is a DRAIN, designed by civil engineers and controlled by the Drain Commission, to regulate the flow of water between the two lakes and several other lakes. More accurately, Austin Lake and West Lake are part of a chain of lakes, and the flow of water from one to the other affects all of the lakes. The proposal to alter the ecosystem and water flow by widening the Channel IGNORES THE DELICATE ECOSYSTEMS involved and illustrates the lack of thought put into this ill-conceived proposal. Empty promises to undertake environmental impact assessment in the future are just promises – and we cannot count on the City of Portage or any developer to undertake the required efforts, particularly if the Study is accepted by the Portage City Council (the "Council").
- In addition to water quality issues, the Steering Committee IGNORED SAFETY CONCERNs related to increased boat traffic on West Lake, and even proposed adding a boat/jet ski rental facility (and docks that extend out into the lake) where the West Lake Drive In is currently located.
- West Lake cannot support increased boat traffic. West Lake is a 330-acre lake, and West Lake residents specifically bought homes on West Lake because of the small, quiet nature of the lake. The size of West Lake makes it safe for swimming, kayaking, and boating. Widening the Channel

will effectively require West Lake to accommodate boat traffic for a 1,400-acre lake (when combined with Austin Lake's 1100 acres). It will have a negative impact on water quality and threaten the safety of West Lake riparians.

---

- For decades, West Lake riparians have paid thousands of dollars in fees and assessments in order to carefully plan and implement programs to manage the weeds and water quality issues on West Lake. The introduction of invasive species from Austin Lake riparians or other non-resident boaters will negatively impact the many years and thousands of dollars that have been invested by West Lake riparians.

---

- **The Steering Committee was STACKED AGAINST WEST LAKE.**

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- City Council Members who served on the Steering Committee MUST RECUSE THEMSELVES from the City Council vote. The chairperson of the committee is a member of the City Council WHO LIVES ON AUSTIN LAKE – Lori Knapp. Another member of the City Council and member of the Steering Committee is Jim Pearson – WHO LIVES ON AUSTIN LAKE.
- In addition to the above, the Vice-Chairperson of the Steering Committee is a lawyer WHO LIVES ON AUSTIN LAKE – Danielle Mason Anderson.
- In addition, the President of the Austin Lake Riparians – AJ Spicer – is on the Steering Committee.
- One “representative” of West Lake actually is from the group that owns the Cove Bistro, and clearly the restaurant does not share the same perspectives/goals as West Lake residents. Another West Lake “representative” is a REAL ESTATE SPECULATOR, who is only looking out for his investment in the West Lake Drive-In property. He has never lived on or owned a residence on West Lake.

---

Although there are a number of thoughtful ideas about traffic calming, pedestrian safety, and business corridor improvements included in the Study, the widening of the Channel is not one of them. As Portage citizens, taxpayers, and West Lake riparians, we object to the widening of the Channel and ask that the Study be rejected in its entirety unless the Study is amended to remove any and all references to the widening of the Channel.

Thank you for your attention to our concerns.

Rick & Julie Hakken

Sent from my iPhone

Sent from my iPhone

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**Subject:** Re: Opposition to the Lake Center District Corridor Study  
**Date:** Tuesday, May 11, 2021 at 11:28:50 AM Eastern Daylight Time  
**From:** Claudette Reid <reidc@portagemi.gov>  
**To:** Dnstuut <dnstuut@gmail.com>

Mr. Stuut,

Thank you for the clarification. I appreciate your opinion.

Best regards,  
Claudette

Claudette Reid  
Councilmember, City of Portage  
[claudette.reid@portagemi.gov](mailto:claudette.reid@portagemi.gov)  
269-491-9725

---

**From:** Dnstuut [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 11, 2021 11:26 AM  
**To:** Claudette Reid  
**Subject:** Re: Opposition to the Lake Center District Corridor Study

**CAUTION: THIS EMAIL IS FROM AN EXTERNAL SENDER**

Do not click on links or open attachments unless this is from a sender you know and trust.  
Opposed to the Channel and the park/ dock that includes the boat and jet ski rental.

Dave

On May 11, 2021, at 11:15 AM, Claudette Reid <reidc@portagemi.gov> wrote:

Mr. & Mrs. Stuut,

I wanted to thank you for your email. I have read your comments and understand your concerns regarding the channel portion of the plan.

For your reference, the study is online in its entirety at [portagemi.gov/721](http://portagemi.gov/721). you can also post a comment on this page.

My understanding is that you are ONLY opposed to that portion of the plan that relates to widening the channel, and are supportive of the other aspects identified in the plan. Is that accurate?

Thank you again for your input.

Best regards,

Claudette

Claudette Reid  
Councilmember, City of Portage  
[claudette.reid@portagemi.gov](mailto:claudette.reid@portagemi.gov)  
269-491-9725

---

**From:** Dave Stuut [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Friday, May 7, 2021 11:43 AM  
**To:** Patricia Randall; Lori Knapp; Jim Pearson; Chris Burns; Victor Ledbetter; Claudette Reid; Terry Urban  
**Subject:** Opposition to the Lake Center District Corridor Study

**CAUTION: THIS EMAIL IS FROM AN EXTERNAL SENDER**

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As a West Lake riparian, going on 25 years, we strongly oppose the planned widening of the Austin/West lake channel which will cause additional traffic on our quiet lake.

We also do not endorse this resulting increase of boat traffic on West Lake, and do not endorse the proposed boat/jet ski rental facility (and docks that extend out into the lake) where the West Lake Drive-In is currently located.

Although there are a number of thoughtful ideas about traffic calming, pedestrian safety, and business corridor improvements included in the Study, the widening of the Channel is not one of them. As a Portage citizen, taxpayer, and West Lake riparian, we object to the widening of the Channel and ask that the Study be rejected in its entirety unless the Study is amended to remove any and all references to the widening of the Channel and the adding of a boat/jet ski rental facility.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dave & Maryette Stuut  
[REDACTED]



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**Subject:** FW: Lake Center concerns  
**Date:** Tuesday, May 11, 2021 at 1:34:52 PM Eastern Daylight Time  
**From:** Kelly Peterson <petersok@portagemi.gov>  
**To:** Mary Beth Block <blockm@portagemi.gov>  
**Attachments:** Response Summary 4 26 21 (1).pdf, Drain.pdf, LARA.pdf

Additional comments (not submitted via website)

---

**From:** Lori Knapp <knapp@portagemi.gov>  
**Sent:** Monday, April 26, 2021 10:04 AM  
**To:** Joseph La Margo <lamargoj@portagemi.gov>; Kelly Peterson <petersok@portagemi.gov>; doug@farrside.com; vita@farrside.com  
**Subject:** Fw: Lake Center concerns

---

**From:** Adam Edlefson [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, April 26, 2021 9:34 AM  
**To:** Patricia Randall; Jim Pearson; Chris Burns; Lori Knapp; Victor Ledbetter; Claudette Reid; Terry Urban  
**Subject:** Lake Center concerns

**CAUTION: THIS EMAIL IS FROM AN EXTERNAL SENDER**

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Good morning,

I am attaching a few items for your review re: the proposals to the Lake Center District proposal. This information was collected collaboratively by a number of West Lake residents and NOT simply my own thoughts and concerns. I, as well as some of my fellow West Lake community members, will be attending the virtual meeting tomorrow.

I would welcome any dialogue from the council if there are any questions or concerns about the attached material. I implore you to read and consider the thoughts and feelings presented.

Regards,

Adam Edlefson  
[REDACTED]

## **Lake Center Area- Austin and West Lakes and Portage Road**

**April 27, 2021**

### **Resident Feedback**

#### **History:**

##### *Businesses/Commercial*

There has always been interest in how to assist the Lake Center Area which has been dominated by locally owned businesses. Local businesses have managed to thrive without any support from any governmental entity (ie: advertising, special tax capture districts, etc). Between 2013 and 2017, the Lake Center Area Business Association LLC worked to market the area and engage interest. Since 2017, the LLC is no longer in good standing with the state, and it no longer holds meetings. (Attached LLC document from State of Michigan)

##### *Traffic*

Portage Road is a main corridor for many people coming from south county. It has a very direct route unlike Sprinkle Road which is only practical for those in the south east portion of the county. It also has an elementary school on it. Additionally, many vehicles will utilize Portage Rd to get to Vicksburg or Schoolcraft as alternate routes are not as direct for some in Portage or north of Portage. Recently, FedEx opened a distribution facility on Portage Rd just north of Pfizer. This has increased traffic in the Portage Road corridor.

##### *The Lakes*

Additionally, the residents on the lakes have played a significant role in ensuring the environmental health of their lakes and supporting the local businesses. Austin Lake, the largest of Portage's lake at 1,090 acres, has a governmental lake board that has taken an active role in reviving trouble spots on the lake. West Lake, about 1/3<sup>rd</sup> the size of Austin Lake at 335 acres has had fewer challenges and a very active Association that has guided the decisions for that lake. West Lake also has a relatively undisturbed bog on its west side that is owned by the city.

The Austin Lake Governmental Lake Board has not traditionally treated their lake for invasive species and has a large, active DNR access on it. (Given the heavy non-resident use of Austin Lake, it may not be feasible to lay the burden of treatment on to the lake residents.) (Also note: it appears the Austin Lake Governmental Lake Board may be soon disbanded.) The West Lake Improvement Association has successfully advocated for annual treatments that has re-established native species and minimized the presence of invasive species. Their public access is a narrow, dirt road end in to the lake that is voluntarily maintained by lake residents. Off lake boaters use this access as well, but since there is no parking, there is a lower volume of users. Both lakes have unique city parks and trails located on the lakes. (West Lake Nature Preserve and Lake View Park Information Attached)

##### *The Austin Lake Consolidated Drain*

Around 1959, the Austin Lake Outlet Drain Extension was created (now called Austin Lake Consolidated Drain). Properties (or portions of properties) within the Townships of Portage, Pavilion and Schoolcraft were taken by eminent domain or property owner agreement to establish the drains needed that would facilitate the flow of water from Sugarloaf to West to Austin to south. (MAP ATTACHED OF DRAIN DISTRICT ESTABLISHED)

Today, the drain running from West Lake to Austin Lake is a narrow area that allows for the flow of water and small watercraft. (Speed boats and pontoons cannot fit through narrow opening.) There is a quaint pedestrian

bridge that goes over the drain and is located on the east side of Portage Road. Also, an existing court order has set the legal lake level for Austin Lake. The level of Austin Lake does impact West Lake.

#### *Development of Lake Center Area*

In 2013, the City of Portage engaged marketing and development consultants who produced a 2014 report to the Portage Planning Commission suggesting various possible improvements including

- Create a uniform design standard for the area
- Create safe pedestrian pathways
- Reduce lanes from 4 lanes to 3 lanes
- Connect the lakes by widening the drain

It appears this effort did not go much further than the idea stage. Progress stopped at the Planning Commission level. While certain aspects were appreciated by area residents (better traffic flow and improved pedestrian access), other aspects were not favorably received. West Lake residents who were aware of the proposal were concerned the consultants had not personally viewed the lakes and drain.

#### **The Current Plan**

##### *Steering Committee*

In 2020, a new consultant was engaged that has expertise in urban revitalization. This process was heavily hindered by the beginning of the ongoing pandemic. This created many challenges to both the presentation of the plan as well as, and most importantly, gaining resident feedback and insight. It also led to the meetings being largely private.

- Created tension of what is being done behind closed doors without input of affected persons;
- COVID 19 protocols created an environment where citizens were kept at an arm's length with the exception of an open house during this entire process.

##### *Open House*

The information shared with the public at virtual and in person meetings were tense at times. There were several factors at play:

- Affected persons were not able to provide input all along;
- There is a lack of acknowledgement that the drain is a drain;
- The environmental health of the lakes had not been, and still isn't a consideration;
- The proposal was very similar to the 2014 plan that was rejected;
- Portage Road modifications for an envisioned "canal" were not considered;
- Urban concepts were being proposed for an area that has never been urban.
- It appeared the open house was intended to sell the concept, not receive input.

##### *Continued Private Meetings*

After this, the meetings continued in private, and information was only given out to residents who knew someone that participated. There was no invitation to join or provide input.

## Citizen Feedback- this is a summary of feedback from a group of concerned residents who live in the Lake area

### *Support*

There features that all residents including West Lake residents can get behind:

- Improved access and safety on Portage Road for ALL users (motor, pedestrian, bicycle, etc)
- Improved stormwater systems
- Traffic calming devices
- More public viewing of West Lake
- Shared driveways of businesses are safer when practical (pg 75)
- Making roads safer that intersect with Portage Rd
- Supporting local businesses

### *Concerns*

It is no surprise there are continued concerns when the final recommendation is largely unchanged from 2013/2014 and the 2020 proposal despite citizen feedback.

- Environmental impacts and health of the lakes are not given any consideration. With West Lake housing a nature preserve, the DEQ was absent and there has been no consideration on what increased boating traffic would do to the health of the ecosystem.
- Access to West Lake from Austin Lake via a canal would significantly increase boating traffic.
  - Residents of West Lake largely do not want an increase in traffic
  - A 340 acre lake has no business seeing the traffic increase of due to Austin Lake's DNR launch access.
  - Residents of the lake do not have shorelines that are built with fortified sea walls capable of sustaining the increased activity and the erosion that will follow.
- Assumptions are made on page 14 that increased response rate on delayed survey is due to "non-citizen" input. This disregards the many people who work or have other obligations. Some residents watched the presentation multiple times prior to taking the survey. This assumption feeds into the mistrust that some residents have of the entire process.
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> chart on page 15 (delayed survey) is identical to the above chart (instant survey) except it has a different color. The responses are identical in number despite increased feedback.
- A pedestrian/bicycle path under Portage Rd is identified as a recommendation (pgs 69 and 79).
  - This had limited support in the survey. It was tied with other categories or slightly behind depending on the instant versus delayed (pg 16)
    - Additionally, there is a lack of trust factor that the city will not respect the use of the drain and attempt to make it a navigable waterway for large boats.
  - Sightlines of anyone crossing the road on either side of the canal will be decreased and harm pedestrians. It's not practical to assume how pedestrians currently use Portage Rd. Sidewalks on both sides are a benefit. Portage Road will become increasingly difficult to cross when Portage Rd traffic is forced into fewer lanes. Lovers Lane became more backed up and congested when its lanes were also reduced. (Many people need to cross in areas not identified as crosswalks.)
  - How does this impact the property owner(s)?
- Design guidelines can be problematic if they increase costs and start creeping from original intent. (pg 75)
- Concern over shared use of an alley/bicycle lane (pg 75).
  - Who pays for this?

- Is it a taking of private property rights?
- Safety concerns of mixed traffic that may have false assumptions of allowed users.
- Noise and other negative impacts on adjacent residential neighbors.
- Boat docks/piers/boardwalks (pg 77)
  - Should a dock be added on Austin Lake for boat tie ups? Concern about noise and other issues for residents of Austin Lake. (Note: do not believe there is any tie up for boats on Austin Lake currently)
  - Should the public pay for piers and boardwalks on private properties
  - Given the small size of West Lake, what is the proposed length to ensure boaters can keep a safe distance without losing much of the east shore area.
  - Will the “docks, boardwalks, etc” actually become marinas for a small lake that cannot handle that much additional lake traffic on a daily basis?
- No recognition of working with the state or drain commissioner on the drain development proposal.
- Cost for the project seems to significantly outpace those who will “benefit”
  - \$150,000-\$180,000 for a study about a dock on West Lake. (What’s the actual cost to build?)
- “Canal” Riverwalk (note: it is a drain): \$2.6-\$3.35 million for a pathway that can be accomplished over the road in a more fiscally responsible manner.
- Many regulations have been discussed in regards to local businesses with no ideas on how to pay for it. Special tax districts have limited value and can often become out of touch with their original goal.

### **Conclusion:**

There is a tremendous cost here in terms of dollars. It is estimated by the consultant to cost between \$11.6-\$13.9 million to do these improvements with other significant costs unknown. (Note cost to rebuild Portage Road and Property Acquisition are not included in costs below.) Portage continues to have aging infrastructure and recently, public safety concerns. With COVID 19 wreaking havoc on small business owners, it is questionable if the city’s taxpayers should be expected to foot a bill filled with many “extras” that are not needed to improve the Portage road corridor. Similar goals could be accomplished by focusing on Portage Road and turning the West Lake Drive In in to a viewing park with access over Portage Road versus under Portage Rd. It will save the city millions in redesigning the street, purchasing property and building the underpass walkway. (chart below taken from report). While there is common ground in the form of pedestrian and automobile safety as well as support for the private sector and beautification of our city, bypassing the drain commission and ignoring required environmental precautions are more than concerning. I can safely speak for my West Lake neighbors in saying that we do not want to resemble Austin Lake in terms of traffic and seriously question the financial commitment to those portions of the project.

**Good governance and fiscal responsibility are still good goals for local government.**

ONE-YEAR ACTION PLAN	Range of Cost		
	Low Estimate	High Estimate	Unknown
Design and Install Traffic Signal at Forest Drive/Portage Rd	\$ 450,000	\$ 540,000	
Gateways & Landscaping Improvements	\$ 1,468,750	\$ 1,762,500	
Propose New Zoning Amendment for Lake Center District	\$ 70,000	\$ 84,000	
Negotiate Priority Land Acquisitions			Unknown; likely millions
Portage Road Right-of-Way Decisions from Steering Committee and Council	\$ -	\$ -	what is this?
<b>MID-TERM IMPLEMENTATION (2-5 YEARS)</b>			
Intersection Improvements at Ames/Portage Road	\$ 390,000	\$ 468,000	
Facade improvements along Portage Road	\$ 430,000	\$ 486,000	
Improve Pedestrian Connectivity Across Portage Road	\$ 400,000	\$ 480,000	
Feasibility analysis for public dock on West Lake	\$ 150,000	\$ 180,000	
<b>LONG-TERM IMPLEMENTATION (5-10 YEARS)</b>			
Create pedestrian/bike route alternative parallel to Portage Rd	\$ 530,000	\$ 636,000	
Underground utilities	\$ 1,480,000	\$ 1,776,000	
Create a canal riverwalk	\$ 2,612,333	\$ 3,134,799	
Create a bike connection between Austin Court & Austin Drive			unknown
<b>FUTURE MOVES</b>			
Establish full pedestrian & trailway connections under Portage Road along the Canal	\$ 3,646,075	\$ 4,375,290	
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 11,627,158</b>	<b>\$ 13,922,589</b>	

There are many valued projects:

- ✓ Make Portage Road safer and more attractive for all users
- ✓ Integrate side streets better in to Portage Road
- ✓ Properly handle stormwater run off
- ✓ Underground utilities
- ✓ Support local businesses
- ✓ Identifying areas for more housing

There are projects that are not needed and appear to be a desire to make “one’s mark” with limited justification for why the taxpayers of Portage should pay for it and who exactly wants it.

- Environmental health of lakes have received no mention or consideration from proposed impacts.
- No cost built in to actually redo Portage Road which will be more millions of dollars
- Closing down streets without speaking with the residents who use them
- Creating “alleys” without consulting with businesses about who will pay for this
- Views of West Lake through an underpass in the drain at the minimum cost of \$3 million when it could be done at a much lower cost with same benefit.
- Property acquisition to build a walkway in the existing drain (at no cost factored in)
- Housing proposal seems to be an after thought and needs more consideration. Concerned some areas identified may be wetlands and there is concern about the environmental impact.

