

# SOUTH SHERIDAN REVITALIZATION PLAN



Waukegan, Illinois



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# SOUTH SHERIDAN REVITALIZATION PLAN

WAUKEGAN, IL  
AUGUST 2016



**WAUKEGAN**  
City of Progress *Illinois*



PREPARED BY  
PERKINS+WILL

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Special thanks to the following for their support of and valuable contributions to the South Sheridan Revitalization Plan:

**Wayne Motley**, Mayor

**Maria Bedolla LaCour**, City Clerk

**Dr. John Schwab**, Treasurer

**Sam Cunningham**, Alderman First Ward

**Patrick Seger**, Alderman Second Ward

**Greg Moasio**, Alderman Third Ward

**David Villalobos**, Alderman Fourth Ward

**Edith Newsome**, Alderman Fifth Ward

**Larry TenPas**, Alderman Sixth Ward

**Lisa May**, Alderman Seventh Ward

**William Valko**, Alderman Eighth Ward

**Ann Taylor**, Alderman Ninth Ward

This plan was prepared by Development Concepts, Inc. and Perkins+Will for the City of Waukegan in consultation with stakeholders and neighborhood residents.

# CONTENTS

<b>1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>2. PROJECT OVERVIEW .....</b>	<b>10</b>
The Study Area: Overview	11
Downtown-Lakefront Vision	14
Catalyst Site	16
Regional Ties	18
<b>3. EXISTING CONDITIONS.....</b>	<b>20</b>
History and Context	21
Demographic Overview	24
Housing and occupancy	27
Blight Analysis	30
Landscape Patterns	34
<b>4. DESIGN FRAMEWORK.....</b>	<b>38</b>
Lakefront Conservation	40
Sheridan / Streets	42
Multifamily / Mixed-Use	44
Single-Family / Neighborhood Nodes	46
Connections	48
Catalyst Site Development	52
<b>5. PROJECTS AND PROGRAMS.....</b>	<b>61</b>
Neighborhood Revitalization	62
Neighborhood Economic Development Initiatives	66
Opportunity Hub Initiatives	69
Catalyst Project Initiatives	70
<b>6. APPENDIX.....</b>	<b>75</b>

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Context and History

Up until the mid-20th century, Waukegan's industrial Lake Michigan waterfront represented expanding manufacturing capacity, good paying jobs and a thriving working class community whose residents could afford to take care of their families and be assured of a bright future. Today, the Lake Michigan waterfront sits idle. Jobs, homeownership, and personal income have all declined following the many years of prosperity. The onset of the 21st century finds business, job and quality of life opportunities elsewhere in Lake County and the greater Chicago region. Waukegan is working hard to address basic needs while creating its new destiny.

The [South Sheridan Revitalization Plan \(SSRP\)](#) identifies one of the ideal locations to initiate the rejuvenation of a community with a proud history—one that can, once again, contribute to the economic well-being of the region. The South Sheridan Neighborhood is, in many ways, the poster child for what once worked so well in Waukegan but no longer does. The industrial factories along the lakefront, which supported economic vitality are long gone. So are most of the businesses lining South Sheridan Road, a major regional thoroughfare that extends north from Chicago to Waukegan on its way to the Wisconsin border. Finally, the single-family homes that formed the foundations of the community have been largely converted to rentals. These homes are aging, as are the public housing units built in the 1960s to provide safe and decent housing options for lower-income residents. This plan aims to provide a multi-faceted approach to the revitalization of the area with focus on redevelopment of catalyst sites along South Sheridan Road.

## Lakefront-Downtown Master Plan (2003)

In 2002, the Waukegan community launched a yearlong effort to master plan the future for its lakefront and downtown. Adopted in 2003 as a 21st Century vision for Waukegan's Downtown and Lakefront, the Master Plan targeted Waukegan's south lakefront and South Sheridan Road among the critical redevelopment components. The plan envisioned a new lakefront neighborhood with open spaces and retail amenities serving existing and future residents. The lakefront would once again be a relevant part of the neighborhood's environment, providing contemporary recreational and aesthetic relief to the older urban community.

The plan focused on South Sheridan Road as a redevelopment zone, highlighting opportunities for new businesses and services to the underserved neighborhood. The historic corridor was identified for multi-modal upgrades to better serve neighborhood residents as well as commuters to Waukegan's downtown, Metra Station and points beyond.

## The South Sheridan Revitalization Plan (SSRP)

The SSRP utilizes the Lakefront-Downtown Master Plan as the foundation for creating new opportunities in the South Sheridan Neighborhood. Unlike the 2003 Master Plan, the SSRP incorporates the neighborhood to the west of Sheridan Road as part of the revitalization effort. It is clear, neither the lakefront nor the South Sheridan corridor will prosper without being a part of a healthy and economically viable neighborhood.

The south lakefront, South Sheridan Road, and their neighborhood to the west have all suffered from significant disinvestment over the past 30+ years. Industrial development along the south lakefront has completely disappeared. What has been left behind are a series of brownfields (land with real or perceived environmental contamination) and unsightly vacant land parcels overtaken by vegetation. South Sheridan Road hosts a mix of uses ranging from empty lots and storefronts to dated public housing units and several larger neighborhood institutions. The residential neighborhood is filled with single-family homes and some small multifamily structures. Forty-six percent of the homes were built over 77 years ago. Their age and the fact that over 66% are now rental properties has led to a growing long-term maintenance and repair issue. The combined 30 years of persistent disinvestment in these three areas requires a well-formulated redevelopment response if the property is to be reclaimed and able to sustain the type of long term reinvestment program which is required to assure an adequate revitalization response.

Perhaps the biggest challenge in activating a meaningful redevelopment program in the South Sheridan corridor area is the lack of clear market indicators to help inform a reinvestment strategy. On every front, the South Sheridan corridor neighborhood underperforms the City of Waukegan, and the discrepancy becomes even more significant when compared to the rest of Lake County or the State of Illinois. Household incomes in the eastern area (Census Tract 8623) are just less than the rest of Lake County. Moreover, in the eastern half of the neighborhood the household poverty rate in 2014 was 46%. Neighborhood unemployment was 20% for the same time period. Residential vacancy hit a high of 26% in 2010 and sat at 20% in 2014. The good news is that the population did grow slightly from 2010 to 2014 as investors purchased vacant homes and converted them into rental properties that attracted new residents to the neighborhood. Going forward, the Study Area is projected to continue to lose population following earlier population trends from 2000 to 2010. Between

2000 and 2013 approximately 75% of the residents now living in the South Sheridan neighborhood lived somewhere else. The neighborhood transitioned significantly during this period of time, ethnically, economically and in housing tenure (ownership vs rental). There is no indication that this broad-based downward trend will abate if left unattended.

It is important to remember that the South Sheridan corridor neighborhood's decline occurred not only during the recession, but during the economic boom of 2000-2008 and the recovery years of 2012-2016. Clearly, other areas of Lake County, Illinois and the midwest are currently enjoying modest but steady economic growth. The South Sheridan neighborhood is fortunate to have wonderful views of the Lake Michigan waterfront, proximity to downtown Waukegan, and a robust bus and train transit system which grants access to regional services and opportunities. It appears that the area's economic upheaval combined with a neighborhood in major transition has served to impede an organized response designed to take advantage of its inherent assets.

In order for the South Sheridan neighborhood to establish a clear path to successful revitalization, it must fully utilize its assets and opportunities. The real estate maxim, "Location, Location, Location", is clearly in play for the South Sheridan neighborhood. Its proximity to two Metra stations, active Pace bus lines, and a bus transfer hub provide excellent mobility to regional assets, opportunities and amenities. Within a five-minute drive there are over 14,000 jobs, ranging from entry level service employment to higher paying industrial and professional positions. Downtown is within a 15-20 minute walk providing convenient access to a broad array of Lake County and City of Waukegan services, College of Lake County education offerings and numerous cultural amenities. The Waukegan Park District has invested in several parks and open spaces including the unique ravine park system which runs through the neighborhood, and greater Waukegan to the lakefront with beautiful topography and natural features. Of course, the former industrial Lake Michigan waterfront is waiting to be reclaimed and integrated in a manner that creates a lakefront community similar to Jackson Park in Chicago or Lake Park in Milwaukee. There is an opportunity to retain the best of the industrial grit that has historically characterized this community and mix it with a lakefront aesthetic which recognizes the new mission that the lakefront is now charged with achieving for the neighborhood and greater Waukegan. The goal should be to create an authentic South Sheridan neighborhood that works as well as the original version once did. To honor the past through careful planning, design and execution and to

FIG 1.1 SOUTH SHERIDAN NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION FRAMEWORK



welcome regional and national market opportunities creating long-term prosperity for existing residents and businesses as well as those that are new to the area.

The one very visible neighborhood market indicator that presents itself is the demand for high-quality affordable rental housing. As mentioned earlier, many of the South Sheridan neighborhood's single-family homes have been converted from their intended use as owner-occupied residences to rental properties. Too often, this conversion has occurred through landlords that too often are not residents of the neighborhood. Many times the renters are new to the neighborhood as well. Over time, the sense of community has disappeared, as well as the motivation to take care of and maintain property and community relationships. Over a 30-year period the unfortunate outcome is that the majority of single-family rental properties are poorly maintained due to the age of the housing stock, inconsistent maintenance and persistent resident turn over.

The SSRP process has concluded that a short-term market opportunity exists that focuses on reclaiming the neighborhood's single-family housing stock while at the same time introducing well-designed, contemporary, professionally managed affordable multifamily housing as an early new land use. There are significant pockets of vacant land and underutilized properties along Sheridan Road that are excellent candidates for this recommended land use. In addition, the 120-unit Barwell Manor, a 50+ year old public housing project has outlived its useful life given its construction typology. The Waukegan Housing Authority is planning to develop a replacement strategy for this complex. The intersection of Sheridan Road and South Avenue, with Barwell Manor to the northeast and northwest along with significant City of Waukegan owned land to the southeast, provide a strong catalyst opportunity which, if acted upon in a deliberate manner, begins to address several important neighborhood revitalization objectives. This site potentially represents up to 20 acres of underperforming distressed real estate fronting on Sheridan Road. The City of Waukegan has initiated discussions regarding the potential redevelopment of this site which resulted in the establishment of the SSRP process. Creating a quality mixed-use, mixed-income development program that primarily addresses the strong demand for affordable housing on this site will serve as a visible beacon representing the future opportunities that are present in the South Sheridan neighborhood.

This catalyst project opportunity must be undertaken not in isolation but within the context of a comprehensive neighborhood revitalization program. Reconverting the neighborhood's single-family homes to home ownership opportunities should be planned and programmed for. In order to do this,

existing partnerships which include the City of Waukegan, Lake County and Habitat for Humanity, to name a few, will need to be strengthened and additional resources committed. The large number of abandoned neighborhood homes provides an existing initial inventory to work with in accomplishing this objective. Assisting neighborhood residents that are on the borderline of qualifying for home mortgages in this more stringent financing environment will help families and individuals that represent an excellent early market for homeownership.

Expanding the homeownership market will depend on planning and introducing several key initiatives. The SSRP identifies specific projects and programs to be considered as part of one or more of the following broad-based key initiatives: Neighborhood Revitalization, Economic Development, Opportunity Hub, and Catalyst Project. There are 20+ programs and projects that are recommended to be developed and executed over a 10-20 year neighborhood revitalization effort. The programs and projects are designed to engage the public sector (City, County, State and Federal governments), the private sector (developers, property owners, financial institutions), and the neighborhood (residents and businesses), both short-term and long-term, to transform an economically depressed neighborhood into one of choice and opportunity. The SSRP will show significant physical and economic results within the first five years with increasing sustainable outcomes moving forward over a 20-year period. The final outcome will be a dynamic lakefront neighborhood that will welcome the business and residential market back to a revitalized full-service South Sheridan neighborhood.

**FIG 1.2 CATALYST SITE PHASE I CONCEPT PLAN**

- 1 Existing Apartment Building
- 2 Proposed Mixed-Use Building
- 3 Kennard Street Extension
- 4 Conservation Area / Parkland
- 5 New Pedestrian Connection
- 6 Multifamily Residential Buildings
- 7 Secured Bike Storage
- 8 Walk-Up Flats
- 9 Townhouses
- 10 Green Buffer
- 11 Pedestrian-Activated Signal
- 12 Linear Park
- 13 Pedestrian Bridge To Lake
- 14 Cottage Community
- 15 New Sheridan Streetscape





## **INTRODUCTION**

THE STUDY AREA: OVERVIEW

DOWNTOWN-LAKEFRONT VISION

CATALYST SITES

REGIONAL TIES

# INTRODUCTION

## THE STUDY AREA: OVERVIEW

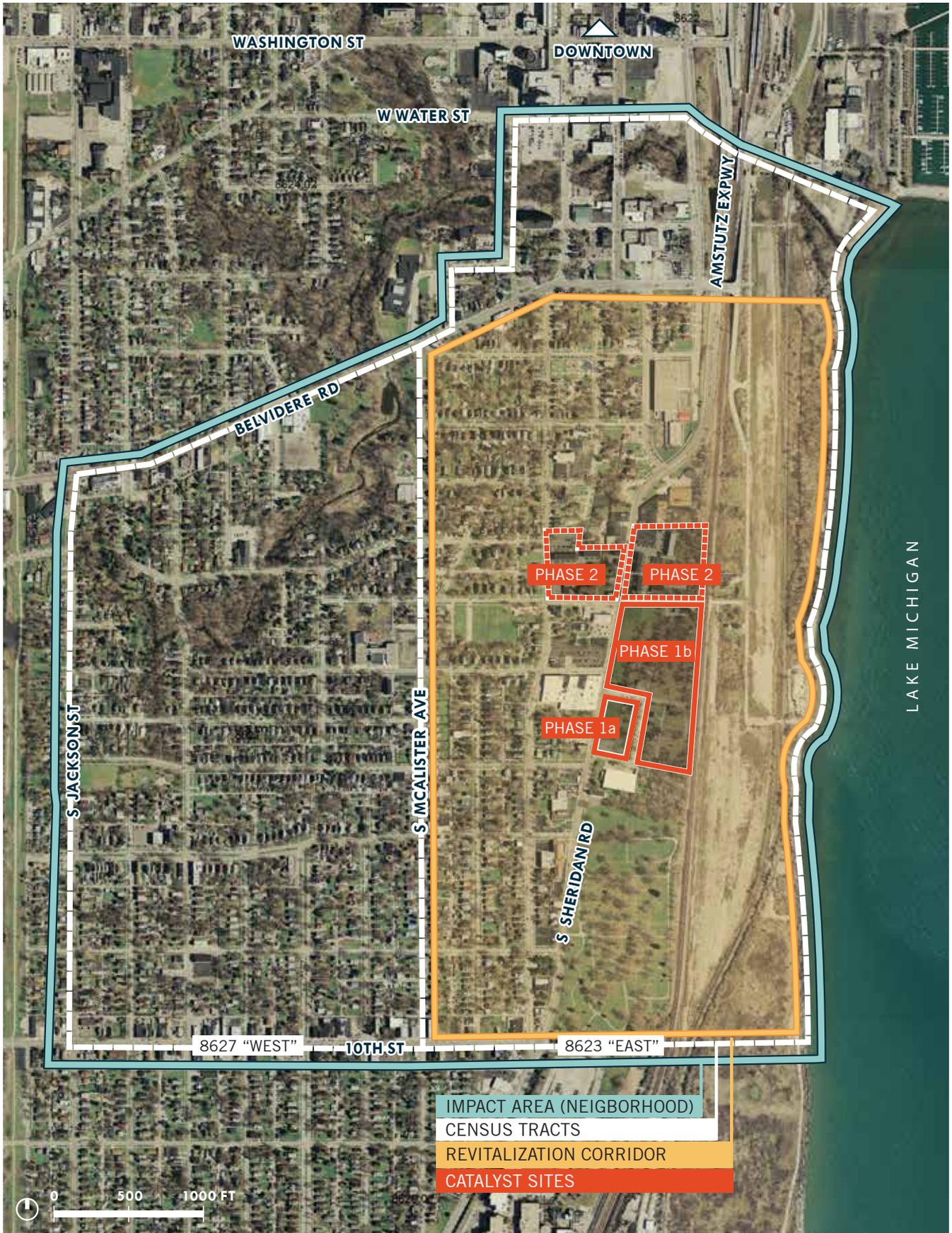
The Revitalization Plan focuses on the South Sheridan corridor in Waukegan, with a broader impact area referred to as the South Sheridan Neighborhood.

The [South Sheridan Neighborhood](#) comprises historic residential neighborhoods and former industrial land flanking South Sheridan Road immediately to the south of Belvidere Road and Water Street—the southern edge of downtown Waukegan. The neighborhood boundary extends east from South Jackson Street to Lake Michigan, and south to 10th Street, which marks Waukegan’s border with the City of North Chicago (See Fig 2.1 on page 14). The neighborhood includes most of Waukegan’s Ward 1, and census tracts 8623 and 8627.

The [South Sheridan Revitalization Corridor](#) includes neighborhood blocks in close proximity to South Sheridan Road, as well as large swaths of vacant and underutilized land once occupied by factories along the lakeshore. This section of South Sheridan is largely occupied with auto-oriented businesses and vacant storefronts, with the notable exception of NOSCO, a leading pharmaceutical packaging company and the Family Dollar, a variety store selling discount grocery items and household goods. The area is home to numerous educational, civic and religious institutions including Shiloh Baptist Church, St. Martin de Porres High School, Boys and Girls Club of Lake County, and the Salvation Army. Oakwood Cemetery (est. 1851), one of the City’s oldest historic landmarks, doubles as a park with views of Lake Michigan from atop its bluff. From here, the topography drops about thirty feet down to the flats and the lake shore (See Fig 2.2 on page 15).

The Revitalization Plan provides specific development recommendations for the [Catalyst Site](#)—contiguous vacant parcels located north of Oakwood Cemetery along South Sheridan Road. The recommendations build on the [2003 Downtown-Lakefront Redevelopment Plan](#), which called for the development of a new lakefront neighborhood in this area, with open space connections north to the Harborfront. The catalyst site is comprised of aging public housing community (Barwell Manor), 6 acres of city owned land, and another 6 acres of mostly vacant land and a 6 residential structures. The Barwell Manor property when combined with the nearly 12 acres of redevelopment land provides an excellent location to initiate the Sheridan Road and neighborhood renaissance.

FIG 2.1 STUDY GEOGRAPHIES



**FIG 2.2 SOUTH SHERIDAN REVITALIZATION CORRIDOR AND CATALYST SITES**



- South Sheridan Revitalization Corridor
- Catalyst Sites
- Buildings, General
- Schools / Govt Buildings
- Religious Institutions
- Park / Open Space
- Water
- State Routes / Freeways
- Major Streets
- Streets
- Pedestrian Paths
- Railroad
- Parcel Boundaries
- South Lakefront TIF
- City Boundary



## DOWNTOWN-LAKEFRONT VISION

The City of Waukegan adopted a comprehensive master plan for its Downtown and Lakefront in August 2003, following a nine-month process of evaluation, design, and public comment.

Entitled “**A 21st Century Vision for Waukegan’s Downtown and Lakefront**”, the master plan highlighted Waukegan’s three regional assets: its marina, its lakefront ecosystem, and its location on a regional rail line, as the foundations of a new economic future. It called for revitalization and densification of the historic downtown as the center of government, commerce, and tourism. The master plan also identified the opportunity for 200 acres of new development along the post-industrial lakefront, organized into five districts connected by trails and parks: Downtown, the Harborfront / Marina (abutting Downtown), the North Harbor, the North Lakefront, and the South Lakefront.

In March 2005, the City adopted an accompanying set of Design Guidelines to guide new development in downtown and along the lakefront. The Guidelines identify specific land uses, density regulations, and access criteria for each development district.

### South Lakefront Redevelopment

The downtown / lakefront Master Plan called for the transformation of Waukegan’s south lakefront—wide stretches of vacant, post-industrial lands—into a new residential neighborhood with a lakefront park and neighborhood retail. The following actions were recommended to unlock this redevelopment potential:

- Relocation of any remaining industrial uses that are not water-dependent to existing industrial districts near the airport and along transportation corridors;
- Investment in new infrastructure, including a pedestrian-scale network of streets to foster new development; and,
- Elimination of barriers between downtown and surrounding neighborhoods, including narrowing the Amstutz and decommissioning it as an expressway.

The Design Guidelines set a maximum height of 3 stories for the South Lakefront, and development densities ranging from 10 to 35 dwelling units per acre, depending on parcel location.

