City of Escanaba
Northshore Redevelopment
Master Plan

January 2010

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Northshore Redevelopment Master Plan
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Delta County Area Chamber of Commerce
Delta County Historical Society
City of Escanaba Residents

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The Waterfront Center

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Dockside Freighter Conveyor Structure on CN Railroad Property
Photo: Beckett & Raeder, Inc.

Overview of Study

Where there is no vision, the people perish.
Proverbs 29:18

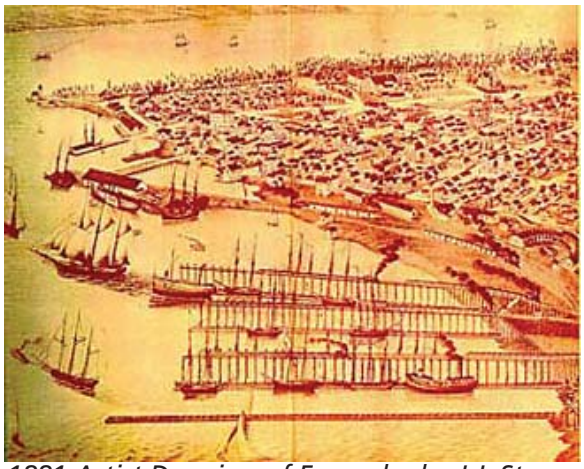
The Escanaba waterfront was identified throughout the community master plan process as an underutilized resource, which could be converted into a dynamic mixed-use redevelopment area. The properties along the north shore of Little Bay De Noc are viewed by the City of Escanaba to hold great potential to generate year-round activity with linkages to surrounding neighborhoods, downtown amenities, labor, regional access, and the recreational and scenic attributes of the waterfront location.

As a result, the community master plan outlined a logical segmentation of the waterfront to include a series of uses, such as waterfront related retail, commercial, lodging, and residential from the Municipal Dock area to 16th Avenue North positioning the "Northshore" for redevelopment.

The City of Escanaba recognizes that a property owner and community-based plan is needed to strengthen existing businesses and attract new businesses and jobs, create housing opportunities for a wide range of income levels, provide recreational, civic and cultural opportunities, and ensure protection of and public access to and along the valuable environmental resources found along the Little Bay De Noc Waterfront. To take the next step, the City will need to involve waterfront property and other major community stakeholders into the pre-redevelopment process in order to create a "doable" environment for public-private partnerships.

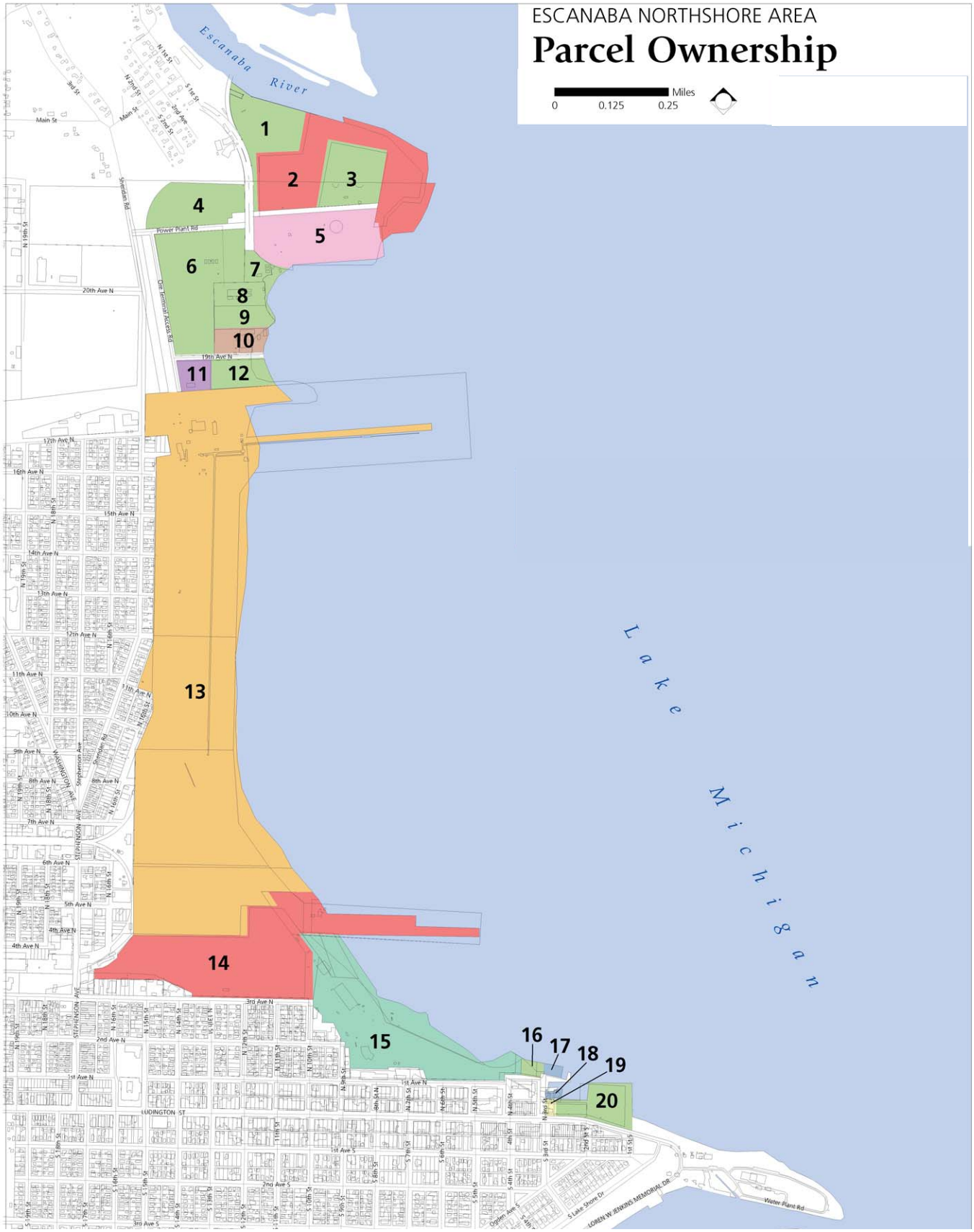
Areas addressed within this plan update include:

- Transportation, including access management, safety, walkability, aesthetics, and alternative transportation (bike paths, trails, greenways)
- Urban character
- Future land use coordination and consistency
- Exploration of potential mixed-use areas
- Environmental sustainability
- Public and private open spaces
- The relationship between public utilities and development options
- Lakefront planning strategies including public access, existing and future land use, brownfields, recreation and natural habitat and historic resources
- Institutional arrangements needed to implement



1881 Artist Drawing of Escanaba by J.J. Stoner of Madison, Wisconsin

Figure A1


ESCANABA NORTHSHORE AREA
Parcel Ownership
Miles
0
0.125
0.25
Escanaba River
Lake Michigan
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
Power Plant Rd
Sheridan Rd
Our Terminal Access Rd
20th Ave N
19th Ave N
LUDINGTON ST
Water Plant Rd
S Lake Shore Dr
LOREN W. JENKINS MEMORIAL DR

Existing Conditions

Property Ownership

The City of Escanaba includes 9.92 miles of Lake Michigan coastline. A portion of that coastline (4.20 miles), called the Northshore is located north of the downtown and east of Stephenson Avenue and Sheridan Road to the City's north city limits. A considerable amount of the property is occupied with waterfront-related and heavy industrial land uses. In total, there are nine property owners controlling approximately 430 acres. The largest property owner is Canadian National (formerly Chicago Northwest Railroad) (parcel #13), which owns 223 acres or 52% of the Northshore in the central portion of the study area. This property accommodates multiple rail sidings and facilities for bulk commodity shipping and storage.

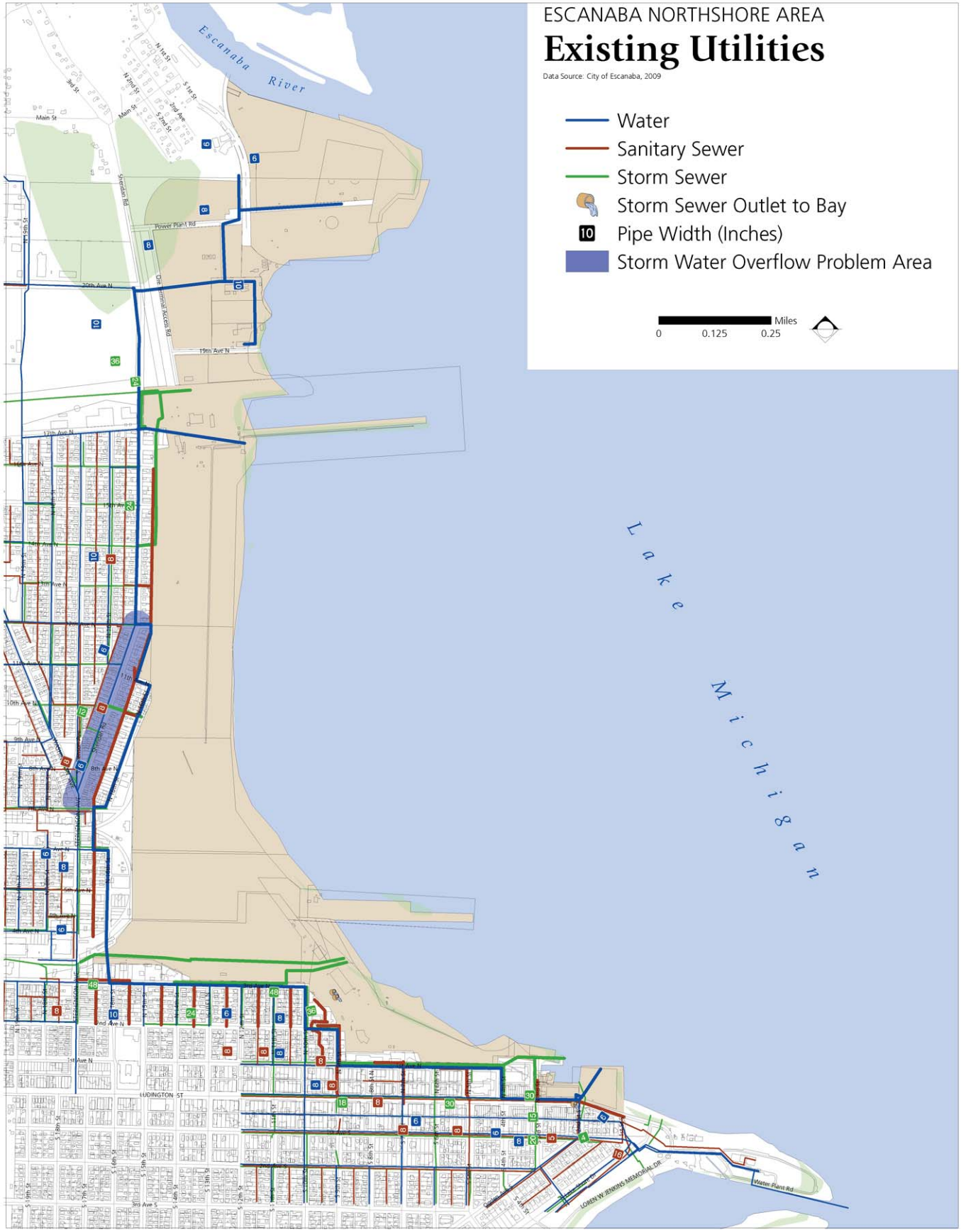
Similarly, the C. Reiss Coal Company and Escanaba Coal & Dock Company account for another 21% of the Northshore properties accommodating bulk commodity shipping and storage. The City of Escanaba owns 76 acres and 17% of the Northshore properties with many of the parcels located in the north part of the Northshore. Several City parcels (#8 and #9) are occupied by the Escanaba Power Plant which produces 25 mega watts of electricity. The plant is for sale based on a recently approved voter referendum and has the potential of becoming a "green" power plant. Other City owned properties are located in the south section of the Northshore just north of downtown. Two parcels (parcel #16 and #20) include open space and recreational uses. The municipal dock property (parcel #20) is sizeable; located on Little Bay de Noc and used for recreational and historical purposes.

Freight Train along Escanaba Northshore Waterfront
Photo: Beckett & Raeder, Inc.

Figure A2
Property Owner Parcel Identification

Parcel Number	Property Owner	Acreage	Percent
1, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 12, 16, and 20	City of Escanaba	76.04	17.70%
2 and 14	C. Reiss Coal Company	76.12	17.72%
5	Escanaba Coal & Dock Company	15.00	3.49%
10	Thomas D. Vinette	3.99	0.93%
11	Gallagher Marine Company	2.99	0.70%
13	Canadian National (Chicago Northwestern)	223.07	51.93%
15	Basic Marine Inc.	30.64	7.13%
17 and 18	Irish, Wendy	1.41	0.33%
19	Chamber of Commerce	0.32	0.07%
		429.58	100.00%

Figure A3


ESCANABA NORTHSHORE AREA
Existing Utilities
Data Source: City of Escanaba, 2009
Water
Sanitary Sewer
Storm Sewer
Storm Sewer Outlet to Bay
Pipe Width (Inches)
Storm Water Overflow Problem Area
Miles
0
0.125
0.25
Escanaba River
Lake Michigan
Power Plant Rd
Sheridan Rd
Dreimanis Access Rd
LUDINGTON ST
LOREN W. JENKINS MEMORIAL DR
Water Plant Rd

Public Infrastructure

Public sewer, water, and storm systems surround the Northshore study area. However, very few of these municipal services penetrate into the respective properties. The map entitled, "Existing Utilities," illustrates the location of storm, sanitary, and water systems in and around the Northshore.

Storm System

All of the Northshore properties drain directly into Little Bay de Noc with minimal, if any, filtration which is particularly concerning since these properties, are industrial in nature and contain acres of bulk commodity storage for coal. The city storm system penetrates through several parcels to outlet surrounding neighborhood and business district storm water into the bay. There is a 30" outlet at the end of 1st Avenue N, 36" and 48" outlets through the Basic Marine property, and an outlet along 19th Avenue N through City of Escanaba property. The watershed storm system for the 36" and 48" outlets on the Basic Marine property are at capacity. During certain periodic rain events Sheridan Road from 7th Avenue N to 12th Avenue N floods. Any redevelopment within the Northshore area will require storm water improvements and on-site storm water management strategies.

Sanitary System

The sanitary system runs adjacent to the west edge of the Northshore properties and, for the most part, is a network of 8" gravity flow sewer lines that flow south and west connecting to a 24" interceptor sewer on 12th Avenue North and Stephenson Avenue. This interceptor increases to 30" as it flows in a Westerly direction until it connects with to a 30" interceptor on 1st Avenue North and North 30th Street. From that point, it continues southward along Willow Creek Road directly to the Wastewater Treatment Plant. A review of the sanitary system results in two issues. First, records confirm the lack of public sanitary sewers in the Northshore properties. Some of the sites may have private lines tied into the public sanitary system or have on-site septic systems. Secondly, the current system lacks capacity to accommodate any major redevelopment. As a result, redevelopment to other non-industrial uses will require an upgrade to the existing sanitary sewer system.

Water System

Like the sanitary sewer system, the water system skirts the perimeter of the Northshore. Many of the water lines are 6" and 8" mains with a 10" water main along Sheridan between 12th Avenue North and 20th Avenue North. This 10" main reduces to an 8" main that serves the Escanaba Power Plant. According to the City Engineer, the existing water system meets existing conditions but may be lacking for fire flows. Issues affecting the system are age and the absence of a looped system; therefore, there is a need to upgrade for any significant redevelopment.

The assessment of public infrastructure denotes a situation where applicable systems are at capacity and in need of upgrading to support any sizeable redevelopment effort.

Figure A4
Infrastructure Issues

Utility	Issue(s)
All	Very few municipal utilities extend into waterfront properties
Storm	All waterfront properties drain directly into Little Bay de Noc
Storm	No apparent stormwater filtration management practices are employed
Storm	Periodic storm water flooding occurs on Sheridan Road
Sanitary	Some waterfront sites have private sewers and possibly on-site septic systems
Sanitary	Current sanitary system lacks capacity for any major non-industrial development
Water	Water system meets current needs but will require upgrading to serve any additional development

Community Kick-Off Meeting - February 12, 2009
Photo: Courtesy Escanaba Daily Press

Public Involvement

Project Kick-Off Meeting

On February 12, 2009 members of the Escanaba Planning Commission conducted a Kick-Off meeting for the project. A component of that session involved community input using a questionnaire and table discussions. At the conclusion of the session participants collectively voted for their priorities. The information from the Kick-Off meeting was used to develop an initial overview of community expectations for the process and project.

Issues and Barriers

There was considerable consensus on the issues and barriers confronting the Northshore area. Six issues and barriers were isolated from the conversations. These included:

Figure B1
Community Issues / Kick-Off Meeting

Community Issues (02-12-09)
Funding
Ore Dust
Environmental Challenges
Public Ownership of Some Waterfront
CN Rail Property
Lack of Public Trust resulting from Past Endeavors

Due to the current economic and fiscal condition affecting the nation, State of Michigan, and City of Escanaba, the funding needed to effectuate redevelopment of some of the properties within the Northshore was considered an issue and probable barrier. Aside from municipal funding, the recent downturn in the real estate market, lack of commercial credit, and the limited number of available developers could complicate efforts for redevelopment, even waterfront redevelopment. Several other issues were more site related. These included the problems associated with coal and ore dust and potential environmental problems with several of the properties.

Another issue was the status of the Canadian National Railroad property and what influence it will have on the future direction of the Northshore due to its central location and size. Lastly, the issue of public trust was expressed and the need to include the community in the Northshore planning and redevelopment process.

Community Kick-Off Meeting - February 12, 2009
Photo: Courtesy Escanaba Daily Press

Major Thrusts

Participants at the Planning Commission were asked to identify what they considered major outcomes (thrusts) for the plan process. These would be a combination of future expectations of how the Northshore would be used and policies needed to effectuate any agreed change. Once all outcomes were identified each participant voted on their top three priorities to help solidify the major thrusts for the plan process. The results, noted below, are pragmatic in content, reflecting a realistic approach to the planning and redevelopment of the Northshore.

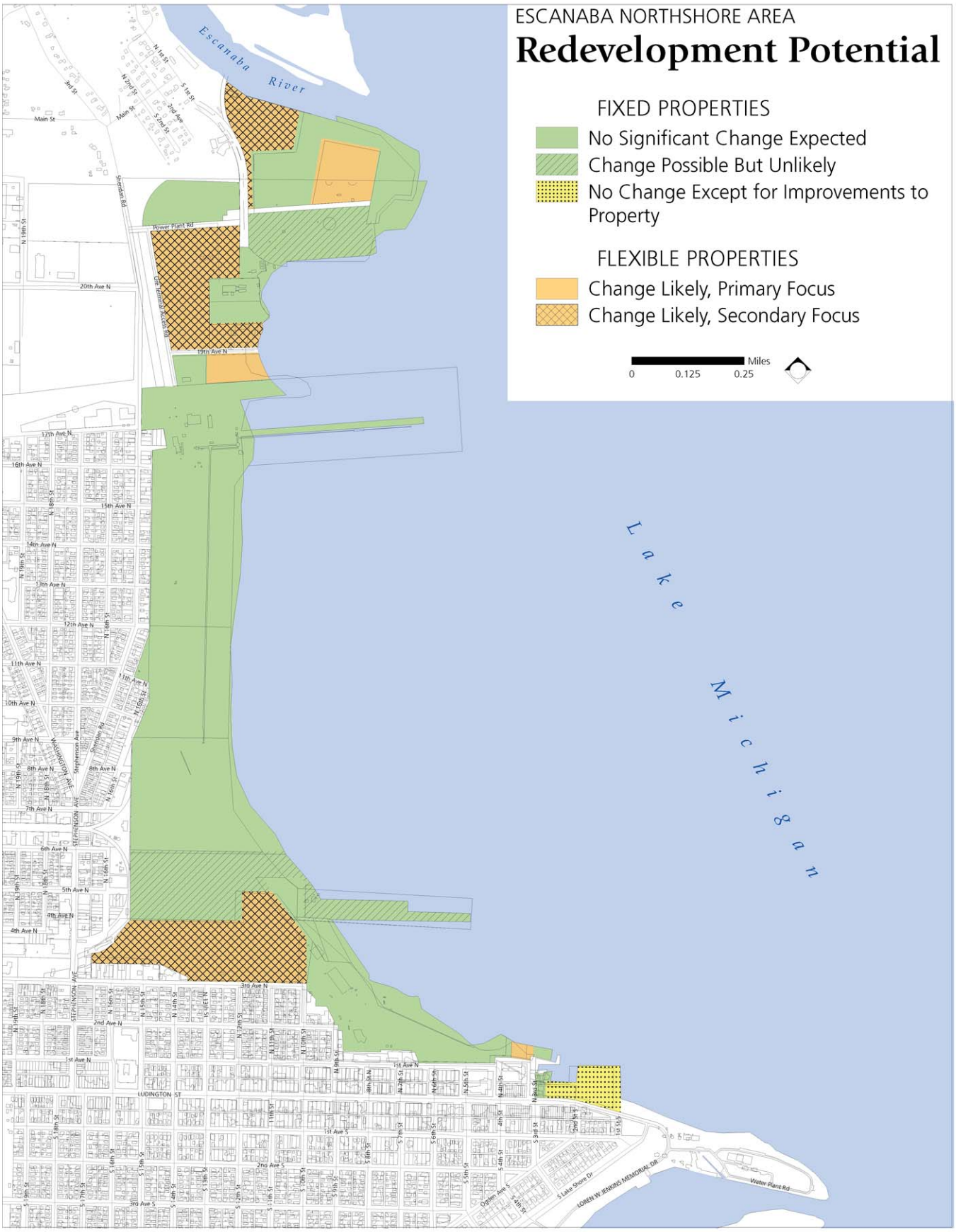
Participants focused on enhancement to publicly owned property such as the Municipal Dock and Chamber of Commerce property; assisting new and existing businesses; job creation; and identifying property owners willing to redevelop. Layered on these major thrusts were the need to incorporate historic preservation in the plan, increasing recreation and tourism opportunities, and expanding recreational fishing. And lastly, identifying at the conclusion of the plan process, creating measurable short and long term objectives for implementation, and integrating the land use outcomes of the Northshore plan with the City's zoning ordinance.

