

2. JOHNSON PARK NEIGHBORHOOD (C-4)

ADOPTED JUNE 2003

2.1

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND PLANNING PROCESS

Public Meeting #1

Public Input/Kick-off Meeting – On October 28, 2002 a Public Input Session was held at Gifford School to explain the planning process to neighborhood residents and to gather public input regarding issues and opportunities within the neighborhood.

Workgroup Meetings

Neighborhood resident volunteers, Village Board Members and Village Plan Commission Members formed the Neighborhood Workgroup and met several times to develop the Neighborhood Plan. These meetings were also open to the general public and time was reserved at the end of each meeting for observers to voice any concerns or ideas.

Public Meeting #2

Open House – On January 6, 2003 the first

Open House was held at Gifford School. Preliminary neighborhood issues that had been discussed in the workgroup meetings were illustrated on display boards, as well as a variety of other pertinent information such as the Village Land Use Plan and the results of the Household Survey. The primary purpose of the Open House was to conduct a Design Preference Survey where residents were asked to rate various images. After the images were rated, the audience was asked to discuss the pros and cons of each image.

Public Meeting #3

Open House – On March 3, 2003 the second Open House was held at Gifford School. At this open house, the plan concepts were discussed. In addition, the results of the design preference survey were tabulated and presented at the second neighborhood open house. Revisions to the plan were made in response to public comment received at

this meeting and at subsequent workgroup meetings.

Public Meeting #4

Village Committee Meeting – On June 4, 2003, a meeting was held at the Caledonia Community Center to update the various Village Committees and Commissions and solicit feedback on the draft plan. The following groups were invited to attend and sent a copy of the draft plan: Planning Commission, Village Board, Park Commission and Director, Caledonia #1 Sanitary District, C-4 Workgroup, Police Chief, Fire Chief, Highway Superintendent, and the Village Administrator.

Public Meeting #5

Public Hearing – On June 25, 2003 a public hearing was held at the Caledonia Community Center before the Village Board and Plan

Commission. Several residents expressed concern over one roadway connection in Subarea A. Other than that one concern, the public was generally in favor of the neighborhood plan.

2.2 NEIGHBORHOOD ISSUES

Throughout the neighborhood planning process, several specific issues have been identified that pose opportunities and challenges for the neighborhood's future. These issues have been categorized and are described below.

Traffic and Circulation

Limited access to the Neighborhood

The configuration of the Root River limits access to this neighborhood. Currently there is only one river crossing to accommodate north/south traffic at State Hwy. 31 and one crossing to accommodate east/west traffic at State Hwy. 38. While Four Mile Road is not a river crossing, it does abut on the north side of the neighborhood and provide for east-west access to and through the neighborhood

Increasing Congestion on Newman Road

Residents indicated that congestion on Newman Road has increased. Recent road widening improvements to Newman Road in the Village of Mt. Pleasant have been met with mixed reactions among area residents. The main concern of residents was to maintain Newman Road with a rural cross-section design, while accommodating increased traffic and providing safe pedestrian and/or bicycle movement.

Character of State Hwy 31

The cross-section design of State Hwy. 31 does not provide any pedestrian or bicycle amenities. There are few, if any points between State Hwy. 38 and the Root River bridge for pedestrians or bicyclists to safely cross the highway.

C4 Neighborhood Workgroup Members

Village Officials

Susan Greenfield - Former Town Chairperson
Howard Stacey - Village Trustee
Linda Mielke - Plan Commission Chairperson
William Sasse - Plan Commission Member
Dan Grosse - Plan Commission Member
Jim Morrill - Plan Commission Member
Raymond Olley - Plan Commission Member
Nick Orno - Plan Commission Member
Jennifer Pennings - Plan Commission Member

Neighborhood Residents

Vera Anderson- Neighborhood Resident
Mike Foy - Neighborhood Resident
John Jones- Neighborhood Resident
Debbie Lovdahl- Neighborhood Resident
Leif Lovdahl- Neighborhood Resident
Dwaine Otwaska- Neighborhood Resident
Doris Szejna- Neighborhood Resident
Kathleen Trentadue- Neighborhood Resident
Jeff Vassh- Neighborhood Resident
William Wdowicki - Neighborhood Resident
Jon Christensen - Neighborhood Resident

Village & County Staff

Arnold Clement- Racine County Planning
Julie Anderson - Racine County Planning
Fred Haerter - Village of Caledonia Engineer
Beth Paul-Soch -Village Parks Director

Pedestrian & Bicycle Circulation

Residents of this neighborhood raised concern over pedestrian movement within the neighborhood, especially on collector streets such as Newman and Three Mile Roads. While residents recognize the need for improved pedestrian circulation, they were generally not in favor of an urban street cross-section including formal sidewalks. However, results from the Design Preference Survey indicate some degree of support for walking paths and trails along collector streets (Figure 2-1).

