

THE HEART OF LA PORTE

POST-CHARRETTE DRAWING PACKAGE
FOR PRIORITY PROJECTS

JULY 2020



CONCEPT RENDERING OF AN IMPROVED LINCOLNWAY
AND MONROE ST. INTERSECTION

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS:

Thank you to everyone who participated in the process including many residents, community advisory groups, City administrators, and council members. A special appreciation is owed to City staff who led the process to re-envision a healthy La Porte.

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PUBLIC FEEDBACK

Thank you to the residents who provided input by participating in the open houses, site tours, and online engagement during the planning process. A special thank you is sent to Nate Louks and the State Street Church, who opened their doors to welcome the design team and community throughout the 3-day charrette.

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CLEAR LAKE GREENWAY LOOP (PAGES 6 - 58)

A reimagined Clear Lake is the centerpiece of a healthy Heart of La Porte. Lake-related improvements provide the catalyst for new and improved mixed use development and community destinations that engage the shoreline and continuous ribbon of trails and public green space. A diversity of shoreline treatments and amenities, including accessible edges, piers, and potential water-based recreation will enliven the lake as La Porte's next great address, providing the environment for outdoor healthy living and fitness.

THE STITCH (PAGES 59 - 80)

"The Stitch" is composed of four segments that will create a series of vibrant destinations while providing safe access between Downtown and Clear Lake. First, a flexible park will serve as the primary green space downtown. Secondly, a series of streetscape interventions along Monroe Street transform the existing four-lane roadway into a shared street prioritizing walkability. At the terminus of Monroe, the pedestrian bridge's entry fronts the street creating an invitation to venture beyond. One of only a few elevated features with public access, the bridge will serve as a branded symbol to residents and visitors alike that the community values pedestrian mobility and safety. Finally, once across, the bridge lands in a new community-focused public space adjacent to the new YMCA center.

LINCOLNWAY IMPROVEMENTS (PAGES 81 - 104)

Lincolnway is a State Highway and the main spine of commercial activity in La Porte's downtown. Future efforts to reduce volume, speed, and detour large trucks promote the community's vision for a walkable downtown. Long-term improvements include reduction of parking and travel lanes to utilize the space for expanded walks, a thickening of the vegetated buffer between the street and walks, and safe crossings. A phased approach is outline defining short-term strategies to incrementally reach the long-term vision.