Redevelopment Potentials

In order to pool local knowledge of Northshore properties, participants were asked to identify properties which would likely not change ownership or use in the foreseeable future and those which may be candidates for redevelopment. The map entitled, "Redevelopment Potential," illustrates the consensus of this exercise. Parcels designated as "Fixed" are ones where change is unlikely. Parcels designated as "Flexible" are ones where change is likely, subject to funding and ownership. This assessment concluded that a majority of the Northshore properties will remain fixed and unlikely candidates for redevelopment. These parcels included Basic Marine, C. Reiss Coal Company, and Canadian National Railroad, to name a few. Parcels identified as flexible were primarily city-owned properties in the north portion of the Northshore study area and the Municipal Dock at the southeast terminus of the project area.

Figure B2
Key Community Concerns & Directions

	Concerns & Directions
Higher Priority	Keep Municipal Dock as a public space and Develop as a Portal to Escanaba
	Identify Funding for New and Existing Businesses
	A Plan that Co-exists with Current Owners
	Identify Owners willing to Redevelop
	Job Expansion
	Chamber of Commerce and Jail off the North Shore waterfront
	Recreation and Tourism Type-Development
	Incorporate Historic Preservation
	Marina Expansion
	Realistic Plan for the North Shore
	Zoning and Land Use Plan
	Potential Residential on CN Rail Property
	Expand Recreational Fishing
	Preserve of Open Space
	Develop a Vehicular and Pedestrain Traffic Flow
	Improve Neighborhood Infrastructure
	Year-Round Business Activities
	Define Short and Long Term Objectives
Lower Priority	Long Term Disposition of CN Rail Property


ESCANABA NORTHSHORE AREA
Redevelopment Potential
FIXED PROPERTIES
No Significant Change Expected
Change Possible But Unlikely
No Change Except for Improvements to Property
FLEXIBLE PROPERTIES
Change Likely, Primary Focus
Change Likely, Secondary Focus
Miles
0
0.125
0.25
Escanaba River
Lake Michigan
Power Plant Rd
20th Ave N
19th Ave N
17th Ave N
16th Ave N
15th Ave N
14th Ave N
13th Ave N
12th Ave N
11th Ave N
10th Ave N
9th Ave N
8th Ave N
7th Ave N
6th Ave N
5th Ave N
4th Ave N
3rd Ave N
2nd Ave N
1st Ave N
LUDINGTON ST
STEPHENSON AVE
WASHINGTON AVE
Sheridan Rd
Main St
Water Plant Rd
S Lake Shore Dr
LOREN W JENKINS MEMORIAL DR

Stakeholder Interviews

As part of the Escanaba Waterfront Redevelopment Plan, a number of community stakeholders were interviewed on an individual basis to gather information on their goals and visions for the community as well as what they see as the primary challenges to development. Interviewees included area residents, local business owners, the Chamber of Commerce and DDA as well as commercial real estate brokers.

Interviewees were asked a variety of questions about their experiences in Escanaba, with the understanding that their comments would be kept anonymous and their identities not disclosed. Conducting interviews in this manner allowed some individuals, particularly those not affiliated with a local governing body, to feel the ability to speak more freely. The questions posed to the respondents included, but were not limited to:

- What brought them to Escanaba and what keeps them there?
- What changes, if any, have they seen in the community in the last 10-15 years and were those changes positive or negative?
- What changes should be being made that haven't been?
- What do they see as the biggest challenges to waterfront redevelopment along the north shore?
- What do they see as the biggest benefits?
- If money and land availability were no issue, what would they like to see happen?
- Given the current constraints, what do they think is possible and preferred?

Interviews ranged from a half hour to 1.5 hours, depending upon the respondent, their willingness to open up and talk, and the amount of time they had available to devote to the interview process. Questions were posed so as not to be leading towards any particular answer or to put thoughts and ideas into an interviewee's head. The goal was to ascertain priorities, concerns and original ideas without any influence as to how they should respond. All comments were considered legitimate and reasonable and treated as such so that respondents were able to offer their opinions without criticism.

Once the interviews were completed, the answers were reviewed and tallied to see what people placed priority on and where there were divisions among respondents.

While individual comments may be presented in this document, the source of the comment will not be revealed either directly or indirectly, in order to maintain the privacy that was promised as part of the interview process.

It is important to note here that individuals reading this document should not assume they know where a comment came from. Things are not always as obvious as they may appear and the purpose of this document is not to find out who said what but rather to gather information regarding the goals and expectations of the area stakeholders and incorporate it into the overall redevelopment plan. Every answer should be treated with respect and courtesy, regardless of whether the respondent's opinion is shared by the reader or not.

Almost all of the people interviewed have been in Escanaba at least 10 years. Of the business people (including the Chamber and DDA), the average length of time in business or working for the city is 19.1 years. These numbers indicate that people like living in Escanaba and are able to do business in the city successfully. The majority of the people interviewed also grew up in Escanaba and preferred to stay there. Only one indicated that they could not envision staying in Escanaba for much longer, but that this sentiment is more a result of economic conditions in the state/country than the community itself.

Many respondents stated that they did not feel that there has been any progress over the last 15 years or so. The only changes that were noted were the addition of some angled parking and the loss of a couple of restaurants recently. There was some frustration expressed at the number of studies already done with no measurable results. While no one directly questioned the conducting of this analysis, there was skepticism that there would be any progress after this analysis is completed.

The biggest challenge to the waterfront is the concern that all efforts are futile unless the city can either acquire the land from stakeholders such as Basic Marine, CN Railroad, C Reiss Coal and others or convince them to relocate all or part of their businesses to make room for the redevelopment efforts. More than half the interviewees cited this as their biggest concern. Respondent comments included:

- "I won't even comment until they can actually do something. I have ideas but I won't share them until I can see they might be possible."
- "Why are they talking about developing land they don't even own? There are other things they need to spend time and money on"
- "It's hard to envision what I'd like to see there when I can't imagine getting cooperation from the landowners."

In several cases, it was difficult to get interviewees to think beyond the current conditions and imagine a waterfront as if they were able to design it themselves. Several of the respondents were very mired down in the feeling that nothing will happen because they will not be able to get the land to make it happen. There was a comment made that the city already owns a lot of property and they should look at developing that first and not worrying about spending money to acquire more.

Several respondents specifically discussed C. Reiss Coal, Basic Marine and the CN Railyards as the property owners they were most concerned about. The general feeling is that getting these particular owners to work with the city will be the biggest challenge, for a variety of reasons. Overwhelmingly, people feel that the railroad property is highly underutilized and is the best opportunity for development. The majority of respondents also recognized that it may be very difficult to move things such as ore docks to a different location. People do not want to see these businesses removed, but some favored a relocation of one or all of them. In particular, two-thirds of respondents would like to see Basic Marine remain intact, but relocated to an area that makes more sense in the overall scheme. One individual stated, however, that people need to look at the big picture not just Basic Marine. People would like to see cooperation among the property owners and the city, but there is a general sentiment that this will not happen.

Respondents also cited the fact that while moving some of these businesses would be ideal, such measures also bring up the issues of environmental contamination on the sites. This will be an issue in future land use, as well as who pays for the clean-up.

Great lake Tugs docked along Basic Marine Property
Photo: Beckett & Raeder, Inc.

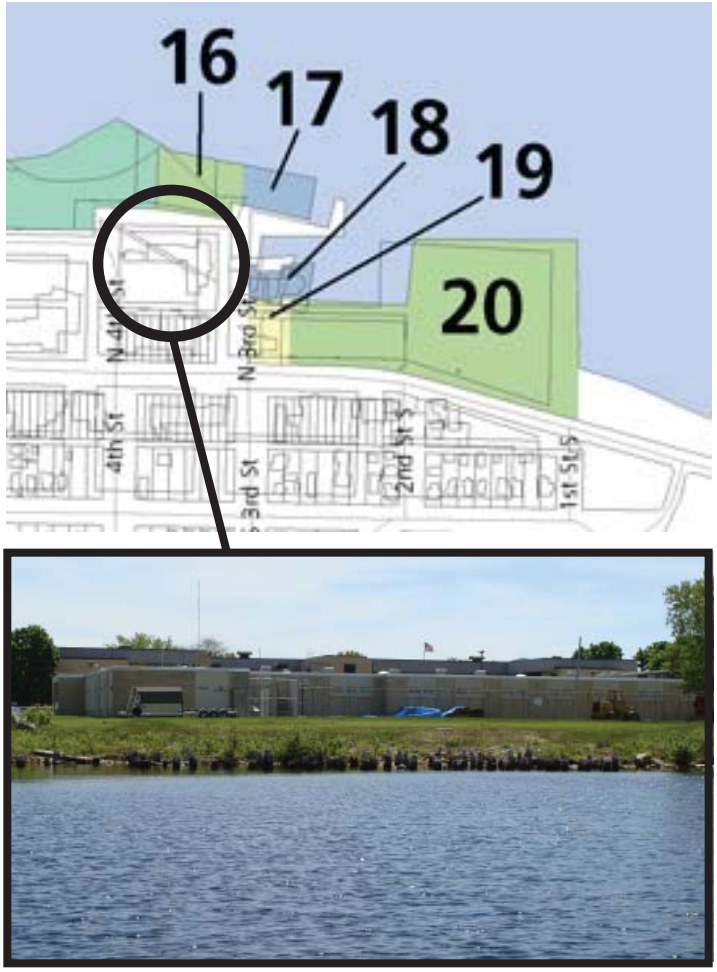
There is also some mistrust that still stems over from historic attempts by previous administrations to forcibly relocate or remove some of the business owners along the Northshore. Between the lack of action on past analyses and actions that were considered inappropriate by many (which also caused bitter feelings), there is an evident lack of trust in the city government as a whole, although it did not appear to be directed at any individuals. Rebuilding this trust will be essential to moving any plans forward. However, comments were made that people believe the current council is more forward thinking and business-friendly.

Area stakeholders will expect to see results with this plan. Expectations include short-range goals picking low-hanging fruit, so to speak, as well as long-range planning. The long-range planning will be crucial to the building of trust. Respondents do not want to see a few little things that will take 25 years to get done. Establishing short and long-term goals and visions with help instill public faith in the redevelopment plan.

The second most cited response was that the jail and Chamber of Commerce are poorly located and moving one or both of these uses would free up some prime land that could be developed for public use. The Chamber representative was very forthcoming in stating that the Chamber recognizes it would be better suited to a location on Lincoln Road and would actually benefit from such a location. However, the Chamber does not have the money to relocate but would be willing to work with someone that does have the money to help them move.

There was significant concern expressed regarding the job situation in Escanaba. One-third of respondents stated that job creation should be an absolutely high (if not highest) priority for development along the north shore. There are concerns about possible layoffs at the paper mill (which was recently bought out), and shared concern over what might happen if Reiss Coal and Chicago & Northwestern Railroad leave and take jobs with them. The city should be conscious of the repercussions of getting the north shore businesses to relocate as it could result in job loss and a less favorable situation for the community. Development should focus on things that will bring jobs to town with good wages, not the $9-10 an hour variety.

At the same time, there is concern about increased truck traffic along the truck route if more business is brought in. The counter-argument to that is that it will both be necessary to expand businesses and add jobs and that this impact can be minimized by using the rail and port facilities more.



Delta County Jail - View from Little Bay de Noc
Photo: Beckett & Raeder, Inc.

These respondents also felt that the city needs to be more flexible in its zoning ordinances/policies so as not to inhibit potential employers. Several people cited the case (with slight variations) about the company that was looking to locate in Escanaba. The zoning ordinances and lack of necessary infrastructure made it difficult and eventually the company ended up going to Erie, PA where it found a ready-made site without the zoning issues, a decision which cost Escanaba potential jobs and tax revenue. Marquette was used as an example of a community that made its zoning more flexible or changed it and achieved success.

In addition to job creation, several interviewees said that the city needs to bring in more people, but not necessarily more industry.

There was a general overall feeling that they city should capitalize on its natural resources. The city is ideally situated where it can take advantage of the Escanaba River, Little Bay de Noc and Lake Michigan. The Chamber and Convention & Visitors Bureau have done a great job in promoting and building up the recreational fishing tournaments. These bring in substantial sums of money. More than $700,000 in direct economic contributions are generated from the walleye tournaments. However, these are not ongoing events and while they benefit the community, they do not necessarily involve the whole community nor do they do anything to provide the public access to the waterfront people desire. Tying in with this is also the suggestion to capitalize more on the maritime history of the area.

There were a variety of suggestions for options, which include the following:

- Have a boat tour that incorporates the limestone cliffs and the lighthouses, much like Shepler's does at St. Ignace and the boat tours of Pictured Rocks
- Have a bigger, better harbor/marina that incorporates restaurants etc. to take advantage of the waterfront
- Work Basic Marine into development plan – there are not that many shipbuilders any more and the novelty could be used as an attraction (although this will most likely not include tours inside the actual facility due to the risk of injury and other safety concerns)
- Boardwalk and nature trails
- More fishing areas/public piers
- Area for waterskiing/jetskiing
- Community space
- A real marina
- A real water recreation community

Mackinaw City Fishing Pier on former State Ferry Dock
Photo: Beckett & Raeder, Inc.

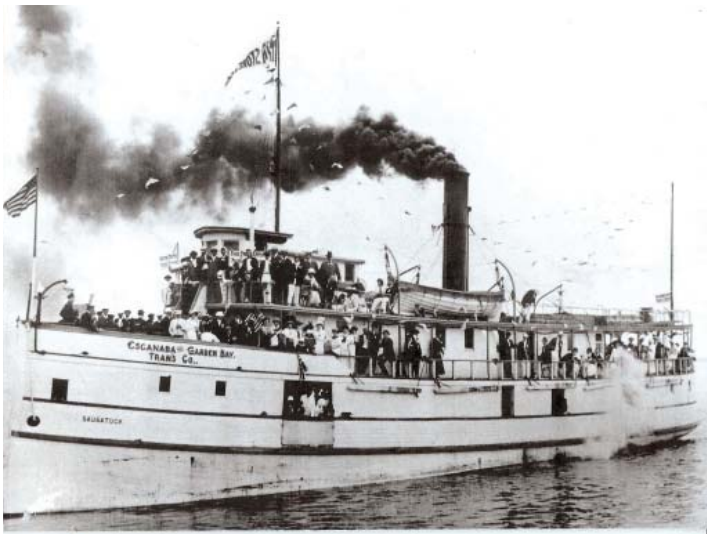
There was a very definite division between those who want to see tourism increased in Escanaba and those who are opposed to it. There are basically two camps – one that wants to become more like Traverse City and one that does not. The responses were virtually 50/50 for these two opposing viewpoints. Included in the opinions in favor of more tourism is the fact that historically, Escanaba attracted large, ocean liner-sized tour ships from areas like Chicago. There is sentiment that this could again become feasible and Escanaba could become a greater tourist destination bringing in jobs and revenue. Support varied from being strongly in favor of it to merely not being opposed to it. Most people who would support the idea also expressed the following:

- "In order to become more like Traverse City, we need more year round jobs. You can't have it become a resort area without more employment."
- "It would be ok but I am not sure where the people would come from. I don't think you will attract them from Chicago – it is too far away."
- "Not wanting to be like Traverse City has lead to a lot of wasted waterfront property."

An equal number of respondents were definitely not in favor of resort-level development. One respondent called the idea of trying to bring cruise ships in "absolutely ridiculous", adding that this is not a "if you build it, they will come" situation. Instead, this person stated that they should invest in building connections between the municipal docks and the downtown so that the people that do come in that way have a way to get downtown and utilize what the city has as a way to bolster business.

Two out of three respondents feel that something should be done to further develop the municipal docks. Regardless of how they feel about developing a tourism component, there is less division about generating more traffic within the docks. Respondents unanimously indicated some small-scale commercial development might be ok if done correctly but that they do not want condominium development at this location. There is definite resistance to any significant level of mixed-use development. Reasons stated include not wanting to block the view of the water for residents along Ludington Street and people wishing to access the waterfront, keeping the waterfront available to the community in general and not wanting anything on the water that could become an eyesore.

Concern was expressed about the potential for constructing buildings for mixed-use and then not being able to sell/lease the space. Under such a scenario, land that was once nice, usable and pristine would then be ruined. This sentiment applied to much of the waterfront area, not just the municipal dock segment.



Top: Cruise Ship "South America" from Detroit
Bottom: The "Saugatuck" Escanaba & Green Bay Transit
Photo: Courtesy Delta County Historical Society

Municipal Dock and Yacht Harbor
Photo: Courtesy Delta County Historical Society

In general, respondents seemed wary of mixed-use development. The majority thought maybe a small amount would be alright but do not want to see extensive mixed-use projects. There is a noted need for housing and condos but most people did not want to see the condos in the downtown or on the waterfront. There is some feeling that the House of Ludington may be an optimal opportunity for a conversion to condos but there is a question of whether or not there is really a market for this type of development, as some rental properties currently have a vacancy rate of 50% and the housing market is sluggish at best.

There was also some expression of the fact that the waterfront and downtown should not try to operate independently of each other. Several respondents expressed the need and desire for better linkages between the waterfront and downtown areas. The city can start with pockets of development that will make the area look nicer and provide links to the downtown. One example is the patch of land across from Hereford & Hops. The DDA is discussing the purchase of this space and using it to improve the area with appropriate development.

It was also suggested that a meandering walkway be developed between the municipal dock and 1st Avenue North `as a way to begin making the connection, recognizing that in order to do this, the jail and the chamber would have to be relocated.

Respondents recognize the need to connect with the downtown, as evidenced by the number of responses that incorporated the downtown. Respondents recognize the two do not operate independently and in order to achieve optimal success the two areas will need to work together. Because of this understanding, a number of concerns about the downtown were also expressed. One-third of the respondents stated that they would like to see angle parking added to all of the downtown, not just specific areas in order to add more parking and reduce the size of Ludington Street. There does not seem to be a feeling of inadequate parking in the downtown, but rather the desire for more storefront parking in areas where there is currently only parallel parking available.

Almost one-third of the interviewees also expressed concern about Ludington Street being too wide. The extensive street width makes it dangerous to cross and uninviting, discouraging cross-shopping from opposite sides of the street. Comments were also made about the streets looking old and tired which makes the city look tired and poor. The city needs to develop infrastructure to make the city more appealing.

Petoskey Waterfront link to Downtown
Photo: Beckett & Raeder, Inc.

There was also concern expressed over the high taxes in downtown. The lease rates are low, but the high taxes offset this benefit, which has resulted in businesses closing or moving from downtown. In order to attract more businesses and keep the ones they have, taxes will need to be addressed.

Vacancies are increasing on Ludington Street and unless they do something to reduce taxes, development will be difficult along the waterfront. Many businesses are struggling, but holding their own. The vacancy rate in downtown is about 10% and lease rates are about 1/10th what they are on Lincoln Road. These rates provide good opportunity for development on the Northshore.

However, there needs to be a plan to develop of new retail. There needs to be more variety. The opinion of whose responsibility this is varies. Can the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) exert any influence or is it truly just market driven? The answer definitely depends on who is being interviewed. Those that commented on this indicated they definitely do not need any more tattoo parlors or similar operations.

