

# 5. COUNTRY LOTS NEIGHBORHOOD (C5)

ADOPTED APRIL 2004

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## 5.1

### PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND PLANNING PROCESS

#### Public Meeting #1

Public Input/Kick-off Meeting – On February 24, 2003 a Public Input Session was held at Gifford School to explain the planning process to neighborhood residents and to gather public input regarding issues and opportunities within the neighborhood. The results of the Village-wide household survey were presented as well as preliminary issues that the project management team identified.

#### Workgroup Meetings

Neighborhood resident volunteers, Village Board members and Village Plan Commission members formed the Neighborhood Workgroup. The workgroup discussed many issues that impact the neighborhood. Issues such as the sewer service boundary, land uses and density and conservation concepts were discussed. All workgroup meetings were

open to the public. Time was allotted at the end of each workgroup meeting for non-workgroup “observers” to voice comments, questions and concerns.

#### Public Meeting #2

Open House – On June 18, 2003 the first Open House was held at the Caledonia/Mt. Pleasant Joint Park Building. Preliminary neighborhood issues that had been discussed in the workgroup meetings were illustrated on display boards, as well as a variety of other pertinent information such as the Village Land Use Plan and the results of the Household Survey. The primary purpose of the Open House was to conduct a Design Preference Survey where residents were asked to rate various images. After the images were rated, the audience was asked to discuss the pros and cons of each image.

#### Public Meeting #3

Open House – On December 1, 2003, the second Open House was held at the Caledonia/Mt. Pleasant Joint Park Building. At this open house, the plan concepts were discussed. In addition, the results of the design preference survey were tabulated and presented.

#### Public Meeting #4

Village Committee Meeting – On March 15, 2004, a meeting was held at the Franksville/Mt. Pleasant Joint Parks Building to update the various Village Committees and Commissions and solicit feedback on the draft plan. The following groups were invited to attend and sent a copy of the draft plan: Planning Commission, Village Board, Park Commission and Director, Caledonia #1 Sanitary District, C5 Workgroup, Police Chief,

Fire Chief, Highway Superintendent, and the Village Administrator.

### **Public Meeting #5**

Public Hearing – On March 31, 2004 a public hearing was held at the Caledonia Eastside Community Center before the Village Board and Plan Commission.

### **C5 Neighborhood Workgroup Members**

#### *Village Officials*

Susan Greenfield - Former Town Chairperson  
Howard Stacey - Village Trustee  
Linda Mielke - Plan Commission Chairperson  
William Sasse - Plan Commission Member  
Dan Grosse - Plan Commission Member  
Jim Morrill - Plan Commission Member  
Raymond Olley - Plan Commission Member  
Nick Orno - Plan Commission Member  
Jennifer Pennings - Plan Commission Member

#### *Neighborhood Residents*

Jennifer Berg - Neighborhood Resident  
Judy Grove - Neighborhood Resident  
Bill Halberstadt - Neighborhood Resident  
Frank Haney - Neighborhood Resident  
Chuck Johnson - Neighborhood Resident  
Charles Kind - Neighborhood Resident  
Peter A. Martin - Neighborhood Resident  
Rich Orcholski - Neighborhood Resident  
Sheron Rohner - Neighborhood Resident  
Laura Schmidt - Neighborhood Resident  
Jon C. Soderberg - Neighborhood Resident

#### *Village & County Staff*

Julie Anderson - Racine County Planning  
Fred Haerter - Village of Caledonia Engineer  
Beth Paul-Soch - Village Parks Director

#### *Resource People*

Nancy Anderson - SEWRPC

## 5.2 NEIGHBORHOOD ISSUES

The Country Lots (C5) neighborhood is a very unique area of the Village. The area includes the entire “Country Lots” area as designated on the Village’s adopted Land Use Plan and the Caddy Vista Subdivision area. This area is a mix of uses including horse farms, other agricultural uses and single-family residential homes. This diversity and rural atmosphere is highly valued within the Village as a whole. The horse farms and associated horse trails throughout this area make it a unique niche in the Village as well as the region. It is believed that the environmental areas and rural feeling in this neighborhood provide a significant amenity and contribute to the value of the Village. The desire to preserve the character of this area and emphasize the “horse-farming community” image was highly valued in the neighborhood (Figure 5-1).

Throughout the neighborhood planning process, several specific issues have been identified that pose opportunities and challenges for the neighborhood’s future. These issues have been categorized and are described below.

### Traffic and Circulation

#### Major Arterial Roadways

Four major arterials pass through this neighborhood:

1. Seven Mile Road faces increased development pressure due to its direct connection from Hwy. 32 to Interstate 94. Residents have identified traffic speed and volume on Seven Mile Road as a concern for the area.

2. Six Mile Road also faces significant pressure as it is the main east-west route from the most populated area on the east side of the Village to Interstate 94. Traffic speed and volume on Six Mile Road were the main concerns among residents.

3. Five Mile and Four Mile Roads also face some degree of development pressure, although these arterials provide only partial connection between the east and west sides of the Village.

4. State Highway 38 (STH 38), the western border of the C5 neighborhood, is the major north/south road through the neighborhood. The State of Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WISDOT) has plans to study the alignment and configuration of this Highway. At the time of this neighborhood planning process, WISDOT had not yet begun this study. Several intersections along Hwy 38 have been identified as concerns by residents in this neighborhood and should be studied as part of the State’s planning process. The intersections of greatest concern include Six Mile, Five Mile, and Four Mile Roads as they intersect STH 38.



Figure 5-1. In the design preference survey, highly landscaped streets with informal walking paths (above) were preferred over streets with few pedestrian amenities and limited landscaping (below).



### *Character of Rural Roads*

The vistas along major arterial roads and local streets in the C5 neighborhood are generally rural. Residents in this neighborhood expressed strong support for preservation of the vistas and rural character of the road network. Residents expressed concern regarding development abutting the major arterial which would block or detract from the rural vistas. As WISDOT proceeds with planning for State Highway 38, the rural character of the current roadway alignment should be taken into account and preserved. STH 38 was identified as one of the most scenic roads in the W1, C4, and C5 neighborhoods.

### **Transportation and Environmental Issues**

As development occurs in this area, additional local road networks will be necessary for access to new developments. A group of residents in this neighborhood and the adjoining neighborhood to the east (C3) expressed a desire to link the environmental corridors and isolated natural resource area via greenways. The residents felt that penetrating these proposed greenways with roads would detract from the rural character of the area. The residents termed this approach the “environmental linkage policy”.

### *Importance and Value of Path and Trail Systems*

This neighborhood has a wealth of equestrian activity and values the existing and proposed trail systems (Appendix H). The trails are publicly and privately held and contribute significantly to the character of this area. The Caledonia Conservancy has purchased land in the Village which is used for public trails. Local landowners have also developed a private trail system which is a valued asset in the community.

### **Environmental**

#### *Root River Corridor*

This neighborhood is uniquely significant in its environmental aspects because it is the end of the Root River watershed. The Root River, 11 drainage ways and its surrounding environmental corridors are the major environmental feature within this neighborhood. All actions in this neighborhood will directly and immediately affect the quality and quantity of water in this system. Providing enhanced storm water management plans and construction site erosion control plans will be important considerations as this neighborhood continues to grow. A detailed environmental assessment is included in Appendix EE of this report.

#### *Existing Parkland and Trail System*

There are eleven park and open space sites within the C5 neighborhood. The four publicly owned parks include: Gorney Park (40 acres owned by the Village of Caledonia supporting active and passive recreational activities); Linwood Park owned by the Village of Caledonia (18 acres providing frontage and access to the Root River and space for informal group activities) and Renak-Polak Maple-Beech Woods (107 acres owned by the University of Wisconsin), the City of Racine Dog Park off of STH 38, a 38-acre parcel owned by Milwaukee County as part of the Root River Parkway, and several parcels, encompassing 361 acres, within the Root River Parkway owned by Racine County. The five privately owned parks include: the Greater Racine Kennel Club (20 acres off of Six Mile Road) and four sites owned by the Caledonia conservancy that stretch along the abandoned North Shore rail line. The Conservancy sites include the New Marshal Right of Way, the Schumann Right of Way, the Rohner Right of Way and the

Ehrlich Right of Way. A detailed description of these parks can be found in Appendix H. The existing and proposed trail systems in this neighborhood are a valuable part of the neighborhood. These trails can also provide means to connect isolated natural areas in order to protect transportation corridors for a diversity of wildlife.