Environmental

Root River Corridor

The Root River, and its surrounding environmental features is the major environmental feature within this neighborhood. Providing enhanced storm water management plans and construction site erosion control plans will be important considerations as this neighborhood continues to grow.

Hood's Creek corridor

Hood's Creek and its surrounding environmental features are a significant feature in this neighborhood and should be preserved.

Existing Public Parkland

Johnson Park is the only publicly owned park within the C4 neighborhood. This 357-acre park is owned and maintained by the City of Racine. This park provides the following facilities: ice skating, one soccer field, playfields, playground, a sand lot softball field, an 18-hole golf and driving range, as well as informal group picnicking areas. There are no Village-owned park facilities within this neighborhood.

Existing Private Parkland

Three private park sites exist within this neighborhood. The Caledonia Conservancy owns and maintains a 6-acre parcel referred to as the Aboagye Acquisition near the north east corner of Johnson Park. Orrin C. Stearns Park is a 3-acre park within the Aldebaran residential subdivision. This park provides areas for outdoor passive use, informal picnic areas and a beach. The third private park is Armstrong Park – a 139-acre park associated with the S.C. Johnson corporate development. This private park provides



Figure 2-1. In the design preference survey, highly landscaped streets with informal walking paths (above) were preferred over streets with few pedestrian amenities and limited landscaping (below).



the following facilities for the S.C. Johnson employees: one soccer field, play fields, playground equipment, two league softball fields, two sandlot softball fields, four tennis courts, miniature golf, golf driving range, and a sand volleyball court. There are also informal group picnicking areas and hiking trails.

Proposed Parkland

The images in Figure 2-2 show the type of parkland preferred by residents. The Village Park and Open Space Plan (prepared by SEWRPC) recommends that hiking and biking trail be established within the Root River Parkway. According to the Park and Open Space Plan, this neighborhood is not adequately served by a baseball diamond, basketball courts, general playfield, and playground. The Park and Open Space Plan proposes three parks for this area. In addition, the plan has proposed that the Village work cooperatively with Racine Co., WISDOT, and other agencies to develop a bicycle and pedestrian route and trail system, which includes a proposed trail within the Root River Parkway.

Critical Species Habitat

SEWRPC has identified seven areas of critical species habitat within the C4 neighborhood study area. A detailed description of the areas and SEWRPC's recommendations are contained in Appendix EE.

Visual Character

Scenic Views and Rural Character

Scenic view and the rural character of this neighborhood were identified as very important to the residents. A key feature of this neighborhood is its rolling hills. Much of the residential development has been nestled in wooded areas – existing mature trees were protected and maintained during the area's development. Therefore, even at high points within the area, one's views are shortened. A second, less visible feature of this area is the Root River. The river channel is at the bottom of a relatively deep ravine, and there are few instances where the river itself is visible from the roadway.

Historic Resources

Several sites within this neighborhood have been identified as historic structures. Identification of these structures is the result of a preliminary inventory of historic buildings and structures in Caledonia built before 1900. The list is not necessarily inclusive of the historic sites in the Village (Figure 2-3). The list includes only residential properties. Civic buildings, commercial buildings and other tax exempt properties such as churches and cemeteries are not included on this preliminary list. Other significant structures should be researched and added to the map in the Appendix. These structures are in the process of being field verified by the Village's Historical Society.



Figure 2-2. In the design preference survey, less formal open spaces (above) were preferred over more formal park areas (below).