There were also comments that the downtown needs to be cleaned up. These comments referred not only to Ludington Street but the backs of the shops along 1st Avenue North. If the waterfront is to be improved, the backs of these shops need to be improved and provide better customer access.

However, it was recognized that there have been some improvements, including nicer signage and the establishment of bike paths.

It was also expressed that in order to succeed, the downtown and/or waterfront will need to secure an anchor store/attraction to bring people into the community. Respondents did not feel that the newer, trendier stores will come to Escanaba. There was a desire for operators such as Kohl's but people feel it will be highly unlikely they will come since there is a unit in Green Bay and Marquette.

The amount of shopping going to Green Bay is not viewed by the respondent as a problem. People from Green Bay, Marquette and other areas also come to Escanaba to shop.

In general, people feel Escanaba is behind areas such as Green Bay, Appleton, Milwaukee and Marquette in terms of development and economic conditions and that it will be at least 5 –10 years before anything starts to happen and things start to turn around. Housing and employment are down in the area.

Some feel that at least part of the problem is because Escanaba has become a retirement community and people have money but they just aren't spending it. One respondent indicated that 5 elementary schools have closed in the district in the past 12-13 years as the population ages and their children are out of school.

Some other random, but noteworthy comments include:

- Bay College is in the wrong spot. It should have gone downtown and not on the outskirts of town. If it had located in or next to the downtown, there would be a lot more student/faculty shopping and dining in the city. Putting the college outside of town hurt both the college and the businesses.
- The city needs to be fully prepared for events. There are now world class walleye tournaments in Escanaba but they don't have a dealership where someone can go by a boat battery or something like that – they would have to drive to Green Bay or Marquette for items like this.
- Most respondents continually emphasized the need to preserve and maintain open space and recreational opportunities.
- The area between the jail and the ore docks could be put to better use.
- Bring the sheep back.
- There were comments about visitors actually leav ing town because they got bored and there was nothing to do. More could be done to improve Escanaba as a destination and have things for people to do when they get there.
- There were multiple comments about the DDA kind of fading in and out and not necessarily help ing all businesses.
- City management is good now but some bad decisions by past management have hurt.
- The city should help business owners trying to sell their property, not just buy land for new develop ment that they then need to turn around and sell to a developer.
- Does the city really want to change or not?
- Confusion needs to be cleared up as to whether or not something is already being done with Ludington Park.
- There is a mix of owners and renters for down town businesses that can create a problem – landlords don't want to put money in to building repairs.

Top: Ludington Park
Bottom: Marina / Historic Light House
Photo: Beckett & Raeder, Inc.

- Escanaba needs to be ready for the future.
- A lot of businesses don't sell things people want and that is part of the problem. They need to bring in items people want and not more of the same things they already have and/or don't need (and they don't need any more tattoo parlors)."
- There are too many different ideas to gain consensus. People are too divided on what they want.
- Escanaba is a great community for bringing in jobs.
- It is beautiful if you like the outdoors and very, very safe. It is an ideal small-town community to live in.
- Preserve Ludington Park but there needs to be more development in other areas. You can't preserve it all as green space and still add jobs.
- Escanaba is getting by-passed on a lot of port business that are going to Green Bay and Menom inee – the city has a beautiful, natural, protected port and is missing an opportunity in terms of utilizing it from a business perspective, including cruise ships and ships with containers.

Conclusions

Based on the respondent comments, it appears that the biggest hurdles the city will face are not only gaining co-operation from the landowners (which in some cases may not be as difficult to obtain) but rebuilding trust among the citizens and landowners, and getting people's mind-sets to change that something can, in fact, be done.

The waterfront and community as a whole have great potential. There may be too many ideas out there, but the first step is already being taken and that is to get the ideas on the table for review. Once the ideas are known and discussed, then the process can begin of deciding which ones are feasible and determining an appropriate course of action. While there will never be 100% consensus on any idea, the first step is to determine which ideas are feasible and make sense for the overall goals of the community.

While all ideas are valid, some just are not feasible. Others, while feasible, will require extra effort on the part of the city, landowners and the residents. The most important thing for all to remember is that the transformation will take time. It will not happen overnight and will encounter challenges along the way. Say, for example, it is determined that the ore docks could be combined into one location away from the downtown and this land could be made available for use (and environmental clean-up was taken care of). Moving the docks themselves will take time as will the cleanup, before any redevelopment can begin.

The next question is what is the highest and best use for the land and does this fit in with the community goals. So continuing the example, if the downtown ore docks are moved and this land is redeveloped, is the next logical step helping Basic Marine become an integral part of the new waterfront and what does that mean to both the business owners and the community? Turning the business into a tourist style destination that showcases Great Lakes shipbuilding will require cooperation from the business owner, the city, the DDA (Basic Marine has some land within the DDA boundaries) and the Delta County Historical Society, which is certainly an achievable goal.

The city may decide that using it as a tourist draw is wonderful but it also needs to be beneficial to the business owner, and not disrupt his day-to-day operations. Further, safety concerns would prohibit tours inside the shipyard but there is potential for a viewing platform so that people could observe. In short, each new step will raise another series of questions and it is important that the scenarios be well thought out and researched, and contingency plans be in place.

There are some issues that most likely cannot be easily addressed but are still valid points/concerns. For example, comments were made that Bay College should have been located in or near downtown to attract students and faculty to the waterfront and downtown. This is a valid comment, but moving the college would be difficult since it is now established. However, there may be other ways to get the college community to visit the city and waterfront that would be mutually beneficial to both. This may range from events downtown geared towards students to student-run events. This will require more than just planning the events, however, including advertising and ways to encourage the students to attend (which may require providing transportation).

Moving the jail and Chamber of Commerce may be more feasible. The Chamber is willing to relocate but lacks the funding to do so – this is a prime opportunity for the city to work with them and one of the local real estate brokers or developers and accomplish one of the goals quickly. Moving out to Lincoln Road area would place the Chamber in a more strategic location for them, fill some vacant space the realtors need to get off their books and make space available at a prime location on the waterfront. Relocation of the jail may be more difficult as some of the control is beyond that of anyone directly associated with the city, but it certainly should be pursued as quickly as possible to determine options and see what assistance can be received to accomplish this.

Picking some "low-hanging fruit" in order to complete some goals can help the process of gaining community support but must be handled with care. Picking a couple little things and then making no more progress anywhere can be as damaging as doing nothing by generating a "see, I knew they would not accomplish anything significant" attitude or a "here we go again" mentality. It is acceptable to start with smaller projects to get things moving and generate interest/excitement, but it needs to be followed up with communication about what the next steps are and what additional progress is being made.

In general, people are willing to be more patient and contribute their own time, if they are kept well apprised of progress and plans. It is when they hear and see nothing that the negative attitudes are fostered and speculation takes the place of information. The city has been doing a commendable job of involving the public and we strongly encourage a high level of additional and ongoing communication.

It is important to remember as well that even though the economy is causing issues and making funding and other necessary things for development hard to obtain, the time to plan is now so that as things turn around, Escanaba is ready to move forward. For example, if there is consensus to bring some small retail to the waterfront, this is the time to start talks with the appropriate retailers, as it usually takes them 2-3 years to open a store, even in good economic times. They will need to do their due diligence and get adequate funding so getting on their radar screens now will be critical to development over the next five to ten years.

It will also be important as the city moves forward to understand that while the city can certainly capitalize on its history, it should not try to return to it, as now is a different time. While there were once ocean liner sized ships stopping in Escanaba at the docks, is that truly feasible to try to restart/rebuild? There is differing opinions and this should be carefully researched before moving forward. Even running a ferry service, such as Shepler's, can be difficult, especially in economic times where tourism is down. And while there has been some inquiry from outside the community into a ferry that will tie in with the casino, the feasibility needs to be addressed. It is not out of the realm of possibility, but needs to be done right to succeed.

The maritime history should be celebrated, but it is unlikely that the level of business from that sector will return exactly like it was before, due to modern technology. For example, the Coast Guard can monitor their lighthouses remotely now so their former strong presence is not likely to return. Things have simply evolved and Escanaba must evolve as well. This does not mean that business cannot be expanded on the waterfront, but that there needs to be realistic developments. It is possible for the existing businesses to be expanded and bring in jobs, but the likelihood of getting the Coast Guard presence back to previous levels is unlikely. The city should look for other types of businesses and replace the lost business while, in the long term, capitalizing on the port location, rail access and truck route. Escanaba has significant potential to move goods, materials and people.

The abundance of water can be turned into new activities, such as boat tours, jet-ski and water-ski area's, more fishing options, kayaking opportunities etc. These are all things that can capitalize on the area's natural resources, maintain public access to the water to benefit both residents and visitors and potentially bring more jobs and people to the area.

Bringing more jobs to the area will also be crucial in the short and long-term goals for Escanaba. An increase in jobs will bring more families and non-retirees to help contribute to the overall economic health of the area. An increase in better paying jobs will be one of the single biggest factors in long-term success for the city. These jobs need to be better than minimum wage retail type jobs and contribute to the overall makeup of the community. Adding to the piers to bring in more boats and possibly bigger ships would result in new jobs and also more truck traffic (which can be minimized by capitalizing on the rail and waterways). You cannot have one without the other and jobs are across the board a priority with the area residents.

In summation, the respondents had a lot of good ideas and all are valid but it will be vital to determine which ones are truly feasible, which can be accomplished quickly and which are longer-term goals. Then, once the strategy is in place, it will be vital to keep momentum going. Once progress begins to happen, more people will come on board and the proverbial "snowball effect" can happen.

Figure B4
Summary of Stakeholder Interviews

Observations and Suggested Direction
Rebuilding trust among citizens and landowners
Maintain the working waterfront
Transformation of the waterfront will take time to do correctly
Chamber willingness to relocate off waterfront but lacks the funding to make it happen
Relocate the county jail off the waterfront
Increase connectivity between the downtown and the waterfront
Improve the appearance of downtown
Improve the appearance and utilization of the Municipal Dock
Escanaba has significant potential to move goods, materials, and people

Top: Lincoln (US-2) Road Shopping Area
Bottom: Downtown Escanaba along Lugington Street
Photo: Beckett & Raeder, Inc.

C

Market Overview

Market Analysis for Escanaba

While Beckett & Raeder, Inc. did not conduct a formal market analysis to determine retail feasibility, there is some general commentary and information that can be provided based upon our field visit and expectations of the community. As part of this analysis, several previous reports conducted for the Escanaba downtown and waterfront were reviewed. While many of these were primarily focused on the downtown, they also incorporated the waterfront to some degree. The reports reviewed included the Downtown Market Strategy conducted by Anderson Economic Group (2006), the Fantus report (1982), Camiros I (1987) and II (1988), the Development Plan (1988) and the Sullivan Report (1989). It is not the goal of this report to critique the previous studies but rather to determine where Escanaba is positioned relative to these studies, what can be taken from these prior analyses and how current conditions influence outcomes earlier envisoned.

With the exception of the Anderson Economic Group study, the reports were generally too old to be of much value in terms of information, but rather provide a starting point for discussion. At the time of the reports done in the 1980's, Lincoln Road was developing as the primary shopping area for the community and having a drastic impact on the downtown. While it still impacts what the downtown can do in terms of retail development, there has since been an adjustment in the business mix. Across the board, the only real developments from the reports conducted in the 1980's is the angle parking along a portion of Ludington Street.

The Camiros Reports indicated that a 100 to 200 room hotel should be constructed on the waterfront with up to 50 condominium units within the hotel and up to an additional 50 condominium units elsewhere along the waterfront. Based on observations made in the community, input from the public meeting and individual interviews and general demographics for the area, it is not likely that a hotel and condominium development is feasible nor desired. As an example, the House of Ludington is an established hotel on the waterfront and it is not at capacity. In fact, it is up for sale and the owners have indicated that the use for a waterfront hotel seems to be past its prime. If tourism in the area were to be increased, there may be potential to improve this establishment's performance. However, even with the increase in visitors for the walleye and bass tournaments, several sources indicated there was sufficient hotel space available.

Further, the location of a hotel and condominium complex on the waterfront would not only obstruct the view for area residents it would also make part of the waterfront less accessible, if not inaccessible to residents and visitors. If waterfront hotel or condominium space is needed, it is recommended that the House of Ludington be upgraded/remodeled or converted to residential space. This would bring additional activity to the waterfront without detracting from it.

House of Ludington
Photo: Beckett & Raeder, Inc.

The Camiros II report was heavily focused on retail development, particularly as it pertains to attracting tourists. The report presented a list of potential businesses but did not clearly explain the methodology for arriving at their conclusions, so it is hard to discern the accuracy. If the city determines to become a tourist destination, then this type of retail is feasible, but not on its own. Just adding retail will not bring tourists in and will only engage them for a limited amount of time. Without other non-retail activities tourism will not flourish. Additional retail may attract additional shoppers from Marquette and Green Bay, but will not establish or support a tourism-based economy.

The Sullivan report made a few retail recommendations, including increasing local spending in the downtown and adding a few higher-end boutique type shops. Increasing local spending is a good idea, but will need to extend beyond just increasing store hours (which presents its own challenges) and adding a few boutiques/specialty shops. Store hours are always a difficult issue, particularly with "mom and pop" stores as they often already put in long hours and do not want to add more hours to their schedules. They may also not want the expense of adding employees to cover the hours. One potential solution is an assessment of activity to determine when the shops are the busiest. So for example, if the majority of stores are open from 10 AM until 5 PM, but they don't get any business until 11:30, it may make more sense for them to open at 11 or 11:30 and stay open until 6:30 or 7:00 instead. This way they are not adding to the hours they are working, but are open when it is convenient and attractive to their customers. The drawback to this method is that different stores may have different peak hours. A coffee shop undoubtedly does the bulk of its business in the morning but a shoe store may do all or most of its business in the late afternoon or evening.

Further, adjusting hours cannot be an experiment for a week or two. If the shopowners keep changing their hours, customers will get confused and simply find it easier to just go to Wal-Mart, Kmart or other stores where the hours are set and known.

It is important that any downtown or waterfront development NOT try to compete with Lincoln Road. A locally owned downtown retailer cannot compete with the larger national stores on price and selection, but they can offer things that the discount department stores and other Lincoln Road retailers can't or don't offer. Niche and boutique options would suit a waterfront or downtown location.

Downtown Escanaba
Photo: Beckett & Raeder, Inc.

The Anderson Economic Group (AEG) report offered a more detailed and contemporary analysis, including the amount of supportable square footage that Escanaba could add to the downtown. Their report also addressed additional issues such as parking and the potential of a ferry service between Escanaba and other northern communities.

One overall thread among the reports that AEG focused on heavily, is the fact that the downtown is too large. Not only does this take away from the retail attractiveness by making it more difficult to navigate and limiting cross-shopping between stores, it also impacts the amount of square footage available to construct any retail within the waterfront development. As described in the AEG report, there is only a certain amount of money available in an area to be spent on retail goods and services. This amount will not change with the addition of more stores, but rather will be redistributed. So, if the effort is being made to add more retail space to the downtown area, there is less development potential for the waterfront.

The downtown and waterfront will not exist in a vacuum but need to co-exist and draw upon each other to succeed. The concept of shortening the retail corridor on Ludington Street and creating a focal point stands to significantly benefit the downtown. It can also benefit the waterfront as long as there is connectivity established between the waterfront and downtown.

The AEG report suggested that there is opportunity for 112,000 square feet of new retail development across 34 categories. While the economic climate for retail and restaurants has changed dramatically since that report, there is still potential for new development to fill voids in the market. While AEG recommended focusing on the retail core of Ludington Street first and the waterfront second, it is possible to focus on both, but priorities must be established. If the main goal is retail development, then the downtown core should be the priority, but if the focus is more broad, then the waterfront and connectivity with downtown would be more central to the efforts.

In order to better understand the make up and characteristics of the area, additional demographic information for select geographic areas was generated. We could not replicate the trade areas used for other reports as they were not included with the studies.

Recognizing the absence of these trade areas a primary (local) trade area and a more regional trade area that accounts for the cross-shopping between northern Michigan and Wisconsin communities was developed for this study. The Primary Trade Area (PTA) accounts for approximately 70% of the retail business in the market and covers approximately a 30-minute drive from the community, which is certainly reasonable in this type of environment. The Regional Trade Area (RTA) accounts for another 10-15% of the retail business.

Figure C1
Community Demographics and Income

Characteristic	City of Escanaba	Delta County	30-Minute Drive	Escanaba PTA	Escanaba RTA
2007 Population	12,700	38.240	34,800	35,840	178,470
2012 Population	12,385	37,880	34,375	35,420	177,100
2007-2012 Population Change	-2.46%	-0.94%	-1.22%	-1.17%	-0.77%
2007 Median HH Income	$28,307	$36,630	$36,662	$36,902	$36,266
2007 Per Capita Income	$20,977	$22,291	$21,581	$21,856	$22,116

Figure C2
Escanaba Primary Trade Area

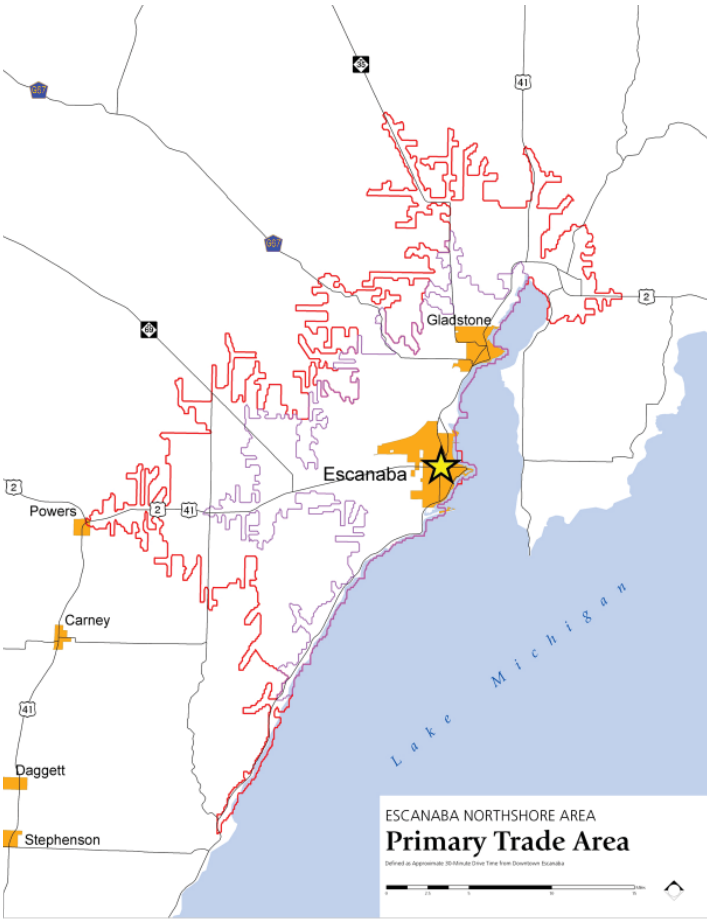
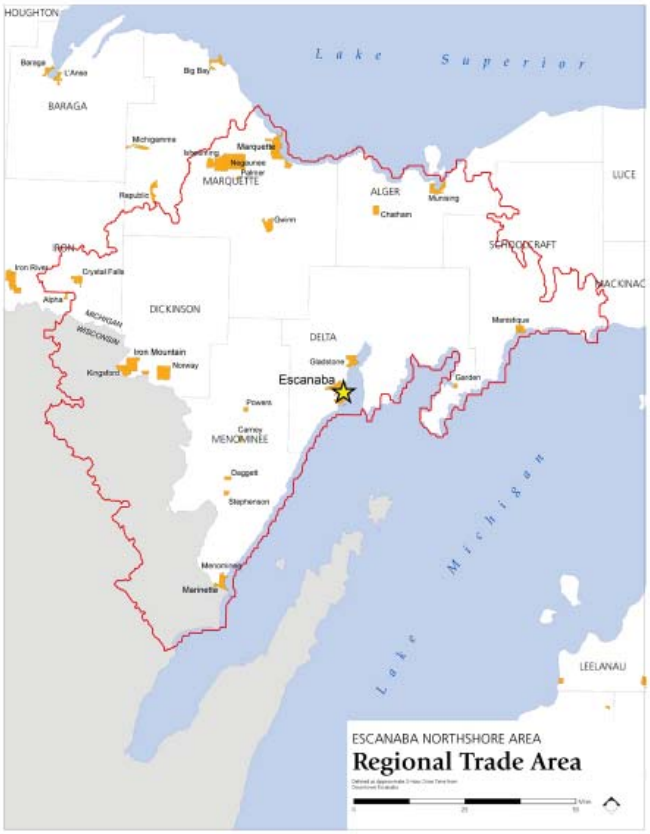


Figure C3
Escanaba Regional Trade Area



The map [Figure C2] depicts the PTA for Escanaba in purple. The purple polygons depict a 20-Minute and 30-Minute drive time (red) for comparison. Figure C3 depicts the Regional Trade Area for Escanaba.