*Proposed Parkland and Trail Systems*

The Village Park and Open Space Plan does not specify the need for additional active parks in this neighborhood. The plan does recommend the acquisition of additional open space lands along the Root River by Racine County and that a hiking and biking trail be established within the Root River Parkway. This trail would connect the Root River Recreation area in Milwaukee County and the proposed Pike Creek trail in Mt. Pleasant. Figure 5-2 illustrates the preference of open space to formal parkland.

*Environmental Corridors*

This neighborhood supports considerable land classified as Primary Environmental Corridor as designated by SEWRPC (Appendix U). These lands primarily follow the Root River. These isolated natural areas are significant and contribute to the quality of the area.

*Isolated Natural Resource Areas*

SEWRPC has identified sixteen isolated natural resource areas in the C5 neighborhood (Appendix U). SEWRPC recommends these areas be protected through the implementation of proper zoning.

*Natural Areas and Critical Species Habitat*

SEWRPC has identified seven natural areas and three areas of critical species habitat within the C5 neighborhood study area. A

detailed description of the areas as well as SEWRPC's recommendations is contained in Appendix FF.

The isolated natural resource areas and critical species habitats are significant and contribute to the quality of the area. Due to the fragmented nature of these areas, they are highly susceptible to disturbances and could result in irrevocable loss of vital natural community structures and functions and ultimately leading to the loss of the area's natural resource value. Environmental continuity can be achieved through environmental linkages, trail systems and the "environmental linkage policy" mentioned earlier.



Figure 5-2. In the design preference survey, less formal open spaces (above) were preferred over more formal park areas (below).



## Visual Character

### *Scenic Views and Rural Character*

As discussed previously, scenic views and the rural character of this neighborhood were identified as very important to the residents. The photographs in Figure 5-3 represent the character of the rural roadways within the neighborhood.

### *Historic Resources*

Several sites within this neighborhood have been identified as potentially historic structures. Identification of these structures is the result of a preliminary inventory of historic buildings and structures in Caledonia built before 1900. The list is not necessarily inclusive of the historic sites in the Village (Figure 5-4 and Appendix C). The list includes only residential properties. Civic buildings, commercial buildings and other tax exempt properties such as churches and cemeteries are not included on this preliminary list. Buildings that have been identified by the workgroup include the Old Town Hall and Wilson School. Other significant structures should be researched and added to the map in the Appendix. These structures are in the process of being field verified by the Village's Historical Society.

## Social and Economic

### *Sanitary Sewer Service Area Boundary*

SEWRPC is the regional water quality management agency for this area. The Sewer Service Area Boundary is established by SEWRPC for a twenty year horizon. The boundary establishes the area in which sewer service can be provided to residents. The existing Sewer Service Boundary was established in 1986. As the twenty year time horizon is approaching, SEWRPC has recommended refinements to the sanitary sewer service area as part of the planning process. The C5, Rural and C3 workgroups discussed these changes. The results of these discussions are detailed in the "Recommendation and Implementation Strategy" Section 3.4 of this report.

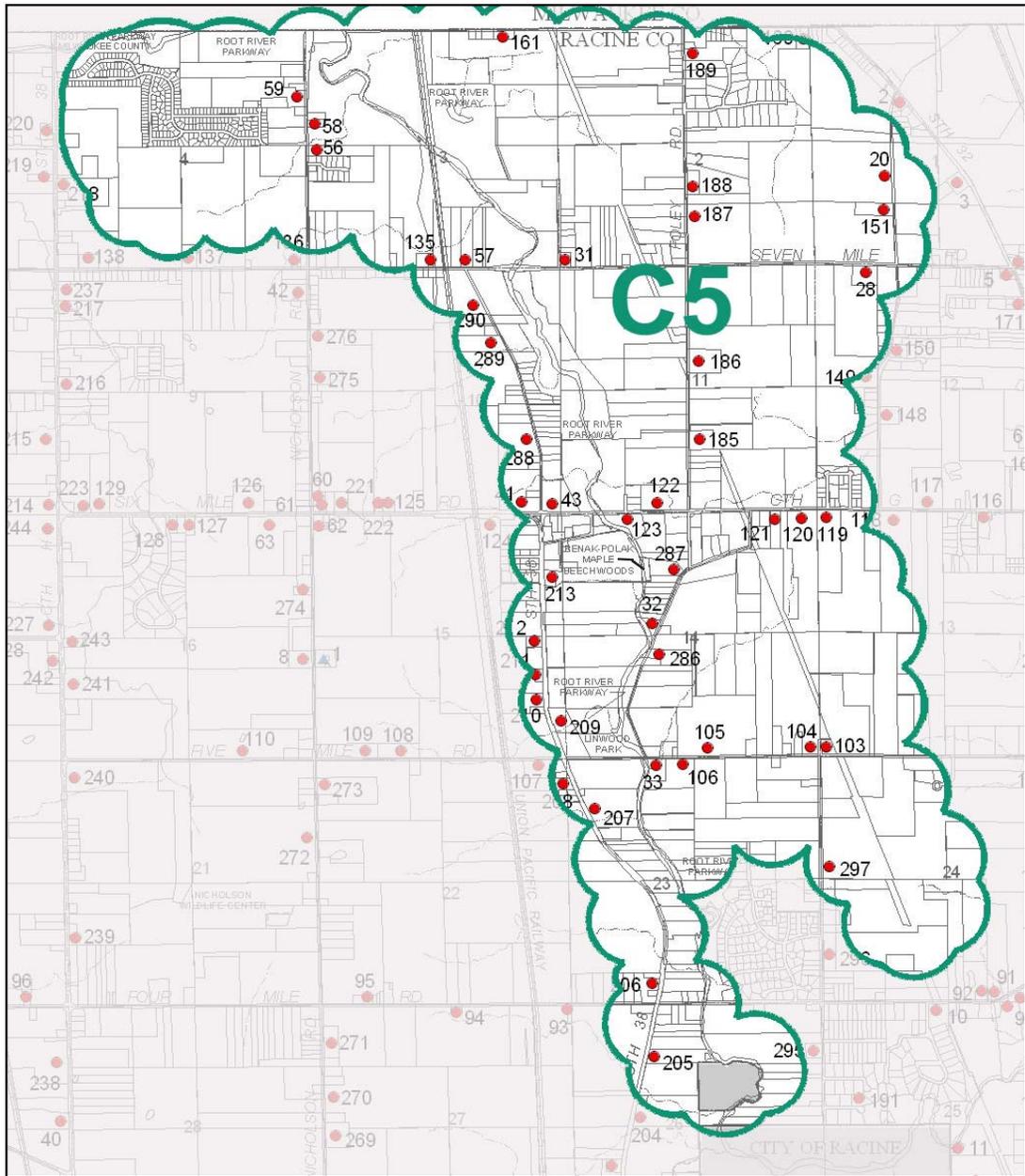
### *Existing Land Use*

Figures 5-5 and 5-6 illustrate the existing land uses in the C5 neighborhood. Forty five percent of the neighborhood remains agricultural.

Figure 5-7 represents an approximation of the number of additional homes that could be accommodated in the C5 area. This analysis indicated that there could be an additional maximum build out of 463 homes in the unsewered area. It is important to note that the maximum build out scenario may be unlikely due to existing land owners who are committed to the preservation of large tracts of land. This neighborhood is home to a number of horse farms, a unique niche in the real estate market of the region. Circumstances may arise which may alter the current movement of private land conservation in this area. Thus, the maximum build out scenario was calculated in order to understand the potential growth in this neighborhood.



Figure 5-3. Character of the rural roads in the Village of Caledonia.



**LEGEND**

- ▲ NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE
- STATE OR LOCAL HISTORIC SITE
- IDENTIFIED HISTORIC SITE WHICH HAS BEEN DEMOLISHED
- 10 REFERENCE NUMBER (SEE TABLE II-11)

Source: U.S. Department of the Interior, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Caledonia Historical Society, and SEWRPC.

Figure 5-4. Known and Potential Significant Historic Sites in the C5 Neighborhood, 2002. Note: Significance of all sites should be field verified.