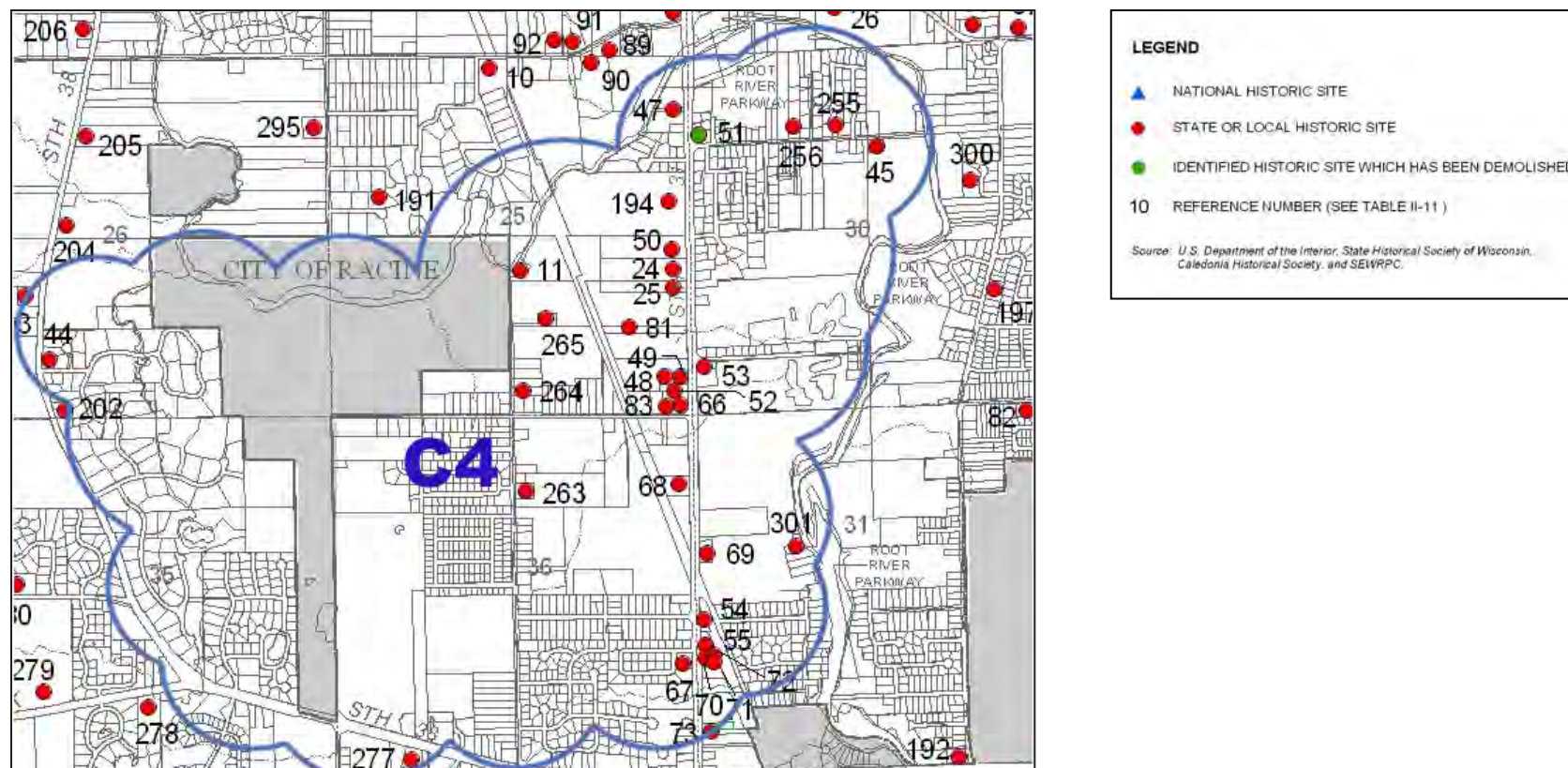


Figure 2-3. Known and Potential Significant Historic Sites in the C-4 Neighborhood.

Social and Economic

Residential Land Use

The majority of developable land within this neighborhood is residential. Three subdivisions have been recently approved and the plans have been superimposed on the aerial photograph of the neighborhood. There are several other areas where additional residential development could occur. Residents of the neighborhood are concerned that new development would disturb the rural character they enjoy in the neighborhood. Figure 2-4 illustrates the type of residential development that residents hope to see in the neighborhood.

Institutional Land Use

Grace Baptist Church owns a large piece of institutional property within this neighborhood. As the site is not fully developed, many residents were concerned that the site be developed in a compatible manner with the surrounding neighborhood. The Village and County have reviewed a master plan for this site. Any future development should follow the approved master plan.

Park and Recreational Land Use

The two major parks in the area are not owned and operated by the Village of Caledonia. Johnson Park, as noted earlier is owned and maintained by the City of Racine and Armstrong Park is privately owned. It is critical that the future of these parks be protected as green space, even if ownership or control of the property changes.



Figure 2-4. The above residential images were among the highest rated in the design preference survey. The image below was among the lowest rated images.



Design Preference Survey

Figures 2-5 and 2-6 depict the results of the Design Preference Survey that was conducted for the C4 Neighborhood. At the end of the Design Preference Survey, the audience was asked to discuss the pros and cons of each image.



Figure 2-5. The design preference survey results indicated a preference for higher quality, pedestrian friendly signage (right). The above images were the lowest ranked in the signage category.



Figure 2-6. Commercial buildings with high quality architecture and pedestrian friendly amenities were among the highest rated commercial images in the design preference survey (above). Buildings that lacked landscaping or quality architectural design were among the lowest rated images (below).