As the above table indicates, all geographies are losing population. This has been an ongoing trend for this portion of the Upper Peninsula as evidenced by the fact that in the earlier reports for the community, the 1988 population for Escanaba was 13,950 and for Delta County, was 38,380. The City of Escanaba is exhibiting the strongest population decline, at almost 2.5%, a significant number to any retailer or developer. In order to make the market more attractive, it will be imperative that this number be at least stabilized.

This is not to say that retail development is unattainable with population decline, but it makes it much more difficult to attract new retail to the market. However, income levels have grown, adding to the overall pool of available dollars for retail expenditure. Because of the growth in income, expenditure potential is still projected to grow for the trade areas, as indicated in the chart below:

Figure C4
Trade Area Demographics and Income

Geography	2007 Expenditure	2012 Expenditure	Percent Change
Primary TA	$286.2 million	$327.4 million	14.4%
Regional TA	$1.5 billion	$1.8 billion	20%

These numbers represent positive potential for Escanaba's retail growth, although some caution is appropriate. As the national economy begins to rebound, consumer confidence will grow as well, but this growth will likely be slow. Further, most retailer expansion plans are less aggressive than just a few years ago and will likely remain so for many years after the recession is history. Therefore, it will be extremely important that the city and businesses focus efforts on those operators most likely to be long term.

Attracting the right tenant mix will be a task for the city, Chamber of Commerce and DDA to tackle jointly, but with one person spearheading the effort. By combining resources, the city can achieve far more than it would on its own. While it is true that that city and DDA can not necessarily be held responsible for who landlords lease/sell their property to, they can certainly make an effort to attract/recruit the retailers/restaurants that make the most sense.

Determining which retailers are the best fit is dependent upon a number of criteria, including:

- Does the retailer locate in small communities such as Escanaba?
- Is the retailer looking to expand into Northern Michigan/Wisconsin?
- Is there already a sufficient amount of this type of retail in the community and will this addition negatively impact an existing unit?
- Is this retailer in keeping with the goals of the community?
- Looking at it from the retailers point of view – does Escanaba have enough of my customers to warrant consideration?

This last point is extremely important. It is not necessarily how many people are in the trade area, but are there enough of a particular retailer's core customers to warrant a store? For example, if the area has a high percentage of young, urban professionals, a medical supply store may not be a good fit, but it might do well in an area with a large proportion of retirees. Similarly, a more upscale restaurant could do well with the yuppie crowd, but a retiree area may be more price conscious and want family style restaurants such as Denny's.

In the case of Escanaba, there is a relatively low income level, with a fair number of retirees, but also a base of college students. The question becomes which lifestyle are you catering to and how will this affect locational decisions? The City of Escanaba has the lowest income level and the highest population decline of all the geographies as enumerated in Figure C1. Further, the younger people are located closer to the college and the older people near the downtown. Therefore, although a nationally franchised pizza place may be better situated away from downtown despite fitting the overall community profile. If attractions are added to the waterfront that will bring the younger crowd in, it may be desirable to have a pizza place near the waterfront. To service the slightly older crowd living in the city, full service family dining places such as a Country Kitchen or Perkins Family Restaurantmay be more appropriate.

However, should the demographic/lifestyle (psychographic) makeup of the community change (i.e. tourism becomes a significant contributor much like Traverse City and Dorr County, WI), then boutique food and retail operators may become feasible.

Not only must the city choose operators that fit the demographic and psychographic mold for the retailer, they must also understand the locational requirements of that retail or restaurant operator. An extreme example is that in communities such as Escanaba, you would never locate a Home Depot downtown or on the waterfront. The retail needs to be appropriate. Operators like Menards, the Hiawatha Chef and Janitorial Supply, Wal-Mart and others are better suited to their current locations. Other retailers, focused on year-round and seasonal traffic will seek downtown locations while still others can go either place, depending on the circumstances.

Locational circumstances include the placement of competition, available parcels, access, vehicular and pedestrian traffic and proximity to the population it intends to serve. Further, locational preference may vary between different operators within a category. For example, if a drug store were a feasible addition to the community, where it locates would depend on the operator. A CVS or Rite Aid unit would prefer Lincoln Road but a locally owned establishment might do better in a downtown setting.

Other uses, such as automotive accessories, and appliances may be willing to go into a downtown or waterfront but the city needs to carefully consider whether these are appropriate uses within the vision for the community.

The important factor in all this is that the retail chosen for retention and recruitment must be appropriate for the location. A large building obstructing the view may not be the best option for a waterfront location, but a small specialty store may be just fine and actually draw people to the waterfront. On a nice, warm summer day, a small ice cream shop or hot dog/hamburger place may be just the perfect thing for people accessing the waterfront, whether for water-related activities, biking, running or any other activity. By their very nature, some of these uses may be seasonal.

In the case of Escanaba, there is a fair amount of retail vacancy within the downtown and new retail development should be focused more predominantly in this area, as this is a primary purpose for the downtown. As stated in previous reports, the retail node of Ludington Street should strive to become more focused on a central area in downtown rather than spread out for blocks and the attraction of new retail should focus first on the core area.

Development on the waterfront should be of a scale so as to allow the residents and visitors continued access to the water, but provide some connectivity with the downtown and community. A restaurant/bar or two with patio seating for the summer months is conceivable, especially near the municipal docks as it would provide the boaters with easy access to food and beverage and encourage waterfront traffic. Such a development, if done properly, may also attract the Bay College students. With 5,000 students enrolled in graduate and undergraduate programs, there is substantial potential for food and beverage business that is not being captured by the city or downtown businesses.

Another reasonable opportunity for the waterfront/downtown area is a marine/water-sports based business. With the improvement of recreational fishing, as well as the opportunity for other water-related activities, a waterfront area sporting goods store would be desirable.

Sayklly's in Downtown Escanaba
Photo: Beckett & Raeder, Inc.

Retail development, of the correct size and appropriate for the vision is acceptable for parts of the waterfront development, as long as they follow these guidelines:

- Their obstruction of the waterfront view is minimal.
- They will ideally still allow for some level of access to the water, be it a patio or other seating.
- They are appropriate for the community's desire to maintain and preserve open space and are not a string of shops or a strip center.
- Ideally they would celebrate Escanaba's maritime heritage (such as a maritime theme or architecture).

While other reports have suggested waterfront condominium development with attached retail, we are not convinced the market will support this type of development over the next 5-10 years. The housing market for both ownership and rental is sluggish at best and based on conversations with local real estate professionals, Escanaba is lagging behind other areas and is not expected to recover quickly. Some rental communities are sitting 50% vacant and home sales are slow.

Condominium development, at this time, does not appear to be the most appropriate use for waterfront property unless the need for additional housing increases. There is currently an oversupply of housing available, as well as buildings that maybe suited for conversion in to condo units (i.e. House of Ludington). While this analysis did not include a detailed housing assessment, the real estate professionals indicated that there is not a market for new development in the foreseeable future. In order to increase the need for new housing, the city needs to increase its employment base to attract new workers, stabilize the population growth, and bring more people back in to the community.

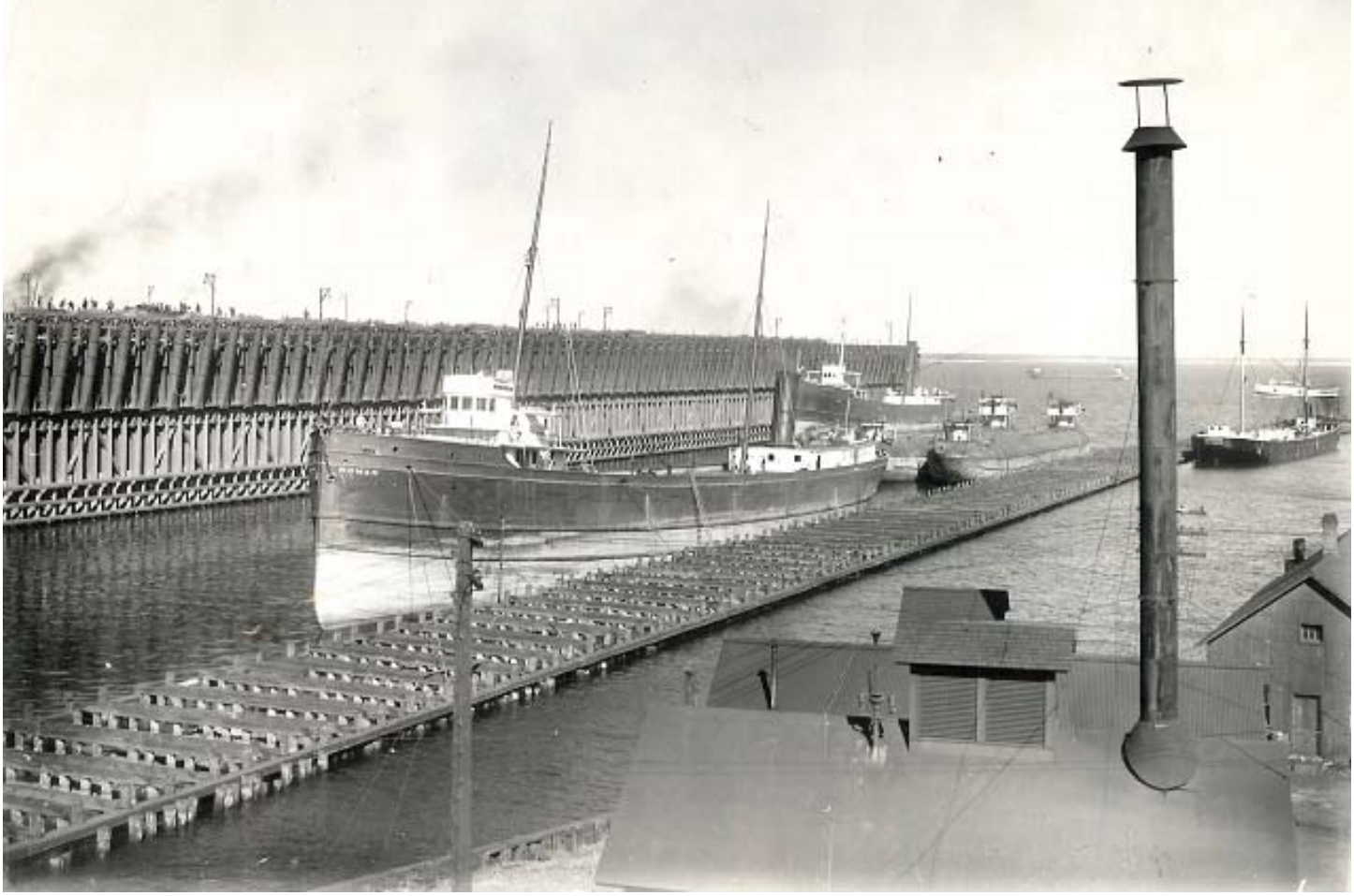
Crucial to any retail development in Escanaba will be the retention and recruitment of new jobs to the area. There is potential along the waterfront for additional business development that could add to the preservation of history and add to the amount of open space. Progress does not need to include mixed-use, high-rise development. It does need to include business development and economic growth (or stabilization at a minimum). Bringing in more jobs can reduce and eventually reverse the population decline, which will open the doors for additional development.

As an example, if the piers are expanded at Basic Marine so that they can accommodate container ships and more ships overall, they might add jobs. This will also require more truckers and increased usage of the CN Rail line (also resulting in more jobs). While there will be more traffic, this is a necessary part of progress and might be divided among the different modes of transportation. The main requirements to move this forward would be dredging the bottomland, and designing and building of expanded piers. Additional jobs can bolster the business of existing retail and bring in new stores and restaurants. these actions may be in line with the goals of residents and key components in a small town with a declining and aging population, such as Escanaba.

In conclusion, while the population of the area is declining, the level of available retail expenditure has continued to rise. While the continuing weak economic conditions may temper this factor, it is still a fact that can work in Escanaba's favor to attract additional retail development. If development is to be included along the waterfront, it should be of the proper scale tocomplement, not compete with the downtown. Further, connectivity must be established between the waterfront and downtown so that they may draw on each other's strengths. Business and jobs need to be expanded in order to succeed. There are opportunities for Escanaba to achieve these goals.

Figure C5
Summary of Market Overview

Observations and Suggested Direction
Waterfront hotel and condominiums not feasible
House of Ludington needs to be upgraded and maybe converted to residential use
Tourism will could flourish with well planned non-retail activities
Downtown is too large and lacks a critical focal point
Primary trade area can support additional retail
Primary trade area accounts for 70% of retail sales
Primary and Regional trade areas are losing population
Population is declining but income and retail expenditures are increasing
Market is a combination of lower median income households, retirees, and college students
Waterfront development should maintain or increase public access
Growth in housing will be tied to employment growth



Escanaba Waterfront - Early 1900's
Photo: Courtesy Delta County Historical Society

Physical Site Assessment

Introduction

The Northshore is in many ways defined by its surrounding environment. The land and water played critical roles in settlement of the area, its development and economy. The area's natural features are equally important today and are central to daily life. Nearly all employment in the community can be linked to an environmental source. If not direct timber, mining, maritime, or recreation jobs, they are usually second or third tier supporters of those industries and their employees. This is particularly true of the Northshore area where the majority of land use is dominantly mining, maritime, and recreation related. It is an active, working waterfront that is an integral part of the community's economy and heritage.

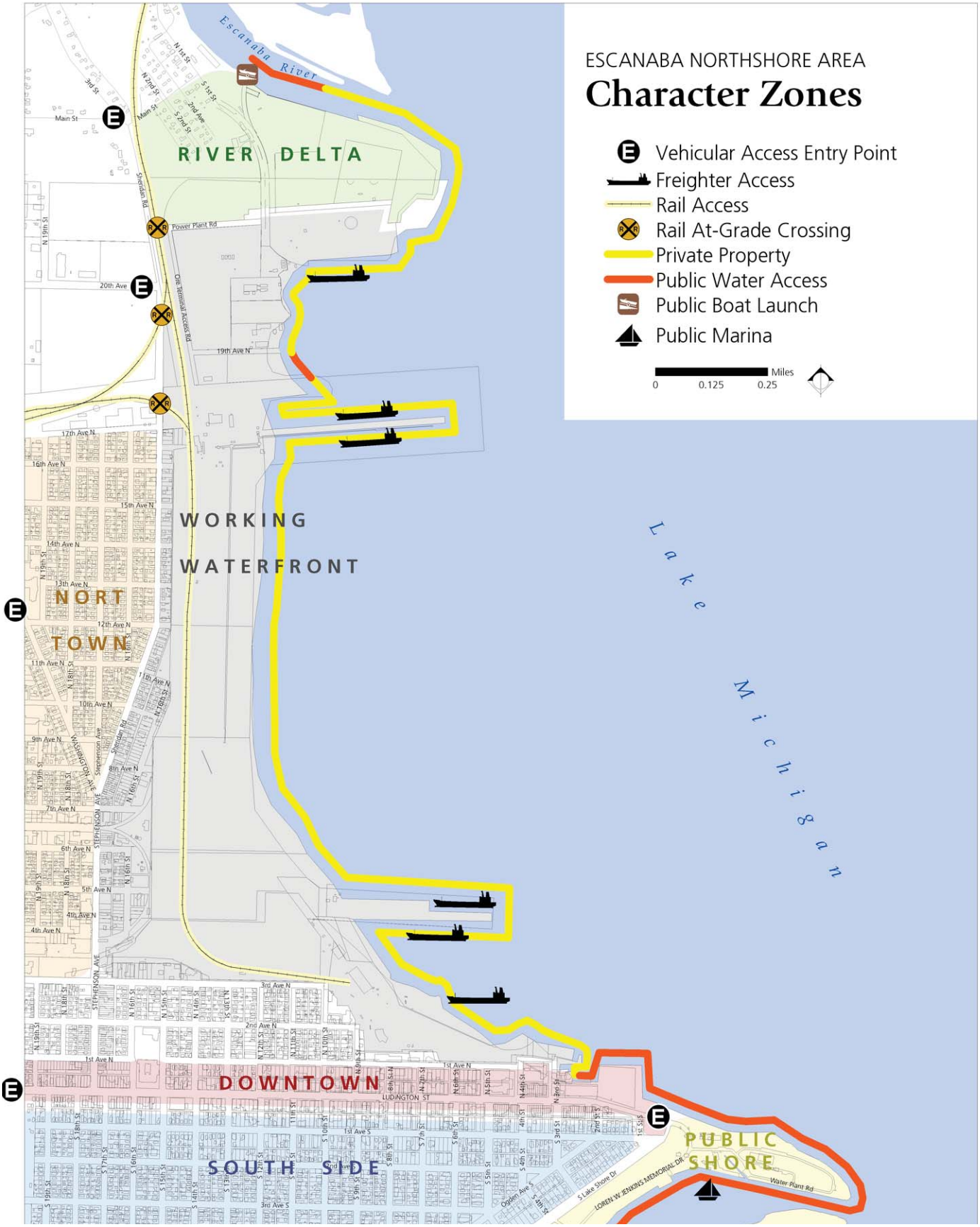
Building upon the positive, there are also characteristics that could be improved. Currently, the Northshore area is isolated in perception and reality from downtown to the south, recreational uses to the south, and residential neighborhoods to the south and west. Similarly, land uses within the district are a barrier to visual and physical shore access by the public. Those same land uses are also a currently underutilized potential. People are fascinated by industrial and maritime activities. Especially trains, ore docks, ore boats, tugboats, barges, cranes and other items commonly active in the Northshore area. However, it is not easy for the public to view or understand the activities taking place.

This physical assessment considers many factors that contribute to the functionality and aesthetics of the Northshore. These include the Northshore's history, different character zones within the area, approaches and vehicular circulation, non-motorized circulation, and character defining features that provide Northshore its unique identity.

History

Before Escanaba, there was the land and the water. It fostered settlement with its towering timber, clean water and plentiful wildlife. The area's primary timber, mining and fishing industries spawned other industries such as railroads, ship building, and services that supported logging and mining camps. By the 1950's and 60's, depletion of commercial fishing stock, larger freight vessels, conversion from iron ore to taconite pellets, and conversion to self-unloading vessels greatly altered activity patterns in the Northshore area. Over the next several decades, labor needed to fuel industry continued to decline with increased mechanization. Despite the decreased labor force, the timber, mining, and maritime industries remain primary contributors to the area's economy. Many artifacts and remnants of the Northshore's industrial and maritime history are very visible today. During the time activity patterns within the Northshore were evolving, national prosperity, greater access to automobiles, and completion of the Mackinaw Bridge made Escanaba more accessible as a recreational destination. Like local residents, visiting families and sportsmen found the Escanaba area to be incredibly beautiful and full of outdoor recreation opportunities through all seasons. Environmentally related activities such as hunting, fishing, boating, hiking, bird watching, ORV use, and snowmobiling are very important aspects of Escanaba's economy.

Figure D1


ESCANABA NORTHSHORE AREA
Character Zones
Vehicular Access Entry Point
Freighter Access
Rail Access
Rail At-Grade Crossing
Private Property
Public Water Access
Public Boat Launch
Public Marina
Miles
0
0.125
0.25
Escanaba River
RIVER DELTA
WORKING
WATERFRONT
NORT
TOWN
DOWNTOWN
SOUTH SIDE
PUBLIC
SHORE
Lake Michigan
Power Plant Rd
Ore Terminal Access Rd
Sheridan Rd
Main St
20th Ave
19th Ave N
Water Plant Rd
S Lake Shore Dr
LOREN W JENKINS MEMORIAL DR

Character Zones

The first impression of the Northshore area is of declining and deteriorating industrial uses. However, a closer study begins to reveal some of the district's rich history and its relationships to adjacent districts. In order to better make suggestions of how to emphasize what is positive and improve what is not, the Northshore and adjacent areas have been divided into 6 character zones. While each zone contributes to the overall function and aesthetic of the area as a whole, each has a distinct character of its own.

Public Shore
The Public Shore is immediately south and east of downtown and is fully comprised of public lands including Ludington Park, Aronson Island, Sand Point, Municipal Marina, and the Municipal Dock. The Public Shore is characterized by expanses of open lawn area and mature trees within Ludington Park, Sand Point and Municipal Dock. Artificially constructed Aronson Island has areas of open lawn, woodlots, and dunes. Activity areas within the Public Shore zone include the marina, Aronson Island beach, fishing piers, ball fields, play courts, multi-use pathways, bandshell, and light house, archives, and historical museum. The Delta County Historical Society is housed in the Sand Point Lighthouse built in 1867. The light is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The size of the waterfront public lands dwarf those found in many other communities and are a tremendous asset to the community. However, its visual remoteness from downtown and distances between activity points prevent many visitors from fully enjoying its assets.

