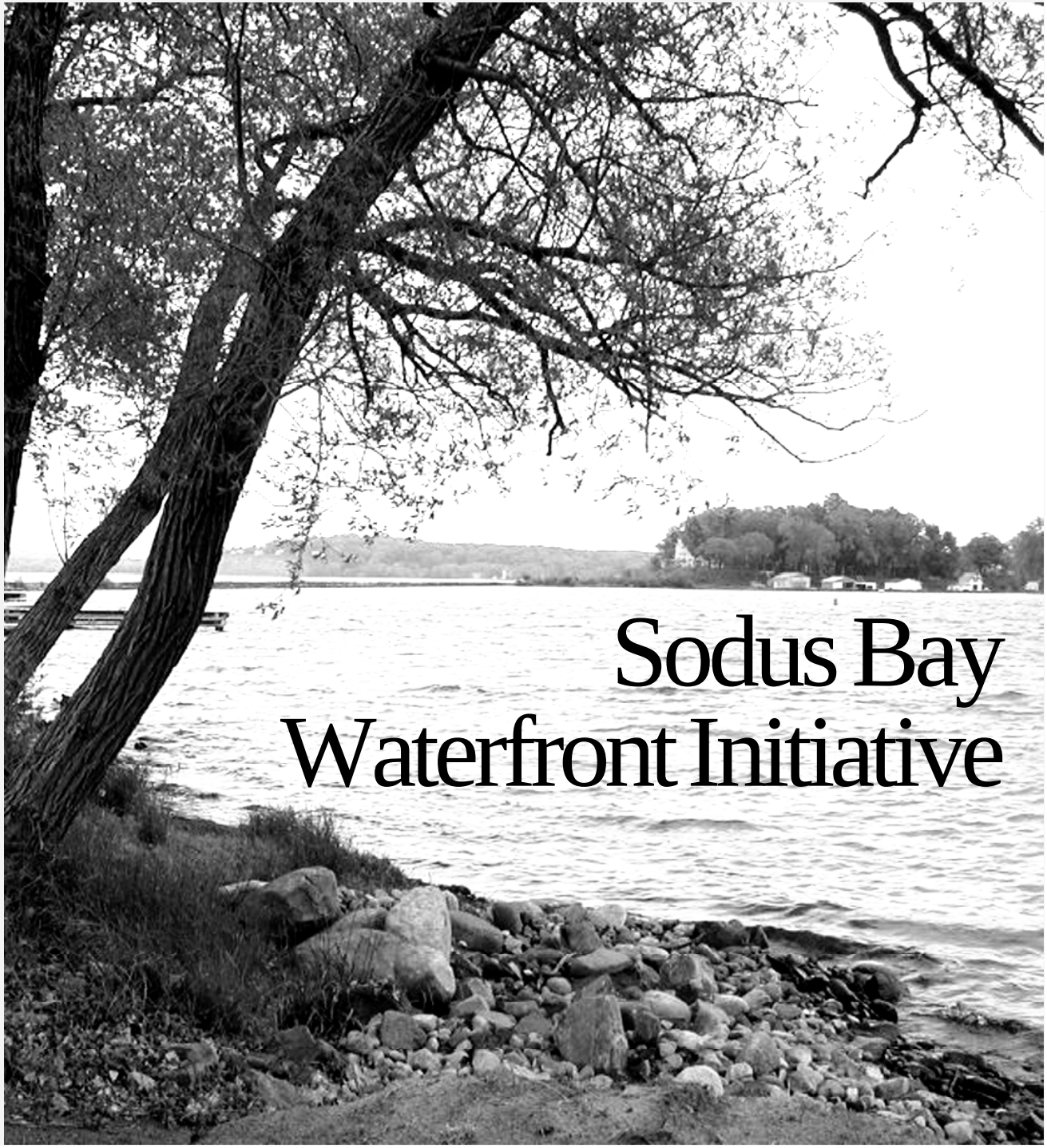
2001 CCDR Summer Institute

Lake Ontario Embayments

Community Waterfront Planning Initiatives



Sodus Bay Waterfront Initiative

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Sodus Bay Waterfront Initiative

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Table of Contents

Introduction 1

Vision Plan

Vision Planning Process 2
Vision Statement and Goals 3
Action Steps 4
Implementation 8

Design and Planning Studies

Introduction 9
Open Space and Recreation Plan 9
Open Space Trail System 15

Bay Design Study Sites 19
- Hog Island 20
- DEC Lake Shore Marshes Management Area 22
- Saw Mill Cove 22

Village of Sodus Point Schematic Plan 23
- Harriman Park Improvements 24
- South Ontario Street Bay Acess 26
- Beach Access at the Numbered Streets 28
- Waterfront Park and Village Greenway 30
- Public Pier 33

Appendices

A. Resources 34
B. Open Space Criteria 36

Introduction

Over a period of eight months in 2001, faculty and students in landscape architecture and planning from the State University of New York, College of Environmental Science and Forestry (SUNY ESF) worked with community members from the Towns of Sodus and Huron and the Village of Sodus Point on a participatory planning and design process to develop a Vision Plan for Sodus Bay. Funded by the New York State Department of State (NYS DOS), Division of Coastal Resources and administered through the Faculty of Landscape Architecture's Council for Community Design Research (CCDR), the intent of the program was to help build local leadership and project support through community involvement. In addition to the three municipalities surrounding Sodus Bay, two other Lake Ontario waterfront communities, the Village of Fair Haven and the Town of Sandy Creek, were also selected to participate in this pilot program.

The project employed participatory methods to work with small communities that typically do not have large in-house planning or design staffs. The project developed a communication framework between the communities and state agencies that provide the technical assistance and funding for community based projects. From the perspective of members of the SUNY ESF Faculty of Landscape Architecture, exploring the participatory process to better understand the dynamics of community has been an on-going empirical effort for many years.

This document records and explains the process and the products that resulted from this collaborative effort. The first section of the document: the Vision Plan, describes the process leading to the development of the community's Vision Plan, the Vision Statement, the Goals, and identified actions that could be taken to reach the goals and implement the plan. The second section, Design and Planning Studies, describe conceptual planning and design studies developed as a first step in the implementation process.

Ideally, the process of vision planning and community design is beneficial to both the community in guiding future planning activities and to the students in providing a valuable educational experience about public participation methods. In this interactive planning and design process, community members provide valuable information and insights and help students understand local values, traditions and desires. Community input and evaluation is the cornerstone of the community design process and ultimately the implementation of the Vision Plan recommendations depends on the commitment and effort of the community members.

There were many projects and planning initiatives underway around Sodus Bay when this project began. The goals and activities outlined through the vision planning process are not intended to duplicate or usurp these ongoing projects but to coordinate with and complement ongoing work.

Vision Plan

Residents provided valuable information and feedback during both the vision planning and design studies

Vision Planning Process

Over the course of one academic semester four students worked with residents from the Towns of Huron and Sodus and the Village of Sodus Point to facilitate a participatory design and planning process that led to the development of an inter-municipal Vision Plan for Sodus Bay. The students conducted two community workshops and made a final presentation of the Vision Plan to the community at the end of the semester.

Vision planning by definition is the initial and critical step in a comprehensive planning process. Vision planning brings community members together to identify the unique opportunities and issues facing their community. Ultimately, vision planning asks community members to look beyond the current conditions of their community to imagine a desired future for their community. Having a vision plan in place is important because it helps communities manage changes currently happening and serves to guide the direction of future change.

A Vision Plan is composed of several related pieces. The vision statement is an "umbrella statement" that embodies the collective view for a community's future. Under this vision statement are several goals that describe the purpose or pieces of the vision statement in greater detail. Finally, implementation strategies or action steps are developed under each goal to describe how that goal can be achieved.

Students from SUNY ESF worked with the community to develop a vision plan through a series of workshops. The first workshop, at the Huron Town Hall, provided an introduction to the visioning process, outlined the scope of the work, described SUNY-ESF's role in the process and discussed the importance of community participation. Community members worked with students on several participatory exercises aimed at discovering the ways in which residents use and value the community. Participants were asked to complete a series of mapping exercises to identify valued resources and destinations; daily and seasonal routes; and to identify seasonal use patterns of the Bay. A brainstorming session focused on understanding what community members perceived as opportunities, concerns and issues, and on how they envisioned the future of their community. Finally, a photo-survey was distributed for participants to complete. This survey was intended to collect more detailed information from community members about the opportunities and issues facing the community and to provide a chance for more personal, reflective thought.

At a second meeting in Sodus Point, students presented a summary of the information gathered at the first workshop. The maps created by participants at the first workshop were compiled by topic onto summary maps for review. Participants then had an opportunity to edit and add to these maps. In a new mapping exercise, residents were divided

into teams and asked to consider future development, conservation and preservation that they would like to see in the community. They produced maps to record their ideas and marked the various areas that they thought would be best suited for these different activities. These maps revealed interesting patterns between development and conservation and identified three areas, Sodus Point, Lake Bluff and Bay Bridge where multiple opportunities suggest the need for careful planning. This activity was followed by a brainstorming activity to identify critical water management issues, strategies to resolve each issue and the partners that might assist. The group also completed a photographic survey and ended the workshop with a review and edit of the draft vision statement presented by the students.

The last meeting began with a review and analysis of the activities completed at the previous workshop, followed by a final review of the revised Vision Statement and Goals. Then the students presented action steps that the three communities could take to begin implementation of their vision. Each of the proposed steps were discussed and revisions and additions incorporated. Residents then indicated their near-term and long-term priorities by placing a sticker next to specific action steps. The draft plan was revised to reflect the residents' comments and the priorities noted to help guide implementation decisions.

Vision Statement

The combined community vision for Sodus Bay and its environs is to improve water quality, preserve and enhance the natural beauty and promote sustainable use by:

- Establishing stewardship of the bay through shared management and resource allocation among public agencies and individuals;
- Managing land and water activities to mitigate their impact on the water quality of the bay to protect the bay and its tributaries;
- Protecting and improving natural areas such as wetlands, stream channels and important dryland areas;
- Providing public access to the bay resources and linking compatible activities on and around the Bay to benefit both residents and visitors; and
- Promoting and managing quality development and land use patterns that enhance the historic and unique character of the bay area while balancing the residential, economic, and ecological needs to foster a sense of community pride and identity.

Sodus Bay is a regional resource that provides year round recreation opportunities. The natural beauty of the area is valued by residents and visitors alike.

Goals and Action Steps

Goal 1: Establish stewardship of the Bay through shared management and resource allocation among public agencies and individuals.

- *Organize a bay management/preservation commission* with representation from each of the three municipalities to coordinate resource management programs on the Bay. This group would serve as an advisory board to each of the municipalities to coordinate management studies, establish development requirements and participate in the review of development projects within the Sodus Bay watershed.

- *Lobby with other Lake Ontario coastal communities for assistance to address common issues* identified in the recent study the " Lake Ontario Embayment Initiative" and to develop support to fund remediation efforts.

- *Provide technical assistance to facilitate and guide local bay management.* An individual serving as Bay Manager could provide management assistance to Sodus Bay by promoting assessment and monitoring studies, guiding waterfront projects, initiating educational programs and providing answers to questions from residents and developers.

- *Make local stewardship visible* both within the three municipalities and to outside visitors. This can be done through local media coverage, celebrations, public recognition and promotional fliers and displays.

Goal 2: Manage land and water activities to mitigate their impact on the water quality of the bay and its tributaries.

- *Enhance existing programs and encourage complementary efforts to address weed control in the Bay.* This program should address the weed condition through the entire Bay and employ a coordinated and cost effective strategy for its control.

- *Mitigate the impact of septic waste on the Bay.* Seek funding/assistance to conduct a feasibility study to evaluate alternative strategies for handling septic wastes. Work with appropriate agencies to implement the most cost effective solutions.

- *Seek assistance to assess the impact of commercial and recreational boating on the Bay water quality and develop a strategy to mitigate these impacts.* This might include a

survey of boaters and marinas to determine current practices and to identify actions (such as the addition of more pump-outs, increased docking access, etc.) that would help to mitigate these impacts.

- *Continue to work with existing conservation/preservation programs to promote public awareness and participation in best management practices*. Seek funding to promote best practices throughout the Bay through the development of educational programs and by providing technical assistance and incentives to private landowners.

- *Establish development review criteria to mitigate impacts on the Bay watershed*. The criteria should be clearly identified and carefully reviewed during the development process.

Goal 3: Protect and improve natural areas such as wetlands, stream channels and important dry-land areas.

- *Develop an Open Space Plan for the Bay.* Create a process that coordinates open space planning and acquisition through the three municipalities. The plan produced by this process should identify and incorporate areas around the bay that are unsuitable for development, are highly sensitive to development impacts, provide scenic views of the bay or have high value for public use. This should also include areas currently designated for public access and recreation, and any developed pedestrian walkways/trails.