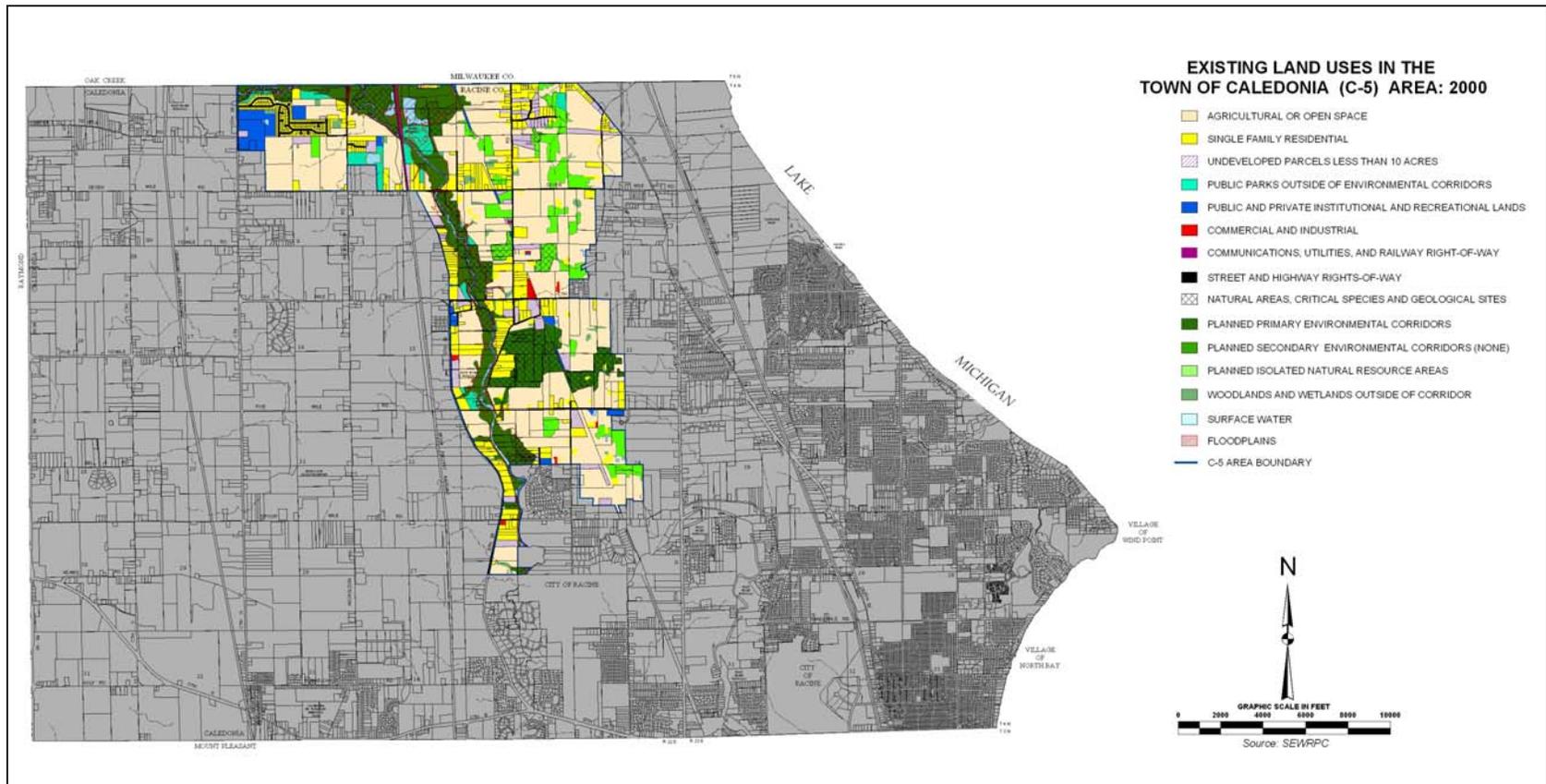


Figure 5-5. Existing Land Uses in the C5 Neighborhood.

Land Use Category	Acres	Percent
Agricultural .....	2,077	45.0
Single-Family Residential <sup>a</sup> .....	861	18.6
Environmentally Sensitive Lands:		
Primary Environmental Corridor .....	865	18.7
Isolated Natural Resource Area .....	306	6.6
Woodlands and Wetlands Outside Corridors .....	52	1.2
Surface Water .....	54	1.2
Public Parks <sup>b</sup> .....	113	2.4
Subtotal of Environmentally Sensitive Lands	1,390	30.1
Public and Private Institutional .....	24	0.5
Private Recreational <sup>c</sup>	85	1.8
Commercial and Industrial .....	15	0.3
Street, Highway, and Railroad Rights-of-Way .....	165	3.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,617</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Note: There are 619 acres of floodplain in the C-5 area; 478 acres within natural areas; and 32 acres within critical species habitat sites.

<sup>a</sup>Includes existing vacant lots less than 10 acres.

<sup>b</sup>Includes public park lands located outside primary environmental corridors.

<sup>c</sup>Includes the trail corridor within the former North Shore railroad right-of-way, which is now owned by the Caledonia Conservancy, and Jellystone Park.

Source: SEWRPC.

Figure 5-6. Existing Land Uses in the C5 Area of the Village of Caledonia.

**APPROXIMATE NUMBER OF ADDITIONAL HOMES  
THAT COULD BE ACCOMMODATED IN THE CALEDONIA C5 AREA  
("BUILD-OUT" ANALYSIS)**

Location	Number of Existing Homes (in 2000)	Approximate Number of Additional Homes	Total
Section 4 (Within planned sewer service area)	278 <sup>a</sup>	254 <sup>b</sup>	532
Remainder of C5 Area (Outside planned sewer service area)	238	463 <sup>c</sup>	701
Total	516	717	1,233

<sup>a</sup> Includes 267 homes in the Caddy Vista subdivision.

<sup>b</sup> Based on a development density of 0.75 homes per acre for new land divisions within the planned sewer service area.

<sup>c</sup> Based on a development density of one home per five acres for new land divisions outside the planned sewer service area, plus the development of one home on each of 66 existing vacant parcels less than 10 acres.

Source: SEWRPC.

Figure 5-7. Approximate Number of Additional Homes That Could Be Accommodated in the Caledonia C5 Area ("Build

*Existing Zoning*

The Village of Caledonia is under the jurisdiction of the Racine County general zoning and shoreland/floodplain zoning ordinance. The general zoning provisions of the County zoning ordinance are jointly administered by Racine County and the Village.

The existing zoning in the Country Lots (C5) neighborhood generally includes A2 zoning in the northern portion and Residential zoning (R2) in the southern portion of the neighborhood.

*Design Preference Survey Results and Land Use*

Figure 5-8 through 5-11 depict the results of the design preference survey as it related to various land uses. Although there are no existing or proposed significant commercial or industrial land uses in this neighborhood, the design preference survey did include images of such uses. Participants were asked to rate images for other parts of the Village that do have these uses as part of the overall land use plan.



Figure 5-8. Above, among the highest rated single-family home images in the design preference survey. The image below was among the lowest rated images.



Figure 5-9. Above, among the highest rated multi-family home images in the design preference survey. The image below was among the lowest rated images.





Figure 5-10. Commercial buildings with high quality architecture and pedestrian friendly amenities were among the highest rated commercial images in the design preference survey (above). Buildings with that lacked landscaping or quality architectural design were among the lowest rated images (below).



Figure 5-11. The design preference survey results indicated a preference for higher quality, pedestrian friendly signage (above). The images below were the lowest ranked images in the signage category.



### 5.3 EXISTING LAND USE PLAN

Figure 5-12 is the Village's Land Use Plan for the C5 Neighborhood Area. The primary planned land uses include Country Lots residential (0.2 dwelling units per acre), park and open space. The area including and surrounding the Caddy Vista Subdivision was also considered in this neighborhood plan. The planned land uses in this area include low and medium density residential development.