South Side
Along with North Town, this is one of two residential areas in the core of Escanaba. South side is generally located south of Ludington Street and east of South19th Street and contains homes of various architectural styles. Most homes in the area were constructed prior to 1940 and are reflective of moderately priced construction materials and methods of the era. Some larger and more ornate homes can be found along Lake Shore Drive. All are set back from the road with a typical front lawn with mature trees. Roads are appropriately scaled with the neighborhood and have two-way traffic, on-street parking, and adjacent sidewalks.

Downtown
The Downtown is the historic center of activity in Escanaba. It stretches 22 city blocks along Ludington Street between Lincoln Road (US-2) and Lake Shore Drive. Although very long in the east/west dimension, downtown extends only one block north and south of Ludington Street. Of the 6 character zones, downtown contains the most prominent historic structures and gives evidence to Escanaba's historic importance as a port of trade and the wealth it generated. Land uses in the zone include retail, commercial, office space, public open space and surface parking lots. Currently, commercial activity occurs through the corridor with varying levels of success.

The downtown architecture has a strong sense of history with several mid-to-late 19th century buildings still serving active roles. Perhaps the most prominent historic structures are The House of Ludington, the Richter Brewery building, and the Delta Hotel building. Other historic buildings are less visible under their current façade treatments. Newer, contemporary buildings are also mixed through the zone and do not engage pedestrians as successfully. In some cases, the more contemporary buildings detract significantly from the character of the street and adjacent historic buildings.

Perhaps downtown's most underutilized asset is the bay's historical importance to the community's commercial district. Water's presence can be sensed while at the eastern end of downtown but is not currently being utilized to its full potential. The Municipal Dock gives downtown visitors an opportunity to view the bay but it is a open space with little activity. Glimpses of the Working Waterfront are visible from 1st Avenue N. However, fences, stone stockpiles, vegetation and other items block views to more interesting aspects of the Working Waterfront.
Downtown is generally pedestrian friendly. However, the width of Ludington Street is imposing for pedestrian crossings and is excessive given the volume of traffic it serves. Many non-motorized pathways exist within the Public Shore area but do not continue into downtown.
Vehicular navigation within the two-way street system is simple and straight forward. Parking is located mostly on-street or to the rear of the Ludington Street buildings. The off-street parking lots behind buildings do not have a large presence on Ludington Street which is very good. However, pedestrian access between the lots and Ludington Street could be improved and landscape buffering of the parking lots could significantly contribute to the character of 1st Avenue N and S. In some cases, service areas including dumpsters, grease bins, and outdoor storage are also quite prominent.

CN Railroad Conveyor Structure
Photo: Beckett & Raeder, Inc.

Figure D2
Waterborne Traffic Characteristics (Short Tons)

Commodity	Receipt	Shipments	Total
Coal and Lignite	333,514		333,514
Limestone	791,501		791,501
Iron Ore		4,717,654	4,717,654
Non-Metal	18,640		18,640
Total	1,143,655	4,717,654	5,861,309

Source: Waterborne Commerce Statistivcs Center, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (2007)

Working Waterfront
The Working Waterfront contains the largest amount of land area in the Northshore area. It includes the entire area between Stephenson Avenue and Sheridan Road (Old CR-426) on the west, the shoreline on the east, 3rd Avenue N on the south, and Power Plant Road on the north. Industrial and maritime activities within the Working Waterfront include municipal power generation, taconite dock and storage facility with rail yard, 2 shipbuilding facilities, 2 coal and stone docks, and a marine construction company. While steeped in history, these land uses are also major contributors, directly and indirectly, to Escanaba's present day economy. Figure D2 highlights the shipping activity (receipts and shipments) for commodities in 2007.

Many industrial and maritime remnants and artifacts are scattered throughout the Working Waterfront and are of great interest to visitors. Residents consider the industrial and maritime activities familiar and part of daily life. However, they are new and exciting curiosities to visitors. History buffs, rail fans, boat watchers, and children of all ages are fascinated by the Working Waterfront's activities. Some remnants and artifacts such as old ore dock pilings, clamshell buckets, cranes, trains and vessels are visible from public roads or the public land south of 19th Avenue N. Views of many more artifacts and active maritime activities are obscured by buildings, fences, vegetation, and large berms.

Nearly all the land within the Working Waterfront is privately held and not open to the public with the notable exception of land adjacent to the power plant owned by the City of Escanaba. Physical public access is restricted to 19th Avenue N and portions of Ore Terminal Access Road and Power Plant Road. The only location of physical public access directly to the water is from the City's unimproved parcel south of 19th Avenue N. Limited visual access into the Working Waterfront is available from 1st Avenue N, 3rd Avenue N and 19th Avenue N.

Because of restricted access throughout the Working Waterfront, the area serves as a barrier to non-motorized transportation and is physically and visually separated from Downtown and North Town. Non-motorized improvements found in the Public Shore do not continue through the area. There is a lack of connectivity to the recreation-intense Escanaba River Delta.

North Town

This is the second of the two residential areas in the core of Escanaba. North Town is generally located north of Ludington Street and east of Lincoln Road and contains modest homes. The perceived heart of North Town is a small neighborhood center of commerce located on Sheridan Road between 15th and 16th Avenues N. In addition to serving the neighborhood, the North Town center of commerce has historically served employees of the Working Waterfront and crews of docked freight vessels.

Of all the surrounding character zones, North Town has the closest affinity to the Working Waterfront. Glimpses and sounds of industrial and maritime equipment are filtered through the vegetation and large berms surrounding the working waterfront giving it a "living in the shadows" feel. Likewise, many North Town residents historically worked in the waterfront industries and had rich family maritime heritages.

Most homes in the area were constructed prior to 1960. They are reflective of economically priced construction materials and methods of the era. All are set back from the road with a typical front lawn and mature trees. Roads are appropriately scaled with the neighborhood and have two-way traffic, on-street parking, and adjacent sidewalks.

River Delta

This is the area lying between Sheridan Road (Old CR-426), Power Plant Road and the Escanaba River. Most of the land area is undeveloped with open fields and woodlots. Developed portions of the River Delta area include the City's North Shore Boat Launch, fishing piers, and a small rail yard and repair shop. The area is roughly 2 miles from Downtown and is visually removed from other character zones. The only public access is to the North Shore Boat Launch via Power Plant Road. Facilities dedicated to non-motorized transportation are not currently provided.

Although the River Delta is physically and visually removed from other character zones, the North Shore Boat Launch has many resident and visitor users. It is also the staging area for both local and national level fishing tournaments. The facility includes 4 boat launch ramps, shore based fishing piers, a restroom building, fish cleaning station, and 225 tow vehicle and trailer parking spaces. Notably absent are other recreational opportunities such as non-motorized pathways, play facilities and picnic facilities.

Like the Working Waterfront, signs of the area's industrial heritage found fascinating by visitors are visible from the River Delta area. Many old dock and bridge remnants are visible in the Escanaba River. Also, historical power units and rolling stock stored at the small rail yard are easily viewed from the North Shore Boat Launch parking lot.

North Town District Businesses
Photo: Beckett & Raeder, Inc.

The "Stephenson / Washington / Sheridan" Intersection
Photo: Beckett & Raeder, Inc.

Approaching and Entering the Northshore Area

There are five principal approaches to the Northshore area. The first, Ludington Street, is the entry to the area for most visitors. The other four are local roads used primarily by residents; Sheridan Road from the north, Washington Avenue from the northwest, 20th Avenue N from the west, and Lake Shore Drive from the south. Each offers a unique experience and first impression.

Ludington Street from the west
This is the primary entrance to the Northshore for most visitors. It is the route taken by those approaching from the north and west on US-2 and US-41 and those approaching from the south on M-35. Users travel Ludington Street into Downtown and to the Public Shore. Land uses in the vicinity of the US-2/US-41 and Ludington Street intersection are typical suburban large-scale retail, commercial and automobile service. Retail and commercial signage is dominant while wayfinding signage is limited and not quickly distinguishable from other roadside items. A large, overhead wayfinding sign exists over Ludington Street but due to its setback from US-2 is not fully visible when approaching the intersection from the north or south. As a result of these conditions, Downtown does not have a presence at the intersection and visitors are not intuitively guided to turn east onto Ludington Street.

As mentioned previously, Ludington Street is excessively wide for the amount of traffic it carries. The corridor contains a mix of historically significant architecture and contemporary buildings. In most cases, the contemporary buildings do not have an appropriate street façade and detract from the overall quality of the corridor. The east end of Ludington Street terminates at Sand Point within the Public Shore. However, because of the emptiness and lack of activity at the Municipal Dock and on Sand Point, users do not feel as if they have arrived at a Northshore destination.

Sheridan Road (Old CR-426) from the north
Sheridan Road (Old CR-426) is a local collector road and is the route taken to the Northshore area from Wells, North Town, and commercial areas north of North Town. Between Wells and 17th Avenue N, Sheridan Road is a rural, two-lane road bordered by undeveloped land and rural scale residential. Users gain a sense of the Working Waterfront industry as they pass Power Plant Road. Sheridan Road crosses two sets of railroad tracks and the rail line entering the ore dock facility is visible on the east side of the road. South of 17th Avenue N, Sheridan Road enters the North Town neighborhood and takes on the character of a neighborhood collector street. The road is bordered by small-scale residential, large front lawns and mature trees.

Within the North Town area, Sheridan Road passes a public park and intersects with Washington Avenue to form Stephenson Avenue. Between the Sheridan Road/Washington Street intersection and Ludington Street, Stephenson Avenue is bordered by medium scale commercial land uses that contribute positively to North Town's working heritage. Of all the approaches to the Northshore, this one has the strongest link to the Working Waterfront. While on Sheridan Road, industrial equipment is visible over the tree tops and ore facility berm. The architecture and North Town center of commerce also allude to the area's relationship to the neighboring industry.

Washington Avenue from the northwest
Washington Avenue is a neighborhood collector road used largely by residents as an entry into North Town and Downtown from southbound US-2. Like Sheridan Road, Washington Street is bordered by small-scale residential, large front lawns and mature trees. Users pass by a public park before Washington Street intersects with Sheridan Road to form Stephenson Avenue leading toward Ludington Street. The Washington Street, Sheridan Road, and Stephenson Avenue junction is the beginning of a significant entry corridor to Downtown. However, it is a confusing, acute angle intersection that currently does not reflect its importance as a gateway to Downtown.

20th Avenue N from the west
This is a local road that connects US-2 with Sheridan Road. Due to turning movements along the US-2 corridor, 20th Avenue N is a preferred route for commercial vehicles going to Working Waterfront businesses accessed by Power Plant Road. Land uses along 20th Avenue N are commercial and industrial and generate significant amounts of commercial vehicle traffic. The character of the corridor is industrial in nature and lacks definition and screening of parking and storage areas, non-motorized facilities, and street trees. Industrial storage yards and parking areas run together and into the right-of-way without proper access management.

Lake Shore Drive from the south
Lake Shore Drive is a neighborhood collector street used by South Side residents to access Ludington Park and Downtown. It is bordered by moderate to large-sized homes with large front lawns and mature trees. North of 7th Avenue S, Lake Shore Drive is bordered on the east by Ludington Park.

Of the five primary approaches, Lake Shore Drive has the closest relationship to the waterfront and has significant views of the bay. As a roadway adjacent to Ludington Park, it also has great vehicular and non-motorized access to the shore.

Buckets used on the Waterfront
Photo: Beckett & Raeder, Inc.

Remnants of former interurban trolley bridge
Photo: Beckett & Raeder, Inc.

Vehicular and Non-motorized Circulation

Directional and Identification Signage
Currently, public directional and identification signage is visually overwhelmed by private identification signage and other visual elements. Design and placement of signs are critical factors in communicating to the intended audience. For example, the large, overhead sign existing over Ludington Street is not visible when approaching the intersection from the north or south due to its setback from US-2. Also, the dining, picnic, swimming and other symbols used on the sign are not always understood. In other situations, signage is not of an appropriate scale or design to be legible from passing vehicles.

Vehicular Circulation
Outside areas of restricted private property within the Working Waterfront, vehicular circulation around the Northshore and neighboring areas is quite good. The grid based street pattern makes navigation of the area simple and easily understandable. Streets are nearly all two-way and are appropriately scaled to their context. Ludington Street is the one exception and is much wider with more travel lanes than necessary to serve vehicular traffic volumes. Portions of Ludington have angled parking while others have parallel. Past studies of Ludington Street have suggested consistent treatment of parking, reduced vehicular travel lanes and introduction of non-motorized improvements.

Non-motorized Circulation
The Northshore is characterized by a general lack of quality non-motorized access to the waterfront and between character zones. Understandably, circulation and waterfront access is restricted on private property within the Working Waterfront. However, circulation and access outside of those areas leaves more to be desired. Ludington Park has a great non-motorized pathway system that does not extend to Downtown, North Town, or the River Delta in the form of dedicated facilities. Non-motorized users must currently make use of vehicular roadway lanes or sidewalks.

Character Defining Features

Escanaba is unique among many communities in that its character and feel are not defined by signature landmarks or physical improvements, but rather by its people and culture. It is a place where people have a strong attachment to the natural environment as a source of livelihood and recreation. Many communities that have evolved over time, have lost the connection to their environment and culture, and have lost themselves in the process. Escanaba can be very proud that its cultural character is strong and active today.

Industrial and Maritime Heritage
As described previously, Escanaba and Northshore development have been formed and shaped over time by their industrial and maritime past. The port of trade and wealth it generated supported development of a downtown 22 blocks in length; an incredible amount for a City of Escanaba's size. North Town developed as a neighborhood closely linked to the working waterfront in proximity, attitude and culture. Remnants of dock pilings and crane artifacts tell the story of Great Lakes shipping changing from schooners to steamers to bulk freighters to modern self-unloaders. Rail yard remnants and artifacts tell the story of changing from iron ore to taconite pellets. Historical photos and vessels illustrate the previous commercial fishing industry, its prosperous years, its decline, and its restrictions resulting from US Government and Native American Treaties. Sand Point Light is testament to men and women of the United State Coast Guard and their devotion to assisting mariners on the Great Lakes.

However, this is not just a story from the past, but also one that continues today in the form of an active, working waterfront. Ore, coal and stone boats are coming and going, trains are moving about, vessels are being constructed and the local economy is being fueled. Although local residents are familiar with the working waterfront activities and consider them part of everyday life, they are new and exciting to visitors. The waterfront is a magnet for history buffs, rail fans, boat watchers, and children.

Recreational Heritage
Since development of reliable automobiles and completion of the Mackinaw Bridge, Escanaba's desirability increased as a recreational destination. Families and sportsmen found the Escanaba area to be wonderful for activities such as hunting, fishing, boating, hiking, bird watching, ORV use, and snowmobiling. In fact, so much so that the outdoors traditions of Escanaba have drawn national attention in hunting publications and Hollywood films.

Of particular importance to the Northshore, Escanaba has started to develop as a center for water-based recreation. Local commissions and agencies have worked hard to restore the Bays de Noc and tributary waters rich with salmon, steelhead, lake trout, brown trout, walleye and bass. Like the hunting tradition, fishing has brought national attention to Escanaba in the form of stops on the FLW Outdoors Walleye Tour and the ESPN B.A.S.S. Bass Federation Tour. Another growing activity on the Big and Little Bays de Noc is recreational diving. Numerous shipwreck and "wall" dives are available within a short distance of Escanaba. In fact, several shipwrecks within Escanaba harbor itself are accessible as shore-based dives. These include the Nahant and John Webber, which are both well documented at the Delta County Historical Society Museum. The Escanaba Municipal Marina is a Michigan Department of Natural Resources designated harbor of refuge and is capable of serving recreational vessels of all sizes cruising the Great Lakes. All of these assets are great foundation stones to continue building water-based recreation opportunities.

Shoreline Fishing Piers along the Escanaba River
Photo: Beckett & Raeder, Inc.

Joint Commission Meeting on Waterfront Issues - June 9, 2009
Photo: Courtesy Escanaba Daily Press

Intragovernmental Assessment

Attributes

In June 2009 the City of Escanaba convened a series of meetings with representatives from various commissions who met with project consultants to discuss issues, evaluate constraints and identify opportunities for the Northshore. Participants included the Mayor and City Council, Planning Commission, Downtown Development Authority, Chamber of Commerce, Delta County Historical Society, property owners and residents. The City of Escanaba Planning Commission was selected as the primary commission to spearhead the discussion and provide the oversight for the intragovermental assessment.

Early in the assessment process participants acknowledged the problems associated with previous waterfront-related studies including the absence of opinion and input from private property owners, the inability to implement recommendations, the lack of community buy-in with the recommendations, and the radical scope and magnitude of the proposed projects. As a result, the City often found itself reacting to situations rather than providing a reasonable and workable framework for change along the waterfront.

As noted in Figure E1 participants on the Northshore and the Escanaba waterfront in general have many positive economic development, recreational, and environmental attributes. For example, marina and recreational boating are noted as positive attributes, as well as the deep-water access used by waterborne commerce. The need to improve and better utilize the waterfront is similarly expressed for the downtown.

Figure E1

What is Good on the Northshore
Natural beauty of bay
Deep water access
Ludington Park as a major asset
Marina facilities
Lighthouse
19th Avenue City property as potential
Interest in historic district designation and associated tax credit
Rich and unique history of City
Active waterfront industries
Upcoming streetscape and façade improvements
North Shore Boat Launch
Escanaba River delta
Northtown Business District
Diving opportunities
Apparent willingness of landowners to open discussions

Figure E2

What Could Be Better along the Northshore
Lack of food and services at waterfront
Location of water treatment facility at Sand Point
Gateway to downtown
Increase downtown activity to 12 –18 hours
Underutilized municipal dock
Location of jail
Promotion of community assets
Underestimation of assets
Natural systems interpretation
Adversarial attitudes in the community
Lack of recreational rentals (bikes, boats, etc.)
Lack of fishing and hunting supplies at waterfront
Connectivity to downtown
Interpretation of industry
Availability of small boat repair
Limited uses at North Shore Boat Launch
Public/private partnerships toward a common goal

Figure E3

ESCANABA NORTHSHORE AREA
Environmental Challenge Sites
Leaking Underground Storage Tank (Closed)
Leaking Underground Storage Tank (Open)
Part 201 Contaminated Site
Wetland
Miles
0
0.125
0.25
Escanaba River
Lake Michigan
Main St
Power Plant Rd
20th Ave N
19th Ave N
17th Ave N
16th Ave N
15th Ave N
14th Ave N
13th Ave N
12th Ave N
11th Ave N
10th Ave N
9th Ave N
8th Ave N
7th Ave N
6th Ave N
5th Ave N
4th Ave N
3rd Ave N
2nd Ave N
1st Ave N
1st Ave S
2nd Ave S
3rd Ave S
LINCOLN ST
STEPHENSON AVE
WASHINGTON AVE
LOREN W. JENKINS MEMORIAL DR
S Lake Shore Dr
Water Plant Rd

Ideas to increase utilization of the waterfront included facilities which promote the maritime heritage of the City, development of eco-tourism venues focused on Little Bay de Noc, a freshwater aquarium, connecting the waterfront with the downtown, and maintaing a working waterfront to expand job opportunities.

Throughout the discussions, which spanned several meetings, there was always recognition that the Northshore was integral to the community and its future use and viability would have an impact (positive or negative) on the downtown and the surrounding neighborhoods. Simply stated the waterfront was connected to the social, historic, recreational, and economic network of the City.

Certain planning constraints would influence current and future use of the Northshore. These are listed in Figure E4 and include several environmental-related concerns, including the dust non-attainment area, and one important economic development issue concerning the lack of infrastructure capacity in the water and sanitary sewer systems. Significant changes in land use to more intense development (commercial, hotel, and residential) will require a public investment in providing increased water and sanitary service. Further, changes in ownership and use will probably necessitate a review and remediation of soil and groundwater contamination often associated with industrial waterfronts.

Figure E4

Planning Constraints
Wetlands
Protected and endangered plant species
Dust non-attainment area
Fish spawning area
Lack of utility infrastructure capacity

The unintended result of prior studies created a "cloud" over the waterfront leaving property owners unsure of local government intentions regarding expansion, zoning, and future use. However, the identification by session participants of potential opportunities for the Northshore based on initial community and stakeholder input begins to form the framework for the future waterfront.