- *Identify significant and valued natural areas for preservation and development for public access.* Consider the conservation value and educational potential of each identified site, its accessibility for public use, and development costs and acquisition strategies if it is not in public ownership. Based on the feasibility study prepare funding strategies for acquisition and development of the best-suited site.

- *Establish Best Development Practices and tie them to local development regulations and review.* Criteria should include but are not limited to: a plan for erosion control management during construction, a post construction drainage plan, development setbacks from the water and the use of buffers to separate new development from sensitive resources.

Goal 4: Provide public access to Bay resources and link compatible activities on and around the Bay to benefit both residents and visitors.

- *Develop a comprehensive trail system that links residential, commercial, public lands, and points of interest within the bay.* This trail should support walking, bicycling, and other means of travel as appropriate for the location. In addition to linking resources within the bay, consider the potential to extend and connect this trail to regional trails including the Seaway Trail and Erie Canal Bikeway.

- *Study the potential to mark the bay entrance with a gateway/information station at Sodus Point.* Conduct a planning/design feasibility study to examine the development of a public landing that would serve as an information center for visitors arriving in the bay by boat.

- *Improve existing public boat launches and develop plans for additional public landings.* Some of the existing launch facilities need upgrading and new sites are desired to allow water access from the southern and eastern sides of the bay.

- *Improve and develop public beach and recreation facilities to meet resident and visitor needs*. Current recreation interests are diverse and existing public spaces may benefit from redesign that provides greater flexibility to accommodate a variety of mixed uses. Consider the desirability to distribute beach/recreation opportunities around the bay. Identify appropriate locations considering site accessibility, parking capacity and acquisition strategies.

- *Develop strategies that encourage new development to tie into public trails and provide public open space amenities in their site development.* This could be encouraged through development incentives or requirements.

- As tourism increases, monitor the impact of traffic on the three municipalities and develop strategies to mitigate impacts.

Goal 5: Promote and manage quality development and land use patterns that enhance the historic and unique character of the Bay area while balancing the residential, economic, and ecological needs in order to foster a sense of community pride and identity.

- *Encourage adaptive reuse, maintenance and upgrading of existing structures and sites that are currently dilapidated or in need of repair.* Design studies, technical assistance, incentives and creative funding might be used to encourage private actions. Community groups could be approached to take on projects on vacant or public sites.

- *Establish coordinated management practices to guide and review future development in the three municipalities.* Criteria for development in the bay area should be consistent among the three municipalities. Environmental criteria, design guidelines, and incentive programs can be used to encourage development activities that protect the watershed and maintain the valued character of the area.

- *Waterfront development supports continued public access.* Private waterfront development reduces the potential for future public access to the Bay and Lake. The communities can encourage new development to contribute to public open space and public waterfront access by incorporating public access in design proposals or by establishing a development fee tied to protecting open space.

- *Conduct design studies to analyze and assess the potential impact that different development patterns will have on the landscape and views around the Bay.* The potential development of municipal sewer and water lines will stimulate new residential and commercial development and support a higher settlement density. Design studies will allow the community to consider different development patterns and their physical impact on the landscape. This assessment will enable the three communities to consider desired/compatible development patterns and land-use management strategies to guide future development.

- *Manage development in natural areas (e.g. agriculture lands, wetlands, floodplains etc.) throughout the community to protect valued resources.* Establish design review criteria for specific areas and incorporate lands not suited for development into an open space plan.

- *Protect continued agricultural land use in the bay area.* Agriculture has an historic and economic importance in the bay area. As new development occurs the three municipalities should take steps to mitigate the impact of new residential and commercial activities on agricultural practices.

Implementation

In May 2001, after completion of the Visioning Process, The CCDR and NYS DOS organized a meeting that included representatives of the three waterfront communities and representatives from seven state agencies to review the Sodus Bay Vision Plan. Lois Buckalew, Donna Chittenden and Don Buckwald represented the three Sodus Bay Communities at this meeting. The intent of the meeting was to provide a coordinated and efficient forum to review the Vision Plan and discuss the ways the different state agencies could help the communities forward their vision. A desired outcome of this meeting was the discussion of potential state assistance and the preliminary selection of specific projects to be further developed by student interns working on the Waterfront Initiatives during the summer of 2001.

The agency representatives were impressed with the comprehensive nature of the Sodus Bay Vision Plan, and the clarity of the goals and action steps. They identified numerous funding programs that would not only assist with project implementation but could also provide management and technical assistance. The agency representatives identified a number of initiatives in the Sodus Bay Vision Plan that were worthy of state support and they encouraged the three leaders to pursue them.

Following the meeting the two supervisors and mayor met together with Sharon Lilla, director of Wayne County Planning, to decide on the next steps to be taken. Collaboration among the three municipalities had been the strength of the Vision Planning process and they decided to start with activities that would continue to build on that collaboration. They identified three initial implementation steps:

1. Preliminary development of an open space and recreation plan for the Bay.
2. Preparation of an inter-municipal agreement between the three municipalities to coordinate planning activities around the Bay.
3. Consideration of creating a bay manager position to assist the three communities in the implementation of the Vision Plan.

Over the summer ESF students and faculty worked with the residents on the open space and recreation plan, developing a schematic plan and conceptual site designs for public water access and environmental education opportunities around the Bay. Residents were involved through informal community meetings, public displays, and public review sessions. The community reviews and critiques were crucial to the refinement of the designs and the investigation of new opportunities. The following section presents a summary of the open space, recreation plan and design studies.

Design Studies

Introduction

The development of an open space plan was a specific action step under Goal 3 of the Vision Plan. The inclusion of recreation in this plan recognized the communities' desire to identify and preserve land with unique recreational or educational value for future public development. This work included the development of a schematic open space plan, a preliminary bike route around the Bay and conceptual site designs for public use at specific identified sites around the bay.

As the students began their data collection and conducted field visits as part of the open space inventory, they were also assessing individual locations to determine their potential as future sites for public recreation, conservation and education. Residents had identified a number of sites during the workshops and the field visits provided an opportunity to assess each site and to identify additional sites with development potential for public use. This report begins with a summary of the open space plan, proceeds to review the preliminary bikeway study and then presents the conceptual design studies around the Bay and in Sodus Point.

Open Space & Recreation Plan

The development of this plan is the first step in a process to coordinate open space planning in the three municipalities surrounding the Bay. The intent of Open Space Planning is to identify areas of environmental sensitivity or public value which the community might want to preserve, or on which the community would like to guide or review future development activities to protect valued resources. The establishment of an open space plan can contribute to the economic value of community lands and increase recreational opportunities, while preserving the ecological balance of interconnected natural systems and maintaining the area's historic agricultural tradition. An open space plan provides a framework that will allow the three municipalities to manage future growth in a way that protects valued resources and encourages desired development.

The Plan incorporates areas around the Bay that are unsuitable for development, highly sensitive to development impacts, provide scenic views of the bay or have a high value for public use. Also included in the plan are areas currently in public ownership, areas with easements designated for public access and recreation, and any existing pedestrian and bicycle routes. In addition to the initial, schematic delineation of a Sodus Bay Open

Space district, the planning process identified sites within this designated open space that have unique public value for conservation, environmental educational, and waterfront access.

Goals of Open Space Planning

Open space is defined as land, which is not intensively developed for residential, commercial, industrial or institutional uses. It includes agricultural and forest land, undeveloped shoreline, public park land and preserves. It also includes undevelopable land such as wetlands and areas of steep slopes. Land can be designated as part of an open space plan on the basis of its character, public value and degree of sensitivity to development. It can also be designated on the basis of its proximity to such lands when additional open space land is required to protect these resources.

The Primary objectives of the Sodus Bay Open Space Plan are to:

1. Insure preservation and careful planning of development on prime open space lands.
2. Protect environmentally sensitive areas such as wetlands, habitats, areas of groundwater recharge, and prime agricultural soils.
3. Protect the water quality of Sodus Bay.
4. Preserve land for the future development of waterfront access for public recreational and educational use.
5. Conserve prime agricultural soils.
6. Maintain the visual character of the rural landscape surrounding Sodus Bay.

Workshop participants felt stongly about the importance of providing public waterfront access around the Bay for fishing, swimming and boating.

Open Space Planning Criteria

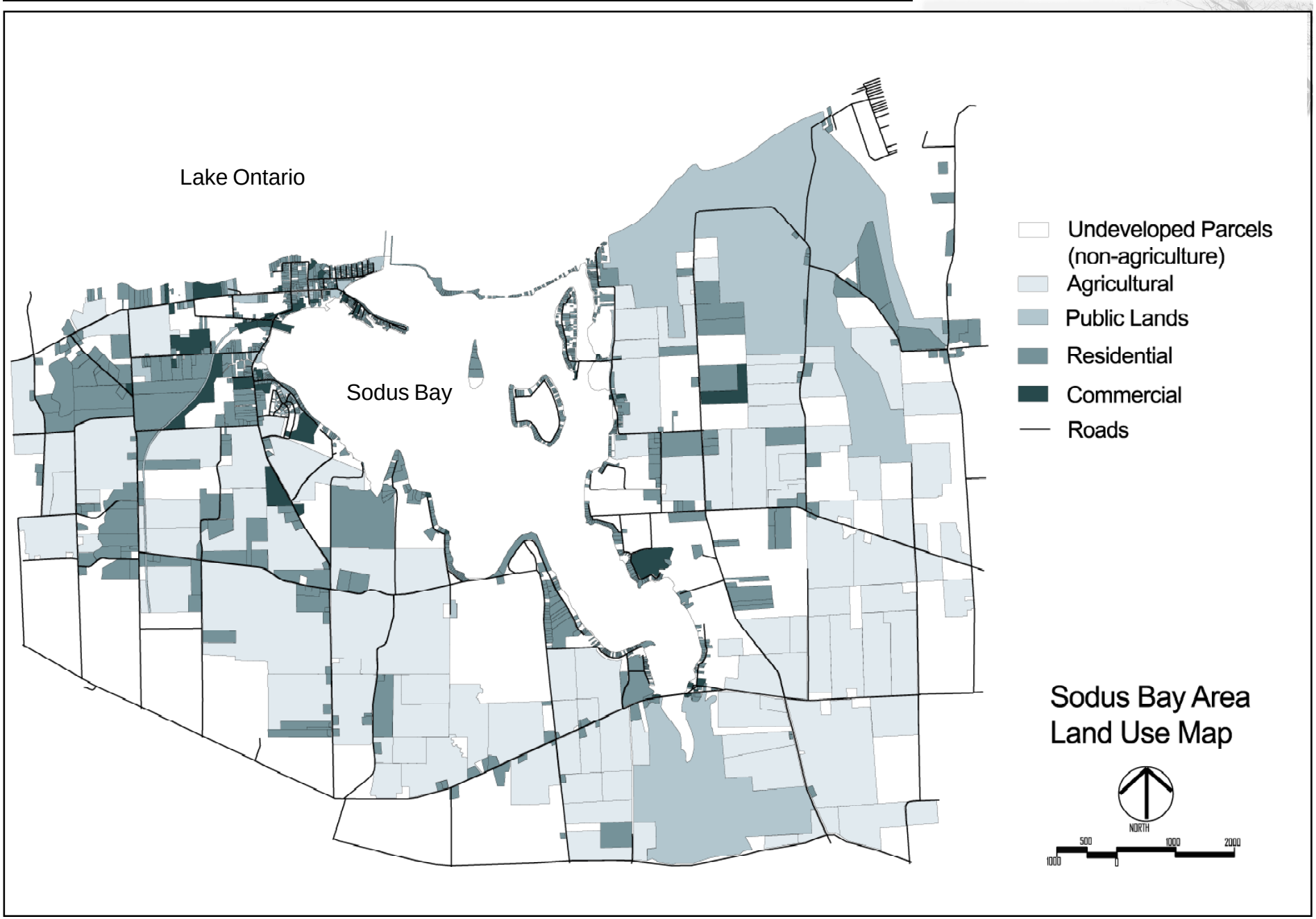
The study area includes portions of the Town of Sodus, Huron and Rose and the Village of Sodus Point and extends from the edge of the Bay inland a distance of two to five miles. Three levels of criteria were established to guide the inventory, analysis and designation of the open space lands. The first and highest level of the criteria are associated with land that is not suitable for development including:

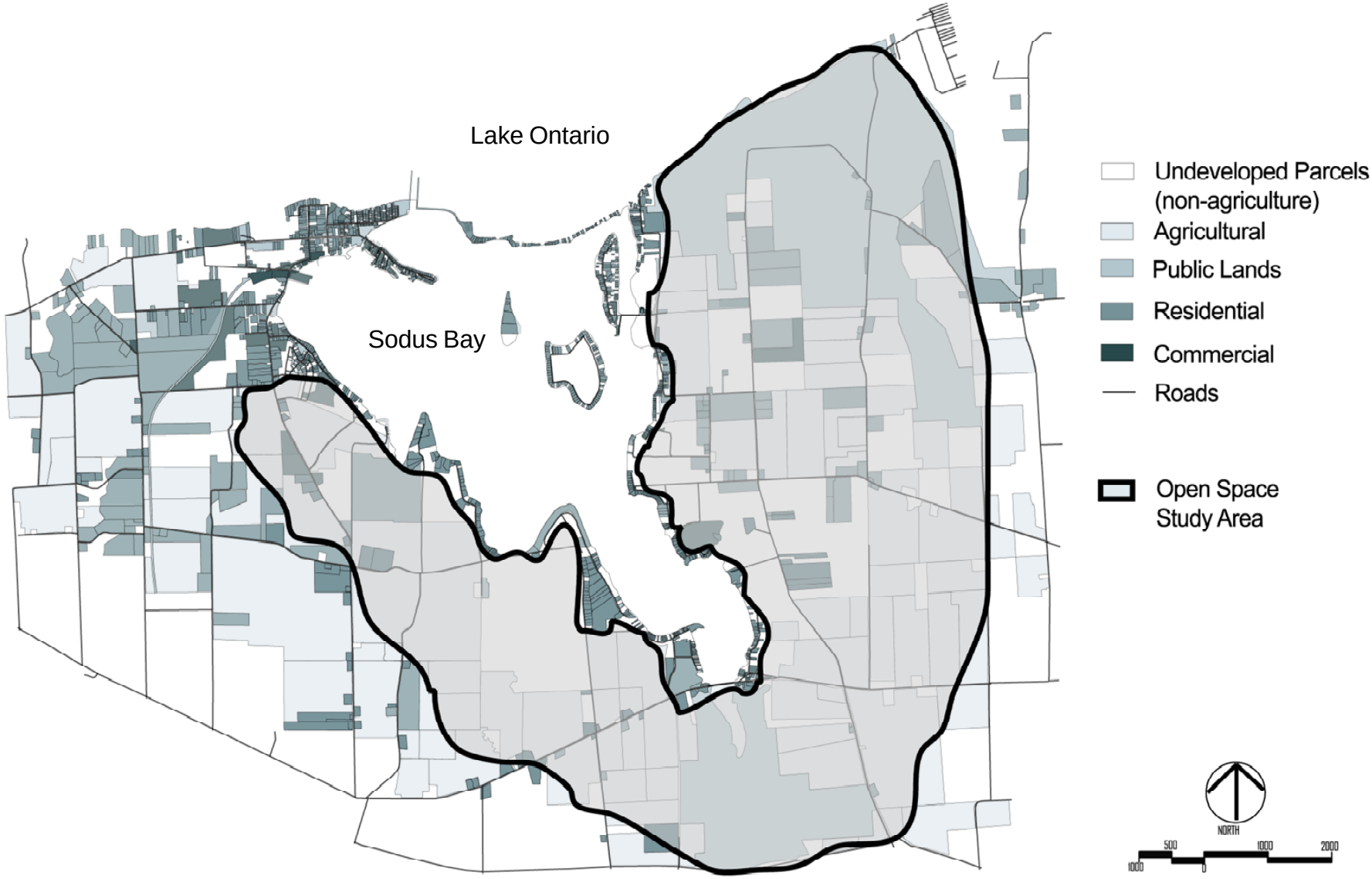
1. Wetlands with and without standing water present
2. Areas of steep or unstable slopes, 20 % – 30% or greater
3. Areas that provide habitat for endangered or rare plant and animal species

This list also includes Class I agricultural soils, which, while well suited for development, are an important resource worthy of protection especially given the importance of agriculture in the Towns of Huron and Sodus.

The next category of criteria are less sensitive but equally important in the preservation of environmental and visual quality. They include:

1. Existing mature vegetation and woodlands
2. Floodways or those areas below the seasonal high water mark
3. Scenic view-sheds in the and around the bay
4. Buffer zones surrounding wetlands and significant habitats


Lake Ontario
Sodus Bay
Undeveloped Parcels (non-agriculture)
Agricultural
Public Lands
Residential
Commercial
Roads
Sodus Bay Area Land Use Map
NORTH
500
1000
2000
1000
0



Sodus Bay Open Space Overlay

Due to the conceptual nature and schematic representation of the Sodus Bay Open Space Plan, a third category was designated, which includes lands that are not necessarily environmentally sensitive but that, due to their proximity to environmentally sensitive areas, provide an important buffer. This designation depends on location and the need to provide a protective buffer for designated open space lands.

Open Space Planning Process

A. Inventory

The development of the Open Space Plan began with the inventory of existing land use and property ownership. A land use map was produced using digital data provided by the Wayne County Planning Department. Once the map was completed the different land uses were classified. This classification was broken down by categories into agricultural land, undeveloped parcels or vacant lands not in agricultural production, existing public lands, commercial lands, residential and publicly owned lands. When these classifications were applied to the map, patterns of existing open space became clearly evident.

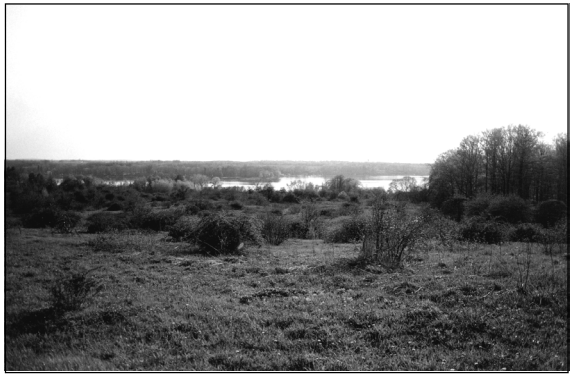
The second phase of the data analysis was the development of map overlays to delineate environmentally sensitive areas surrounding Sodus Bay. The overlay maps included hydrology, prime agricultural soils, sloped soils or unstable lands, mature woodlands, designated wetlands, rare or endangered species habitat, and existing publicly owned lands (see Appendix B).

B. Environmental Analysis

Once the overlay maps were completed, analysis began by overlaying the environmental maps on the land use map. As this process continued it became clear that there was a correspondence between the maps. Areas of steep slopes were usually the location of poor agricultural soils and as a result, mature woodlands. Also located within the areas of steep slopes were watersheds or stream corridors and wildlife habitat. The land use map also revealed that these areas were consistently designated as vacant or undeveloped on the lands on the land use map. Areas designated as agricultural land or presently in production are predominantly located on prime agricultural soils and are also undeveloped. The Open Space Plan was produced by locating the environmentally sensitive areas and public lands on the land use map.

C. Delineation of the Open Space Overlay

The schematic open space overlay identifies areas around the Bay which are currently classified as undeveloped or have a very low density of development. This overlay district also has extensive areas of sensitive environmental, cultural and scenic resources. The intent of the Open Space Plan is to identify lands that should either be protected from development or should receive special consideration and review if they are developed in the future. While the plan does not identify individual parcels or list their specific resources, the resource value



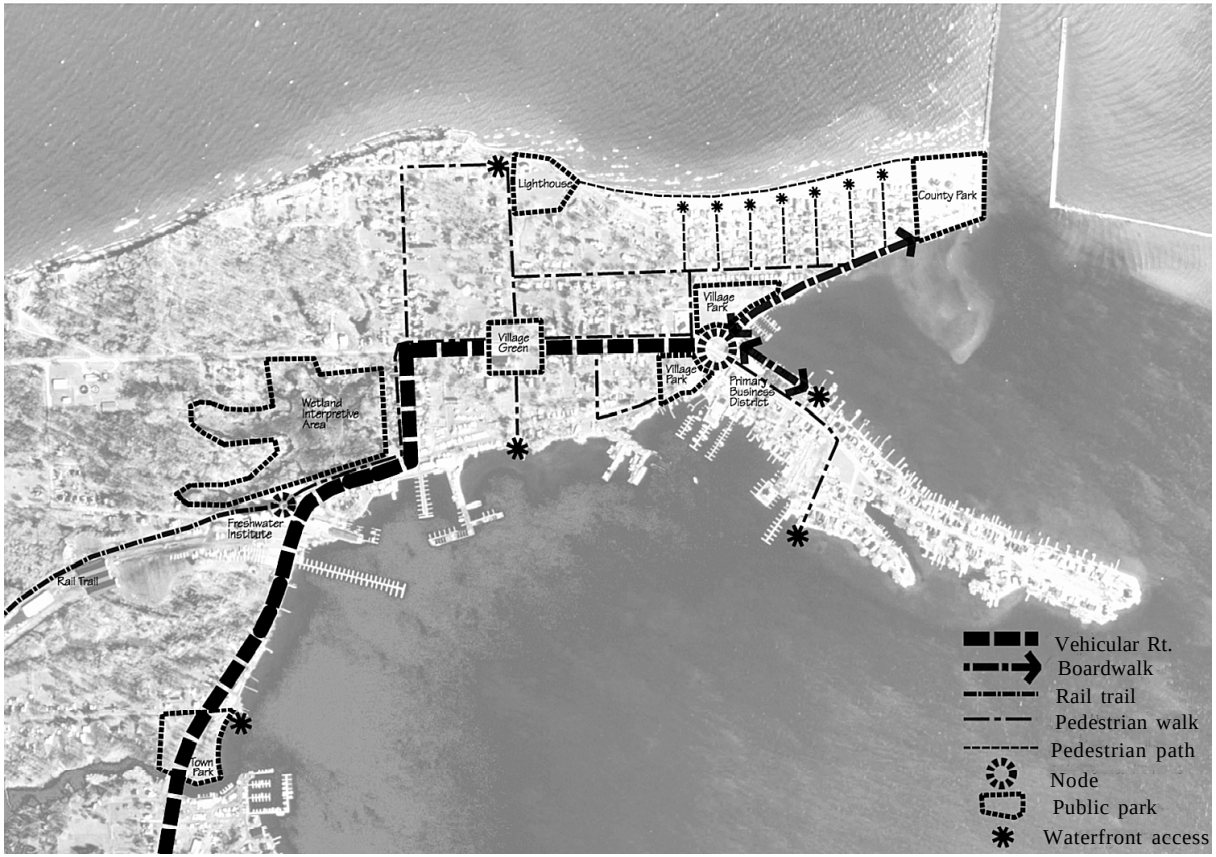
Above: Agricultural lands and open space in the town of Huron contribute to the rural character of the aera.

Below: The open space diagram illustrates existing public lands in the village as well as those potential sites identified during the study. Pedestrian linkages connect the public sites and are critical to the success of this plan.

and degree of sensitivity can be determined by consulting the analysis map created for the open space designation process (see Appendix B).

Village Open Space

The village differs from the surrounding towns in many ways but one of the primary differences is its settlement density. Like the planning in the two towns, the village open space planning focuses on issues of environmental conservation, pedestrian circulation and public lands for active and passive recreation. Environmentally sensitive areas in the village should be identified and protected through open space planning. Public access to the waterfront is a critical issue in the village. As a primary community asset, the waterfront should be accessible to residents and visitors. Development should be carefully considered and designed to protect and accommodate public access. In this same spirit, open space planning in the village and two towns should be coordinated and connected. This plan links the open space system along proposed bike and pedestrian routes.



Implementation of the Open Space Plan

Once mapped, a strategy will be required to protect the designated open space lands. This can be accomplished in several ways including: the out right purchase of available properties, the development of an easement program, and the transfer of development rights. A regional or local land trust could assist the municipalities in this process. In areas where careful development will not reduce the open space value of a property, development guidelines can be prepared to guide future development so that it occurs in a manner that protects the open space value of the property. Wayne County Planning Department, state agencies and not-for-profit planning organizations can assist in this process. An open space plan is not anti-development; instead it encourages thoughtful development on the part of both the municipality and developers. It should provide a framework to guide quality development around the Bay.

Open Space Trail System

Overview
During the vision planning process, residents expressed an interest in connecting destinations around the Bay by a bike trail (Goal 4). To address this goal, the design team studied a trail system to link resources within the bay area and to connect the community to regional trails such as the Seaway Trail and the Erie Canal Bikeway. This study was developed in conjunction with the open space plan to link publicly owned lands and assure access to public sites that may be developed in the future.

Route Design Criteria
For the purposes of this study, no formal criteria were developed for the designation of bicycle and pedestrian routes. However, consideration was given to factors such as desirable destinations, safety, road width, surface conditions, and steepness of grades. The routes shown on the trail system diagram were chosen as "best fit" solutions between the design team's informal criteria, the existing road conditions of the area, and the expressed desires of the community. To increase the development feasibility of the trail system and to expedite its implementation, routes were selected that maximize use of existing public right-of-ways and designated bike routes.

Bikeway Opportunities
During the vision planning workshops, residents identified a number of opportunities that could be incorporated in the design of a bike trail. Each of these was considered in the development of the initial proposal.

1. An abandoned railroad corridor extends south from Sodus Point along the west side of the bay to the Town of Newark. This railroad corridor would be ideal for the creation of a multiuse trail because of its minimal grade change and solid base material. This corridor could be easily modified to create a trail that would serve both pedestrians and bicyclists. As a first step, this corridor could be developed to connect the Village of Sodus Point and the Seaway Trail on Route 104. Programs such as Rails-to-Trails could help identify potential funding sources.