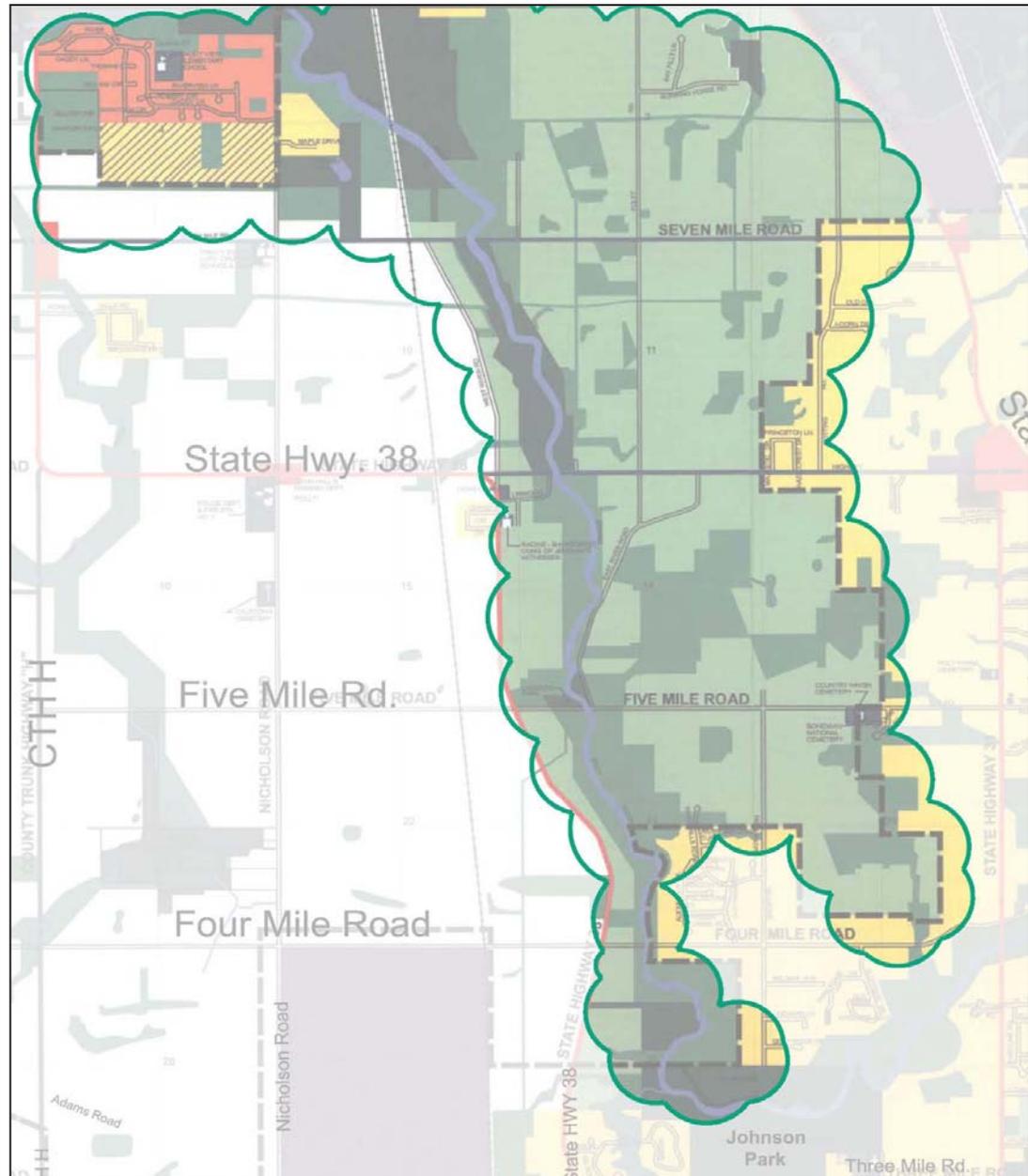
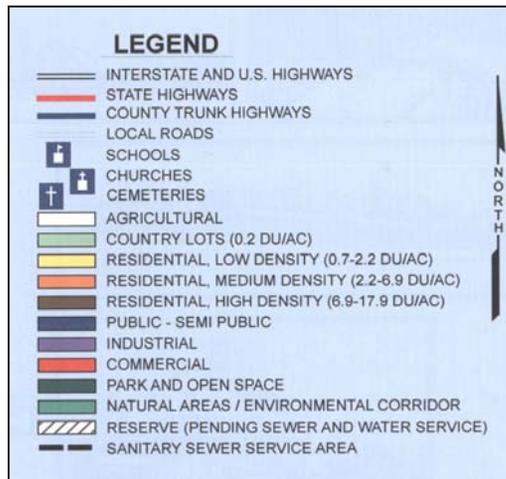


Figure 5-12. Existing Land Use Plan for the Village of Caledonia.

## 5.4 NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

### Traffic and Circulation

#### *Streets and Highways*

The Village should make every effort to maintain the rural character of the roads in this area. There are several methods to achieve this goal.

#### *Driveway Ordinance*

The rural area workgroup has suggested that the Village adopt a Driveway Ordinance or Highway Access Ordinance. The goal of this ordinance would be to prevent several long narrow lots with driveways on to the main arterial highways in the Village often referred to as “bowling alley” or “piano key” lots. This form of development is often used by subdividers to avoid the expense of constructing internal streets that would serve lots within the subdivision.

#### *Driveways*

The number and density of driveways resulting from the development of “bowling alley” and “piano key” lots may interfere with the safe and efficient operation of the abutting street. In addition to traffic impacts, “bowling alley” and “piano key” lots can have a negative impact on drainage, aesthetics, fire protection, and emergency access.

Implementation measures recommended to avoid this undesirable pattern of development in the future include requiring a sketch plan for all contiguous parcels under the same ownership at the time a CSM is submitted, and the adoption of regulations that would

restrict the number of driveways intersecting an arterial street and also regulate the spacing of driveways. Driveway access to arterial streets is of particular concern, since arterial streets are intended to carry high volumes of traffic at relatively fast speeds.

Driveway regulations are currently set forth in Chapter 2 of the Village subdivision ordinance. The existing regulations address the installation and maintenance of culverts under a driveway, curb cuts, paving within the public right-of-way, and maintenance of existing roadside drainage ditches. Consideration should also be given to regulating driveway access to existing streets. It is recommended that the Village consider including regulations that would limit direct access to arterial streets under Village jurisdiction. Lots to be created as part of a new land division (both minor land divisions and conservation subdivisions) should be required to front on a non-arterial street. A waiver provision could be included, if desired by the Village, for situations where only one additional lot is being created.

#### *Landscaping within the Village Rights-of-ways*

Landscaping within the Village Rights-of-ways is another way to maintain a balance between the rural character and increased development in the area. Currently, the Village prohibits owners of land adjacent to street rights-of-way owned by the Village from planting grass, flowers, or other vegetation in the Village right-of-way. The Village should consider establishing a permit system that would allow vegetation to be planted, provided the Village determines that the landscaping would not interfere with maintenance of the street or right-of-way. Care must be taken to ensure that permits are granted only for landscaping within Village-owned rights-of-way and not those owned by Racine County or the State

of Wisconsin. In the establishment of such a permit system, the staffing ability to enforce proper planting and maintenance in these areas should be a primary consideration.

#### *State Highway 38*

A major impact on the C5 Neighborhood is State Highway 38. As stated previously, WISDOT is planning to evaluate this highway in the near future. The Village should work cooperatively with WISDOT on the design and location of State Highway 38. If this roadway is expanded, it should be sensitive to the surrounding rural context. Functional improvements recommended by the plan within the R1 (Rural) area included the expansion from two to four lanes of STH 38 between CTH K and the north Village line. It should be noted that the current alignment of STH 38 may change as a result of corridor studies that will be conducted by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation prior to any widening of the highway. The C5 workgroup believes that if the roadway was expanded to four lanes, the rural character of the area would be compromised.

The intersection of Six Mile Road and STH 38 was identified as the most critical intersection along STH 38. This intersection is actually a combination of two intersections that create complicated and dangerous turning movements. This intersection should be carefully studied during the WISDOT’s planning for STH 38. Intersections with Four Mile, Five Mile and Seven Mile Roads should also be carefully evaluated when any changes of STH 38 are planned. These are intersections which have been identified by the residents as dangerous. In addition, parking for the dog park owned by the City of Racine, along STH 38 should be evaluated as part of future reconfiguration.

### *Public Trail System*

The Village should encourage the continuation and connection of both the public and private trail systems in this area. The existing Village park and open space plan recommends several trail and bicycle paths (Appendix H). When fully developed, the trail system would provide Village residents with opportunities for recreation and exercise, as well as an alternative means of travel to local parks, schools, and other activity centers.

The proposed public trails shown in Appendix H include those adopted as part of the 1999 Village Land Use Plan and the Village Park Plan. The plan also reflects the existing Racine County Bicycle Route, which is signed on Seven Mile Road. It is recommended that the Village acquire trail rights-of-way and develop trail sections as land divisions occur within the C5 area.

Specific trail locations, widths, and surfacing will be determined as land divisions take place. Any walking and bicycling trails to be dedicated for public use should comply with the standards developed by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO). AASHTO standards call for off-street trails to be a minimum of eight feet wide, with 10 feet preferred; with a right-of-way width of 20 feet. Trails located within a street right-of-way, but separate from the roadway pavement area, must be a minimum of five feet wide if provided on both sides of the street, and a minimum of eight feet wide if provided on one side. Paved shoulders signed for bicycle travel must be a minimum of four feet wide, with five feet preferred.

Paved shoulders or separate bike paths within the street right-of-way should be provided along arterial streets identified as

trails at the time the street is constructed or reconstructed. Due to lower traffic volumes and traffic speeds on non-arterial streets, it may not be necessary to provide trail facilities, other than signs, on non-arterial streets. The need for paved shoulders or separate paths along non-arterial streets to link off-street portions of the trail system should be determined as land divisions occur and the trail system begins to take shape.