2.3 EXISTING LAND USE PLAN

Figure 2-7 is the Village's Land Use Plan for the C4 Neighborhood Area. The primary land uses include low density residential (0.7 – 2.2 dwelling units per acre), park and open space.

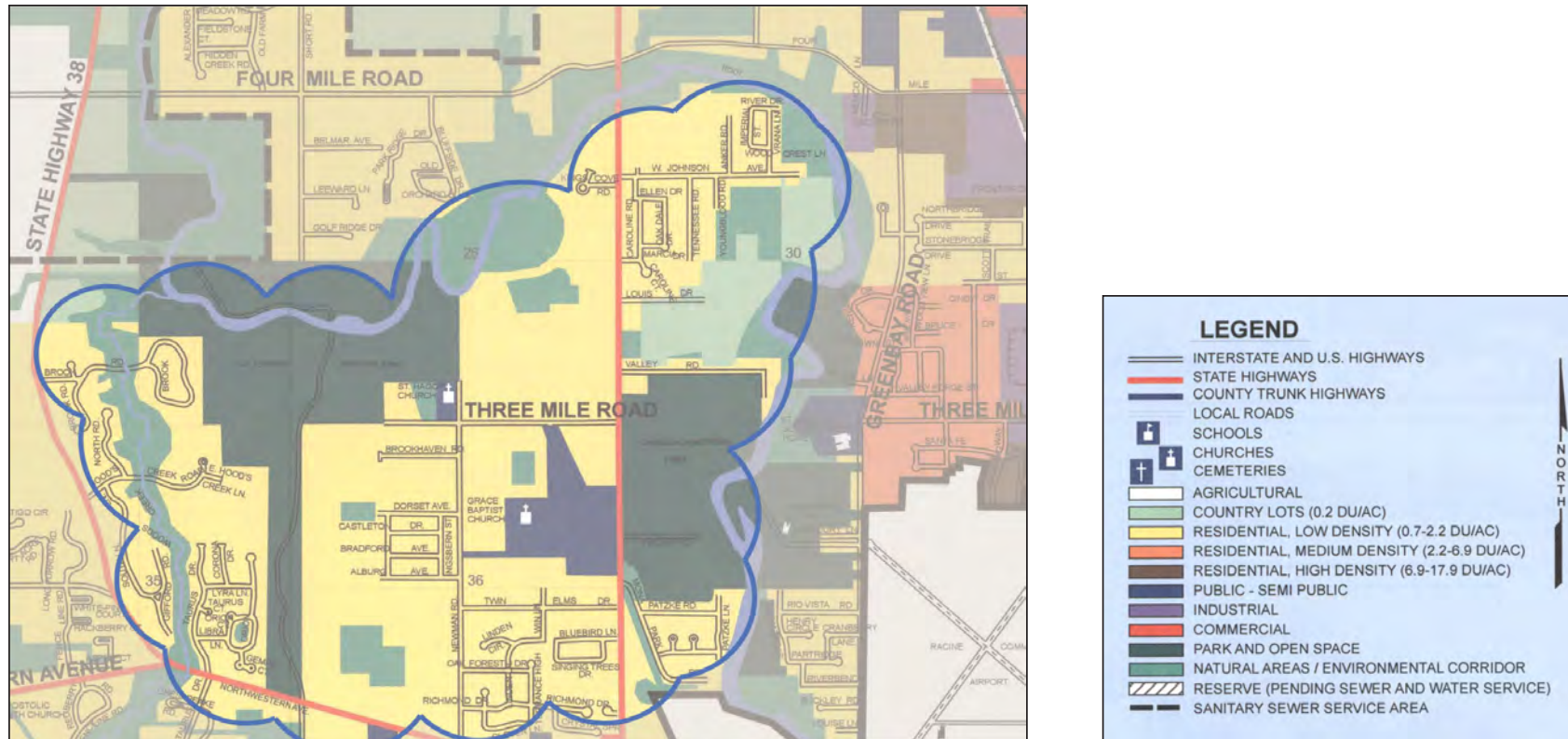


Figure 2-7. Existing Land Use Plan.


2.4 DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES




Neighborhood Plan Subareas

In order to describe the neighborhood planning issues in detail, the Johnson Park Neighborhood has been subdivided into the following areas (Figure 2-8).

- A. West of Johnson Park
- B. North of Hwy. 38 between Johnson Park and Hwy 31

- C. East of Hwy. 31, North of Armstrong Park
- D. East of Hwy 31, South of Armstrong Park
- E. Hwy 38 Corridor
- F. Hwy 31 Corridor

The plan illustration that accompanies these subarea descriptions is intended to be used as a guide for future development and illustrate possible connections within the neighborhood and the surrounding community. On the plan diagram, public access point connections are indicated with a  symbol. These include critical

points that should be protected by the Village of Caledonia as it plans for its future. The proposed public right of way connections are indicated with a    symbol indicating conceptual road alignments. The blue arrow symbol represents options for future connections that should be established if the area is developed. It is essential to note that these alignments are intended to be used as a guide for development, and must undergo several action steps before implementation.

