

Preserving Endangered Rural Character

Sheboygan County, Wisconsin

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Abstract

Rural scenic resources are being lost at an alarming rate across the country. Development on the edge of every city, large and small, is turning America's rural character into parking lots and franchise developments. The resulting "Anywhere USA" creates a homogenized visual image across the landscape everywhere. Sheboygan County decided to take control of the visual quality of the countryside along two of its major transportation routes. The adoption process for ideas outlined below is still moving forward on the local government level and has achieved a small step in preserving the county's rural character.

1 - PROJECT OVERVIEW

In 1995, the Sheboygan Development Corporation completed a planning study for Sheboygan County. The purpose of the initial planning study was to "define and answer questions that will lead Sheboygan County's land use and economic development into the next century." One recommendation contained in that report was to protect and enhance the visual quality of the Interstate Highway 43 and State Highway 23 corridors. The report further recommended the establishment of design controls for architecture, site design, green space, signage, lighting, access, and aesthetic components of all development. The Sheboygan Development Corporation formed a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) which selected HNTB Corporation planners to implement these recommendations.

This next phase of planning was titled "Sheboygan County's Vision Implementation." The mission of this planning process was to prepare a set of planning and implementation "tools" that would amend existing local zoning ordinances and enable local units of government and the county to direct development in a manner that protects and enhances the scenic quality of the Interstate Highway 43 and State Trunk Highway 23 corridors.

The first step in preserving the highway corridor's rural aesthetic character was to assess the existing visual quality, inventory significant visual features and define visual limits. To accomplish this, HNTB conducted a Visual Assessment of the State Highway 23 (STH 23) and Interstate Highway 43 (IH-43) corridors in Sheboygan County. The visual assessment mapped key visual characteristics, significant features, and defined the limits of the "view shed" or visual corridor from the highway traveler's perspective. Based upon the Visual Assessment, a number of planning and implementation "tools" were considered and discussed by the TAC as a means of preserving and enhancing the visual quality of the corridor. HNTB also examined existing zoning ordinances to identify "gaps" which allow the types of development which can be detrimental to the visual quality of the corridor. The evaluation and selection of visual preservation and enhancement tools was based on the following criteria:

- The ability to insure that new development is of high quality, while maintaining the property owner's right for economic return on investment.
- The appropriate degree of development and aesthetic control to preserve and enhance the visual quality of key corridors.

Options considered as possible implementation tools included several that were deemed unrealistic on a large scale largely due to the magnitude of the financial commitment required:

- Public Purchase of Land
- Private Purchase of Land
- Purchase of Easements
- Transfer or Purchase of Development Rights
- Purchase of Billboard Rights

2 - RECOMMENDED ACTION

The following implementation tools were recommended by HNTB and approved by the Technical Advisory Committee:

- Communities would voluntarily create a "Scenic Management Corridor" extending varying distances on either side of STH 23 and IH-43 within their jurisdictions. HNTB's planners next task was to physically inspect the highway corridors, identify the limits of the visual corridor and delineate the corridor.

Communities would voluntarily adopt a "Scenic Management Corridor Overlay Ordinance" as part of their local zoning ordinance. Each community would adapt the model ordinance, prepared by SDC, to that community's individual requirements. The model overlay ordinance contains a set of "Design Guidelines" for new development or redevelopment that would also be adapted to fit the individual community. The Design Guidelines address:

- Landscape planting and design
- Excavation and site grading
- Signage location and design
- Parking location and design
- Roadway location and design

The intent of the "overlay" zoning ordinance is not to replace the existing zoning, but to provide an additional level of control to preserve and enhance the visual quality of the Scenic Management Corridor. Communities would be responsible for voluntarily adopting the design standards and creating a Review Board to deal with development issues and plan review for projects within the Scenic Management Corridor. This board could be the local Plan Commission or a specially convened body. It was recommended for ease of implementation, that the Plan Commission be used for this task.

A Draft Overlay Model Zoning Code was then prepared for review and comment by local government representatives. Site development standards were also suggested.

Recommendations were made for development standards, which further protected the visual quality of the county. These standards are found in the model ordinance and include the following topics:

- Variable setbacks
- Outdoor storage and/or display
- Utilities (type and locations)
- Outdoor lighting
- Preservation of native landscape
- Preservation of agricultural landscape
- Sight lines (created and/or preserved)
- Architectural treatments of structures
- Building size and massing
- Cluster development (building coverage)

- Building and landscape construction materials
- Natural storm water systems (detention and infiltration)
- Public open space

The goal of the new zoning regulations and design/development standards is to maintain a positive visual character and quality with control mechanisms that are "workable" for both the public and private sector. HNTB met with members of the SDC four times throughout the preparation of the zoning and design/development standards to discuss and refine the proposed development control mechanisms.

The successful implementation of the vision plan depends entirely on the public's and local government's willingness to adopt and support it. Consensus must be built with the public so they not only agree with, but embrace any proposed zoning districts or overlays and development standards as the mechanisms which will protect their investment in land, while not damaging the potential for economic gain.

It was recommended that public information meetings be held by local governmental bodies to answer questions and determine the views and concerns of property owners. The public's views can provide valuable insight and ultimately may be incorporated into portions of the final zoning and development standards for each community.

To further assist local governments in implementing the Design Guidelines, HNTB prepared illustrative development plans for the three interchanges (STH 42 & IH 43, STH 32 & STH 32, STH 23 & STH 57) in the project area. These Schematic Land Use Plans were the basis of discussion by the Technical Advisory Committee. HNTB then prepared a more detailed Development Plan for each of these intersections, illustrating how the zoning and development standards could be applied to appropriate uses and how development at these interchanges might appear if development occurs. The intent of the key intersection development plans is to illustrate how the zoning and development standards translate into a physical plan and suggest development patterns for these specific intersections.

