

REDEVELOPMENT SITES

Several areas are targeted for transformative future land use changes. These redevelopment spaces build upon the guiding principles of the Community Master Plan by helping to contain outward development; curtailing the loss of natural areas; providing more housing opportunities and aiding job growth. Past projects in Marquette, notably Founders Landing, have shown the transformative nature of redevelopment projects can have on a community to meet community needs and tax base for community services. However, it is important to ensure redevelopment projects align with the community's vision and values.

In June of 2023, a series of redevelopment visioning sessions were held regarding key redevelopment sites in Marquette. The sites were preselected by the City of Marquette's Community Development Department and the Master Plan Consultant Team. Participants at the workshop were asked to use colored wooden blocks that corresponded to specific land uses to plan a future redevelopment concept for each site. The prime areas for a transformative redevelopment are the South Front Street Corridor, West Washington Street Corridor, North Lakeshore Boulevard, the 19-acre Tadych's Food/O'Dovero Drive site area, and former Marquette Mall. Below is a summary of the key changes envisioned for these areas of the community.

South Front Street Corridor

This stretch of highway is the first impression of Marquette for people coming into town from the south. Today's one-story buildings with a wide variety of commercial and industrial uses are envisioned over time to be replaced with multi-story buildings. These buildings should be shaped, oriented, and positioned in a manner that will maintain broad lake views, especially at the ends of the east/west streets. In exchange for securing substantial open views of Lake Superior, zoning incentives may be given to property owners.

This area will have a wide variety of commercial, social, and civic uses incorporated in multi-story buildings interspersed with landscaped view corridors oriented towards the lake. Buildings are envisioned to be placed close to the public sidewalks on both sides of South Front Street. Off-street parking will be relegated to the rear or side of buildings. Coordinated vehicle access is to come from existing, adjacent parallel streets or newly constructed alleys. Crosswalks are to be marked at every street intersection and bike lanes boldly painted on the highway. As an alternative to bike lanes, a grade separated multi-use path on the west side of the highway can be constructed, provided the highway is reduced to three lanes or additional right-of-way width can be secured. These physical changes will communicate to drivers Marquette is a pedestrian and bike friendly town.

A skybridge is envisioned to be constructed over the highway from Craig Street extended to the waterfront. This bridge will provide universal, unimpeded travel for pedestrians to Lake Superior from the historic South Marquette neighborhood and serve as gateway structure for the community. Green infrastructure and street trees will add beauty to the corridor while also helping to quiet and calm the traffic noise. If a future traffic study demonstrates the highway can be reduced from five to three lanes, a richly landscaped boulevard would be appropriate for this "Welcome to Marquette" entryway.



Image source: The Marquette Beautification & Restoration Committee

West Washington Street Corridor

West Washington Street is a major east/west corridor that serves as a key access route to the central business district. As such, it offers ample opportunity to extend commercial and mixed-use development beyond the central business district. The mix of uses may happen horizontally with a combination of single-use building types or with the development of multi-story, mixed-use buildings. Density and intensity of developments generally increase as one approaches the central business district.

A broad variety of uses are appropriate and include the maintenance of existing parks and the development of multi-story residential buildings and commercial stores. Light industrial uses are also envisioned to be part of the mix of uses west of the hospital along West Washington Street and West Baraga Avenue. Building intensity and residential density is envisioned to be moderate with higher intensities near downtown and at street intersections

to help anchor the corners. High intensity residential, office, hotels, and commercial services are also planned near the 222-bed regional medical center. Available housing near the hospital will assist with the recruitment of health care professionals while also helping to balance the vicinity's job/housing ratio, thereby lessening the amount of motor vehicle traffic generated by the medical center's large employment base.

West Washington Street future reconstruction projects will exemplify the standards for a complete street with ample provisions for transit, walking, and bicycling. The character of the street will be a major determinant of the types of land use that will develop along the corridor. An aggressive five-lane street may be fine for auto-centric commercial uses, but to broaden the land use types, especially for residential uses, the street will need to be rebuilt with measures to limit vehicle speeds and provide attributes that are important to pedestrians and cyclists such as sidewalks, protected bike lanes, and landscaping. To ensure carrying capacity of the street is maximized while making walking and bicycling safer, the design speed for the street should be set at 30 miles per hour. A roundabout envisioned at McClellan Avenue will also aid with traffic flow along this busy corridor. West Baraga Avenue is intended to be extended westerly to intersect with West Washington Street just east of Meeske Avenue. Properties with frontage on both West Washington Street and West Baraga shall access off-street parking from West Baraga Avenue. By prohibiting vehicle access directly from West Washington Street, turning conflicts will be reduced and the carrying capacity of the primary street will be boosted.

Green infrastructure along the corridor is sought and can be accomplished when oversized parking lots are shrunk, making space for trees, rain gardens, and infiltration beds. A formal rows of canopy trees is envisioned along both sides West Washington Street. The trees will add beauty to the street while providing shade and offering some protection for pedestrians. The trees will also help to sequester carbon emitted by internal combustion engines. If a future traffic study indicates a road diet is practical, then a landscape boulevard would be appropriate and can be accomplished within the existing right-of-way by eliminating and narrowing travel lanes. Transit investments in the corridor will also help to move the community towards a more efficient form of travel and further reduce the need for parking.