**FIG 2.3** AERIAL VIEW OF DOWNTOWN-LAKEFRONT VISION (SOUTH SHERIDAN NEIGHBORHOOD AT LEFT)



**FIG 2.4 SOUTH LAKEFRONT REDEVELOPMENT, AS SPECIFIED IN THE 2003 DOWNTOWN-LAKEFRONT MASTER PLAN**



- DOWNTOWN-LAKEFRONT MASTERPLAN:**
- Master Plan Area
  - Downtown
  - New Development Blocks
  - Park / Open Space
- EXISTING CONDITIONS**
- Park / Open Space
  - Water
  - Railroad
  - South Sheridan Corridor
  - South Lakefront TIF
  - City Boundary

## CATALYST SITE

The **Catalyst Site** comprises contiguous vacant parcels and six residential structures located north of Oakwood Cemetery along South Sheridan Road that have been identified in the **Downtown-Lakefront Master Plan** for residential development.

Presently, few market opportunities exist for the South Sheridan neighborhood except for the increasing need for affordable, high-quality rental housing with appropriate amenities and services. The South Sheridan neighborhood has transitioned from a primarily owner-occupied community to over two-thirds rental housing. Most of the rental housing is now in formerly single-family homes that were built to be purchased for long term home ownership. Affordable housing ranges from households earning as much as 120% of the area median income (\$91,200) to a family living on a poverty level income.

### New Affordable Housing

Providing affordable rental housing to a mix of household incomes in a manner that improves the quality and management of the neighborhood's multifamily product and enhances the design and aesthetics of the South Sheridan neighborhood is an achievable market-driven objective. The introduction of contemporary multifamily housing product to the South Sheridan market will improve the quality of life for existing Waukegan renter households while offering an opening to reclaim the neighborhood's single-family rental housing stock for home ownership. The key to implementing a successful affordable multifamily development strategy is to set high standards for the design, construction and management of each project. Too often the affordable housing product is produced with too much emphasis placed on reducing construction expense, thus developer risk and little to no priority on

how the new investment contributes to the revitalization of the community. Both factors must be fully addressed in order to ensure a positive outcome.

Sheridan Road contains an abundance of vacant and underutilized properties. Addressing the affordable housing demand on the corridor would activate now dormant and underperforming land as well as accomplish several important neighborhood revitalization objectives. Activating South Sheridan Road with an affordable housing development would have a significant positive impact on both potential lakefront investment and neighborhood redevelopment activity.

### Redevelopment of Barwell Manor Public Housing

The Waukegan Housing Authority is currently planning for the replacement of the 50+ year old 120-unit Barwell Manor Homes. The property sits on three sites that lie to the north, east, northwest and southwest of the South Avenue and Sheridan Road intersection. The City owns land to the southeast of the intersection and has offered this land for redevelopment. The land offered by the City to the successful bidder has resulted in the South Sheridan Revitalization Plan process.

The Barwell Manor Public Housing and city sites provide an excellent context for execution of a catalyst project on Sheridan Road. A catalyst project is designed to raise the bar for future development. It is also intended to be accomplished within a short time period – 18-36 months. This catalyst project could ultimately impact up to 20 acres of vacant land and distressed property as well approximately 1,500 feet of Sheridan Road street frontage, and set the context for future investment activity. This project proposes to support a mix of housing product types, affordable and market, as well as some level of retail, community services and open space.



**FIG 2.5** CATALYST SITE: PANORAMIC VIEWS SHOWING RELATION TO THE LAKEFRONT



## REGIONAL TIES

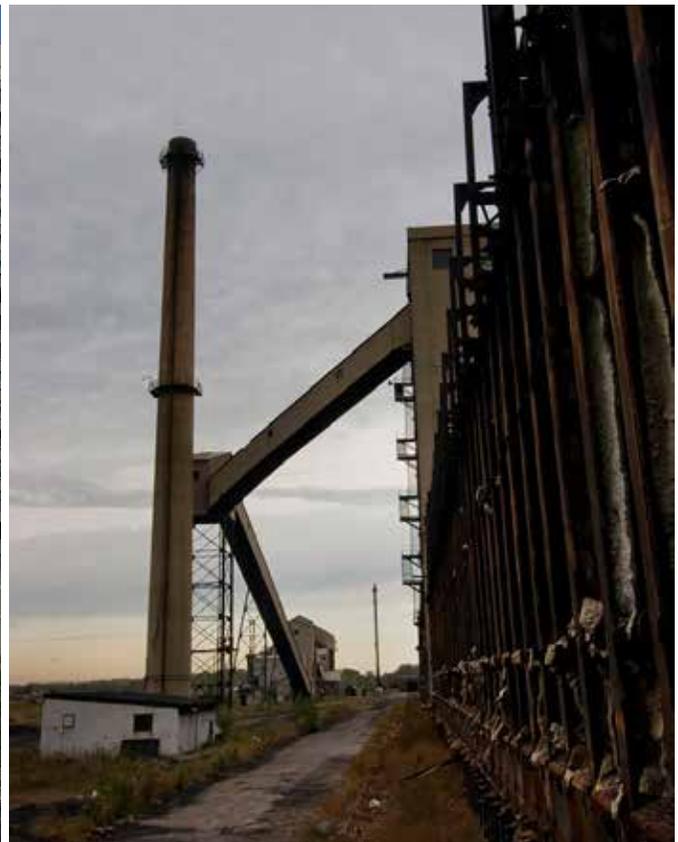
The South Sheridan project may seem localized to the southern half of Waukegan but it touches several regionally significant resources that have ramifications for the growth and design of the area, as well as for future planning initiatives that, at a minimum, involve adjacent communities. As with anything central to urban development, these resources originate in infrastructure – in this case Sheridan Road and the railway lines.

In addition to forming the backbone of the revitalization area, Sheridan Road and its ancillaries slice through layers of history and geography on their way from Downtown Chicago to the Wisconsin border – layers essential to understanding the region’s natural origins and evolution. In its earliest days, Sheridan Road was envisioned as an extension of Lake Shore Drive linking Chicago through the North Shore to Milwaukee – a regional “superhighway” for pioneer motorists. Local resistance and piecemeal construction drove the superhighway concept west to the Skokie Valley where it became U.S. 41 – part of the Dixie Highway, the great American route from the Atlantic coast to Lake Superior. In spirit though, Sheridan Road is the Dixie Highway. Its dialogue with Lake Michigan is not

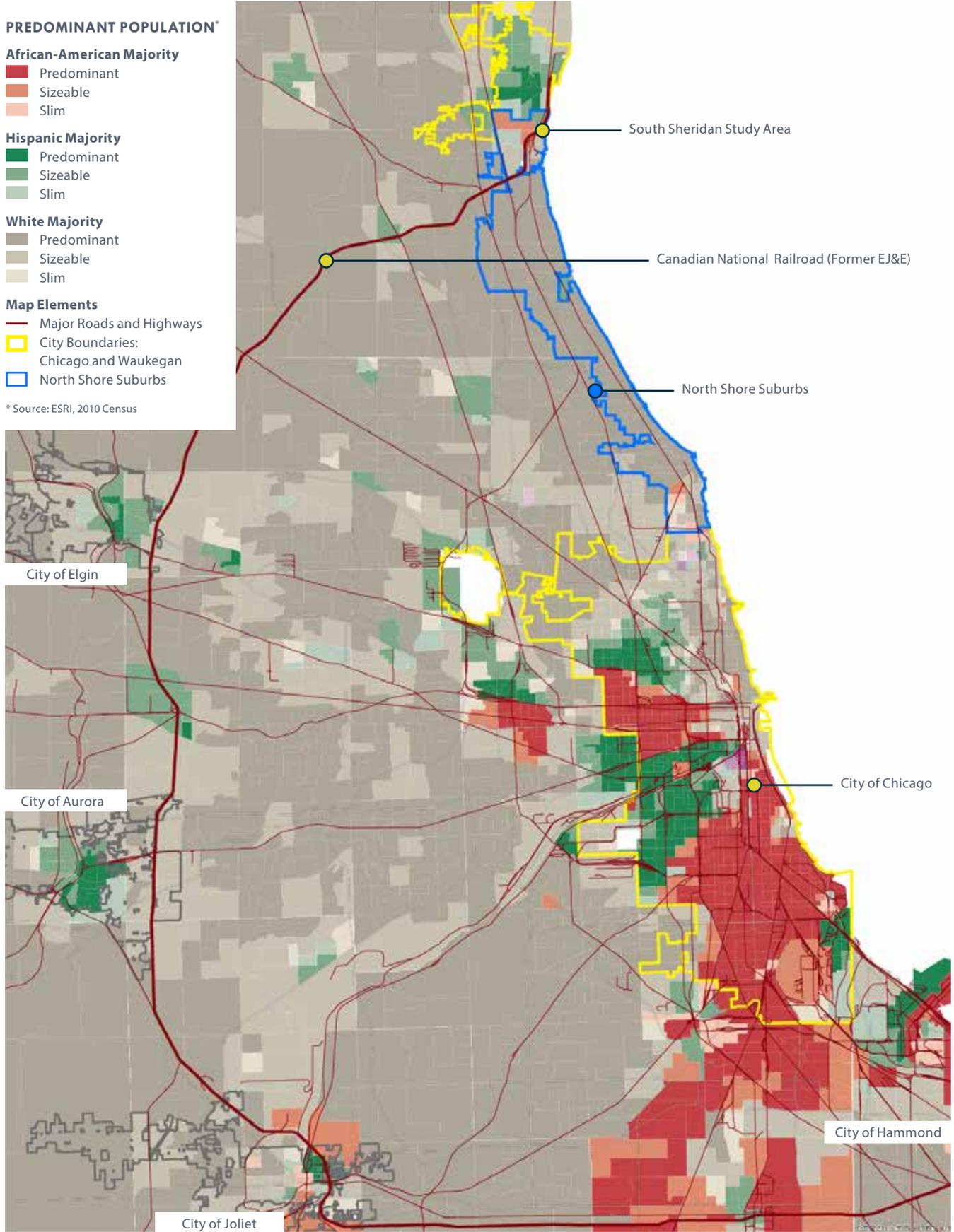
unlike U.S. 41 in Miami – glimpses of blue water between tall trees and striking buildings. Add to this the unique elements of wooded ravines, midwest neighborhoods and industrial architecture and you have the essence of the Great Lakes landscape: tough, utilitarian and poetically beautiful all at once.

Similarly, the railroads link other cities and towns that encapsulate the trajectory of the region’s economy – from heavy industry and raw materials, to professional services and knowledge. They also fold in the other Illinois landscape – that of the prairie and its forests and rivers. In particular the (former Elgin Joliet & Eastern line) Canadian National connects Waukegan to old steel and manufacturing cities and sites in Indiana and the Fox River Valley (Figure 2.7). These places hold pockets of working class communities similar to the South Sheridan neighborhoods, and could benefit from the kind of investment contemplated in Waukegan. Metra’s study of this line as a commuter route reveals its strategic potential as an investment corridor – one enhanced not only with plentiful redevelopment sites but Lake Michigan at both ends and the Fox River in the middle.

**FIG 2.6** DIVERGENT URBAN CHARACTER IS PART OF THE SOUTH SHERIDAN STORY (LEFT IMAGE: SHERIDAN ROAD IN CHICAGO; RIGHT IMAGE: BELT LINE RAIL INDUSTRY)



**FIG 2.7 WAUKEGAN AND SOUTH SHERIDAN IN THE REGION**



# 3

## **EXISTING CONDITIONS**

HISTORY AND CONTEXT

DEMOGRAPHIC OVERVIEW

HOUSING AND OCCUPANCY

BLIGHT ANALYSIS

LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS

# EXISTING CONDITIONS

## HISTORY AND CONTEXT

The South Sheridan Neighborhood was developed to support a growing commercial and industrial economy that was forming on the Lake Michigan waterfront and nearby downtown in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. At its peak, it was a healthy traditional neighborhood filled with hard-working immigrant communities pursuing opportunities that addressed almost every household need. The lakefront contained thousands of family wage jobs that residents could walk to each day. To the west, on top of the lakefront bluff, South Sheridan Road hosted numerous commercial/retail establishments that supported the surrounding neighborhood, its workers, as well as the many regional commuters that travelled the corridor each day. Finally, the residential neighborhood to the west of Sheridan Road provided quality working class housing with nearby parks and schools to support an ever growing number of households that were enjoying a quality of life commensurate with the strong area economy.

Starting in the late 1960s and into the 1970s, a national industrial contraction was becoming apparent in many communities. A momentous and unfortunate physical and demographic transition was the result in the South Sheridan neighborhood. As area industry exited so did many of its workers and support businesses. Slowly but consistently the neighborhood's economic base disappeared and finally was non-existent with the ushering in of the 21st century. The results have been grim. The once job-rich lakefront is now mostly abandoned land, slowly returning to nature with the small exception of a handful of single-family structures and a disused rail line. Much of the vacant land qualifies as a brownfield, with real or perceived environmental contamination. Even though there has been a fair amount of correctional work undertaken, the impression of a contaminated lakefront has in effect created a psychological wall between it and the rest of the neighborhood. What should be a unique neighborhood asset is currently a liability and a symbol of the economic distress that has befallen the area.

Today, South Sheridan Road has only a handful of viable businesses sporadically located on its seven-tenths of a mile neighborhood corridor stretch. For the most part, the corridor consists of marginal buildings and vacant land. Neighborhood residents no longer visit the corridor to satisfy household needs. Perhaps the saving grace for the corridor is the existence of well-attended churches and an active Boys and Girls Club.

The residential neighborhood has experienced a dramatic, but in some ways imperceptible, transition as 75% of its residents moved to the area within the past 15 years. There was a persistent exodus of the former residents, many likely long-term homeowners. Indeed, during this period many homes were converted to rental properties from homeownership. Now approximately two-thirds of the properties are rental – mostly single-family homes. This, combined with a significant drop in household incomes over this same period and a 46% poverty level, has resulted in a neighborhood that no longer has a stable foothold in the community.

From all economic and visual indicators, the South Sheridan neighborhood is one of last resort, not choice. While it does enjoy the advantage of a location in proximity to downtown services, transit options and Lake Michigan, the community seems unable to organize in a manner to take advantage of these important but underutilized assets.

**FIG 3.1** HISTORIC HOME ON SHERIDAN ROAD



**FIG 3.2** OAKWOOD CEMETERY (EST 1851) AND LAKEFRONT INDUSTRIES PRODUCING STARCH AND STEEL

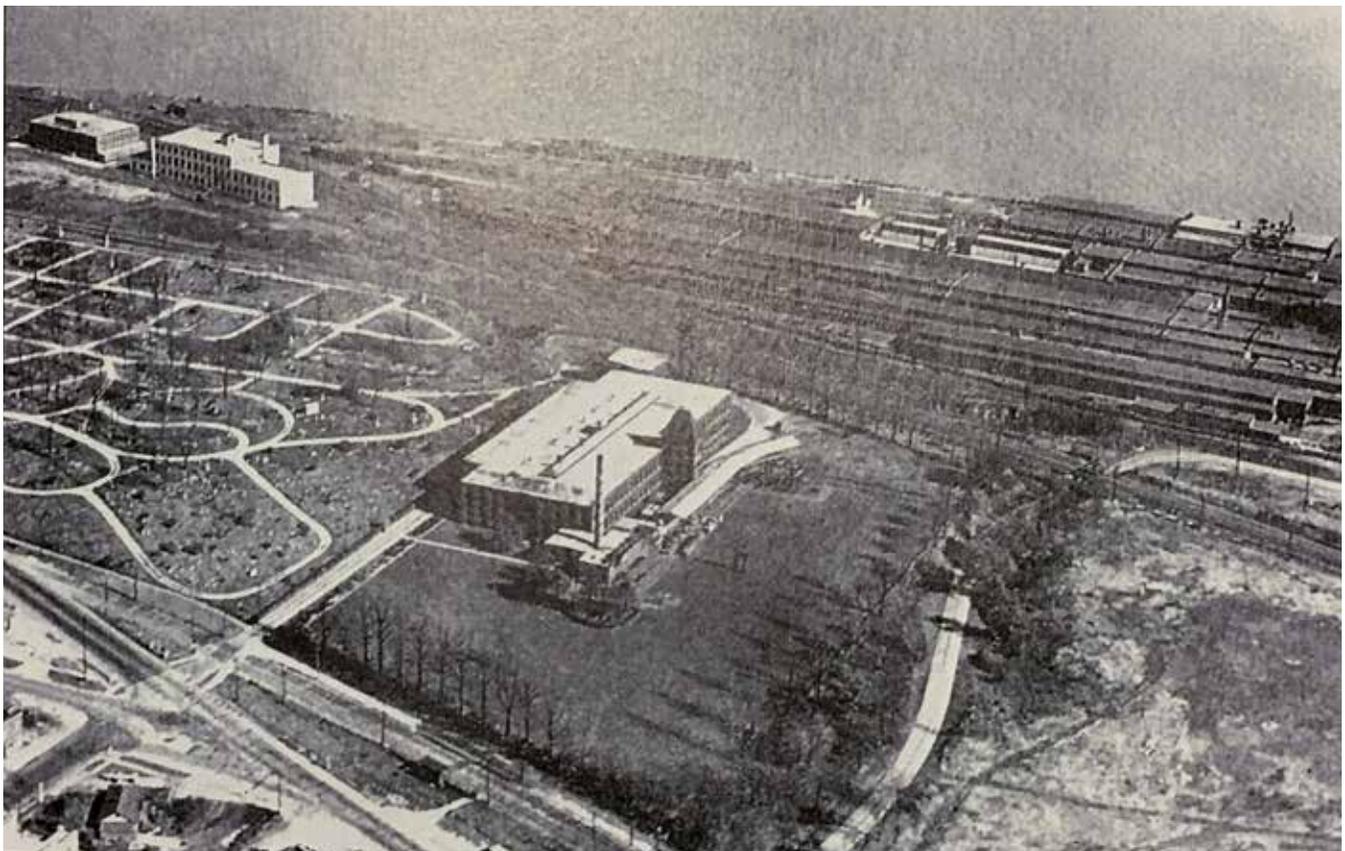
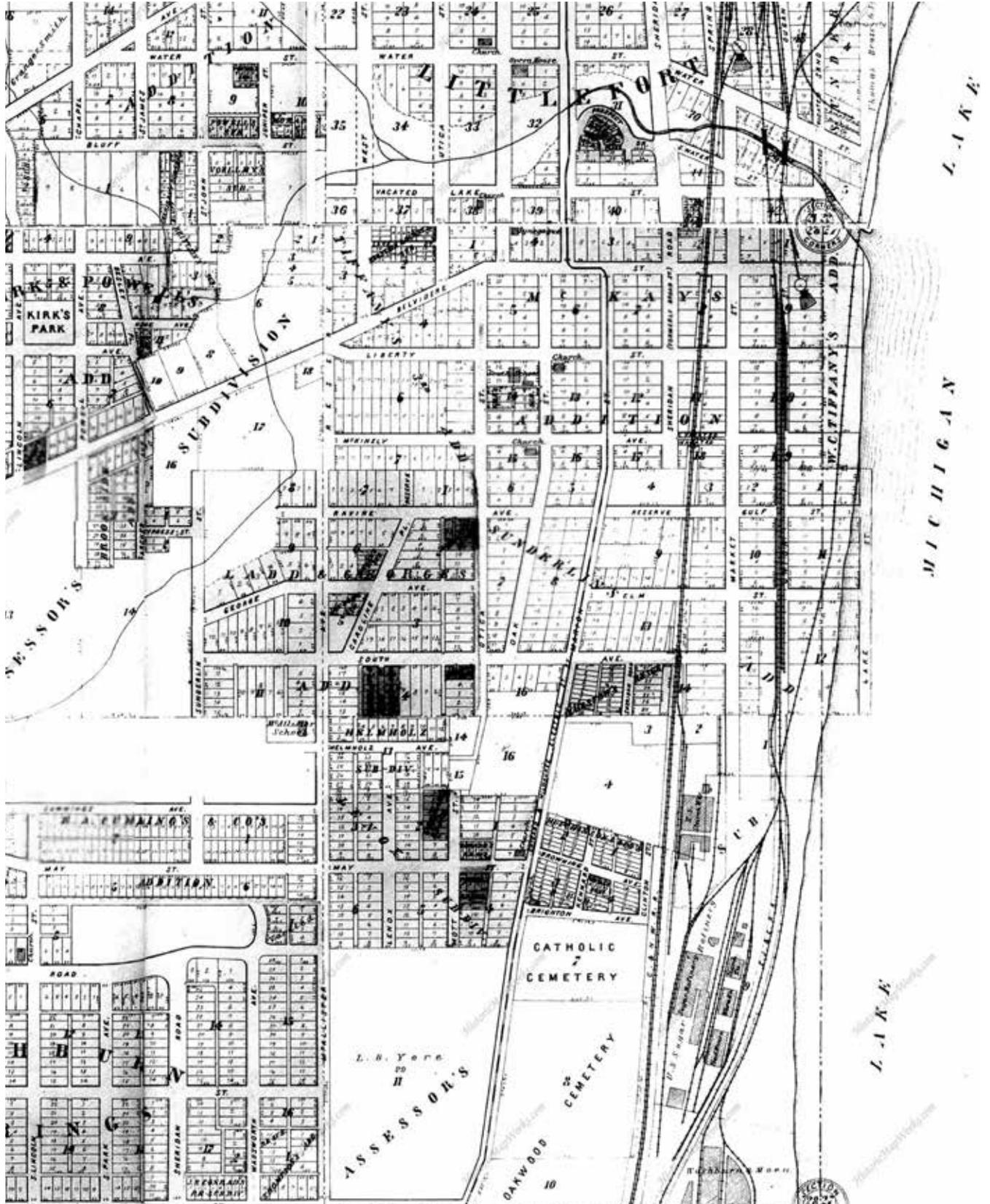


FIG 3.3 1907 SUBURBAN EXPANSIONS AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP TO DOWNTOWN WAUKEGAN (LISTED AS LITTLE FORT)



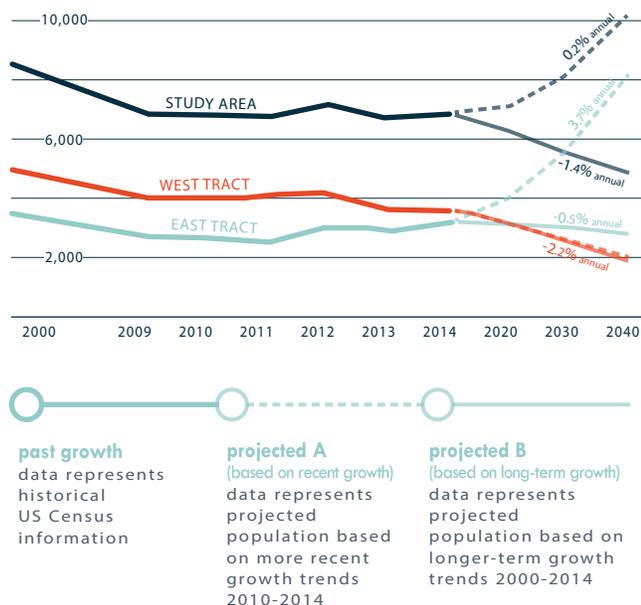
## DEMOGRAPHIC OVERVIEW

Census tracts 8623 and 8627 have been dynamically evolving parts of Waukegan for the past 20 years. Clearly a population shift has occurred with the inclusion of a larger number of Hispanic families. The housing stock has continued to get older with little to no replacement, and it has incrementally become dominated by rental tenancy versus its intended use as owner-occupied homes. Seventy-five percent of the residential units are hosting households that moved within the past 13 years. Finally, the population is younger than the rest of the city, county and Illinois, presenting both opportunity and challenge to local service providers and institutions.