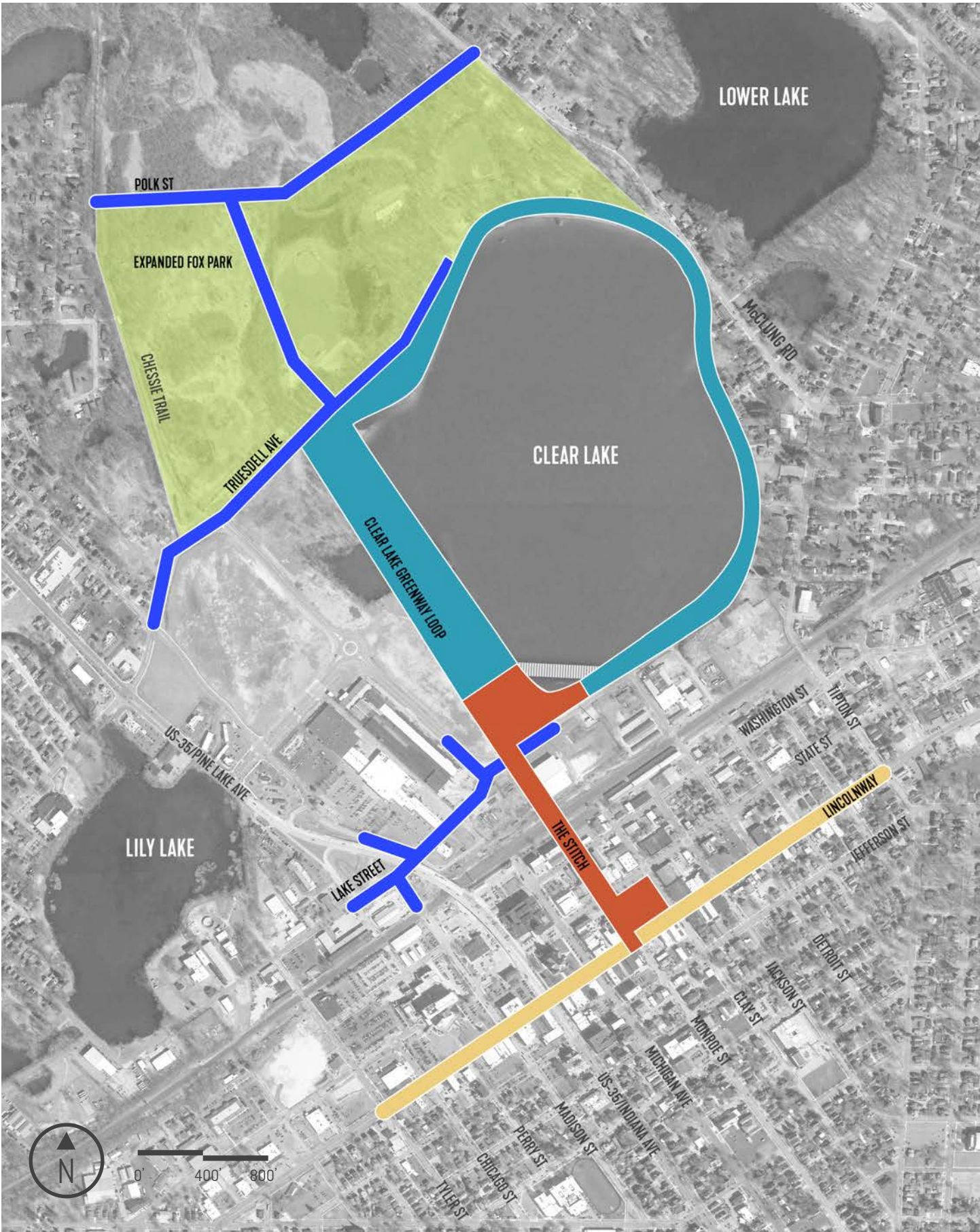
AN EXPANDED FOX PARK (PAGES 105 - 110)

Roadway extensions through Fox Park allow opportunity to relocate selected sports fields to improve functional relationships and allow for improved parking and service for park events and attractions, including the amphitheater.

CLEAR LAKE ROADWAY IMPROVEMENTS (PAGES 111 - 156)

TRUESDELL REALIGNMENT AND POLK STREET EXTENSION: The proposed Clear Lake Greenway and the expansion of Fox Park provides opportunity to showcase the entrances to Fox Park and reduce the amount of thru traffic on Truesdell Avenue. The Truesdell thru route is proposed to be re-routed North at the entrance to The Strand development, to an extension of Polk Street, from Fremont Street to McClung Road. Polk Street would then become the East/West through street from McClung Road to Pine Lake Avenue. Truesdell would become more of a 'park road' section to enhance the arrival experience to Fox Park, which would be expanded to include Clear Lake. The north run of Truesdell and Polk Street extension would allow for future residential development of the AC Trust property, owned by the City.

LAKE STREET EXTENSION: Lake Street is proposed to be extended from Madison Street to Clear Lake Boulevard. With the anticipated closure of Detroit Street as part of the Tipton Street overpass, extending Lake Street will provide the East/West corridor on the North side of the railroad tracks. The route of the extension was chosen to maximize the development possibilities in this area.



PRIORITY PROJECTS MAP

CLEAR LAKE GREENWAY LOOP

Clear Lake Greenway Loop is the central driving feature to a healthier La Porte. It provides recreational opportunity to circumnavigate an idyllic lake only blocks from downtown, provides social spaces for people to gather, and encourages a thoughtful approach to environmental remediation. The geographic proximity to other priority city projects enables the Greenway to connect the Heart of La Porte's planning districts into a single identity focused on healthy living to unify New Porte Landing, Fox Park, and downtown. Additionally connecting to the existing Chessie Trail builds upon the existing infrastructure to create a cycling network with access as well as destinations.