### *Private Trail Systems*

A network of snowmobile trails is also provided in the C5 area during the winter months. The location of snowmobile trails during the 2002-2003 winter season is shown in Appendix H. Snowmobile trails are generally located on private property, with the permission of the landowner. Because they are located on private lands and do not rely on improved trails to the extent of other trail uses, the location of snowmobile trails is subject to change each year. The Racine County Division of Public Works maintains updated annual maps of snowmobile routes within the Village.

The Caledonia Conservancy, a non-profit conservation organization active in the Village, has sponsored the development of a system of trails for horseback riding and hiking. Trails developed under the sponsorship of the Conservancy are located primarily within the C5 neighborhood, although the Conservancy and the Racine County Pony Club are currently working with the Village to develop a trail loop that would extend from the Root River to the Caledonia Wildlife Refuge. With the exception of trail segments open to the public within the former North Shore railroad right-of-way and the Aboagye property, which are shown in Appendix H, trails that are part of the Conservancy's network are located on private property. The trails are maintained by the Conservancy and by many of the

individual landowners. Permission to use the trails is at the discretion of the landowner. The Caledonia Conservancy can provide information about the location and use of trails within the Conservancy's network.

The Village views the existing network of horse-riding trails, and the efforts to extend the trail system into the R1 area, as an asset that contributes to the rural character and the quality of life for residents of the C5, C3 and R1 areas. Where a land division or other development is proposed on lands that are being used for private trails, the Village will encourage, but not require, the landowner concerned to incorporate the trail as part of the land division or development, or to relocate the trail in a way that maintains the continuity of the trail network. The Village will also consider providing a public system of horse-riding trails parallel to the recommended system of public walking and bicycling trails as land divisions are proposed.

## Environmental

### *Protection of the Root River Watershed*

The Village should work collaboratively with the Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewage District (MMSD) and other agencies to acquire land within the Root River Watershed for preservation.

### *Livestock Management*

Actions in the C5 Neighborhood can have critical implications on the Root River watershed. Currently, the number of animals permitted on a specific property is not regulated under the County zoning ordinance unless the keeping of animals is associated with a use that requires a conditional use permit (CUP) from the County. Commercial stables are an example of a use that requires a CUP. The CUP for a specified use usually limits the number of horses or other animals that can be kept, and may also specify how manure should be disposed.

There is no limit to the number of animals that may be kept on a property that is not subject to a CUP. Although currently there is no contamination problem, as the horse-farming community grows in this area, the Village should consider adopting an ordinance that would specify the maximum number of animals permitted per acre of land. The ordinance should apply to uses, such as keeping horses on private land for personal use, that are not regulated under the County zoning ordinance. The ordinance should take into account specific issues such as the proximity to the Root River and other environmental concerns. The new Village ordinance should also establish standards for the management of manure. An example of some “best management practices” are located in Appendix CC.

## Environmental Corridors

### *Primary Environmental Corridors*

Primary environmental corridors should be preserved in essentially natural, open uses to preserve natural resources. Development within such corridors should be limited to essential transportation and utility facilities (i.e. transmission lines) and compatible outdoor recreational facilities, such as trails.

### *Secondary Environmental Corridors*

Secondary environmental corridors also contain concentrations of high value elements of the natural resource base, but are smaller in area than primary environmental corridors. Secondary environmental corridors serve to link primary environmental corridors, or encompass areas containing concentrations of natural resources between 100 and 400 acres in size. All areas within secondary environmental corridors should be preserved in natural, open uses. Any development within such corridors should be limited to essential transportation and utility facilities (i.e. transmission lines) and compatible outdoor recreational facilities, such as trails.

### *Isolated Natural Resource Areas (INRA)*

Isolated natural resource areas consist of woodland and wetland areas between five and 100 acres in size that are separated geographically from primary and secondary environmental corridors. Isolated natural resource areas are distributed throughout the C5 area. It is recommended that such areas be preserved in essentially natural, open uses whenever possible, since these areas sometimes serve as the only available habitat for wildlife and critical plant species, lend natural diversity to the landscape, and can serve as stormwater detention and retention areas. Development within such areas should be limited to essential transportation

and utility facilities (i.e. transmission lines) and compatible outdoor recreation facilities. Carefully planned rural-density residential development may also be permitted in upland portions of isolated natural resource areas. Any development in upland portions of such areas should avoid disturbing areas of steep slopes and areas that provide high-value plant and wildlife habitat.

The Village should work with the landowner, the Caledonia Land Conservancy, and other appropriate organizations and government agencies to identify sources of funds or other means of acquiring or protecting lands within the natural area.

## Regulation of Prairie Burns

Periodic burning of prairies helps protect prairie grasses from intrusion by woody plants and competition from “exotic” species that are not normally found in prairies. The Stewardship Plans prepared for the management of prairies re-established in conservation subdivisions often call for periodic burning to maintain the prairies. The Village should ensure that regulations for open burning explicitly require notification to and approval by the Village Fire Chief prior to conducting prairie burns. Conservation subdivision plats should also be reviewed by the Fire Chief to ensure that areas proposed to be re-established as prairies will be located a safe distance from proposed homes and that prairie areas will be accessible by fire trucks.

## “Environmental Linkage” Policy

The Village should encourage the connection of isolated natural resources in this neighborhood. Although many of these areas are on private property, the Village should explore various means to preserve these natural corridors. Figure 5-13 depicts the existing environmental corridors and potential linkages between them. The Planning Commission and Village Board should use this as an overall guide to help preserve these lands of conservation interest as development is proposed in the Village.

This map, prepared by the Caledonia Conservancy, is a gross overall map linking properties which are classified or contain portions of lands classified as environmentally significant natural resource areas. These significant natural resource areas include Primary and Secondary Environmental Corridors and Isolated Natural Areas, as defined by SEWRPC. The map also identifies entire properties which provide a physical link between these natural resource areas. This map is useful as a guide, presenting considerations which should be made concerning land acquisition and even the development patterns of individual parcels.

Taking this map a step further and refining the boundaries would present more site-specific guidance as well as help set priorities in protecting significant natural resources. Currently, this map shows all properties as equal, however all properties do not contain natural resources of equal quality, and not all portions of each property are equal with regards to environmental values. Refinement of this map can begin by setting priorities. To be an effective environmental linkage map, these priorities should reflect the relative ecological value of the natural resources.

Before establishing priorities, a few clarifications should be made:

SEWRPC identifies areas as Primary or Secondary Environmental Corridors or Isolated Natural Resource Areas according to set definitions. A key for defining corridors is their overall and connected size and length. Key to defining Isolated Natural Resource Areas is the quality of the resource.

Lands classified by these definitions are not protected. SEWRPC has no jurisdictional powers regarding the protection of lands. These definitions and classifications are presented to guide the development and land protection patterns of an area.

The rationale behind creating linkages stems from the goal of connecting habitats to create larger systems. Larger systems are often more complex, containing a diversity of micro-habitats. The size and redundancy of available resources increases an area’s ability to sustain itself over time. Linkages therefore aids in creating sustainable systems.

Linkages provide transportation corridors for wildlife, for people, and for the flow of nutrients and energy.

By assessing the values of land parcels according to both the natural resource elements they possess and the linkages they present, a more comprehensive and specific map can be developed to assist the decision making process. Building on these ideas, properties – or portions of properties – can be prioritized as follows:

### *Parcel Selection Priorities*

1. The entire parcel has been classified as Primary Environmental Corridor.

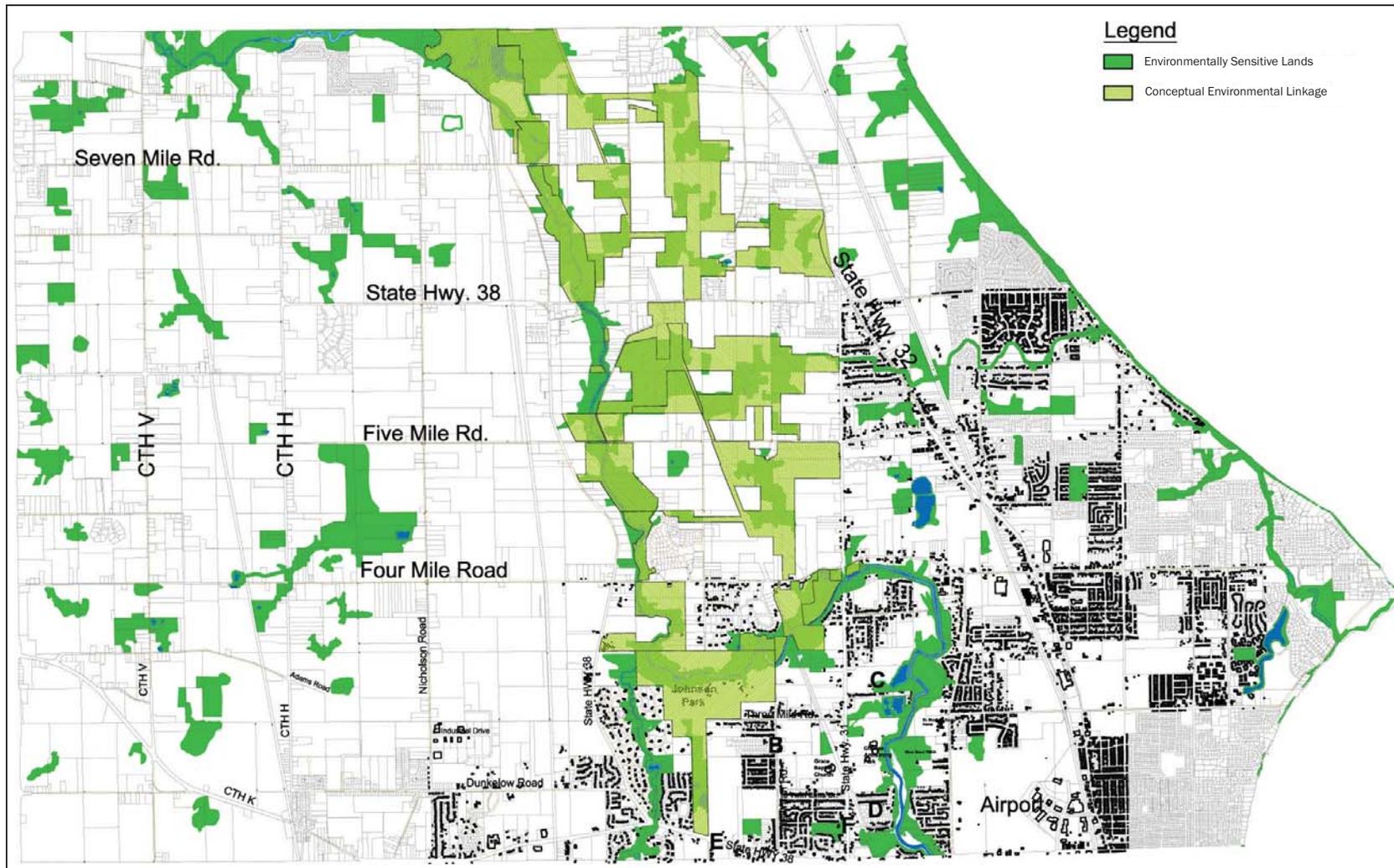


Figure 5-13. Conceptual Environmental Linkage Map.

2. The parcel contains land classified as Primary Environmental Corridor.
3. The entire parcel has been classified as Isolated Natural Resource Area.
4. The parcel contains land classified as Isolated Natural Resource Area.
5. The parcel contains lands valuable for flood storage (floodplain).
6. The property extends the reach of Primary Environmental Corridors.

*Linkage Priorities*

1. The linkage provides/maintains a hydrologic connection to protected, environmentally significant lands.
2. The linkage connects areas identified as Isolated Natural Resource Areas (linking Primary Environmental Corridor lands to Isolated Natural Resource Areas, and/or Isolated Natural Resource Areas to Isolated Natural Resource Areas).
3. The linkage provides a valuable transportation corridor for wildlife between two differing habitats (i.e., woodlands to wetlands).
4. The linkage connects freshwater wetland systems (currently subject to regulations by Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources).

The size and shape of the linkage will depend on the specific resources involved as well as the size and shape of the land parcel.

*Examples of Map Applications*

Land acquisition. This map would be valuable in selecting parcels to acquire for open space

protection. It also assesses the relative value of available parcels. Land could be acquired by public or private entities with the overall goal of conserving the land.

Site development. Should a parcel identified on the Environmental Linkage Map be considered for residential development or other type of subdivision, the map would indicate the portion of the parcel which should be protected by easement or used as the conservation subdivision's required shared open space area.

**Visual Character**

*Scenic Views and Rural Character*

Preservation of the rural character of this neighborhood was the main concern of the workgroup. All of the recommendations and implementation strategies were formulated with that overall goal in mind.

*Historic Structures*

The Village of Caledonia Historical Society was incorporated as a nonprofit organization in 2002. The Historical Society has inventoried potentially historic buildings on the map in Appendix C, and is in the process of evaluating each building to determine its historic significance. One home in the Village is currently listed on the National Register of Historic Places: the John Collins Residence on Nicholson Road.

The Village should consider adopting a local historic preservation ordinance to help protect buildings that are identified as historically significant by the Village Historical Society. Normally, such an ordinance would create a historic preservation or landmarks commission, which would be responsible for reviewing building and demolition permits before a historic property could be altered or demolished.

In order to maintain the rural character of the Village, the historic structures should also include valued historic agricultural buildings such as barns, silos and other accessory buildings.

## Social and Economic

### *Refinement of the Sewer Service Area Boundary*

Many residents from the C5 and C3 neighborhoods were concerned with the proposed changes to the Sanitary Sewer Service Area Boundary. The main concern of residents focused on how changes to the Sanitary Sewer Service Area Boundary could impact the rural character of the neighborhood. Residents suggested that the Sanitary Sewer Service Area Boundary be moved to match the existing Northpark Sanitary District boundary. This option was discussed in great detail in the C5 workgroup. The conclusion of the workgroup was to recommend the revised line, as indicated in Appendix AA. The proposed revisions to the Sanitary Sewer Service Area Boundary include minor revisions to follow property lines or the center of roadways. Members of both the Northpark and Crestview Sanitary Districts indicated opposition to the proposed changes at the public hearing held on March 31, 2004.

Changes to the planned sanitary sewer service area reviewed by the R1, C5 and C3 workgroups are shown in Appendix AA. The plan for the C5 area recommends the following changes to the planned sanitary sewer service area:

A. That the existing sewer service area associated with the Caddy Vista Sanitary District be expanded to include additional lands north of Seven Mile Road and east of Nicholson Road, and that lands on the west side of STH 38 be removed from the sewer service area. This recommendation has been reviewed by the C5 workgroup, which has concurred with the recommendation. Following approval of the plans for the R1

and C5 neighborhoods by the Village Plan Commission and the Village Board, the Caddy Vista Sanitary District should request that SEWRPC amend the planned sanitary sewer service area to reflect the recommended changes.

B. That minor modifications be made to the eastern edge of the sewer service area to follow either property lines or road center lines. Following approval of the plan for the C5 neighborhood by the Village Plan Commission and the Village Board, the Village Board should ask the City of Racine Wastewater Utility to request that SEWRPC amend the planned sanitary sewer service area to reflect the recommended changes. SEWRPC prefers that modifications to Village Sewer Service Areas within the Village be based upon the neighborhood planning process be consolidated and addressed in one review process.

Additional modifications to the sewer service area have been proposed and will be discussed in detail in the R1, W1 and W2 neighborhood plans.

### *Procedures for Amending the Sanitary Sewer Service Area Boundary for Areas Tributary to the Racine Sewage Treatment Plant*

1. A request to consider a modification to the Sanitary Sewer Service Area Boundary may initiate with the residents, the utility or sanitary district involved, or with the Village Board itself. No matter the initial source of the discussion or request, it is the policy and practice of the Southeastern Regional Planning Commission (SEWRPC) that a modification will only be pursued if the Village Board has approved such a request.

2. The Village of Caledonia would then transmit a letter to the Racine Wastewater Utility, which owns and operates the Racine sewage treatment plant, asking that the Wastewater Utility request the assistance of SEWRPC in amending the sewer service area plan as it pertains to the Village.

3. Upon receipt of such a request from the Racine Wastewater Utility, SEWRPC staff would meet with officials from the Village of Caledonia, the concerned sanitary and utility districts, and the Racine Wastewater Utility to work out the details of the proposed amendment.

4. SEWRPC staff would then prepare a draft report documenting the proposed amendment to the sewer service area. Copies of the draft report would be provided to the Racine Wastewater Utility, Racine County, the Village of Caledonia, other concerned local units of government, the concerned utility and sanitary districts, and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR).

5. A public hearing, sponsored jointly by the Racine Wastewater Utility and SEWRPC, would be held to obtain public comment on the proposed sewer service area plan amendment.

6. The Racine Wastewater Utility and SEWRPC staff would consider the results of the public hearing and revise the draft report as may be needed.

7. The sanitary sewer service area plan amendment would be considered for adoption by the Board of Commissioners of the Racine Wastewater Utility.

8. Following adoption by the Racine Wastewater Utility, the plan amendment

would be considered for adoption by the SEWRPC as an amendment to the regional water quality management plan.