3 -VISUAL ASSESSMENT

The first step necessary for the implementation of a corridor preservation strategy was to define the Scenic Management Corridor. In order to define the limits, quality and character of this area, HNTB conducted a visual inventory of the State Trunk Highway 23 (STH 23) and Interstate Highway 43 (IH-43) corridors in Sheboygan County to record the general visual perception from the roadway. The data for the visual inventory was collected by observation, plan notation, photography and video recording during multiple visits to the project area. The intent of the visual inventory was to describe, in general terms, the limits of the Scenic Management Corridor. This was defined as the existing visual character and prominent visual features of the area within the limits of a motorist's general visual perception from the highway. The visual inventory focuses solely on the view from the road, as experienced by the highway traveler. The existing visual character / land use of the project area was categorized as follows:

The main mapping tool consisted of actual field observations of key views and limits of view, noting the following visual features.

- Rural features (crops, pasture, nursery, orchard, etc.)
- Woodlands (existing vegetation)
- Streams and Rivers
- Commercial, Residential & Industrial Facilities
- Park and Conservancy areas
- Environmental Corridors
- Key Views or Focal Points (positive or negative)

- Visual Features and Landmarks (positive or negative)
- Billboards
- Extent of view from the road (viewshed)
- Key Intersections
- Depressed Roadway (constricted view)

This information was then combined with map data from aerial photographs, USGS topographic map data, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) wetland mapping, county environmental corridor maps, transportation plans and published reports. This information was recorded on the Visual Assessment Maps for each Township. Once these visual elements were identified and mapped, the extent of the "visual corridor" for implementation of special zoning and development standards could then be determined.

To define the limits of the visual corridor, the extent of the views along the route which could be seen by a highway traveler during normal weather conditions was recorded. The limits of the view from the road varied substantially according to the vantagepoint, topography, and the location of wooded areas, road cuts, buildings and other visual barriers. This undulating line was recorded on the Visual Assessment Maps as the "limit of the view from the road." This visual limit line (or viewshed) then became the basis for discussion at meetings with the Sheboygan Development Corporation's Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) to determine what the defined limits of the visual quality zoning overlay district should be.

HNTB recommended that for each community to adopt an overlay zone in all areas within the defined Visual Management Corridor. Each town, village or city would then decide upon its own Visual Management Corridor limits. In order to simplify the definition and facilitate administration TAC representatives recommended that the Visual Management Corridor zoning overlay district limits be defined as the area within 1/4 mile each side of the centerline of Interstate 43 and Highway 23.

4 -VISUAL ASSESSMENT FINDINGS

The visual assessment concluded that the visual quality of the study area was generally quite high. Travelers along I-43 and STH-23 experience views of gently rolling rural countryside ranging in distances of up to 2 miles from the highway corridor, although most of the corridor has a viewshed of about a mile from the roadway. Viewshed distances of greater than a mile in a few selected areas provide views to large scale landscape features, such as Lake Michigan and wooded Kettle Moraine geologic features. Natural features such as wetlands, rivers, ridgelines and wooded areas also serve to orient the traveler. Such visual features provide the traveler with a variety of pleasing views.

The area near the interchange of I-43 and STH-23 is predominantly a mixture of commercial, industrial and residential development. The visual quality and character of this area is typical of medium-density, suburban development. Throughout the project area, the traveler sees numerous landmark features such as water towers, radio towers, power plant smokestacks, and prominent industrial buildings.

There are no spectacular vistas within the project area; however, much of the project area is of high visual quality. In particular are those outlying areas that offer long views of pristine farmlands, geologic features of the kettle moraine area, natural areas and, in some cases, distant views of Lake Michigan.

It is the simple and pristine quality of these expansive views, which makes them highly vulnerable. The intrusion of a single visual element, which does not blend with the surroundings, will compromise the entire vista. This would not be the case if the

topography was steeply rolling or the landscape was predominantly wooded. These types of landscapes are not nearly as vulnerable to visual intrusion because the natural features screen and draw the viewer's eye away from an unattractive element. The project area, however, consists of level or gently rolling terrain with farm or pastureland and some wooded areas. In this open type of landscape, the introduction of any incompatible visual element detracts from the visual quality of the area. The viewer's eye is drawn to the dissonant feature instead of other more positive visual elements. The vulnerability of these high quality rural vistas, underscores the importance of efforts to preserve them. These high quality rural vistas are generally located in the southern and northern portions of I-43 and the western portion of STH-23. Other positive views or vistas occur along I-43 and STH-23 in locations where the roadway crosses ponds, rivers, streams, wetlands and wooded areas. A particularly good panoramic vista is seen traveling eastbound on STH-23 as it crests over the ridge of the Kettle Moraine State Forest. Another significant view of Lake Michigan is seen traveling northbound or southbound on I-43. This view to Lake Michigan is distant, yet dramatic during certain light and atmospheric conditions. Perhaps the most important view for city dwellers is that of the traditional dairy farms with historic barns and farmhouses and cows grazing on pastureland. These views are still common in rural areas, but are becoming less so and will be sadly missed if efforts are not made to preserve them.