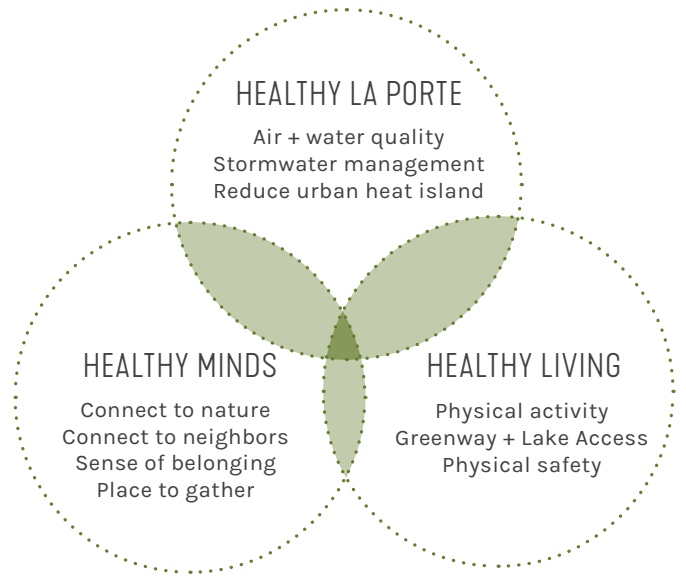
Beyond providing recreational access, the Greenway provides interesting opportunities to socially engage with the community through unique spaces along the journey from intimate alcoves for lake viewing to large community gathering spaces such as the Fox

Park Amphitheater and new YMCA site. Connecting to nature, connecting to neighbors, and providing a sense of belonging promote social health and community well being.

A well connected and interesting loop improves the pedestrian experience and encourages more non-vehicular trips. In turn, this reduces emissions, congestion, and modal conflict resulting in improved air quality and safer environments for non-motorists. A bucolic lake with an industrial past, the Greenway focuses on remediating shorelines, implementing phytoremediation practices, and promoting native flora and fauna. Collectively, these strategies focus on a well-rounded approach to comprehensively stimulate healthy living in La Porte.

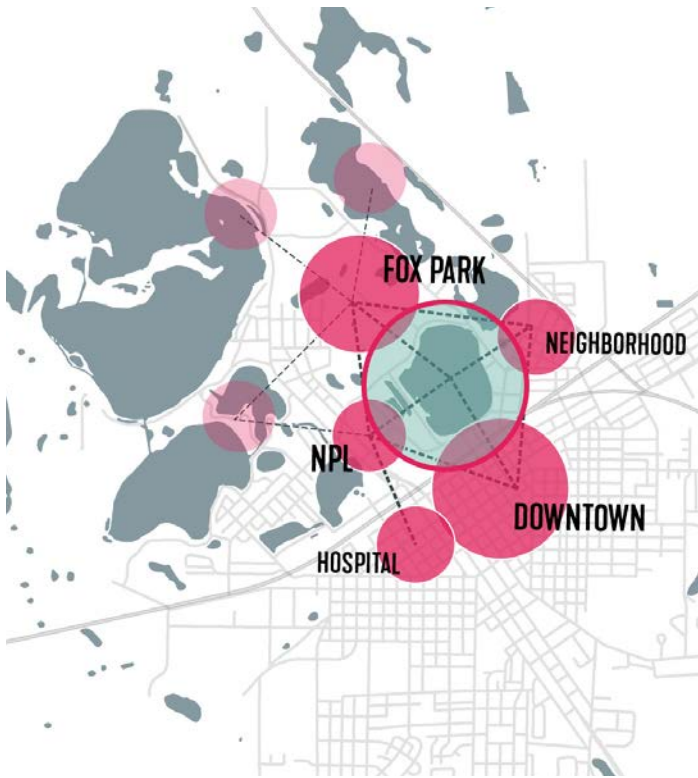


THE EXISTING SEGMENT OF THE GREENWAY ALONG THE EASTERN EDGE OF CLEAR LAKE WAS CONSTRUCTED 2018.