# KALAMAZOO COUNTY DRAIN MAPS

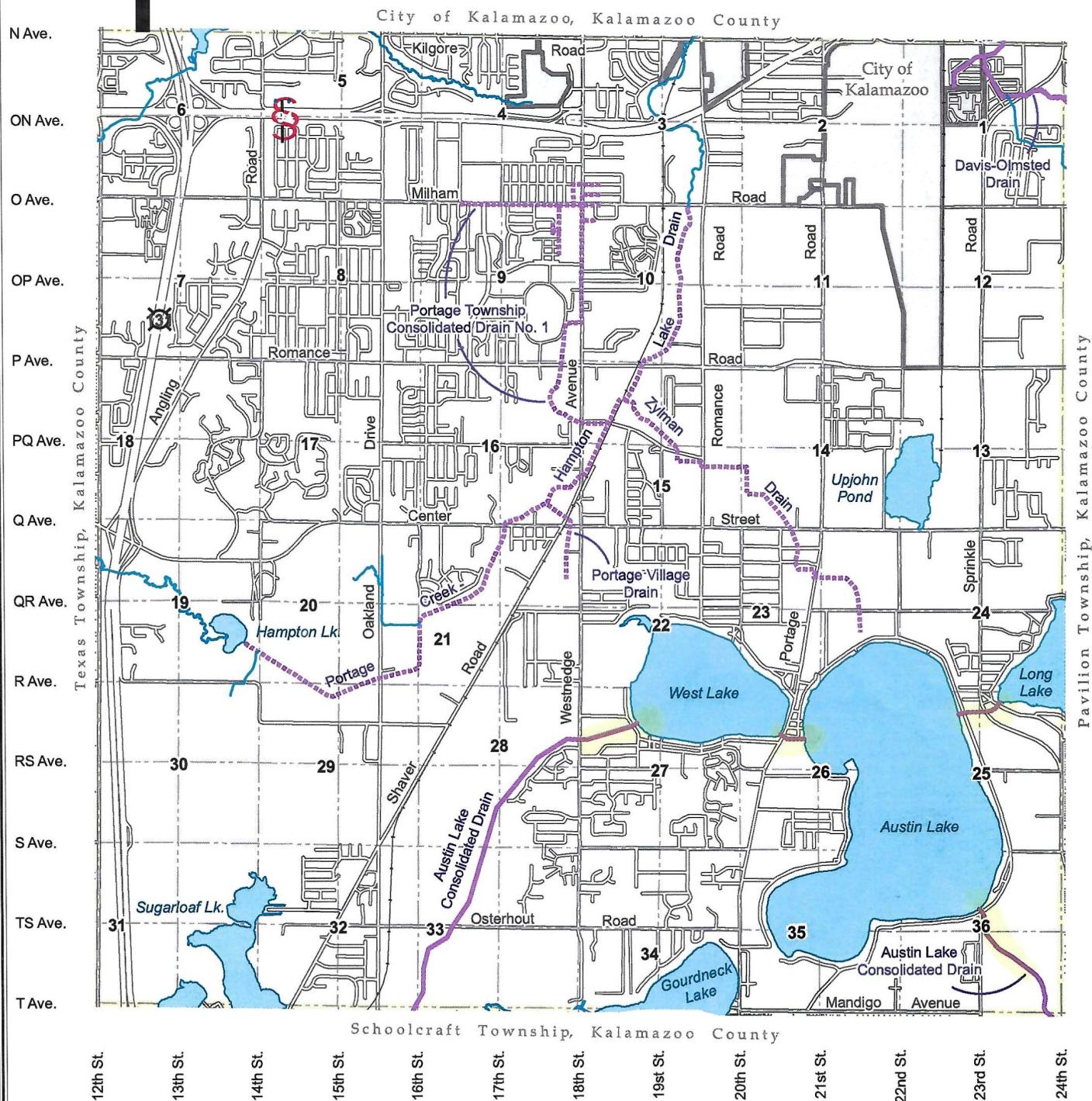
# Drain Map of **City of Portage**

T. 3 S., R. 11 W.

Kalamazoo County, Michigan

0 2500 5000 Ft

Scale: 1" = 5000'



**DISCLAIMER:** While the intention of this map is to be a relatively accurate graphic representation, its accuracy cannot be guaranteed. Therefore, it should be used for reference purposes only. Any conclusions or information obtained or derived from this map will be at the user's sole risk. Please note that plat drains are not shown.

Printed: June 2009





ID Number: 801720338

[Request certificate](#)[Return to Results](#)[New search](#)

Summary for: LAKE CENTER BUSINESS ASSOCIATION, LLC

The name of the DOMESTIC LIMITED LIABILITY COMPANY: LAKE CENTER BUSINESS ASSOCIATION, LLC

Entity type: DOMESTIC LIMITED LIABILITY COMPANY

Identification Number: 801720338 Old ID Number: E2539K

Date of Organization in Michigan: 07/25/2013

Purpose: All Purpose Clause

Date of In Existence But Not In Good Standing: 02/15/2017 Term: Perpetual

The name and address of the Resident Agent:

Resident Agent Name: JEAN TRUITT  
 Street Address: 9029 PORTAGE ROAD

Apt/Suite/Other:

City: PORTAGE State: MI Zip Code: 49002

Registered Office Mailing address:

P.O. Box or Street Address:  
 Apt/Suite/Other:  
 City: State: Zip Code:

Act Formed Under: 023-1993 Michigan Limited Liability Company Act

Managed By:

Members

View filings for this business entity:

ALL FILINGS  
 ANNUAL REPORT/ANNUAL STATEMENTS  
 CERTIFICATE OF CORRECTION  
 CERTIFICATE OF CHANGE OF REGISTERED OFFICE AND/OR RESIDENT AGENT  
 RESIGNATION OF RESIDENT AGENT

[View filings](#)

Comments or notes associated with this business entity:

**Subject:** FW: Lake Center District - Update & Survey Responses  
**Date:** Tuesday, May 11, 2021 at 1:36:23 PM Eastern Daylight Time  
**From:** Kelly Peterson <petersok@portagemi.gov>  
**To:** Mary Beth Block <blockm@portagemi.gov>

For addition to comments PDF

---

**From:** Joseph La Margo <lamargoj@portagemi.gov>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, April 27, 2021 10:35 PM  
**To:** Kelly Peterson <petersok@portagemi.gov>; Lori Knapp <knapp@portagemi.gov>; Jim Pearson <councilmemberjp@portagemi.gov>; Doug Farr <doug@farrside.com>; Mary Beth Block <blockm@portagemi.gov>  
**Subject:** Fwd: Lake Center District - Update & Survey Responses

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** Mark Yassay [REDACTED]  
**Date:** April 27, 2021 at 8:18:30 PM EDT  
**To:** Joseph La Margo <lamargoj@portagemi.gov>  
**Subject:** FW: Lake Center District - Update & Survey Responses

**CAUTION: THIS EMAIL IS FROM AN EXTERNAL SENDER**  
Do not click on links or open attachments unless this is from a sender you know and trust.

Hello Joseph,

My name is Mark Yassay and I am the President of the West Lake Improvement Association. I was on the call this afternoon for the City Council Committee of the Whole Meeting and wanted to share the survey results with you as mentioned by myself and several other West Lake Residents.

Thank you for your time,

Mark Yassay  
[REDACTED]

---

**From:** West Lake Improvement Association <[info@westlakeassociation.com](mailto:info@westlakeassociation.com)>  
**Sent:** Monday, April 26, 2021 7:57 PM  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** Lake Center District - Update & Survey Responses

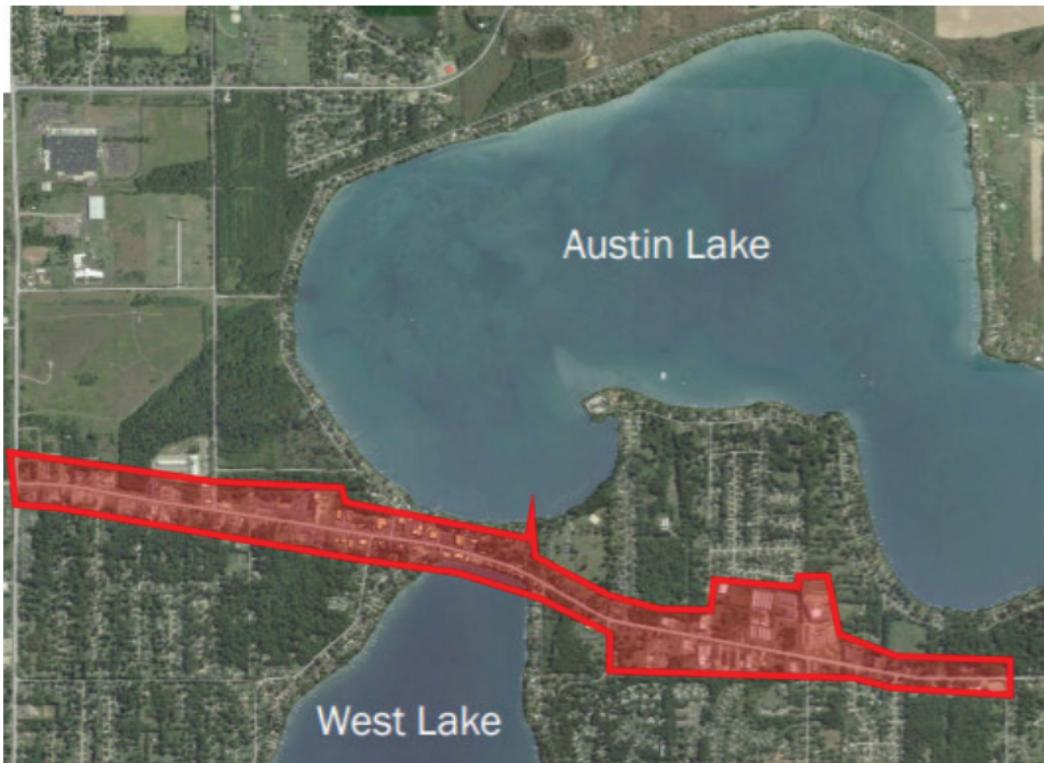
West Lake Improvement Association



info@westlakeassociation.com  
westlakeassociation.com



## WLIA & Portage Lake Center District Plans



As a reminder the city of Portage has been actively engaging in design and planning activities for the Lake Center District with an objective to make it a destination corridor for the city. What is the lake Center District? The Lake Center District Area runs along Portage Road between Osterhout and East Centre Avenue. These activities have been publicly underway since February of last year and more information about the past meetings and activates can be found at the [Lake Center District](#) web page.

## What is next in the process? \*

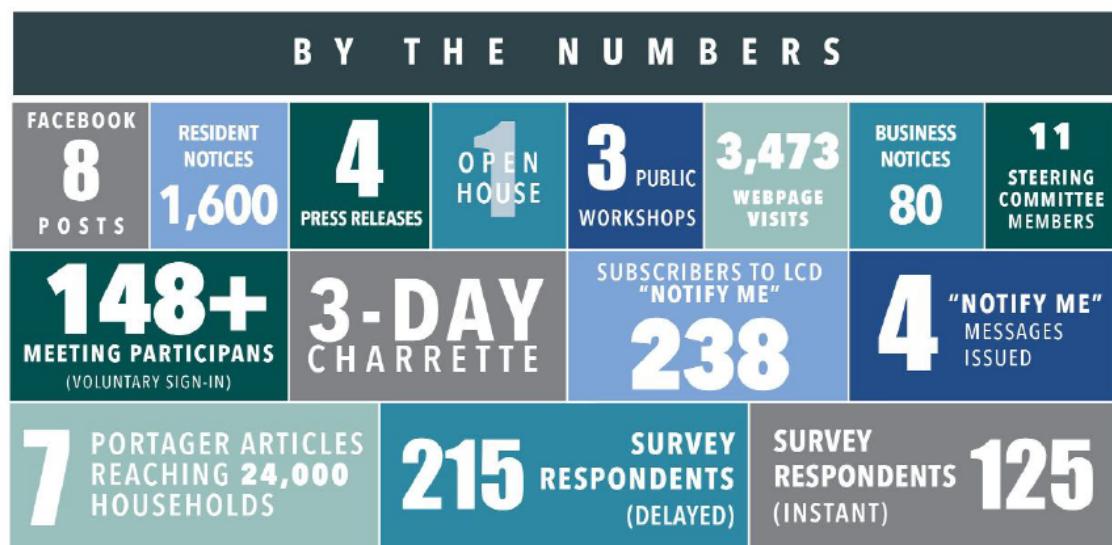
### **City Council Committee of the Whole Presentation, April 27**

The Portage City Council will receive the *Draft Final Lake Center District Corridor and Placemaking Study* in a Committee of the Whole on Tuesday, April 27 at 4 PM.

At this meeting, the design consultant will present the final draft of the plan to the Council. Councilmembers will be seeing the plan for the first time since receiving all of the public input and will have the opportunity to ask questions. **The City Council will not make any decisions about the plan at this meeting.**

### **Public Comment Period: April 28 – May 16**

**The City Council will continue to receive feedback during a public comment period, a public open house, and a public hearing before the City Council takes a final vote.** The public comment period will run from April 28 through May 16. Submit a public comment below.



**This graphic depicts how the city gathered public input to help shape the Lake Center District Corridor & Placemaking Study.**

[View the Draft Lake Center District Corridor & Placemaking Study](#)

[Submit a Public Comment](#)

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**The City Council will continue to receive feedback during a public comment period, a public meeting and a public hearing before the City Council takes a final vote.** The public comment period will run from April 28 through May 16. The public can view the final study and make public comments at <https://www.portagemi.gov/721/Lake-Center-District>.

**On Saturday, May 15, from 12 - 3 PM, the city will hold an open house at Lakeview Park, in the heart of the Lake Center District.** City staff and Steering Committee members will be on-site where interested individuals can view display boards and study details, ask questions and provide public feedback. After the May 15 open house on a date yet to be determined, the City Council will meet to consider final approval of the study, which will include a public hearing.

*\* The above information and image was sourced from <https://www.portagemi.gov/721/Lake-Center-District>*

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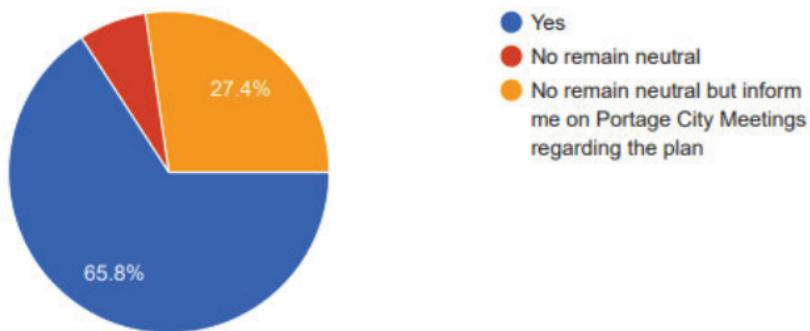
## WLIA Survey Responses

A couple weeks back, we asked for a few minutes of your time to complete a survey so that we better understand your thoughts as individuals so that we can best serve the association members as a whole. **The results are in! We had 117 responses and below is a summary of what the association members responded with.**

As a result of your responses, we plan to share this information with the city council and leadership during the meetings on **April 27th, 2021** and **May 15th, 2021**.

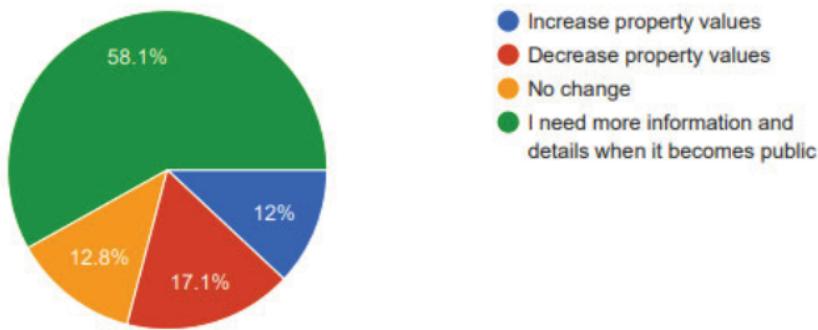
Should WLIA board take a formal position on behalf of all WLIA members on Lake Center District Plan once the details are made public?

117 responses



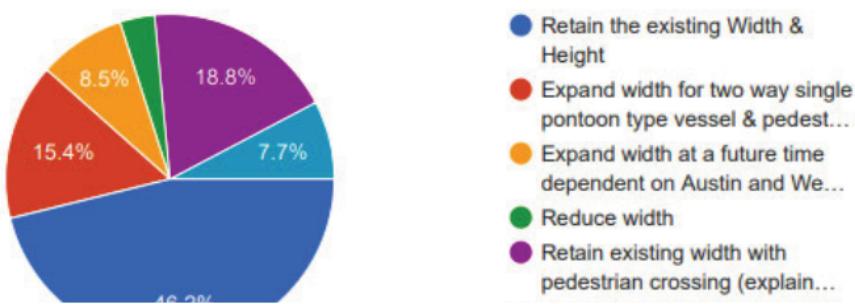
In your opinion, do you believe the Lake Center District planned improvements will:

117 responses



If there were a change with the Portage Road bridge between West Lake and Austin Lake, you would support:

117 responses

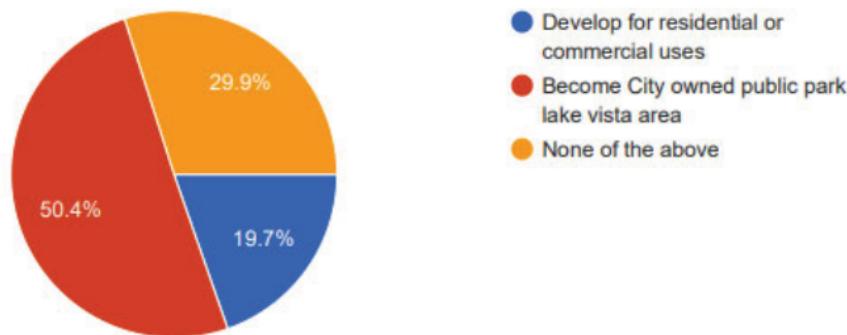




● None of the above

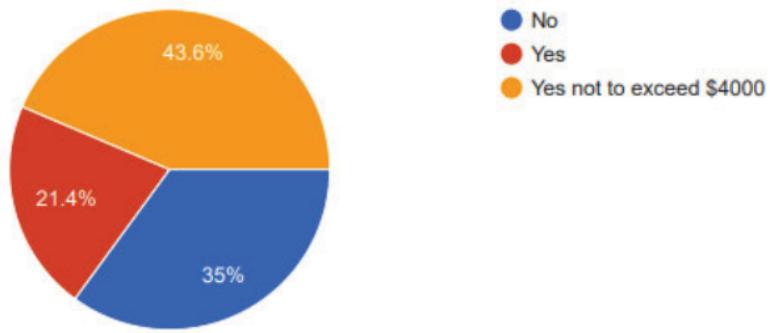
If the City purchased the West Lake Drive-in, you would support:

117 responses



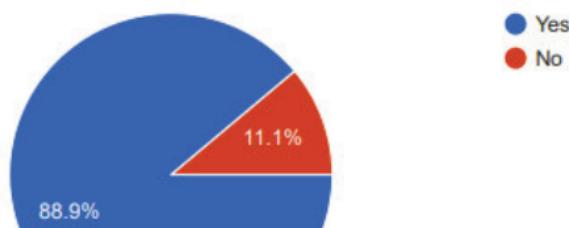
Should WLIA funds be used for contracting with environmental experts for a review of Lake Center District Plan?

117 responses



Do you plan on attending the City public hearings when they are published?

117 responses





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As a reminder you can also sign up for update alerts regarding the Lake Center District Plan directly through the city of Portage by using their [notification center](#) and subscribing to the Lake Center District Area listed under the Notify Me section of the page.

We will continue to send updates as they are received via email and Facebook.

Thanks for your continued membership and pursuance to keep West Lake an amazing home for all of us!

As a way to support our riparian's and operate with purpose, please remember our guiding principles:

- Ensure long term quality of the West Lake-Protect the Water
- Positive Social Environment
- Contribute to Long Term Property Values

Best regards,

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West Lake Improvement Association Board

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This email was sent to [REDACTED]

[why did I get this?](#) [unsubscribe from this list](#) [update subscription preferences](#)

West Lake Improvement Association · Lakeview Dr · Portage, MI 49002 · USA



**Subject:** FW: Lake Center District Plan  
**Date:** Tuesday, May 11, 2021 at 1:36:56 PM Eastern Daylight Time  
**From:** Kelly Peterson <petersok@portagemi.gov>  
**To:** Mary Beth Block <blockm@portagemi.gov>  
**Attachments:** questions for city council.docx

Email and attachment to add to comments PDF

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**From:** David & Mary Lager [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 4, 2021 3:56 PM  
**To:** Joseph La Margo <lamargoj@portagemi.gov>  
**Cc:** Patricia Randall <randallp@portagemi.gov>; Jim Pearson <councilmemberjp@portagemi.gov>; Chris Burns <burnsc@portagemi.gov>; Lori Knapp <knappl@portagemi.gov>; Victor Ledbetter <ledbettv@portagemi.gov>; Claudette Reid <reidc@portagemi.gov>; Terry Urban <urbant@portagemi.gov>; Kelly Peterson <petersok@portagemi.gov>  
**Subject:** Lake Center District Plan

**CAUTION: THIS EMAIL IS FROM AN EXTERNAL SENDER**

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Hello Mr. LaMargo,  
Attached are some questions and comments that have come up regarding this plan.  
thank you,

Mary and Dave Lager

Questions for City Council/sent to City Manager, Joe LaMargo.