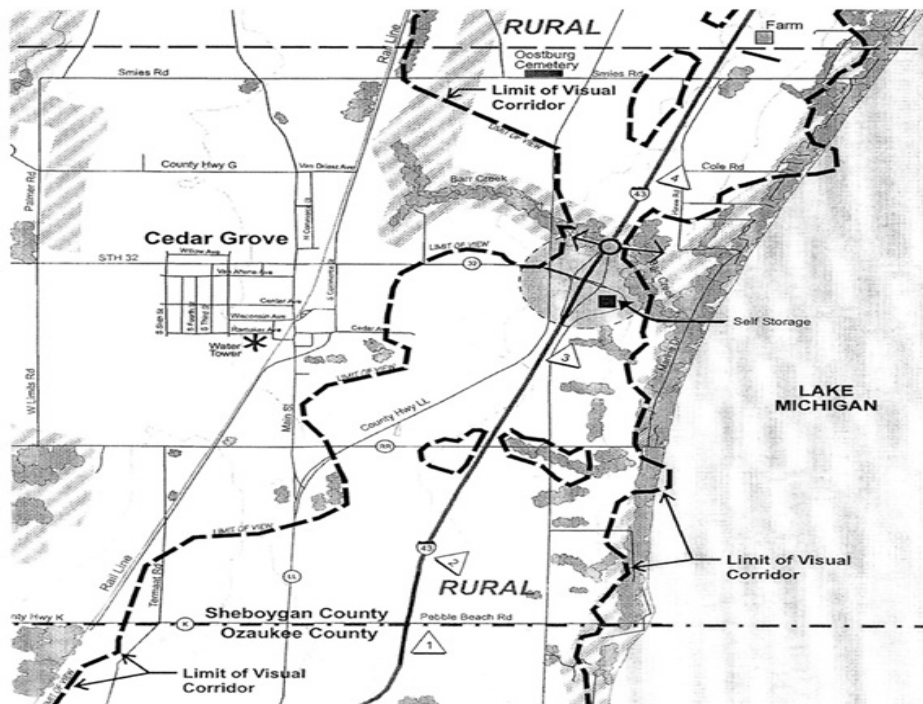


Figure 1

Figure 1 illustrates a "typical" segment of the Visual Management Corridor along I-43. The viewshed in this area is limited, in most instances, by the topography. Note the two areas where the viewshed extends to Lake Michigan. With I-43 being a part of Wisconsin's Lake Michigan Circle Tour route, views to the lake should be preserved and any development that may ultimately frame the views should be compatible with the rural character of the area.

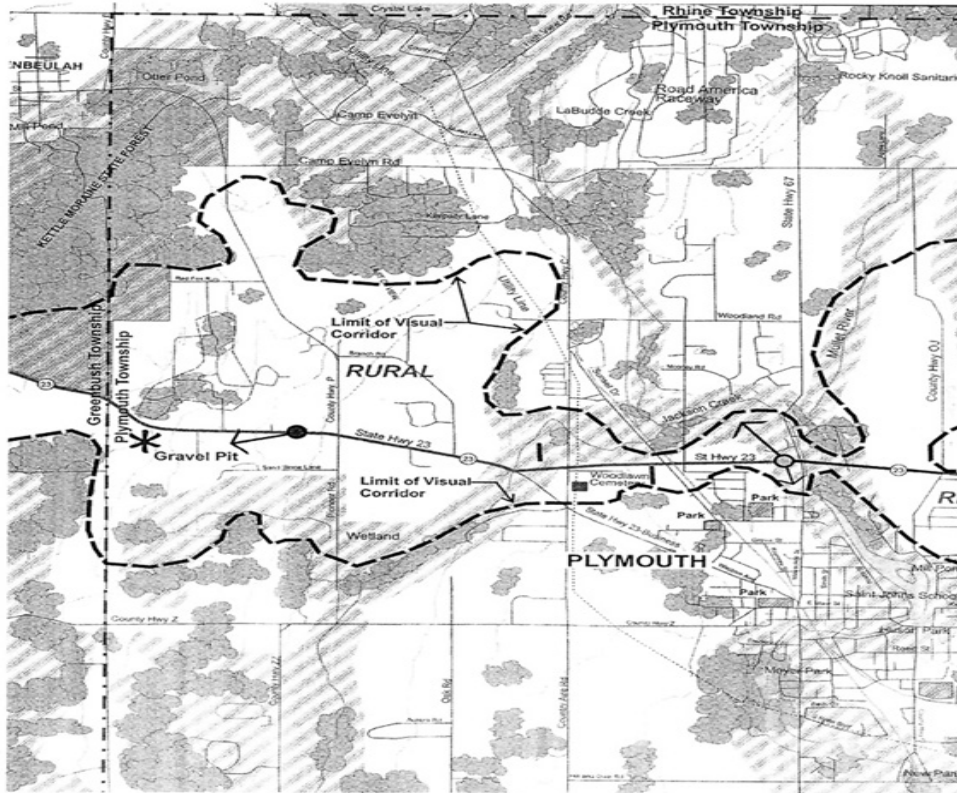


Figure 2

Figure 2 illustrates a "typical" segment of the Visual Management Corridor along State Highway 23. The view shed in this area tends to be somewhat wider than the Interstate 43 corridor with wider panoramic views to large natural areas. Heavy vegetation and the steep topography of the Kettle Moraine State Forest define this corridor.

In summary, the visual assessment process collected and evaluated data to define the limits, quality and character of the Visual Management Corridor of STH 23 and I-43 in Sheboygan County, Wisconsin. This visual data was graphically summarized on Visual Assessment Maps for each Township and detailed in the previous text. The results of the visual assessment were presented to Sheboygan Development Corporation representatives to serve as a basis for selecting the most appropriate tools to preserve and enhance the visual quality of the corridor.

5 - DRAFT OVERLAY MODEL – ZONING DISTRICT

The following model for Scenic Management Corridor Overlay Ordinance language is recommended as an addition to existing local zoning codes. It is designed to create the framework within which local zoning authority can guide development and redevelopment activities. The design review standards referenced are attached.

Purpose

The purpose of this section is to protect designated areas within Scenic Management Corridors within the (Town, Village, City) of _____. The protection of these areas is considered important to the overall image and quality of life as well as in retaining the character and charm of the (Town, Village, City) of _____ and Sheboygan County; further, it will enhance their aesthetic and economic vitality by maintaining the attraction of the area to visitors and residents alike. It is, therefore, deemed necessary for the protection of the general health, safety and welfare of the community.