### Population

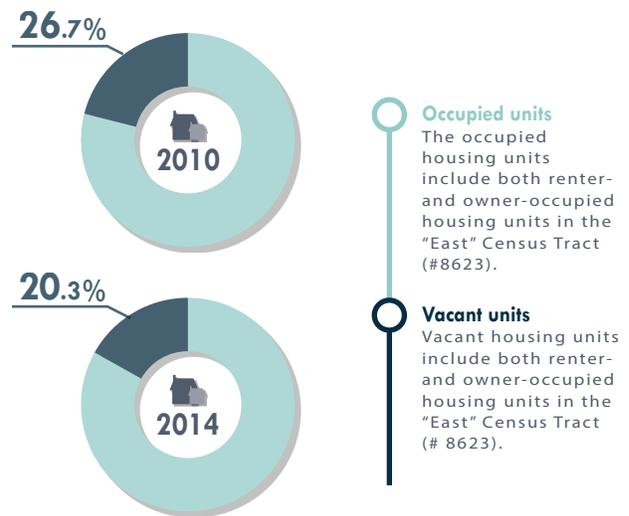
Heading into the recent recession, the population of the Study Area was steadily declining – losing nearly 2,000 residents between the 2000 and 2010 Census. In each successive year, the area’s population has been very unsteady, alternating between growth and decline nearly every year. The most recently released ACS data for 2014 indicated a somewhat steady two-year gain. Understanding that there will continue to be some economic uncertainty, two alternative population projections have been created based on (A) recent growth from 2010 to 2014 and (B) long-term growth from 2000 to 2014. Depending on how the public and private sectors respond to the Study Area’s challenges, it is hard to say how the residential population will change over time, but the accompanying graph represents two possible outcomes.

**FIG 3.4 POPULATION GROWTH**



Much of the recent population gains can be attributed to the number of vacant housing units in the East Census Tract that were reoccupied over the last few years. In 2010 Census Tracts 8623 “East” reported a vacancy rate of 27% which decreased to 20% (in 2014) representing a gain of approximately 70 households or 210 persons. The re-habitation of formerly occupied units is only one variable in the population equation, but may represent some demand for new housing in the Study Area.

**FIG 3.5 HOUSING OCCUPANCY STATUS**



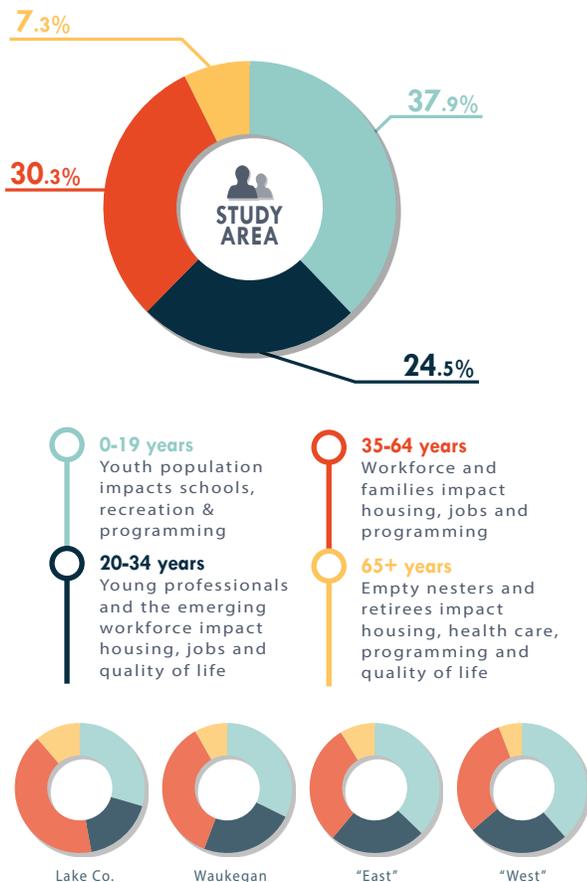
**FIG 3.6 APARTMENT FOR RENT ABOVE FORMER STOREFRONT RETAIL SPACE**



## Age Distribution

The Study Area, as well as Waukegan overall, contrary to national and Lake County trends, has seen significant growth in ITS younger population. The majority of the population is under 35 years of age, which is indicative of a large number of families and children. The Study Area has 37% of its population at 19 years of age or younger, compared to the state with 25.5%. While the discrepancy is not quite as great in the 20-34 years category with 24.4% in the Study Area and just under 21% in the state. At the other end of the spectrum 7.3% of the Study Area's population is 65+ years with the state at 13.2%. The lower percentage of 35-64 year olds residing in the Study Area represents another demographic anomaly. Only 30% of the Study Area's population falls into this age category compared to the state at 39%. Clearly the Study Area is much younger than the state profile as well as Lake County's. The higher number of young people is likely to speak to the types of amenities, educational offerings and services that are needed in the area.

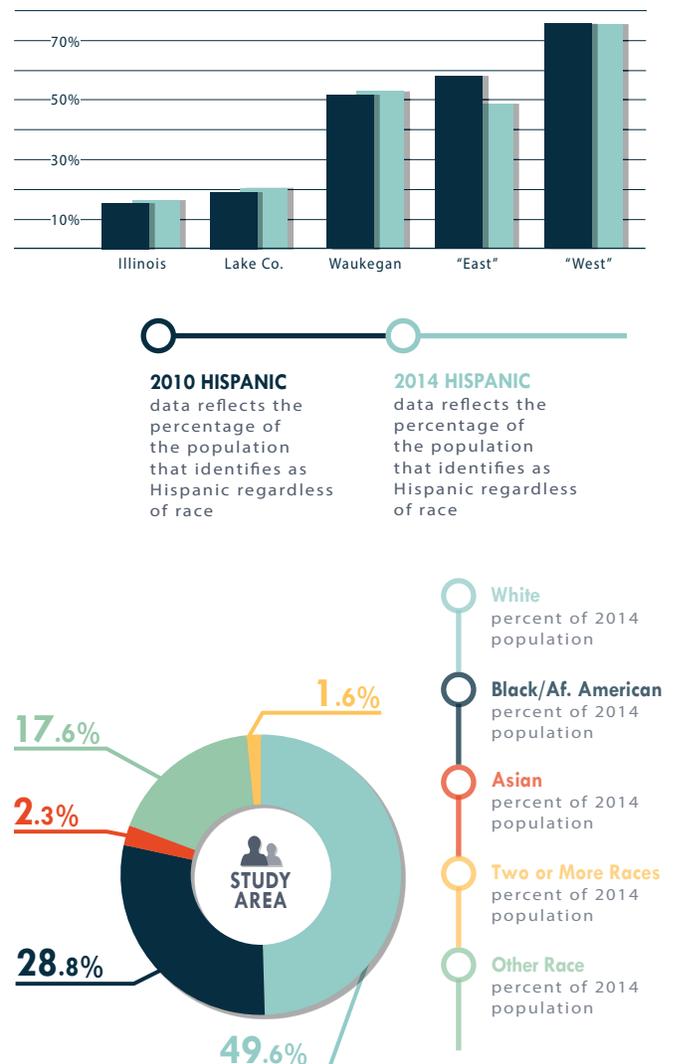
**FIG 3.7 AGE PROFILE**



## Race + Ethnicity

The Study Area's neighborhoods are home to a racially diverse population and one of the City's larger Hispanic populations. While Waukegan's population increased by only 770 people between 2000 to 2014, the Hispanic population has grown by almost 8,000. These two variables suggest a significant number of people in exodus from the neighborhood during the past 14 years, while at the same time there was a steady influx of Hispanic people and households. Both the Black/ African American and Asian populations have reported small increases in population numbers.

**FIG 3.8 RACE AND ETHNICITY**



## Income + Employment

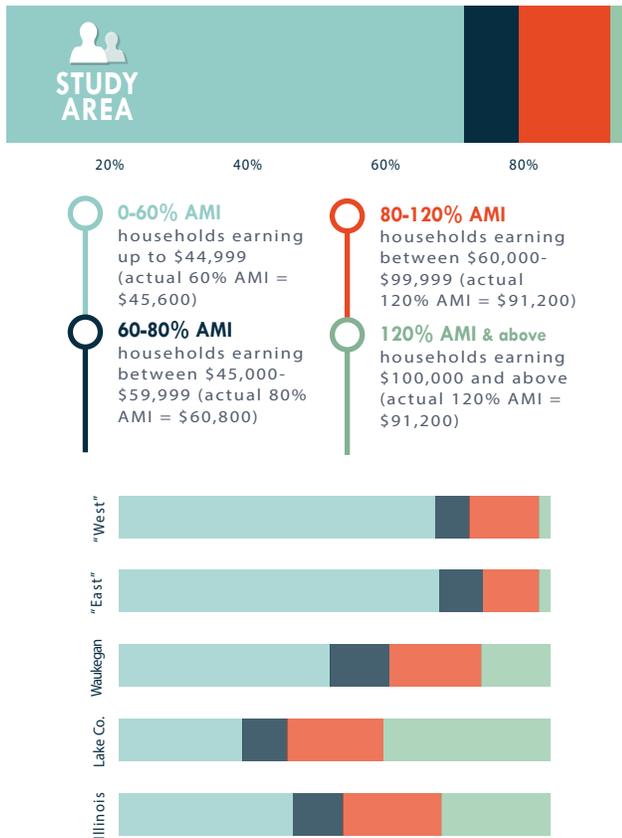
Household incomes in the Study Area are significantly lower than surrounding areas. In the period between 2010 and 2014, median household incomes (MHI) in Study Area neighborhoods dropped substantially more than in adjacent areas. Overwhelmingly, the majority of households in the Study Area qualify for some level of affordable or subsidized housing, with three out of every four households' incomes falling below 60% of the Area Median Income (AMI) - one of the most commonly used indicators for affordable housing programming.

The Study Area, when compared to the rest of Waukegan, Lake County and the State of Illinois, has a disproportionately higher number of households with incomes at or below 80% of the area median income. Lake County's median income is over two and a half times higher (\$77,000 vs. \$28,000) than the Study Area's. The median income levels in the Study Area have dropped from 2010 to 2014, unlike Waukegan and Lake County which increased slightly. The limited and reduced household incomes will impact the ability of the Study Area population to maintain their homes and address day to day needs.

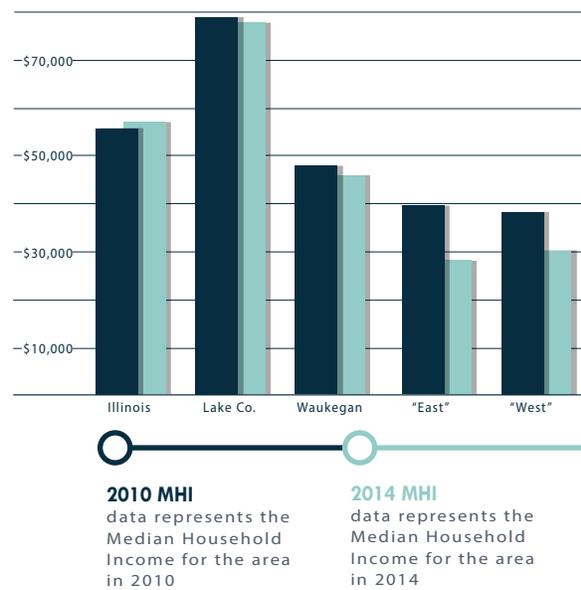
Not surprisingly, the low household incomes suggest a correlation with the unemployment rate in the Study Area which

is double that of the state and nearly three times the unemployment rate for the country in 2014. The "East" tract is more challenged than the "West." One in every three residents of this area is unemployed, and one in every five households earn less than \$15,000 annually. In 2014, 46% of the population lived below the poverty line (\$24,250 for a family of four - 2015), which is an improvement from 2013 when over half (54%) of the population met this criteria.

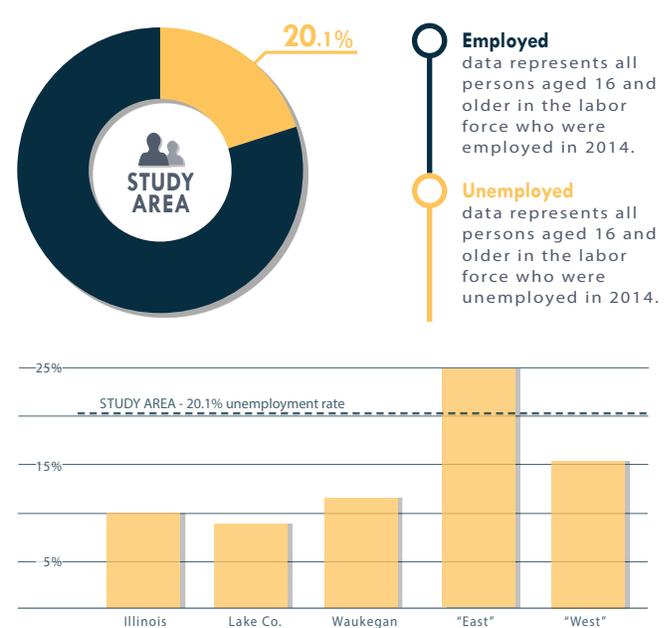
**FIG 3.9 AVERAGE MEDIAN INCOME (AMI)**



**FIG 3.10 CHANGE IN MEDIAN INCOME (2010-2014)**



**FIG 3.11 EMPLOYMENT STATUS**



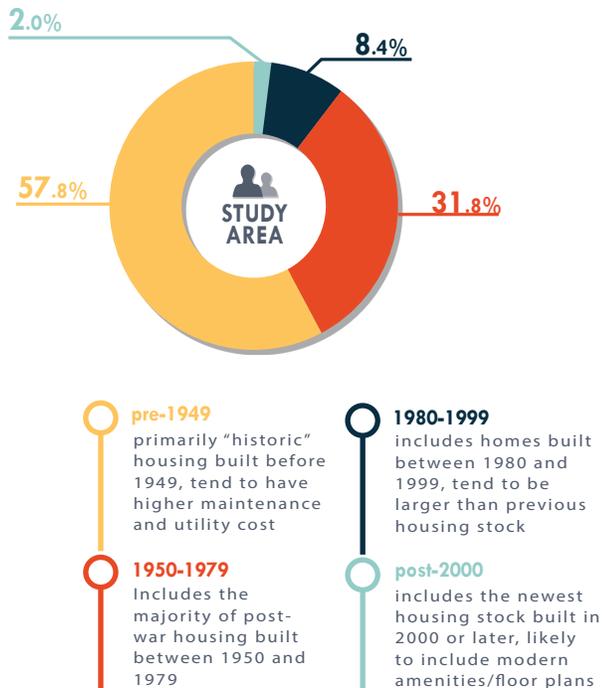
## HOUSING AND OCCUPANCY

The age of a community's housing stock can greatly impact the actual and perceived values of residential real estate. The age of the housing stock in the Study Area likely contributes to the lower value of homes, in addition to other factors such as the lack of nearby retail, services, and safety concerns. The median year built of the housing stock in the Study Area is 1944. Forty-eight percent of the housing units were built in 1939 or earlier – over 77 years in age. The State of Illinois median housing build year is 1965.

The exterior conditions and issues due to deferred maintenance can be seen on many homes - contributing to reduced property values in the neighborhood. Additionally, many homeowners and renters are discouraged by renovation costs or are deterred by the higher cost of maintaining an historic home. Another indicator of the deteriorating housing conditions is the vacancy statistic – 590 units (24%) were vacant in 2013.

The number of rental units in the Study Area is unusually high. Nearly two-thirds of the units in the Study Area are rental, compared to about half in Waukegan and one-quarter in Lake County. Of the 2500 residential units in the Study Area, only 725 are owner-occupied. Seventy-three percent of the residential units (1,825 units) are in structures that include two or fewer units. The majority of these units were once owner-occupied and now are rental properties. Maintaining an appropriate

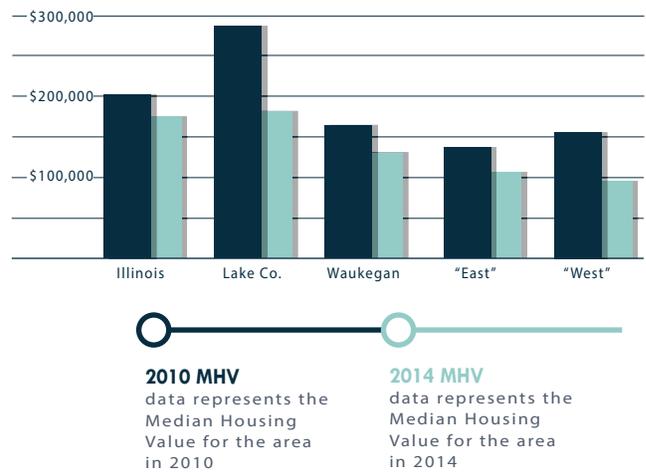
**FIG 3.12 AGE OF HOUSING STOCK**



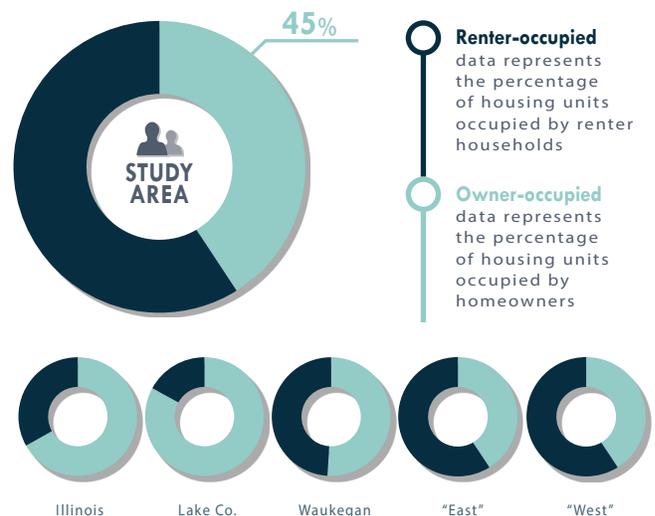
balance of renter to owner-occupied units is desirable and creates housing opportunities for a variety of residents and household types.