9 - Following adoption by SEWRPC, a final report would be published by SEWRPC and forwarded to the DNR for approval.

*Issues Related to Removal of Property from a Sanitary District and/or from the Sewer Service Area*

The entire C5 neighborhood (with exception of the Caddy Vista Subdivision) falls outside of the Sanitary Sewer Service Area Boundary and therefore outside of all Sanitary and Utility Districts. Concerns were expressed regarding the implications that changes to the Sewer Service Area and future expansion of the sanitary districts could have on this neighborhood. The chart in Appendix DD was prepared to summarize the issues and potential risks associated with the removal of parcels from the sanitary districts and sewer service area.

*Subdivision Plan for the Area North of Seven Mile Road*

As part of the R1 area plan, and refinement of the sewer service area boundary, the land south of the Caddy Vista subdivision was recommended to be added to the sewer service area. Figures 5-14 and 5-15 depict Concept Plan B and the Adopted Concept for this area. Each concept makes connections to the Caddy Vista subdivision, creates a strong green edge along Seven Mile and Nicholson Roads and also creates significant greenspace within the development. These illustrations were reviewed by both the R1 and C5 workgroups. Concept B, including smaller lots adjacent to the Caddy Vista subdivision transitioning to larger lots towards Seven Mile Road, was preferred by the workgroups.



Figure 5-14. Concept Plan B.



Figure 5-15. Adopted Concept.

The Racine County Highway Department also reviewed these concept plans and indicated that one access point to Seven Mile Road would be preferable. Residents of the Caddy Vista subdivision expressed concern over a direct road connection between Caddy Vista and Seven Mile Road. This connection should be indirect to avoid cut through traffic.

#### *Development Density and Zoning*

The current zoning in the Country Lots (C5) neighborhood is generally A-2 (general farming and residential) in the northern portion of the neighborhood and R-2 (suburban residential) in the southern portion of the neighborhood.

The A-2 district allows agricultural uses, roadside stands and greenhouses, and one- and two-family homes. The A-2 district also allows the creation of parcels as small as 40,000 square feet, which is slightly less than one acre. The R-2 district also allows 40,000 square foot parcels but does not allow the establishment of new agricultural uses. The Village's conservation subdivision ordinance requires that lands not served by sanitary sewers, which includes the C5 area, which are proposed to be subdivided first be rezoned to the C-2, Upland Resource Conservation District. The C-2 district requires an average density of one home per five acres for "cluster," or conservation, subdivisions. Land divisions that create four or fewer lots in a five-year period, however, are not subject to the conservation subdivision ordinance. Such land divisions, often referred to as "minor land divisions" or "lot splits," are created using a Certified Survey Map (CSM). New lots created by a CSM may be as small as 40,000 square feet, if the land being divided is zoned A-2 or R-2.

As the population in the Village has increased and the random development of 40,000

square foot lots has proliferated, the results of this type of development have become better understood. While many good home sites have been provided, the negative impacts of this type of development include increased costs of services, such as fire and police protection; the loss of rural views due to small home sites that are often "stripped out" along major streets; and closely-spaced driveways with direct access to arterial streets, which often interfere with traffic on the arterial.

If a significant portion of the land zoned A-2 and R-2 is developed at the one-acre density permitted by existing zoning, the rural character of the C5 area will be lost. The A-2 and R-2 zoning districts will not be an effective tool in achieving the goals of the land use plan for the C5 area.

The Racine County zoning ordinance does currently include a residential zoning district, the R1, Country Estates District, which allows one-family homes on parcels having a minimum size of five acres. This district may not be appropriate in the C5 area, because it allows agricultural uses only as a conditional use and does not allow subdivisions using conservation design.

The C-2, Upland Resource Conservation District, allows agricultural uses and one-family homes, among other uses. Conservation subdivisions may be permitted as a conditional use in the C-2 district, and must maintain an average density of one home per five acres. Due to an inconsistency in the Racine County Zoning Ordinance, a minimum parcel size of three acres, rather than five, is required for parcels in the C-2 district created through a CSM or a conventional subdivision.

This plan for the C5 area places an emphasis on a future development density of one home

or less per five acres, with a conservation design to be used for all proposed subdivisions and lot averaging techniques to be an option for minor land divisions. The current Racine County zoning ordinance does not include a zoning district which would directly accommodate these types of development. It is therefore recommended that the Village of Caledonia request that Racine County initiate action to create an A-5 Agricultural/Rural Residential District, and that the minimum parcel size in the C-2, Upland Resource Conservation District, be changed from three to five acres.

The A-5, Agricultural/Rural Residential District, would be intended to provide for the continued use of lands historically used for agricultural purposes, and for the establishment of new agricultural uses. The district would also permit residential development at a density of no greater than one home per five acres to accommodate the market demand for rural single-family residential development. The A-5 district should permit conservation subdivisions and lot averaging in minor land divisions as a conditional use.

The C-2, Upland Resource Conservation District, is intended to preserve and protect all significant woodlands, related scenic areas, and areas of hilly topography within Racine County. The current C-2 District provides for limited residential development not to exceed one dwelling unit per three acres. The text of this district should be modified to establish a minimum density of one dwelling unit per five acres. This change would make the density required by the district for both conventional and conservation subdivisions the same and would be consistent with the density recommendations of the C5 plan and the regional land use plan with regard

to development within upland portions of environmental corridors and isolated natural resource areas.

Any changes to the zoning ordinance regulations should be cooperatively formulated by Racine County and the eight towns in the County. The Wisconsin Statutes provide that changes to the County zoning ordinance become effective only if a majority of the towns regulated under the County ordinance do not disapprove them. Any changes to the Racine County zoning ordinance regulations must therefore have broad support from the other seven towns within the County, which are all under County zoning. Changes to the County zoning ordinance must also be approved by the County Board.

Following approval of the A-5 zoning district, the Village should work with Racine County to rezone to A-5 those portions of the C5 area designated on the land use plan map as “agricultural and rural residential.” The A-1, General Farming District I, which requires a minimum parcel size of 35 acres, and the A-4, Truck Farming District, which requires a minimum parcel size of 10 acres, would also be consistent with the “agricultural and rural residential” land use plan designation. Landowners who wish to maintain their land in long-term agricultural use may request that their land be rezoned to the A-1 or A-4 district rather than the A-5 district.

Although changing the zoning of land now in the A-2 and R-2 zoning districts to a new district that requires a density of one home or less per five acres is desirable to implement the recommended land use plan, the rezoning process is likely to be a relatively long one. The rezoning process will first require an amendment to the Racine County zoning

ordinance, in cooperation with the County and the other seven towns under County zoning. Following the amendment to the ordinance, the Village and County will then need to amend the zoning map. Changes to the zoning map will require notification to each property owner affected, a public hearing, and approval of the change by the Village Board and County Board.

A development density of one home or less per five acres in the country lots area is recommended to help accomplish the following:

Minimize traffic volumes on rural streets and highways.

Preserve natural drainage systems insofar as possible and minimize drainage problems and the need for stormwater management facilities.

Preserve open space and rural character, especially through the use of conservation design, to accommodate residential development while avoiding “wall to wall” residential subdivisions.

Sustain development served by on site sewage treatment systems and wells.

Minimize the risks to groundwater quality and quantity.

Preserve, through careful design, the overall integrity of the rural landscape, including environmental corridors and wildlife habitat areas.

Lands designated for agricultural and rural residential use would also accommodate continued, or new, agricultural uses, including crop and dairy farms, greenhouses, orchards,

horse farms and stables, and livestock raising. The Village is conducting a study to determine the feasibility of establishing a Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) program to compensate farmland owners for relinquishing the rights to develop their land for rural residential or other uses that would be permitted under the plan. In return for a cash payment, a conservation easement is used to ensure that farmlands will remain in agricultural use or in open space.

## Village Subdivision Ordinance

The Village of Caledonia subdivision regulations are set forth in Title 14 of the Village code of ordinances. Chapter 1 of Title 14 regulates “land splits,” which are land divisions that create four or fewer parcels, where any one of the parcels to be created will be 35 acres or less in size. Chapter 2 sets forth requirements for drainage plans, street widths and construction specifications, and requirements for driveways and street intersections. Chapter 3 is the Village’s Conservation Subdivision Ordinance, which was adopted in September 2002. The ordinance applies to a division of a parent parcel of three acres or larger where the division creates five or more new parcels or building sites by successive division within a five-year period. As noted in the preceding section, zoning in effect in much of the C5 area allows lots as small as 40,000 square feet to be created by CSM, which is not consistent with the recommendations of the land use plan. The Village subdivision ordinance requires conservation subdivisions in unsewered areas to be placed in the C-2 zoning district. Conservation subdivisions may be permitted as a conditional use in the C-2 district, provided the average density of the subdivision is no greater than one home per five acres. The Village subdivision ordinance and County C-2 zoning regulations together accommodate subdivisions that are consistent with the five-acre density recommended by the C5 area plan.