Scenic Management Corridor Overlay District

The Scenic Management Corridor Overlay District encompasses the lands within the defined visual corridor defined on both sides of the following designated street(s) and highway(s): _____, _____, and _____. Persons with property divided by the defined limits of the Scenic Management Corridor Overlay District are required to comply with the District's standards only for that segment of the property within the District. Application of this District is intended to provide the framework for protecting those areas on and adjacent to major highway corridors which are deemed important to the scenic beauty, aesthetic character and charm of the (Town, Village, City) of _____. This District may be placed over one or more standard zoning districts. The boundaries of said District shall be determined by the Planning Commission (Board) and recommended to the Council (Board).

The regulations promulgated in this section shall be considered equal to those in the underlying district. In cases where regulations conflict, those regulations that offer the greatest protection for the visual resources of the corridor shall prevail.

Uses

The uses of the underlying standard zoning district shall remain in force; however, all uses, whether permitted or conditional (special) in the underlying zoning shall be considered as conditional (special) as defined elsewhere in this ordinance.

- Sexually-oriented land uses that include any facility oriented to the display and/or sale of sexually-oriented materials such as videos, movies, slides, photos, books, or magazines; or actual persons engaged in sexually oriented activities shall not be permitted within the Scenic Management Corridor.
- Storage facilities (commonly referred to as mini-warehouses or self-storage units) shall not be permitted within the Scenic Management Corridor.

Design Review

All uses proposed in the Scenic Management Corridor Overlay District shall be subject to review of site and design considerations as presented in the attached design review guidelines. The Plan Commission shall undertake the Design Review function unless otherwise provided for under local ordinance.

6 - DESIGN GUIDELINES

Visual Preservation and Enhancement Tools

- **Landscape Development** - All proposed development within the Scenic Management Corridor Overlay District shall require a landscape development plan, with the exception of single-family residential and bona fide agricultural land uses.

Landscape development shall be consistent and blend with the adjoining landscape (i.e. meadow, prairie, windbreak, upland woods (woodlot), hedgerow, lowland woods, wetland, etc.).

Screening - Service areas, loading docks, truck parking, outside storage and dumpster areas shall be screened from the viewing highway and any adjacent residential developments. Screening shall be accomplished with a minimum 8' high opaque screen. This screening may be accomplished by:

- Freestanding or attached wing walls or fences constructed of materials complimentary or the same as the primary construction materials found in the principal buildings.
- Earth berms and/or landscaping dense enough to create a year-round opaque screen. Plant material used for screening these service areas may be considered part of the general Site Landscaping & Open Space landscape requirement.

Parking Lot Landscaping and Screening - Parking lots shall be screened from the "viewing highway" utilizing landscaping and/or earth berms with a side slope no greater than 12:1 on the "viewing highway" side, 4:1 on the "development" side and a minimum height of 3 feet above the adjacent edge of the parking lot. Planting should compliment the natural configuration of the berm with plant material. Plant material used for screening parking lots shall be considered to be a portion of the general Site Landscaping and Open Space requirement.

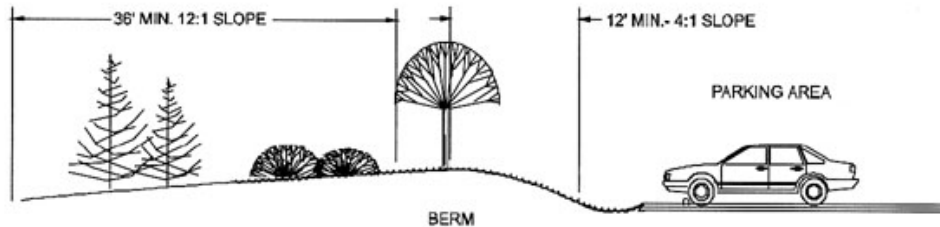


Figure 3

Typical Berm cross-section (Figure 3) shows gentle 12:1 slope on side of berm facing the viewing highway. The 12:1 slope maintains a ground slope that matches the context of natural sloping open spaces found along the corridor.

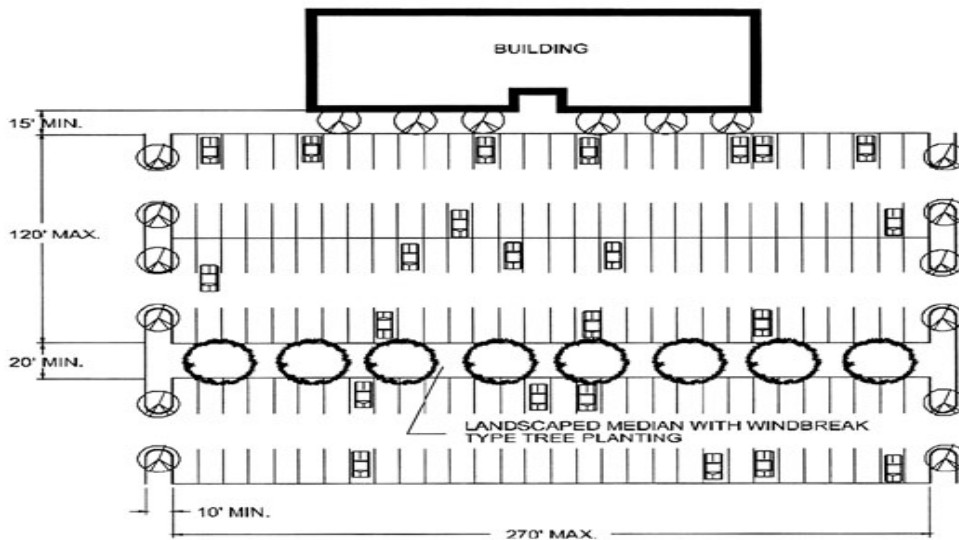


Figure 4

A 20' wide planting "island" must be included in the parking lot area at a spacing of every 120' or every four (4) parking rows (Figure 4). Parking lots shall have a minimum of one shade or ornamental tree for every 10 spaces. This parking lot tree requirement is in addition to the Site Landscaping and Open Space requirements. **Site Landscaping and Open Space** - Building sites shall maintain a minimum of 30% of the lot area in open space that will be landscaped. Landscape development in unincorporated areas should reflect the native or agricultural character of the adjoining countryside. Agricultural and single residential development (individual lots) are excluded from this requirement. For every 1000 square feet of open space (non-building and non-parking areas), there shall be a minimum of the following woody plant material: 1 shade, ornamental or evergreen tree, and 5 flowering or evergreen shrubs. The open space landscaping

requirement (above) shall apply to all "common open space" included in single-family developments (subdivisions). This requirement does not pertain to the areas of the single-family lots.