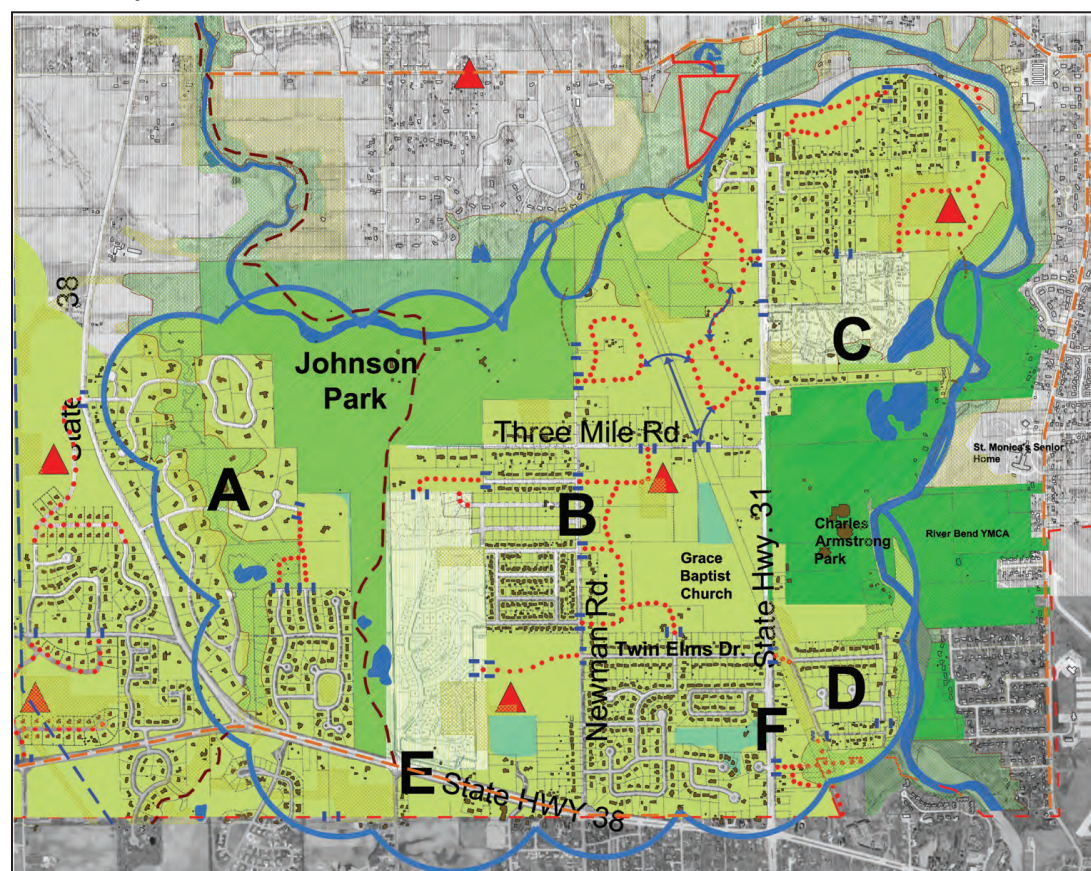


Figure 2-8. Johnson Park Neighborhood Subareas.



A. West of Johnson Park

Goals:

Create opportunities for development that follow the Village's Conservation Subdivision Ordinance.

Protect environmental features in this area.

Identify critical points where 'options' for connections and linkages need to be protected to create an internal street system that provides a safer, efficient, and more effective circulation system (Figure 2-9).

Issues:

Currently the three subdivisions in this neighborhood are completely disconnected from one another. Each subdivision has only one main egress point onto STH 38. Providing some linkage between the subdivisions via infill residential development would provide alternate egress routes within the subdivisions. Residents living on Hood's Creek Rd. expressed concern that linkage would be detrimental to their subdivision. In addition, there is insufficient linkage of these residential areas to parkway and Johnson Park. The Aldebaran subdivision provides one pedestrian link to the park and Auburn Hills to the east has plans for two pedestrian connections.

Residents in this area have identified traffic speed and visibility of oncoming traffic on STH 38 as an issue to be addressed. The scenic views along STH 38 have also been identified by residents as worthy of preservation.

