

B. Resort/ Residential - (Lakeside)

While housing can and should be integrated to varying extents at most points along the lake (excepting areas designated natural habitat), not all types of housing are appropriate for every waterfront location. Factors to consider in residential site planning and design include topography, views and surrounding land uses and architectural styles.

In very general terms, new residential development should relate to existing housing nearby. To the extent that higher land use densities are found in areas closer to the central city, so too should be residential densities in downtown waterside locations. In all cases, there should be a variety of housing styles and types to choose from.

Because of the strongly residential profile of its surroundings, the formerly industrial lowlands immediately east of the Great Lakes Marina, and across from Pinchtown, is best suited for residential use (predominantly of the single-family variety). While other compatible land uses should not be ruled out, this area is a prime location for single-family housing for several rea-

sons which include the proximity to the established neighborhoods of Nims, Lakeside and Bluffton, the commanding views of Muskegon Lake (which would likely be lost on, or possibly obstructed by, more intensive uses).

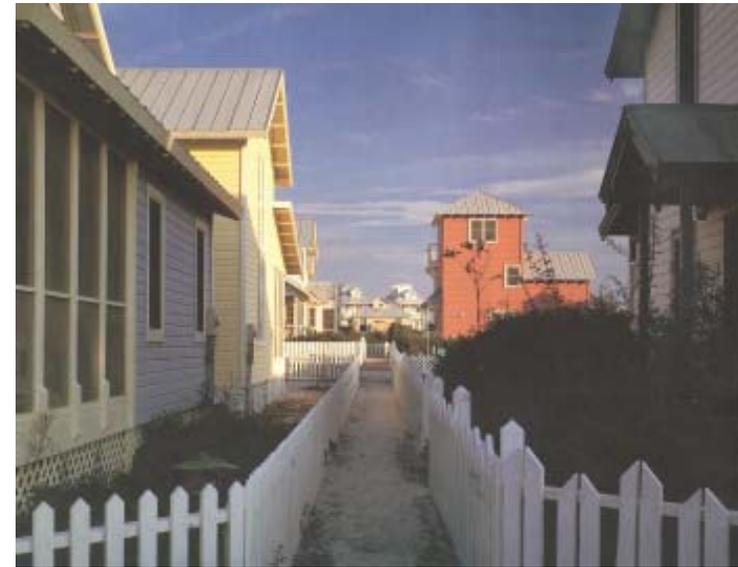
This site is also far enough away from existing lakeside industry that the presence of companies such as Sappi Paper and West Michigan Steel will not likely undermine the market appeal of higher end residential housing.

While limited neighborhood and waterfront serving commercial development could (and should) be incorporated into any new development at this location (preferably along Lakeshore Drive), it should be carefully designed and sited so as not to diminish the existing viewshed, or visually overwhelm the residential character of the area. In general, this means commercial buildings of modest scale with larger buildings located at an angle to the water's edge.

To preserve the view corridors to Muskegon Lake formed by Lakeside's north-south streets, and to harmonize new development with old, new Planned Unit Development at this location should strive to extend Lakeside's

street grid to the water's edge. Gated communities and suburban styled site planning (i.e. excessively wide, curvilinear streets and cul-de-sacs) should be discouraged while architectural designs which hint at local vernacular styles with garages recessed or to the rear of the property, should be encouraged. All but the most *benign* industrial uses in the vicinity should be relocated to the maximum extent possible.

Serving as a prototype for the type of residential community appropriate to this location are the neighborhoods of Bluffton and Lakeside themselves, which are some of the City's most stable and desirable residential communities. With its traditional shopping strip (which includes the City's only movie theater), Lakeside is also perhaps the most self-contained. In fact, the neighborhood stands as a model of traditional town planning principles of the type that have enjoyed a resurgent popularity in recent years: a variety of housing



*Top: New “Neo-Traditional” residential development at Seaside, FL. The variety of housing styles grouped along traditional residential streets underscores the distinction between mere subdivision and “community”. * Source: “The New Urbanism” Peter Katz.*

Although somewhat less dense, the widely acclaimed Seaside, borrows the scale and architectural vernacular of Muskegon’s own Bluffton (right).



on smaller lots served by neighborhood commercial uses.