   There are several issues relating to use of the rail corridor that would need further consideration. First, there is no longer a direct link into the Village of Sodus Point. Property owners adjacent to the corridor are currently using the right-of-way and reestablishing this route into the village center would require the cooperation of these individuals. Secondly, the potential to extend a bike trail along this route from the Village of Sodus Point to join the Erie Canal bikeway at Newark may also be difficult since portions of the route are still an active rail line.

2. State Route 104A, running east-west, south of Sodus Bay, is part of the State designated Seaway Trail. Already a designated tourist and

bicycle route, the Seaway Trail provides an opportunity to connect the Sodus Bay trail system to a larger trail network that would allow certain destinations to become more accessible to visitors.

While State Route 104A has been designated as a bicycle route along certain segments, the conditions are not always ideal for safe bike riding. High vehicular speeds and narrow shoulders could potentially result in high-risk situations for less experienced riders.

3. Lake Bluff Road on the eastern side of the Bay provides vantage points for viewing the Bay and a possible connection to Le Roy Island. By connecting to Garner Road the route will lead to Chimney Bluffs State Park and Lake Shore Marshes Wildlife Management Area.

4. Shaker Tract Road was also considered because it passes by many interesting destinations such as Alasa Farms, Sawmill Cove, and the Shaker Tract. It also provides a more direct experience of the Bay. While this is an interesting route, it does not meet all of the design considerations. Segments of the route are steep and narrow and could pose a challenge for some riders and a potential conflict between bike riders and cars. Therefore we recommend that it be considered as a secondary rather than primary route on this trail.

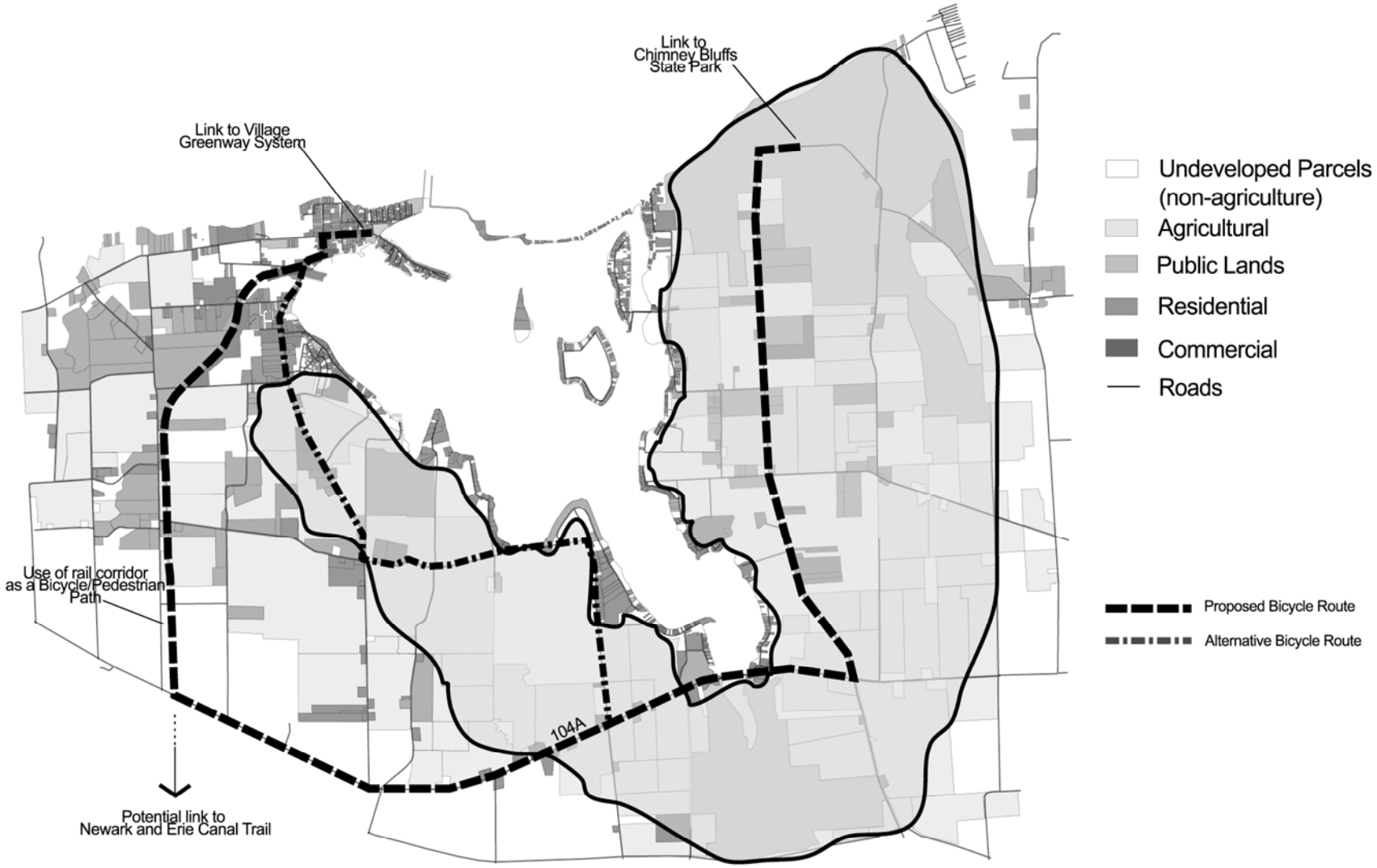
4. The Sodus ditch was also mentioned as a possible connecting route to the Erie Canal Bikeway. While we were not able to uncover enough information regarding the location of the route and current land ownership along the route this seems to present an interesting opportunity and should be further investigated with the help of local residents familiar with this corridor.

The route along Red Mill and Shaker Tract Roads is challenging due to steep grades; however, it presents expansive views of the Bay along the shore line and from the hill of the Shaker Tract.

Description of Primary and Secondary Routes

The proposed bike trail will begin in the Village of Sodus Point and continue around the Bay ending at Chimney Bluffs State Park. The study delineates two potential routes between the Village and State Route 104A. Both the primary and secondary routes are extensions of the Greenway System within the Village of Sodus Point.

1. The primary Route
   From the Village of Sodus Point, the primary route follows the abandoned railroad corridor turning east on Route 104A. The trail then passes destinations such as the Bay Bridge and the DEC Lake Shore Marshes Management Area to the south of the bridge before turning north on Lake Bluff Road. The route then travels north along Lake Bluff Road, connecting to Garner Road and terminating at Chimney Bluffs State Park. Should a public gathering area be developed at the Hog Island/Le Roy Island site, a secondary branch could then be extended from the primary route to enable access by bicycle.



Preliminary proposal for

The Sodus Bay Bikeway

2. The Secondary Route

The secondary trail leaves the village following Route 14 south until it meets the Red Mill/ Shaker Tract Road. There the route turns east (left) on Red Mill Road where it passes destinations such as Alasa Farms, Sawmill Cove, and a viewing point of the Bay on the Shaker Tract before turning south along the Shaker Tract Road. At the intersection of the Shaker Tract Road and Route 104A, the secondary trail turns east to rejoin the primary trail.

Recommended Next Steps

A bicycle trail system would provide recreation opportunities for both the residents and visitors. This initial study indicates several development opportunities; however, more study is required. To expedite implementation, routes should follow existing corridors and right-of-ways where possible. Routes should be selected to link desirable destinations and to provide a safe experience for the user. The following is a list of action steps that can be taken to carry the planning and development of the bike trail forward.

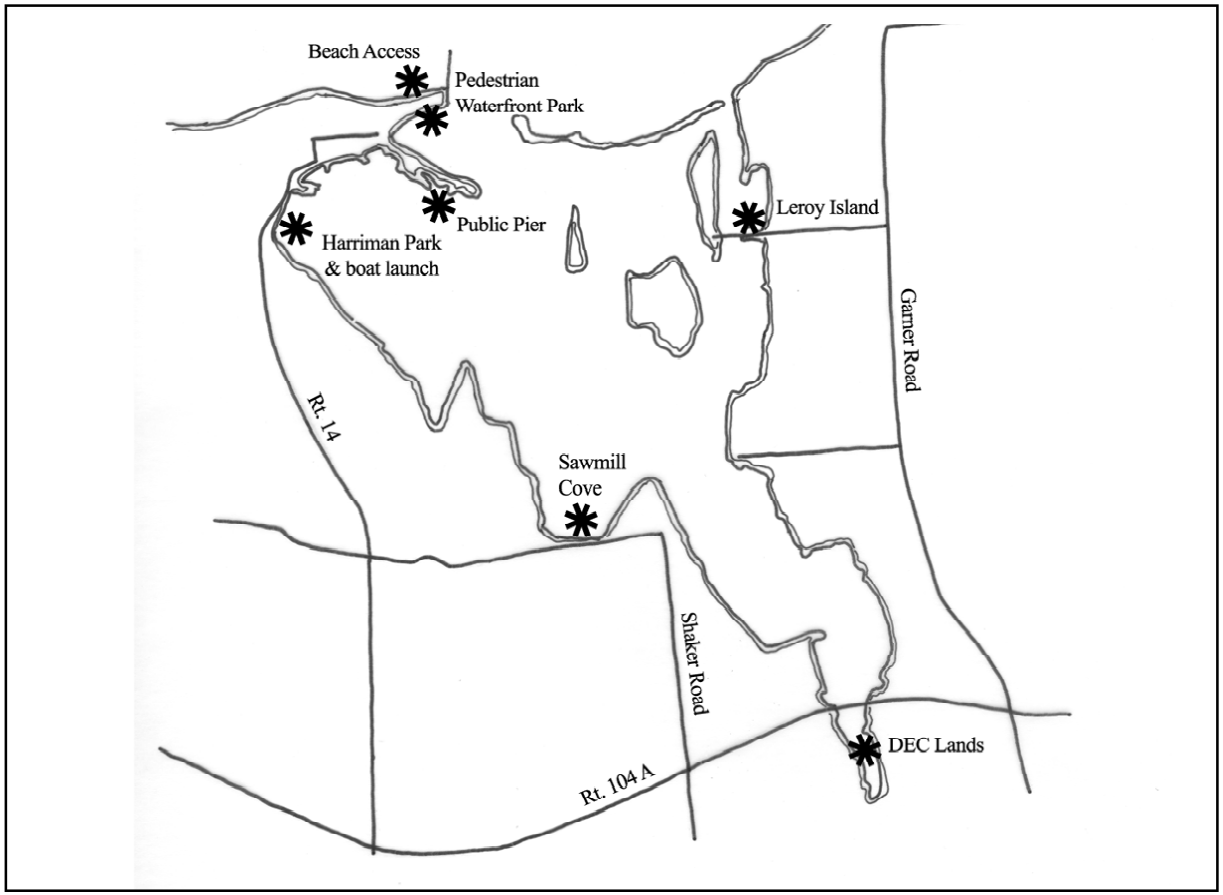
- Contact Wayne County Planning for advice and technical assistance on this project.
- Review and revise preliminary criteria developed in this study to establish planning criteria that can be used to designate a route.
- Where roads meet safety criteria for bike routes, mark the routes with share the road signs and develop a route map showing the bike routes and destinations around the bay. Include the map in promotional brochures and make the map available to visitors, bike clubs and tourism offices.
- Where roads or routes are not currently suited for bikes, develop a strategy for upgrading and improving them to acceptable standards.
- Determine the feasibility of redeveloping the RR corridor from the village to Rt. 104A. Work with Wayne County Planning on this effort and contact NYS DOT, NYSPRHP, and Rails to Trails for possible funding assistance on this portion of the trail.
- Identify appropriate sites for parking, information kiosks and bike racks. Seek funding to provide these support facilities.
- Further investigate the possibility of creating a multiuse trail between the Village of Sodus Point and the Erie Canal Trail by way of the abandoned railroad corridor or the Sodus Ditch.

Bay Design Study Sites

The identification and development of recreation opportunities and increased public access on the bay are community objectives identified in the Vision Plan. Currently there is an imbalance of public waterfront access and recreation opportunities on the Bay with a higher concentration of public sites on the Western side of the Bay and in Sodus Point. There is very little waterfront access on the east side of the bay in the Town of Huron. It was the intent of the open space planning to identify sites with the potential for public use and to increase the opportunities in the Town of Huron. During the workshops residents identified a number of sites that they considered to be sacred and worthy of protection for public use. The potential public use of these sites varied from water access and recreation to environmental education. During the open space inventory and analysis the design team conducted a field inventory and analysis of these sites and prepared conceptual designs to illustrate their potential for various uses.

The following design studies suggest opportunities around the Bay and in the Village of Sodus Point. The studies are conceptual and employed here to suggest development possibilities and reveal the character of each site.