In analyzing the percentage of owner-occupied housing units in each housing value cohort, it reveals the glut of lower value housing present in both the east and west census tracts – where over half of all the units are valued under \$100,000, which is approximately \$80,000 less than the median housing value in Lake County (figure 3.15). The two census tracts have very few higher valued units compared to the other geographies, which are more likely to have homes in the \$150,000 to

**FIG 3.13 CHANGE IN MEDIAN HOUSING VALUE (2010-2014)**



**FIG 3.14 OCCUPANCY STATUS**

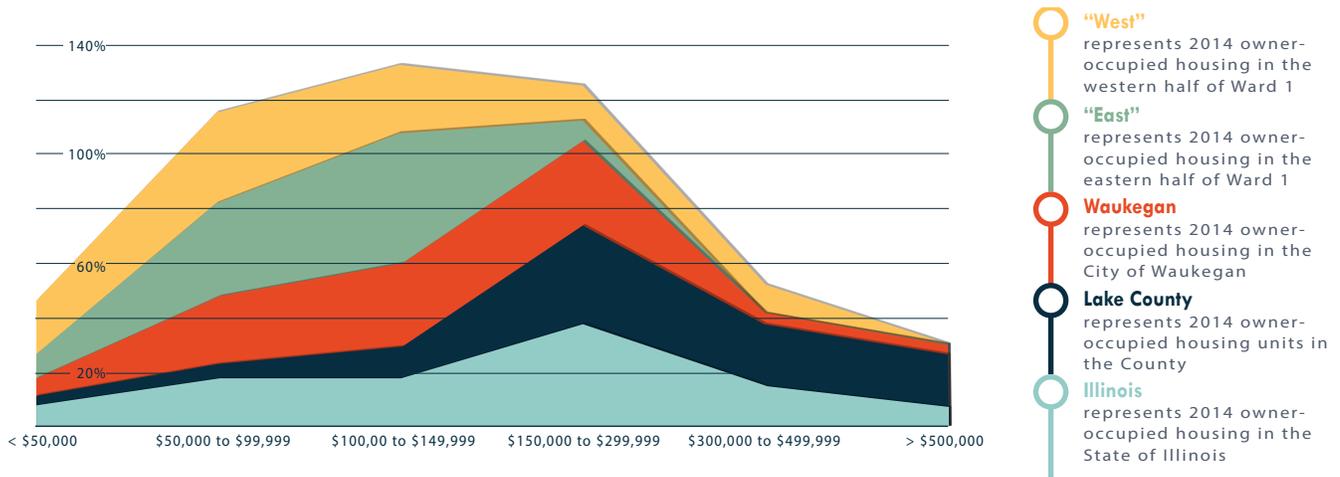


\$299,999 range. Not only are these homes at a value disadvantage when compared to other Lake County communities, they appear to be losing value as they continue to be converted into low cost rental properties for lower income households.

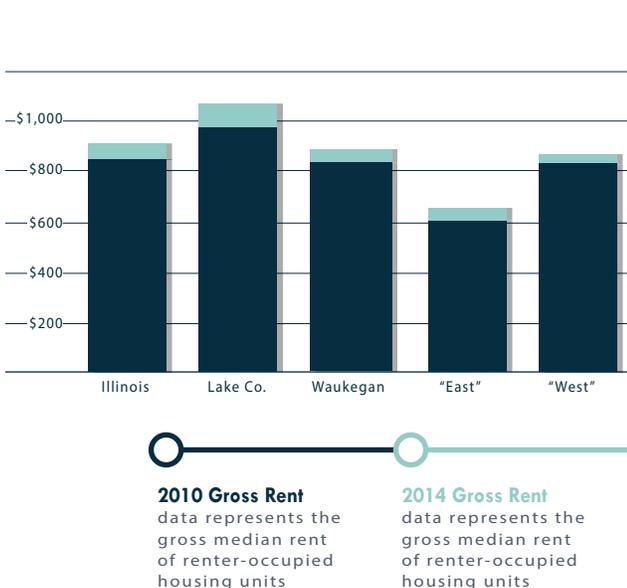
Most of the residents in the two census tracts are renters. As figure 3.16 demonstrates the housing rents are less in the east census tract than in the west. Both census tracts enjoy lower rents than the rest of Waukegan, Lake County and the State of Illinois. The somewhat lower rents, however, when correlated

to household incomes (Figure 3.17) create a cost burden for the majority of households both in the East and West census tracts. A cost burdened household is defined as one spending more than 30% of their total income on housing related expense (cost of residence + utilities). Waukegan in general carries a larger percentage of cost burdened renter households than both Lake County and the State of Illinois. It is important to note that in addition to the rents, the majority of renters are responsible for paying their household utilities as well.

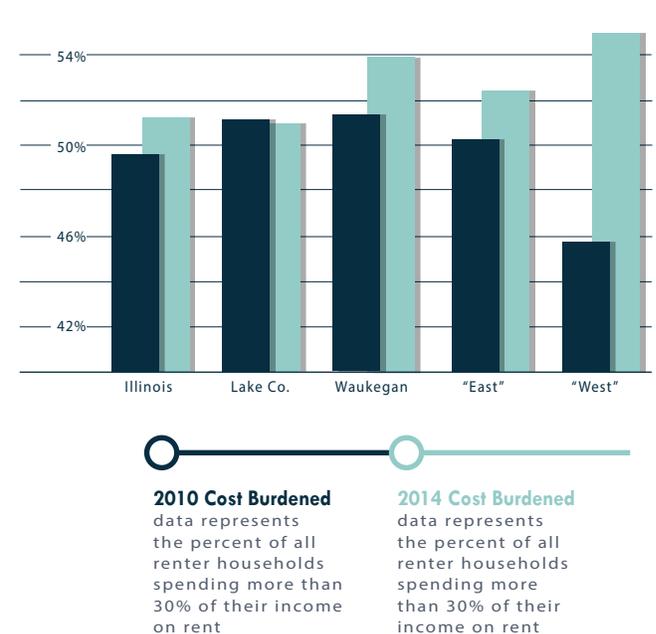
**FIG 3.15 VALUE OF OWNER-OCCUPIED HOMES**



**FIG 3.16 GROSS MEDIAN RENT, COMPARISONS**



**FIG 3.17 RENT AS PERCENTAGE OF INCOME, COMPARISONS**

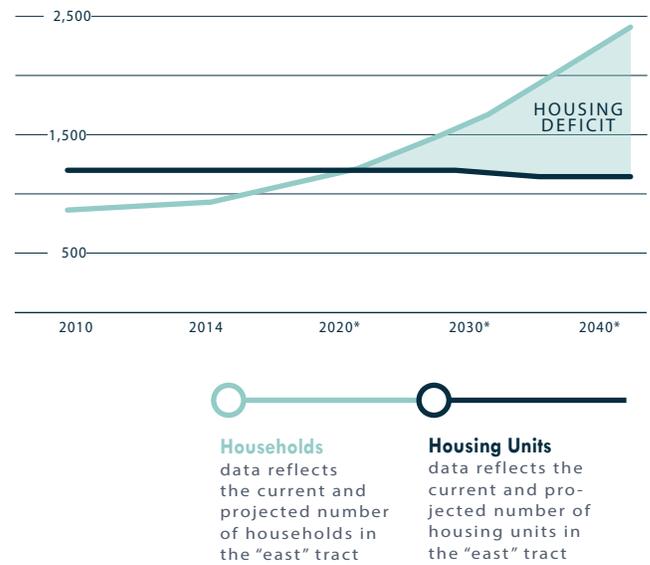


## Housing Supply

The Study Area housing stock is old and deteriorating. More importantly the housing stock, as it surpasses its useful life (estimated between 50-75 years), is not being replaced. Over the past 26 years, only 105 new housing units have been added to the neighborhood inventory – with no new units added within the last six years. The age of the housing stock combined with building styles from the first half of the 19th century translates into housing with little contemporary market appeal, that is costly to maintain and operate, and is likely in need of major renovation. While the majority of the housing stock was built to serve homeowners, it no longer is doing so. On the other hand, there is a clear demand for affordable rental housing. The available housing stock was not established to meet this neighborhood housing need, although it is currently serving this purpose.

The inventory of rental and owner-occupied housing stock is out of balance. This imbalance has resulted in a lack of quality neighborhood housing opportunities and destabilization in home values and residential conditions. The market is currently dominated by a demand for high-quality rental units. The neighborhood has not been able to adequately meet this demand and the development community has not provided the unit inventory to address the need in a manner that creates a neighborhood with quality housing diversity and choice.

**FIG 3.18** HOUSING DEFICIT (2010-2014)



**FIG 3.19** EXISTING PUBLIC HOUSING: BARWELL MANOR



## BLIGHT ANALYSIS

An inventory of blighted properties — substandard structures that negatively impact neighborhood stability and character — is often prepared to identify areas (if any) where redevelopment can have the greatest positive impact. The location of vacant parcels (even if in good condition) are also included in blight analyses to provide a broader picture of where redevelopment opportunities exist in a given area.

The blight analysis of the South Sheridan Corridor Study Area shows a high concentration of blighted properties and vacant parcels along major arterials: Belvidere Road and South Sheridan Road (see Fig 3.21 on page 33). Blight conditions and vacancies are more common among commercial and industrially-zoned parcels, which is indicative of the history and current economic status of the area (Fig 3.20).

### Residential Neighborhood

The residential neighborhood to the west of South Sheridan Road, while harboring a scattering of blighted properties or vacant parcels, is largely stable with a mix of moderately-maintained homes. The aging housing stock and streetscapes, while posing a challenge for ongoing maintenance, also contributes positively to a sense of place and community. Many homes have well-tended yards and a majority of the streets are lined with sidewalks and old shade trees. King Park and the newly rebuilt Bedrosian Park provide opportunities for exercise for neighborhood kids, who ride their bikes along the residential streets. There are many established churches and schools within walking distance of homes. (Fig 3.22 on page 34).

While the Study Area offers many affordable rental options to families, only roughly 30% of homes are occupied by their owners. Furthermore, 70% of all owners reside in the Waukegan area, which combined with a lack of large rental corporations in the area, is an indicator that the neighborhood is relatively stable even if not thriving economically.

### South Sheridan Road / IL-137

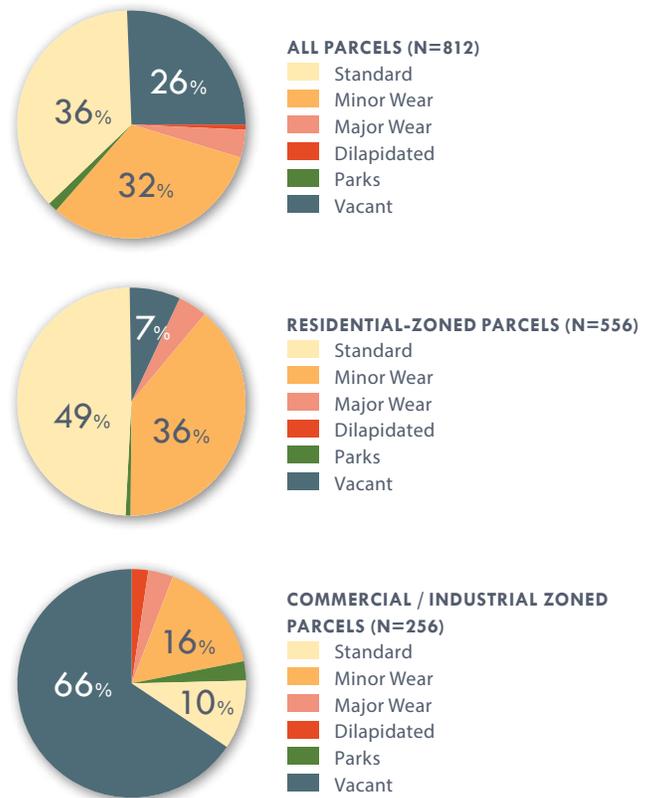
The largely commercial and post-industrial parcels along South Sheridan Road paint a different story. Blight is more clustered, and highly visible to the 15,000 drivers who use the arterial on a daily basis, reflecting negatively on the perception of the abutting neighborhood. A large percentage of the small residential parcels located between the historic Oakwood Cemetery and South Avenue have also been vacant for decades, contributing to the overall sense of abandonment and disrepair along the corridor.

Barwell Manor, a 120-unit housing development owned by the

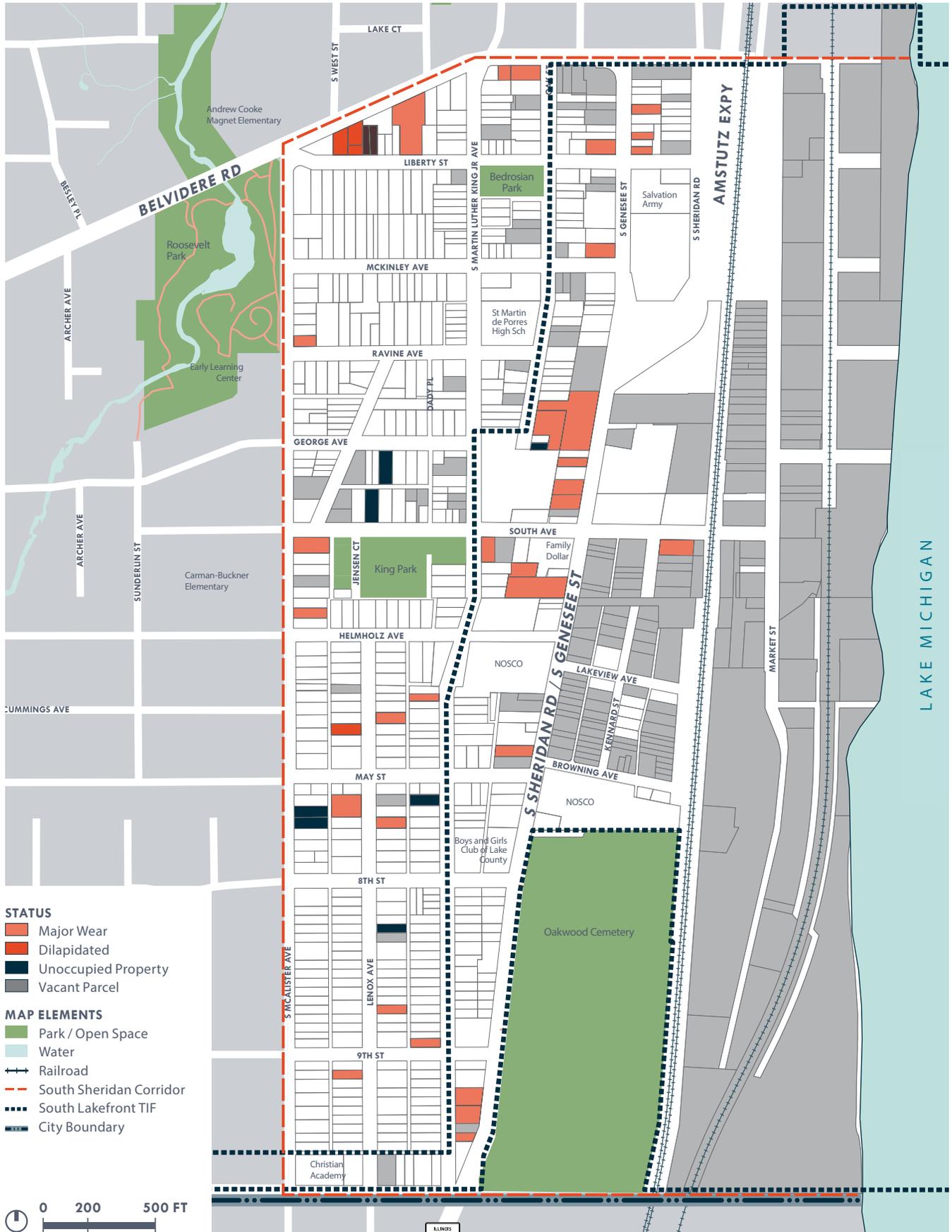
Waukegan Housing Authority, is also located adjacent to South Sheridan Road. Residents of Barwell Manor have a significantly different experience of the neighborhood due to the proximity of their units to South Sheridan. The poor condition of properties along the corridor, combined with the car-oriented design of its streetscape, provides a significantly different environment for kids and aging population living here than within the neighborhood core. There is a need, as well as an opportunity, for a catalyst redevelopment in this segment of South Sheridan Road.

Redevelopment along South Sheridan can knit together and support pockets of active uses and amenities that co-exist with blight along this arterial. These include the Salvation Army Family Store and Donation Center, NOSCO facilities, Family Dollar, the Boys and Girls Club of Lake County, Shiloh Baptist Church, and Casey's Auto Body.

FIG 3.20 CONDITION — SHERIDAN CORRIDOR STUDY AREA



**FIG 3.21** BLIGHT ANALYSIS, SUMMARY — SHERIDAN CORRIDOR STUDY AREA



**FIG 3.22** PHOTOGRAPHS: RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOOD LOCATED TO THE WEST OF SOUTH SHERIDAN ROAD



(1) Historic homes in good condition, Lenox Avenue, between 8th and 9th Streets. (2) Kids on bikes and adults walking, McKinley and S. MLK Jr. Avenues. (3) Historic homes and shade trees at the intersection of S. MLK Jr. Avenue and May Street. (4) Teenage students walking near Cristo Rey St. Martin College Prep School on Oak Street (5) Basketball court, Bedrosian Park

**FIG 3.23** PHOTOGRAPHS: SOUTH SHERIDAN ROAD / IL-137



(1) Vacant and underutilized industrial property abutting sections of Barwell Manor, seen in the background (looking north) (2) Vacant residential parcels owned by the City of Waukegan (left) and vacant commercial property with deficient, unprotected sidewalks (looking south) (3) Auto repair and maintenance shops at the intersection of 10th Street, Martin Luther King, Jr. Avenue and South Sheridan Road.

## LANDSCAPE PATTERNS

Place-based planning has become a cornerstone of urban revitalization both as a culmination of the gradual move away from generalizing tendency of Modernist design, and the increasing recognition of the benefits of tying design to local tradition. Through the growth of New Urbanism, the preservation movement and other social trends, traditional neighborhoods and public spaces have been invigorated through new investment and even emulated in places where no history of settlement exists. The neighborhoods of the South Sheridan Corridor are poised for this kind of investment. They have the benefit of complete authenticity with a historical narrative dating back to the origins of the city.

Yet to truly do justice to this part of Waukegan, it requires more than planning best practices. It requires urban archaeology to expose the corridor's DNA. By approaching the area as series of distinct landscapes that have evolved from interrelationships between industry, community and nature, the special qualities that are embedded in what is normally taken for granted can be advanced through design to impart to the redevelopment strategy a strong connection to place.

### Layer Analysis

Discovering the place that is Waukegan and South Sheridan has the advantage of proximity to one of the most impressive and sublime natural phenomenon in the country – Lake Michigan. The ancient pattern of ridges left as the lake shore receded, as well as the fan-shaped dune lines distinguishing the southern portion of Illinois Beach State Park point to a landscape order that is both representative of, and intimately linked to, the great body of water. Early settlement in Waukegan was also driven by the lake, with much of the city's early development shaped by the distance from the shore.

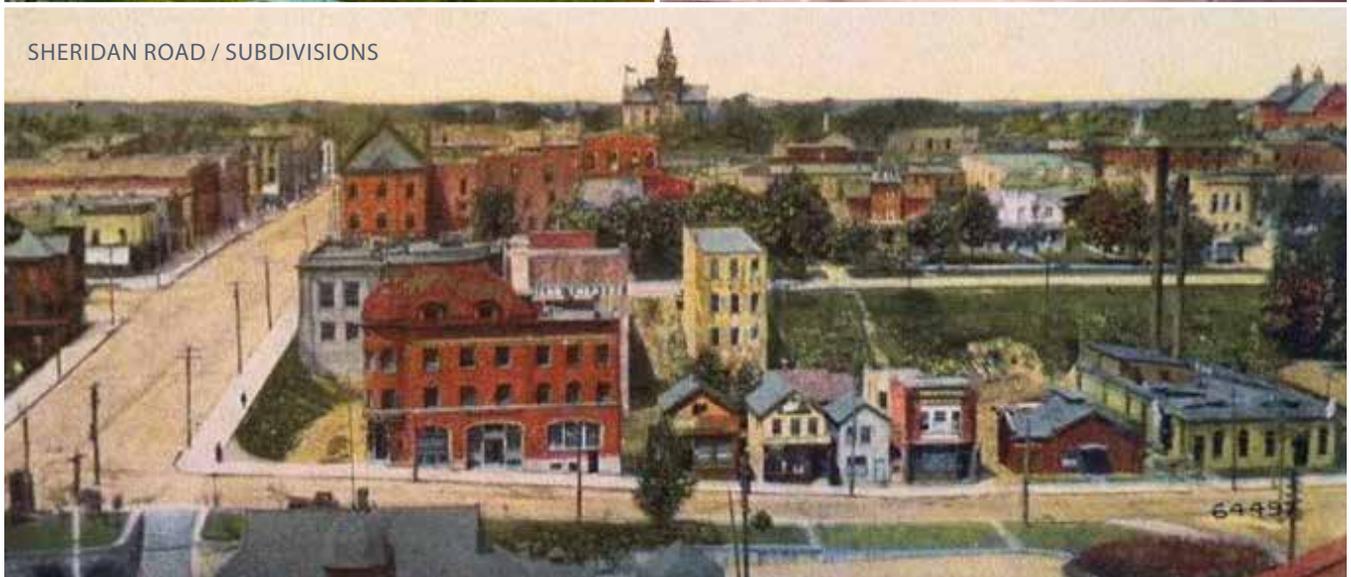
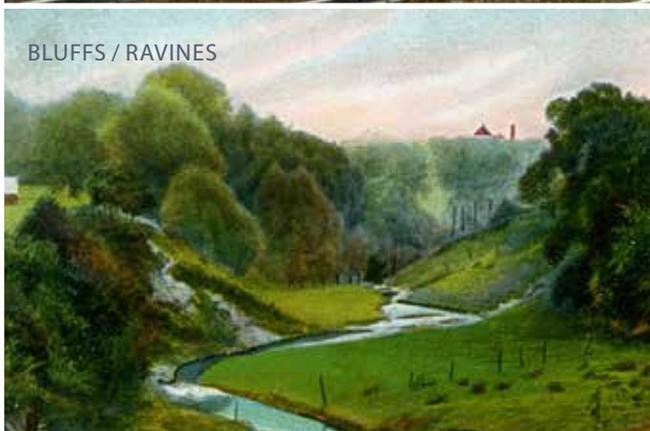
The following sequence of landscape “layers” decodes the physical space of the revitalization corridor as a series of unique environments that have developed distinctive characteristics, generally as a combination of natural and artificial forces.

