

Other Recommendations:

- Increase the visual “porosity” of the shoreline (more places that allow at least a glimpse of the water.)
- Implement streetscape and design program for the Lakeside commercial district.
- Provide incentives for animating or softening the appearance of industrial facilities along the lake.
- Preserve the industrial *character* of the waterfront. Integrate new buildings/ uses that interface compatibly with this character.
- Promote human-scaled, pedestrian-oriented development along the lake, and in downtown. Promote development that seeks to create a visual connection between downtown and the waterfront.

G. Transportation & Circulation

Existing Conditions

The combination of Lakeshore/ Shoreline Drives forms the principle trans-



portation spine of Muskegon Lake. Major streets which feed into this system are Laketon Avenue, Apple Avenue via Terrace Street, and U.S. Business 31. The western leg of Shoreline Drive, completed in the mid 1990s, serves as the City’s lakefront parkway, and has been credited with increasing access and investment activity along the lake.

Major improvements to the area’s transportation infrastructure are pending completion of Shoreline Drive - East, and the Lakeshore Trail bicycle path. Both projects are being developed

concurrently as a means to unify transportation and land uses along the lake.

In terms of commercial transportation, a number of deep draft berths can be found at various scattered sites along the lake. The most heavily used among these is the dock at the CMS power plant at the extreme northeastern edge of the lake. This dock receives frequent shipments of coal to help fuel power plant operations. Running parallel to Lakeshore/ Shoreline is one of the few remaining active railroad corridors left in the City and operated by CSX Railroad.

Despite periodic plans to reestablish cross-lake ferry service, water-born passenger transit has been dormant in Muskegon since the retirement of the Milwaukee Clipper in the mid 1970s.

Lakeshore Drive

Although the current “level of

service” of lakefront streets is considered good to excellent, new housing developments underway at Bluffton Bay and along McCracken will likely cause a noticeable increase in traffic on Lakeshore Drive (especially in the summer months). If other proposed developments materialize (such as at the present-day, MeKoff Dock), a further increase in traffic volume can be expected.

An area of current concern, is the heavy volume of truck traffic generated by Sappi Paper, along Lakeshore Drive. Heavy shipment volumes and cramped conditions at the entrance to the mill, have resulted in frequent truck queues as trucks attempt to negotiate the mill’s gates.

Recommendations:

Unifying the Waterfront

The pending completion of Shoreline Drive - East is widely viewed as a catalyst for redevelopment of major sections of shoreline. One planning objective of the new road is for it to serve as the new downtown segment of U.S. Business 31; thus allowing traffic to be

diverted from Muskegon and Webster Avenues.

While this will likely make the core downtown more pedestrian friendly, it will accentuate the existing “divide” between downtown and the lakefront, unless steps are taken to mitigate this effect.

Possible solutions include boldly marked/ textured crosswalks at Third Street and Shoreline Drive, and at Seventh and Shoreline. If future traffic volumes warrant, pedestrian bridges and visual devices (i.e. pavers, boldly marked crosswalks etc.) intended to strengthen the physical connection between downtown and the waterfront should be explored.

McCracken Corridor

Clearly, one of the most pressing transportation issues facing the City is the current traffic volumes on Lakeshore Drive in Lakeside. With possible plant expansions at Sappi and with new residential developments at Bluffton Bay, along McCracken and at Harbortown, (and with more lakefront housing proposed under this plan) it is important that alternative transportation

routes be developed - or traffic demand management measures implemented - to relieve the burden of this route. Improvements to McCracken Street would be a logical first step in attempting to disperse traffic in this area.

Other Recommendations:

- Institute a “way-finding” system in downtown and along the primary routes to Shoreline Drive (Apple, Laketon/ Seaway) designed to highlight the locations of key downtown and waterfront attractions.
- Develop the necessary transportation and infrastructure needed for more fully developed port operations *at the desired location* for such operations.
- If future circumstances warrant, develop an overpass at the

current junction of U.S. 31 and the Causeway (Veteran's Memorial Highway).

- Work to develop a staging area for a cross-lake ferry near downtown.
- Work with Sappi officials to better manage truck traffic volume on Lakeshore Drive. Options include: physical modifications to entrance and unloading areas, as well as traffic flow management measures such as, restrictions/prohibitions on truck arrivals/ departures during commuting hours.
- Further study the development of alternative route from Lakeshore Drive to Sherman Blvd.

H. Zoning

Existing Conditions

With the exception of higher density residential areas, the City's existing lakeshore zoning includes almost every zoning classification found within the larger City. A few special designations such as Lakefront Recreation (L-R) and "Waterfront Marine" (W-2) are used to address the special types of land uses

which are encouraged along the lake (i.e. restaurants, hotels, recreational facilities).

Typical of most zoning schemes in mature urban areas, many aspects of the City's current zoning appear largely to affirm historic land uses, rather than attempting to change them in any profound way. Besides the aforementioned W-2 and L-R, the major classifications include Industrial (I-2), Open Space Conservation (OSC), and Business (B-2). Conspicuously absent, are most residential classifications although most would be allowed in other zones as a permitted or special use.

Recommendations:

Lakefront P.U.D.

In attempting to control the quality of development in sensitive lakeside areas, a Planned Unit Development (PUD) overlay zone is strongly suggested along the entire lakeshore. PUD should not be construed as an additional layer of regulatory control, but rather as a way to encourage a superior level of design, responsive to the particular characteristics of a given site.

Primary goals of such oversight are to encourage a higher level of aesthetics, preserve/ protect view-sheds, provide public access, and promote environmentally sensitive design in exchange for greater site plan flexibility.

Integral to an effective PUD program, is the adoption of specific design criteria for all residential, waterfront marine, commercial and industrial zones along the lake. Design considerations should include:

- Detached or recessed garages and carports (residential areas).
- Maximum setbacks or "build-to" lines (residential and commercial areas).
- Maximum/ minimum residential lot sizes (residential areas).
- Discourage/ prohibit gated communities (residential areas).