

Lakefront Nodes

As stated in the introduction, the conceptual framework of this plan is premised on the designation of four primary land use nodes along the Muskegon lakefront: recreation/ natural habitat, residential, commercial/ industrial and public/ institutional. The nodes, described below, were selected for their physical characteristics and location, the level of current infrastructure, and their compatibility with surrounding land uses.

The node designations are not meant to preclude development identified primarily with one particular node, at other locations along the lake, or the mixing of uses between nodes. For instance, it may be perfectly acceptable, and in fact desirable, to have housing near port facilities even though housing is most strongly associated with resort/ residential development (of the type envisioned for Lakeside). Similarly commercial uses, albeit limited in some cases, may be appropriate at each node and in the stretches of shoreline in between nodes. In all cases, recreational uses and public access to the shoreline are encouraged.

Although a mixture of land uses is typically desirable, to assure year-round use, there are instances where concentrating uses is advantageous either to contain adverse impacts, or to catalyze positive ones. Such affects are also accounted for in the nodal concept outlined below.

For instance, while certain port operations may actually help “animate”, or add interest to the waterfront, *heavy* port operations and aggregate storage are best concentrated at one particular area to mitigate impacts on (or take advantage of) area infrastructure, to reduce noise and other environmental and visual impacts. On the other hand, cultural and “tourist” facilities are best concentrated near downtown where they can form a “critical mass” of activities whose economic benefits can spill-over into the heart of the City.

In short, the nodal concept should not be interpreted, or applied rigidly. By design, the boundaries are both porous and overlapping.

A. Civic/ Cultural (Downtown Waterfront)

The Civic & Cultural node is conceived as the centerpiece of the lakefront, and a principle focal point for the entire City and region. Because of this dual role, it is important that it is visually linked to downtown, and be physically integrated with it in terms of site planning and streetscape. It is also important that the activities planned at this location be distributed densely enough to encourage pedestrian cross-traffic and spill-over into downtown.

Principle uses appropriate for this node include those recommended in the Master Plan, and repeated (augmented) here: Aquarium, Planetarium-Observatory, Arboretum-Botanical Gardens, Great Lakes Maritime/ Industry Museum, outdoor recreation/ sports facilities, municipal fishing pier, hotels, conference center/ research institute(s), produce/ seafood market, restaurants, ferry landing, transient boat slips, amphitheater,