The Village's Park and Open Space Plan, recommends that the 20-acre Hoods Creek Swamp be acquired by the Village. This area is located along both sides of Hood's Creek

just north of Brooks Road. The area has been designated as a Critical Species Habitat because SEWRPC has noted the occurrence of red trillium (*Trillium recurvatum*) within this environmental community.

Action Steps:

1. Study ways of creating necessary vehicular rights-of-way to connect existing subdivisions. Explore options that allow local emergency access only between the subdivisions to deter cut through traffic.

2. Conduct a feasibility study to determine if the Village can acquire, or otherwise conserve, the Critical Species Habitat identified as Hoods Creek Swamp.

3. Work with the City of Racine to provide additional pedestrian and bicycle connections to Johnson Park consistent with ongoing operation of the golf course.

4. Ensure compliance to the Village's Conservation Subdivision Ordinance.



Figure 2-9. This diagram represents one conceptual site plan for West of Johnson Park. For additional key symbols, see Page 9.

B. North of State Hwy. 38 between Johnson Park and State Hwy. 31

Goals:

Create opportunities for development that follow the Village's Conservation Subdivision Ordinance.

Provide park space within this residential neighborhood.

Protect and identify additional environmental features and scenic views in this area.

Ensure future development maintains the rural character of this area.

Issues:

The Village's Park and Open Space plan has identified the need for two neighborhood scale parks in this subarea. The first is a 10-acre site in the area south of Alburg Ave. (Figure 2-10) and west of Twin Elms Dr. (proposed for acquisition for playfield, playground, 2 tennis courts). The second is a 15-acre site south of Three Mile Road, west of Newman Road (proposed for acquisition for basketball courts, picnic shelter, playfield, playground, and sandlot softball diamond). There are several undeveloped parcels of land where infill residential development would be allowed. However, residents are concerned that increased development would diminish the rural character of the neighborhood.

Newman Road is currently a well-traveled road and often unsafe for bicyclists or pedestrians at peak travel times. With increased development in this area, this problem will increase.

There are currently limited access points to the Root River in this neighborhood.

Action Steps:

1. Conduct a feasibility study to determine if the Village can acquire or otherwise conserve the Parkland identified in the Park and Open Space Plan.

2. Ensure that any proposed subdivisions adhere to the Village's conservation subdivision ordinance and identify significant environmental features to preserve.

3. Work with Racine County to identify and purchase critical species habitats as well as bicycle and pedestrian trail systems.

4. Identify connection areas that could be used to cross the Root River via a pedestrian footbridge to connect proposed trail systems.

5. Monitor traffic counts on Newman Road and when needed, reconfigure the road by developing a cross section design that preserves its rural road character while providing a safe place for pedestrians and bicyclists. Figure 2-11 illustrates one possibility for this type of roadway design.

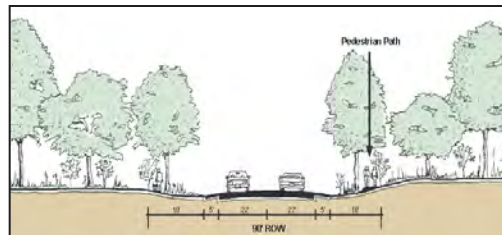


Figure 2-11. One possible road cross section design for Newman Road. The section includes two driving lanes, drainage way and pedestrian paths.



Figure 2-10. One possible design providing park space and maintaining public access points. For additional key symbols, see Page 9.

C. East of State Hwy. 31 from northern boundary of Armstrong Park to the Root River

Goals:

Create opportunities for development that follow the Village's Conservation Subdivision Ordinance.

Provide park space within this residential neighborhood.

Protect environmental features and scenic views in this area.

Ensure existing private parkland remains designated for recreational uses.

Issues:

The Village's Park and Open Space Plan has identified the need for one neighborhood scale park in this subarea (Figure 2-12). The 15-acre site in the area south of Johnson Ave. and east of Youngblood Rd. is proposed for acquisition of recreational amenities such as basketball courts, a softball diamond, two playfields, and a playground. This site would also include picnic shelters and restrooms.

The east end of Johnson Avenue provides the best and most open view of the Root River within this neighborhood. This valuable view could be enhanced to capitalize on the area's tie to the landscape.

Armstrong Park is currently a privately owned recreational area. Every effort must be made by the Village to ensure that this land remains designated for park and recreation regardless of ownership of the land.

East/West access is very limited in this area due to the configuration of the river. The

extension of Three Mile Rd. or Valley Road over the river was considered as part of this planning process. Due to the apparent economic infeasibility of extending either of these roads, bridging the river is not a recommended action at this time but could be revisited in the future.

Action Steps:

1. Conduct a feasibility study to determine if the Village can acquire the parkland identified in the Park and Open Space Plan.