The redevelopment framework outlined in Chapter 4 builds upon these layers to generate urban design ideas that bind form and program to this unique place.

**FIG 3.24** 1960S BIRD'S EYE VIEW SHOWING TRANSITION FROM NEIGHBORHOOD TO THE LAKEFRONT ACROSS SHERIDAN ROAD



**FIG 3.25** HISTORIC IMAGES ILLUSTRATING LANDSCAPE LAYERS WITHIN THE STUDY AREA (SEE NEXT PAGE FOR MAPS)



**FIG 3.26** LANDSCAPE LAYERS: DIAGRAMS (CATALYST SITE AREAS OUTLINED IN YELLOW)



**LAYER 1: SHORE / FLATS**

The narrow band marking the shore zone is dominated by concrete shore reinforcement and scrub vegetation, with a few places where small beaches have formed. The line of the Canadian National railroad is a distinguishing feature to the west as is the remains of an industrial building at a point where the shore edge projects into the lake. Though the area appears neglected, it provides an opportunity for the most direct human contact with the lake.

Between the shoreline and the Union Pacific railroad is the Flats where heavy industry was established. By the late nineteenth century, this area had numerous mill complexes producing products ranging from starch to steel. The railroad also had servicing facilities at the north end. While the industrial buildings have been removed, there are traces of them amidst regenerating grassland and forest. The Flats have the potential to renew the historic connection between industry and supporting neighborhoods. It also provides an opportunity to strengthen and build on the lake edge ecology, and tell the story of Waukegan’s immigrant heritage through the remnant traces of industry and artifacts that might exist.

**LAYER 2: BLUFF / RAVINE**

A bluff created by glacial action and erosion separates the lake-shore from the bulk of Waukegan’s urban development, which sits about 30 feet above the shore level. This bluff and ravine system endows the catalyst project site with such spectacular views. Next to the lake itself, the ravines of the Waukegan River are a natural complement to the flatness of the water, and evoke eastern hills and valleys that seem out of place on the prairie. It was in part the ravines that made the North Shore so desirable for suburban growth; and they still are a hallmark of its identity. The ravines offer North Shore residents pockets of wildness in the midst of the city.

Waukegan took advantage of this fact to create a park system integrated into the ravines. Washington Park, which touches the Study Area to the west, also preserves a natural marsh which provides another window into understanding the lake, as well as a signature open space very different from the ecosystem that occurs along the shore. While the ecosystem of the ravine is encouraged by the enclosed topography, the bluff also harbors some of the same plants and animals. Areas of bluff erosion offer an opportunity to bring those natural communities into site, enhancing connections to ravine system in the process.



Subdivisions, ca 1907  
 Early routes proposed for Sheridan Road



Interurban lines, early 20th century  
 Interurban stops, early 20th century  
 Commercial Uses  
 Institutional Uses

### LAYER 3: SHERIDAN / SUBDIVISIONS

One of the factors that give the South Sheridan neighborhood its character is the street network that breaks the rectangular pattern of blocks. Oak Street, George Avenue, and Caroline Place are examples, as is the median in 8th Street and Adams and the alley cut-off at Prescott, Adams and Wadsworth. These idiosyncrasies mark early real estate subdivisions, or city “additions” that were developed as early suburbs.

Some early developers had visions of creating their own towns. When the concept of a highway linking the North Shore to Chicago and Milwaukee was first conceived in the 1900s, many seized on the idea that their developments could outpace competition if they made room for Sheridan Road. The corresponding red lines show at least four disconnected Sheridan segments in the various tracts.

The idea of Sheridan as a signature boulevard was developed to its fullest in the Chicago neighborhoods of Edgewater Beach and Rodgers Park. In Waukegan, however, the corridor no longer extends directly to downtown. The redevelopment plan provides the opportunity to connect Sheridan from south to north, re-establishing the corridor’s prominence in the city.

### LAYER 4: INTERURBAN / MAIN STREETS

The “North Shore Line” grew out of the Waukegan & North Shore street railway which connected the Lake County Courthouse with residential areas of the city, including housing along Sheridan Road. After acquisition by Samuel Insull in 1916, the line was upgraded to provide interurban service between the downtowns of Chicago and Milwaukee. As one of three interurbans in the Chicago region, it supplemented commuter railroad and streetcar lines to provide a true regional transit system even before the concept was invented.

The Shore Line route was abandoned in 1955, followed by the Skokie Valley Line in 1963. In the 1980s, LCDOT began conversion of the main interurban line to the North Shore Bike Path, now known as the Robert McClory Greenway. The catenary supports along the path are not the only tangible evidence of the interurban’s past presence in Waukegan. As shown by the orange dots in the figure, the stops on both lines contributed to the development of commercial land uses along key streets connecting the two lines – particularly 10th Street, which is still the main commercial district of the South Sheridan neighborhoods.



## **DESIGN FRAMEWORK**

LAKEFRONT / CONSERVATION

SHERIDAN / STREETS

MULTIFAMILY / MIXED-USE

SINGLE-FAMILY / NEIGHBORHOOD NODES

FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

CATALYST SITE DEVELOPMENT

OPPORTUNITY / NEIGHBORHOOD  
CONNECTIONS

# DESIGN FRAMEWORK

The South Sheridan neighborhoods have faced their challenges of brownfield degradation and economic disinvestment, but they are no less valuable than the exclusive North Shore suburbs to the south. In fact, their special location at the edge of Lake Michigan provides them with the opportunity to be both strikingly urban and lake-side small-town at the same time – something unique for the Chicago region.

Chapter 4 summarizes the many aspects of this opportunity, both in words and diagrams. Because of their proximity to downtown Waukegan and the research complex of AbbVie, these neighborhoods have the potential to connect to local and regional transportation, sources of well-paying jobs and education, and neighborhood heritage. The neighborhoods also have the benefit of several diverse landscape environments that can be enhanced to increase their beauty and functionality, and provide a highly individualized context for the architecture of the catalyst project.

The South Sheridan Redevelopment Corridor is an outgrowth of the vision for the south lakefront contained in the 2003 Master Plan. Much time and energy was invested in that effort, and in creating development standards for the shore / flats area. While the changing market creates an opportunity to revisit that planning, the framework described below assumes that the design template for the flats could be refined as part of subsequent work. Consequently, the framework focuses on the development concept for the catalyst site and surroundings, improvements to Sheridan Road and related streets, linkages to the shore edge and its potential amenities, and important public improvements in the neighborhood west of Sheridan.

The framework plan is comprised of four broad planning categories: the natural environment, public infrastructure (streets), affordable multifamily housing, and homeownership. Each category contains a goal statement related to the City's policy objectives and the planning analysis. The goal is followed by several design strategies that lead to the projects outlined in Chapter 5.

## LAKEFRONT CONSERVATION

**GOAL:** Bring the Essence of the Lake Michigan Shore onto the Site

Lake Michigan is only .25 miles from Sheridan Road and yet, despite it being the sublime force that inspired places like Jackson Park in Chicago and Lake Park in Milwaukee, it has almost no presence on Sheridan beyond the occasional view through the trees. Because it is such a major ingredient in the corridor's sense of place, it is essential that it be physically better connected to Sheridan and that the existence of the lake be felt in the character and spirit of new development.

### 1. Transform South Avenue into a Lakeshore "Gateway"

South Avenue is the only place south of downtown where a pedestrian can walk directly to the lake edge without interacting with industry or the harbor. This provides a unique opportunity to create a lake experience different from the working waterfront envisioned for the harbor. There are several locations around the Great Lakes where cottage communities have been developed on flat shore land - for example Monroe Park in South Haven MI. These communities evoke coastal places like Cape Cod or the beach towns of Southern California, and often have a distinctive architecture to match. The same could be developed on the flats. Because South Avenue is the gateway

to this new neighborhood, it should be redesigned to provide a fitting sense of entry.

### 2. Develop a green pedestrian link between Sheridan and the shore

The second key connection to Lake Michigan involves a pedestrian greenway paralleling Lakeview Avenue. This complements South Avenue but provides a very different experience to access the shore. Running from Lakeview and Sheridan to the bluff, the greenway would cross the Metra line on a pedestrian bridge before descending to Market Street on the flats. The bridge could be an iconic structure much like the Lion Bridge in Milwaukee's Lake Park; and the portion running between the bridge and the shore could form the basis of a beachfront gathering space like a skatepark or playground.

### 3. Improve the bluff as a conservation area with an overlook park

The unobstructed overlook at the edge of the bluff provides a setting for a park matched only by Sheridan Road in downtown. In fact, the proximity of the lake to the bluff at this point yields scenic potential that even surpasses downtown. The groves of mature trees and undulating ground plane also tie the bluff to the ravine ecosystem. Like Lake Park, the alternating areas of overlook and forested slope are elements of landscape architecture that not only adhere the site to the lake, but could be viewed as a southern extension of the proposed Harborfront Park in downtown.

### 4. Plan for a long-term lakefront destination

The final remaining building from the industrial history of the flats, the Lakeshore Foundry, was torn down in 2011. While it was still standing, its remote location on a promontory at the end of Market Street gave it an atmospheric quality that is usually associated with pleasure piers and beach pavilions. The structure is gone, but the special site still exists and provides a panorama of the breakwater and lighthouse, and on a clear day the Chicago skyline. Places like this once inspired architects to create buildings that had powerful and poetic connections to their context - buildings like the North Avenue Beach House in Chicago, or the Roundhouse Aquarium in Manhattan Beach California, or the Casino in Narragansett Rhode Island. A sensitive reprogramming of the site could provide the flats with a landmark destination that would also serve the South Sheridan neighborhoods.

**FIG 4.1** LAKEFRONT CONSERVATION FRAMEWORK



**FIG 4.2** CHARACTER PRECEDENTS ILLUSTRATING RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE LAKEFRONT



## SHERIDAN / STREETS

### GOAL: Reposition Sheridan as the Boulevard of South Waukegan

Chapter 3 provided a historical sketch of how Sheridan Road came to be, and why it could be considered one of the great roads of the Midwest. Waukegan is fortunate that it has Sheridan as one of its signature streets, with the ingredients for recreating many of its scenic experiences in one place. From the downtown edge overlooking a working harbor and break-water to historic northside homes, to prairies, wooded ravines and formal gardens, it has a great diversity of environments hosting Sheridan. With some enhancements, the southern segment has the potential to be the neighborhood equivalent of downtown – local and familiar, and very urban.

#### 1. Expand the Sheridan cross-section with sidewalks, on-street parking.

Sheridan's 60' right-of-way is dominated by four lanes of traffic leaving little room for sidewalks and landscaping. In fact, sidewalks are lacking or in disrepair over much of the length of the street, resulting in conditions that create a serious disincentive for pedestrian use. Fortunately, the vacant redevelopment parcels that exist along the eastern edge allow the right-of-way to expand, providing room for a generous streetscape as well

**FIG 4.3 SHERIDAN / STREET FRAMEWORK**



as on-street parking without affecting traffic flow. Sheridan should be redesigned in conjunction with the catalyst redevelopment to transform it into a proper multimodal urban boulevard. This could include two lanes of travel with on-street parking on both sides, with a center median / turn lane if needed. An 8' landscape strip and 6' sidewalk is the minimum standard for new construction; however utilizing the same streetscape dimensions and materials used in downtown is a better solution to integrate Sheridan's character throughout the city. This is reflected in the redevelopment master plan discussed in Chapter 5.

#### 2. Resolve the Sheridan disconnect at the Amstutz approach

Sheridan Road is currently disconnected between South Avenue and Liberty Street. This is due to the alignment of the Amstutz Expressway approach and the arc of Genesee Street. Yet before the Amstutz was built, Sheridan did continue south of Liberty and swung west to intersect at an angle with Genesee, which still contained the tracks of the Shore Line interurban. Earlier maps of Waukegan show Sheridan extending to Belvidere and turning east one block to run north along the bluff. It would be beneficial to reinstate this arrangement since it is difficult if not impossible to transform Sheridan into a walkable urban boulevard without decoupling it from the Amstutz approach. If access to the Amstutz is still required from South Sheridan, the intersection could be rebuilt to allow Genesee to occupy its historic right-of-way. If access is not needed, then the approach could be removed and the expressway reconnected to Belvidere, or in the long term removed to Mathon Drive. In either case, South Sheridan would run straight to Belvidere, terminating in new development marking the entrance to downtown.

#### 3. Develop an internal system of streets that extends the adjacent network

With the Amstutz approach relocated or removed, it is possible to expand the existing grid of streets east of Sheridan into a larger network that could connect directly to downtown. By reinstating Hill Street and connecting it to Kennard, a continuous north-south local street paralleling Sheridan could be created on the project site. And, by continuing this alignment onto the Barwell Manor site and beyond, the new street could eventually link up with the dead-end portion of Sheridan cut by the Amstutz approach. This would not only break the project site into small, walkable blocks, but would open up access to some of the eroded bluff that contains ravine-type woodland

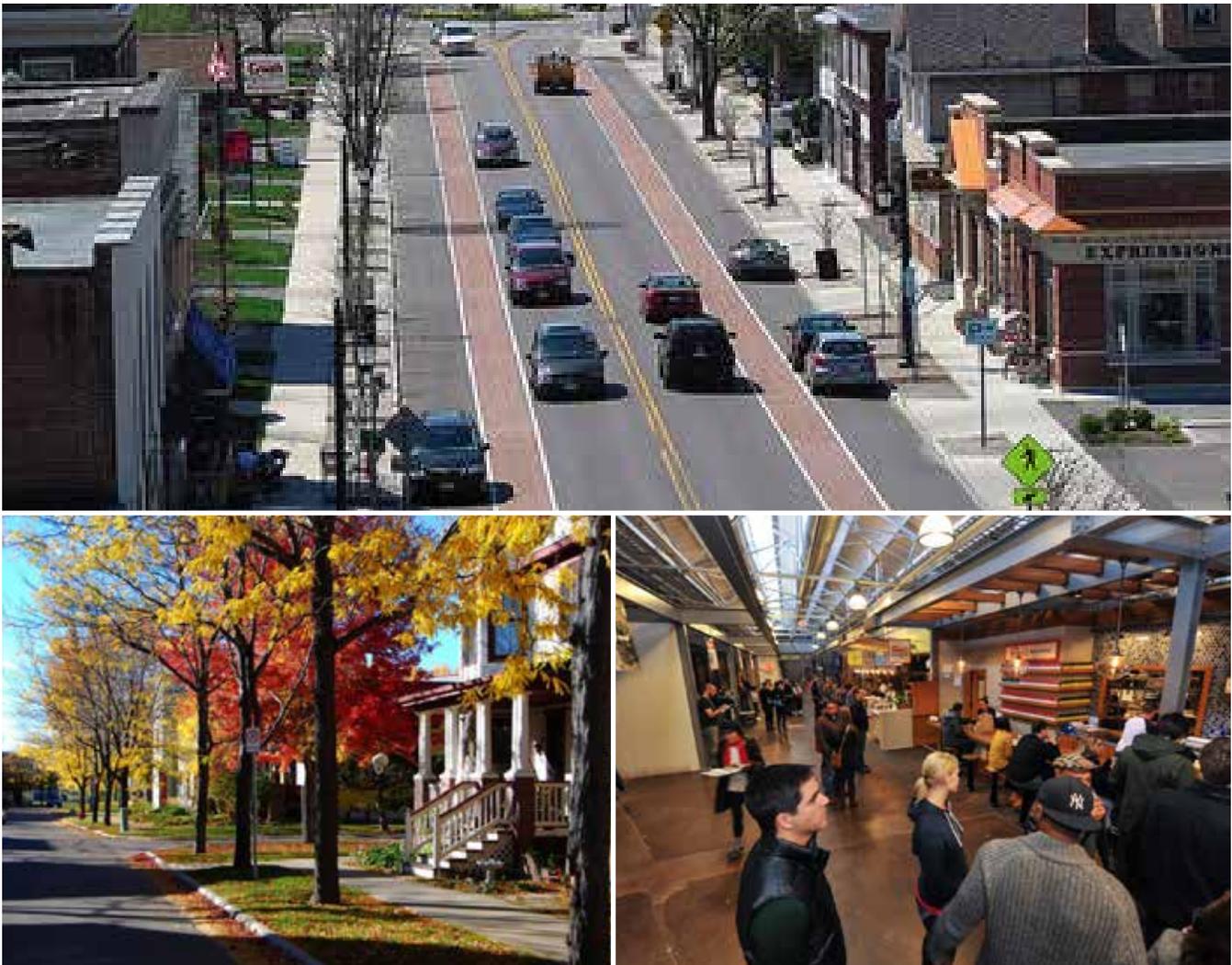
environments. The street would also encourage walking and biking from the heart of the redevelopment into downtown. Existing and new east-west streets would complete the internal network.

#### 4. Long-term repositioning of vacant buildings, Nosco facility

There are several existing buildings along Sheridan that, despite their deteriorating condition, lack of architectural detail or incompatible alterations, still provide the corridor with a character unique to this location. Some of these - like the Nosco headquarters - are large enough to provide space for mixed-use redevelopment or market hall space. Others, like

the Zanotti Tile & Stone buildings, have interesting modern styling that lend well to conversion into restaurants or regional destinations like craft breweries. The redevelopment plan acknowledges the strategic importance of these structures by positioning new public infrastructure to benefit future adaptive reuse - for example aligning the pedestrian greenway with the original entrance to the Nosco building, or reinstating Marion Court as an internal street to facilitate activation of the Zanotti parking lot.

**FIG 4.4** CHARACTER PRECEDENTS ILLUSTRATING RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SHERIDAN ROAD CORRIDOR AND NEW STREETS



## MULTIFAMILY / MIXED-USE

### GOAL: Bring Affordable Best-in-Class North Shore Development to the Area

The amount of land available for redevelopment combined with the proximity to Lake Michigan and Metra commuter rail make this an unparalleled site for new urban-scaled development commensurate with the kind of quality multifamily housing being built in Evanston and other North Shore communities. However, given the history of the neighborhoods and their existing demographics, it is more important than ever that this site preserve affordability for families and seniors, especially considering a possible partnership with the Waukegan Housing Authority.

#### 1. Develop mixed-income multifamily housing that combines historic inspiration with cutting-edge architecture

Financing mixed-income multifamily housing with federal low-income tax credits is a proven way to increase the number of quality affordable units without relying on ongoing long term subsidies. Tax credit projects also blend income ranges to deconcentrate poverty; and the quality standards of tax credit projects like Park Douglas in the Chicago region are quite high. Sheridan Road is well known for its grand apartment buildings in Rogers Park and Evanston, but it also hosts landmarks of

Modern and Midcentury architecture as it makes its way north. Waukegan also has its share of Midcentury homes on North Sheridan as well as more traditional buildings. This architectural heritage should influence the final design of all aspects of the project, to tie it to Waukegan's past while moving it into the future. Chapter 5 provides more detail on the proposed Phase 1 project on the catalyst site.