Figure E5 outlines the Northshore "potentials" gleaned from the intragovernmental commission discussion sessions. The list of potentials includes project and program initiatives including preservation and continued use of the House of Ludington, using the maritime heritage of the Northshore to increase tourism, positioning local government as an "enabler" for economic development, maintaining a working waterfront, and creating a waterfront business owner advisory board to assist with economic development matters.

Public Policy Initiatives

Based on the foregoing summary the following public policies are advanced:

- Maintain the working waterfront and assist property owners when opportunities arise for busi ness expansion.
- Establish a waterfront advisory board where the majority of members are Northshore property owners and other members represent local govern ment and the greater business community.
- Identify a 'champion" which can either be an individual or organization who will promote the Northshore waterfront and assist with the imple mentation of projects and programs.
- Provide nodes for public access on publicly owned properties within the waterfront for access to Little Bay de Noc and for waterfront viewing.
- Physically and organizationally connect the down town with the Northshore.
- Focus multiple-uses at the end of Ludington Street in order to create a major activity center for the City and downtown.

Figure E5

Northshore "Potentials"
House of Ludington
Downtown buildings and lofts
Apparent willingness of landowners to open discussions
Local government as an "enabler" for economic development
Market for townhome(s) and other non-traditional housing
Expand non-motorized pathways
Opportunity for Escanaba to be part of regional system
Conversion to biomass power plant
Change from pellets to ingots
Possible land swaps to protect shoreline
Greater visual access of the working waterfront
Advancing maritime heritage
Idea of a waterfront "champion"
Formation of a waterfront business owners advisory board

Figure F1

ESCANABA NORTHSHORE AREA
Physical Opportunities Plan
Miles
0
0.125
0.25
Escanaba River
Lake Michigan
Main St
Sheridan Rd
Power Plant Rd
20th Ave N
19th Ave N
LUDINGTON ST
1st Ave N
2nd Ave N
3rd Ave N
5th Ave N
8th Ave N
9th Ave N
10th Ave N
11th Ave N
12th Ave N
13th Ave N
14th Ave N
15th Ave N
16th Ave N
17th Ave N
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
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15

Physical Opportunities Plan

The complete Physical Opportunities Plan is described in this section and consists of the Northshore Master Plan and its resulting recommendations and action items. All have been developed based on the assessment of existing conditions and input from community meetings, stakeholder interviews and the Planning Commission. The recommendations are presented by category and where necessary, are further divided into sub-categories. Community priorities identified during public sessions are indicated as such and specifically addressed as part of this Physical Opportunities Plan.

Support and Encourage the Working Waterfront

(Community Priority)

Map Key: 1

As acknowledged throughout previous sections of this report, the Working Waterfront has long been vital to Escanaba's economy. As a result, the waterfront's maritime industries and labor-intensive jobs have become synonymous with the character of the community. For these reasons, the City should take deliberate steps to support existing waterfront businesses and facilitate new businesses. Many vacant or underutilized properties exist around the edges of the Working Waterfront and present opportunities for commercial or light industrial businesses with ties to the major waterfront industries. Also, with possible conversion to a cogeneration facility, vacant or underutilized properties adjacent to the power plant bear potential for energy intensive industries. The vacant, City owned parcel immediately south of 19th Avenue N has the benefits of power plant adjacency and direct bay frontage for a marine based business.

The primary rail, shipping, materials handling, and shipbuilding industries within the Working Waterfront present a secondary, tourism related opportunity for the Escanaba community. While Escanaba residents consider the industrial and maritime activities a familiar part of daily life and, in some cases, an eyesore, they are new and exciting curiosities to visitors of all ages. As evidence, a substantial on-line community of history buffs, rail fans, and boat watchers collect detailed information and track activity on websites such as Michiganrailroads.com and Boatnerd.com. Enthusiasts on both websites have posted extensive galleries of historic and current photographs; train/vessel specifications, statistics, schedules and destinations; cargo records and even radio communication frequencies. Creation and promotion of a working waterfront interpretive center and viewing opportunities could serve as an outreach to this community of interest and have a noticeable contribution to tourism. However, the goal is not only to draw new, interest specific visitors. Increasing available activities also encourages visitors, particularly families with children, to extend their stay or make Escanaba a destination rather than an overnight waypoint.

Key Considerations

- Develop and implement specific strategies to retain and grow existing waterfront businesses.
- Develop and implement specific strategies to attract new waterfront businesses.
- Explore industrial synergies possible with a potential conversion of the power plant to cogeneration.
- Create public viewing and interpretive opportunities of the working waterfront.
- Develop and implement a tourism marketing strategy for working waterfront related activities.

Provide Opportunities for Economic Development

(Community Priority)

While the Working Waterfront is vital to Escanaba's economy, its industries do not provide the number of local jobs they once did. As a result, a primary community desire expressed during public meetings is for new job opportunities in the form of an expanded industrial and commercial base. The Northshore Master Plan responds to this desire by identifying possible locations for new industrial/commercial development as well as possible locations for multi-use and residential infill. While not on the scale of industrial or large commercial developments, multi-use and residential infill also creates new jobs in addition to housing a consumer base.

Industrial/Commercial

Map Key: 2

Opportunities for industrial or commercial development are focused primarily in two locations within the Working Waterfront. As previously mentioned, several vacant, City owned parcels exist around the power plant. With possible conversion to a cogeneration facility, these properties bear potential for use by energy intensive industries. The City owned parcel immediately south of 19th Avenue N has the benefits of power plant adjacency as well as direct bay frontage for a marine based business. The second location is a stretch of underutilized land fronting on 3rd Ave. N between N. 10th Street and Stephenson Avenue. These properties have the benefits of access to a CN rail spur and adjacency to other supporting Working Waterfront businesses.

Key Considerations

- Explore possibilities for development of 3rd Ave. N property frontage with private landowners.
- Evaluate 3rd Ave. N light industrial or commercial development proposals with sensitivity to adjacent neighborhood.
- Create a waterborne commerce district which encourges water-related and water-dependent businesses but discourages typical industrial busi nesses from locating in this special area.
- Explore industrial synergies possible with a poten tial conversion of the power plant to cogeneration.
- Support and assist C. Reiss Coal in exploring options to better utilize or reconfigure power plant coal dock if plant is converted to cogeneration.

Potential Water-related Industrial Sites on 19th Ave. N

Concept; Beckett & Raeder, Inc.

Multi-use Retail/Office/Residential

Map Key:3

Opportunities for mixed-use infill development are focused primarily at the downtown waterfront and in Northtown. As will be described further later in this section, the master plan proposes 3 new multi-use infill buildings adjacent to the N. 3rd Street right-of-way in an effort to extend downtown activity to the waterfront. The new infill is in the vicinity of the current County jail and Chamber of Commerce facilities. Similarly, infill buildings on vacant or underutilized properties in Northtown's core area will strengthen its sense of vibrancy. In both downtown and Northtown, new multi-use building development is envisioned as two-story multi-use with active functions such as retail, dining and entertainment on the first level. Less active uses such as office or residential occupy the upper level. Proposed development occurs at the public right-of-way and is distinctively "downtown storefront" in character.

Example of an Office/Retail/ Residential Mixed-Use
Photo: Urban Land Institute

Key Considerations

- Coordinate with County for relocation of jail and exchange of property.
- Coordinate with Chamber of Commerce to explore acquisition and renovation of existing residence for relocated offices.
- Expand the DDA district to include Northtown in order to better support and encourage new devel opment.
- Develop DDA design guidelines to guide desired character of future development.

Residential - Transitional

Map Key:4

Like multi-use, opportunities for residential infill development are located at the downtown waterfront and in Northtown. Several vacant or underutilized parcels exist on Sheridan Road just north and south of the Northtown core area. Addition of single-family homes similar in character to those that exist will strengthen the neighborhood's sense of vibrancy. The second location is a stretch of underutilized land fronting on 1st Ave. N between N. 4th Street and N. 7th Street. This property is suggested for development of urban townhomes and has the very desirable assets of lake front views and location with the downtown core.

Key Considerations

- Explore possibilities for development of 1st Ave. N property frontage with private landowners.
- Explore possibilities for Northtown single-family residential infill with individual property owners.
- Develop DDA design guidelines to guide desired character of future development.

Example of Attached Townhomes
Photo: Beckett & Raeder, Inc.

Increase Physical and Visual Public Access to the Waterfront

(Community Priority)

One of the highest priorities that emerged during community meetings and sessions with the Planning Commission was for greater access to the waterfront. Many community members remember when much of the waterfront was accessible and children swam at the beach adjacent to where the CN rail yard is today. Over time, changes in land use patterns and safety concerns have combined to greatly reduce public access to the waterfront. During the course of the study, several sites have been identified where physical or visual public access could be created or improved. The major opportunities are described below and include:

- River Delta Park
- Ore Dock Park
- Northtown Overlook
- Working Waterfront Interpretive Center
- Merchant Dock Park
- Waterfront Park
- Future Private Development

River Delta Park

Map Key: 5

The proposed River Delta Park is an expansion and improvement of what is referred to today as the North Shore Boat Launch on the Escanaba River. The new River Delta Park adds 33.17 acres to the existing 11.62 acres occupied by the current North Shore Boat Launch through a potential land exchange. The City of Escanaba and C. Reiss Coal Co. each own two parcels in the river delta area. The City's parcels are non-contiguous and separated by a C. Reiss Coal parcel. A land exchange may be beneficial to both owners in order to make each parcel group contiguous, provide each owner land more suitable for its intended use, and expand public access along the Escanaba River and Little Bay De Noc shorelines. In addition to the existing boat launch, the new River Delta Park master plan includes multi-use pathways near the shore, a series of fishing and overlook piers on the Escanaba River, a picnic shelter overlooking Little Bay De Noc, and an overlook tower on the Escanaba River Delta peninsula extending into Little Bay De Noc. The opportunity also exists for a future non-motorized pathway bridge over the river that could utilize the alignment and possibly remnants of the old E.&L.S. railroad branch bridge.

This non-motorized crossing would provide views up and down the river that would otherwise only be visible by boat.

Proposed expansion of Boat Launch to River Delta Park
Concept; Beckett & Raeder, Inc.

Key Considerations

- Explore land exchange with C. Reiss Coal Co.
- Amend 5-year Parks and Recreation Plan to include acquisition and improvements.
- Develop plan for extension of non-motorized pathway over Escanaba River to regional destina tions.
- Coordinate non-motorized crossing of river with E.&L.S. railroad.

Ore Dock Park
Map Key: 6
Ore Dock Park is proposed where 19th Avenue N meets Little Bay De Noc. The park is primarily a water and pier access point largely contained within the 19th Avenue N right-of-way. The park also occupies a small portion of the City's property south of the road right-of-way while leaving the majority of the parcel available for future industrial use. The new Ore Dock Park master plan includes a boardwalk pier replicating the width and length of the historic ore docks, historic barge moored at the end of the pier to serve as an overlook and interpretive location for the taconite handling facility, non-motorized craft portage and ice shanty launch, and picnic facility at the water's edge.

Key Considerations

- Amend 5-year Parks and Recreation Plan to include improvements.
- Coordinate pier design and construction with Michigan Department of Natural Resources and Environment.

Northtown Overlook
Map Key: 7
The Northtown Overlook is one element proposed within a new Northtown neighborhood park between 15th Avenue N and 16th Avenue N. The proposed overlook to be placed on top of the taconite facility's berm provides significant views and interpretive opportunities. The facility's rail yard, taconite storage, conveyor system, dock, trains, and ore boats are all within view from the proposed platform location.

Key Considerations

- Expand the DDA district to include Northtown and amend DDA Development Plan and Tax Increment Financing Plan to include improvements.
- Amend 5-year Parks and Recreation Plan to include improvements.
- Coordinate with CN Railroad to implement over look on berm.

Reuse of the former Michigan State Ferry Dock in Mackinaw City as a Fishing Pier and Viewing Platform
Photo: Beckett & Raeder, Inc.

Construction of a "Working Waterfront" Overlook in Northtown.
Concept: Beckett & Raeder, Inc.

Example of a Small Interpretive Center with upper story viewing platform
Photo: Peter and Mary Muth Interpretive Center, Newport Beach, CA

Working Waterfront Interpretive Center
Map Key: 8

As mentioned previously, the Working Waterfront is literally and symbolically central to Escanaba's community character. As evidence, many industrial and maritime artifacts are visible throughout the district and a wealth of historical documentation is available at the Delta County Historical Society. However, a complete body of historical information as well as an interpretive overview of modern operations is not available in one location. From a visitor's point of view, the complete waterfront story will be most easily understood by following its transition from past to present in one location. To the extent possible, Working Waterfront artifacts and documentation currently scattered around the area should be collected and consolidated by a Working Waterfront Interpretive Center into a complete historical archive for public viewing. The Interpretive Center should also stand as a central point of interpretation for the modern waterfront's activities. An overview of modern operations and processes at the Center can be supplemented by additional site-specific interpretation at the various public viewing locations described in this section. The Interpretive Center itself is master planned at the intersection of 3rd Avenue N. and N. 15th Street and is proposed to include a roof top or tower overlook for viewing the mix of large waterfront industries and smaller supporting businesses at its perimeter.

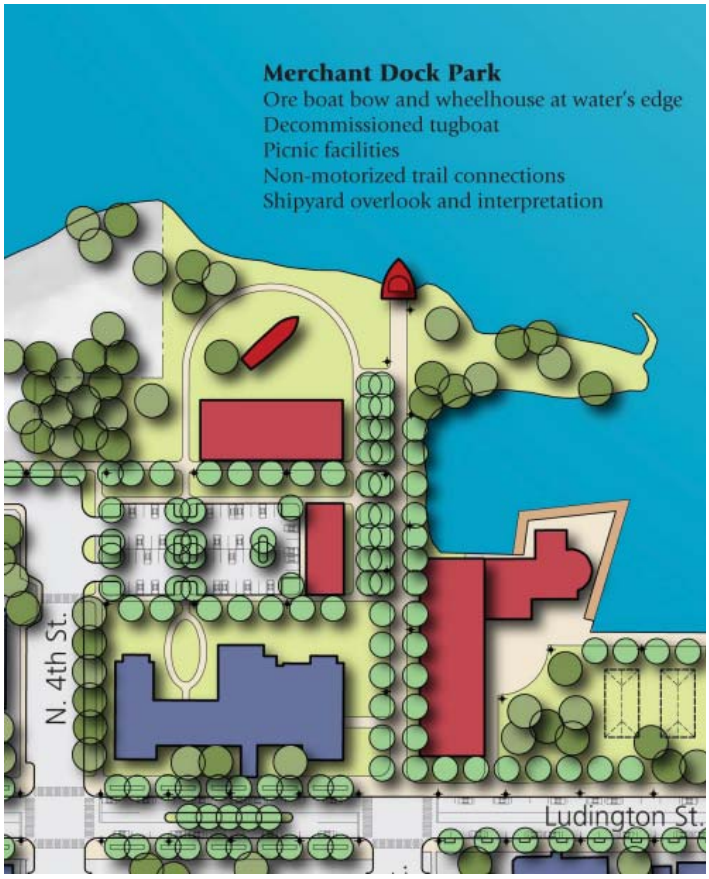
Key Considerations

- Create inventory of historical artifacts and documentation that should be consolidated by the Interpretive Center.
- Create inventory of historical remnants and mod ern waterfront activities that should be part of an interpretive program.
- Conduct feasibility study to define demand and appropriate facilities for interpretive center as well as potential mechanisms for funding and manage ment.
- Amend 5-year Parks and Recreation Plan to include acquisition and improvements.

Merchant Dock Park
Map Key: 9
Merchant Dock Park is proposed for where N. 3rd Street meets Little Bay De Noc. Currently, the site is occupied by the county jail. This park along with Waterfront Park, which will be described next, maintain public control of the waterfront between Sand Point and Merchant Dock Park. Descriptions here will focus on public access to the waterfront. Other aspects of both parks will be described more fully later in this section.

Consistent with its name, the shipyard to the west can be viewed from the park. Unlike other viewing opportunities from 1st Avenue N. and N. 9th Street, views from the park to the primary shipyard operations are over water and unobstructed. Clear views of the coal dock are also available. The new Merchant Dock Park master plan includes placement of a decommissioned tugboat and a Great Lakes freighter wheelhouse as features for visitors to explore. The tugboat is proposed to be set into the ground to be at a similar level as it would be in the water. The freighter wheelhouse is proposed at the shoreline facing the water. When standing on the bow or inside the wheelhouse, water will fill the outward views creating a sense of sailing in open water. Because of its height, the freighter's bow will also serve as an overlook point for the shipyard and coal dock. As with other overlooks of the Working Waterfront, interpretive exhibits should be included in the tugboat and wheelhouse.

Key Considerations
- Amend 5-year Parks and Recreation Plan to include improvements.
- Coordinate with County for relocation of jail and exchange of property.
- Explore possibilities for placement of tugboat and freighter wheelhouse.



Merchant Dock Park - connecting downtown to the bay
Concept; Beckett & Raeder, Inc.

Waterfront Park utilizing part of the "Municipal Dock"
Concept; Beckett & Raeder, Inc.

Petoskey Waterfront Park
Photo: Beckett & Raeder, Inc.

Waterfront Park
Map Key: 10
The new Waterfront Park includes the area from N. 3rd Street east to and including the current Municipal Dock. As with Merchant Dock Park, descriptions here will focus on public access to the waterfront. Other aspects of the park will be described more fully later in this section.

As will be discussed more fully later, the master plan concept is to increase available activities in this area to better link the activities of downtown and Sand Point and as a result, give the opportunity for more people fully enjoy the community's waterfront asset. In addition to the existing docking opportunities and perimeter walkway, the new Waterfront Park master plan includes a public hall and amphitheater for the Municipal Dock. The public hall could be a public/private partnership and include retail and restaurant components in addition to the hall itself. With proper architectural design, panoramic views of the Bay will make these very desirable spaces. Adjacent to the public hall, the amphitheater faces north toward the Bay where a temporarily moored barge serves as a stage. The amphitheater area is also an ideal location for fishing tournament activities. When not used for special events, the amphitheater serves as an informal gathering space to have lunch or read a book while overlooking the Bay.

Further west, adjacent to N. 3rd Street, the new master plan proposes that the City acquire the residence north of the current Chamber building and that it be renovated to serve as a new home for the Chamber of Commerce. The seawall surrounding the new Chamber location and the historic yacht basin give the opportunity for new shopper's docks adding activity in the area and increasing boater access to downtown goods and services. In the evening, the shopper's docks could also serve as marina overflow space for transient boats.

Key Considerations

- Amend 5-year Parks and Recreation Plan to include acquisition and improvements.
- Conduct feasibility study to define demand and appropriate facilities for public hall as well as potential mechanisms for funding and manage ment.
- Coordinate with Chamber of Commerce to explore acquisition and renovation of existing residence for relocated offices.
- Coordinate design and construction of shopper's docks with Michigan Department of Natural Resources and Environment.

Build upon North Town's Heritage

Map Key: 11

Of all the surrounding areas, North Town has the closest affinity to the Working Waterfront. Glimpses and sounds of industrial and maritime equipment are filtered through the vegetation and large berms surrounding the working waterfront giving it a "living in the shadows" feel. Likewise, many Northtown residents historically worked in the waterfront industries and had rich family maritime heritages. The master plan seeks to strengthen this sense of identity by focusing multi-use infill development around a central neighborhood open space. An increase in development density with active uses on the first floors will create a sense of vibrancy while the central open space provides a location for neighborhood gatherings and events. The park is also the access point for the working waterfront overlook previously described. Another critical element in creating a vibrant neighborhood feel is rebalancing use of the Sheridan Road right-of-way to produce a more intimate scale. Currently, the 2 travel lanes and 2 parking lanes on Sheridan are excessively wide and the street lacks adequate non-motorized facilities. The master plan proposes to change the roadway use to include 2 travel lanes, 2 non-motorized lanes and on-street parking on the west side of the street. Two new parking areas are proposed east of Sheridan within the 15th Avenue N. and 16th Avenue N. right-of-ways to compensate for loss of parking on one side of the street and needs of additional infill development. Other streetscape improvements include new sidewalks, crosswalks, lighting, and street trees.

Key Considerations

- Expand the DDA district to include Northtown and amend DDA Development Plan and Tax Increment Financing Plan to include improvements.
- Amend 5-year Parks and Recreation Plan to include acquisition and improvements.
- Coordinate with CN Railroad to implement overlook on berm.
- Develop implementation plan for rebalanced roadway and streetscape improvements.
- Develop implementation plan for Northtown neighborhood park.