Below: Map locates sites around the Bay and in the Village of Sodus Point that were considered during the design studies for recreation, waterfront access and environmental/nature areas.



Hog Island

Site

Hog Island lies just east of LeRoy Island between the LeRoy Island bridge and Bluff Road. The land is low and flat along the edges of the Bay and is bordered by marshlands. This area is considered a "Sacred Place" and affords favorite views of LeRoy Island Cove and Sodus Bay.

Opportunities and Issues

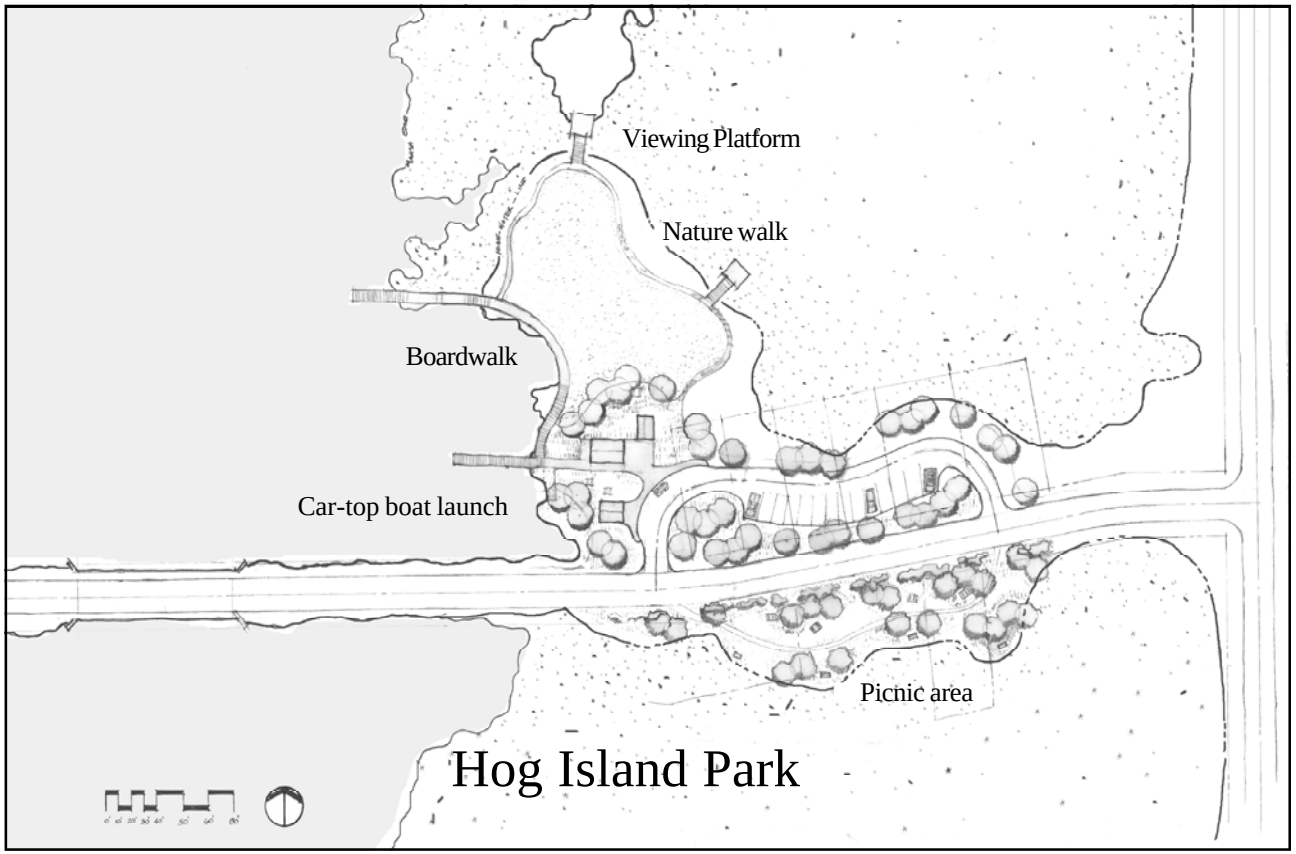
Currently, there are a number of small privately owned buildings on the site. Most of these structures are unoccupied and appear to be in disrepair. Due to the high water table in this area it is unlikely that it will ever be redeveloped for residential use.

We propose that this area be considered for public use as a town park. This development will not only provide unique opportunities for town residents but it will create an attractive entrance to LeRoy Island. Due to the sensitive nature of the site, the marshlands, wildlife habitat and high water table, we propose that the area be used for nature walks, fishing and picnicking. The bridge is currently used for fishing and the existing parking is very limited. The development of the site could increase the fishing opportunities and address parking concerns. Once developed the site could be used for a summer youth program that could include nature study, kayak/canoeing, and fishing. In addition, a small business or concession could be established on the site to sell bait and food.

Design Proposal Recommendations

- Build a multipurpose community building with restrooms for community gatherings, nature education and recreation programs.
- Develop a picnic area with tables and grills. Plant trees as necessary to provide shade.
- Provide an area for a car-top launch for small boats, canoes, and kayaks and provide a small building for small boat storage and rental.
- Construct a boardwalk that extends out into LeRoy Island Cove for pedestrian access and fishing.
- Provide a nature walk of mown grass that would loop from the boardwalk to a large open space for picnic and mixed use activities. Include viewing platforms along the walk.
- Provide benches along the water's edge and the nature walk.
- Provide parking for approximately 15 vehicles.
- Provide planting buffers in parking areas.

Below: A view of Hog Island from LeRoy Island Bridge reveals the surrounding wetlands and open character of the site.



Hog Island, was identified as a "Sacred Place" during the workshops. It is a "jewel" of a small site with the potential to become a favorite use area. Wetlands and shoreline offer the potential for education and recreation activities. Currently there are plans to rebuild LeRoy Island Bridge. These plans should give consideration to the future development of this site for a small park.

Below: At Saw Mill Cove, Shaker Tract Road separates the Bay on the North and a unique wetland to the south.

The DEC Lake Shore Marshes State Wildlife Management Area

The Site

The NYS Department of Environmental Conservation oversees a state management area at the south end of the bay along Rt. 104 A, just west of the Bay Bridge.

Opportunities and issues

During the workshops, participants identified this area as an important resource for environmental education, hiking and canoeing/kayaking. Currently there has been little development on the site. There is an unimproved dirt road that leads to a cleared area that can be used for parking and the land slopes from this point to provide an area where small boats can be launched.

Recommendations

The three municipalities should discuss opportunities for increased public use of this site with NYS DEC. An improved launch site and the addition of shelter, hiking trails and boardwalks could establish this area as a unique environmental interpretation and educational resource. Residents of the area are interested in seeing a resource of this type developed for local residents and to diversify the area's tourist attractions.

Saw Mill Cove

The site

Saw Mill Cove was a second area identified during the workshops with potential for environmental interpretation and nature education.

Opportunities and issues

Designs were prepared to explore development opportunities along Red Mill Road; however, due to the limited right-of-way, there is little opportunity along the road to develop parking and trails that lead into the wetlands.

Recommendations

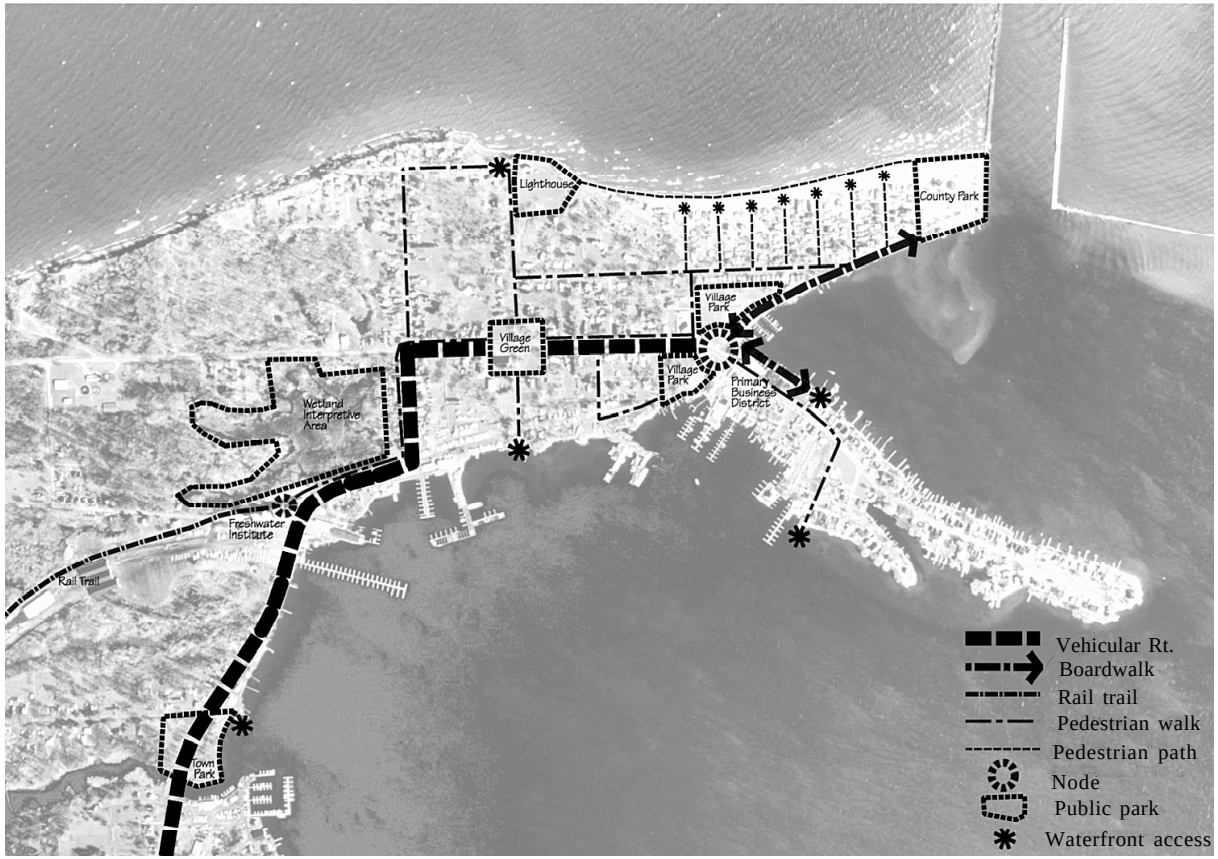
This wetland is a unique resource and should not be forgotten. If the wetland or properties adjacent to the wetland come up for sale, the bay municipalities should consider working with a land trust or environmental organization to purchase the area for development as wetland nature center.

The Village of Sodus Point Schematic Plan

The Village of Sodus Point has a number of parks, and the Village Master Plan prepared by Trowbridge and Wolf in 1996 included an open space plan. This current study builds on the 1996 master plan and identifies additional sites that provide waterfront access for inclusion in the open space system, prepares design studies for these sites and proposes pedestrian connections between them. The diagram to the right identifies existing open space locations as well as new sites proposed in this study. The diagram further illustrates the relationships between each of these sites and the importance of the physical connections between them. Finally it recognizes that the vision to increase waterfront access also includes improved pedestrian circulation throughout the village.

These circulation patterns are an important component of the proposed Open Space Recreational Plan and Comprehensive Bay Trail System. Improving the quality of the landscape connections between important sites and providing public amenities such as trees, benches, and lighting along these routes will play an important role in fostering an improved quality of life to residents and visitors.

The Schematic map below locates existing Village parks and open space, design study sites and the pedestrain and vehicular connections between them.



Harriman Park

The Site

Harriman Park, is located on the southwest side of the Village of Sodus Point near the village entrance on State Route 14. The park is the only free public launch site on the Bay that is available on a year round basis. It is considered a "Sacred Place." The site is split in half by the State highway. The boat launch is on one side of the road and parking for 41 cars with trailers is located on the other side of Rt. 14. The Launch area includes a driveway that accommodates enough space for several cars and boat trailers to wait their turn to launch and space to back a loaded boat trailer into the Bay along side a dock. A low stonewall between the parking lot and the highway identifies Harriman Park. A similar wall on the launch side of the park parallels the road between the entrance and exit.

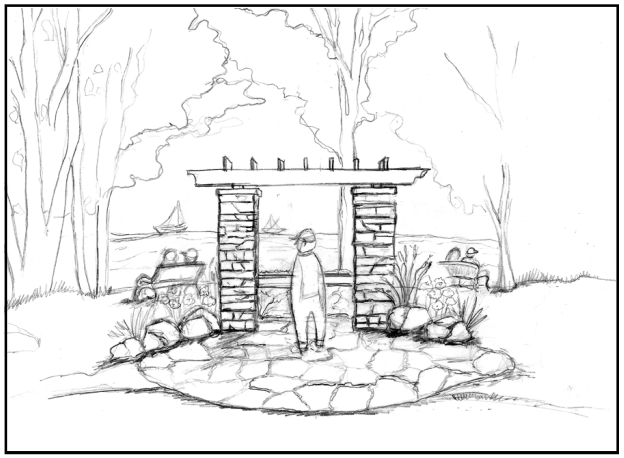
Opportunities and Issues

Harriman Park is a great community resource; however, it could be improved to accommodate a greater variety of uses and to establish a stronger sense of "Gateway" into the village. Reviewing the Trowbridge and Wolf design proposal for the park it is apparent that the original plan was never fully implemented. This proposal recommends completing the original plan and suggests additional site improvements. There is a stone and wood information kiosk that is not fully utilized and the grove of trees above First Creek could provide shelter for a seating and picnic area. Finally, and most importantly, the park does not have a safe and accessible pedestrian walk between the parking and launch area.