Images source: Congress for the New Urbanism (top), LRK Architects (bottom)

North Lakeshore Boulevard

This prized area of Marquette is a popular destination for people walking, biking, and driving along the Lake Superior shoreline. The shoreline multi-use paved trail paralleling the street is popular with residents and visitors, setting the tone for this area to be pedestrian oriented. The waterfront side of Lakeshore Boulevard is primarily city parkland with few private residences. Over time, as residential properties come up for sale, they may be considered for purchase and converted for public recreational lands.



There will be a cost for the City of Marquette to purchase the property and to take tax generating properties off the tax roll; however, it should be acknowledged that the public waterfront contributes indirectly to the desirability and value of properties in the vicinity and community at large, thereby adding to the overall tax base for the community.

The west side of North Lakeshore Boulevard includes various shops and services in an eclectic grouping of buildings. The scale and local character of these existing buildings provides a template for new development that will likely occur because of the corridor's desirable location. Buildings one to two stories are appropriate south of Fair Street. Regulations should be developed so building siting and orientation minimizes the loss of lake views.

Future developments on the west side of North Lakeshore Boulevard will primarily be residential with a mix of single-family detached dwellings to moderately dense attached dwellings. Mixed-use buildings and smaller commercial shops are also envisioned primarily south of Fair Avenue and north of Wright Street. The large undeveloped parcels north of Fair Street may allow moderately sized two-story residential or mixed-use buildings. Three-story buildings may be allowed provided broad lake views are dedicated and protected for the neighborhood to the west. To improve access from the residential area west of Presque Isle Avenue between Wright Street and Hawley Street, new east/west streets are envisioned to break up the super block to improve circulation and provide more direct, shorter access to the waterfront.

North Lakeshore Boulevard running near the shoreline of Lake Superior is a prime candidate for addressing stormwater with green infrastructure. Currently, a coastal restoration project for the recently relocated street is underway with the final stage starting soon. The native plantings of trees, shrubs, and dune grass will add beauty to the coastline and help the area become more resilient to the changing lake levels and the predicted increase in the severity of storms. To keep this corridor scenic and quiet from traffic noise, traffic calming measures should be incorporated and any street section reconstruction projects should maintain travel speeds of 25 miles per hour or less. The section of North Lakeshore Boulevard north of Pine Street has sufficient space to create a true boulevard with native plantings in the median.

Tadych's Food/O'Dovero Drive Site Area

Located on the south side US-41/M-28 along the west side of McClellan Avenue is Tadych's Grocery and a disconnected grouping of several smaller commercial buildings. The area's dominant feature is the large, underused parking lot. With the infrastructure already in place and a regional trail just steps away, this private sprawling development area is a solid candidate for a walkable, compact mixed-use center.

The City is encouraged to explore the concept of creating a mixed-use center with the private property owners. Creating a mixed-use district or permitting through a planned unit development process are two options for advancing a mixed use, village center form of development. The grocery store can serve as an anchor for a mixed-use development with moderate density housing occurring above the commercial shops or in apartments and townhomes. The general layout of the area will incorporate several minor streets to form urban blocks much like one would find in the historic core of Marquette.

These new streets will be fronted with two to three-story buildings and parking will be placed internally behind buildings on each block. A community square or village green would be the central focus of the mixed-use center surrounded by shops, services, and restaurants. A heavily landscaped buffer is envisioned to be planted on the northern section of the property to help soften the noise and view of the highway. To help connect this part of town with the neighborhoods north of the highway, reconstructing the McClellan Street intersection with US41/M28 is sought with an urban type of intersection. A pedestrian tunnel under the highway will help to provide a safe connection to the Iron Ore Heritage Trail and the businesses and neighborhoods to the north.



Image source: Pinterest (Example of multiple, mixed-use buildings lining small urban blocks).

Former Marquette Mall

The area surrounding the former Marquette Mall is the first impression for people arriving from the west along US-41/M-28 at the Wilson Street intersection. The site was home to a regional shopping mall which has now been mostly demolished aside from two buildings occupied with a thrift store and a fast-food restaurant. Recently, a free-standing building has been constructed housing an auto parts store. Businesses in this area of the city have developed independently and have poor connectivity making walking, biking, and driving between them challenging. The dominant feature remaining on this private site is the expansive parking lot fronting the highway with posted speeds of 45 mph.



The former mall area is adjacent to residential neighborhoods to the west and south. A hotel sits to the east and north, and across the highway to the north is a strip of commercial businesses that abuts against a residential neighborhood. Although these businesses and homes are just across the highway, there are no feasible or safe ways to cross the highway on foot or bicycle. The residential streets to the south and west do not connect. The site mostly sits isolated from the rest of the community.

Although the area has challenges for redevelopment, the high exposure along the highway and prime location within a few miles of thousands of jobs makes this site attractive for a mix of commercial and residential uses. To take advantage of the highway exposure, commercial uses are most appropriate next to the highway. The commercial buildings will also offer some noise protection for more noise sensitive uses such as residential. Moderate to high density housing is envisioned to sit further back from the highway and will front on several minor streets forming blocks and graced with street trees. These streets are intended to be connected to Wilson Street on the east and Brookton Road to the west. Parking is envisioned to be set behind the buildings internally on the newly formed blocks. Taller buildings with higher residential densities are appropriate for this area. The dwellings on the upper floors will garner Lake Superior views. A town green in the center of the redevelopment will help to provide a sense of community. A transit stop and a multi-use path connection to the Iron Ore Heritage Trail will help to integrate the mixed-use center with the rest of Marquette. Mixed-use zoning or a Planned Unit Development are two possible processes to advance these ideas if the property owners are interested in pursuing such a project.

Image source: Dover, Kohl and Partners for Northeast El Paso