Extend and Connect Downtown Activities to the Waterfront

Map Key: 12

As described in the physical assessment, one of the challenges currently facing the downtown waterfront is a lack of activity and vibrancy in the area of the Municipal Dock. Although it has physical and visual access to the water, it is currently separated from the retail intensive portion of downtown by approximately 1/3 mile. Within that 1/3 of a mile are the less active uses of City Hall, the Delta County Courthouse Building and the Escanaba State Office Building. As a result, many people are reluctant to walk through that distance of inactivity to enjoy the water views and open space at the Municipal Dock or through a further inactive zone to enjoy the Sand Point Lighthouse.

The concept illustrated in the master plan seeks to increase available activities in this area to better link the activities of downtown and Sand Point and as a result, make the walk from downtown more pleasant and the community's waterfront assets more accessible. One master plan suggestion for additional activity is to extend retail activity east of the municipal buildings. New multi-use developments are proposed north of Ludington Street along the N. 3rd Street right-of-way. In addition to extending downtown, the development at the corner of Ludington and N. 3rd could include a small convenience and fishing supply store to serve those stopping at the shopper's docks. Slightly further to the east, retail and restaurant components within the proposed multi-use public hall will also help to extend the downtown experience to the waterfront. Part of the current disconnection in the area is that the Sand Point Lighthouse is not visible from downtown. By extending downtown activities further east to the waterfront, users will be within view of the Sand Point Lighthouse thereby strengthening the connection between primary activity zones.

A companion piece to extension of downtown activity is improvement of its motorized and non-motorized character. Ludington Street has an unusually wide 100' wide right-of-way. Currently, 4 travel lanes, a center turn lane and 2 parallel parking lanes occupy approximately 68' of that right-of-way. In some locations downtown, the lane usage within the +/-68' has been changed to 2 travel lanes, a center turn lane and 2 angled parking lanes. The right-of-way and roadway widths are both challenges and great assets. As a challenge, the wide roadway is a visual and physical imposition on the downtown's character that creates a psychological barrier for pedestrians.

As an asset, the +/-68' roadway is wider than the entire right-of-way in most community downtowns and provides a unique opportunity to balance the needs of motorists, bicyclists, pedestrians, and the general character of downtown.

The master plan proposes to narrow the roadway cross section to a 49' width that would include 2 travel lanes, a center planted median with turn lanes, and 2 parallel parking lanes. The narrower roadway and planted median reduces the physical and visual dominance of the street in downtown and puts greater emphasis on the sidewalks and storefronts. The narrower roadway also allows for the widening of sidewalks and creation of a non-motorized zone at sidewalk level. The non-motorized zone is separated from the pedestrian zone by trees in substantially sized planters and is part of a larger non-motorized system linking various waterfront destinations. Other streetscape improvements include new sidewalks, crosswalks, lighting, and street trees.

Along with new development opportunities and improvements to Ludington Street, the master plan identifies creation of Waterfront and Merchant Dock Parks that were described briefly earlier in this section. Waterfront Park is designed as downtown's front door to the waterfront. As a festival space and home to the Chamber of Commerce, the park is a landmark and welcoming point for boaters using the shopper's docks. Critical elements to the park as a festival space include an amphitheater and significant green space. Adjacent to the public hall, the amphitheater faces north toward the Bay where a temporarily moored barge serves as a stage. The amphitheater area is also an ideal location for fishing tournament activities and other significant community functions. When not used for special events, the amphitheater serves as an informal gathering space to have lunch or read a book while overlooking the Bay. Open spaces in the park are sized to accommodate multiple large festival tents and rows of smaller vendor booths. In addition to physical improvements, programming is critical to successful urban open spaces. The Waterfront Park festival spaces should be scheduled with a full program of events to enliven the park as a destination contributing to downtown vibrancy.

Key Considerations

- Amend DDA Development Plan and Tax Increment Financing Plan to include improvements.
- Amend 5-year Parks and Recreation Plan to include acquisition and improvements.
- Coordinate with Chamber of Commerce to explore acquisition and renovation of existing residence for relocated offices.
- Develop a program of regular activities to enliven Waterfront Park festival spaces.

Create Gateways to the Waterfront and Downtown

Map Key: 13

As part of the physical assessment, five primary approaches to the waterfront and downtown were identified. Of those five, visitors primarily enter from Ludington Street from the west and a significant amount of local traffic enters from Washington Avenue and Sheridan Road from the north. From the Ludington Street approach, the US-2 corridor, western portion of the Ludington Street corridor and core of downtown bleed together without clear definition or sense of arrival to downtown. An overhead wayfinding sign for downtown does exist at the corner of US-2 and Ludington Street but is not easily visible. The US-2/Ludington Street intersection is an appropriate location for wayfinding signage to downtown and the waterfront. However, when examining physical character of the corridor, a gateway to downtown and the waterfront is appropriately located further west. The Ludington Street corridor between US-2 and Stephenson Avenue has significant green frontage in the form of Lakeview Cemetery and single-family residence front yards. The commercial buildings are also more contemporary in nature than those east of Stephenson Avenue. East of Stephenson, the architecture is generally older and more significant. Most buildings present a relatively pedestrian friendly façade to the street. The combination of these elements gives the Ludington Street corridor east of Stephenson a "downtown core" feel. Given the differences in character, the Ludington Street and Stephenson Avenue intersection is the most appropriate place for a gateway to downtown and the waterfront. It is also a logical place when considering the significant amount of local traffic entering downtown from the north on Stephenson Avenue. In addition to improvements suggested as part of the Ludington Street roadway rebalancing and streetscape, suggested improvements for the gateway intersection include identification and directional signage, special planting, special lighting, and an emphasis on pedestrian improvements. To reinforce the intersection as a gateway, it could be the eastern terminus of the center lane median. Because the two are so closely related, the gateway should be integrated with a detailed design study for Ludington Street improvements.

When approaching from the north on Washington Avenue or Sheridan Road, industrial uses, commercial areas, and residential areas bleed together without a clear sense of destination or arrival when entering the waterfront area. When examining the physical character of the corridors, the three-leg intersection of Washington, Sheridan and Stephenson is an ideal location for a gateway. It is the most defined division point between the Northtown neighborhood to the north and Working Waterfront related commercial to the south. From this gateway intersection, users proceed south on Stephenson to the downtown gateway at Ludington Street.

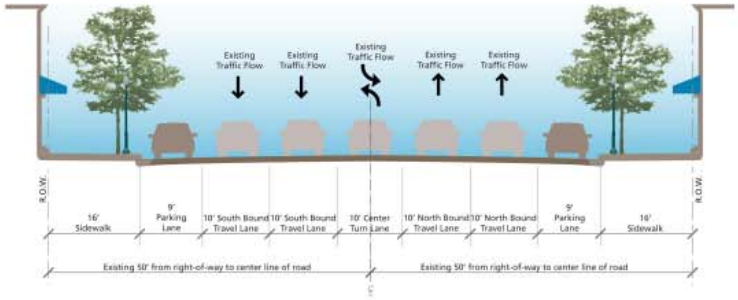
The three-leg intersection and adjacent Rose Park provide a unique gateway opportunity. Because of the intersection's acute angle, adequate space exists for a roundabout that will create a unique gateway experience as well as allow for a free flow of traffic. Although the proposed roundabout in the master plan is sized to accommodate tractor-trailers, its visual presence is appropriate to the neighborhood with incorporation of pedestrian improvements, non-motorized lanes and a generously sized center island. Other suggested improvements include identification and directional signage, special planting and special lighting.

Key Considerations

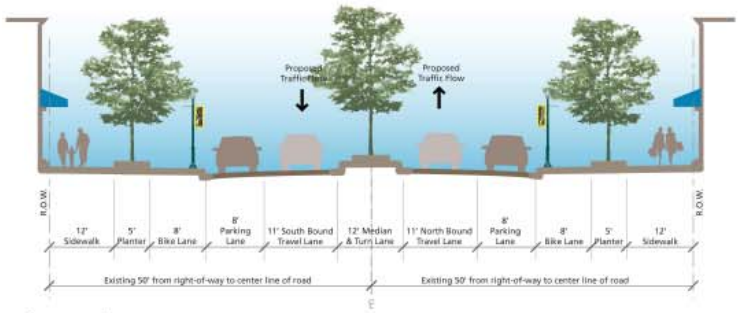
- Conduct detailed design study for Downtown gateway in conjunction with Ludington Street roadway and streetscape improvements.
- Conduct detailed design study for Working Waterfront gateway roundabout in conjunction with Sheridan Road and Stephenson Avenue roadway and streetscape improvements.

Huron Parkway and Nixon Rd. Roundabout in Ann Arbor, MI
Project: Beckett & Raeder, Inc. and OHM

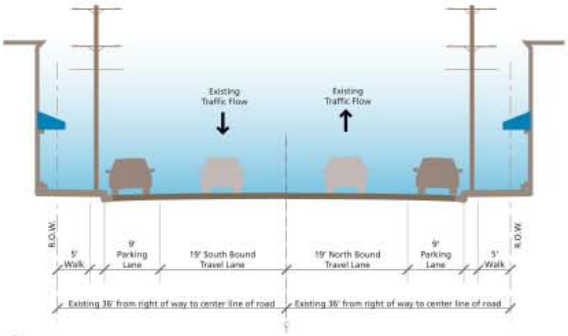
Figure F2



Section **A** Ludington Street - Existing
Scale: 1/8" = 1'-0"



Section **A′** Ludington Street - Proposed
Scale: 1/8" = 1'-0"



Section **B** Stephenson Avenue - Existing
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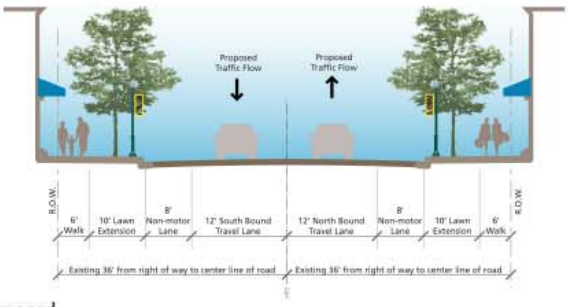

Section **B′** Stephenson Avenue - Proposed
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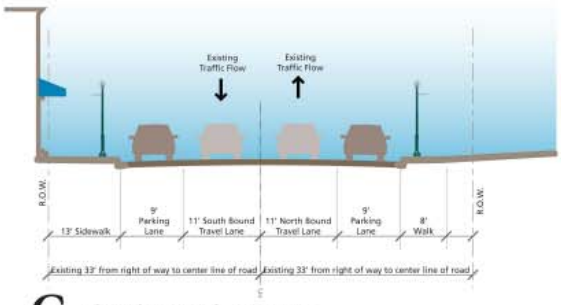
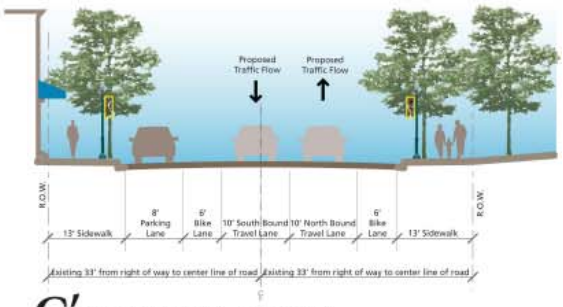


Section **C** Sheridan Road - Existing
Scale: 1/8" = 1'-0"



Section **C′** Sheridan Road - Proposed
Scale: 1/8" = 1'-0"

Motorized and Non-motorized Transportation

Adequate and well-designed motorized and non-motorized facilities are key components of any successful business district and recreational community and are particularly important for connectivity of Escanaba's waterfront. As mentioned previously, one of the highest priorities that emerged during community meetings and sessions with the Planning Commission was for greater access to the waterfront. Several sites described earlier in this section have been identified for improved physical or visual public access including River Delta Park, Ore Dock Park, the Northtown Overlook, the Working Waterfront Interpretive Center, Merchant Dock Park, and Waterfront Park. However, for the overall concept to be successful, these individual elements need to be part of a larger, easily understood system. In other words, visitors and residents need to be intuitively guided between points of interest along the chain of waterfront destinations illustrated on the overall Northshore Master Plan diagram. On a more pragmatic level, the connectivity is accomplished through balancing the motorized and non-motorized systems in order to create more intimate and pleasant corridors that intuitively guide users through the waterfront, downtown and Northtown.

Motorized Transportation
Map Key: 14

In general, primary roadways in the waterfront area are quite wide. Historically, the roadways served different function than they do today and the widths were appropriate. However, uses have changed and the widths are excessive for current traffic types and volumes. Previous to 1932, Escanaba Street Railway Company (Escanaba Traction Company after 1909 and then Escanaba Power and Traction Company after 1920) had tracks that ran down the middle of several area streets. When the railway ceased operation in 1932, the street width occupied by the tracks became part of the roadway. Today the extra width has been used to create center turn lanes that are also used for snow storage and removal in the winter. Although operationally efficient for snow removal, the excessive widths are detrimental to the streets' character and do not positively contribute to a desirable business environment.

As discussed previously, the Northshore Master Plan proposes that several streets be narrowed and/or rebalanced to include non-motorized improvements. Ludington Street is narrowed to provide a more appropriately scaled cross section of 2 travel lanes, a center planted median with turn lanes, 2 parallel parking lanes and sidewalk level non-motorized lanes. Stephenson Avenue is narrowed and rebalanced to include 2 travel lanes and 2 non-motorized lanes. The narrower road cross section allows for wider sidewalks and a green extension for street trees between the curb and sidewalk. Lack of other softening vegetation on adjacent properties make street trees especially important in creating an intuitive, desirable link between downtown and Northtown. Sheridan Road is rebalanced to include 2 travel lanes, 2 non-motorized lanes and on-street parking on the west side of the street. Two new parking areas are proposed east of Sheridan within the 15th Avenue N. and 16th Avenue N. right-of-ways to compensate for loss of parking on one side of the street and needs of additional infill development.

Another major proposed improvement to the motorized system is a gateway roundabout at the three-leg intersection of Washington Avenue, Sheridan Road and Stephenson Avenue. As previously described, roundabouts allow for continuous traffic flow which results in vehicles spending less time cueing at the intersection. Less time cueing translates into saved fuel and reduced emissions. Because all traffic yields at reduced speeds when entering the intersection, roundabouts have demonstrated to be generally safer than other intersection types by reducing frequency and severity of collisions.

Key Considerations

- Conduct detailed design study for Ludington Street roadway and streetscape improvements.
- Conduct detailed design study for Stephenson Avenue roadway and streetscape improvements.
- Conduct detailed design study for Sheridan Road roadway and streetscape improvements.
- Conduct detailed design study for Working Waterfront gateway roundabout in conjunction with Sheridan Road and Stephenson Avenue roadway and streetscape improvements.

Non-motorized Transportation
Map Key: 15

Escanaba has an extensive non-motorized path system within Ludington Park that connects to Sand Point and the Municipal Dock. The Northshore Master Plan seeks to expand the network to provide continuous non-motorized improvements between proposed Working Waterfront points of interest as far north as River Delta Park. As a long-term goal, the pathway could extend north over the Escanaba River to connect with Gladstone as part of a regional system.

Specific non-motorized improvements within the Northshore area from south to north include pathways and sidewalks in Waterfront Park, designated sidewalk level lanes on Ludington Street, off-street pathway along 1st Avenue N., on-street lanes on N. 10th Street, on-street lanes on 3rd Avenue N., on-street lanes on Stephenson Avenue, on-street lanes on Sheridan Road to 17th Avenue N., off-street pathway along Sheridan Road north of 17th Avenue N., and off-street pathway along Power Plant Road extending to River Delta Park and Ore Dock Park. Internal, non-motorized pathways are also planned to connect activities within River Delta Park. For adequate functionality and to maximize grant funding opportunities, all non-motorized improvements should conform to American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) standards including width, pavement markings and signage.

- Conduct detailed design study for non-motorized improvements.
- Integrate non-motorized improvements as part of Ludington Street, Stephenson Avenue and Sheridan Road detailed design studies for roadway and streetscape improvements.
- Develop and implement a regular maintenance and replacement program for non-motorized infrastructure. Particularly for on-street lane pavement markings.
- Be a bicycle friendly destination. Provide bicycle specific signs.
- "Walk Your Bike" policy should be implemented for sidewalks.
- Shared use arrows can be applied to local streets to remind motorists that will be sharing a lane with bicyclists.
- Place bicycle parking at desirable locations throughout the corridor.

Special Pavement Markings for Bike Lanes
Photos: Vendor Websites

Future Non-motorized connection to Gladstone
Photo: Beckett & Raeder, Inc.

Figure G1

ESCANABA MASTER PLAN

Escanaba Waterfront Areas

Port Waterfront
Transitional Waterfront
Downtown Waterfront

Beckett&Raeder

Future Land Use Program

The Community Master Plan, adopted May 2006 recommended the long term conversion of the Northshore waterfront from a working waterfront and industrial area to a combination of mixed-uses. [Figure G1]. Properties south of 3rd Ave N would be converted to non-industrial uses to establish a physical connection to downtown. Properties between the C. Reiss Coal Company Dock and the Escanaba Power Plant were envisioned as a transition area dependent on the continuation of the CN iron ore handling facility. The evolution from a working waterfront to non-industrial uses was predicated, to a large degree, on the economy and the closure of inland iron ore operations.

This long term scenario is still valid when noting the changes to similar waterfront properties in Marquette, Michigan and the communities along the Detroit River in southern Michigan. The City should ultimately plan for change, however, the timing of this change is extremely dependent on a variety of variables outside the control of the City.

In the near term, it would be appropriate to base the Northshore land use program on prevailing conditions and known variables, such as current operational plans, business expansions, and discussions with Northshore property owners.

The land use program suggested for the Northshore is based on a phased approach dependent on the evolution of private interests rather than public interests. The three phases suggested include the following:

Phase 1: Working Waterfront
The land use within the Northshore area would remain primarily working waterfront. Several changes are recommended for properties adjacent to existing public (civic) properties and along fringe areas which abut non-industrial areas. Specifically:

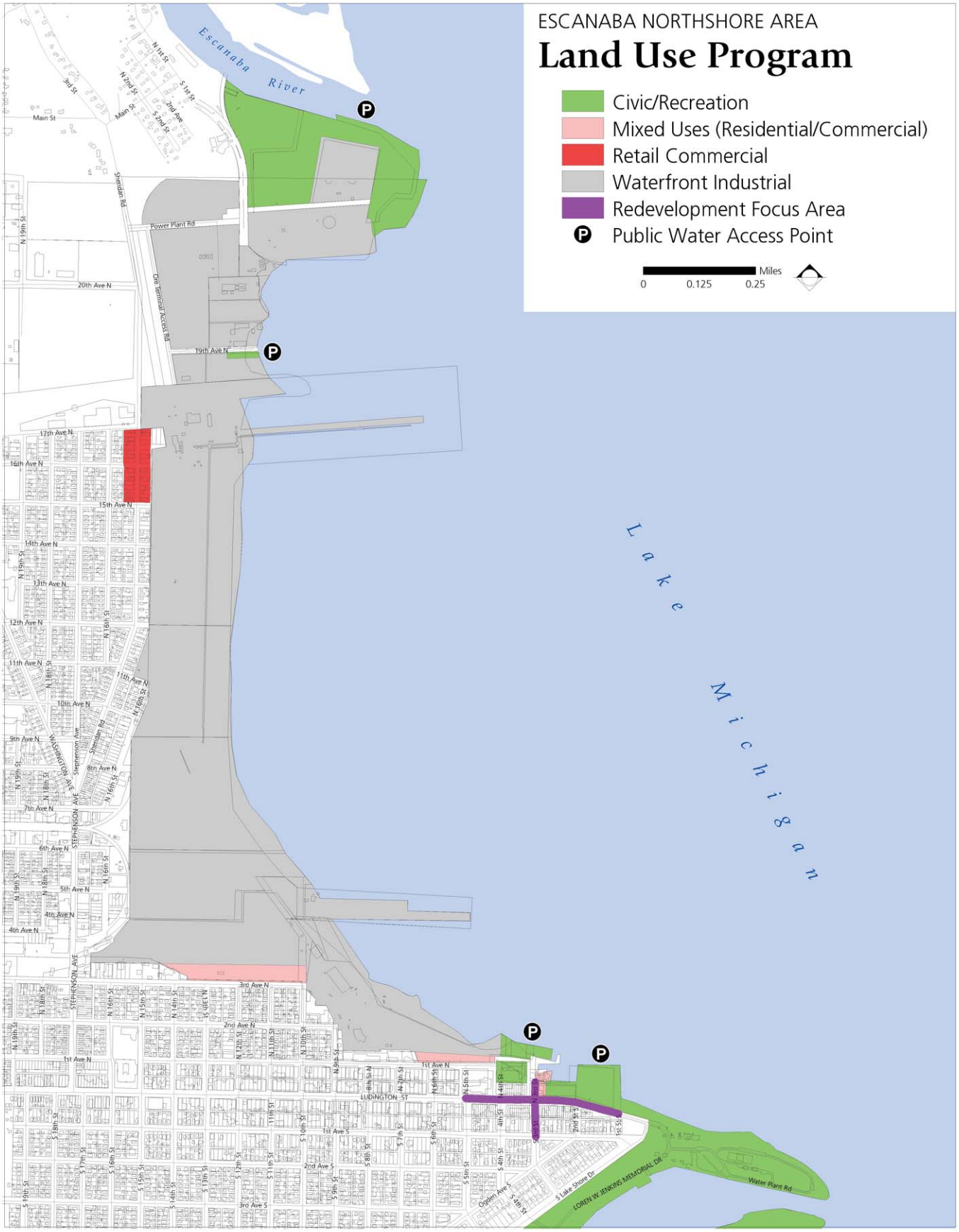
1. Pursue relocation of jail from the current site and acquisition of properties east of the City property located on 1st Ave, N.
2. Pursue acquisition or property exchange with C. Reiss Coal Company to create an expanded public area along the Escanaba River.
3. Classify areas along north side of 3rd Avenue, N. between Stephenson to N 14 Street and north side of 1st Ave N between N 4th Street to the Municipal Dock to mixed use. These fringe areas would have a lot depth of 120 to 140 feet deep and would serve as a transition from residential to working waterfront.