1. What is the cost estimate for the city's property acquisition; to buy all the homes and property along the drain/channel and along Portage Rd. and as proposed in the Lake Center District plan, and which houses do you plan to buy?
2. What is the cost for Mr. Farr and associates and city staff for the LCD plan?
3. The plan renderings show 2 piers. These appear to be many times longer than riparian docks, which do not impede navigation on the lake. How many piers are being proposed and what is the cost?
4. How wide and how long will the piers be as they extend into the lake?
5. Who will own and operate the piers, managing use and access?
6. What is the purpose of the piers? Who would park their boats there? Would people be allowed to put boats in the lake there? Swim there? Would boats/slips be for rent? How many boats could be docked there?
7. There is concern about boats coming through the drain/channel onto West Lake from Austin Lake, especially from the public launch and potentially lessening West Lake water quality (zebra mussels, weeds, etc.).
  - a. What is the city's plan to protect West Lake water quality?
  - b. If water quality is lessened, will the city guarantee unlimited financial resources to correct it or would property owners be assessed?
8. If there is more boat traffic on West Lake due to enlarged drain/channel and boats coming and going from the piers (some after dining/drinking at the Cove), how will the city guarantee safety for swimmers and boaters (some pulling tubers, skiers) since more boats on the lake raises the probability of accidents?
9. What are the city's financial priorities? In the survey that the city did last fall, how did residents respond when they were asked if they were willing to pay increased taxes to support the Lake Center District plan? Increasing the safety of Portage Rd. with decreased speed through lower speed limits and traffic lights at Forest and Lakeview Dr. (directly across from the park so pedestrians could cross safely there too, which would eliminate the need for under-road passage, but which could have been done when it was reconfigured) along with supporting businesses make sense. However, how can you justify spending tens of millions of city dollars revolving around the drive-in site which is so tiny and West Lake (also small), when we already have great parks right here/nearby (Lakeview, Ramona, Prairieview, Eliason, etc.) that actually have established bountiful peaceful green space and water access/views, while the narrow drive-in site is not really feasible for all of these grandiose plans to revolve around? Are people really going to want to sit there and picnic or whatever, with 22,000 noisy vehicles going by when they can be at peaceful Lakeview park doing the same thing and much more? What about the upcoming milage request for construction of five schools or investing in the Westnedge corridor/Crossroads mall or other retail areas or fixing the roads, and many more areas of need that would end up benefitting more citizens compared to the mostly seasonal Lake Center District plan?
10. Where do you expect people to park when coming to this destination corridor and possible condos since this did not seem to be indicated in the plan? Lakeview Park's lot is already

usually pretty full and the beauty and usefulness of the park would suffer if more parking is added there. The Cove already does a great business and usually has a full lot. H & B's lot is for their customers only.

11. Why has the city not done a survey asking West Lake homeowners opinions/input on the Lake Center District plan for our lake, which would have been prudent and insightful?  
The notice from the Department of Community Development was the first direct communication mailed to lake residents and was appreciated, however coming in the mail on May 1<sup>st</sup> was too late for people to attend the Meeting of the Whole on 4-27-2021, which was at 4:00, when many were also unable to attend due to working during the day, while email from the city to those opting in came the night before, which is not much notice.
12. Could the public comment period be extended through the end of May to allow more time for input?
13. In order to facilitate increased awareness, attendance and engagement, which, as you know, is lacking with virtual meetings, could the city please hold off on the public meeting until the summer/fall when it should be possible to meet in person in some fashion, possibly meeting in an auditorium for distancing, if needed?

Thank you so much for your time, consideration, and response by 5/10/2021,

Sincerely,

Mary and Dave Lager

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

**Subject:** FW: Portage Lake District Improvement  
**Date:** Tuesday, May 11, 2021 at 5:08:28 PM Eastern Daylight Time  
**From:** Joseph La Margo <lamargoj@portagemi.gov>  
**To:** Mary Beth Block <blockm@portagemi.gov>  
**Attachments:** image001.jpg, Portage City Manager Joe La Margo 2021.docx, image002.jpg

**JOSEPH S LA MARGO MA, ICMA-CM, City Manager**

City of Portage | 7900 S Westnedge Ave | Portage MI 49002  
708.277.3209 cell | 269.329.4400 office | [lamargoj@portagemi.gov](mailto:lamargoj@portagemi.gov)



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**From:** Jackie Wylie [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 11, 2021 4:55 PM  
**To:** Joseph La Margo <lamargoj@portagemi.gov>  
**Subject:** Portage Lake District Improvement

**CAUTION: THIS EMAIL IS FROM AN EXTERNAL SENDER**

Do not click on links or open attachments unless this is from a sender you know and trust.

Dear Mr. La Margo,

Your support is requested. My attached letter offers logic.

Thank you,

Jackie Wylie  
1417 Lakeview Drive  
Portage, MI 49002

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[REDACTED] Virus-free. [www.avast.com](http://www.avast.com)

Jacqueline Wylie

[REDACTED]  
Portage, MI 49002-6916

May 11, 2021

Joe La Margo, Portage City Manager

Portage City Hall  
7900 South Westnedge Avenue  
Portage, MI 49002

Dear Mr. La Margo,

It is so disappointing to hear that the drain widening is part of the previous exciting plan to enhance pedestrian and bike traffic as well as beautify this area with increased greenery and slow traffic with changes in lane pattern and maybe a roundabout or two. The West Lake Drive Inn area could be a perfect small green park for walkers and bikers to enjoy a rest stop by West Lake. I hope the city will buy the land for that purpose. I will happily pay tax dollars to enhance traffic, pedestrian and water safety.

Reasons not to spend our tax dollars to widen and dredge the West/Austin drain and channel:

- Stress on an already fragile ecosystem that will be devastated with increase water vehicle traffic.
- Cost of millions of dollars, not only to close Portage road and widen the drain and channel but the cost to dredge and dredge again with the occurrence of erosion and silt build-up. Cost to tax payers who will not benefit is unconscionable.
- Stores north of the drain will suffer loss of income for an extended period of time with road closure.
- Loss of homes to families living along Portage Road and the channel.
- Noise pollution.
- Decrease in safety with an increase in big boat and pontoon traffic. Would the channel be widened to accommodate two pontoons passing?

Please listen to the logic of Portage City tax payers: reasons not to spend our Portage tax dollars to widen and dredge the West/Austin Lake drain which now allows water craft up to the size of a row boat to pass through. Risks and damage far outweigh the benefits for Portage and Kalamazoo County. Costs to a fragile ecosystem must be first. It has taken years for these lakes to recover from past damage.

Thank you for listening and please oppose widening the West/Austin lake drain.

Sincerely,

Jackie Wylie, Portage Resident

**Subject:** Re: Widening the DRAIN Between West Lake and Austin Lake  
**Date:** Tuesday, May 11, 2021 at 6:42:51 PM Eastern Daylight Time  
**From:** Claudette Reid <reidc@portagemi.gov>  
**To:** Pam Beuker [REDACTED]

Mr. & Mrs. Beuker,

I wanted to thank you for your email. I have read the attached materials and understand your concerns regarding the channel portion of the plan.

I wanted to know if you are supportive of the other aspects identified in the plan. The Lake Center District Corridor and Placemaking Study can be viewed in its entirety at [portagemi.gov/721](http://portagemi.gov/721), where citizens can also post public comments. The public comment period will run through May 16.

On Saturday, May 15 from 12 - 3 PM, the City of Portage will host a Lake Center District Corridor and Placemaking Study open house at Lakeview Park. City staff and Steering Committee members will be on-site where interested individuals can view display boards and study details, ask questions and provide public feedback. On a date yet to be determined, the City Council will meet to consider final approval of the study, which will include a public hearing.

Thank you again for your input.

Best regards,  
Claudette

Claudette Reid  
Councilmember, City of Portage  
[claudette.reid@portagemi.gov](mailto:claudette.reid@portagemi.gov)  
269-491-9725

---

**From:** Pam Beuker [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 11, 2021 4:37 PM  
**To:** Patricia Randall; Lori Knapp; [councilmemberip@portagemi.gov](mailto:councilmemberip@portagemi.gov); Chris Burns; Victor Ledbetter; Claudette Reid; Terry Urban  
**Subject:** Widening the DRAIN Between West Lake and Austin Lake

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Sent from my iPad  
Pam Beuker  
[REDACTED]

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** Pam Beuker [REDACTED]

**Date:** May 11, 2021

May 11, 2021

To Whom it May Concern:

Steven Beuker and Pamela Beuker living at [REDACTED] on West Lake, strongly oppose the widening of the DRAIN between Austin and West Lake for the following reasons:

- 1.) This DRAIN was designed by civil engineers and regulated by the Drain commission so as to make sure the right amount of water is distributed to West Lake. Widening this DRAIN could change the lake level too much or too little.
- 2.) West Lake is a fragile ecosystem. This would be a huge impact on the environment.
- 3.) West Lake riparians are assessed many dollars to manage weeds every year. Non-resident boaters going through the DRAIN will bring in new invasive species. We care about water quality and do NOT want this to happen.
- 4.) West Lake is a 330 acre lake, 1/3 the size of Austin Lake. Widening the DRAIN would bring in more boat traffic, damaging our shore line and endangering swimmers and kayakers. A proposed boat/jet ski rental facility and docks extending into the lake would also threaten our safety.
- 5.) The City of Portage has always been proud to tell people about our beautiful lake within the city limits. We should keep it a quality place.
- 6.) This project will cost the tax payers of Portage millions of dollars. Is this price worth it for a few boaters to go between lakes? We think NOT! Can you justify this? The Mayor and Council should want to protect the tax payers of West Lake from serious DRAIN issues and protect our lake from being over run by increased boat traffic. Or, do they wish to support a Chicago Real Estate Speculator who has never paid taxes to Portage or appreciated the nature of West Lake?

Many of the people on West Lake had no idea about what was happening to the DRAIN or about the Lake Center Corridor and Placemaking Study. The lack of transparency and secrecy has been a real disappointment about our Portage Leaders! We need to be better informed.

This is a special lake and a place each of us calls home, please reject all references to the widening of the DRAIN!

We appreciate your reading our letter and hope you can be on our side.

Thank you,

Steven and Pamela Beuker

Sent from my iPad

Pam Beuker

**Page 2 of 3**



**Subject:** Fw: Lake Center District

**Date:** Wednesday, May 12, 2021 at 11:15:23 AM Eastern Daylight Time  
**From:** Claudette Reid <reidc@portagemi.gov>  
**To:** Mary Beth Block <blockm@portagemi.gov>  
**CC:** Joseph La Margo <lamargoj@portagemi.gov>

---

**From:** Adam Edlefson [REDACTED]

**Sent:** Wednesday, May 12, 2021 10:41:42 AM

**To:** Claudette Reid

**Subject:** Lake Center District

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Claudette,

I was able to attend the city council meeting last night and appreciate the council offering time to comment/question after the agenda was wrapped up.

There are a few observations that I, as well as others, have made:

1. The Mayor seemed to position the open house on Saturday as a chance to present the plan. Since the Steering Committee started meeting, there haven't been options to provide community input prior to the finalization of the study. If this is a chance to present the plan, it would stand to reason that the plan has been decided on. We were all under the impression that rather than hearing from the committee, this would be our chance for them to hear from us. The concern here is two fold. First, the council has made up their mind and is trying to explain their decision to the community. Second, there will continue to be an inadequate chance for the council to hear from the community. This is especially true when considering the cut-off date for online submissions is immediately after the open house. This isn't enough time for us to digest the plan and determine the risk/reward of the proposal.
2. Ms. Randall dismissed concerns about conflict of interest as a consequence of the size of our town and the extensive involvement in many areas that the council is involved in. While I agree that you are required to wear many hats and that this is a small town. There is not a small degree of separation between the council members on the steering committee. There is no degree of separation. The study proposal places, in black and white, the financial gain these members would receive. The community I'm speaking with, which involves many successful attorneys, believe that the council is not absolved from creating a direct conflict of interest.
3. I am not alone in my belief that the mayor's response that this is an "emotional" topic for West Lake residents insulting. There are arguments that are being presented (financing, environment, responsible spending, water safety) that warrant more than just a dismissal that we are an unstable group. These are objective concerns that, void of emotion, have substantial warrant. I reiterate that this proposal will be the most invasive to West Lake residents and our voice is being dismissed by many. We are being told to give in so that the rest of the community can benefit. I would argue that residents in other areas of Portage don't even know this proposal is taking place.

Thanks for your time and commitment to our great city.

Adam

**Subject:** Fw: West Lake and Austin Lake Improvement concerns

**Date:** Wednesday, May 12, 2021 at 11:18:39 AM Eastern Daylight Time

**From:** Claudette Reid <reidc@portagemi.gov>

**To:** Mary Beth Block <blockm@portagemi.gov>

Claudette Reid

Councilmember, City of Portage

claudette.reid@portagemi.gov

269-491-9725

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**From:** Eric Comer [REDACTED]

**Sent:** Wednesday, May 12, 2021 7:47:19 AM

**To:** Claudette Reid

**Subject:** West Lake and Austin Lake Improvement concerns

**CAUTION: THIS EMAIL IS FROM AN EXTERNAL SENDER**

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Ms. Reid, --please read to the completion of my email,

I am writing this morning to voice my concerns to the proposed widening of the channel and proposals for **"improvement"** between Westlake and Austin Lake. I have been a home owner on West lake for 13 years.

The "channel" between West Lake and Austin Lake is actually a DRAIN, designed by civil engineers and controlled by the Drain Commission, to regulate the flow of water between the two lakes and several other lakes. More accurately, Austin Lake and West Lake are part of a chain of lakes, and the flow of water from one to the other affects all of the lakes. The proposal to alter the ecosystem and water flow by widening the Channel IGNORES THE DELICATE ECOSYSTEMS involved and illustrates the lack of thought put into this ill-conceived proposal.

In addition to water quality issues, the Steering Committee **IGNORED SAFETY CONCERN**s related to increased boat traffic on West Lake, and even proposed adding a boat/jet ski rental facility (and docks that extend out into the lake) where the West Lake Drive In is currently located.

City Council Members who served on the Steering Committee **MUST RECUSE THEMSELVES** from the City Council vote. The chairperson of the committee is a member of the City Council WHO LIVES ON AUSTIN LAKE – Lori Knapp. Another member of the City Council and member of the Steering Committee is Jim Pearson – WHO LIVES ON AUSTIN LAKE.

In addition to the above, the Vice-Chairperson of the Steering Committee is a lawyer WHO LIVES ON AUSTIN LAKE – Danielle Mason Anderson.

In addition, the President of the Austin Lake Riparians – AJ Spicer – is on the **Steering Committee**.

One "representative" of West Lake actually is from the group that owns the Cove Bistro, and clearly the restaurant does not share the same perspectives/goals as West Lake residents. Another West Lake "representative" is a REAL ESTATE SPECULATOR, who is only looking out for his investment in the West Lake Drive-In property. He has never lived on or owned a residence on West Lake.

**My parents live on Austin Lake in the cove closest to the channel currently. Their area of the lake gets a large amount of silt and muck accumulation due to the winds and activity of the lake and if the channel is widened. I am positive no matter what the "specialists" say, this will become an issue shifting to our lake.**

**Please note that I AM PARTICULARLY CONCERNED about WATER QUALITY and SAFETY issues on West Lake.**

My wife and I now have a 2 year old son and one more on the way and we are significantly concerned about the safety and lack of thought about the increased boat traffic and waverunner rentals on our small 300 acre lake. Austin lake is 3-4 times the size of our lake in comparsion.

Please keep in mind when voting and making decisions with your heart and feelings and not just the economic well being of a limited few and appearance of this portage road area.

We have no objections to the improvements of portage road but the widening of the channel and boat/kayak/waverunner rentals will greatly effect all of our lives on both lakes.

Eric Comer

[REDACTED]

Portage, MI

49002

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

**Subject:** Fw: Channel Study  
**Date:** Thursday, May 13, 2021 at 9:13:55 AM Eastern Daylight Time  
**From:** Claudette Reid <reidc@portagemi.gov>  
**To:** Mary Beth Block <blockm@portagemi.gov>

Claudette Reid  
Councilmember, City of Portage  
[claudette.reid@portagemi.gov](mailto:claudette.reid@portagemi.gov)  
269-491-9725

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**From:** Dave Grosser [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, May 12, 2021 6:52 PM  
**To:** Claudette Reid  
**Subject:** Re: Channel Study

**CAUTION: THIS EMAIL IS FROM AN EXTERNAL SENDER**

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Actually, I do not agree with any of the proposed changes. Thank you

---

**From:** Claudette Reid <reidc@portagemi.gov>  
**Sent:** Sunday, May 9, 2021 9:31 PM  
**To:** Dave Grosser <grssteel@msn.com>  
**Subject:** Re: Channel Study

Mr. Grosser,

I wanted to thank you for your email. I have read the attached materials and understand your concerns regarding the channel portion of the plan.

My understanding is that you are ONLY opposed to that portion of the plan that relates to widening the channel, and are supportive of the other aspects identified in the plan. Is that accurate?

Thank you again for your input.

Best regards,  
Claudette

Claudette Reid  
Councilmember, City of Portage  
[claudette.reid@portagemi.gov](mailto:claudette.reid@portagemi.gov)  
269-491-9725

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**From:** Dave Grosser [REDACTED]

**Sent:** Sunday, May 9, 2021 7:35 PM

**To:** Terry Urban; Claudette Reid; Victor Ledbetter; Chris Burns; Jim Pearson; Lori Knapp; Patricia Randall

**Subject:** Channel Study

**CAUTION: THIS EMAIL IS FROM AN EXTERNAL SENDER**

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Please see attached letter. Thank You

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**Subject:** FW: Lake Center District Opinion

**Date:** Friday, May 14, 2021 at 9:56:04 AM Eastern Daylight Time

**From:** Joseph La Margo <lamargoj@portagemi.gov>

**To:** Mary Beth Block <blockm@portagemi.gov>

**From:** [REDACTED]

**Sent:** Friday, May 14, 2021 8:00 AM

**To:** Patricia Randall <randallp@portagemi.gov>; Lori Knapp <knapp@portagemi.gov>; Jim Pearson <councilmemberjp@portagemi.gov>; Terry Urban <urbant@portagemi.gov>; Chris Burns <burnsc@portagemi.gov>; Victor Ledbetter <ledbettv@portagemi.gov>; Claudette Reid <reidc@portagemi.gov>; Joseph La Margo <lamargoj@portagemi.gov>

**Subject:** Lake Center District Opinion

**CAUTION: THIS EMAIL IS FROM AN EXTERNAL SENDER**

Do not click on links or open attachments unless this is from a sender you know and trust.

Dear Council Members:

My name is Linda Herzberg, a resident of Portage for almost 40 years, and I wanted to share my thoughts regarding the proposed plan. I may not be able to attend Saturday's open house so I wanted to make sure my thoughts were in writing to the members.

These are my thoughts and suggestions regarding the many different scenarios to improve Portage Road, West Lake and Austin Lake. First of all I'm very disappointed that this project was given to an out of state Company. The Chicago firm does not know or understand the dynamics of this small town environment of West Lake and Austin Lake. We are NOT Petoskey or Charlevoix and we are NOT a large resort town. My biggest concern is the cost of all of this.

Portage has recently passed several major millages and as a taxpayer we have had to pay for that. Any of these changes if approved will cost a substantial amount money that will be up to the residents of Portage to pay for. Its as if the city of Portage is acting like it has a lot of money to spend for this, but its not the city's money, it will be put on the taxpayers to fund.

Making Portage Road into a 2 lane road is ridiculous. This was done on Lovers Lane mainly for a bike lane, even though there was already a large bike lane on the side of the road. Since that was done, no other improvements have been made and there are now turn lanes and arrows that lead to nowhere, which is a waste of taxpayer's dollars. Th

Another problem if Portage Road goes down to a 2 lane road is the amount of traffic it will create on S. Shore and Lakeview. These roads are already not good with people speeding on them to cut through. The configuration that was done at Lakeview and Portage Road did not solve the problem, traffic still is too fast and visibility is not good because of the curve in Portage Road.

I do not think that if you want to beautify the business of Portage Road, that this is the taxpayers' responsibility. If you are a business owner and you want to improve or upgrade your business, it is their responsibility to do so, NOT the taxpayers.

The idea of connecting West Lake and Austin lake is ludicrous. They are connected by a drain, NOT a channel. This will increase the boat traffic on both lakes exponentially, not to mention the quality of the water due to the increase in boat traffic. There are a lot of small cottages and large homes that would be effected, we would loose the charm of the 2 lakes and the surrounding areas and environment. It would also negatively impact the wildlife and surrounding park/marsh with the additional traffic and condos proposed.

We have been paying a lot of taxes in Portage and the lake front homeowners especially. These ideas are NOT in the best interest of Portage homeowners and this wonderful small lake community.

Thank you,

Linda

**Draft Lake Center District Corridor and Placemaking Study - Public Comment - Submission #8160**

**Date Submitted:** 5/7/2021

**Name\***

Jessica Leyrer

**Email Address\***

[REDACTED]

**Address\***

[REDACTED]

**City\***

Portage

**State\***

MI

**Zip Code\***

49002

**Phone Number\***

[REDACTED]

**Submit a Public Comment\***

STOP REDUCING LANES EVERYWHERE! There are some people that can't handle going the speed limit and you're creating too many idiots - people passing in turn lanes, riding peoples' bumpers, etc. It's ridiculous. At least with multiple lanes, there is a safer option for people who won't slow down instead of creating road rage incidents.