The following changes are recommended to Chapter 1 of the Village subdivision ordinance, which regulates lots created by CSMs, to help implement the plan for the C5 area:

1. Require a density of no greater than one home per five acres in minor land divisions

created by CSM in areas outside the planned sewer service area;

2. Require a sketch plan to be submitted for all contiguous parcels under the same ownership when a CSM is filed;

3. Provide an option to allow minor land divisions to use lot-averaging techniques; and

4. Require site inventory information to be provided on CSMs.

### *Density Requirements for Minor Land Divisions*

It is recommended that the Village Board amend Chapter 1 of the Village subdivision ordinance to require that any minor land division created through a CSM maintain a density of no greater than one home per five acres in that portion of the Village outside the planned sewer service area. Such a requirement will help the Village prevent the creation of land divisions at the higher density allowed under the existing A-2 zoning during the time needed to amend the County zoning ordinance and zoning map.

Although the regulation of minimum lot sizes/development density is typically regarded as a function of zoning, the Wisconsin Supreme Court concluded in its decision in *Lake City Development v. Mequon* (1997) that local governments have the authority under Chapter 236 of the Wisconsin Statutes to regulate minimum lot sizes/density through a local subdivision ordinance. Although the Village has the authority to use its subdivision ordinance to require a density that is more restrictive than the density required under County zoning, it would be preferable if the land use plan, zoning map, and subdivision ordinance were all consistent with each

other. The zoning in the C5 area should be changed as expeditiously as possible to bring it into conformance with the land use plan recommendations.

### *Sketch Plan Approval for Minor Land Divisions*

Chapter 1 of the Village subdivision ordinance should also be amended to require that sketch plans for all contiguous parcels under common ownership be provided to the Plan Commission for review when a CSM is submitted for approval. The sketch plan should identify the future development of the parcel being divided and contiguous areas, including general street, parcel, driveway, and building locations. The Village Plan Commission could then review the sketch plan to ensure that the eventual layout and development of parcels under common ownership will protect natural resources, provide for appropriate circulation and access, and be consistent with the land use plan. The Village should require that the approved sketch plan be recorded to help ensure that future development will conform to the plan. The Village should also establish an internal system for tracking sketch plans to ensure that future land divisions are consistent with the sketch plan.

### *Lot Averaging for Minor Land Divisions*

Under conventional zoning and land division ordinances, the allowable density called for by a community or County land use plan is typically converted to a minimum required lot size. For example, a development density of one home per five acres would require that each home be sited on a five-acre parcel. There are other, more flexible, zoning and land division techniques that allow variation in individual lot sizes while maintaining the overall density called for by the land use plan. The Village of Caledonia conservation

subdivision ordinance is an example of an ordinance that provides flexibility in subdivision layouts. It is recommended that the Village provide similar flexibility for minor land divisions by including an option allowing lot averaging techniques to be used.

“Lot averaging” allows parcel sizes to vary so long as the area that is taken from one parcel is transferred to one or more other parcels within the land division, so that the average density called for by the land use plan is maintained within the land division as a whole. Advantages of lot averaging include flexibility in site design and preservation of farmland and/or environmentally sensitive areas. This technique is useful in cases where a landowner may wish to create a few residential parcels for sale or for family members through a CSM, while retaining a large parcel for continued agricultural use. It is important that parcels created through lot averaging be prohibited from further division through a deed restriction placed on the parcels being created.

#### *Site Inventory Requirements for Minor Land Divisions*

The Village currently requires proposed conservation subdivision plats to identify significant natural resource features on the site being subdivided, including wetlands; floodplains; watercourses and drainageways; wooded areas; slopes of 12 percent or greater; rare, threatened, and endangered species; environmental corridors; and views and other prominent visual features. The Village should amend the ordinance regulating minor land divisions to require the same information to be provided when CSMs are submitted for review.

#### *Vegetated Buffer Strips*

In addition to the changes described in the preceding paragraphs, the Village should consider revising the requirements for both minor land divisions and subdivisions to require vegetated buffer strips adjacent to ponds, streams, wetlands, the Root River, Lake Michigan, environmental corridors, and isolated natural resource areas.

#### **Additional Plan Implementation Programs and Policies**

A number of implementation programs and policies should be considered by the Village in addition to the recommendations for new or amended ordinances presented in the preceding section. The following programs and policies include several programs, some of which are already in place, that are intended to help preserve existing farmland within the C5 area. Programs and policies to encourage the use of rain gardens, rain barrels, and phosphorus-free fertilizers should also be considered by the Village Board.

## Farmland Preservation Techniques

The following is a list of voluntary farmland preservation techniques that may help to ensure the long-term viability of farming activities in the Village:

### *Purchase Of Development Rights Program*

Purchase of development rights programs, or PDR programs, are intended to ensure the long-term preservation of agricultural lands. Under a PDR program, the owner of farmland receives a payment for relinquishing rights to development. Deed restrictions are used to ensure that the lands concerned remain in agricultural or other open use. Such restrictions are attached to the land and remain in effect regardless of future sale or other transfer of the land.

PDR programs can provide assurances that farmland will be permanently retained in open use. Landowners receive a potentially substantial cash payment, based on the appropriate market value, while retaining all other rights to the land, including the right to continue farming. The money paid to the landowner may be used for any purpose, such as debt reduction, capital improvement to the farm, or retirement income. Lands included in a PDR program remain on the tax roll and continue to generate property taxes. Since the land remains in private ownership, the public sector does not incur any land management responsibilities.

The Village is currently working with the American Farmland Trust to evaluate the cost and feasibility of establishing a PDR program within the Village.

### *Wisconsin Farmland Preservation Program*

The State Farmland Preservation Program allows farmers who agree to maintain

farmland in agricultural use to receive annual State income tax credits. The farm must be a minimum of 35 acres, and must produce a minimum of \$6,000 in gross farm receipts in the previous year or \$18,000 in the previous three years. Contracts are for a ten-year period. Currently, only one farm in the Village is enrolled in this program.

### *Use-Value Assessment*

In 1995, the Wisconsin Legislature acted to lessen the property tax burden on farmers by mandating the "use-value" assessment of agricultural land. Under this system, agricultural lands are assessed based solely on their value for farming, without regard to development potential or existing zoning. Any landowners who sell their land after owning it for less than five years are required to pay a modest penalty to the Wisconsin Department of Revenue; an amount equal to 5 percent of the difference between the sale price and the use-value during the last year of ownership. While this program provides substantial property tax relief to owners of farmland, it does so without attaching any restrictions to the land, so that there is no guarantee that the land will not be converted to urban use. Nevertheless, use-value assessment provides some financial relief to farmers, which serves to encourage continued farming in the Village.

### *Wisconsin Managed Forest Law*

The Managed Forest Law is an incentive program intended to encourage sustainable forestry on private woodlands in Wisconsin. Owners of at least 10 acres of contiguous wooded land that is used primarily for growing forest products are eligible to apply for the program through the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR). Following approval of the application, the DNR prepares

a management plan for the property. The program can provide significant tax savings to participating landowners.

### *USDA Programs*

The U. S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) administers a variety of incentive programs to prevent non-farm development in agricultural areas. These programs include the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP), and the Wetland Reserve Program (WRP), among others. Under these programs, the landowner enters into an agreement to restore or protect lands for a 10-year or longer period in return for cash payments or assistance in making land conservation improvements.

## **Stormwater Management and Water Quality Programs and Policies**

### *Rain Gardens and Rain Barrels*

The Village should consider establishing an incentive program for homeowners to create rain gardens and use rain barrels. Rain gardens absorb water runoff from roofs, streets, and other impervious surfaces and slowly discharge the collected water into the ground. Rain gardens and barrels decrease the amount of runoff in storm sewers and drainage ditches, which helps reduce the risk of flooding and erosion, and may also reduce the amount of pollutants washing into surface waters.

### *Phosphorus-Free Fertilizers*

The Village Board should consider adopting a policy that would prohibit the use of fertilizers containing phosphorus on Village-owned lands. Use of phosphorus-free fertilizers should also be encouraged in conservation subdivisions through Village review and approval of the Stewardship Plans required for common open space lands within such subdivisions. The Village should also consider establishing an education program to promote the use of phosphorus-free fertilizer to all Village residents, beginning with homeowners that live near ponds, streams, the Root River, and Lake Michigan.