TANGIBLE COMMUNITY HEALTH BENEFITS OF GREENWAYS





HEALTHY MINDS: CLEAR LAKE'S CENTRAL PROXIMITY TO SOCIAL ENGINES

Clear Lake's advantageous proximity to downtown creates opportunity for people to wander, meet, and say hello to one another. Clear Lake should be used as a mechanism for bringing people together with many social engines in from the hospital, downtown, and New Porte Landing.



HEALTHY LA PORTE: ROLE IN THE BLUE - GREEN SYSTEM

La Porte has several significant water bodies and each has a distinct character, but no lakes exist south of the railroad which has traditionally served as a major barrier to pedestrian mobility. Extend the presence of the lakes downtown and extend the people to the lakes.



HEALTHY LIVING: ACCESS AND CIRCULATION

Recipient of Strategic Grant funding from the Healthcare Foundation of LaPorte in 2017-2018, the Chessie represents a leap in healthy living for La Porte. The Chessie Phase 1, creates a main North-South spine through La Porte linking Pine Lake to Clear Lake. A portion of the lake loop was constructed as well as is a well used prototype for future phases. Building upon the existing system will effectively link the existing Chessie to downtown, New Porte Landing, and Fox Park with active modes of transportation

CREATE NATURALIZED SHORELINE HABITAT

Clear Lake has long been known for its aesthetic value and non-motorized recreational opportunities, primarily fishing. A popular spot among the community, Clear Lake should foster this use through re-naturalizing the shoreline creating and habitat for fish, birds, and insects. Promote Clear Lake as a healthy and functioning aquatic ecosystem by maintaining the following best practices:

PROVIDE SHORELINE STABILIZING PLANTS

Aquatic plants hold the bottom of the lake in place, reducing sediment from stirring and making the water murky. If sunlight cannot penetrate the water, this will reduce plants ability to conduct photosynthesis, reducing oxygen levels in the water, ultimately jeopardizing a healthy ecosystem. Stabilized shorelines have the following benefits:

- A transition from emergent plants, submergent plants, and floating leaf plants ensures shoreline stability while providing a visually interesting edge.
- Edge habitat provide bass and other fish species opportunities to hide and spawn in area protected from waves.
- Waterfowl nest in vegetation and feed on underwater vegetation.
- Reduced sediment in the lake results in improve water quality.

AVOID CLEARING FALLEN TREES

Shoreline shrubs and fallen trees provide habitat for wildlife, but have typically been regarded as unsightly. They provide numerous ecological benefits:

- Songbirds use these dead trees for nesting
- Amphibians sun on fallen trees and rocks. Fish (primarily bass) hide in the shade under toppled trees
- Insects, such as mayflies, graze on the algae that grows on wood
- Nymphs hunt for pray among the sticks and limbs.

AVOID LAWNS ADJACENT TO WATER

Lawns are high maintenance landscapes that often require fertilizers and other treatments which should be avoided near water bodies. Removing lawns at the water's edge has many benefits:

- Lawns attract nuisance animals, such as geese which graze on the grass and can produce as much as 15 lbs of waste per week.
- Less shoreline erosion results when tall grasses and shrubs hold the edge
- Less chemical runoff in water due to treating lawns



MAINTAIN BUFFER STRIPS ALONG THE LAKE

Overdeveloped shorelines with tidy shorelines, which have traditionally been deemed ‘well-maintained’ from a land management perspective, have resulted in fewer fish and wildlife. Ensuring species success depends on corridors of vegetation allowing for species circulation which can be ensured by the following practices:

- Where possible, maintain at least 30’ wide buffer of tall grasses, broad-leaf plants, shrubs, and trees along the lake edge. Native species are beneficial due to their ability to thrive with little maintenance.
- Avoid using pesticides or fertilizers in the buffer strip.
- Use adapted or native vegetation to promote pollination.