Plant sizes (at time of installation) - Minimum size of shade and ornamental trees shall be 2-inch caliper. Minimum size of evergreen trees shall be three feet high. Minimum size of evergreen shrubs shall be 15 inches in width or three gallons. Minimum size of flowering shrubs shall be 18 inches high. Measurement and quality of plant materials shall conform to the American Association of Nurserymen (AAN) standards.

Natural landscape treatments & preserved areas - Open areas of individual sites may offer opportunities to recreate a "native" landscape (i.e. prairie, wetland, etc.). Use of native plant species (perennial / herbaceous) is encouraged but individual sites must still conform to the required numbers of "woody plants" (shade and/or ornamental trees and evergreen and/or flowering shrubs).

Preservation of native plant communities through careful site design is encouraged; however, preserved areas are still considered part of the 30% open space when determining "woody plant" requirements as defined in the Site Landscaping and Open Space section.

- **Excavation & Site Grading** - No permanent excavation and/or site grading shall be allowed which has a slope exceeding 3:1 (horizontal measure:vertical measure), or does not have a protective vegetative cover to prevent erosion. Grading and excavation necessary for building construction shall be substantially completed within one year of the issuance of a building permit in the case of single-family homes and 18 months in the case of commercial development.
- **Preservation of Existing Vegetation** - Significant existing vegetation within all setback areas shall be preserved (i.e. wetlands, prairie vegetation, and woodlands). Significant existing vegetation within the buildable area of any industrial, retail, office or multiple family lot shall be preserved through careful and innovative site design, if feasible.
 - Trees greater than 8 inches in diameter (measured 4 feet above the ground) or special specimen trees, as identified by the Town are considered significant vegetation.
- **Signage Location & Design** - Off premises advertising signs (temporary and permanent) shall not be allowed within the Scenic Management Corridor Overlay District.

Standard WisDOT tourist information signs and business logo sign groupings, as currently used along the Interstate and State highway system shall be allowed within the right of way. Route designation signs such as the Lake Michigan Circle Tour, Rustic Road and Ethnic Trail signs shall also be allowed within the right of way. Individual business identification signs (building mounted & free standing) shall have an area no greater than 150 square feet, and the top edge of such sign shall be no higher than the height of the principal building. Individual businesses shall be allowed no more than two identification signs per building site. A "double-sided" sign, where the printed messages are arranged 180 degrees from each other (back to back) and mounted on the same supporting structure, shall be considered as one sign. Sign area shall be considered to be the area graphically defined by color and/or a definitive border design. In the case of individual letters and/or logos painted on or attached to permanent buildings, the sign area shall be defined as the area of the smallest rectangle which can encompass the sign's verbiage and/or logo.

Sign colors shall be complimentary to the hues of the principal building. Company logos may comprise 100% of the sign area. Signs may not have flashing light elements or be constructed of highly reflective materials.

Lighting of building and/or free standing signs shall incorporate "cut off" lighting where the illumination source shall not be visible from the viewing highway.

Temporary signage shall be permitted announcing "For Sale," "For Rent," "Garage Sale," Real Estate For Sale, Voting and Political Campaigns. Such signs shall be no greater than 12 square feet.

Temporary construction and/or development identification signs shall be allowed within the District, with a maximum of two signs per site. Such signs shall be no greater than 32 square feet.

No rooftop or mobile signs shall be allowed in the District.

- **Parking Ratios, Location & Design** - No more than one double-loaded parking band (19' parking stall, 22' travel aisle, 19' parking stall) shall be located between building and the "viewing highway."

Parking ratios as set forth in the local zoning ordinance may be reduced by 20% in commercial and industrial areas within the Corridor.

- **Roadway Standards, Location & Design** - "Frontage roads" within 100 feet of the "viewing highway" right of way in unincorporated areas, or within 50 feet of the "viewing highway" right of way in incorporated areas, are prohibited. All "frontage roads" shall be screened from the viewing highway by a landscaped berm as set forth in the Parking Lot Landscaping and Screening section of this document.

Natural drainage systems are encouraged, but curb and gutter are allowed. If drainage detention is required, it shall be in a naturally configured pond, recreated wetland area or dry detention area.

- **Setbacks** - In Towns, buildings in open areas of the visual corridor shall maintain a minimum 200-foot setback from the "viewing highway's" right of way.

In Villages and Cities, buildings in open areas of the visual corridor shall maintain a minimum 75-foot setback from the "viewing highway's" right of way.

Buildings constructed where a wooded area is between the "viewing highway" and the principal building may be granted a variance to reduce the setback to 60 feet from the "viewing highway's" right of way.

No telecommunications equipment shall be permitted closer than the established building setback.

All building locations must be approved by the municipality prior to the issuance of a building permit.

A variance in the setback dimensions may be granted by the municipality where necessary to preserve a particular view, sight line, conservancy area, environmental corridor or significant vegetation

- **Outdoor Storage and Display** - No outdoor display of products shall be allowed between the business location's principal or accessory building and the "viewing highway's" right of way. This restriction shall not apply to "farmer's markets" and other agricultural uses (i.e. livestock, crops, farm implements).