Proposed Design Recommendations

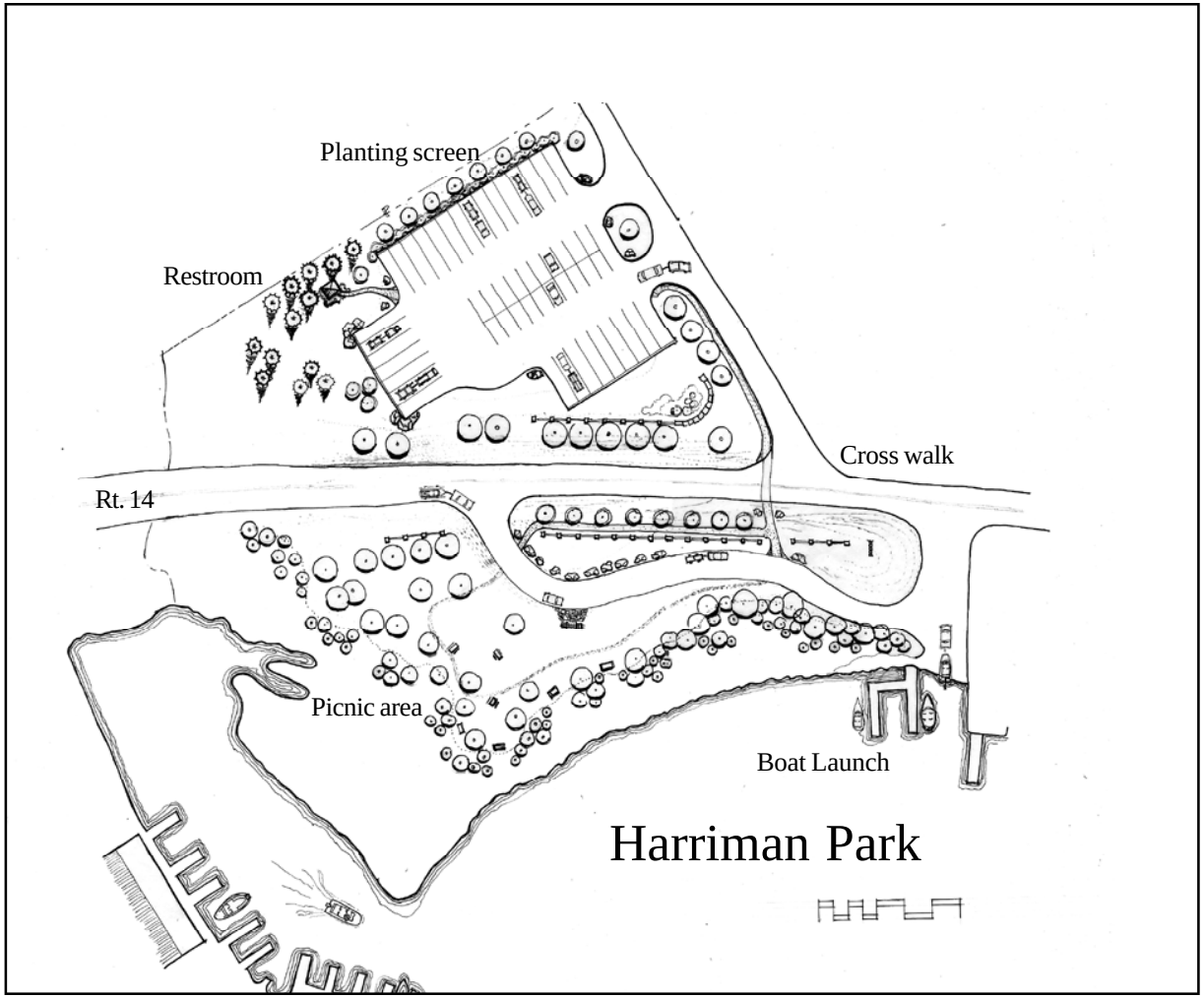
We propose that the village continue to improve and enhance this important community resource in the following manner.

- Install a crosswalk between the parking and launch area.
- Extend the low stonewall piers south of the access drive on the launch side of the park.
- Add street trees along both sides of the road.
- Install paving and planting in the area of the information kiosk.
- Rebuild the existing stone wall and stone piers.
- Provide additional planting to buffer parking from the neighbors.
- Provide picnic tables, grills and benches on the Bay side of the park. Add an informal walk to link pedestrians to these public amenities.
- Provide restroom facilities adjacent to the parking area.



Above: The existing stone kiosk (above top) could be enhnaced to create an attractive information station for visitors.

Right: Plan illustrates proposed improvements and additions at Harriman Park.



Below: Existing conditions along S. Ontario Street reveal an open view to the Bay (top) and the view from the Bay toward the Village Green on Main Street.

South Ontario Street Bay Access

The Site

Bay access at the foot of South Ontario Street would connect the public to the Bay from the Village Green. South Ontario Street has an historical connection to the War of 1812 and this site marks the location of the British landing in the Village of Sodus Point. This site provides a direct view of the bay from the Village Green and is located near the site of a proposed hotel. The depth of the water at this location appears to be deep enough to allow deeper draft boats to dock and it is also within a 5-minute walking distance to the Village business districts and the historic lighthouse at the opposite end of Ontario Street.

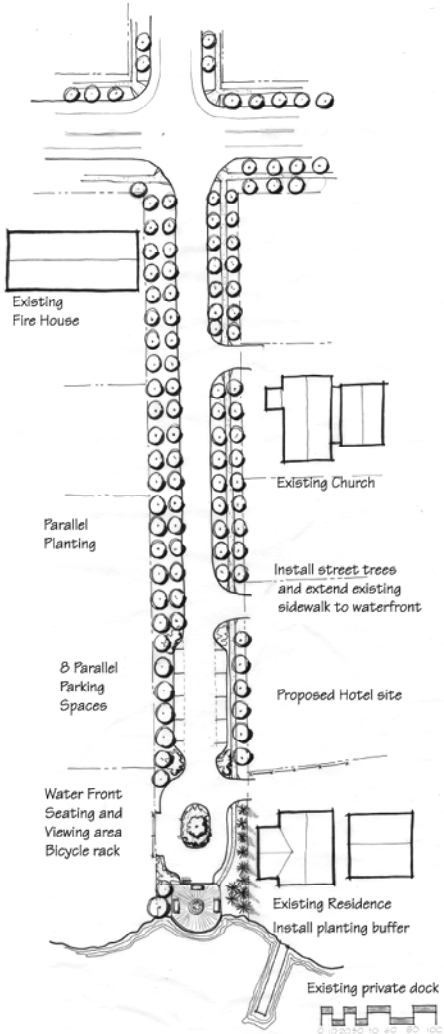
Opportunities/Issues

The study for the location of public access to the Bay on South Ontario Street produced 3 alternative design schemes. Residents and visitors benefit from the expansive view of the Bay, fishing off a short pier and a car-top boat launch. Limited parking for vehicles could be provided and tree plantings and an improved walkway would provide a pleasant walk to the village green and lighthouse. The Trowbridge Master Plan of 1999, noted the Village's desire to commemorate its involvement in the War of 1812 on an information plaque located in the Village Green. The redesign of South Ontario Street will provide an important terminus to this historic corridor and could contribute to this historic interpretation. During a public review of the preliminary design proposal it was noted that this site might provide docking space for the historic schooner "Lotus" which is currently moored in the Bay.

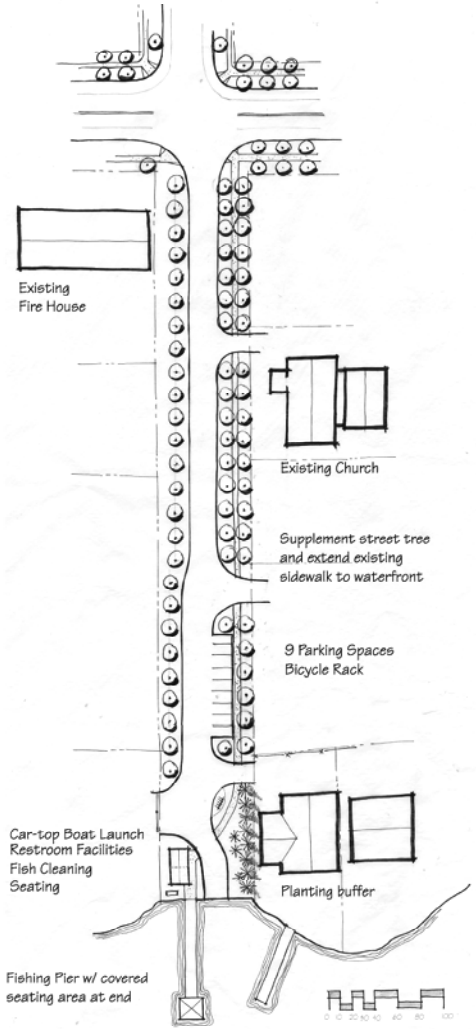
While the road right-of-way permits the development of a public site at this location, there are several development limitations. The 80 ft. road right-of-way limits the boat launching to car-top craft and it also limits the space for parallel parking along the street. Close proximity of a residence on the east side of the street must be considered carefully to mitigate possible impacts. Finally, the residence dock on the east and the marina docks to the west would create constraints on water movement around a pier.

Proposed Design Recommendations

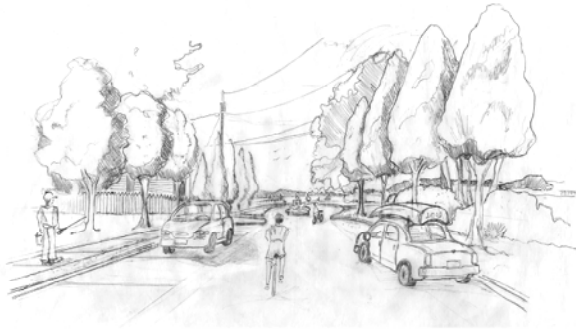
- Extend the existing sidewalk on the east side of the street south to the water's edge.
- Plant street trees
- Create a public viewing area to include benches and a bicycle rack.
- Establish a planting buffer between the viewing area, car top launch and the residence to the east.
- Provide limited parking.
- Optional improvements might include a small dock with a covered seating area and restroom facilities.



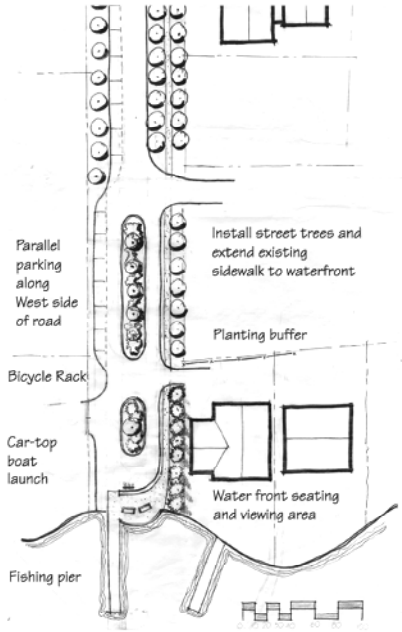
Scheme 1



Scheme 2



Sketch of Scheme 1 looking South into Bay



Scheme 3

South Ontario Street Bay Access

Beach Access at the Numbered Streets

The Site

Eight streets dead end on the Lake Ontario beach. Located between the historic lighthouse and the operating lighthouse at the channel entrance to the bay, these streets numbered 1 through 8 connect the community to water activities, favorite views, and "Sacred Places" along the beach.

Opportunities

These streets are public gateways to the beach but currently they are not marked or celebrated. Three design alternatives were proposed for the street ends. Each is intended to celebrate and mark the important connection between the end of the street and the beach, creating a gateway between the village and beach. The designs are intended to fit within the context of the beach and reflect the scale of the neighborhood. The materials were selected to be compatible with the beach, water, street and surrounding neighborhood structures.