RESTORE AND MAINTAIN WETLANDS

Wetlands serve a central role to water quality serving as a filter strip treating water runoff before entering the lake. Benefits are numerous including:

- Wetland plants also have phytoremediation capabilities with the ability to remove and stabilize soil or groundwater contaminants.
- Wetlands provide food and cover for terrestrial, aquatic, and avian species.
- Wetlands filter sediments before entering the lake reducing summer algae blooms.
- Wetlands provide ground water recharge by slow down water runoff.
- Wetlands provide food and cover for birds and other wildlife.



EXISTING:
CHESSIE TRAIL

EXISTING LAKE TRAIL LOOP



EXISTING CONDITIONS AROUND CLEAR LAKE

An existing route around Clear Lake loop path can be pieced together through a series of on-street and off-street segments. Along Truesdell Ave at Fox Park, cyclists and pedestrians share the roadway with vehicles. This is a primary stretch of pathway providing panoramic views of downtown and currently has series of active nodes drawing people through the park. Formalizing a loop route will successfully provide recreational opportunity, safety, and access to Fox Park. Other stretches, such as along Hoelocker Dr, are safer to travel and provide unique opportunities for water engagement. Comprised of many segments that currently lack safety and access, the lake loop can provide a singular thread building La Porte's identity as a capital for healthy living.