No outdoor storage shall be allowed between the business location's principal or accessory building and the "viewing highway's" right of way. This restriction shall not apply to "farmer's markets" and other agricultural uses (i.e. livestock, crops, farm implements currently in use for agricultural production).

- **Utility Locations** - Overhead utility lines shall be a minimum of 200 feet from the edge of highway right of way or installed underground. Overhead utility lines may cross the highway right-of-way.
- **Outdoor Lighting** - All outdoor lighting, except agricultural and single-family residences, shall be "cut off" or similar fixtures where the illumination source is not be visible from the "viewing highway."
- **Sight Lines** - Scenic vistas and sight lines to other special views particularly related to Lake Michigan, Kettle Moraine, inland lakes, rivers, creeks, public open space, conservancy areas, and large farms shall be maintained through careful building placement and landscape development. Purchase of scenic easements may be considered.
- **Architectural Treatment of Structures** - Structures within the Visual Management Corridor shall be designed with an "architectural character" that blends with the overall visual character of the urban or rural context of its setting. This character can be stylized but should, at a minimum, have the following elements:

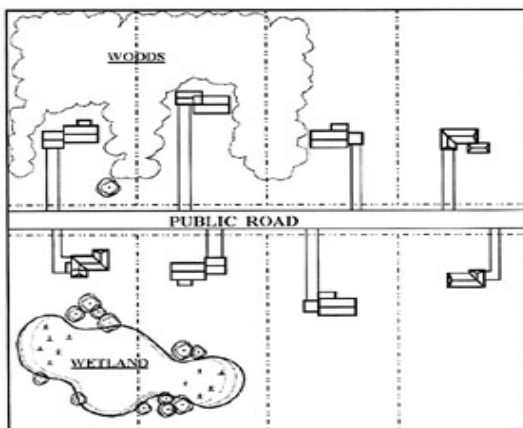
Buildings shall have a minimum 2:1 roof slope when the building's ground coverage is less than 10,000 sq. ft.

Buildings greater than 10,000 sq. ft. shall have architecturally detailed elements strategically integrated into the building's facades to add detail and break the visual impact of large wall areas.

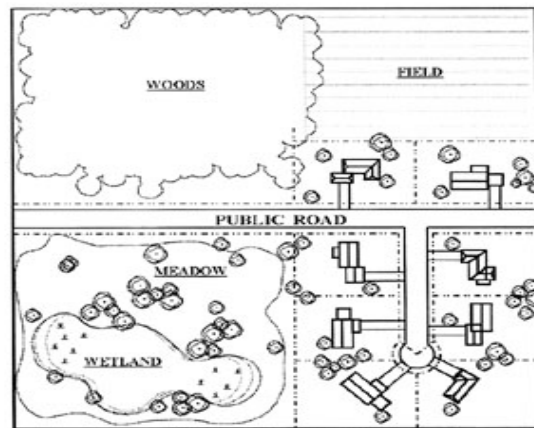
Building height shall not exceed two stories, or 35 feet, as a maximum height in unincorporated areas. Height restrictions in incorporated areas shall be governed by the applicable zoning district.

- **Cluster Development** - Commercial buildings less than 10,000 square feet shall be clustered whenever possible within a single parcel to avoid a typical suburban strip commercial center appearance.

Residential development (Figures 5 and 6) within unincorporated areas of the District (if not in an exclusive agricultural zone) shall have a maximum density of 5 acres per dwelling unit. Lot sizes shall be a maximum of 2 acres and a minimum of 1/2 acre. All preserved open space shall remain in its natural state, recreated natural state or agricultural use (i.e. orchard, meadow, hay field, old field, woodlot, crop production, etc.).



40 ACRE PARCEL
WITH 5 ACRE
CONVENTIONAL LOTS
Figure 5



40 ACRE PARCEL
WITH 5 ACRE DENSITY-
60,000 SQ.FT. LOTS
Figure 6

Building Construction Materials - No highly reflective surfaces for the main wall and/or roof systems shall be permitted

Building materials shall be compatible with the visual context and use customary in Sheboygan County; to the greatest extent possible, materials such as brick, stone and wood. Composite wall panels, curtain wall systems, decorative masonry and architecturally detailed prefabricated concrete wall panels shall be permitted in industrial and commercial areas.

Building colors shall be natural "earth tones," or subdued hues of blue, green or yellow. Building colors which sharply contrast with the natural colors of the landscape context shall be prohibited.

- **Natural Storm Water Systems** - Storm water drainage should be directed into natural drainage channels and detention / retention ponds. Pond edges and drainage channels shall be protected from erosion by natural aquatic vegetation whenever possible. When storm water volumes and/or velocities indicate more substantial measures than planting are required to control erosion, limestone rip-rap may be used.

7 – ILLUSTRATIVE DEVELOPMENT SCENARIOS

One of the main concerns of the Technical Advisory Committee is that the most desirable lands for development could fall victim to the standard collection of "highway commercial" structures with their accompanying visual clutter, so evident in many of the major highway interchanges throughout the state. The interchanges along the corridor, I-43 / STH 42, STH 23 / STH 32 and STH 23 / STH 57 are already under development pressure and need to employ the measures of the overlay district and design guidelines to avoid becoming just another in a series of highway commercial developments that does not fit the context of the countryside or community.

The overlay zoning district, along with the design guidelines, can provide a positive direction for developers interested in these areas. The intent is not to stop or even slow development but to guide development in a manner that creates high quality projects with environmental sensitivity and aesthetic compatibility with the surrounding rural image.

Some key features of the three interchange / intersection Illustrative Development Plans are as follows:

Interstate 43 and State Trunk Highway 42 (Figure 7)

This particular intersection is almost completely developed east of I-43; however, the northwest and southwest quadrants of this intersection are still mainly in agricultural use and have a great deal of potential for future development. The northwest quadrant has scattered small wetland areas that must be avoided in development.