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Draft Lake Center District Corridor and Placemaking Study - Public Comment - Submission #8165

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Date Submitted: 5/8/2021

Name\*

Michael L Burke

Email Address\*

[REDACTED]

Address\*

[REDACTED]

City\*

Portage

State\*

MI

Zip Code\*

49002

Phone Number\*

[REDACTED]

**Submit a Public Comment\***

My name is Michael Burke and I have lived at [REDACTED] in the City of Portage since 2010. I STRONGLY object to the proposed Draft Final Lake Center District Corridor and Placemaking Study (the "Study") that was developed by a biased Steering Committee (the "Steering Committee"). I found your proposal for the Lake Center District project more of a garbage dump of haphazard poorly thought-out ideas that were not based on any realistic data. You started out discussing making the street in the area safer for pedestrians and bicyclists yet that is the last improvement that you are actually proposing to implement. Reading your proposal, it is clear that you have slanted it in the interest of some developer and perhaps one or two business leaders, not the residents of Portage and what their needs and desires are for the area.

These two lakes are not a destination spot for tourists and from an environmental standpoint they are already at risk of becoming an environmental disaster. Adding condominiums, a larger boat ramp, and increasing the size of the canal are ensuring that the current lake residence is going to be living with this environmental disaster created by the greed of a few individuals. Both West Lake and Austin lake cannot handle a large influx of boats. Go visit Pine Lake on a nice weekend and you will see what happens with too much access to the lakes. West Lake in particular is a very small lake.

Please note that I AM PARTICULARLY CONCERNED about WATER QUALITY and SAFETY issues on West Lake.

- The canal between West Lake and Austin Lake is a DRAIN, designed by civil engineers and controlled by the Drain Commission, to regulate the flow of water between the two lakes and several other lakes. More accurately, Austin Lake and West Lake are part of a chain of lakes, and the flow of water from one to the other affects all of the lakes. The proposal to alter the ecosystem and water flow by widening the Canal IGNORES THE DELICATE ECOSYSTEMS involved and illustrates the lack of thought put into this ill-conceived proposal. Empty promises to undertake environmental impact assessment in the future are just promises – and we cannot count on the City of Portage or any developer to undertake the required efforts, particularly if the Study is accepted by the Portage City Council (the "Council").

- In addition to water quality issues, the Steering Committee IGNORED SAFETY CONCERNS related to increased boat traffic on West Lake, and even proposed adding a boat/jet ski rental facility (and docks that extend out into the lake) where the West Lake Drive In is currently located.

- West Lake cannot support increased boat traffic. West Lake is a 330-acre lake, and West Lake residents specifically bought homes on West Lake because of the small, quiet nature of the lake. The size of West Lake makes it safe for swimming, kayaking, and boating. Widening the Canal will effectively require West Lake to accommodate boat traffic for a 1,400-acre lake (when combined with Austin Lake's 1100 acres). It will have a negative impact on water quality and threaten the safety of West Lake riparians.

- For decades, West Lake riparians have paid thousands of dollars in fees and assessments in order to carefully plan and implement programs to manage the weeds and water quality issues on West Lake. The introduction of invasive species from Austin Lake riparians or other non-resident boaters will negatively impact the many years and thousands of dollars that have been invested by West Lake riparians.

- The Steering Committee was STACKED AGAINST WEST LAKE.

- o City Council Members who served on the Steering Committee MUST RECUSE THEMSELVES from the City Council vote. The chairperson of the committee is a member of the City Council WHO LIVES ON AUSTIN LAKE – Lori Knapp. Another member of the City Council and member of the Steering Committee is Jim Pearson – WHO LIVES ON AUSTIN LAKE.

- o In addition to the above, the Vice-Chairperson of the Steering Committee is a lawyer WHO LIVES ON AUSTIN LAKE – Danielle Mason Anderson.

- o In addition, the President of the Austin Lake Riparians – AJ Spicer – is on the Steering Committee.

- o Only two members of the Steering Committee LIVE ON WEST LAKE. One "representative" of West Lake actually is from the group that owns the Cove Bistro, and clearly the restaurant does not share the same perspectives/goals as West Lake residents. The other West Lake "representative" is a REAL ESTATE SPECULATOR, who is only looking out for his investment in the West Lake Drive-In property. He has never lived on or owned a residence on West Lake.

- o Although there are a few thoughtful ideas about traffic calming, pedestrian safety, and business corridor improvements included in the Study, the widening of the Canal, adding a boat/jet ski rental facility (and docks that extend out into the lake) where the West Lake Drive-in and Cove are located are not among them. Or, is allowing condominiums on the West Lake Drive-in location.

As a Portage taxpayer, and West Lake riparian, I object to the widening of the Canal and many of the other ideas that will cause permanent damage to the lakes and the wildlife preserve. I ask that the Study be rejected in its entirety and that the city focus is changed to improving pedestrian safety, bike trails, and landscape improvements along Portage Road. I would approve creating a small café with outdoor seating where the West Lake Drive-in is located to start creating an appealing place for residents to gather and enjoy the views and sunset at West Lake.

This project is poorly conceived, it would waste millions of taxpayer's dollars, it would not bring the economic growth suggested in this "FAKE" proposal, and would not create a pedestrian safe and friendly destination. I have many better ideas for the city if they are truly looking to improve this area and wish to create a more appealing place for residents and bring in visitors to the area without causing harm to the lakes.

Thank you for your attention to my concerns.

Michael Burke

[REDACTED]  
Portage, MI 49002

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**Draft Lake Center District Corridor and Placemaking Study - Public Comment - Submission #8167**

**Date Submitted:** 5/8/2021

**Name\***

Christine Sanborn

**Email Address\***

[REDACTED]

**Address\***

[REDACTED]

**City\***

Portage

**State\***

MI

**Zip Code\***

49002-7246

**Phone Number\***

[REDACTED]

**Submit a Public Comment\***

Please stop all this nonsense. Let the Austin and West Lake homeowners vote if THEY want to connect the two lakes. It is our properties and taxes that this will most effect.

A road speed would be nice to lower and to simply "clean up" the businesses in this corridor. That is all we need - we moved out of the city to have our peace and quiet lakes - NOT to create a "City Corridor". We have parks and amphitheaters, bike and walking trails already. Please spend the money elsewhere.

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Draft Lake Center District Corridor and Placemaking Study - Public Comment - Submission #8168

Date Submitted: 5/9/2021

Name\*

Penny Sundman

Email Address\*

[REDACTED]

Address\*

[REDACTED]

City\*

Portage

State\*

MI

Zip Code\*

49002

Phone Number\*

[REDACTED]

Submit a Public Comment\*

I have lived on Stanley Avenue my whole life. With the increase in traffic through the years it has become increasingly difficult to turn onto Portage Road. Reducing the lanes down to 3 would be the worst thing possible for this area. I cannot imagine the traffic jams this would create. I am an avid walker and bicyclist and enjoy the off road bike lanes in Portage. I do not believe we need to reduce traffic lanes to add bike lanes with the many biking opportunities we already have in Portage. I am also troubled by the proposal to put mid point crosswalks in Portage Road. These are a hazard to humans and cars alike. The proof of that is the one already in existence by Daane's. It has been run through no less than 5 times and I would not go stand in that target area to wait to cross Portage Road. A traffic light at Forest Drive seems to be long overdue and would slow traffic down and give people and opportunity to cross Portage at that location. The stupid cross walk/engineered traffic hazard could then be removed.

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**Draft Lake Center District Corridor and Placemaking Study - Public Comment - Submission #8175**

**Date Submitted:** 5/10/2021

**Name\***

Rex Cummings

**Email Address\***

[REDACTED]

**Address\***

[REDACTED]

**City\***

Portage

**State\***

MI

**Zip Code\***

49002

**Phone Number\***

[REDACTED]

**Submit a Public Comment\***

I appreciate the work by the city in an effort to improve our city. The Lake Center development plan is interesting but I there are 3 big concerns I have.

1. West Lake is already at capacity during the summer weekends. I am very concerned for the safety of the boaters on the lake. I live on West Lake and it is already dangerous due to high traffic on the lake. Adding additional traffic is a very bad idea.
2. There is no question this will have a negative environmental impact. The additional boat traffic, boat rentals, public access brings litter, noise and disrupts the wildlife at the West Lake Nature preserve and the birds that depend on the lake for their existence. Boat rentals or any kind of marina type services invites the spillage of petroleum, litter and other foreign debris into the lake system which is not good for the fish or people that use the lake.
3. This will cost millions of dollars of tax payer money to develop this area. Who is going to pay for this? A smaller version that can enhance the public space for our citizens is important, however this is huge for this already congested area and does not promote a positive experience for homeowners on the lake or near the Lake Center area.

For the above reasons, I do not support the project.

**Upload File**

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**Draft Lake Center District Corridor and Placemaking Study - Public Comment - Submission #8176**

**Date Submitted: 5/10/2021**

**Name\***

Amy Boerma

**Email Address\***

[REDACTED]

**Address\***

[REDACTED]

**City\***

Portage

**State\***

MI

**Zip Code\***

49002

**Phone Number\***

[REDACTED]

**Submit a Public Comment\***

I couldn't be more upset with the changes being proposed. The LAST thing I want is more traffic brought to the area and ESPECIALLY onto the lake. The channel should not be expanded in any way for the good of the health of the lake and I do NOT want additional traffic on the lake. I pay EXTREMELY high tax rates to enjoy West lake and am angered terribly at the thought of a jet ski rental on the lake. There are many people who swim around the lake. Strangers zipping around will make swimming unsafe which is completely unfair to the people who spent hundreds of thousands of dollars extra for their houses ONLY for the privilege of enjoying the lake. Perhaps parking spaces and picnic tables would allow people to come up and enjoy the view over our beautiful lake without damaging the enjoyment for those that chose this lake because it doesn't have public access. We are not able to be at the meeting but are horrified and angry at the thought of ANY changes to West Lake Access by anyone who does not pay the extra tax assessments for lake care and the extra taxes because of the cost of being lakefront. Those living on Austin, paid to live on a large busy, beautiful lake and should continue to enjoy their lake. I don't want to add to their traffic and think it is ridiculous to think they should be allowed open access to our little quiet lake.

**Upload File**

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**Draft Lake Center District Corridor and Placemaking Study - Public Comment - Submission #8177**

**Date Submitted: 5/10/2021**

**Name\***

Becky Klose

**Email Address\***

[REDACTED]

**Address\***

[REDACTED]

**City\***

Portage

**State\***

MI

**Zip Code\***

49002

**Phone Number\***

[REDACTED]

**Submit a Public Comment\***

First of all, let me say I feel that the city is trying to put things under the radar. I grew up on West Lake, my mother has lived on that lake for nearly 80 of her 88 years.

Your widening the "channel" is not a good idea for many reasons including these:

1. It is a DRAIN NOT A CHANNEL. Did you contact the drain commissioner? I think you didn't because he was unaware from what I have heard.
2. Has the DEQ been contacted for the impact this will have on West Lake? This lake is TOO SMALL to accommodate more boats, swimmers, skiers, etc. We already have crowded conditions during the summer.
3. Who was on this board/committee? Seems to be a lot of Austin lake folks and where were the West Lake ones? Oh, wait, you had the guy who owned West Lake Drive in, who doesn't live on the lake.
4. Does Austin Lake pay an assessment to treat their lake for weeds like West Lake does? Another DEQ concern.
5. Why are you choosing to draw more traffic to the area, drop the lanes on Portage Road to one each way - that is a nightmare. Getting in and out of businesses is going to be a mess. The road diet you did on Lovers Lane is also a pain, but you haven't learned from that. I have people PASSING me in the turn lane. That's fun. NOT.
6. Where are the funds coming from for this? Raising my taxes again? I think not.
7. Seems that this is nothing but a sham. Shame on you City of Portage powers that be.

**Upload File**

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**Draft Lake Center District Corridor and Placemaking Study - Public Comment - Submission #8179**

**Date Submitted: 5/10/2021**

**Name\***

Don & Linda Todd

**Email Address\***

[REDACTED]

**Address\***

[REDACTED]

**City\***

Portage

**State\***

Michigan

**Zip Code\***

49002

**Phone Number\***

[REDACTED]

**Submit a Public Comment\***

We would like to introduce ourselves. We are Don & Linda Todd. We had a home built on West Lake in 2012 in the City of Portage. As voting citizens of Portage, WE STRONGLY OBJECT TO THE PROPOSED DRAFT FINAL LAKE CENTER DISTRICT CORRIDOR AND PLACEMAKING STUDY. We are particularly concerned with the Study that relates to the proposed widening of the Channel between West Lake and Austin Lake.

**WE ARE CONCERNED ABOUT WATER QUALITY AND SAFETY ISSUES ON WEST LAKE.**

- The channel between West Lake and Austin Lake is a DRAIN. It was designed by civil engineers and is controlled by the Drain Commission to regulate the flow of water between the two lakes and several other lakes. The proposal to alter the ecosystem and water flow by widening the Channel ignores the ecosystems involved and illustrates the lack of thought put into this proposal.
- The Steering Committee IGNORED SAFETY CONCERNS related to the increased boat traffic on West Lake and even proposed adding a boat/jet ski rental facility with docks extending out into West Lake.
- West Lake cannot support increased boat traffic. West lake is a 330-acre lake. We particularly had a home built on this lake due to the size of the lake and quiet nature which is safe for swimming, kayaking and boating. Widening the Channel would require West Lake to accommodate boat traffic for a much larger lake. It would definitely have a NEGATIVE impact on water quality and threaten the safety of West Lake riparian's.
- For many years West Lake riparian's have paid thousands of dollars in fees and assessments in order to carefully plan and implement programs to manage the weeds and water quality issues on West Lake. The introduction of invasive species from Austin Lake riparian's/other boaters who launch their boats at the public access would negatively impact the money that has been invested by West Lake riparian's.

We are concerned that the Steering Committee was very heavily weighted towards Austin Lake residents.

There are a number of thoughtful ideas about traffic calming, pedestrian safety, and business improvements included in the study, the widening of the Channel is not one of them. As a Portage Citizen, Taxpayer, and West Lake riparian, WE OBJECT TO THE WIDENING OF THE CHANNEL and feel the Study should be rejected unless the Study is amended to remove any and all references to the widening of the Channel.

**Upload File**

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May 10, 2021

Joseph La Margo, City Manager  
City of Portage  
7900 S. Westnedge Ave.  
Portage, MI 49002

Re: Lake Center District Corridor and Placemaking Study

Dear Mr. La Margo,

My name is Charles Nelson and I have lived at [REDACTED] in the City of Portage since 1998. I appreciate the time and effort of the Steering Committee and Farr Associates to study improvements to the Lake Center area. There are many recommendations that I support such as revising Portage Road to include three vehicular lanes with bike paths, landscaping, and pedestrian walks along each side; safe street crossings for pedestrians; improvements to the facades of area businesses; replacing the drive-in with a park, and a possible canal walk on the north side of the channel. However, as a West Lake riparian, **I object to the widening of the channel between West Lake and Austin Lake to accommodate pontoon boats and power boats**, and I ask that the Study be amended to remove all references to the widening of the channel for the following reasons.

West Lake is a 330-acre lake, and residents bought lake homes here because of the small, quiet nature of the lake. The small size also makes it safe for swimming, kayaking, and boating.

West Lake cannot support increased boat traffic. Widening of the channel to allow the passage of pontoon boats and power boats would degrade the water quality of the lake, increase shore erosion, lead to over-fishing, and threaten the safety of West Lake riparians. Widening the channel would effectively require West Lake to accommodate the boat traffic for a 1,400-acre lake (when combined with Austin Lake's 1100 acres).

- West Lake is a shallow lake, and the power boats of West Lake riparians churn up the bottom causing the water to be murky and full of plant debris. Existing boat traffic also causes shore erosion. Increasing the number of boats on the lake would only decrease water quality further and increase erosion.
- Austin Lake is a heavily fished lake with multiple contests and tournaments throughout the summer. Extending these tournaments into West Lake would negatively impact the fishing on West Lake.
- During summer weekends and holidays West Lake is filled with, pontoon boats, jet skis, wave runners, fishing boats, kayaks, sailboats, and power boats pulling skiers and tubers. The lake is crowded, and pulling tubers and skiers feels hazardous during these times. Increasing the traffic on our small lake would be dangerous.

Thank you for reading this letter, and please oppose the widening of the channel for pontoon boats and power boats.

Sincerely,

Charles Nelson, West Lake Riparian

**Draft Lake Center District Corridor and Placemaking Study - Public Comment - Submission #8183**

**Date Submitted: 5/11/2021**

**Name\***

Justin and Amy Susan

**Email Address\***

[REDACTED]

**Address\***

[REDACTED]

**City\***

Portage

**State\***

MI

**Zip Code\***

49002

**Phone Number\***

[REDACTED]

**Submit a Public Comment\***

We are writing in regard to the proposed plan to widen the channel/drain between West and Austin Lake. We STRONGLY OPPOSE this plan due to the following reasons:

1. West Lake can simply not support increased boat traffic. Our lake is a small 330-acre lake. We purchased our home on West Lake in 2010 because of the peaceful and quiet nature of West Lake. If the channel/drain is widened, West Lake will be required to accommodate boat traffic for a 1,400 acre lake. This will greatly impact our water quality and the safety of West Lake residents.
2. West Lake residents have paid thousands of dollars in fees and assessments to manage the weeds and water quality issues on West Lake. Invasive species from Austin Lake and other non-resident boaters will negatively impact the many years and thousands of dollars that have been invested by West Lake residents.
3. The cost to widen the channel/drain would be astronomical! Austin and West Lake residents would be required to pay increased taxes and special assessments.
4. The Steering Committee and the City Council are seeking to bypass the required regular process-review by the city planning commission- in order to avoid any possible objections. The Steering Committee did not hold open meetings. There has been a complete lack of transparency related to the development of the Study. At no time did the City of Portage, or the Steering Committee, ever explain in detail that the major goal of the Study was to widen the channel/drain.
5. The "channel" between West Lake and Austin Lake is not a channel. It is a DRAIN. The proposal to alter the ecosystem and water flow by widening the channel/drain ignores the delicate ecosystem.

As citizens of Portage and taxpayers, WE STRONGLY OBJECT, to the widening of the channel/drain and ask that the study be rejected in its entirety unless the study is amended to remove any and all references to the widening of the channel.

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Draft Lake Center District Corridor and Placemaking Study - Public Comment - Submission #8184

Date Submitted: 5/11/2021

Name\*

Adam Edlefson

Email Address\*

[REDACTED]

Address\*

[REDACTED]

City\*

Portage

State\*

Michigan

Zip Code\*

49002

Phone Number\*

[REDACTED]

Submit a Public Comment\*

Council Members - There are several reasons to oppose the study in its current form. It is shown through multiple survey results that if the study is approved by the council, said council would NOT be representing the wishes of their constituents but their own interest in what the consultant has sold them.

No one would say that they don't want a safer Portage Rd. No one would say that our local businesses don't deserve our support. However, most would agree that these changes should be done with transparency and fiscal/environmental responsibility.

The steering committee (which is riddled with conflicts of interest) has operated in the dark and behind closed doors until recently when forced to comply with a Freedom of Information Act request. This speaks to the lack of transparency and community input that has been heard.

Many have mentioned the tax implications this will place on the community. We, to date, have still not received any information on how we are paying for a project requesting a minimum of \$13 million. This figure isn't even complete. There are many costs that are not filled in such as property acquisition (millions more dollars). We are being asked to be compliant with the city approving a blank check to be paid for by taxpayers.

Additionally, there has been no research into any environmental impacts. The widening of the drain connects two bodies of water that have vastly different water qualities, problems, and ways in which they are governed. That drain is part of a larger ecosystem that affects multiple bodies of water, the dam on Austin Lake, a nature preserve on West Lake and more. A mistake here is a blunder that would be expensive and costly to all to fix.

Yes, I live on West Lake. I have spoken with members of the city and the hired consultant that have shamed me for wanting the atmosphere of my home to remain the same. This is not out of malice to any other residents of the community. My wife and I spent hundreds of thousands of dollars and continue to spend tens of thousands in property taxes to make the choice to purchase our dream home and we chose West Lake for a reason. The fact that widening the canal, against all considerations previously listed, would be the most invasive for a West Lake resident means that the West Lake voice (which is strongly opposed) should not be marginalized.

In summary, I find the proposal and the way in which it has come together to be reckless and incomplete. There is no reason why the safety of Portage Rd. needs to be combined with a lakes project. The addition of the latter phases mitigates what would be overwhelming support of measures taken to make the road safer.

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Use this feature to upload images or documents.

**Draft Lake Center District Corridor and Placemaking Study - Public Comment - Submission #8187**

**Date Submitted:** 5/11/2021

**Name\***

Kevin & Patricia Collins

**Email Address\***

[REDACTED]

**Address\***

[REDACTED]

**City\***

Portage

**State\***

MI

**Zip Code\***

49002

**Phone Number\***

[REDACTED]

**Submit a Public Comment\***

I like the future thinking of the plan, am excited by many of the improvements, and believe it will go a long way in helping an area that sorely needs work as well as a strategic vision as it continues to grow. There are a few concerns I have for the safety of West Lake related to widening the canal and the new 100'+ West Lake piers that I'm strongly opposed to.