ON STREET BIKE ROUTE AT TRUESDELL AVE

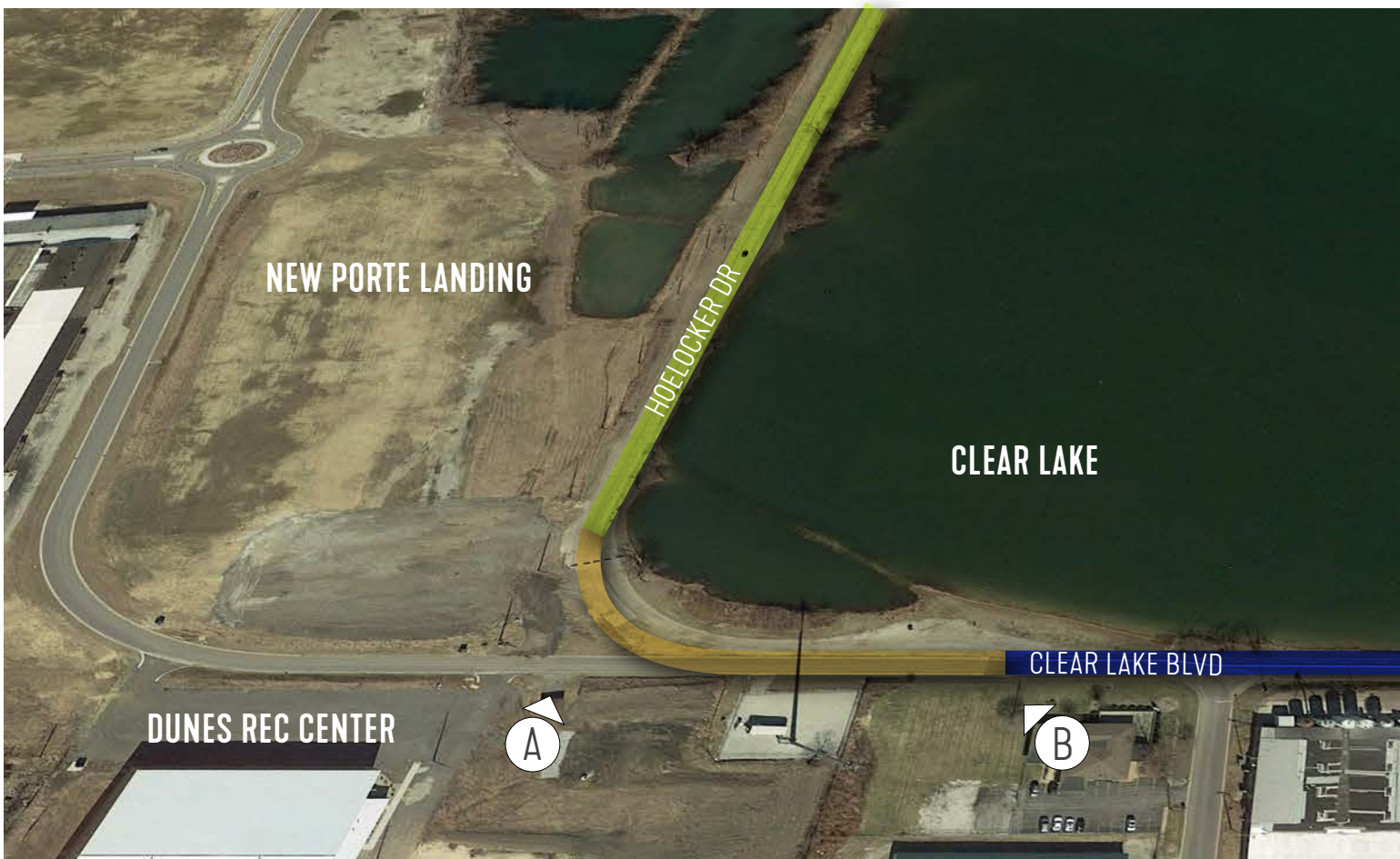
ON STREET AT HOELOCKER DR

CLEAR LAKE PARKING LOT BETWEEN HOELOCKER DR AND CLEAR LAKE BLVD

SEPARATED TRAIL ALONG CLEAR LAKE BLVD

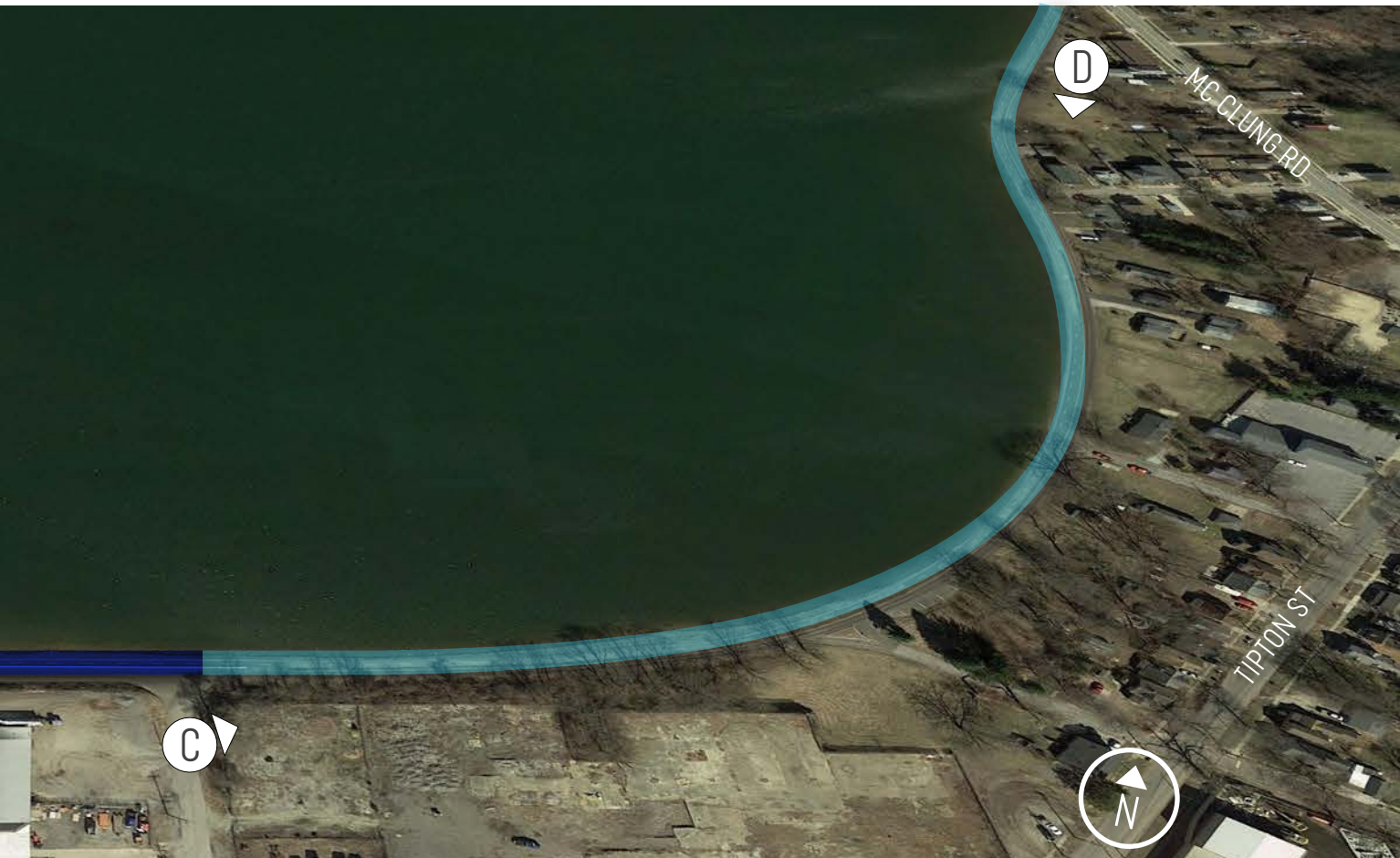
CURB SEPARATED MULTIUSE PATH ALONG CLEAR LAKE BLVD

SIDEWALK ALONG MCCLUNG RD TO FOX PARK ENTRY



CLEAR LAKE GREENWAY STUDY AREA VIEWING NORTH

- (A) Looking down Hoelocker Dr
- (B) Transition from 12' shared use path to parking along Clear Lake Blvd
- (C) Looking East along Clear Lake Blvd with curb separated path; yellow lane delineators at end of Detroit St
- (D) Condition along the eastern edge of Clear Lake showing boulevard and path separation





CLEAR LAKE GREENWAY STUDY AREA VIEWING SOUTH





- Ⓐ Transition from 8' shared path to sidewalk
- Ⓑ Fox Park entry monument
- Ⓒ Fox Park Amphitheater along Truesdell Ave
- Ⓓ Intersection of Hoelcker Dr and Truesdell Ave

DESIGN STRATEGIES

Four strategies drove the individual greenway segment and gathering space typologies. These strategies were contextually sensitive, and explored how one accesses the system, where hubs of activity exist and are proposed, and strategies for utilizing the greenway as a tool to expand recreation around Clear Lake.

EDGE CHARACTER

Greenway typologies are driven by the community character adjacent to the trail traversing from the rustic La Porte neighborhood through the park edge, a restored bank habitat, to the downtown/urban interface. This greenway will be a shared community thread but reflect the contextual setting of the differing planning districts it passes through.

ACCESS TO THE NETWORK

Currently the Chessie Trail connection along Truesdell provides the primary pedestrian access. Routes from downtown to the Lake exist, but these routes are not inviting. Vehicles can nearly circumnavigate the lake with parking lots at Fox Park and on the southern edge of the lake by the Dune Recreation Center.