The Illustrative Plan for this interchange indicates that frontage would be removed from the main highway. The commercial uses located on the frontage road "back" into the viewing highway.

The 200-foot building setbacks illustrated remain in open space that has an "agricultural" or natural image. Storm water detention, either wet or dry, prairie grasses, old field plant communities, mowed hayfield and woodlot, are just a few of the potential uses of the 200-foot visual buffer that occurs between the viewing highway's right of way and the potential development.

Parking lots for larger commercial development, similar to the type illustrated in the southwest quadrant, will be oriented away from the viewing highway as illustrated. The architecture of commercial buildings within the corridor should "address" the highway. Building massing (size, shape and height), roof slope and colors need to be compatible and fit within the rural context along the corridors.

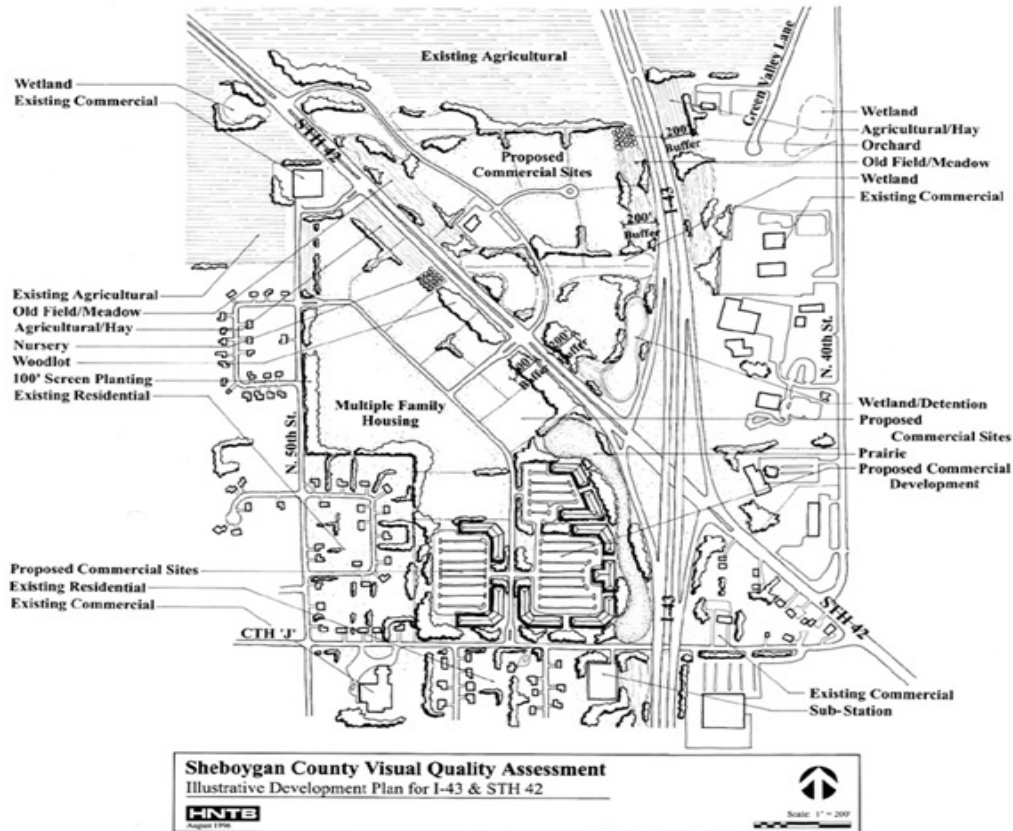


Figure 7

State Trunk Highway 23 and State Trunk Highway 57 (Figure 8)

This intersection is undeveloped but development is slowly moving in this direction from Plymouth. A large area of conservancy runs from the northwest quadrant, southeast through both the northeast and southeast quadrants. The large amount of conservancy area helps to preserve the visual character of the rural landscape in these quadrants. The 200-foot setback areas ensure that development does not create an abrupt visual change in character by allowing development immediately outside the viewing highway's rights of way.

A large department store is illustrated in the southwest quadrant. Some employee parking is located between the viewing highway and the principal building but it is screened with a combination of berms and planting. Individual commercial lots and a "strip" center are illustrated off of frontage roads, removed from the viewing highway and with internally focused parking.