Phase 2: Neighborhood Expansion
This phase is entirely dependent on the state and continued use of the CN rail property and the viability of regional iron ore mining and processing. At a point where this operation is scaled back or the property is no longer used for rail and bulk commodities it is recommended that the North Town residential neighborhood be expanded into this zone with property along the Little Bay de Noc reserved for community open space. Properties north and south of this neighborhood expansion zone would remain working waterfront to take advantage of existing docks and deep-water channels needed for freighter access. The trigger for this phase of the land use program is the cessation of CN bulk commodity operations.

Phase 3: Future Land Use
This phase is long term and is based on the cessation of business operations along the south portion of Northshore. Again, the trigger influencing this change in land use is dependent on private interests and their continued viability not public intervention. As long as private property owners continue to use their properties they will remain as working waterfront. This phase reflects what the area would evolve to after a working waterfront.

The timing and development of each phase will be influenced by economic and market conditions, availability of infrastructure, brownfield remediation, and zoning modifications.

Figure G2

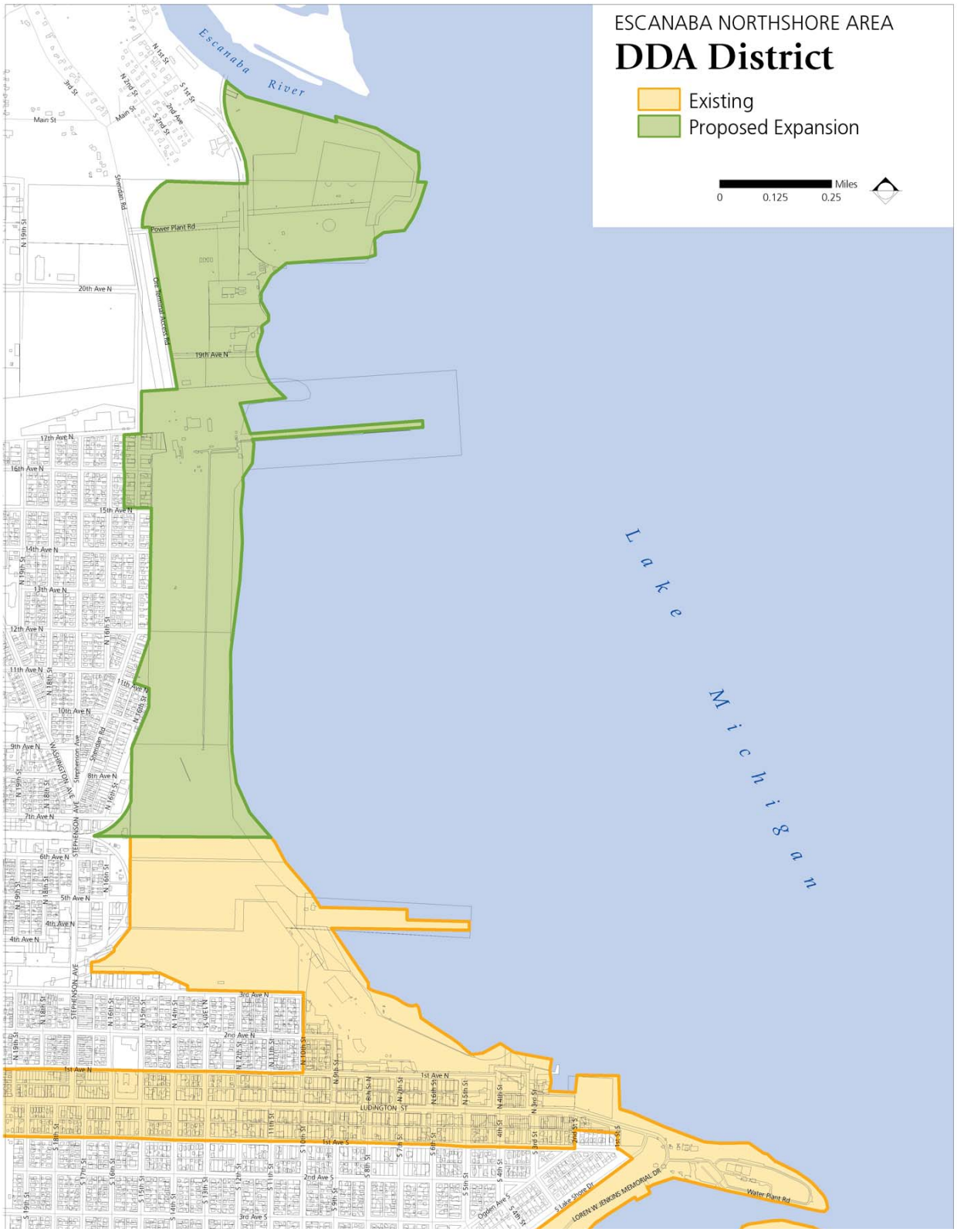

ESCANABA NORTHSHORE AREA
Land Use Program
Civic/Recreation
Mixed Uses (Residential/Commercial)
Retail Commercial
Waterfront Industrial
Redevelopment Focus Area
Public Water Access Point
Miles
0
0.125
0.25
Escanaba River
Lake Michigan
Power Plant Rd
Ore Terminal Access Rd
Sheridan Rd
Main St
19th Ave N
20th Ave N
17th Ave N
16th Ave N
15th Ave N
14th Ave N
13th Ave N
12th Ave N
11th Ave N
10th Ave N
9th Ave N
8th Ave N
7th Ave N
6th Ave N
5th Ave N
4th Ave N
3rd Ave N
2nd Ave N
1st Ave N
1st Ave S
2nd Ave S
3rd Ave S
LUDINGTON ST
STEPHENSON AVE
WASHINGTON AVE
S Lake Shore Dr
LOREN W. JENKINS MEMORIAL DR
Water Plant Rd

The recommended land use program and phasing would create civic, open space and recreation, and mixed-use opportunities at the extreme north and south portions of the Northshore area. The majority of the Northshore would remain as working waterfront. As business and economic conditions change the land use program reflects the expansion of non-industrial uses into the Northshore to capitalize on the residential neighborhoods to the west and the downtown to south.

Based on information compiled during the community involvement and stakeholder interviews it is anticipated that current conditions along the working waterfront of the Northshore will continue for the next 10 to 20 years. However, this timeframe should not deter other community priorities such as establishing a physical connection between the Northshore waterfront and the downtown. As mentioned in Community Master Plan and the Downtown Market Study (prepared by Anderson Economic Group) the downtown retail needs to be concentrated in one area and not elongated over the length of Ludington Street. In addition, discussions during the plan process indicated the need to create a critical mass of retail and pedestrian activity at the east end of the downtown in order to link the House of Ludington, the Municipal Dock, and other public sites to the downtown. As a result, the land use program suggests focusing public and private redevelopment activities at the N 3rd St. between Ludington Street and 1st Ave N. This will locate commercial and civic activity back along the N 3rd St. historic corridor and former "Merchant Dock" area. In addition, this redevelopment focus will create the critical mass of activity needed to fill the retail void created by the location of the public buildings between 3rd St and 5th St. A component of this redevelopment area will involve the extension of the planned DDA streetscape improvements through this zone. The character of the 3rd St. redevelopment area would include a combination of open space, parks, and mixed-use buildings with retail and upper story living units. The area would developed with a higher density that typically found along the Ludington Street and higher level of public amenities in order to create a place and destination sufficient to draw residents and visitors through the downtown. Lastly, efforts to maintain the House of Ludington either as a hotel / restaurant or another adaptive reuse would be of equal importance to the overall redevelopment effort described.

The proposed mixed-use transition strips would create an opportunity for either townhome development or mixed-use development for ground floor level offices and retail with upper floor residential. From field visits and review of aerial photography these transition strips are now being used as setbacks and side yards. The proposed depth of the transition strips would be between 120 and 140 feet of depth. They accomplish two objectives; first they provide opportunities for small-scale real estate development adjacent to the downtown and provide housing product not traditionally found in the Escanaba market and secondly, give property owners an increased development option for their properties.

Figure H1


ESCANABA NORTHSHORE AREA
DDA District
Existing
Proposed Expansion
Miles
0
0.125
0.25
Escanaba River
Lake Michigan
Power Plant Rd
Sheridan Rd
Main St
3rd St
N 1st St
N 2nd St
S 1st St
S 2nd St
2nd Ave
N 19th St
20th Ave N
19th Ave N
17th Ave N
16th Ave N
15th Ave N
14th Ave N
13th Ave N
12th Ave N
11th Ave N
10th Ave N
9th Ave N
8th Ave N
7th Ave N
6th Ave N
5th Ave N
4th Ave N
3rd Ave N
2nd Ave N
1st Ave N
1st Ave S
2nd Ave S
3rd Ave S
WASHINGTON AVE
STEPHENSON AVE
LUDINGTON ST
S Lake Shore Dr
LOREN W. JENKINS MEMORIAL DR
Water Plant Rd

Select and Enable a Waterfront Champion

(Community Priority)

Although this is not a physical opportunity, it is a concept critical to the Waterfront's success. Like Escanaba, communities throughout Michigan have identified downtown as a district with many physical and socio-economic complexities. As a result, Downtown Development Authorities were created to organize landowners and businesses, promote the district, guide and implement physical public improvements, and facilitate private economic development. In essence, the DDA director serves as a "champion" for downtown. The Waterfront has its own set of physical and socio-economic complexities and deserves its own advocate.

The Waterfront Champion should be an individual passionate about the cause and fully devoted to the task without other responsibilities within the City. The Champion should be the face of the Waterfront, regularly meeting with landowners and businesses to understand and respond to the pulse of the district in order to be an effective advocate. As a result, the close working relationships with landowners and businesses will allow the Champion to identify synergistic opportunities, guide and implement physical public improvements, and engage private economic development.

There are a variety of economic development -related programs, including funding assistance, venture capital, and tax incentives and credits available through the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) that a skilled economic development professional can use to assist existing companies and new business enterprises.

Key Considerations

- Develop desired attributes and responsibilities for a Waterfront Champion.
- Determine how the Waterfront Champion operates as part of the City's organizational structure.
- Utilize this person (or organization) as the economic development coordinator for the Northshore and the City of Escanaba.

Expansion of Downtown Development Authority

If the "waterfront" champion is not a volunteer position it will need a source of sustainable funding for salary and operating expenses. As noted in the initial recommendation we would suggest that the "waterfront" champion essentially be the economic development executive for the Northshore and the City. To further this organizational arrangement we would suggest the expansion of the Downtown Development Authority boundary, as illustrated in Figure H1, to include the Northshore area and the North Town Business District with a caveat; that no tax increment capture would occur within the Northshore portion of the expansion area. Instead, it is recommended that the DDA Development Plan be amended to reflect the economic development position as an eligible expenditure and infrastructure projects to improve the North Town Business District. Further, to derive a sustainable funding source for the economic development position and associated expenses it is recommended that a portion of the 2 mil levy authorized through the DDA legislation be levied on properties in the expanded DDA district. Further, subject to the DDA boundary expansion, DDA Board vacancies would be allocated to property / business owners from the Northshore and North Town Business District.

Key Considerations

- Expand DDA district to include the Northshore and North Towns Business District.
- Do not utilize tax increment capture within the expanded area to ensure present use of tax base by taxing jurisdictions.
- Amend DDA Development Plan to include projects identified in the Northshore Land Use Strategy, including the Waterfront Champion.
- Consider using the 2-mil tax levy provision in the DDA legislation to procure the funding for the Waterfront Champion and associated support costs.
- When vacancies on the DDA Board occur fill with representative from the Northshore and North Town Business District.

Figure H2
Zoning Ordinance Assessment

Land Use	Permitted in Heavy Manufacturing "G"	Waterfront-Related Heavy Manufacturing	Also Permitted in Commercial "E"
Restaurants and Taverns	X		X
Wholesale business (storage in bulk and warehouse)	X	X	X
Cold storage plant	X		X
Dyeing or dry cleaning plant	X		X
Printing plant	X		
Radio and TV Broadcasting	X		X
Community garage	X		X
Manufacturing	X	X	
Garment factory	X		
Hat manufacture	X		
Furniture factory	X		
Grain factory	X	X	
Asphalt plant	X		
Scrap iron and junk yard	X		
Railroad yards	X	X	
Coal load and storage	X	X	
Light and power plants	X	X	
Propone gas distributing plant	X		
Sewage disposal	X		
Fish curing, smoking and packing	X	X	
Bus terminal	X		X
Kennels and Veterinary hospitals	X		
Crematory	X		
Manufactured housing construction	X		
Contractor offices	X		
Warehousing	X	X	

Waterfront Renaissance Zone

Although not officially designated by the State of Michigan the City through its Michigan legislative representatives could approach the Michigan Strategic Fund Board about the establishment of a specialize renaissance zone for the working waterfront. Since the inception of renaissance zones in 1996 there are 21 zones encompassing 150 geographic areas. Businesses locating in a renaissance zone do not pay Michigan Business Tax (MBT), Michigan personal income tax, local personal property tax, and local real property taxes. We would recommend that the criteria for the renaissance zone would only apply to businesses affiliated with Great Lakes shipping such as shipbuilding, loading and unloading operations, freighter servicing and repair, and other shipping support facilities and businesses. It is also suggested that existing businesses within the working waterfront, which expand operations in excess of 75% of the current state equalized valuation, would be eligible for renaissance zone benefits. Again, this type of renaissance zone needs to be established by the Michigan Strategic Fund Board.

Key Considerations

- Solicit support from State Represenative and State Senator on establishment of new Waterfront Renaissance Zone.

Grand Traverse Commons - former Traverse City State Psychiatric Hospital - redeveloped using Renaissance Zone benefits
Photo: Beckett & Raeder, Inc.

Core Community Opportunities

The City of Escanaba in classified by the State of Michigan as one of 135 "Core Community." There are three programs specifically available to the City and these include:

Brownfield Redevelopment

Core communities have the ability to use the brownfield redevelopment incentives for the remediation of contaminated property, as well as, blighted and functionally obsolete properties. Many parcels within the Northshore qualify under this description. In addition to paying the remediation expenses, core communities can also pay for demolition, site preparation, public infrastructure and lead and asbestos abatement through the tax increment financing revenues established through the brownfield redevelopment plan.

Neighborhood Enterprise Zones

This program is focused on residential neighborhoods such as North Town. New homes constructed within a neighborhood enterprise zone can be granted a 12-year abatement on one-half of the state equalized valuation. For homes undergoing substantial rehabilitation the state equalized valuation is frozen at pre-construction level for 12-years. These abatements provide tangible monetary benefits for those investing or reinvesting in the North Town area.

Obsolete Property Rehabilitation

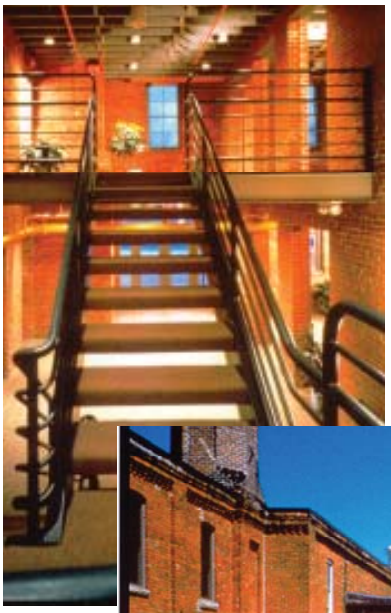
This incentive is available citywide but could easily be focused on the Northshore and North Town areas. Properties that are contaminated, blighted or functionally obsolete can qualify for a tax abatement at pre-development or pre-redevelopment values for a maximum of 12 years.

Modification of Zoning Ordinance

After review of the City of Escanaba Zoning Ordinance the "Heavy Manufacturing" district ("G") extends throughout the Northshore, north of CN rail right-of-way between Sheridan and US-2, and west of US-2 to the westerly city limits. Figure H2 highlights the permitted uses in the heavy manufacturing district and identifies those, which would be considered working waterfront uses. Many of the heavy manufacturing permitted uses would not be the highest and best use for businesses not water access. For this reason, we would suggest modifying the zoning ordinance to include a waterfront commerce district which would permit those industrial and business uses which

utilize or depend on a working waterfront.

Similarly, the Commercial District ("E") contains some of the same uses found in the Heavy Manufacturing District and does not provide for upper story residential development or mixed uses. Both of the later residential uses are needed to accomplish the objectives of this plan to physically connect the downtown to the waterfront and create a viable activity center near the easterly end of the downtown. It is suggested that a Downtown Overlay District be utilized to provide for residential development opportunities in the Commercial District.



Argus Office Building (former Argus Camera Factory)
Photo: CDI

Existing Plan Amendments

In order to utilize available funding sources it is suggested that the Downtown Development Plan and Tax Increment Financing Plan be amended to include projects identified for the Northshore within the jurisdiction of the Escanaba Downtown Development Authority. Further, the City's Parks and Recreation Plan should also be amended to include open space and recreation related projects in order to utilize Michigan Natural Resource Trust Funds for land acquisition and park development.

Utilization of Historic Preservation as an Economic Development Tool

Many of us consider historic preservation as a cultural asset and community objective rather than an economic development tool. Historic preservation is viewed as a means to protect, preserve and interpret property in lieu of reusing, creating, and sustaining property. When historic preservation is used as an economic development tool community character is retained and property is reused for new productive uses. Several examples of this strategy include:

- Conversion of the former La-Z-Boy factory in Monroe, Michigan to a 120-unit elderly housing development.
- Conversion of the former Argus Camera factory in Ann Arbor, Michigan to an office complex occupied by tenants such as Michigan Public Radio and the Great Lakes Colleges Association.
- Conversion of the former Eaton manufacturing plant in Ann Arbor, Michigan to a loft residential complex.
- Designation pursued by City of Pleasant Ridge, Michigan to have the entire community listed on

the National Register of Historic Places which resulted in higher resale values and designation by this Old House Magazine as one of America's top ten metropolitan communities to reside.

An Escanaba building with particular importance to the waterfront is the House of Ludington. Currently for sale this building has historical importance to the community and should be preserved and adaptively reused. Its location at the east end of the downtown and at the beginning of the public waterfront warrants serious attention for future continuation.

This type of project could easily use the services of the "champion" or the DDA to assist with a public-private partnership. Examples of this type of arrangement include:

- The historic Dillworth Hotel in Boyne City, Michigan where the DDA / Main Street Board is utilizing funds through the MSHDA Downtown program to conduct a detailed architectural and market feasibility study on the building in order to recruit a developer / operator.
- The historic Iron Works building in downtown Manistee, Michigan where funds from the Rural Development Administration are being used to finance a feasibility study on its adaptive reuse.

Dillworth Hotel - Boyne City, Michigan
Photo: Beckett & Raeder, Inc.

Infrastructure Standards

The right-of-way widths for Ludington Avenue and Stephenson Street reflect when the roads were jointly shared with automobiles and street (trolley) cars. Today, the trolleys no longer exist and the roadways are still as wide. Connectivity and non-motorized access were identified throughout the plan process as community objectives. As a result, local infrastructure standards, which promote the Complete Streets goals and objectives, should be employed. Complete Streets is a national program, which promotes utilization of street right-of-ways for vehicles, bikes, and pedestrians equally. In the State of Michigan the Complete Streets program is being adopted locally by municipalities and is under consideration by MDOT for a statewide initiative with possible integration into the Act 51 (Highway and Streets Program) and future transportation enhancement funding.

Complete the Streets