Although most houses are modest in scale and appearance, property values here are among the highest in the City. This undoubtedly is attributable to the general condition of the properties as much as to their proximity to Muskegon Lake. Yet despite the water's closeness, most of the Lakeside neighborhood is largely cutoff from the water by large swaths of privately held lands, previously utilized for industrial use, and the railroad tracks that served them.

By developing the northern side of Lakeshore Drive for single-family housing of appropriate design and scale, the Lakeside neighborhood would be allowed to expand in a consistent and unified manner. As stated above, this type of development approach would interface well with, and



reinforce, the predominantly residential character of the area. Public access and recreational facilities for activities such as sports and swimming should be incorporated into, and made a condition of, any new residential development in the area.

The Lakeside Commercial Strip

Clearly, what gives the Lakeside neighborhood its distinct sense of insularity and cohesiveness is its approximately 3 block long commercial strip along Lakeshore Drive. This is perhaps the last economically viable pedestrian district outside of downtown Muskegon. It is one of the few places remaining in the entire county where one can walk from home to a movie, grocery store, pharmacy or restaurant/ tavern.

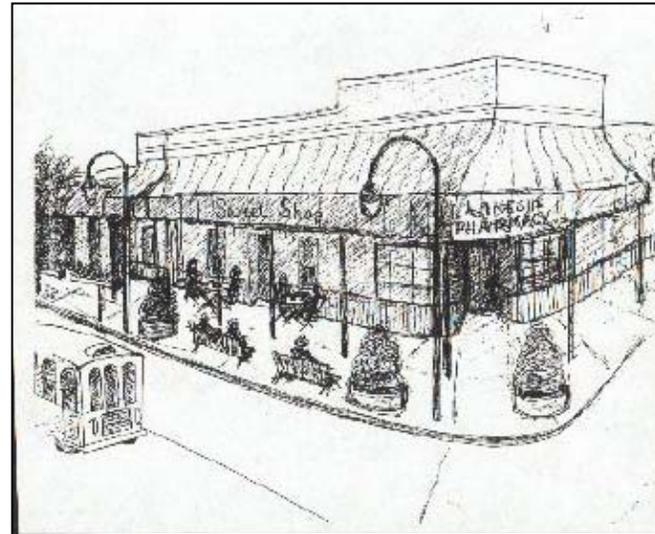
Unfortunately the strip suffers from too many gaps in the streetscape, and a lack of a consistent architectural theme. To remedy this situation a streetscaping theme should be developed for the district which seeks to enhance the strip's attractiveness to local residents as well as tourists. Items to consider include benches, planters, stylized streetlights, and a permanent trolley stop complete with shelter. Business owners should be encouraged to enhance the "curb appeal" of their buildings with dis-

play windows, awnings and outside seating.

Critical to an overall development program for the Lakeside commercial district would be to physically unify both sides of the strip through the development of pedestrian oriented infill buildings on the north side of Lakeshore Drive. Because this is primarily a neighborhood commercial strip, parking requirements should be greatly relaxed. Off-street parking should be placed behind building wherever possible. Shared parking arrangements between predominantly evening based businesses (i.e. taverns, theater) and daytime businesses (pharmacy, grocery store) should be encouraged and coordinated.

Funding Sources

Funding for common, "public" improvements could come from the formation of a Lakeside Business Improvement District (BID), or from concessions for off-site improvements exacted from residential developers (i.e. in exchange for relaxing or forgiving on-site zoning restrictions under a PUD scenario. Note: the latter technique, could also be used to make necessary road improvements along Lakeshore Drive and McCracken to mitigate the inevitable traffic impacts caused by new residential development in the area.)



The Lakeside commercial strip would greatly benefit from a consistent street-scape program, and selected facade improvements. At present, the north side of Lakeshore Drive is made barren by the expanses of asphalt parking which greatly diminish the visual interest of the strip. Sensitive infill, consisting of shallow buildings (with parking at rear) with traditional storefronts could make the strip a destination for tourists and residents alike.