I do not agree that the city should widen the canal between Austin and West Lakes. I think it will add more traffic to West Lake, reduce safety and decrease the water quality of the lake. When my wife and I purchased our house on West Lake, we did it because it was a small private lake and was the primary reason for purchasing versus the other lakes in the area. There is a public access on Austin, along with fishing tournaments and other boaters, that will end up driving more traffic to West Lake, along with traffic from Austin. I do not believe the argument that the city will put in bollards in the canal to prevent larger boats from passing through. After time passes, it would be quite easy for the city to remove the bollards. An overwhelming majority of West Lake residents do not approve of widening the canal. Finally, it is an expensive option of over \$4M. I think the city can find a better use to invest that kind of money.

Another point is that I do not like the 100' piers extending out into West Lake. It creates an unsafe situation with these long piers sticking out farther than other docks on that side of the lake. If the city is going to put piers on that side of the lake, they should stick out no further than other West Lake docks typically do.

Another important element of the recommendations is to make Portage Road safer to drive on as well as safer to cross. I support limiting the speed to 30/35 as the road comes through the isthmus area as many people will exceed the posted speed. I am an avid biker and am glad to see the feedback the city received about not having bike lanes take up scarce right of way space and the study team redirecting the bike traffic around the area. If the city decides to go with a 3 lane right of way though the isthmus, I recommend that a quick pilot be done to test the effect of that before costly construction. A simple pilot could be conducted with reducing lanes with temporary barrels to see what the effect is.

I have participated in all the public study sessions, provided input along the way, and have seen the plan evolve. I hope it is not too late to make some minor changes to the plan. I would like to see adjustments made to eliminate the widening of the channel for larger boats and reducing the length of the piers or eliminating them on West Lake altogether.

Thank you for your consideration.

Kevin and Patricia Collins

**Upload File**

No file chosen

Use this feature to upload images or documents.

**Draft Lake Center District Corridor and Placemaking Study - Public Comment - Submission #8188**

**Date Submitted:** 5/11/2021

**Name\***

Mary Zoeller

**Email Address\***

[REDACTED]

**Address\***

[REDACTED]

**City\***

Portage

**State\***

Mi

**Zip Code\***

59002

**Phone Number\***

[REDACTED]

**Submit a Public Comment\***

I am excited to have the speed lowered on Portage Road, possible walkway to the park and road safety concerns addressed.

Road beautification and channel expansion issues need to be separated!

Most people want a beautiful and safe road. The expansion of the drain/channel is being heavily opposed. Please separate this two very different issues!

I feel our tax dollars are good for roads and school. I do not want our tax dollars to be spent on drain channel expansion. It would only benefit a small amount of our community!

**Upload File**

No file chosen

Use this feature to upload images or documents.

**Draft Lake Center District Corridor and Placemaking Study - Public Comment - Submission #8197**

Date Submitted: 5/12/2021

**Name\***

Barry Williams

**Email Address\***

[REDACTED]

**Address\***

[REDACTED]

**City\***

Portage

**State\***

MI

**Zip Code\***

49002

**Phone Number\***

[REDACTED]

**Submit a Public Comment\***

I've been a West Lake property owner and resident since 2003 when my wife & I bought our home from her parents so our boys could be closer to them and enjoy the lake that my wife grew up having fun on. Over the years we've not regretted this move once and feel lucky to be property owners on such a beautiful lake with a great location near the City of Portage. Elements of the improvement plan for Portage Road make sense to me to for beautifying the area and making it safer for motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians. I support the idea of lowering the speed limit to make this stretch of road safer. However, I have great concern related to widening the drain connection between West Lake and Austin Lake, in addition to concern about the proposed 100'+ West Lake piers at the east end of the lake. My concerns involve both the very real potential for significant environmental impact, as well as serious safety hazards for West Lake boaters. These concerns are in addition to the negative impact I believe West Lake residents will experience due to increased boat traffic and the inability to enjoy our lake as expected when we purchased our property. I do not agree that the city should widen the drainage tunnel, or create a boat thoroughfare, between Austin and West Lakes and am strongly opposed to this proposal. Doing so will disrupt the invasive weed measures that have been implemented through efforts of the resident-funded West Lake Improvement Association over the course of many years and do great harm to other aspects of our lake's ecological system per Dr. Jennifer L. Jermalowicz-Jones of Restorative Lake Sciences. She is the expert on the state of our lake's condition, the necessary steps required to maintain our lake's fine water quality, and how to control the invasive weeds in a way that maximizes our ability to enjoy our properties that we've paid a premium purchase price for. There seems to be zero benefit to West Lake residents if this part of the proposal is adopted and, even if there was, I'm extremely skeptical that it would outweigh the risk of harming our West Lake ecosystem by doing so.

When my wife and I decided to purchase our house on West Lake we did so partially because it was a small semi-private lake and, as a result, allowed for some control over the amount of boat traffic on the lake. West Lake is less than one-third the size of Austin Lake. There is a public access on Austin Lake, along with fishing tournaments and other boaters that will end up driving more boat traffic to West Lake, along with resident boaters that live on Austin Lake. This all adds up to an unsustainable amount of boat traffic that will force West Lake residents to sacrifice our right to safely enjoy our lake as expected when we bought our properties. I expect that Austin Lake residents placed careful consideration into their purchases as well. West Lake residents should not be forced to sacrifice the way in which we enjoy our wonderful lake to anyone that does not live on it themselves. Again, my wife and I had no desire to purchase property on a larger lake with an open public access boat launch that would allow for uncontrolled lake traffic, or we would have in 2003.

Finally, installation of bollards to keep boats from passing through the connection between the lakes is a fragile and temporary solution that can easily be changed in the future. I do not like this idea for that reason.

It must be recognized that an overwhelming majority of West Lake residents do not approve of widening the drainage canal. Certainly, the City of Portage can find a better use for several million dollars rather than directing it at a project that almost nobody on our lake wants to begin with. The opinions and personal interests of Austin Lake residents, steering committee members, or City Council members should not take priority over tax-paying West Lake residents who will be most impacted by this proposal. I respectfully ask that the City of Portage reconsiders the drainage canal widening proposal and eliminates it entirely from the scope of this project.

Thank you

**Upload File**

City letter 5-12-21.pdf

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**Draft Lake Center District Corridor and Placemaking Study - Public Comment - Submission #8206**

**Date Submitted:** 5/13/2021

**Name\***

Pamela Beuker

**Email Address\***

[REDACTED]

**Address\***

[REDACTED]

**City\***

Portage

**State\***

MI

**Zip Code\***

49002

**Phone Number\***

[REDACTED]

**Submit a Public Comment\***

To Whom it May Concern:  
Steven Beuker and Pamela Beuker living at [REDACTED] on West Lake, strongly oppose the widening of the DRAIN between Austin and West Lake for the following reasons:

- 1.) This DRAIN was designed by civil engineers and regulated by the Drain commission so as to make sure the right amount of water is distributed to West Lake. Widening this DRAIN could change the lake level too much or too little.
- 2.) West Lake is a fragile ecosystem. This would be a huge impact on the environment.
- 3.) West Lake riparians are assessed many dollars to manage weeds every year. Non-resident boaters going through the DRAIN will bring in new invasive species. We care about water quality and do NOT want this to happen.
- 4.) West Lake is a 330 acre lake, 1/3 the size of Austin Lake. Widening the DRAIN would bring in more boat traffic, damaging our shore line and endangering swimmers and kayakers. A proposed boat/jet ski rental facility and docks extending into the lake would also threaten our safety.
- 5.) The City of Portage has always been proud to tell people about our beautiful lake within the city limits. We should keep it a quality place.
- 6.) This project will cost the tax payers of Portage millions of dollars. Is this price worth it for a few boaters to go between lakes? We think NOT! Can you justify this? The Mayor and Council should want to protect the tax payers of West Lake from serious DRAIN issues and protect our lake from being over run by increased boat traffic. Or, do they wish to support a Chicago Real Estate Speculator who has never paid taxes to Portage or appreciated the nature of West Lake?

Many of the people on West Lake had no idea about what was happening to the DRAIN or about the Lake Center Corridor and Placemaking Study. The lack of transparency and secrecy has been a real disappointment about our Portage Leaders! We need to be better informed.

This is a special lake and a place each of us calls home, please reject all references to the widening of the DRAIN!  
We appreciate your reading our letter and hope you can be on our side.

Thank you,

Steven and Pamela Beuker

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**Draft Lake Center District Corridor and Placemaking Study - Public Comment - Submission #8208**

**Date Submitted:** 5/13/2021

**Name\***

Courtney Tavernit

**Email Address\***

[REDACTED]

**Address\***

[REDACTED]

**City\***

Portage

**State\***

MI

**Zip Code\***

49002

**Phone Number\***

[REDACTED]

**Submit a Public Comment\***

I love the ideas around making this portion of Portage Rd more desirable to business & shopping/dining. Specifically ensuring that there are sidewalks & enough cross walks.

On the other hand, I am strongly against enlarging the channel between Austin & West lakes. And I am against adding piers/docks to West Lake designed for non-residents of the lake. Both efforts are more expensive than any value they would drive and would disrupt the small lake atmosphere that was a large reason why my family purchased a home on West Lake (and I know many/most of my neighbors agree).

I would, however, be in favor of a small dock near the Cove that would allow residents of West Lake boat over to visit businesses on Portage Rd

Thank you,  
Courtney Tavernit

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**Draft Lake Center District Corridor and Placemaking Study - Public Comment - Submission #8209**

**Date Submitted:** 5/13/2021

**Name\***

Citizen

**Email Address\***

[REDACTED]

**Address\***

[REDACTED]

**City\***

Portage

**State\***

MI

**Zip Code\***

49002

**Phone Number\***

[REDACTED]

**Submit a Public Comment\***

Please be responsible in your decision making process. The Steering Team and Consultant have NOT conducted an environmental study on this project, and have not collected sufficient feedback from enough Portage citizens. The specific request is to ONLY evaluate the initial phase of road improvements and approve nothing further until proper analysis has been provided and sufficient population of people have been included in the proposal.

Thank you.

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Draft Lake Center District Corridor and Placemaking Study - Public Comment - Submission #8211

Date Submitted: 5/13/2021

Name\*

George Bauer

Email Address\*

[REDACTED]

Address\*

[REDACTED]

City\*

Portage

State\*

Michigan

Zip Code\*

49002

Phone Number\*

[REDACTED]

Submit a Public Comment\*

I am totally against widening the channel between West Lake and Austin Lake.

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or documents.

**Draft Lake Center District Corridor and Placemaking Study - Public Comment - Submission #8212**

**Date Submitted:** 5/14/2021

**Name\***

Gail Lindsey

**Email Address\***

[REDACTED]

**Address\***

[REDACTED]

**City\***

Portage

**State\***

MI

**Zip Code\***

49002

**Phone Number\***

[REDACTED]

**Submit a Public Comment\***

I totally agree with the comments from Brett Simmering and Victor Moon.

I, as well as most West Lake property owners, am completely opposed to widening the channel between the lakes. It will increase boat traffic and noise as well as negatively affect the safety of those using the lake. Building a commercial dock renting jet skies would also cause the same problems.

Reducing the traffic lanes to 3 will ruin the businesses along Portage Road and cause huge traffic jams.

I am opposed to changing the West Lake Drive-in other than freshening up the main building. It is an institution on the lake that has been enjoyed by generations of families. It could be leased out to continue being a viable business. An area with seating as shown in the plan would be a good addition. Most of all, it has been there almost 60 years which makes it an historic property which must be preserved.

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**Draft Lake Center District Corridor and Placemaking Study - Public Comment - Submission #8213**

**Date Submitted: 5/14/2021**

**Name\***

Karin Lund

**Email Address\***

[REDACTED]

**Address\***

[REDACTED]

**City\***

Portage

**State\***

MI

**Zip Code\***

49002

**Phone Number\***

[REDACTED]

**Submit a Public Comment\***

Questions: Who is paying for all these improvements? Who will be making money on these improvements? What will happen to our taxes as property owners? How will these plans actually benefit homeowners in the area?

We walk each day possible in the Lakeview Park. Crossing Portage road is difficult. If this road artery goes into 1 lane each way, crossing will be much more difficult as traffic is heavy enough with two lanes each direction. Turning a vehicle onto this road will be a nightmare. I have seen very few bikers along this stretch of road. Those that do, ride on the sidewalk.

I worry that our small shops will lose greatly or close as people will be having to do those left turns onto a busy street.

The park parking will have to be upgraded with an addition of a band shell that will be seldom used. That makes no sense at all. We love and use our park as it is.

What about the school traffic? One lane will be really tough on all drivers.

Why would you want to connect the two lakes for a few boaters? Will the tax payers have to pay for this? Very few homes have boats. No advantage for them.

Suggestions: How about a roundabout at the end of South Shore to slow the traffic? How about trying to temporarily closing one lane each way for a week or two and see what happens to the traffic flow? Will that slow traffic? Would just reducing the speed limit help?

There might possibly be other money saving possibilities to be considered. I see absolutely no advantage to our community to put forth this expensive development, which would benefit few. A beautiful development at a tremendous cost and no advantage....most residents and neighbors we have talked to are not in favor of this.

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**Draft Lake Center District Corridor and Placemaking Study - Public Comment - Submission #8214**

**Date Submitted:** 5/14/2021

**Name\***

Megan

**Email Address\***

[REDACTED]

**Address\***

[REDACTED]

**City\***

Portage

**State\***

MI

**Zip Code\***

49002

**Phone Number\***

[REDACTED]

**Submit a Public Comment\***

West Lake is too small to accommodate the increased traffic from the much larger and much more populated Austin Lake. I like to tow my kids behind the boat on West Lake. The increased traffic will increase the deaths on the lake. I do not want my kids to die because the rich citizens of Austin Lake want to take their boats to get french fries.

It would be much more cost effective to the citizens of Portage to re-zone some areas on Austin Lake for business purposes. This is a very expensive and unnecessary project that will immediately and negatively affect the safety of many citizens.

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Draft Lake Center District Corridor and Placemaking Study - Public Comment - Submission #8215

Date Submitted: 5/14/2021

Name\*

Melanie Edlefson

Email Address\*

[REDACTED]

Address\*

[REDACTED]

City\*

Portage

State\*

MI

Zip Code\*

49002

Phone Number\*

[REDACTED]

Submit a Public Comment\*

We Portagers are very fortunate to have both the West Lake Nature Preserve with its outlook docks and trails to experience this same serenity teeming with wildlife such as pileated woodpeckers, bald eagles, soft shelled turtles, tree frogs and muskrats.

Much the same as Austin Lake has the social spaces of Lakeview Park: the fishing dock, tennis and pickleball courts, playground and paths. In addition, 2 miles to the west, there is South Westnedge Park, which features trails to the Eliason Nature Preserve as well as Bishop's Bog, softball fields and a skating park. 2 miles east takes Portagers to Ramona Park and its beaches, courts and playgrounds.

Portage truly is filled with diversity and outdoor spaces for every personality. Not only would connecting Austin Lake to West Lake be a burden to those who chose to live on West Lake, increased traffic would affect the serenity, both in sound and function as our seawalls have been created to fit the lifestyle expected as well as the safety. Visitors of the preserve would have a changed visit as well, not to mention the effect on the preserve itself which is home to many creatures that rely on our care of the land. We value our environment such that West Lake riparians pay to preserve the quality of water which attracts said wildlife and we value the fact that our backyard is a quiet and beautiful place to call home. It would also affect riparians on Austin Lake, as they would see increased boat traffic and speedy street traffic with boats being dropped in/out at the unmanned launch, also increasing the amount of trash in the neighborhood.

More simply, this plan is ill conceived and lacks funds and a budget. The idea to fund this project by borrowing city money then increasing city taxes after the fact to pay it back all so Treystar Development and The Cove can get us to fund their project, while the city profits from using their traded land, is inappropriate. This sales pitch hides behind the idea that they think traffic goes too fast on Portage Road and that businesses need "beautification" and gates to name the neighborhood in order to slow down cars is a shameful and expensive mask for a developer who bought the drive-in to trade land with the city.

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**Draft Lake Center District Corridor and Placemaking Study - Public Comment - Submission  
#8219**

---

**Date Submitted: 5/14/2021**

**Name\***

Tom and Theresa Wheatley

**Email Address\***

[REDACTED]

**Address\***

[REDACTED]

**City\***

Portage

**State\***

MI

**Zip Code\***

49002

**Phone Number\***

[REDACTED]

**Submit a Public Comment\***

We are opposed to this project for the following reasons and concerns.

1. We oppose widening of the Austin Lake/West Lake drain. Increased boat traffic will lead to grave safety concerns on a small lake that sees the use of kayaks, paddle boards, and swimming off boats in the middle of the lake.
2. Increased boat traffic on a shallow lake like West Lake will stir up sediment from the bottom of the lake and affect the clarity of the water as well as disturbing ecosystems within the lake. We have various wildlife that live and breed here. We think that the needle nosed turtles will be disturbed as they use available frontage to lay their eggs (yes, even on residential property).
3. We are concerned about the the impact to the West Lake Nature Preserve with increased water traffic and erosion of this valuable ecosystem. I am hoping that you have done an environmental study with the DNR regarding these proposals.
4. We are opposed to public docks or jet ski rentals on the lake. The potential noise pollution from an increased number of motor boats and jet skis will decrease the quality of life for lake residents.
5. Traffic on Portage Road is greater than we've ever seen in our 39 years here. Decreasing the number of lanes will not necessarily decrease speed or usage. It will cause more angst to drivers along this area especially when life is back to normal and Pfizer and Stryker employees are back in person rather than virtual working. We think you will see impatient people speeding in the center lane to pass cars, as is the case frequently on Lovers Lane between Milham and Centre.
6. We like many of the "forward thinking" retail centers, however this would put great pressure on small businesses that have already struggled for the last 16 months to just stay open and viable. We should leave the old lake district business feeling the way it is. Housing above new shops is better suited for high density urban areas, not the semi-country feel of portage.

In conclusion, we oppose most of these "improvements" and we hope that the residents' opinions will be heard AND considered.

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Dear Council Member NAME: *All Portage City Council Members*:-

My name is Jane Kuiper and I have lived at [REDACTED] in the City of Portage since 1985. As a voting citizen of Portage, I STRONGLY object to the proposed Draft Final Lake Center District Corridor and Placemaking Study (the "Study") that was developed by a biased Steering Committee (the "Steering Committee") and in particular, that part of the Study that relates to the proposed widening of the Channel/Drain (the "Channel") between West Lake and Austin Lake.

Please note that I AM PARTICULARLY CONCERNED about WATER QUALITY and SAFETY issues on West Lake.

- The "channel" between West Lake and Austin Lake is a DRAIN, designed by civil engineers and controlled by the Drain Commission, to regulate the flow of water between the two lakes and several other lakes. More accurately, Austin Lake and West Lake are part of a chain of lakes, and the flow of water from one to the other affects all of the lakes. The proposal to alter the ecosystem and water flow by widening the Channel IGNORES THE DELICATE ECOSYSTEMS involved and illustrates the lack of thought put into this ill-conceived proposal. Empty promises to undertake environmental impact assessment in the future are just promises – and we cannot count on the City of Portage or any developer to undertake the required efforts, particularly if the Study is accepted by the Portage City Council (the "Council").
- In addition to water quality issues, the Steering Committee IGNORED SAFETY CONCERNS related to increased boat traffic on West Lake, and even proposed adding a boat/jet ski rental facility (and docks that extend out into the lake) where the West Lake Drive In is currently located.
- West Lake cannot support increased boat traffic. West Lake is a 330-acre lake, and West Lake residents specifically bought homes on West Lake because of the small, quiet nature of the lake. The size of West Lake makes it safe for swimming, kayaking, and boating. Widening the Channel will effectively require West Lake to accommodate boat traffic for a 1,400-acre lake (when combined with Austin Lake's 1100 acres). It will have a negative impact on water quality and threaten the safety of West Lake riparians.
- For decades, West Lake riparians have paid thousands of dollars in fees and assessments in order to carefully plan and implement programs to manage the weeds and water quality issues on West Lake. The introduction of invasive species from Austin Lake riparians or other non-resident boaters will negatively impact the many years and thousands of dollars that have been invested by West Lake riparians.
- The Steering Committee was STACKED AGAINST WEST LAKE.
  - City Council Members who served on the Steering Committee MUST RECUSE THEMSELVES from the City Council vote. The chairperson of the committee is a member of the City Council WHO LIVES ON AUSTIN LAKE – Lori Knapp. Another member of the City Council and member of the Steering Committee is Jim Pearson – WHO LIVES ON AUSTIN LAKE.
  - In addition to the above, the Vice-Chairperson of the Steering Committee is a lawyer WHO LIVES ON AUSTIN LAKE – Danielle Mason Anderson.
  - In addition, the President of the Austin Lake Riparians – AJ Spicer – is on the Steering Committee.
  - One "representative" of West Lake actually is from the group that owns the Cove Bistro, and clearly the restaurant does not share the same perspectives/goals as West Lake residents. Another West Lake "representative" is a REAL ESTATE SPECULATOR, who is only looking out for

his investment in the West Lake Drive-In property. He has never lived on or owned a residence on West Lake.