#### 2. Anchor the Sheridan / South Avenue corner with neighborhood-serving retail

Apart from the Dollar General and a handful of small shops on 10th Street, there is no grocery or drugstore in the South Sheridan neighborhoods. This is a far cry from the days when the mills were operating, and there were shops lining Sheridan, 10th and Belvidere. In fact the nearest major drugstore is over a mile from the site, while the nearest full-service grocery is over three miles. This is most typical in low-income communities, and new tax credit projects are addressing the deficiency. While a project like the one shown on the following page is too intense for the residential character of the neighborhood, the ground floor corner of Sheridan and South is ideal for approximately 10,000 - 20,000 square feet of neighborhood-serving retail.

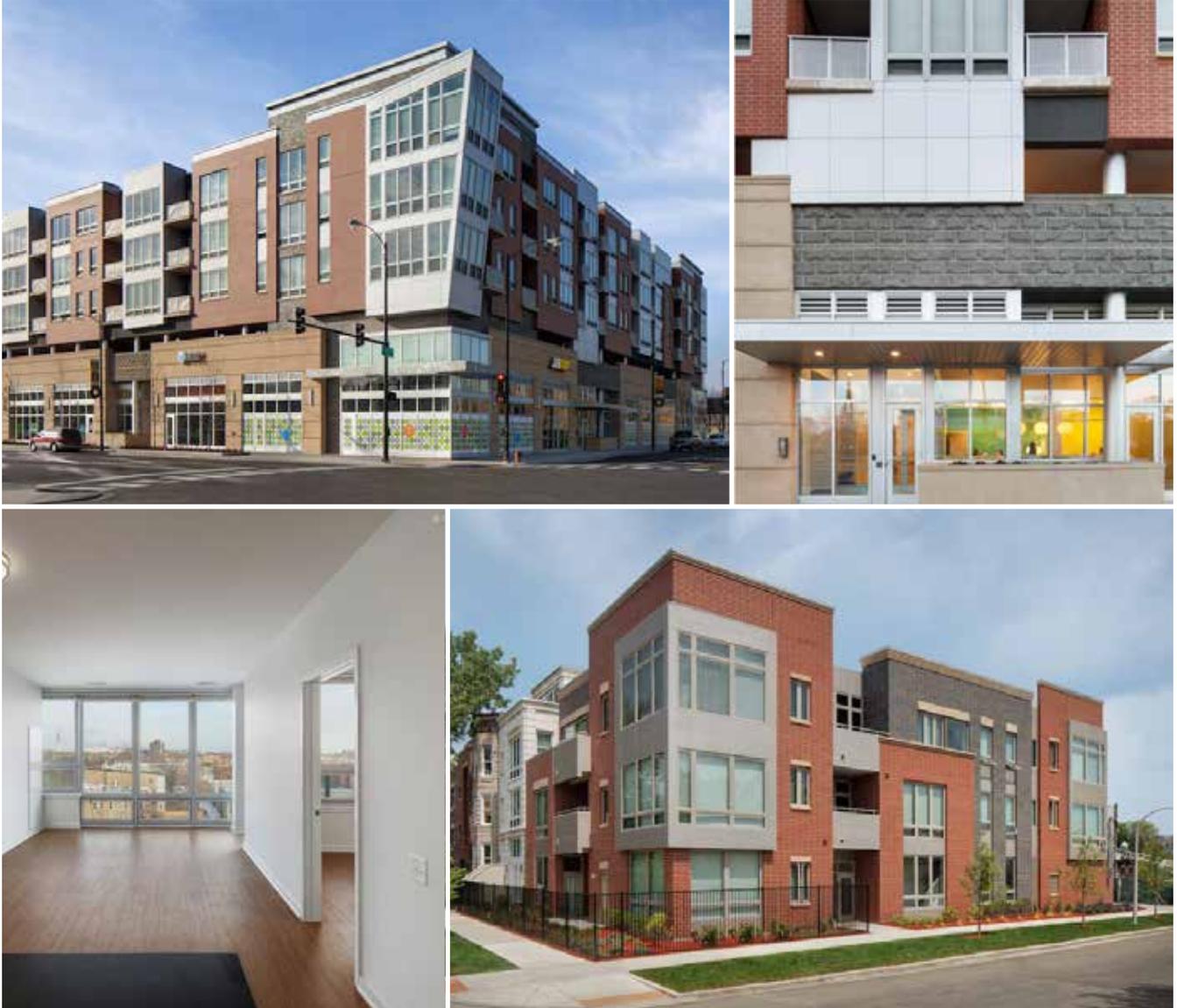
#### 3. Plan for the long-term redevelopment of Barwell Manor

As Waukegan's oldest remaining traditional public housing complex, Barwell Manor is rapidly approaching obsolescence and has an outdated design that orients residents away from the neighborhood. It also occupies a key site that, if redeveloped, could expand the housing supply of the Phase 1 catalyst project and integrate it better into its surroundings. The revitalization plan therefore proposes that Barwell Manor be redeveloped over time following the mixed-income model and designed to match Phase 1 in density and appearance. A new street grid should also be planned for the site that extends north-south streets like Kennard and Oak, and creates additional east-west pedestrian connections to the bluff.

**FIG 4.5** MULTIFAMILY DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK



**FIG 4.6** MIXED-INCOME MIXED-USE CHARACTER PRECEDENTS (THE SHOPS AND LOFTS AT 47, CHICAGO)



*ALL IMAGES: THE COMMUNITY BUILDERS*

## SINGLE-FAMILY / NEIGHBORHOOD NODES

### GOAL: Reinforce Waukegan's "Small Town" Character

Waukegan is in the enviable position of being part of the Chicago region as well as an independent city with an authentic history. Like many other similar places along the coast it is a county seat, a working port, a cultural hub, and center for regional services like health care. It also has memories of local celebrities like Jack Benny and Ray Bradbury, and a past full of small businesses where people made their living from the lake. The revitalization plan draws on this authenticity to preserve the small town character that distinguishes it from the rest of the North Shore.

#### 1. Diversify housing type and density, stepping down from Sheridan in both directions

Successful mixed-income redevelopments provide a wide variety of housing types and sizes to accommodate the diversity of household and family characteristics that defines American society today. Moreover, mixed-income redevelopments that blend seamlessly into their surroundings are designed to reflect the organic patterns of growth of their physical context. The catalyst project takes advantage of the Sheridan location to reinforce the street edge with three- to four-story buildings

containing several different types of rental flats. Development density steps down to two- to three-story townhouses one block back from Sheridan, and then to single-family homes as the new community meets the neighborhood. Density also decreases from west to east to preserve the potential for Lake Michigan views from all units.

#### 2. Create a "cottage village" that celebrates its unique location

One of the most exciting opportunities provided by the special geography of the redevelopment site is the possibility of creating a lakeside cottage village that combines innovative homes on small lots connected together and to peripheral parking by an internal system of walkways and gardens. An excellent model for this type of development is the Grow Community on Bainbridge Island outside of Seattle but there are precedents closer to home that are equally inspiring. Historic Monroe Park in South Haven, Michigan is one such example. Planned in the 1880s, Monroe Park contained modest cottages linked to the beach by common walkways lined with whitewashed concrete block walls and dune grass. Though many of the cottages have been replaced by larger structures, the systems of roads and walkways continue to give the community a cohesive character reminiscent of East Coast resorts. Other similar Great Lakes places include The Old Club on Harsens Island in Lake St. Claire, the Methodist summer resort of Bay View on Little Traverse Bay, and Mackinac Island.

#### 3. Recapture a small piece of WHA land to expand the design of King Park

The Waukegan Park District has an improvement plan for King Park that was the result of a close collaboration with the South Sheridan community. Extending Oak Street as part of the long-term redevelopment of Barwell Manor would also yield a small block that could be used in part as a complement to King Park, allowing some of the park programs to be expanded (for example the farmer's market area) or new park amenities or a public plaza or building to be introduced. Preserving a portion of the block as a public amenity would also tie the catalyst development to the neighborhoods more positively, especially if the excess width of South Avenue between Sheridan and Martin Luther King, Jr. Avenue be improved with a signature streetscape environments. The street would also encourage walking and biking from the heart of the redevelopment into downtown. Existing and new east-west streets would complete the internal network.

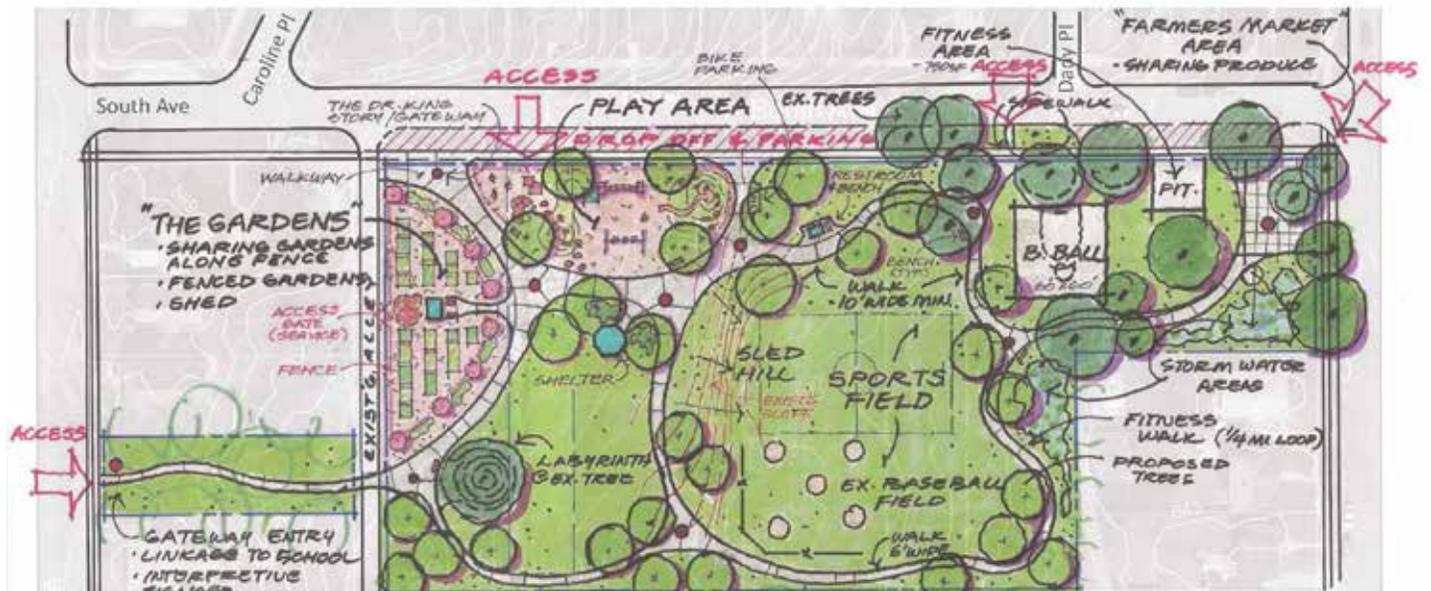
FIG 4.7 SINGLE-FAMILY DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK



**FIG 4.8** CHARACTER PRECEDENTS ILLUSTRATING RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SHERIDAN ROAD CORRIDOR AND NEW STREETS



**FIG 4.9** WAUKEGAN PARK DISTRICT - KING PARK CONCEPTUAL DESIGN



## CONNECTIONS

### OPPORTUNITY CONNECTIONS

The South Sheridan neighborhood feels isolated from many of the local and regional opportunity sites. This isolation can be very real as it relates to informed access to social and employment services, employment opportunities, and quality education offerings for all age groups. The isolation can be more perceived than real when it involves transportation options, retail services, and community amenities such as downtown, the lakefront and Waukegan recreational opportunities. The transition from a neighborhood with a high level of homeownership to one that is more transient (approaching 70% rental) lends to less understanding of what and where opportunities exist and how to take advantage of them. To date, there is limited formal organized effort to remedy the connection to area-wide opportunities. The following represent early steps in connecting the South Sheridan neighborhood to local and regional opportunities.

#### Transportation Mobility

The South Sheridan neighborhood possesses transportation assets that offer an excellent foundation from which to connect both internally and externally to opportunity sites. The Pace Bus system operates on Sheridan Road running in hourly intervals during the week. Both the North Chicago and Waukegan Metra train stations are less than a mile south and north respectively of the South Avenue/Sheridan Road intersection. Pace has a bus transfer site approximately 1 mile away at the intersection of Sheridan Road and Washington Street.

Connecting the above listed transit options with improved pedestrian and bicycle access should be planned and implemented as part of the neighborhood revitalization initiative. Identification of key opportunity sites (jobs, education, social

services, etc.) should be documented and advertised to residents and businesses. A concerted effort to encourage a more mobile neighborhood by intuitively connecting it to needed services and opportunities will serve both the neighborhood and its citizens well.

#### Economic Mobility

Unemployment and poverty rates in the South Sheridan neighborhood impact area are well above the city and state averages. There are over 14,000 jobs within a five-minute drive from the intersection of South Avenue and Sheridan Road. The Pace Bus transfer station connecting throughout the region and the Metra train station connecting to downtown Chicago, offer relatively easy access to major regional employers, training opportunities and a diverse set of education offerings. The challenge for South Sheridan neighborhood residents becomes knowing how and where to find the opportunities to improve their household economic standing. Real time information about employment requirements and opportunities is not readily available in the neighborhood. One must be both motivated and comfortable with navigating a host of offices and regional locations in order to find opportunities appropriate to the capabilities of the respective opportunity seeker.

South Sheridan Road, and downtown Waukegan offer convenient locations in which to create a front door to local and regional employment/training opportunities. Neighborhood and city leaders should investigate how to better link household economic potential with available jobs and training throughout the region. It is believed that the information and services that help link to these opportunities, if closer to the neighborhood will translate into more frequent utilization and understanding by neighborhood residents.

**FIG 4.10** ABBVIE, A REGIONAL EMPLOYMENT CENTER, IS WITHIN HALF A MILE OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD



## NEIGHBORHOOD CONNECTIONS

It is clear that the South Sheridan Neighborhood possesses very real and somewhat unique opportunity potential due both to its physical attributes and location. Its access to Lake Michigan, a relatively robust transportation network, proximity to downtown and major employers, and relatively sound housing stock combine to offer real resident and business opportunity. This potential was initially realized in the early to late 20th Century as businesses and residents came together to create a new neighborhood and lakefront industrial waterfront. As a result of economic dislocation and an exodus of many long time residents, the neighborhood has been in a downward transition for over 20 years. For many South Sheridan neighborhood residents impacted by past and more recent economic disruptions, the appearance and access to opportunity is not obvious. To paraphrase noted entrepreneur and successful business woman Barbara Corcoran, you must believe opportunity is present if you are to seek and find it.

As public and private investments are incurred, improving neighborhood connections to area amenities, assets and services should be given careful consideration. The importance of formalizing key connections becomes more apparent when taking into account the number of households that have moved into the neighborhood within the last 5-10 years – often with language barriers. Currently there are few if any programmed connections between neighborhood households and area opportunities, thus creating a feeling of isolation. Three important connections are highlighted below.

### Connections to Transit

Both the PACE bus system and Metra trains are accessible to neighborhood residents and businesses. There are several well-positioned bus stops along Sheridan Road. There are

Metra train stations within 1-1.5 miles of most residents both north and south of the Study Area. Pace's bus hub is positioned in downtown Waukegan approximately 1 mile to the north of the South Sheridan neighborhood. Currently there is little acknowledgement of the wealth of transit options available to neighborhood residents. Physical and programmatic cues, which do not exist presently, could go a long way in informing the public about how they can better access area opportunities, services and amenities.

### Connections to Downtown

Downtown Waukegan serves as the front door to Lake County services and programs, post-secondary education opportunities with the College of Lake County, and a host of social and community services. The South Sheridan neighborhood shares its northern boundary with downtown and is blessed with multiple ways to access all that downtown has to offer. It is clear that many neighborhood residents do not fully understand or appreciate the array of services that can be easily accessed less than 10 minutes from where they reside. This lack of awareness of the multitude of services and programs for every member of the household should be easily remedied both by both providing channels for information dissemination and demonstrating how easy it is to access downtown's offerings.

### Connections to Parks and Open Spaces

The South Sheridan neighborhood is blessed with Bedrosian and King Park, a passive walkable ravine and conservation area, and Lake Michigan access. Improving the linkages between and amongst the passive and active recreation open space assets will not only improve the quality of life for existing residents but also raise the image and value of the neighborhood to potential future residents and investors.

**FIG 4.11** THE NEWLY RENOVATED BEDROSIAN PARK IS A POPULAR RECREATIONAL AND COMMUNITY AMENITY



## Goal: Strengthen Community Institutions and Local Identity

Because the success of the South Sheridan corridor and the neighborhoods are interdependent, the investment in the catalyst project should be matched by targeted improvements in the neighborhoods to integrate them with the Sheridan corridor and the lakefront. Two ways this can occur are public investments in key streets, and support for small business through similar investment in public space and economic development incentives.

### 1. Enhance key neighborhood streets as green connections

The South Sheridan neighborhoods were built at a time when not everyone owned a car, and residents walked to the mills and the streetcar to get to work and downtown shops. This has resulted in a sidewalk network that almost completely covers the area – an asset many similar neighborhoods do not have. It is critical therefore that sidewalks are kept in good repair, especially on key connectors like Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue and Ravine Avenue. Additional enhancements could include replanting the landscape strip in native species where appropriate (could also include rain gardens or other stormwater control), and introducing pedestrian lighting and wayfinding. And, though limited, existing discontinuities in the street network should be addressed – for example, extending Oak Street to South Avenue. Improving the streetscape along Oak could also provide a green pedestrian connection between King Park and Bedrosian Park, where the splash pad is a major public bathing space. Rethinking Oak Street also helps tee up the potential reuse or redevelopment of St. Martin de Porres School, given its impeding relocation.

### 2. Strengthen local institutions and businesses along 10th Street

Finally, 10th Street played an important role in the development of Waukegan and the life of South Sheridan. It continues to evolve as a neighborhood main street and a critical seam between Waukegan and North Chicago. It is important, therefore, that the street be embraced as a tangible example of a municipal partnership between the two cities – at a minimum through coordinated street corridor improvements, but also through jointly creating a special planning area such as a business improvement district. This partnership could be made visible through the construction of a new public space at the intersection of 10th and Sheridan – once a key stop on the Shore Line and now a gateway to both cities.

FIG 4.12 OVERALL REDEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK



## CATALYST SITE DEVELOPMENT

### The Phase I Concept Plan

The South Sheridan Corridor Project provides a unique opportunity to re-ignite the vitality of a once proud and established community with new housing, commercial and civic projects. With each of three proposed housing types, the materials, scale and details are all conceived to intentionally give this newly-planned community an established identity for today, while recalling some of Waukegan's heritage from yesterday.

### The Site

Consisting of multiple acres of bluff-top property, the site lends itself well to providing multiple housing types in a walkable format with density stepping down from Sheridan to the bluff edge. It is generally flat, with some area of topographic relief to the east. Most of the existing streets are paved with the exception of South Clinton Street which traces the edge of the bluff; sidewalks are almost nonexistent. Subgrade utilities run in the Kennard right-of-way.

The design approach to the site features several fundamental strategies that conform to principles of traditional urbanism. They include:

- Intensifying the Sheridan Road / South Avenue corner
- Improving the Sheridan streetscape with sidewalks and street trees
- Utilizing building mass and architecture to create a street wall
- Limiting surface parking lots and dispersing them across the site, away from the Sheridan Road frontage
- Taking advantage of the groves of trees to create parkland
- Preserving as much of the existing street network as possible
- Maintaining the bluff edge as public space

The resulting plan provides for approximately 200 Phase I residential units, with enough dedicated parking to yield 1.25 spaces per unit. Townhouses have dedicated drives / garages, while parking for the cottages is located at the periphery. The existing Kennard Street has been maintained as a parking access alley to avoid utility relocation, while a new Kennard has been designed to connect with the existing curb cut for Hill Street at South Avenue.

**FIG 4.13** CATALYST SITE PHASE I CONCEPT PLAN

- 1 Existing Apartment Building
- 2 Proposed Mixed-Use Building
- 3 Kennard Street Extension
- 4 Conservation Area / Parkland
- 5 New Pedestrian Connection
- 6 Multifamily Residential Buildings
- 7 Secured Bike Storage
- 8 Walk-Up Flats
- 9 Townhouses
- 10 Green Buffer
- 11 Pedestrian-Activated Signal
- 12 Linear Park
- 13 Pedestrian Bridge To Lake
- 14 Cottage Community
- 15 New Sheridan Streetscape



## Multifamily Residential: Apartment Building

An early project will be a 3-4 story apartment building comprised of 1, 2 and 3 bedroom units. The planning concept for this building is to have no internal corridor on the ground level, like what is common in typical apartment buildings.

The removal of this corridor adds area to the square footage of the ground floor units, making them more viable as accessible unit designs. This concept, more importantly, offers the opportunity to have each ground floor unit have its own exterior entry. This is important for several reasons. The traditional apartment building has generally one central entry point and an environment of anonymity to the buildings residents. The result is often a significant amount of building façade and a site with no sense of ownership or community engagement. With this concept, each ground floor unit has a front yard with “eyes on the street” and residents have a direct connection from their homes to the community. The traditional single point entry still exists for units on the upper floors where the typical double loaded corridor planning concept is still utilized.