Proposed Design Recommendations

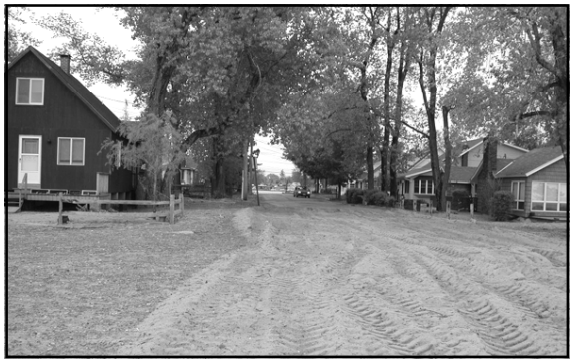
Scheme 1 - A pair of wood trellis structures are proposed to frame the entrance to the beach and to provide shade for benches located below the trellis. Wood fencing and posts line a wood plank ramp that provides handicap accessibility to the beach.

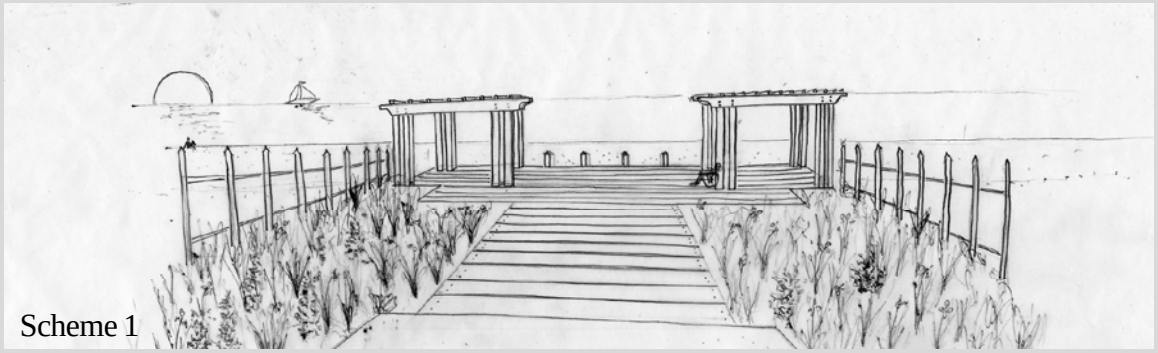
Scheme 2 – A simple boardwalk with railing traverses dunes no higher than 4 ft. Native grasses would be planted on the dunes to provide stability and prevent sand erosion.

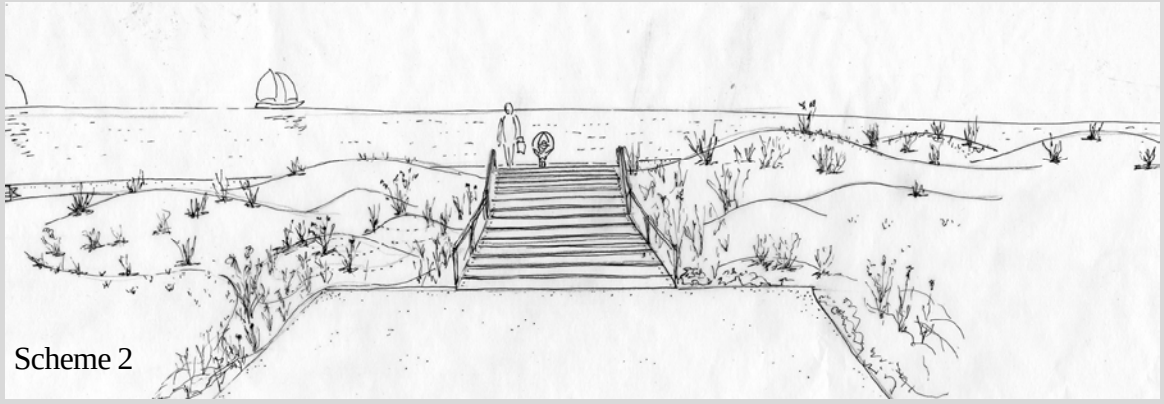
Scheme 3 – Columns made of local stone are set on each side of the street end with benches located at the side of each column. Lights on top of the columns illuminate the entrance at night.

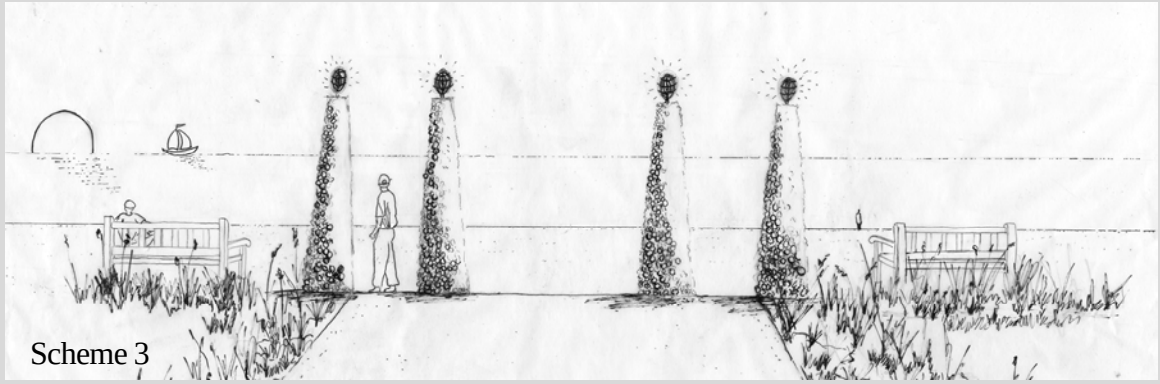
During the review sessions, residents expressed a strong preference for the second scheme.

Below and Right: Photos illustrate the street ends where the number streets meet the beach along Lake Ontario. Design studies suggest creating gateways at these locations as illustrated on the opposite page.









Left: Design studies illustrate three alternative gateway treatments at the end of the number streets.

Waterfront Park and Village Greenway

The Site

This proposal encompasses and connects the Sodus Point County Park, a pedestrian walk along Wickham Boulevard, the Village ball park, and the Greig Street business district.

Opportunities and Issues

This proposal provides public access to waterfront activities on the bay and links residential, recreation and commercial activities in the village through the development of a safe pedestrian corridor. The proposal includes improvements at the county park, the development of a safe pedestrian walkway, stabilization of the shoreline and improvements to the baseball field in the center of the Village.

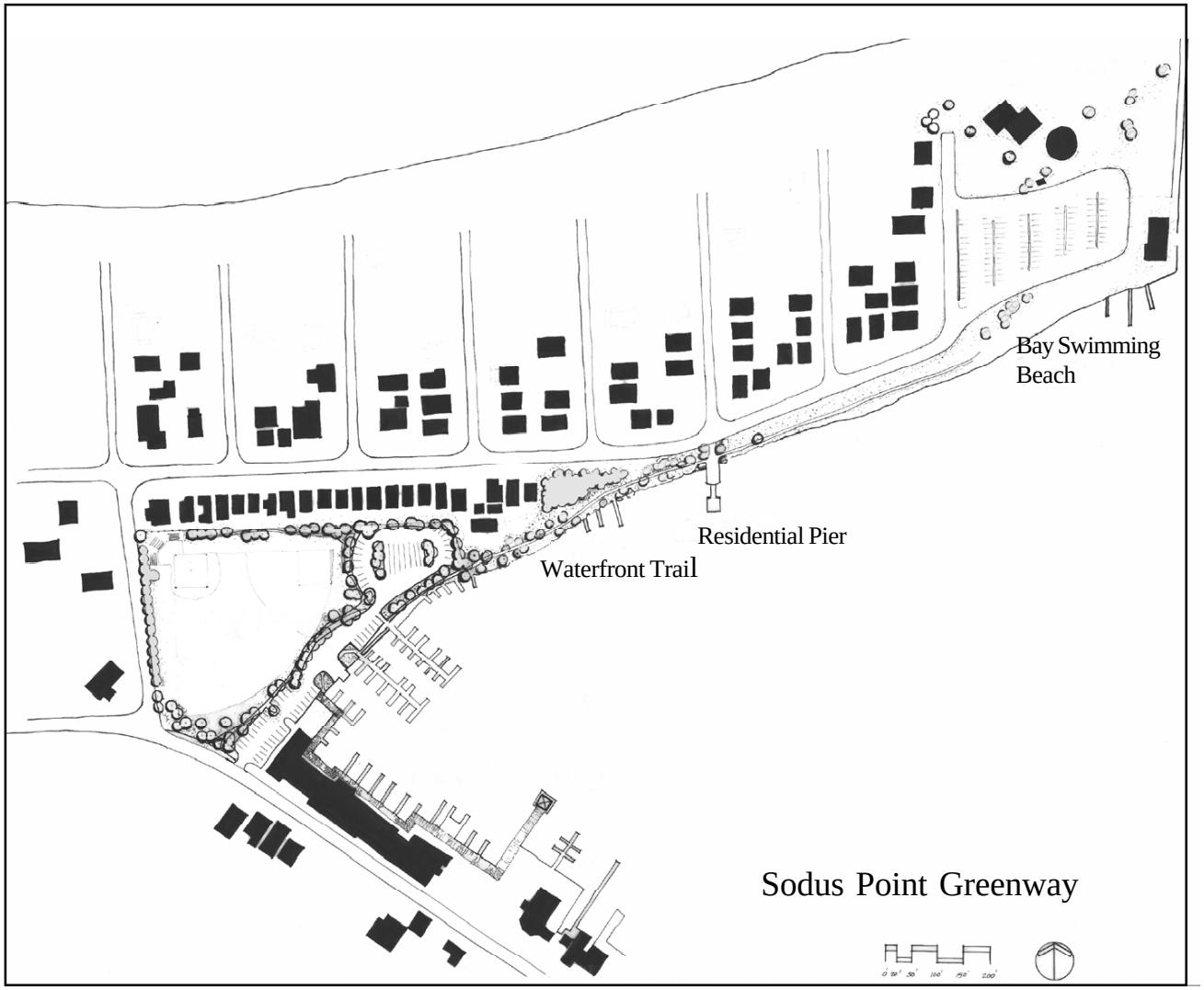
The greenway will be located on an existing public right of way; however, a short easement over private property near the Village ballfield will be required in order to complete the trail all the way to the village center. The greenway begins at the County Park connects to the Village ball park along its eastern edge and extends on to the Greig Street commercial district. The design proposal suggests the reorganization of parking around the ball field to create an improved pedestrian corridor, permit more efficient use of the site, improve access to docks and launch site and visually mark this civic center of the village. A public boardwalk is suggested along the rear of the Greig Street commercial buildings, from which private docks could extend. The extension of a small pier would allow for an information or commercial kiosk where boats with shallow draft might dock.

Proposed Design Recommendations

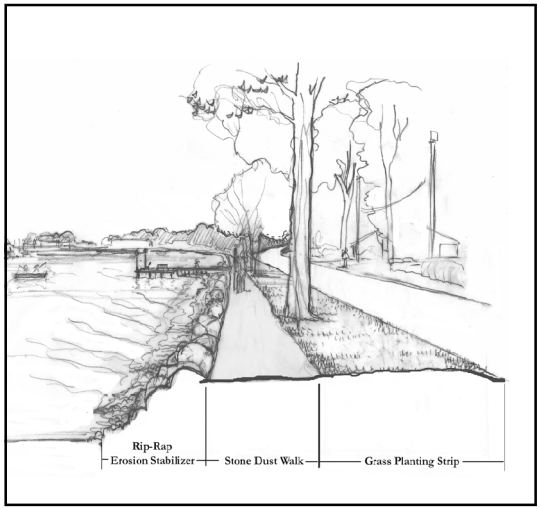
- Relocate and improve the bay swimming area.
- Construct a waterfront walkway from the County Park to Greig Street. The walkway includes a 5ft. wide stone dust trail along the west end of the bay that runs parallel to Wickham Blvd., along the east end of the ball park. A boardwalk extends from the walkway behind the Greig Street commercial buildings to a small public pier.
- Construct a rip rap edge along the bay side of the path.
- Plant trees and install residential scale fencing along the north side of the Sodus Point ballfield to delineate the private/ public edge and improve the character and quality of the open space for private residents and recreational participants.
- Reorganize car and boat trailer parking to make the most efficient use of the site,

Below: View looking east along Wickham Boulevard reveals existing erosion along the shore line. The drawing on opposite page illustrates the proposed Riprap stabilization.

Below: Schematic plan illustrates the relationships between the two parks, one on the lake front and the ballfield in the village center, and the pedestrian route that serves as a link between them.