Although there are a number of thoughtful ideas about traffic calming, pedestrian safety, and business corridor improvements included in the Study, the widening of the Channel is not one of them. As a Portage citizen, taxpayer, and West Lake riparian, I object to the widening of the Channel and ask that the Study be rejected in its entirety unless the Study is amended to remove any and all references to the widening of the Channel.

Thank you for your attention to my concerns.

*Jane Kusler - May 11, 2021*  
[REDACTED]  
*Portage - 49002*

Dear Council Member NAME:

My name is CAROL WARREN and I have lived at [REDACTED] in the City of Portage since 1974. As a voting citizen of Portage, I STRONGLY object to the proposed Draft Final Lake Center District Corridor and Placemaking Study (the "Study") that was developed by a biased Steering Committee (the "Steering Committee") and in particular, that part of the Study that relates to the proposed widening of the Channel/Drain (the "Channel") between West Lake and Austin Lake.

Please note that I AM PARTICULARLY CONCERNED about WATER QUALITY and SAFETY issues on West Lake. *It's a private lake. We pay special assessment and membership fees.*

- The "channel" between West Lake and Austin Lake is a DRAIN, designed by civil engineers and controlled by the Drain Commission, to regulate the flow of water between the two lakes and several other lakes. More accurately, Austin Lake and West Lake are part of a chain of lakes, and the flow of water from one to the other affects all of the lakes. The proposal to alter the ecosystem and water flow by widening the Channel IGNORES THE DELICATE ECOSYSTEMS involved and illustrates the lack of thought put into this ill-conceived proposal. Empty promises to undertake environmental impact assessment in the future are just promises – and we cannot count on the City of Portage or any developer to undertake the required efforts, particularly if the Study is accepted by the Portage City Council (the "Council").
- In addition to water quality issues, the Steering Committee IGNORED SAFETY CONCERNS related to increased boat traffic on West Lake, and even proposed adding a boat/jet ski rental facility (and docks that extend out into the lake) where the West Lake Drive In is currently located.
- West Lake cannot support increased boat traffic. West Lake is a 330-acre lake, and West Lake residents specifically bought homes on West Lake because of the small, quiet nature of the lake. The size of West Lake makes it safe for swimming, kayaking, and boating. Widening the Channel will effectively require West Lake to accommodate boat traffic for a 1,400-acre lake (when combined with Austin Lake's 1100 acres). It will have a negative impact on water quality and threaten the safety of West Lake riparians.
- For decades, West Lake riparians have paid thousands of dollars in fees and assessments in order to carefully plan and implement programs to manage the weeds and water quality issues on West Lake. The introduction of invasive species from Austin Lake riparians or other non-resident boaters will negatively impact the many years and thousands of dollars that have been invested by West Lake riparians.
- The Steering Committee was STACKED AGAINST WEST LAKE.
  - City Council Members who served on the Steering Committee MUST RECUSE THEMSELVES from the City Council vote. The chairperson of the committee is a member of the City Council WHO LIVES ON AUSTIN LAKE – Lori Knapp. Another member of the City Council and member of the Steering Committee is Jim Pearson – WHO LIVES ON AUSTIN LAKE.
  - In addition to the above, the Vice-Chairperson of the Steering Committee is a lawyer WHO LIVES ON AUSTIN LAKE – Danielle Mason Anderson.
  - In addition, the President of the Austin Lake Riparians – AJ Spicer – is on the Steering Committee.
  - One "representative" of West Lake actually is from the group that owns the Cove Bistro, and clearly the restaurant does not share the same perspectives/goals as West Lake residents. Another West Lake "representative" is a REAL ESTATE SPECULATOR, who is only looking out for

his investment in the West Lake Drive-In property. He has never lived on or owned a residence on West Lake.

Although there are a number of thoughtful ideas about traffic calming, pedestrian safety, and business corridor improvements included in the Study, the widening of the Channel is not one of them. As a Portage citizen, taxpayer, and West Lake riparian, I object to the widening of the Channel and ask that the Study be rejected in its entirety unless the Study is amended to remove any and all references to the widening of the Channel.

Thank you for your attention to my concerns.

*It's a very bad idea to widen the channel.  
I'm strongly against it.*

Dear Council Members

My Name is The Cornell's and we have lived at [REDACTED] in the City of Portage since 2007. As a voting citizen of Portage, I strongly object to the proposed Draft Final Lake Center District Corridor and Placemaking Study (the study) that was developed by a Steering Committee (the steering committee) and in particular that part of the Study that relates to the proposed widening of the Channel/Drain (the Channel) between West Lake and Austin Lake. I also strongly object to the Road Diet on Portage Road.

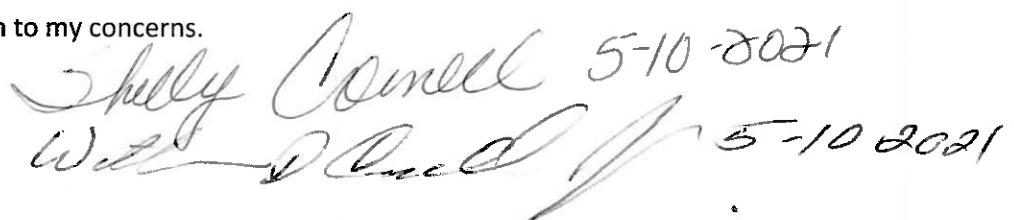
Please note I am particularly concerned with the increased traffic on West Lake due to the widening of said drain. Secondly my major concern is with the amount of road traffic on Portage Road and logic behind the Road Diet.

1. West Lake cannot support increased boat traffic. West Lake is a 330-acre lake, and West Lake resident specifically bought homes on West Lake because of the small, Quiet nature of the lake. The size of West Lake makes it safe for swimming, kayaking, and boating. Widening the Channel will effectively require West Lake to accommodate boat traffic for a 1400-acre lake (when combined with Austin Lake's 1100 acres). It will have a negative impact on water quality and threaten the safety of West Lake riparians.
2. I also have issue with the City of Portage "acquiring" property through EMINENT DOMAIN. This is wrong on so many levels. Your giving citizens no choice in taking away their property for your gain. You are interrupting their lives for the "improvement and good of the community". I don't think so you do not have the right to make that decision for them. Also acquiring property of the West Lake drive in is a good example. The purchase price shows just what a shame Eminent Domain is you paid one quarter of what this property sold for on the open market. That's just legal robbery and shame on you.
3. The Road Diet on Portage Road has been discussed many times and its plain to see that the citizens/businesses are not in favor. This is a main corridor for many coming through our City. We have the large Pfizer Facility, Stryker, and the newly built Fed Ex facilities that all come out on Portage Road with large amount of traffic. Then you have the smaller business that are in the Lake Center corridor that have car deliveries (off semi trucks), food deliveries (box trucks), boats being delivered and customers picking up boats. Let alone just the general business traffic where its already hard to get in and out. The accidents are numerous and this is not the solution!

There definitely need to be more thought put into this process. Give consideration to the amount of tax payer money you are expending and who this is going to benefit. I for one do not think this is something that will "improve" the quality of life for any of us on West Lake or Portage Road. As a Portage Citizen, tax payer, business owner, and West Lake riparian. I object to the widening of the Channel and the Road Diet and ask that the Study be rejected in its entirety unless the Study is amended to remove any and all references to the Road Diet and the widening of the Channel.

Thank you for your attention to my concerns.

William and Shelly Cornell



Shelly Cornell 5-10-2021  
William Cornell J 5-10-2021

Barbara J. Sneath

[REDACTED]  
Portage MI 49002

City of Portage  
7900 South Westnedge Avenue  
Portage MI 49002

Dear Mayor Patricia Randall: Et. Al.

My name is Barbara Joan Sneath and I have owned my house on West Lake in the City of Portage since July 17<sup>th</sup> 2002. I STRONGLY object to the proposed Draft Final Lake Center District Corridor and Placemaking Study (the "Study") that was developed by a biased Steering Committee (the "Steering Committee") and in particular, that part of the Study that relates to the proposed widening of the Channel/Drain (the "Channel") between West Lake and Austin Lake.

Please note that I AM PARTICULARLY CONCERNED about WATER QUALITY and SAFETY issues on West Lake, and WASTING TAX DOLLARS that would be better spent on more important concerns.

- The "channel" between West Lake and Austin Lake is a DRAIN, designed by civil engineers and controlled by the Drain Commission, to regulate the flow of water between the two lakes and several other lakes. More accurately, Austin Lake and West Lake are part of a chain of lakes, and the flow of water from one to the other affects all of the lakes. The proposal to alter the ecosystem and water flow by widening the Channel IGNORES THE DELICATE ECOSYSTEMS involved and illustrates the lack of thought put into this ill-conceived proposal. Empty promises to undertake environmental impact assessment in the future are just promises – and we cannot count on the City of Portage or any developer to undertake the required efforts, particularly if the Study is accepted by the Portage City Council (the "Council").
- In addition to water quality issues, the Steering Committee IGNORED SAFETY CONCERNS related to increased boat traffic on West Lake, and even proposed adding a boat/jet ski rental facility (and docks that extend out into the lake) where the West Lake Drive In is currently located.
- West Lake cannot support increased boat traffic. West Lake is a 330-acre lake, and West Lake residents specifically bought homes on West Lake because of the small, quiet nature of the lake. The size of West Lake makes it safe for swimming, kayaking, and boating. Widening the Channel will effectively require West Lake to accommodate boat traffic for a 1,400-acre lake (when combined with Austin Lake's 1100 acres). It will have a negative impact on water quality and threaten the safety of West Lake riparians.
- For decades, West Lake riparians have paid thousands of dollars in fees and assessments in order to carefully plan and implement programs to manage the weeds and water quality issues on West Lake. The introduction of invasive species from Austin

Lake riparians or other non-resident boaters will negatively impact the many years and thousands of dollars that have been invested by West Lake riparians.

- The Steering Committee was STACKED AGAINST WEST LAKE.
  - City Council Members who served on the Steering Committee MUST RECUSE THEMSELVES from the City Council vote. The chairperson of the committee is a member of the City Council WHO LIVES ON AUSTIN LAKE – Lori Knapp. Another member of the City Council and member of the Steering Committee is Jim Pearson – WHO LIVES ON AUSTIN LAKE.
  - In addition to the above, the Vice-Chairperson of the Steering Committee is a lawyer WHO LIVES ON AUSTIN LAKE – Danielle Mason Anderson.
  - In addition, the President of the Austin Lake Riparians – AJ Spicer – is on the Steering Committee.
  - One “representative” of West Lake actually is from the group that owns the Cove Bistro, and clearly the restaurant does not share the same perspectives/goals as West Lake residents. Another West Lake “representative” is a REAL ESTATE SPECULATOR, who is only looking out for his investment in the West Lake Drive-In property. He has never lived on or owned a residence on West Lake.

Although there are a number of thoughtful ideas about traffic calming, pedestrian safety, and business corridor improvements included in the Study, the widening of the Channel is not one of them. As a Portage citizen, taxpayer, and West Lake riparian, I object to the widening of the Channel and ask that the Study be rejected in its entirety unless the Study is amended to remove any and all references to the widening of the Channel.

Widening the channel between West Lake and Austin Lake is a complete waste of my tax money. The money would be better spent on addressing the ongoing climate crisis.

If you would like more information regarding the imminent threat that global warming poses to Portage residents, please contact me.

Thank you for your attention to my concerns.

Sincerely,  
  
Barbara Joan Sneath

Barbara Joan Sneath Ph.D.

David W. Bauer

Portage MI 49002

City of Portage  
7900 South Westnedge Avenue  
Portage MI 49002

Dear Mayor Patricia Randall:

My name is David William Bauer and I have owned my house on West Lake in the City of Portage since July 17<sup>th</sup> 2002. I STRONGLY object to the proposed Draft Final Lake Center District Corridor and Placemaking Study (the "Study") that was developed by a biased Steering Committee (the "Steering Committee") and in particular, that part of the Study that relates to the proposed widening of the Channel/Drain (the "Channel") between West Lake and Austin Lake.

Please note that I AM PARTICULARLY CONCERNED about WATER QUALITY and SAFETY issues on West Lake, and WASTING TAX DOLLARS that would be better spent on more important concerns.

- The "channel" between West Lake and Austin Lake is a DRAIN, designed by civil engineers and controlled by the Drain Commission, to regulate the flow of water between the two lakes and several other lakes. More accurately, Austin Lake and West Lake are part of a chain of lakes, and the flow of water from one to the other affects all of the lakes. The proposal to alter the ecosystem and water flow by widening the Channel IGNORES THE DELICATE ECOSYSTEMS involved and illustrates the lack of thought put into this ill-conceived proposal. Empty promises to undertake environmental impact assessment in the future are just promises – and we cannot count on the City of Portage or any developer to undertake the required efforts, particularly if the Study is accepted by the Portage City Council (the "Council").
- In addition to water quality issues, the Steering Committee IGNORED SAFETY CONCERNS related to increased boat traffic on West Lake, and even proposed adding a boat/jet ski rental facility (and docks that extend out into the lake) where the West Lake Drive In is currently located.
- West Lake cannot support increased boat traffic. West Lake is a 330-acre lake, and West Lake residents specifically bought homes on West Lake because of the small, quiet nature of the lake. The size of West Lake makes it safe for swimming, kayaking, and boating. Widening the Channel will effectively require West Lake to accommodate boat traffic for a 1,400-acre lake (when combined with Austin Lake's 1100 acres). It will have a negative impact on water quality and threaten the safety of West Lake riparians.
- For decades, West Lake riparians have paid thousands of dollars in fees and assessments in order to carefully plan and implement programs to manage the weeds and water quality issues on West Lake. The introduction of invasive species from Austin

Lake riparians or other non-resident boaters will negatively impact the many years and thousands of dollars that have been invested by West Lake riparians.

- The Steering Committee was STACKED AGAINST WEST LAKE.
  - City Council Members who served on the Steering Committee MUST RECUSE THEMSELVES from the City Council vote. The chairperson of the committee is a member of the City Council WHO LIVES ON AUSTIN LAKE – Lori Knapp. Another member of the City Council and member of the Steering Committee is Jim Pearson – WHO LIVES ON AUSTIN LAKE.
  - In addition to the above, the Vice-Chairperson of the Steering Committee is a lawyer WHO LIVES ON AUSTIN LAKE – Danielle Mason Anderson.
  - In addition, the President of the Austin Lake Riparians – AJ Spicer – is on the Steering Committee.
  - One “representative” of West Lake actually is from the group that owns the Cove Bistro, and clearly the restaurant does not share the same perspectives/goals as West Lake residents. Another West Lake “representative” is a REAL ESTATE SPECULATOR, who is only looking out for his investment in the West Lake Drive-In property. He has never lived on or owned a residence on West Lake.

Although there are a number of thoughtful ideas about traffic calming, pedestrian safety, and business corridor improvements included in the Study, the widening of the Channel is not one of them. As a Portage citizen, taxpayer, and West Lake riparian, I object to the widening of the Channel and ask that the Study be rejected in its entirety unless the Study is amended to remove any and all references to the widening of the Channel.

Widening the channel between West Lake and Austin Lake is a complete waste of my tax money. The money would be better spent on addressing the ongoing climate crisis.

If you would like more information regarding the imminent threat that global warming poses to Portage residents, please contact me.

Thank you for your attention to my concerns.

Sincerely,



David W. Bauer Ph.D.

RECEIVED

MAY 12 2021

PORTAGE  
CITY CLERK

Dear Mayor Patricia Randall:

Our names are Ken and Jeanne Brink and we have lived at 1325 Lakeview Drive in the City of Portage since 1983. As voting citizens of Portage, we STRONGLY object to the proposed Draft Final Lake Center District Corridor and Place making Study (the "Study") that was developed by a biased Steering Committee (the "Steering Committee") and in particular, that part of the Study that relates to the proposed widening of the Channel/Drain (the "Channel") between West Lake and Austin Lake.

Please note that WE ARE PARTICULARLY CONCERNED about WATER QUALITY and SAFETY issues in the West Lake/Austin Lake area.

- The "channel" between West Lake and Austin Lake is a DRAIN, designed by civil engineers and controlled by the Drain Commission, to regulate the flow of water between the two lakes and several other lakes. More accurately, Austin Lake and West Lake are part of a chain of lakes, and the flow of water from one to the other affects all of the lakes. The proposal to alter the ecosystem and water flow by widening the Channel IGNORES THE DELICATE ECOSYSTEMS involved and illustrates the lack of thought put into this ill-conceived proposal. Empty promises to undertake environmental impact assessment in the future are just promises – and we cannot count on the City of Portage or any developer to undertake the required efforts, particularly if the Study is accepted by the Portage City Council (the "Council").
- In addition to water quality issues, the Steering Committee IGNORED SAFETY CONCERNS related to increased boat traffic on West Lake, and even proposed adding a boat/jet ski rental facility (and docks that extend out into the lake) where the West Lake Drive In is currently located.
- WestLake cannot support increased boat traffic. West Lake is a 330-acre lake, and West Lake residents specifically bought homes on West Lake because of the small, quiet nature of the lake. The size of West Lake makes it safe for swimming, kayaking, and boating. Widening the Channel will effectively require West Lake to accommodate boat traffic for a 1,400-acre lake (when combined with Austin Lake's 1100 acres). It will have a negative impact on water quality and threaten the safety of West Lake riparians.
- For decades, West Lake riparians have paid thousands of dollars in fees and assessments in order to carefully plan and implement programs to manage the weeds and water quality issues on West Lake. The introduction of invasive species from Austin Lake riparians or other non-resident boaters will negatively impact the many years and thousands of dollars that have been invested by West Lake riparians.
- The Steering Committee was STACKED AGAINST WEST LAKE.
  - City Council Members who served on the Steering Committee MUST RECUSE THEMSELVES from the City Council vote. The chairperson of the committee is a member of the City Council WHO LIVES ON AUSTIN LAKE – Lori Knapp. Another member of the City Council and member of the Steering Committee is Jim Pearson – WHO LIVES ON AUSTIN LAKE.
  - In addition to the above, the Vice-Chairperson of the Steering Committee is a lawyer WHO LIVES ON AUSTIN LAKE – Danielle Mason Anderson.
  - In addition, the President of the Austin Lake Riparians – AJ Spicer – is on the Steering Committee.

- One "representative" of West Lake actually is from the group that owns the Cove Bistro, and clearly the restaurant does not share the same perspectives/goals as West Lake residents.
- Another West Lake "representative" is a REAL ESTATE SPECULATOR, who is only looking out for his investment in the West Lake Drive-In property. He has never lived on or owned a residence on West Lake.

Although there are a number of thoughtful ideas about traffic calming, pedestrian safety, and business corridor improvements included in the Study, the widening of the Channel is not one of them. As a Portage citizen, taxpayer, and West Lake riparian, **we object to the widening of the Channel and ask that the Study be rejected in its entirety unless the Study is amended to remove any and all references to the widening of the Channel.**

Thank you for your attention to our concerns.



Ken Brink  
Jeanne Brink

Portage, MI 49002

Dear Council Member NAME: *Patricia Randall (Mayor)*

My name is Sandy Stermer and I have lived at [REDACTED] in the City of Portage since 2007. As a voting citizen of Portage, I STRONGLY object to the proposed Draft Final Lake Center District Corridor and Placemaking Study (the "Study") that was developed by a biased Steering Committee (the "Steering Committee") and in particular, that part of the Study that relates to the proposed widening of the Channel/Drain (the "Channel") between West Lake and Austin Lake.

Please note that I AM PARTICULARLY CONCERNED about WATER QUALITY and SAFETY issues on West Lake.