Taking this concept to the next level enables a different approach to the design of the building’s exterior. The multiple individual unit entries at grade allow the façades to be vertically articulated to create a multi-story “townhouse” aesthetic. In a typical multifamily building, the upper floor units are expressed as repetitive openings with little sense of individuality or connection to the ground.

The townhouse aesthetic mitigates that sense of detachment along the entire length of the façade. The resident in the upper floor can self-identify with a location and place within the building vertically extending to the ground. This adds to a greater sense of pride and belonging to an environment and to a home. The exterior design blends regional vernacular and industrial forms with contemporary materials and detailing. Materials are envisioned to be of a variety of types for scale, color, and individuality.

FIG 4.14 MULTIFAMILY RESIDENTIAL: DESIGN CONCEPT



KEY MAP



MULTIFAMILY RESIDENTIAL BUILDING - PHASE 1A

Floor Plan - Ground Level



MULTIFAMILY RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS

South Sheridan Road West Elevation



PLANS AND ELEVATIONS NOT TO SCALE

## Residential “Flats”

The proposed development includes multiple building types and unit configurations that are planned for the site in addition to the apartment buildings previously described.

The first is a concept for a Flats building typology with either 3 or 4 stories. These would be 6 or 8 unit buildings with each level having just 2 units per floor. This creates a more intimate and private living environment. They will be either 2 or 3 bedroom configurations, and each unit is planned to have its own dedicated outdoor space. The exterior is designed to complement the architecture of the apartment buildings through a similar use of materials and color palette.

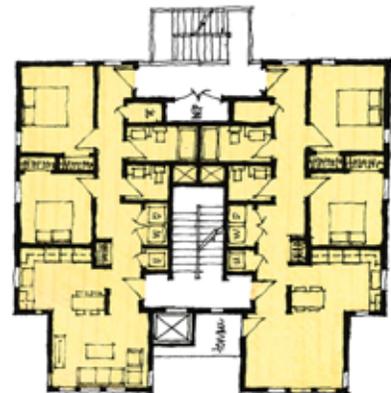
**FIG 4.15** WALK-UP FLATS: DESIGN CONCEPT



**KEY MAP**



Two- and Three-Bedroom Flats



Two-Bedroom Flat



**FLATS:** Typical Elevations

## Townhomes

Another typology is a 2-story townhome concept. These are planned to be 2 or 3 bedroom units with attached garages. They vary in their width depending on their bedroom count. The mix of the size lends to a natural combination for variety and interest to their collective street elevation. A “kit-of-parts” has been established through the use of materials, window fenestration and entry concept to enhance the variety while maintaining a cohesive aesthetic to deliver a unique grouping of townhomes.

**FIG 4.16** TOWNHOMES: DESIGN CONCEPT



**KEY MAP**



**TOWNHOMES:** Typical Elevations

PLANS AND ELEVATIONS NOT TO SCALE

### Single Family Detached Residential / Cottages

The third proposed typology is a series of clustered single family 2-4 bedroom cottages. These buildings will be designed with the same care and attention to the end user and community. The intent is to have a holistic community of walkways and shared parkways, private and community gardens all in a pedestrian neighborhood-friendly environment.

Great effort will be taken to create, through the design process, buildings that are not built as “cookie-cutter” prototypes, but through a common design language and materials, a collection of homes that create a unique sense of place. A good national example of this is the Grow Community in Bainbridge Island (see images on opposite page).

**FIG 4.17** COTTAGES: DESIGN CONCEPT



**KEY MAP**

**FIG 4.18** GROW COMMUNITY, BAINBRIDGE ISLAND, WA  
(DESIGN INSPIRATION FOR SINGLE FAMILY COTTAGES)





**PROJECTS + PROGRAMS**

NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION

NEIGHBORHOOD ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

OPPORTUNITY HUB

CATALYST PROJECT

# PROJECTS + PROGRAMS

It is the City's intent to utilize the South Sheridan Revitalization Plan as a roadmap for the community's leadership to follow with two specific destinations in mind:

- A dynamic revitalization of the South Sheridan neighborhood that results in a full-service mixed-income neighborhood that is one of choice and not last resort. The journey is likely to go beyond twenty years, but significant milestones will be realized within the first 3-5 years if the community and its leadership stay on course.
- A South Sheridan Revitalization effort that serves as a catalyst for a broader revitalization effort attracting a mix of development and investment to Waukegan's lakefront, nearby neighborhoods and downtown.

The following recommendations fall into four broad initiatives; pursuing only one or two of these four initiatives will result in limited success at best. Instead, a coordinated approach to all four initiatives will lead to a holistic revitalization outcome:

1. Neighborhood Revitalization
2. Neighborhood Economic Development
3. Opportunity Hub
4. Catalyst Project

The following programs and projects are offered as recommendations only. Local government and neighborhood leaders must come together, review the recommendations and establish a work program that they are willing to support. There is much heavy-lifting ahead for public, private, and neighborhood leadership. This a neighborhood with a plan and a draft work program. Now it is up to the community to execute.

## NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION

The Neighborhood Revitalization Initiative will focus on building a sense of community as well as diversifying the housing stock and household incomes within each neighborhood. Accomplishing this objective will stop a 30-year trend of downward economic indicators and neighborhood instability. New partnerships between an emerging neighborhood leadership base and government and local institutions will plan specific needs and outcomes in order to ensure an effective revitalization program.

The City of Waukegan should facilitate neighborhood partnerships with the private sector, governmental entities, and relevant not-for-profits to encourage the rehabilitation of the neighborhood's housing stock by attracting new investment designed to encourage increased homeownership as well as improved rental housing options.

The South Sheridan Neighborhood includes 2,477 residential housing units and over 6,800 people. A great percentage of homes are in need of some type of repair or major rehab.

The neighborhood has become younger, more diverse, and household incomes have decreased. Much of the aging housing stock has experienced deferred maintenance, homeownership is on the decline, and single-family home conversion to rental is steadily increasing.

A multi-faceted housing program is recommended. A comprehensive housing program should work with existing residents as well as the larger marketplace to encourage reinvestment as well as new opportunities for home-buyers seeking reasonably priced homes with value upside potential. Each of the following programs are intended to address a specific set of issues that have been identified in the South Sheridan neighborhood.

## HOME REPAIR AND WEATHERIZATION

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**Recommendation:**

Maintaining and increasing homeownership in the South Sheridan neighborhood should be the primary focus of the revitalization plan. A well-organized, multi-faceted program that impacts the challenges faced by the neighborhood’s low and moderate income homeowners in repairing and upgrading their homes with energy-efficient mechanical systems should be developed and operated for up to 10 years. Goal: 4-6 homes annually for up to 10 years.

**Issue(s) To Be Addressed:**

1. Older and/or lower income households unable to finance repairs/maintenance on older homes
2. Older housing stock lacking modern energy conservation equipment and materials, which results in excessive energy and resource usage and higher monthly household expenses
3. Deferred maintenance and excessive household expenses result in deteriorating property conditions, reducing marketability of neighborhood.

**Description:**

Target existing homeowners in need of home repair and weatherization assistance

**Champions & Partners:**

City of Waukegan, Lake County Affordable Housing Corporation, Habitat for Humanity Lake County

**Potential Funding Source(s):**

City & County CDBG and HOME funds, conventional loans, regional foundations

**Other Resources:**

Local churches, Black Chamber of Commerce, Lake County Community Action Partnership

<b>Start-Up:</b>	<b>Target Completion:</b>
2017-2018	<1 Year
2019-2021	2-4 Years
2022-2026	5-10 Years
2026+	Ongoing

## ABANDONED HOUSING RECOVERY

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**Recommendation:**

Prioritize the activation and occupancy of the existing abandoned/vacant housing stock by working with existing property owners to either rehabilitate their property or sell to designated agency.

**Issue(s) To Be Addressed:**

1. Blocks with abandoned or vacant homes are subject to vandalism and a higher incidence of crime
2. Abandoned and vacant home blocks lead to property depreciation
3. Abandoned and vacant homes represent a potential neighborhood and community liability as well as a lost opportunity if not addressed

**Description:**

Focus on returning abandoned homes that can be renovated into affordable home ownership opportunities

**Champions & Partners:**

Habitat for Humanity Lake County, local home contractors, City and County governments, Waukegan Housing Authority

**Potential Funding Source(s):**

City & County CDBG and HOME funds, conventional loans, regional foundations

**Other Resources:**

State of Illinois, local banks, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development - Designated Revitalization Area

<b>Start-Up:</b>	<b>Target Completion:</b>
2017-2018	<1 Year
2019-2021	2-4 Years
2022-2026	5-10 Years
2026+	Ongoing

## RENTAL REHABILITATION PROGRAM

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**Recommendation:**

Engage residential rental property owners to address and prevent sub-standard rental unit conditions utilizing regulations, incentives and education in a persistent and consistent manner (goal: 4-5 units annually) .

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**Issue(s) To Be Addressed:**

1. Steady property deterioration of rental properties scattered throughout neighborhood
  2. Low level of property maintenance and management throughout area resulting in little motivation to improve quality of rental properties
  3. Inexperienced property owners with little knowledge and/or capacity to manage and maintain rental properties
  4. Lack of accessible investment funds to improve rental properties
- 

**Description:**

Identify existing residential properties in need of repair and work with owners to rehabilitate and weatherize at or above local code

**Champions & Partners:**

Waukegan Code Enforcement Office, Waukegan Housing Authority, City of Waukegan

**Potential Funding Source(s):**

City and County Housing Authorities, Illinois Housing Development Authority

<b>Start-Up:</b>	<b>Target Completion:</b>
2017-2018	<1 Year
2019-2021	2-4 Years
2022-2026	5-10 Years
2026+	Ongoing

## HABITAT PARTNERSHIP

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**Recommendation:**

Establish a partnership with the Habitat for Humanity Lake County to build up to 20 affordable single-family homes in the South Sheridan neighborhood over a five to eight year period.

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**Issues To Be Addressed:**

1. Too many empty lots creating voids on residential blocks and long term maintenance problems
  2. Lack of modern, energy efficient, affordable single-family housing options
  3. Aging neighborhood housing stock currently being replaced with either empty lots or conversion to rental housing
- 

**Description:**

Engage Habitat for Humanity Lake County and identify vacant land parcels for new single-family housing investment

**Champions & Partners:**

Habitat for Humanity Lake County, local churches, City of Waukegan, Waukegan Housing Authority

**Potential Funding Source(s):**

Habitat for Humanity, HOME funds (City and County), conventional financing

<b>Start-Up:</b>	<b>Target Completion:</b>
2017-2018	<1 Year
2019-2021	2-4 Years
2022-2026	5-10 Years
2026+	Ongoing

## BARWELL MANOR REPLACEMENT HOUSING

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### **Recommendation:**

As Barwell Manor public housing is transitioned and replaced, incorporate up to one-third of the residents in single-family housing in the South Sheridan neighborhood. An emphasis should be placed on providing quality single-family options for larger public housing families (5-8 members).

### **Issues to be Addressed:**

1. Concentration of low-income families in one location
2. Public housing residents are isolated and not part of existing neighborhood
3. Families with five or more members difficult to serve adequately in typical multifamily unit

### **Description:**

Identify distressed 4+ bedroom homes that could accommodate larger public housing families in a single-family environment, including new Habitat homes.

### **Champions & Partners:**

Waukegan Housing Authority, City of Waukegan, Habitat for Humanity Lake County

### **Potential Funding Sources:**

HOME funds (City and County), Housing Authority capital funds, Housing Authority housing vouchers

<b>Start-Up:</b>	<b>Target Completion:</b>
2017-2018	<1 Year
2019-2021	2-4 Years
2022-2026	5-10 Years
2026+	Ongoing

## NEIGHBORHOOD BLOCK REINFORCEMENT

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### **Recommendation:**

The South Sheridan neighborhood is currently a collection of several dozen blocks (approximately 60 blocks), most of which have little sense of community, common purpose or neighborhood feel. Seventy-five percent of the households did not live in their current location 13 years ago (2000-2013). Blocks that were once characterized by homeownership are now a mix of homeowners, renters, and vacant structures. Block litter, unkempt properties, and illegal activity are taking place due to a lack of block coherence and little community spirit.

There is a need for a growing sense of ownership with each of the blocks, ownership that begins with knowing your neighbors and addressing block issues as they arise. It is proposed that the neighborhood begins to reknit its community fabric, block-by-block. In order to do this, residents and or businesses on each block will have to be willing to assume a leadership role and take on responsibilities. The following initiatives are steps in this direction.

### **Issues to be Addressed:**

1. Property maintenance issues localized block-by-block through engaged neighbor involvement
2. Crime and vandalism thru organized neighborhood and block crime watch activity
3. Lack of a sense of community due to little neighbor interaction and a lack of neighborhood involvement

### **Description:**

Establish a sense of resident involvement and ownership via organized block-by-block improvement activities

### **Champions & Partners:**

City of Waukegan, local churches, Aldermen, Ward 1 Code Enforcement

### **Potential Funding Sources:**

CDBG, local contributions and fundraisers, landlords

<b>Start-Up:</b>	<b>Target Completion:</b>
2017-2018	<1 Year
2019-2021	2-4 Years
2022-2026	5-10 Years
2026+	Ongoing

## NEIGHBORHOOD ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES

Where the working waterfront once served to support and reinforce a vibrant Waukegan and South Sheridan corridor, it is now the corridor's turn to serve as the gateway and catalyst for a lakefront and neighborhood revitalization. Today a distressed and disinvested corridor supports 15,000+ daily cars travelling from AbbVie and the Great Lakes Naval Training Center as well as other local employers, to communities well outside the South Sheridan corridor neighborhood. A revitalized corridor, replete with updated sidewalks and right-of-way linking to downtown and local transit, new businesses and open space amenities sets the table for new and long term investment. A cleaned up and marketable corridor will help to position a Lake Michigan shore with over 500 acres of mixed-use development potential and a transit-oriented neighborhood with excellent opportunities for young families looking for affordable home ownership. A revitalized South Sheridan corridor is the front door to the community and its lakefront.

Neighborhood economic development initiatives will focus on attracting new business investment while supporting and working with existing businesses to bring much needed services and employment opportunities to the neighborhood. A once industrial lakefront and commercial South Sheridan corridor can again support new businesses once it is clear to the broader market that the community is executing a plan that will improve their ability to succeed. Harnessing the currently underserved neighborhood, nearby business anchors combined with the Sheridan Road commuter provides a good start for attracting new business investment.

There are several projects/programs that will help to lead the way in establishing the role of the corridor as a catalyst for long term investment, both in the neighborhood as well as the lakefront.

## SHERIDAN ROAD COMPLETE STREET UPGRADES

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**Recommendation:**

The South Sheridan corridor should be upgraded as a full-service complete street accommodating not only its large number of daily commuters, but also local residents and visitors with enhanced multi-modal transportation options including pedestrian and bicycle. A “complete street” design for South Sheridan Road will improve the functionality of the street for all users while at the same time enhancing the value of the surrounding underperforming real estate.

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**Issues to be Addressed:**

1. Reduce conflicts between traffic and pedestrian/ bicycle users
  2. Explore on-street parking options to help address inadequate parking for neighborhood institutions
  3. Eliminate or impact sense of street as a pass-through thoroughfare and establish context for an interesting commercial street suitable for multiple types of businesses and consumers
- 

**Description:**

Redesign South Sheridan corridor in a manner that expands its relevance beyond commuter traffic to local businesses and enhanced service levels for mobility challenged residents

**Champions & Partners:**

City of Waukegan, State of Illinois Department of Transportation, South Sheridan neighborhood, area employers

**Potential Funding Sources:**

State of Illinois, City of Waukegan, USDOT, TIF, PACE

<b>Start-Up:</b>	<b>Target Completion:</b>
2017-2018	<1 Year
2019-2021	2-4 Years
2022-2026	5-10 Years
2026+	Ongoing

## BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

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**Recommendation:**

The planning effort has documented that the current business context on and adjacent to the South Sheridan corridor is not healthy, resulting in inadequate service delivery to the surrounding community. The market study has shown there are retail and service needs that can be supported by the marketplace (i.e. clothing, shoes, prepared food, basic services). Existing businesses that have demonstrated an ability to meet specific community needs should be identified and supported – they have survived, and in some cases thrived, in a challenging business environment. Efforts should be made to engage these businesses and determine the most significant impediments to both survival and growth. Creating communication channels between the business operators and the regional and national programs that offer technical assistance and access to resources should be considered.

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**Issues to be Addressed:**

1. A lack of retail and business services to adequately address neighborhood demand levels
  2. Negative perception caused by empty storefronts and vacant land parcels
  3. Underperforming business context due to too few and scattered businesses
- 

**Description:**

Establish mechanisms that support existing functional neighborhood businesses and strategically encourage additional business development that serves neighborhood demand

**Champions & Partners:**

Lake County Chamber of Commerce, City of Waukegan, Illinois Small Business Administration, Waukegan Chamber of Commerce, Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity

**Potential Funding Sources:**

CDBG, SBA, New Market Tax Credits

<b>Start-Up:</b>	<b>Target Completion:</b>
2017-2018	<1 Year
2019-2021	2-4 Years
2022-2026	5-10 Years
2026+	Ongoing

## STRATEGIC PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT

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**Recommendation:**

Strategic land parcels and buildings that are now under-performing or vacant should be, where possible, acquired and preserved for future business development. The three retail/business development areas of focus include the South Avenue intersection, the 10th Street Sheridan Road node, and north of South Avenue to McKinley Avenue. It is important to realize that retail development is an intermediate and long term opportunity. Securing strategic retail/business sites should be implemented with this in mind.

**Issues to be Addressed:**

1. Lack of organized redevelopment effort in re-positioning multiple land parcels for new investment
2. Inability to provide development-ready lots for time-sensitive commercial opportunities
3. Need to clean up poorly maintained buildings and lots

**Description:**

Incremental site control and clean-up of poorly performing commercial properties in priority development areas along the South Sheridan corridor

**Champions & Partners:**

City of Waukegan

**Potential Funding Sources:**

CBDG, TIF, property owners

<b>Start-Up:</b>	<b>Target Completion:</b>
2017-2018	<1 Year
2019-2021	2-4 Years
2022-2026	5-10 Years
2026+	Ongoing

## INSTITUTIONAL LAND USE PLAN

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**Recommendation:**

There are a number of institutions that play an important role in providing critical services to neighborhood residents while also strengthening the physical fabric of the community (churches, schools, Boys and Girls Club, etc.) Operational needs of these institutions such as parking, facility growth, and outdoor programming are not always accommodated due to historic and now antiquated land use programming. It is recommended that the City of Waukegan’s Planning Department work with the major neighborhood institutions to develop an institutional land use program that 1) identifies issues impacting the ability of each institution to function efficiently, and 2) provides land use recommendations to guide future decision-making and enhance the physical context in which the respective institutions operate.

**Issues to be Addressed:**

1. Need for updated land use plan better serving significant local institutional anchors
2. Newer larger improvements not well integrated into neighborhood
3. Lack of support programming (i.e. parking) supporting newer land uses

**Description:**

Establish updated neighborhood land use plan for existing and future institutional land uses which allows for improved neighborhood capacity in supporting and integrating into community fabric

**Champions & Partners:**

City of Waukegan, neighborhood leadership

**Potential Funding Sources:**

City of Waukegan, grants, neighborhood institutions

<b>Start-Up:</b>	<b>Target Completion:</b>
2017-2018	<1 Year
2019-2021	2-4 Years
2022-2026	5-10 Years
2026+	Ongoing

## OPPORTUNITY HUB INITIATIVES

The Opportunity Hub initiatives will seek to better connect South Sheridan neighborhood residents with social services and economic opportunities.

The Hub approach seeks to cluster services into a designated area providing easy access to those that are in need of them. In many ways, an Opportunity Hub can perform much like a typical storefront or series of storefronts. Designated locations may offer education, training, employment, financial, social, health and wellness services in close proximity to each other—serving not only neighborhood residents but other Waukeganites as well. The Opportunity Hub could also be designed to offer entertainment and gathering/meeting places for the community. The process of creating a tailored approach for South Sheridan residents will be the first step towards creating opportunity in the neighborhood.