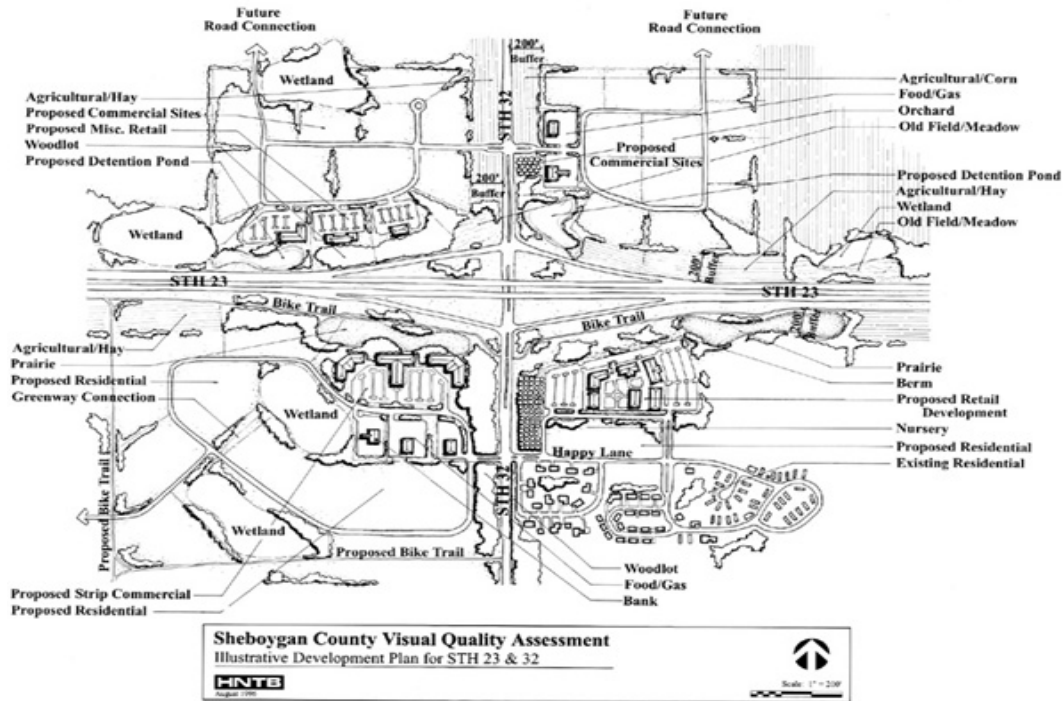


Figure 8

State Trunk Highway 23 and State Trunk Highway 32 (Figure 9)

This interchange, just north of Sheboygan Falls, is currently agricultural but experiencing pressure as indicated by the recent construction of McDonalds west of STH-32, approximately one quarter mile south of 23. The growth of the Village's business park will spur development of support facilities and ancillary uses causing residential and commercial development to edge north.

This interchange area contains some small wetlands but does not have any conservancy areas that will impact development.

Small scale commercial development is a potential land use that could fit into any one of the quadrants. Clustered development of commercial shops, an alternative to the traditional "strip mall," would be an appropriate and low impact land use. A more traditional development of individual commercial parcels is a more likely scenario. This illustration again depicts the concept of a frontage road that backs commercial lots into the viewing highway. The backing of lots into the viewing highway does not preclude commercial establishments from facing the building toward the highway.

The Plank Road Bike Trail runs along the south side of STH 23 and a new bike trail is planned to extend from Sheboygan Falls North to intersect the Plank Road Trail. As residential and/or commercial development occurs in this area, provisions should be made to accommodate for bicycle circulation connecting that development with the adjoining bicycle circulation systems.

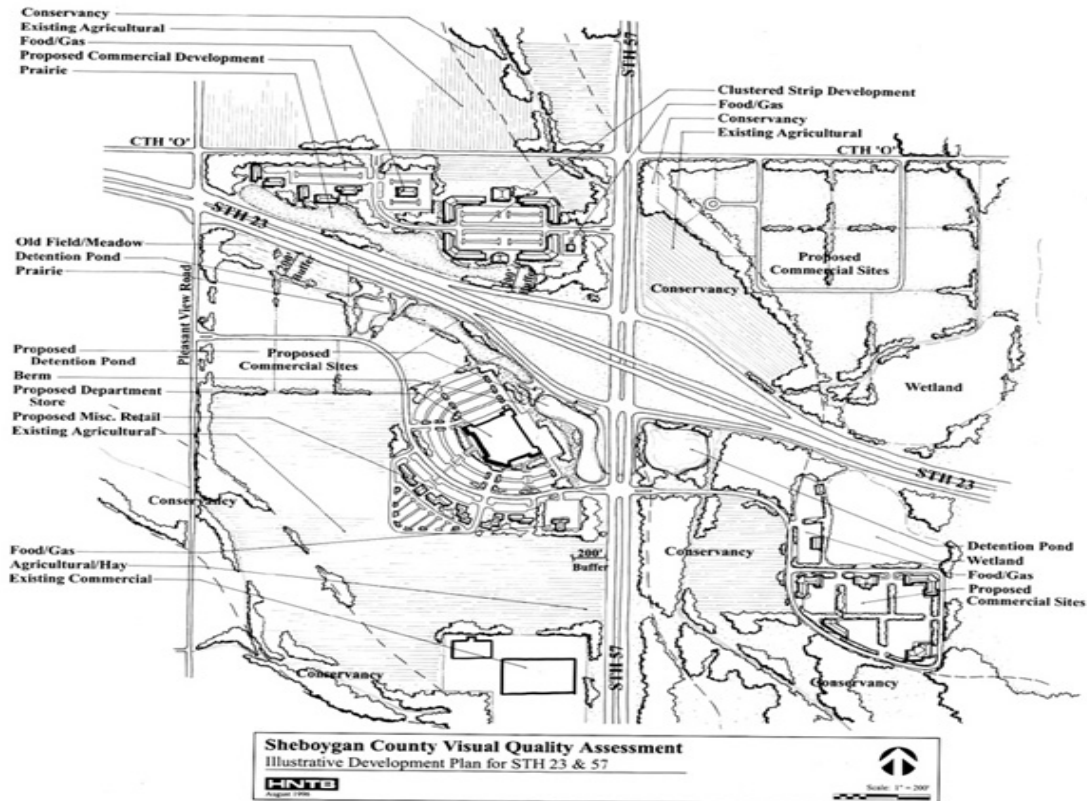


Figure 9

8 - CONCLUSION

Sheboygan County is situated on the fringe of the ever-expanding Metropolitan Milwaukee / Ozaukee County development shield in southeastern Wisconsin. The visual quality of the highway corridors to the south of Sheboygan County have been adversely affected or lost to insensitive development. Sheboygan County has taken a small step in the protection of the visual resources development corridors along I-43 and STH-23. Adoption of the Visual Management Corridor overlay zoning and its design guidelines can direct development in a direction that maintains a certain aesthetic quality and preserves special visual characteristics of the defined corridor. Adoption of the overlay district and design guidelines has met with some resistance and is still in process in many of the communities. With the County Planning Department taking a leadership role in the adoption of the Visual Management Corridor, the aesthetics, rural character and visual quality of the corridor have a bright future.

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