- The "channel" between West Lake and Austin Lake is a DRAIN, designed by civil engineers and controlled by the Drain Commission, to regulate the flow of water between the two lakes and several other lakes. More accurately, Austin Lake and West Lake are part of a chain of lakes, and the flow of water from one to the other affects all of the lakes. The proposal to alter the ecosystem and water flow by widening the Channel IGNORES THE DELICATE ECOSYSTEMS involved and illustrates the lack of thought put into this ill-conceived proposal. Empty promises to undertake environmental impact assessment in the future are just promises – and we cannot count on the City of Portage or any developer to undertake the required efforts, particularly if the Study is accepted by the Portage City Council (the "Council").
- In addition to water quality issues, the Steering Committee IGNORED SAFETY CONCERNS related to increased boat traffic on West Lake, and even proposed adding a boat/jet ski rental facility (and docks that extend out into the lake) where the West Lake Drive In is currently located.
- West Lake cannot support increased boat traffic. West Lake is a 330-acre lake, and West Lake residents specifically bought homes on West Lake because of the small, quiet nature of the lake. The size of West Lake makes it safe for swimming, kayaking, and boating. Widening the Channel will effectively require West Lake to accommodate boat traffic for a 1,400-acre lake (when combined with Austin Lake's 1100 acres). It will have a negative impact on water quality and threaten the safety of West Lake riparians.
- For decades, West Lake riparians have paid thousands of dollars in fees and assessments in order to carefully plan and implement programs to manage the weeds and water quality issues on West Lake. The introduction of invasive species from Austin Lake riparians or other non-resident boaters will negatively impact the many years and thousands of dollars that have been invested by West Lake riparians.
- The Steering Committee was STACKED AGAINST WEST LAKE.
  - City Council Members who served on the Steering Committee MUST RECUSE THEMSELVES from the City Council vote. The chairperson of the committee is a member of the City Council WHO LIVES ON AUSTIN LAKE – Lori Knapp. Another member of the City Council and member of the Steering Committee is Jim Pearson – WHO LIVES ON AUSTIN LAKE.
  - In addition to the above, the Vice-Chairperson of the Steering Committee is a lawyer WHO LIVES ON AUSTIN LAKE – Danielle Mason Anderson.
  - In addition, the President of the Austin Lake Riparians – AJ Spicer – is on the Steering Committee.
  - Only two members of the Steering Committee LIVE ON WEST LAKE. One "representative" of West Lake actually is from the group that owns the Cove Bistro, and clearly the restaurant does not share the same perspectives/goals as West Lake residents. The other West Lake

"representative" is a REAL ESTATE SPECULATOR, who is only looking out for his investment in the West Lake Drive-In property. He has never lived on or owned a residence on West Lake.

Although there are a number of thoughtful ideas about traffic calming, pedestrian safety, and business corridor improvements included in the Study, the widening of the Channel is not one of them. As a Portage citizen, taxpayer, and West Lake riparian, I object to the widening of the Channel and ask that the Study be rejected in its entirety unless the Study is amended to remove any and all references to the widening of the Channel.

Thank you for your attention to my concerns.

Sandra Sterner

[REDACTED]

I have loved living on West Lake. My children, Grandkids & now great Grands have been swimming, skiing & all the fun things you can do on a small lake. I didn't worry about their safety because it is like a neighborhood for most of it boat traffic has been safe & normally not to busy. Please don't wreck this gem of Portage. Small lake vibe in the heart of a city I've loved. Thank you  
Sandy

Dear Council Member NAME: *Mayor Patricia Randall*

My name is Kelly Sterner and I have lived at [REDACTED] in the City of Portage since 2020. As a voting citizen of Portage, I STRONGLY object to the proposed Draft Final Lake Center District Corridor and Placemaking Study (the "Study") that was developed by a biased Steering Committee (the "Steering Committee") and in particular, that part of the Study that relates to the proposed widening of the Channel/Drain (the "Channel") between West Lake and Austin Lake.

Please note that I AM PARTICULARLY CONCERNED about WATER QUALITY and SAFETY issues on West Lake.

- The "channel" between West Lake and Austin Lake is a DRAIN, designed by civil engineers and controlled by the Drain Commission, to regulate the flow of water between the two lakes and several other lakes. More accurately, Austin Lake and West Lake are part of a chain of lakes, and the flow of water from one to the other affects all of the lakes. The proposal to alter the ecosystem and water flow by widening the Channel IGNORES THE DELICATE ECOSYSTEMS involved and illustrates the lack of thought put into this ill-conceived proposal. Empty promises to undertake environmental impact assessment in the future are just promises – and we cannot count on the City of Portage or any developer to undertake the required efforts, particularly if the Study is accepted by the Portage City Council (the "Council").
- In addition to water quality issues, the Steering Committee IGNORED SAFETY CONCERNS related to increased boat traffic on West Lake, and even proposed adding a boat/jet ski rental facility (and docks that extend out into the lake) where the West Lake Drive In is currently located.
- West Lake cannot support increased boat traffic. West Lake is a 330-acre lake, and West Lake residents specifically bought homes on West Lake because of the small, quiet nature of the lake. The size of West Lake makes it safe for swimming, kayaking, and boating. Widening the Channel will effectively require West Lake to accommodate boat traffic for a 1,400-acre lake (when combined with Austin Lake's 1100 acres). It will have a negative impact on water quality and threaten the safety of West Lake riparians.
- For decades, West Lake riparians have paid thousands of dollars in fees and assessments in order to carefully plan and implement programs to manage the weeds and water quality issues on West Lake. The introduction of invasive species from Austin Lake riparians or other non-resident boaters will negatively impact the many years and thousands of dollars that have been invested by West Lake riparians.
- The Steering Committee was STACKED AGAINST WEST LAKE.
  - City Council Members who served on the Steering Committee MUST RECUSE THEMSELVES from the City Council vote. The chairperson of the committee is a member of the City Council WHO LIVES ON AUSTIN LAKE – Lori Knapp. Another member of the City Council and member of the Steering Committee is Jim Pearson – WHO LIVES ON AUSTIN LAKE.
  - In addition to the above, the Vice-Chairperson of the Steering Committee is a lawyer WHO LIVES ON AUSTIN LAKE – Danielle Mason Anderson.
  - In addition, the President of the Austin Lake Riparians – AJ Spicer – is on the Steering Committee.
  - Only two members of the Steering Committee LIVE ON WEST LAKE. One "representative" of West Lake actually is from the group that owns the Cove Bistro, and clearly the restaurant does not share the same perspectives/goals as West Lake residents. The other West Lake

"representative" is a REAL ESTATE SPECULATOR, who is only looking out for his investment in the West Lake Drive-In property. He has never lived on or owned a residence on West Lake.

Although there are a number of thoughtful ideas about traffic calming, pedestrian safety, and business corridor improvements included in the Study, the widening of the Channel is not one of them. As a Portage citizen, taxpayer, and West Lake riparian, I object to the widening of the Channel and ask that the Study be rejected in its entirety unless the Study is amended to remove any and all references to the widening of the Channel.

Thank you for your attention to my concerns.

*Kelly Steiner*

The only reason I bought a home on this lake in Portage, Mi. was because I love the smaller, less busy vibe of West Lake. PLEASE do not do this, it's a terrible idea and will wreck West Lake for all of us who live on it!

## PETITION TO BE PRESENTED TO THE PORTAGE CITY COUNCIL

As a resident of Portage, I am very concerned about the following issues related to the Lake Center District Steering Committee Report (the "Report"):

The Report proposes to widen the drain between West Lake and Austin Lake (the "Drain") and to install two lengthy public/commercial piers on West Lake.

**\*The Report FAILS to acknowledge any environmental concerns** (increased presence of weeds, invasive species) of widening the drain/installing the piers. For example, what will be the impact on West Lake water quality? What will be the impact on the West Lake Nature Preserve?

**\*The Report FAILS to acknowledge any safety concerns** related to increased boat and jet ski traffic and the impeding of navigation on West Lake.

The Report FAILS to acknowledge that **TAXES MUST INCREASE TO PAY FOR THIS PROJECT**. The only thing the Report does say about costs is to propose that a new taxing authority be created and that the City Council be given discretion to spend whatever monies are collected, including expenditures for acquiring and demolishing homes.

By adding my name to this petition, I call on the Portage City Council to reject any recommendation contained in the Report that is related to the Drain and the piers.

Name	Signature	Address	Email Address
Chris Sanborn	Chris Sanborn	2708 Woodbine, Chickasawtr	
Tim SANBORN		2705 Woodbine	@yah
Todd VanderBur	Todd VanderBur	1222 Forest Dr.	
Kris Ferris	Kris Ferris	1510 VICKERY	Kris.Ferris@hofn
JEFF WETTIG	Jeff Wettig	714 Lakeview Dr.	Jeff.Wettig@wet
Sarah Beuker	Sarah Beuker	2611 Woodbine Ave	sarah.beuker@
Adam Beuker	Adam Beuker	2611 Woodbine Ave	adam.beuker@gmail
Joseph Beuker	Joseph Beuker	2611 Woodbine Ave	jbeuker@gmail
Patruck Farmer	Patruck Farmer	7109 Forest Dr.	Patruck.Farmer@att
Elio Migna		10621 Weaver Dr.	Elio.Migna@att
Katherine Strudel	Katherine Strudel	10621 Weaver Dr.	Katherine.Strudel@gmail
Ashley Lager	Ashley Lager	8940 E. Shore Dr.	ashley.lager@gmail

RECEIVED

MAY 24 2021

PORTAGE  
CITY CLERK



## **PETITION TO BE PRESENTED TO THE PORTAGE CITY COUNCIL**

As a resident of Portage, I am very concerned about the following issues related to the Lake Center District Steering Committee Report (the “Report”):

The Report proposes to widen the drain between West Lake and Austin Lake (the "Drain").

- **The Report FAILS to acknowledge any environmental concerns** (increased presence of weeds, invasive species) of widening the Drain. For example, what will be the impact on water quality? What will be the impact on the West Lake Nature Preserve?
- **The Report FAILS to acknowledge any safety concerns** related to increased boat and jet ski traffic.

## **TAXES WILL INCREASE TO PAY FOR THIS PROJECT.** The only thing the

Report says about costs is to propose that the City Council create a new taxing authority and that the City Council be given discretion to spend whatever monies are collected, including expenditures for acquiring and demolishing homes.

By adding my name to this petition, I call on the Portage City Council to reject any recommendation contained in the Report that is related to the Drain.

Name	Signature	Address	Email Address
Victor Moor	Victor Moor	715 Lakewood Dr.	virgmoore@gmail.com
Sharon Jones	Sharon Jones	1204 Lakewood Dr.	gjones52756@att.net
Debra LaFave	Debra LaFave	1486 Lester Dr	debralafave@icloud.com
Eric Comer	Eric Comer	919 Lakewood	ecomer80@yahoo.com
Mike Comer	Mike Comer	919 Lakewood Dr.	MComer1011@gmail.com
Peter Crabb	Peter Crabb	1928 Lakewood	petcrabb63@bellsouth.net
Judy Crabb	Judy Crabb	1925 Lakewood	Judydianellecrabb@gmail.com
Marge Staron	Marge Staron	10200 Wetherford Dr.	emldby4@att.com
Jamila Becker	Jamila Becker	673 South Shore Dr.	jbecker@charter.net
Steven Becker	Steven Becker	623 South Shore Dr.	sbecker@charter.net
Linda Kowalski	Linda Kowalski	1116ic 11th Dr.	linda.kowalski.684@juno.com
Mary Chapman	Mary Chapman	1536 Lakewood	mechapman825@juno.com
Eric Piel	Eric Piel	9171 Austin Dr.	mppiel@charter.net
Jean Austin	Jean Austin	1405 Forest Dr.	jean.austin55@juno.net
Amy Green	Amy Green	908 Forest Dr.	greenamy1@att.net
Rod Green	Rod Green	608 Forest Dr.	rr.green.176@gmail.com
ROBERT J. AUSTIN	Robert J. Austin	1428 Forest Dr.	rfaultin@charter.net
Christy Olivari	Christy Olivari	1927 Lakewood Dr.	christyolivari744@att.net
Mike Marshawn	Mike Marshawn	1503 Lakewood Dr.	marshawn6@charter.net
Tammy Tarver	Tammy Tarver	1536 Forest Dr.	tarverusmc@yahoo.com
Lorene Tarver	Lorene Tarver	1530 Forest Dr.	tarverusmc2@yahoo.com



## PETITION TO BE PRESENTED TO THE PORTAGE CITY COUNCIL

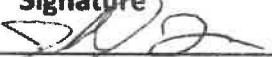
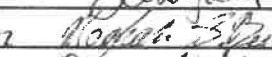
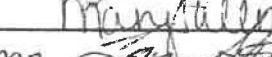
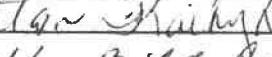
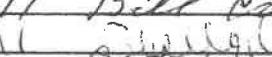
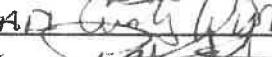
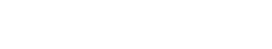
As a resident of Portage, I am very concerned about the following issues related to the Lake Center District Steering Committee Report (the "Report"):

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- \***The Report FAILS to acknowledge any environmental concerns** (increased presence of weeds, invasive species) of widening the drain/installing the piers. For example, what will be the impact on West Lake water quality? What will be the impact on the West Lake Nature Preserve?
- \***The Report FAILS to acknowledge any safety concerns** related to increased boat and jet ski traffic and the impeding of navigation on West Lake.

The Report FAILS to acknowledge that **TAXES MUST INCREASE TO PAY FOR THIS PROJECT**. The only thing the Report does say about costs is to propose that a new taxing authority be created and that the City Council be given discretion to spend whatever monies are collected, including expenditures for acquiring and demolishing homes.

By adding my name to this petition, I call on the Portage City Council to reject any recommendation contained in the Report that is related to the Drain and the piers.

Name	Signature	Address	Email Address
Jay Flory		1527 Paul Ct.	Jay.flory6@gmail.com
Don Decker		10113 Woodlawn	dondecker78@gmail.com
Andrea Gonzales		8929 Austin Ct	andrea.vy1096@skyglobal.net
Kelly Dugan		1810 Forest Dr	kdstyle@chartermi.net
Mick Horner		1808 Forest Dr	mhorner@gmail.com
Margaret O'Brien		1220 Forest Dr	mnbrien@hotmail.com
Jeanne Bruce		1325 Lakeview Dr	jeannebruck77@gmail.com
KEN BESCHICK		8233 NEWELLS LN.	KENGBESCHICK@yahoo.com
PATRICK FERRIS		1510 VICKERY RD	
Lisa Patel		714 Lakeview Dr	elis196@yahoo.com
Meghan Benker		2611 Woodlawn Ave.	megbenk@gmail.com
Larry Stillman		1830 Forest Dr	StitchingMemories@gmail.com
Lawrence Stillman		1830 Forest Dr.	larry.stillman.28c94b11@msn.com
MARK GITTEN		9481 Sebring	markgittentan@comcast.net
Kathy Grotton		9471 Sebring	kathy.grotton@comcast.net
Bill Cecelli		1616 John St.	49002
Shelli O'Connell		1616 John St.	49002
Cristy Dynard		1615 Saratoga Dr.	49002
Dale Taylor		10421 119 St.	49024
DWS		1524 Fox & 27th	49002



## PETITION TO BE PRESENTED TO THE PORTAGE CITY COUNCIL

As a resident of Portage, I am very concerned about the following issues related to the Lake Center District Steering Committee Report (the "Report"):

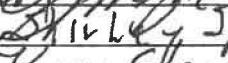
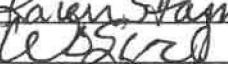
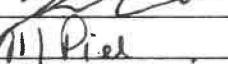
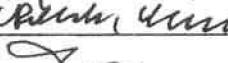
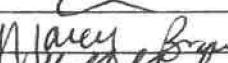
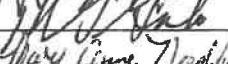
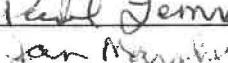
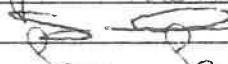
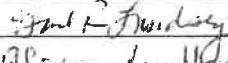
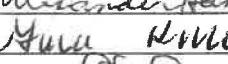
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- The Report FAILS to acknowledge any safety concerns related to increased boat and jet ski traffic.

## TAXES WILL INCREASE TO PAY FOR THIS PROJECT.

The only thing the Report says about costs is to propose that the City Council create a new taxing authority and that the City Council be given discretion to spend whatever monies are collected, including expenditures for acquiring and demolishing homes.

By adding my name to this petition, I call on the Portage City Council to reject any recommendation contained in the Report that is related to the Drain.

Name	Signature	Address	Email Address
Al Sprague		1416 FOREST	N/A 5/15/21
Shirley Sprague		1416 Forest	N/A 5/15/21
Karen Stamm		1594 Lake Terrace	N/A 5/15/21
W. Osgood		1408 Forest Dr	N/A 5/15/21
K. Enfield		1818 Forest Dr.	N/A 5/15/21
Kirk Schieman		9125 West End Dr.	SCHIEMAN.KIRK@gmail.com
Michelle Piel		9121 Austin Dr	melle.piel@gmail.com
Brandon Kilburn		1729 Lakeview Dr.	Sunburn501@gmail.com
James Bray		2136 Ames Dr.	Jamesbray7@gmail.com
Marcy Bray		2136 Ames Dr	marcygf7@hotmail.com
MIKE GRANGER		1103 Lakeview Dr	MIKEGRANGER@GMAIL.COM
Mary Anne Needham		1423 Forest Dr	maneedham524@gmail.com
TERRY NEEDHAM		1423 Forest Dr.	ttneedham@gmail.com
Paul Lemmer		8941 West End Dr	E.P.Lemmer1374@gmail.com
JAN MARSHBURN		1903 Lakeview Dr.	MARSHBURN@charter.net
Anna Suse		1806 Forest	Anna.Suse@charter.net
Tammy Tarver		1530 Forest Dr	tammytarver@yahoo.com
Donald Tarver		1530 Forest Dr	tarverusmca@yahoo.com
GAIL LINNSET		6415 Shoregr	
ALEXANDER HANSON		723 LAKEVIEW DR	W.HANSON@AOL.COM
Grace Knue		1024 LAKEVIEW DR.	GRACIE5@yahoo.com
THAD KNU		1025 LAKEVIEW DR	THADES@YAHOO.COM



## PETITION TO BE PRESENTED TO THE PORTAGE CITY COUNCIL

As a resident of Portage, I am very concerned about the following issues related to the Lake Center District Steering Committee Report (the "Report"):

The Report proposes to widen the drain between West Lake and Austin Lake (the "Drain").

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Name	Signature	Address	Email Address
Elaine Lemmer	Elaine Lemmer	8941 W End Dr	ellemmer1394@outlook.com
Barbara Marie	Barb Marie	2015 Lakeside Dr.	barbmarie1@outlook.com
Barbara Marie	Barb Marie	2010 Lakeside Dr.	bjean811@outlook.com
Tammy Farver	Tammy Farver	1530 Forest Dr	tammyfarver16@outlook.com
Donna Farver	Donna Farver	1530 Forest Dr	farverdusmca@yahoo.com
Justin Susan	Susan Farver	1806 FOREST DR	ctctxf8@gmail.com
Brinda Kempt	Brinda Kempt	6375 Shore Dr	blue911rsrc@charter.net
Clauudia Kempt	Clauudia Kempt	6375 Shore Dr	blue911rsrc@charter.net
Peter Gratzday	Peter Gratzday	2116 Annes Dr.	Peter.Gratzday@windstream.net
Gerrie Peat	Gerrie Peat	1735 TITANSHWOOD	gerrie.peat@outlook.com
Gerrie Peat	Gerrie Peat	10524 Woodlawn	gerrie.peat@outlook.com
Judy Hagey	Judy Hagey	9429 Sebring Dr	neyjude070@gmail.com
Raymond Amey	Raymond Amey	2861 Mansfield St.	amey.ray@gmail.com
Evelyn Hall	Evelyn Hall	1530 Forest Dr	evelynandy.hall@yahoo.com
Andy Hall	Andy Hall	1530 Forest Dr	"

RECEIVED

MAY 24 2021

PORTAGE  
CITY COUNCIL

## PETITION TO BE PRESENTED TO THE PORTAGE CITY COUNCIL

As a resident of Portage, I am very concerned about the following issues related to the Lake Center District Steering Committee Report (the "Report"):

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Name	Signature	Address	Email Address
Judy Kangas Sallie	Judy Kangas Sallie	9240 Portage Rd	Kangas421@gmail.com
Sharon Straatz	Sharon Straatz	2016 Ames Dr	sstraatz5@charter.net
Fred Welsler	Fred Welsler	1010 Forest	fweleser@charter.net
Sandra & Fred Welsler	Sandra & Fred Welsler	1010 Forest	swelsler@ameritech.net
Mark Yassay	Mark Yassay	1401 Lakewood Dr	myassay75@gmail.com
William Peet	William Peet	1735 TITANWOOD DR	
Ken Cummings	Ken Cummings	1309 Lakewood Dr	
JULIE WENTZEL	JULIE WENTZEL	1013 Lakeshore	simontonje@aol.com
Larry Wentzel	Larry Wentzel	1013 Lakewood	
Renee Cummings	Renee Cummings	1309 Lakewood Dr.	
TIM Bowers	Tim Bowers	10585 Woodlawn	TJBowers58@gmail.com
David Bauer	David Bauer	1102 Forest Drive	dwbauler2@gmail.com
Kristin Fiore	Kristin Fiore	1524 Paul Ct	Kfiore6@gmail.com
Mary Bauer	Mary Bauer	11623 Lakewood Dr.	mrbauder1@bcbglobal.net
JAY THOMAS	JAY THOMAS	1811 LAKEVIEW DR	zoofolks@att.net
Judy Thomas	Judy Thomas	1811 Lakewood Dr.	"
EVIE HALL	EVIE HALL	1520 Forest Dr	evieandyhoff@gmail.com
Patrick Duggan	Patrick Duggan	1810 FOREST Dr.	
CAROLYN KAY Decker	CAROLYN KAY Decker	10113 Woodlawn Dr.	