<i>Start-Up:</i>	<i>Target Completion:</i>
2017-2018	<1 Year
2019-2021	2-4 Years
2022-2026	5-10 Years
2026+	Ongoing

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### **Issues to be Addressed:**

1. Neighborhood disconnected physically and psychologically from regional service centers
2. No formal information source for learning about local/regional opportunities
3. No neighborhood gathering place for information exchange

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### **Description:**

Engage neighborhood stakeholders in the creation of a locally-designated “Opportunity Hub” designed to provide convenient access to regional services and opportunities

### **Champions & Partners:**

Neighborhood institutions and stakeholders, City of Waukegan, Lake County, Waukegan Public Library, Waukegan School District, local churches, Erie HealthReach, YWCA, Beacon Place, Lake County Health Department

### **Potential Funding Sources:**

City of Waukegan and Lake County, regional foundations

### **Other Resources:**

Possible public-private partnership

## CATALYST PROJECT INITIATIVES

The Catalyst Project initiatives will attempt to introduce the other three initiatives—neighborhood revitalization, economic development and the opportunity hubs—through the development of the catalyst site. The site is proposed to serve a mixed-income population with well-designed and well-managed housing choices, provide new retail and commercial services and establish the first opportunity hub space for service providers and the public. The catalyst project will set the tone for future development while serving as a visible beacon for both the neighborhood and those looking for investment opportunities.

The existing conditions along the Sheridan Road corridor have led the planning team, the City and many neighborhood stakeholders to conclude that there is a catalyst opportunity which, if pursued with diligence and purpose, could open the greater neighborhood to more opportunity sooner. It should be disclosed that Development Concepts Inc., a member of this planning team, is also a member of the development team that is proposing a redevelopment of the site described below.

The catalyst site must accomplish several important objectives. They include:

- Building and site design that raises the bar for future investments
- New investment that provides quality living opportunity for affordable and market rate residents
- New residential units that will attract middle and higher income households to the neighborhood
- Creating opportunity by establishing a context for new retail and business investment
- Investment along South Sheridan Road, the lakefront and adjacent neighborhood

**The following recommendations are critical to activating the selected catalyst site.**

## DETERMINE DISPOSITION OF BARWELL MANOR PUBLIC HOUSING PROPERTY

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### **Recommendations:**

It is recommended that the Waukegan Housing Authority and the community work together to improve the living conditions for the Barwell Manor residents while creating a Sheridan Road development context that serves to encourage the redevelopment of the broader neighborhood and lakefront.

There are many properties adjacent to the Sheridan corridor that have outlived their useful life. In most instances these improvements exceed 50 years in age, and act as an eyesore and an impediment to future investment. Barwell Manor is among the more conspicuous properties of this type along the corridor. This 120-unit property residing on approximately eight acres of land and 450 linear feet of Sheridan Road frontage serves as a daily symbol of a neighborhood in distress. The Waukegan Housing Authority desires to replace these units, allowing for improved living conditions for its residents. If the South Sheridan neighborhood is to successfully initiate a sustainable revitalization program there is no better place to start than by establishing a plan to replace Barwell Manor. The City, in partnership with the Waukegan Housing Authority, has initiated the process for realizing this goal. They are encouraged to see this initiative through and to incorporate existing housing residents into the neighborhood housing program that is a part of this plan.

### **Issues to be Addressed:**

1. Replace Barwell Manor with new public housing units as part of a mixed-income development that better integrates into surrounding neighborhood and provide improved quality of life for its residents
2. Removal some of the more significant eyesores on South Sheridan Road
3. Address underperforming South Sheridan Road and South Avenue commercial nodes

### **Description:**

Barwell Manor’s age and obsolescence requires a disposition strategy that will replace its 120 public housing units with well-designed residential units that better serve residents and contribute to the neighborhood revitalization.

### **Champions & Partners:**

Waukegan Housing Authority, Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), City of Waukegan

### **Potential Funding Sources:**

HUD, Waukegan Housing Authority, City of Waukegan

### **Other Resources:**

Possible public-private partnership, housing vouchers

<b>Start-Up:</b>	<b>Target Completion:</b>
2017-2018	<1 Year
2019-2021	2-4 Years
2022-2026	5-10 Years
2026+	Ongoing

## ESTABLISH SITE REINVESTMENT PLAN FOR BARWELL MANOR AND ADJACENT CITY SITE

### **Recommendations:**

Establish partnerships between the Waukegan Housing Authority, the City of Waukegan, the neighborhood and development community to maximize the impact from the anticipated redevelopment of Barwell Manor, adjacent city land and nearby under performing properties.

Barwell Manor, along with the city-owned land to the south, combine for approximately 1,500 feet of Sheridan Road frontage on its east edge. These highly-visible combined sites, sitting on a bluff looking east to Lake Michigan, provide an excellent catalyst site for rejuvenating a dormant Sheridan Road corridor. Concurrent with the discussions now underway to redevelop Barwell Manor is a process for creating a public-private partnership to redevelop both the city and public housing sites. Initial site planning is underway and discussions with the broader community are on-going.

Chapter 3 of this plan identifies several key planning objectives that should be incorporated into the final site plan for this catalyst site. The City's Planning Department and Planning Commission along with the Waukegan Economic Development Advisory Board should focus on the proposed site plan and ultimate redevelopment to assure that it raises the bar for future South Sheridan neighborhood development.

### **Issues to be Addressed:**

1. Remove eyesores which exist on aging Barwell Manor site and adjacent vacant land
2. Address perception that South Sheridan Road's existing conditions prohibit new investment opportunity.
3. Absence of neighborhood vision and plan results in inability to organize local stakeholders

### **Description:**

Organize key stakeholders to create a mixed-use development program which integrates Barwell Manor site with adjacent city land and other under-performing properties in a manner that provides maximum positive impact to the South Sheridan corridor.

### **Champions & Partners:**

Waukegan Housing Authority, City of Waukegan, neighborhood stakeholders, private sector

### **Potential Funding Sources:**

Waukegan Housing Authority, City of Waukegan, private sector

### **Other Resources:**

Possible public-private partnership

<b>Start-Up:</b>	<b>Target Completion:</b>
2017-2018	<1 Year
2019-2021	2-4 Years
2022-2026	5-10 Years
2026+	Ongoing

## IMPLEMENT MULTI-PHASE, MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

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### **Recommendations:**

Implement a multi-phase, mixed-use development program that prioritizes the revitalization of the South Sheridan corridor’s commercial, residential and lakefront properties.

The initiatives outlined in this document are intended to create a revitalization context that will support numerous public, private and institutional stakeholders committed to revitalizing the South Sheridan neighborhood and lakefront. The South Sheridan corridor Catalyst Project will support up to 500 new residential units and 15,000-20,000 square feet of new commercial space. The addition of diverse mixed-income housing products will serve both existing residents as well as attract new market rate households. A gradual growth in retail and commercial services will help to re-establish the ability of the neighborhood to meet the daily needs of its residents. The development represents a complex set of partners that includes the private sector, the City of Waukegan, the Waukegan Housing Authority and the neighborhood. As this project moves forward and its several project components are detailed, it is important that the community links the development to the broader set of revitalization objectives it hopes to achieve – both short and long term. These objectives can be summed up by stating that this catalyst project must help to make the South Sheridan neighborhood a more desirable location in which to invest and live in.

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### **Issues to be Addressed:**

1. Lack of investment and development momentum over 30 year period
2. Existing trend of deteriorating property and lower household income and housing values
3. Lack of organized local capacity to effectively reverse negative economic and social trends

### **Description:**

Establish a context, using the momentum gained from the Catalyst Project, to support a multi-phase redevelopment program that results in new neighborhood, commercial corridor, and lakefront investments long term.

### **Champions & Partners:**

City of Waukegan, neighborhood stakeholders, County and State government, private sector, Waukegan Housing Authority

### **Potential Funding Sources:**

Private finance, City of Waukegan with other public partners

### **Other Resources:**

Possible public-private partnership

<b>Start-Up:</b>	<b>Target Completion:</b>
2017-2018	<1 Year
2019-2021	2-4 Years
2022-2026	5-10 Years
2026+	Ongoing



**APPENDIX**  
EXISTING CONDITIONS MAPS

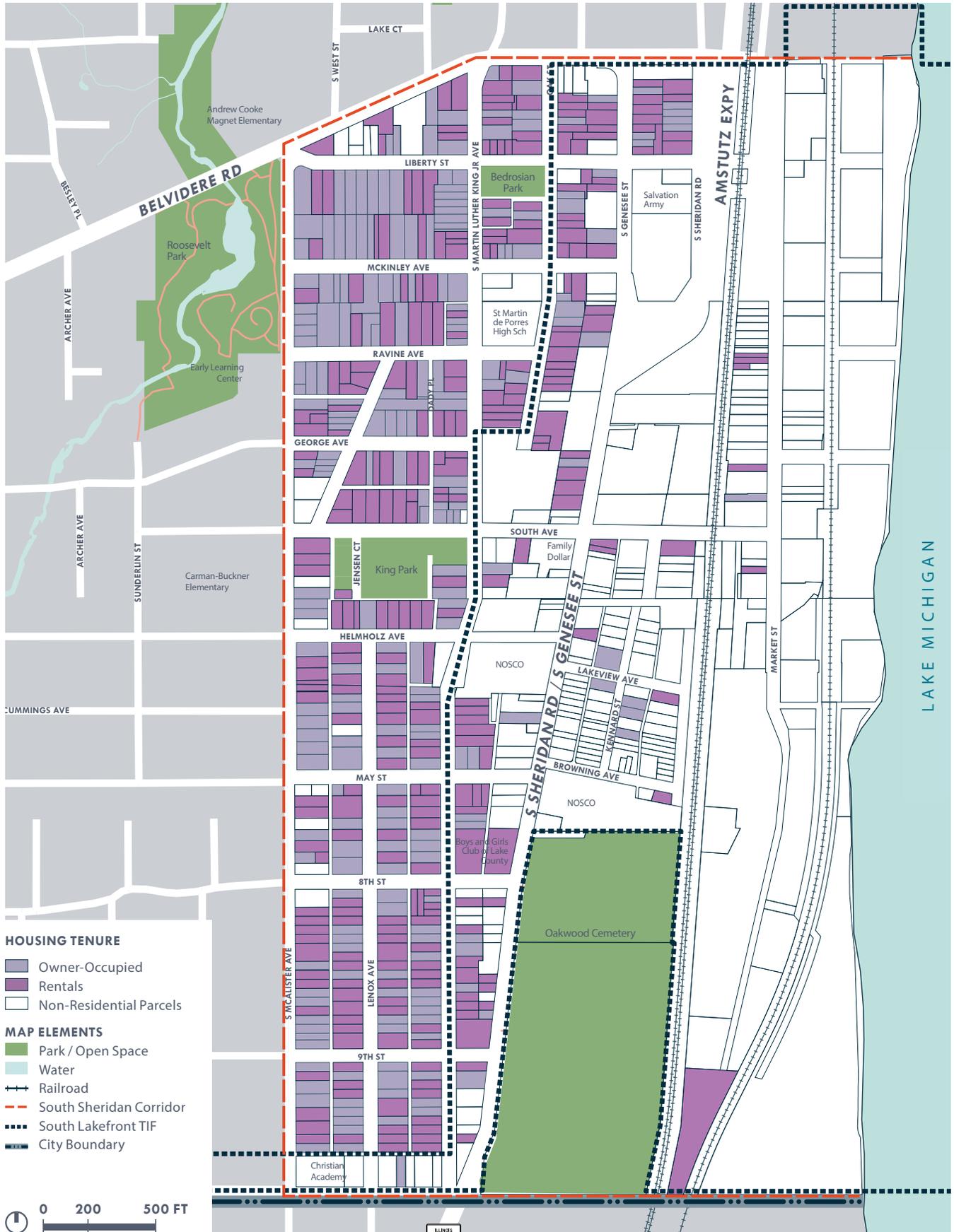
# APPENDIX



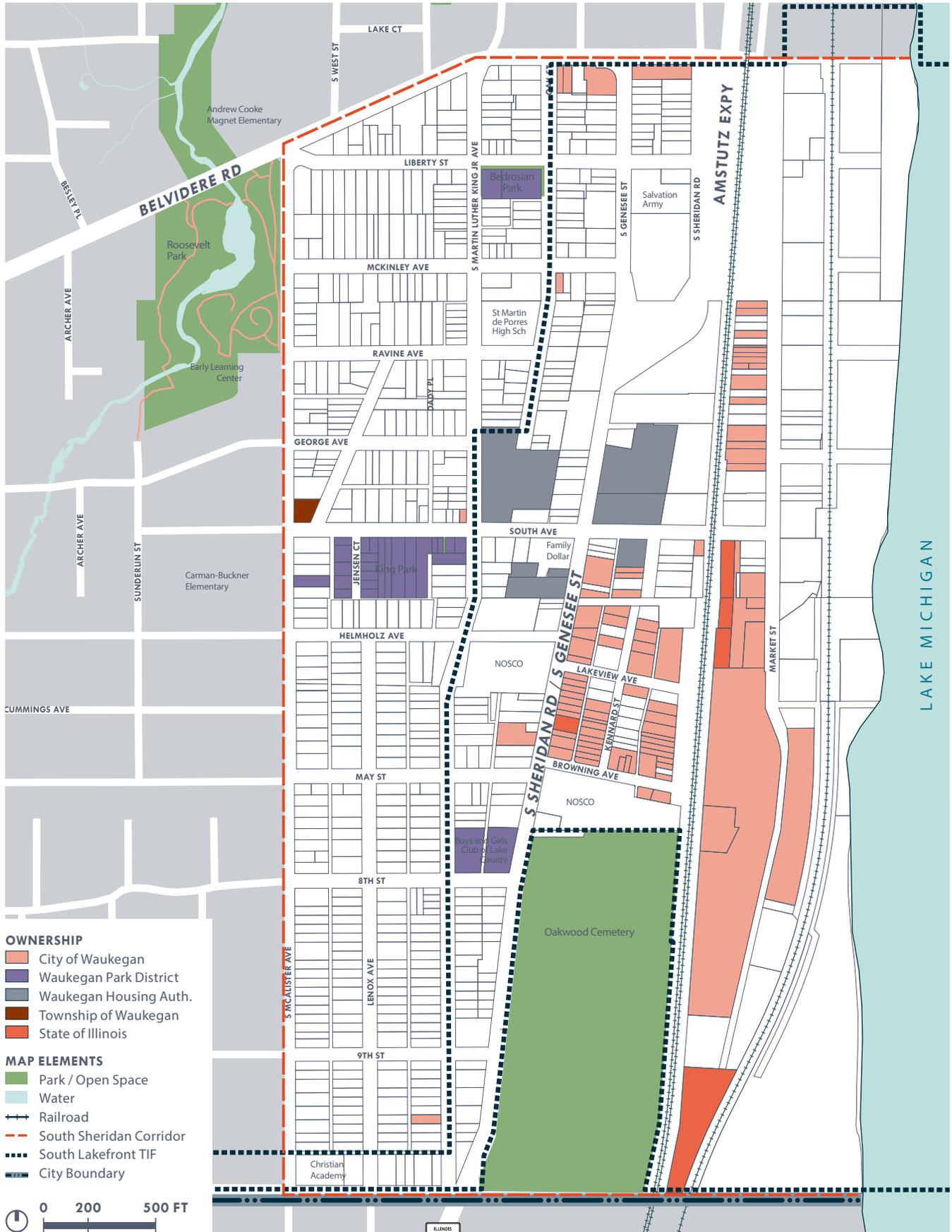
**FIG 6.2 OCCUPANCY STATUS OF USES AND PARCELS — SOUTH SHERIDAN CORRIDOR STUDY AREA**



**FIG 6.3** OWNER-OCCUPANCY FOR RESIDENTIAL PARCELS — SOUTH SHERIDAN CORRIDOR STUDY AREA



**FIG 6.4 GOVERNMENT-OWNED PARCELS — SOUTH SHERIDAN CORRIDOR STUDY AREA**



## LIST OF FIGURES

FIG 1.1 SOUTH SHERIDAN NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION FRAMEWORK .....	7
FIG 1.2 CATALYST SITE PHASE I CONCEPT PLAN .....	9
FIG 2.1 STUDY GEOGRAPHIES.....	12
FIG 2.2 SOUTH SHERIDAN REVITALIZATION CORRIDOR AND CATALYST SITES.....	13
FIG 2.3 AERIAL VIEW OF DOWNTOWN-LAKEFRONT VISION WITH SOUTH SHERIDAN NEIGHBORHOOD AT LEFT .....	14
FIG 2.4 SOUTH LAKEFRONT REDEVELOPMENT, AS SPECIFIED IN THE 2003 DOWNTOWN-LAKEFRONT MASTER PLAN.....	15
FIG 3.4 POPULATION GROWTH .....	24
FIG 3.5 HOUSING OCCUPANCY STATUS.....	24
FIG 3.6 APARTMENT FOR RENT ABOVE STOREFRONT RETAIL .....	24
FIG 3.7 AGE PROFILE .....	25
FIG 3.8 RACE AND ETHNICITY.....	25
FIG 3.9 AVERAGE MEDIAN INCOME (AMI) .....	26
FIG 3.10 CHANGE IN MEDIAN INCOME (2010-2014).....	26
FIG 3.11 EMPLOYMENT STATUS .....	26
FIG 3.12 AGE OF HOUSING STOCK .....	27
FIG 3.13 CHANGE IN MEDIAN HOUSING VALUE (2010-2014) .....	27
FIG 3.14 OCCUPANCY STATUS.....	27
FIG 3.15 VALUE OF OWNER-OCCUPIED HOMES .....	28
FIG 3.16 GROSS MEDIAN RENT, COMPARISONS .....	28
FIG 3.17 RENT AS PERCENTAGE OF INCOME, COMPARISONS .....	28
FIG 3.19 EXISTING PUBLIC HOUSING: BARWELL MANOR.....	29
FIG 3.18 HOUSING DEFICIT (2010-2014) .....	29
FIG 3.20 CONDITION — SHERIDAN CORRIDOR STUDY AREA .....	30
FIG 3.21 BLIGHT ANALYSIS, SUMMARY — SHERIDAN CORRIDOR STUDY AREA .....	31
FIG 3.22 PHOTOGRAPHS: RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOOD LOCATED TO THE EAST OF SOUTH SHERIDAN ROAD.....	32
FIG 3.23 PHOTOGRAPHS: SOUTH SHERIDAN ROAD / IL-137 .....	33
FIG 3.24 BIRD’S EYE VIEW SHOWING TRANSITION FROM NEIGHBORHOOD TO THE LAKEFRONT ACROSS S SHERIDAN ROAD ...	34
FIG 3.25 HISTORIC IMAGES ILLUSTRATING LANDSCAPE LAYERS WITHIN THE STUDY AREA (SEE NEXT PAGE FOR MAPS) .....	35
FIG 3.26 LANDSCAPE LAYERS: DIAGRAMS.....	36

FIG 4.1 LAKEFRONT CONSERVATION FRAMEWORK..... 40

FIG 4.2 CHARACTER PRECEDENTS ILLUSTRATING RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE LAKEFRONT..... 41

FIG 4.3 SHERIDAN / STREET FRAMEWORK..... 42

FIG 4.4 CHARACTER PRECEDENTS ILLUSTRATING RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SHERIDAN ROAD CORRIDOR AND NEW STREETS 43

FIG 4.5 MULTIFAMILY DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK ..... 44

FIG 4.6 CHARACTER PRECEDENTS ILLUSTRATING RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MULTIFAMILY / MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT ..... 45

FIG 4.7 SINGLE-FAMILY DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK..... 46

FIG 4.8 CHARACTER PRECEDENTS ILLUSTRATING RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SHERIDAN ROAD CORRIDOR AND NEW STREETS 47

FIG 4.9 WAUKEGAN PARK DISTRICT - KING PARK CONCEPTUAL DESIGN..... 47

FIG 4.10 ABBVIE, A REGIONAL EMPLOYMENT CENTER, IS WITHIN HALF A MILE OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD ..... 48

FIG 4.11 THE NEWLY RENOVATED BEDROSIAN PARK IS A POPULAR RECREATIONAL AND COMMUNITY AMENITY ..... 49

FIG 4.12 OVERALL REDEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK..... 51

FIG 4.13 CATALYST SITE PHASE I CONCEPT PLAN ..... 53

FIG 4.14 MULTIFAMILY RESIDENTIAL: DESIGN CONCEPT ..... 54

FIG 4.15 WALK-UP FLATS: DESIGN CONCEPT..... 56

FIG 4.16 TOWNHOMES: DESIGN CONCEPT ..... 57

FIG 4.17 COTTAGES: DESIGN CONCEPT ..... 58

FIG 4.18 GROW COMMUNITY IMAGES ..... 59

FIG 6.1 OVERALL CONDITION OF EXISTING USES — SHERIDAN CORRIDOR STUDY AREA ..... 76

FIG 6.2 OCCUPANCY STATUS OF USES AND PARCELS — SOUTH SHERIDAN CORRIDOR STUDY AREA..... 77

FIG 6.3 OWNER OCCUPANCY FOR RESIDENTIAL PARCELS — SOUTH SHERIDAN CORRIDOR STUDY AREA ..... 78

FIG 6.4 GOVERNMENT-OWNED PARCELS — SOUTH SHERIDAN CORRIDOR STUDY AREA ..... 79



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