2. Ensure that any proposed subdivisions would adhere to the Village's conservation subdivision ordinance.

3. Work with Racine County to identify and purchase critical species habitats as well as bicycle and pedestrian trail systems and pedestrian bridges over the Root River.



Figure 2-12. Conceptual site plan for East of State Highway 31. For additional key symbols, see Page 9.

D. East of State Hwy. 31, South of Armstrong Park

Goals:

Create opportunities for development that follow the Village's Conservation Subdivision Ordinance.

Ensure development is in accordance with the Village's Land Use Plan which indicated residential uses in this area.

Issues:

Access to this area is limited due to the high traffic volume on both STH 31 and STH 38.

This is a multi-jurisdictional area, with the actual intersection of STH 31 and STH 38 located in the Village of Mt. Pleasant. The County, the Village of Caledonia, the Village of Mt. Pleasant, and the State Department of Transportation have studied this area and concur that access to this site should be limited to STH 31 and that there should be one main access point, eliminating multiple access points along STH 31 (Figure 2-13).

Action Steps:

1. Limit access to this area to one point off of State Highway 31. Work with WISDOT to determine requirements for access points onto State Highways.
2. Identify costs associated with the relocation of Mona Park Road to align with Twin Elms Dr. west of STH 31.

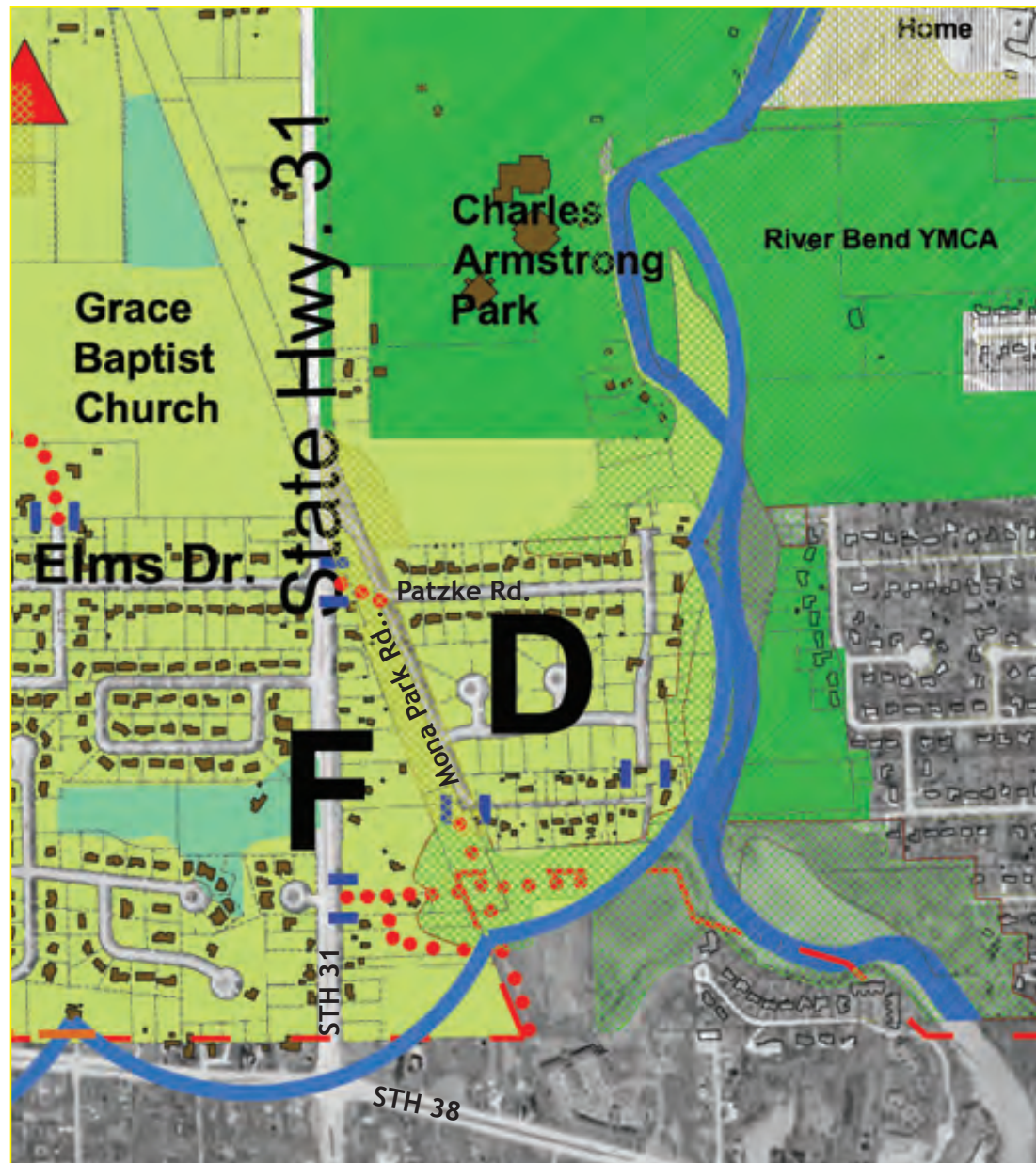


Figure 2-13. Conceptual site plan for East of State Highway 31, South of Armstrong Park. For additional key symbols, see Page 9.