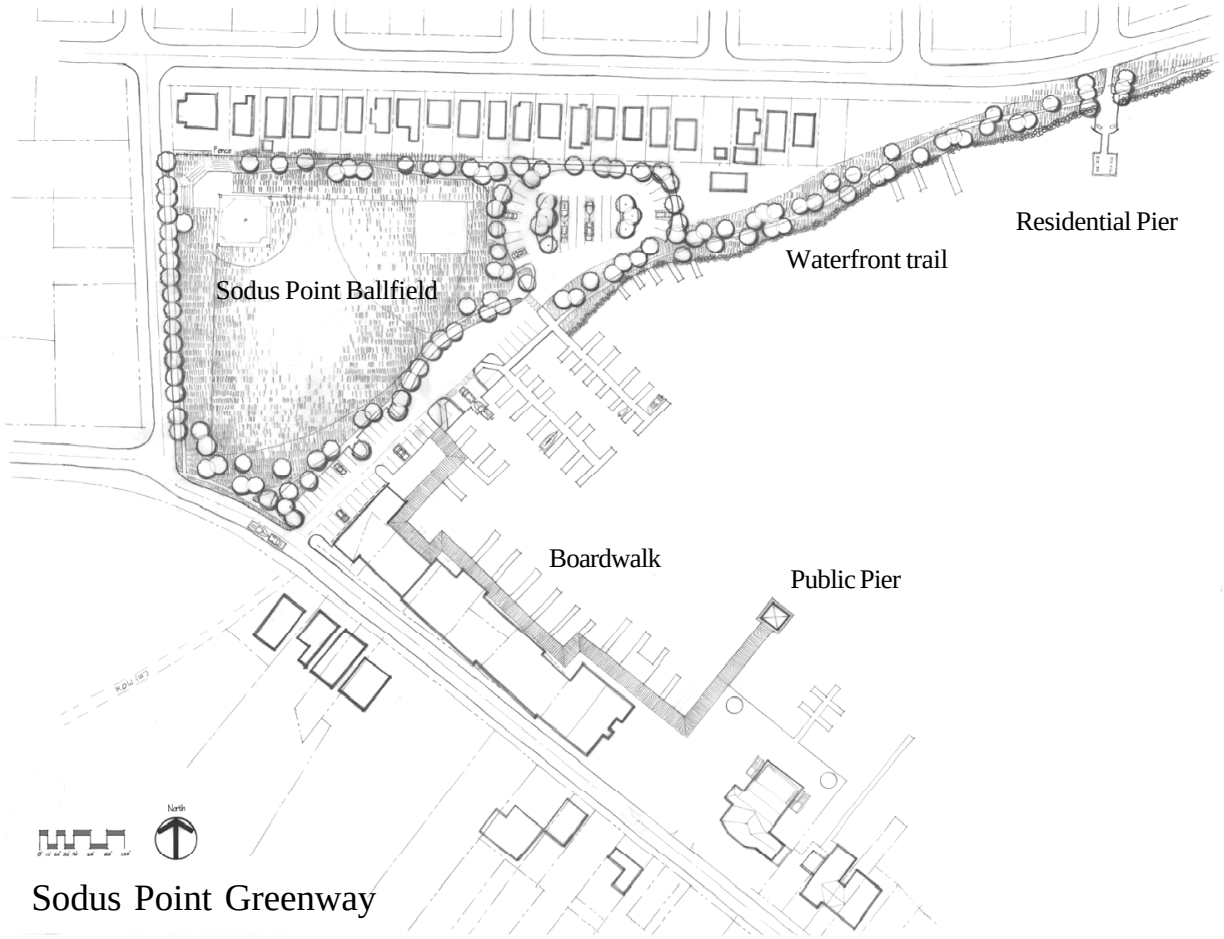


Below: Drawing illustrates proposed riprap stabilization of the shoreline and backfill to permit the development of a pedestrian walk.



Below: The existing ballfield in the center of the village is a popular recreation and gathering area. Reorganization of the parking around the field, the addition of pedestrian paths and vegetation will separate incompatible activities, increase privacy for surrounding residences and improve the pedestrian experience in the village center (see plan to right).

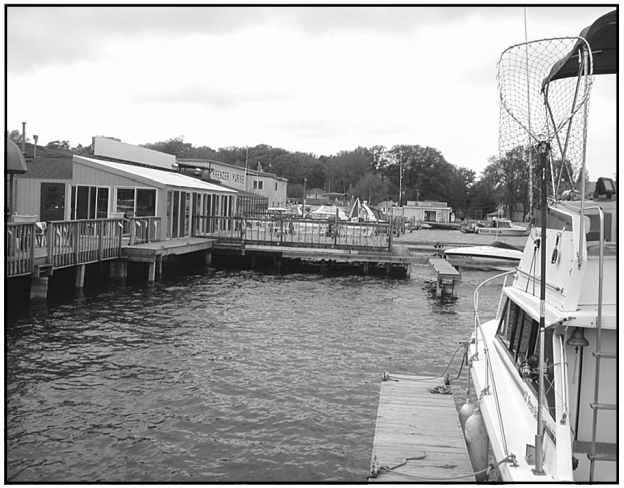
Right: Enlarged plan illustrates the pedestrian bay walk, reorganization of the parking and the extension of the greenway to a boardwalk behind the Greig Street commercial buildings. The boardwalk leads to a small public pier, that provides direct access to the commercial area for boaters on the Bay.



reduce pedestrian/vehicular conflicts and permit the greatest use of the ball field.

- Work with commercial businesses to develop an acceptable proposal for a waterfront boardwalk and pier.

The Park revitalization and Greenway would establish an important link in the Village Open Space Plan while supporting residential, recreation and commercial activities in the village center.



Public Pier

The value of a public pier came up many times during the vison planning workshops. During the design studies residents and students looked at several possible sites to locate such a facility. The Public Pier identified on the Greenway Plan provides access to the Village commercial district for boats with a shallow draught but will not serve as an arrival location for sailboats or large motor craft that require deep water.

It appears that a docking pier would need to be located on the south side of the point to have adequate water depth. South Ontario Street was considered for this purpose; however, adjacent properties and exisiting docks present constraints. While this might be a good location to dock the Lotus, without modifications to the surounding waterfront this site would not be able to accomodate a steady flow of visiting boats.

It appears that the village will need to purchase property to build a pier or negotiate with a private owner for shared use of a facility somewhare along the village's southern shore.

Left: Private docks along the rear of the Greig Street commercial buildings could be enlarged to create a pedestrian boardwalk that provides public open space along the watere edge.

Appendix

A. Resources

Agency/Organization	Resources Available
Wayne County Water Quality **(WQCC)** Coordinating Committee 315-946-4136 (phone and fax) www.lakeontario.net/swcd/	* Watershed Planning * Pollution Cleanup Assist. * Water Quality Public Education * Water Quality Clearinghouse * Public Incentive Grants
Wayne County Soil & Water Conservation District (**SWCD**) Robert Williams, Manager 10 Leach Road Lyons, NY 14489 315-946-4136 (phone and fax) www.lakeontario.net/swcd/	* Mechanical Aquatic Plant Harvesting * Water Quality Monitoring & Research * Land Conservation * Public Education * Special Environmental Projects
USDA – Farm Service Agency & Natural Resources Conservation Service 10 Leach Road Lyons, NY 14489 315-946-9912 315-946-5106 (fax)	* Agricultural Conservation Practices * Conservation Reserve Program * Wetland Reserve Program * Environmental Quality Incentives Program
Wayne County Planning Department Sharon Lilla, Director 9 Pearl Street Lyons, NY 14489 315-946-5919 315-946-7657 (fax) slilla@co.wayne.ny.us	*Federal and State grant preparation *Grant administration *GIS mapping *Agribusiness loan program *Recreational Trails Planning and Development *General land use planning assistance

Save our Sodus
P.O. Box 424
Alton, NY 14413
www.saveoursodus.org

*Develop, support, fund and implement activities, educational programs, initiatives and events to improve the quality of the water in Sodus Bay

Great Sodus Bay Association
P.O. Box 137
Sodus Point, NY 14555-0137
315-483-6391
www.greatsodusbay.com

*Promotion of services, businesses, activities and events on Sodus Bay

International Freshwater Resource Center
8241 Sentell Street
P.O. Box 250
Sodus Point, NY 14555-0137
315-483-4125
www.lakeontario.net/ifrc/
ifrc@lakeontario.net

*Promotes comprehensive understanding and appreciation of our freshwater resources

Sodus Bay Historical Society
P.O. Box 94
Sodus Point, NY 14555-0137
315-483-4936
sodusbay@ix.netcom.com

*Preservation of historical maritime resources, historical education, community events and historical exhibits at the Old Sodus Point Lighthouse Maritime Museum

Finger Lakes – Lake Ontario Watershed Protection Alliance
309 Lake Street
Penn Yan, NY 14527
315-536-5188
315-536-7488 (fax)
wrb@eznet.net
www.fllowpa.org

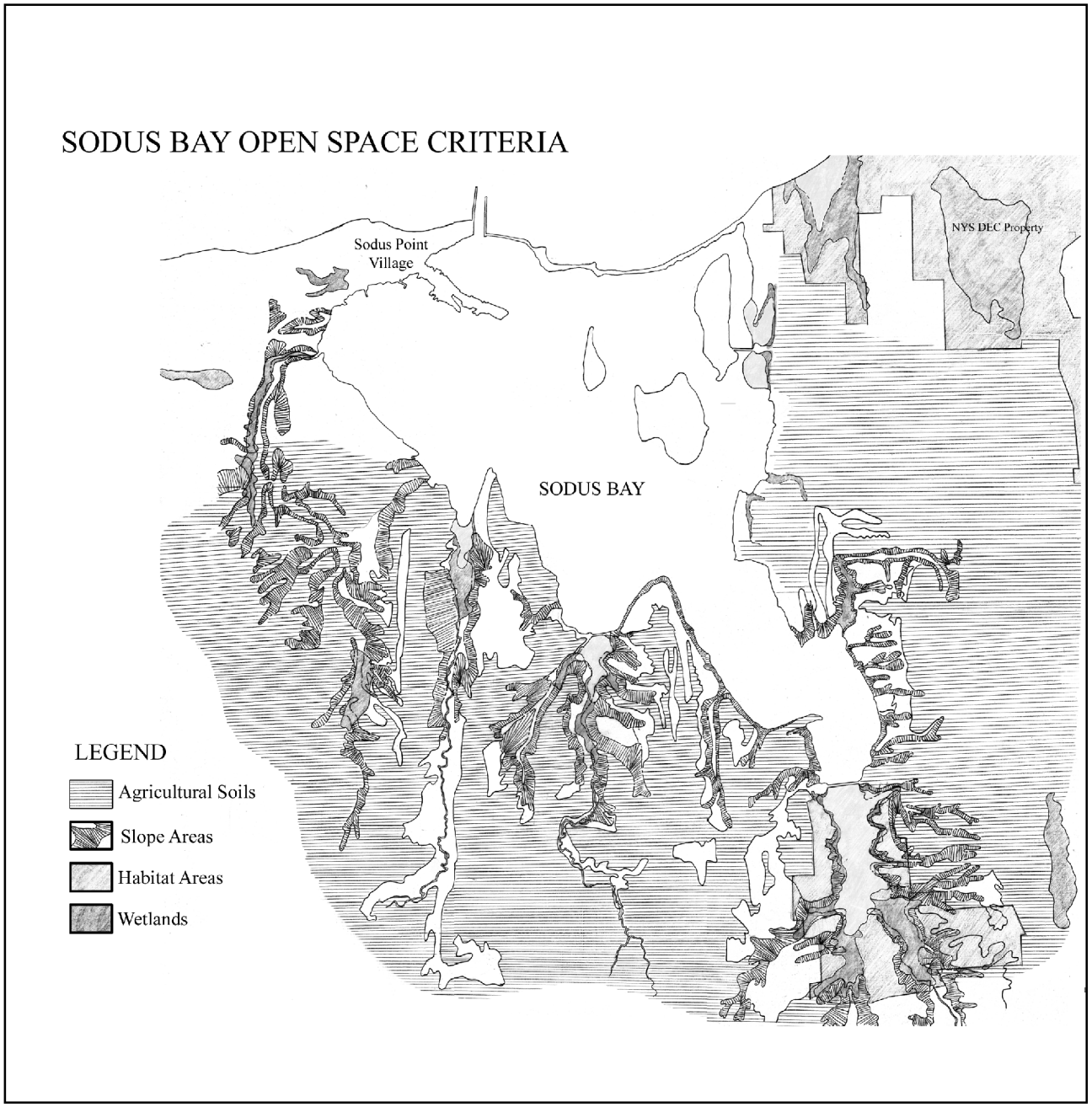
*Protect and enhance water resources by sharing information and data; collaborating on watershed management programs and emphasizing a holistic, ecosystem approach to water quality

State Agencies

NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation
John C. Clancy, Regional Director
Finger Lakes Region
P.O. Box 1055
2221 Taughannock Park Road
Trumansburg, NY 14886-1055
607-387-7041
607-387-3390 (fax)
www.nysparks.state.ny.us

NYS Department of Environmental Conservation
John T. Hicks, Regional Director
6274 East Avon-Lima Road
Avon, NY 14414-9519
585-226-2466
585-226-9485 (fax)
www.dec.state.ny.us

NYS Department of State
Division of Coastal Resources
41 State Street
Albany, NY 12231-0001
518-474-6000
518-473-2464 (fax)
www.dos.state.ny.us/cstl/cstlwww.html



B. Environmental Criteria