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Name	Signature	Address	Email Address
Paul G.ibert	Paul G.ibert	1918 Forest Dr.	P.G.ibert@KASHI.COM
Dustin HARALA	Dustin	7668 N. INDIANOLA DR	dhakala@hotmail.com
Karen Schlosser	Karen	9125 W. END DR	Karen.schlosser@robinbear.com
Robin TULLOCK	Robin TULLOCK	1821 Lakewalk Dr.	Robinbear1960@robinbear.com
Jon TULLOCK	Jon TULLOCK	1821 Lakewalk Dr.	jon.tullock@robinbear.com
Julie Cartier	Julie Cartier	1127 Lakeview Dr	jeliason.cartier@gmail.com
TRICIA LUTZ	Tricia Lutz	9103 W. END DR	tricia.lutz@gmail.com
MARY DENEAU	Mary Deneau	2504 WOODRING AVE	MARY.DENEAU@AT&T.COM
Randy JAHN'S	Randy JAHN'S	1014 Forest Dr.	K2007HRVIS40SAK6B4@GMAIL.COM
Sherry Davis	Sherry Davis	1014 Forest Dr.	K2007HRVIS40SAK6B4@GMAIL.COM
Samantha Evans	Samantha Evans	1103 Forest Dr.	SamanthaEvans@ymail.com
Re Evans	Re Evans	1103 Forest Dr.	Re.Evans1056@gmail.com
JEFF DIAZ	Jeff Diaz	9918 EAST SHORE	J.DIAZ@SBCGLOBAL.NET
JOHN EVERETT	John Everett	645 CLOUDS ELL Portage MI	

RECEIVED

MAY 24 2021

PORTAGE  
CITY COUNCIL

(94)



## PETITION TO BE PRESENTED TO THE PORTAGE CITY COUNCIL

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Name	Signature	Address	Email Address
Bob Hocens	R.P. Hocens	1432 Van Allen St	Portage MI 49002
Margaret Blowers		"	"
Adam Ellerson	Adam	912 Forest Dr.	adamedellerson@gmail.com
Dawn Rio	Dawn Rio	8648 Portage Rd	Scarsdale Dr. Portage MI 49002
Michael Carter	Michael Carter	1127 Lakeside	michaelgeorgecarter@gmail.com
John Zeller	John Zeller	9212 Portage Rd	Philippines 48874
Chris Gilbert	Chris Gilbert	1918 Forest	Chiddockgilbert@gmail.com
Corey Luger	Corey Luger	8940 B Shore Dr	CJLAGER@gmail.com
Kathy Church	Kathy Church	10526 Woodlawn Dr.	Winrose Siberians Michigan
RICK Church	RICK Church	10526 Woodlawn Dr.	Church R53 a@gmail.com
Harold T. Stock	Harold T. Stock	2024 Forest Dr.	htstock3@hotmail.com

RECEIVED

MAY 24 2021

PORTAGE  
CITY CLERK

**PETITION TO BE PRESENTED TO THE PORTAGE CITY COUNCIL**

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RECEIVED

MAY 24 2021

May, 2021- To: Portage City Council, City Manager, and Community Development Director on  
Lake Center District Plan. PETITION TO PROTECT WEST LAKE WATER QUALITY AND SAFETY

As West Lake homeowners/residents, we are concerned about protecting the water quality and safety of West Lake, which is our home. According to the West Lake Improvement Association survey of West Lake residents, the majority want to keep the channel as is, and this position is supported by the board. Enlarging the channel, which is actually a drain, would increase the likelihood of contamination of the lake from weeds or invasive species, resulting in poorer water quality. There would be higher probability of injury to boaters and swimmers due to increased boat traffic coming from Austin Lake, the public access, and the proposed lengthy public/commercial piers being added to the east side of West Lake. Enlarging the drain and using bollards/barriers to restrict boat traffic is not acceptable because these could be removed. As taxpayers, we are also concerned about the known and unknown excessive cost involved considering the small population that would access it compared to the other needs of all Portage citizens (schools, police, fire, roads, water, sewer). By adding my name to this petition, I call on the city council and administration to remove the widening the channel and installation of the long piers on West Lake from the Lake Center District Plan, thereby retaining the protection of water quality and safety of West Lake. Thank you for listening

Printed Name

Signed Name

Address

Ciara Kilburn	Ciara Kilburn	1729 LAKEVIEW DR
Chris Kilburn	Chris Kilburn	1729 Lakeview Dr
Delene Van Dyk	Delene Van Dyk	1725 Lakeview Dr.
Mike Strazdak	Mike Strazdak	1619 Lakeview Dr.
John Bowman	John Bowman	1701 Lakeview Dr.
Peter Czodren	PETER CZODREN	1925 LAKEVIEW DR
Victor Moon	Victor Moon	715 Lakeview Dr.
Amy & Sean	Amy & Sean	715 Lakeview Dr.
TRICIA LUTZ	Tricia Lutz	9102 W END AR
Larry Lutz	Larry Lutz	9103 W END DR
Larry Lutz	Larry Lutz	9107 W END DR
Michael Cartier	Michael Cartier	1127 Lakeview Dr.
Julie Cartier	Julie Cartier	1127 Lakeview Dr.
Paul Taverne	Paul Taverne	522 Barberry Ave
Courtney Taverne	Courtney Taverne	522 Barberry Ave
DEB SLAGER	Deb Slager	9310 PORTAGE RD
DOUG SLAGER	Doug Slager	9310 PORTAGE RD
MARYLOUISE CAPORAL	Marylouise Caporal	1919 LAKEVIEW DR.
Julie Haken	Julie Haken	1611 Lakeview Dr.
Kirk Haken	Kirk Haken	1611 Lakeview Dr.
Joshua Vandermay	Joshua Vandermay	1529 Lakeview Dr.
LINDA KOON	Linda Koon	1523 LAKEVIEW DR
Wendy Osborn	Wendy Osborn	1515 Lakeview Dr.
Lishley Grubka	Lishley Grubka	1511 Lakeview Dr.

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Printed Name	Signed Name	Address
KEVIN P. COLLINS	Kevin P. Collins	825 Lakeview Dr
PATRICIA T COLLINS	Patricia T Collins	825 Lakeview Dr.
KALIE COLLINS	Kalee T. Collins	825 LAKEVIEW DR.
MICHAEL A. MARSHBURN	Michael A. Marshburn	903 LAKEVIEW DRIVE
JANET E. MARSHBURN	Janet E. Marshburn	903 LAKEVIEW DRIVE
David England	David England	829 Lakeview Drive
Heather England	Heather England	829 Lakeview Drive
Jennifer Williams	Jennifer Williams	821 Lakeview Dr.
Barry Williams	Barry Williams	821 Lakeview Dr
Janice Kraft	Janice Kraft	9332 Quarter Line Dr.
James Kraft	James Kraft	9332 Quarter Line Dr.
NIC HELMSTAFFER	Nic Helmstaffer	403 Lakeview Dr.
Jackie Drake	Jackie Drake	707 Lakeview Dr
J. DRAKE	J. DRAKE	101
Jill Libby	Jill Libby	809 Lakeview Dr
Shelley Steffey	Shelley Steffey	809 Lakeview Dr.
Bill & Linda	Bill & Linda	915 Lakeview Dr.
Eric Camer	Eric Camer	919 Lakeview Dr.
Melanie Samie Penn	Melanie Samie Penn	923 Lakeview Dr.
Fred McGee	Fred McGee	1001 Lakeview Dr.
Robert Bush	Robert Bush	927 Lakeview Dr.
Jamy Wentzel	Jamy Wentzel	1013 Lakeview Dr.
ITAD CNUE	ITAD CNUE	1025 LAKEVIEW DR.
JULIA WENTZEL	Julia W. Wentzel	1013 LAKEVIEW DR.
Erik Williams	Erik Williams	821 Lakeview Dr.



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Printed Name	Signed Name	Address
Claire Fundingsland	Claire Fundingsland	1501 Lakeview Dr.
Eddie Fundingsland	Eddie Fundingsland	1501 Lakeview Dr.
Jacqueline Nyfie	Jacqueline Nyfie	1417 Lakeview Dr.
Jim Wessinger	Jim Wessinger	1411 Lakeview Dr.
Joy Harris	Joy Harris	1407 Lakeview Dr.
Matt Youssei	Matt Youssei	1401 Lakeview Dr.
James Beelee	James Beelee	1313 Lakeview Dr.
Rex Cummings	Rex Cummings	1309 Lakeview Dr.
Robin Colwell	Robin Colwell	1233 Lakeview Dr.
Heather Simpson	Heather Simpson	202 Ames Drive
Lawrence Stillman	Lawrence Stillman	1830 Forest Drive
Carter Seim	Carter Seim	
Melissa Vesser	Melissa Vesser	2210 Ames Dr.
Nancy Nagle	Nancy Nagle	2002 Ames Dr.
Sharon Strazdas	Sharon Strazdas	2016 Ames Dr.
Pete Strazdas	Pete Strazdas	2010 Ames Dr.
Catherine Perry	Catherine Perry	1926 Ames Dr.
Paul Bluestein	Paul Bluestein	2134 Ames Dr.
Debra Claude	Debra Claude	2020 Ames Dr.
Matt Crowe	Matt Crowe	" " "
Mary Lager	Mary Lager	2008 Ames Dr.
Steve Lager	Steve Lager	2008 Ames Dr.



May, 2021- To: Portage City Council, City Manager, and Community Development Director on  
 Lake Center District Plan. PETITION TO PROTECT WEST LAKE WATER QUALITY AND  
 SAFETY

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Printed Name	Signed Name	Address
Holly Duggan	Holly Duggan	1810 Forest Dr Portage MI 49002
Vince Renda	Vince Renda	1312 Forest Dr.
Amy Renda	Amy Renda	1310 Forest Dr.
Martin Velez	Martin Velez	27318 Forest Dr.
John Austin MD	Robert J. Austin MD	1416 Forest Dr.
Tammy Tarver	Tammy Tarver	1428 Forest Dr 49002
Debbie Yaeger	Debbie Yaeger	1530 Forest Dr. 49002
Tristin Fiore	Tristin Fiore	1530 Forest Dr 49002
Jill Flory	Jill Flory	1534 Paul Ct
Shelly Correll	Shelly Correll	1524 Paul Ct. 49002
Willie Correll	Willie Correll	1616 John St 49002
Liver Pochylo	Liver Pochylo	1616 John St 49002
Rebecca Bluse	Rebecca Bluse	1726 Forest Dr 49002
Christine Kipp	Christine Kipp	1319 Applewood 49002
Walter Kipp	Walter Kipp	1728 Forest Dr 49002
FREDERICK A. WELCH	FREDERICK A. WELCH	1724 FOREST DR. 49002
Sandra M. Welch	Sandra M. Welch	1724 Forest Dr. 49002
Anni Johns	Anni Johns	1712 Forest Dr 49002
Carla Bushell	Carla Bushell	1111 Forest Dr 49002
MARTIN C. BASCH	MARTIN C. BASCH	1638 Forest Dr 49002
Dean Kropf	Dean Kropf	1632 John 49002
Tom Stickman	Tom Stickman	1902 Forest Dr
Larry Lee	Larry Lee	9102 Water St Dr



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Printed Name

Signed

Name

Address

Amy Green	908 Forest Dr.	Amy Green
Rod Green	908 Forest Dr.	Rod Green
Pamela Yelsma	916 Forest Dr	Pamela Yelsma
MARYETTE STUNT	702 Forest Dr	MARYETTE STUNT
DAVID STUNT	902 Forest Dr	DAVID STUNT

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PHIL YELLSMA 916 FOREST DR. ~~916~~  
Tilman R. Helmrich 1308 Forest Dr. 49602  
Pete Events 1103 Forest Dr. 49602 ~~916~~  
Sherry Jarvis 1014 Forest Dr. 49602 ~~916~~  
Samantha Events 1103 FOREST DR. 49602 ~~916~~  
Randy Jarvis 1014 Forest Drive 49602 ~~916~~  
Carolyn Events 10001 Grace Lane ~~916~~  
Jim Events 1107 Grace Lane ~~916~~  
John Boettcher 7205 S 12th St. 49602 ~~916~~  
Sandra K. Welser 1010 Forest Dr. Sandra K. Welser  
Frederick K. Welser 1010 Forest Dr. ~~916~~  
Tom Rottewinkel 1106 Forest Dr. ~~916~~  
Wendy Rohrwong 1106 Forest Dr. ~~916~~  
Jim Paternoster 1210 FOREST DR. ~~916~~  
Helen Clifford 1006 Forest Dr. ~~916~~ Helen Clifford  
ED CLIFFORD 1006 Forest Dr. ~~916~~  
Jeremy Vainavicius 922 Forest Dr. ~~916~~  
Lara Vainavicius 922 Forest Dr. ~~916~~ Lara Vainavicius  
Adam Elliston 912 Forest Dr. ~~916~~  
Melanie Elliston 912 Forest Dr. ~~916~~ Melanie Elliston  
MATT LINDSAY 1122 Forest Dr. ~~916~~  
David Bauer 1102 Forest Dr. ~~916~~ David Bauer  
James Moran 1028 Forest Dr. ~~916~~  
Jack Vanderkam 824 Forest Dr. ~~916~~  
Leanne B. Thompson 1202 FOREST DR. ~~916~~ Leanne B. Thompson  
SUSAN G. THOMPSON 1202 FOREST DR. ~~916~~ Susan G. Thompson  
Lyon O'Brien 1217 Forest Dr. ~~916~~ Lyon O'Brien  
Lanee Bethell 1216 Forest Dr. ~~916~~  
Todd VanderBur 1222 Forest Dr. ~~916~~  
Margaret O'Brien 1220 Forest Dr. ~~916~~  
Nichols O'Brien 1220 Forest Dr. ~~916~~  
Dinise C. Ulking 1228 Forest Dr. ~~916~~ Dinise C. Ulking  
Chris Gilbert 1918 FOREST DR. ~~916~~ Chris Gilbert  
Paul Gilbert 1918 Forest Dr. ~~916~~ Paul Gilbert

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Printed Name	Signed Name	Address
Anna Zoeller	Anna Zoeller	2024 Ames Dr.
LISA A SCHNEIDER		2104 Ames Dr.
Kurt Saffay	Kurt Saffay	9240 Portage Rd
Judy Saffay	Judy Saffay	1740 Portage Rd.
Kevin Kremser	Kevin Kremser	9230 Portage Rd
JO Moore	JO Moore	9230 Portage Road
Eric Gehr	Eric Gehr	9220 Portage Rd
Brody Braxs	Brody Braxs	2019 Lakeview Dr
Barb Matric	Barb Matric	3015 Lakeview Dr
KEIR KNAPP	KEIR KNAPP	2007 LAKEVIEW DR
Cynthia Knapp	Cynthia Knapp	2007 Lakeview Dr
Jude Gorden	Jude Gorden	1935 LAKEVIEW DR
Richard H. K.	Richard H. K.	1735 Lakeview Dr #2
Amy Haines	Amy Haines	1849 Lakeview Portage MI
Audrey Haines	Audrey Haines	1849 Lakeview Portage MI
Mitchell Haines	Mitchell Haines	1849 LAKEVIEW DR PORTAGE MI
Rich Haines	Rich Haines	1849 Lakeview Dr portage MI
Robin Tullock	Robin Tullock	1821 Luberry Dr portage
Sonabhan Tullock	Sonabhan Tullock	1821 Lakeview Dr portage
Edith Thomas	Edith Thomas	1811 Lakeview Dr
David S. Thomas	DAVID S. THOMAS	1811 LAKEVIEW DR
Danny Thomas	Danny Thomas	1807 Lakeview Dr.
Christy Ohlwardt	Christy Ohlwardt	1807 LAKEVIEW DR
Gordon Kilburn	Gordon Kilburn	1729 Lakeview Dr.



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Printed Name

Signed Name

Address

Printed Name	Signed Name	Address
Julie Mayotte	Julie Mayotte	1121 Lakeview
Jay Hartgerink	Jay Hartgerink	1121 Lakeview DR
Ruth J. Hartgerink	Ruth J. Hartgerink	1121 Lakeview DR,
WILLIAM N. WAHL	William N. Wahl	1009 LAKEVIEW DR.
JEFF KRAFT	Jeff Kraft	813 LAKEVIEW DR.
Kaitlyn Kraft	Kaitlyn Kraft	813 Lakeview Dr
Kim Kraft	Kim Kraft	813 Lakeview Dr.
MIKE GAGLIOTI	Mike Gaglioti	1003 LAKEVIEW DR
DENISE A. GRANCHI	Denise Granchi	1103 LAKEVIEW DRIVE
Sandra Steiner	Sandra Steiner	1123 Lakeview Dr.
SHARON JONES	Sharon Jones	1209 LAKEVIEW DR,
GERALD L. JONES	Gerald Jones	1009 Lakeview DR,

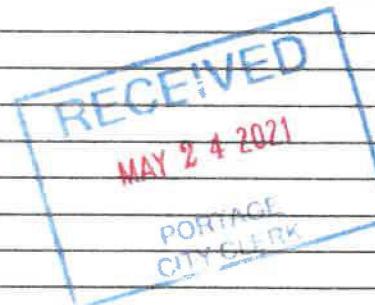
MAY 24 2021

PORTAGE  
CITY CLERK

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Tina Bravata	Tina Bravata	2110 Ames Dr
Andrea Cogrove	Andrea Cogrove	2110 Ames Dr
Drew Cogrove	Drew Cogrove	2110 Ames Dr
Steve Fleschman	Steve Fleschman	2110 Ames Dr.
Ryan Seim	Ryan Seim	2012 Ames Dr
Elin Seim	Elin Seim	2012 Ames Dr.
Alicia Seim	Alicia Seim	2012 Ames Dr.
Amy Mueller	Amy Mueller	1534 Paul Ct.
Michael Burgos		1530 Paul Ct.
Theresa Burgos	Theresa Burgos	1530 Paul Ct.



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Mary Zeller	Mary Zeller	2024 Ames Dr
Doug Zeller	Doug Zeller	2024 Ames Dr
Kathy Utter	Kathy Utter	2114 Ames Dr.
Tracy Utter	Tracy Utter	2114 Ames Dr.
Helen Bogatschow	Helen Bogatschow	2122 Ames Dr. Helen BOGATSCHOW
David C. Laffler	David C. Laffler	2138 Ames Dr.
Judith C. Laffler	Judith C. Laffler	2138 Ames Dr.
Dele Barton	Dele Barton	2142 Ames Dr.
MICHAEL BARTON	MICHAEL BARTON	2142 Ames Dr.
CLARK Lang	CLARK Lang	2214 Ames Dr
John & Doug Murray	John & Doug Murray	2206 Ames
Manley Bray	Manley Bray	2134 Ames
Tim Bray	Tim Bray	2136 Ames
Lorah Bray	Lorah Bray	2136 Ames
Timothy Manning	Timothy Manning	1914 Forest Dr
Frederick Manning	Frederick Manning	1916 Forest Dr
Ryan Manning	Ryan Manning	1916 Forest Dr
Jeffrey Bates	Jeffrey Bates	1916 Forest Dr
Keith Bates	Keith Bates	1912 Forest Dr.
THAVIS Bates	THAVIS Bates	1912 Forest Dr.
Lori Bates	Lori Bates	1912 Forest Dr.
David Bates	David Bates	1912 Forest Dr.
David Mann	David Mann	1924 Forest Dr.



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Printed Name	Signed Name	Address
Jonathan Dettaan		1820 Forest Drive
Matthew Empre	LA EN'SFIELD	1818 Forest Drive
Reagan S. Engen	Reagan S. Engen	1818 Forest Drive
M. Katherine Bisch	Mary Katherine Bisch	1638 Forest Dr.
Linda G. Hamins	Linda G. Hamins	1116 Forest Dr. LINDA G. HAMINS
Michael Horne	Michael Horne	1808 Forest Dr.
Amy Susan	Amy Susan	1866 Forest Dr.
David Little	David Little	1806 Forest Dr.
Julie Little	Julie Little	1804 Forest Dr.
Patrick Duggan	Patrick Duggan	1816 Forest Dr.
Mary Stillman	Mary Stillman	1830 Forest Dr.
Erin Geige	Erin Geige	812 Barberry
William VanderMay	William VanderMay	716 Barberry
George VanderMay	George VanderMay	716 Barberry
Carrie Buerthier	Carrie Buerthier	706 BARBERRY
Rachel Buerthier	Rachel Buerthier	706 Barberry
TERESA FOSS	Teresa Foss	614 Barberry
ENOS A. FOSS	Enos A. Foss	614 Barberry
LINDA Smith	Linda Smith	514 BERRY
CHARLIE Smith	Charlie Smith	506 BERRY
Erin B. Nguyen	Erin B. Nguyen	430 Barberry
Emily Nguyen	Emily Nguyen	430 Barberry
John W. Zull	John W. Zull	416 Barberry