E. State Hwy. 38 Corridor

Goals:

Preserve scenic views along the Corridor.

Ensure consistency with intergovernmental land use and zoning ordinances.

Create opportunities for development that follow the Village's Conservation Subdivision Ordinance.

Issues:

State Highway 38 is under the jurisdiction of WISDOT. Any changes to the roadway must be done cooperatively with WISDOT.

The scenic view traveling north on Highway 38, opposite Hoods Creek Road is at the crest of a hill, and the view towards the west, is across a vast undeveloped agricultural field. This offers perhaps the longest view within the neighborhood. In addition, views from STH 31 to CTH K are also scenic and should be protected. These points include the view of Johnson Park, the natural buffer of the Auburn Hills and Jamestown subdivisions as well as views of Hoods Creek.

Currently this section of STH 38 is not pedestrian or bicycle friendly.

Action Steps:

1. Work cooperatively with WISDOT to maintain the positive aspects, scenic views and rural character of STH 38.

2. Work cooperatively with WISDOT to provide some pedestrian or bicycle amenities along STH 38.

F. State Hwy. 31 Corridor

Goals:

Improve the appearance and character of STH 31.

Provide safe pedestrian or bicycle rights of way.

Issues:

State Highway 31 is under the jurisdiction of WISDOT. Any changes to the roadway must be done cooperatively with WISDOT.

The current cross-section is very wide and lacks a green median or substantial landscape buffer.

The intersection of STH 31 and the River provides some of the most scenic views in the area. The road is very wide and descends into the river valley, surrounded by mature woodlands on both sides. At the top of the hill, before the descent, drivers have a long view of the forest, river valley, and crest of the opposite side of the valley. Views to the water while crossing the bridge are limited due to the present guardrail.

Traveling south on Highway 31 (near the intersection with Highway 38), the road dips

into the valley of a wooded drainage way of the Root River. The view stands out because the driver sees the drainage way from above (up the hill) and experiences the valley driving through it. Portions of the area's ravines are visible from the road.

Recently the Village has felt increased pressure for commercial development along STH 31. The Village Land Use plan and previous Neighborhood Planning by Racine County support residential uses.

Action Steps:

1. Work cooperatively with WISDOT to change the cross section design of the roadway. The cross section design should be pedestrian and bicycle friendly. A green boulevard should also be considered, as is the case on STH 31 south of Four Mile Road. The following illustration (Figure 2-14) shows one possible way to incorporate pedestrian and bicycle facilities on STH 31.

2. Follow the current Village land use plan and County Neighborhood Plan for this area to maintain residential character.

3. Create an access control plan to limit access points onto STH 31.

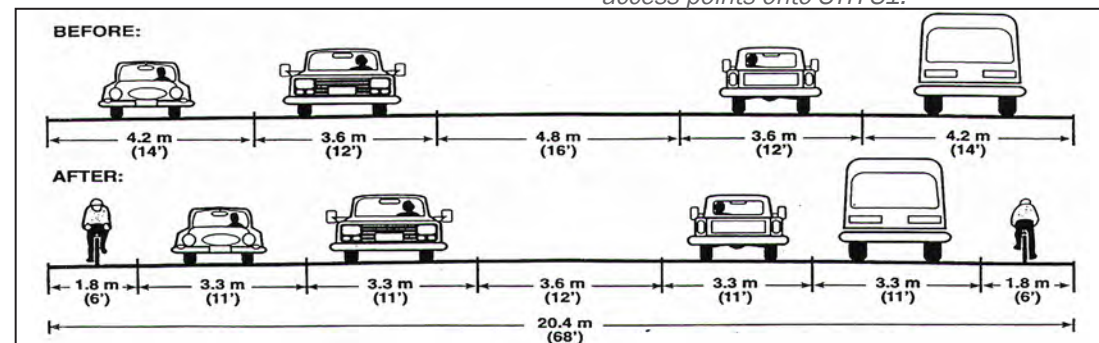


Figure 2-14. Modified from original diagram source: Oregon Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, 1995