DEVELOP NODES AND DESTINATIONS

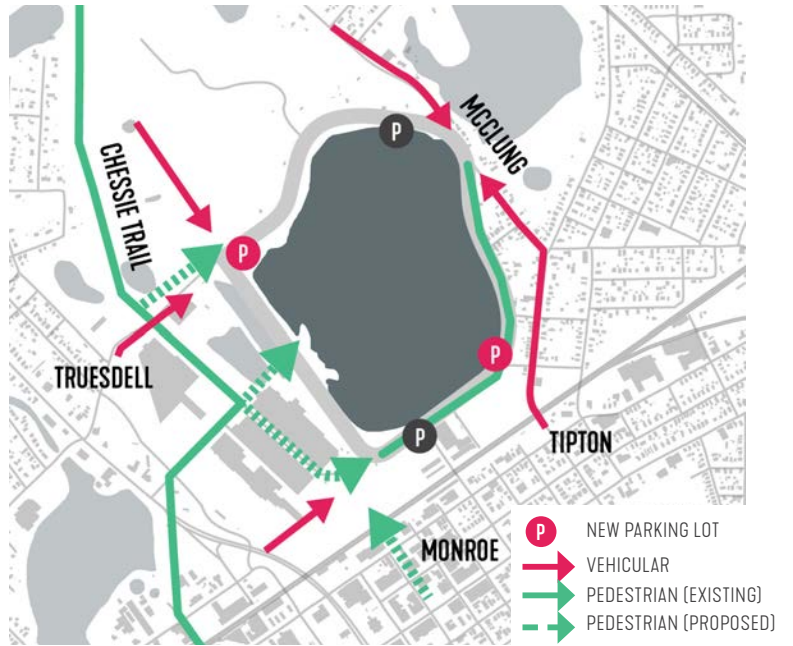
Future nodes will be located where trail access is created at several locations throughout New Porte Landing and a significant connection into downtown with the Monroe Corridor Pedestrian Bridge. Each space will have a unique character specific to its location along the lake and vary in scale from a small private path-side space to large community gathering areas.

THICKENING THE EDGE

The Greenway is not merely the 12' path circumnavigating the lake, but the collection of adjacent parks, community spaces, shoreline, and rec fields creating a green belt around Clear Lake.



1. EDGE CHARACTER



2. ACCESS TO THE NETWORK



3. DEVELOP NODES AND DESTINATIONS



4. THICKENING THE EDGE

COOLER BY THE LAKE

The greenways "Cooler by the Lake" concept focuses on creating an accessible biking and walking network with a variety of interesting destinations. Interest is provided by developing sub-themes such as enhancing the shoreline, creating micro-climates, creating social spaces, providing water engagement, and providing opportunities for interpretation. These result in improved water, habitat for native flora and fauna, and community engagement.

SHORELINE ENHANCEMENTS

Clear Lake can enhance its long-standing reputation as a fishing lake by providing conditions desirable for anglers. A restored shoreline with native vegetation promotes aquatic and avian habitat.



NATIVE PLANTINGS



AQUATIC HABITAT



RESTORED EMERGENT +
SUBMERGENT VEGETATION

MICROCLIMATES

Thermal comfort is a primary factor leading to the success of public spaces. Much of the greenway occurs in a park-like setting nestled among tall, old trees. The shade from these trees in combination with reflective materials, and spaces near water help cool the environment for bicyclers along the loop on a hot day.

CREATING SOCIAL SPACES

A variety of spaces and size of spaces accommodates a variety of users from passive to active. Experiences are unique to the observer, so providing a variety of spaces from intimate and contemplative moments to large areas for interaction allows for flexibility of the user.

WATER ENGAGEMENT

A key objective of this plan was to take advantage of lake effects by locating spaces close to the water. Strategies for engaging the water can varied from low cost fishing docks to structured edges, boardwalks, and piers at strategic locations.

INTERPRETATION

Integrating interpretive features such as art, signage or historic materials celebrates the legacy of La Porte. Themes for interpretation can focus on celebrating La Porte's history, the native flora and fauna of the region, or highlighting restoration or remediation efforts in the area.



PROVIDE SHADE



HIGH ALBEDO MATERIALS



SPACES FRONTING THE WATER



LARGE SPACES:
COMMUNITY EVENTS



MEDIUM SPACES:
SMALL GROUPS



SMALL SPACES:
A COUPLE PEOPLE



DOCKS + PIERS



STEPPED EDGES



WATER PORTAGING



LA PORTE'S HISTORY



NATIVE FLORA + FAUNA



HEALTH-CENTRIC INFORMATION