

Approximately 421 Units were added from 1991 through the 2nd quarter of 1999

-421

754 Units

13 Downtown Development and Design

The town of St. Germain identified the unincorporated community of St. Germain, what is referred to as the "downtown" area, as the focus location for economic growth and revitalization. Numerous issues were raised during the issues identification workshop regarding the town economy and community character. Town residents wanted to establish more high paying jobs and allow for increased commercial development activity without becoming over-commercialized, yet maintain the northwoods aesthetics and small town charm of St. Germain.

A series of questions in the community planning survey focused on business development patterns and community image and character. Creating an aesthetically pleasing and economically viable downtown became a focus for the Town of St. Germain Planning and Zoning Committee, which contracted with Foth and Van Dyke as part of the comprehensive land use planning process. The effort focused on downtown development issues relating to land use, image, character, and aesthetics. This section of the comprehensive land use plan devotes guidance through a proposed concept plan for the continued development and improvement of the downtown area. This concept plan shall be used to help facilitate the desired future state of the downtown area. The St. Germain Planning and Zoning Committee and the St. Germain Town Board should be credited with the foresight needed to champion St. Germain's downtown development and community vision.

13.1 Existing Conditions

The St. Germain "downtown" area is the business core of the town. The downtown extends along STH 70 and STH 155 in a linear (strip) development pattern along the respective roadways (see Map 13-1). The majority of commercial and business uses are located on the north and east side of STH 70, with commercial and multi-family development west of STH 70, north of Sun-Set Boulevard. Uses in the downtown vary, and consist of several restaurants and specialty shops, two gas stations, a grocery store, hardware store, and marine dealership, town offices, park facilities, administration, fire station and community center, post office, bank, chamber and tourism services, several service orientated businesses, and some intermixed single family residences.

The downtown area possess a unique advantage as it provides for many of the needs of both town residents and the seasonal or recreational visitor. It is located on the center of a concentrated area of lakes, yet is close to other, more "urbanized" areas that offer increased services as necessary. Another downtown advantage is the west side of STH 70 as it extends north through the downtown. The west STH 70 right-of-way is largely undeveloped with prominent stands of towering pine emanating the northwoods feel. The pine stands as a buffer from the STH 70 to the Holiday residential area directly to the west, and as a green space corridor with trails and pedestrian access linking the Chamber of Commerce and town park facilities adjacent to the town hall and school.

The town and its business owners indicated a strong desire to enhance and retrofit community identity, tourism, and potential business expansion relative to commercial business development, done within terms of a defined community character. However, due to the linear configuration of the downtown as it is stretched along STH 70, pedestrian access is not readily available nor emphasized in the downtown area. Due to the frontage on to STH 70, access to businesses is auto dependent. A series of parking lots have and continue to be used as a limited frontage road, increasing the concerns of safety and pedestrian integration to the downtown. Also, there is no direct linkage to the lakeshore of Little St. Germain lake, which could limit development potential. Linkage to the lakeshore could prove to be a key element in the long term success of the downtown. In addition, and of higher importance, recent development in the downtown has not been within the "northwoods character" as represented through opinion of community planning survey respondents (in terms of site design and building aesthetics). Often, how a community is perceived is as important as to what it offers. A wave of conflict between maintaining northwoods charm and small town feel has surfaced on the waters of economic growth and expansion.

13.2 Downtown Design and Land Use Directives

Several of the goals and objectives outlined in Section 3 of this plan speak to the importance of guiding future development and growth in the downtown. To assist in the development of the downtown conceptual design plans, a workshop was held with the St. Germain Planning and Zoning Committee October 12, 1998 to develop design directives from which the downtown conceptual design plans could be rendered. The goal and ultimate result of the downtown development plan was to assist the town in guiding the location and character of new development. The objective was to enhance the town of St. Germain's Downtown District and to prevent the loss of desirable qualities and assets by determining where development should occur, how development should be cited and of what character, and what public improvements are appropriate.

The workshop focused on positive attributes or desires and conversely, concerns of the downtown, both real and perceived, based on both the existing and desired future conditions of the downtown. There were 40 responses to the workshop effort. Table 13-1 lists 12 responses to the downtown district opportunities. In addition to the 12 opportunities, 12 limitations were identified which could act as barriers to the development or redevelopment to the downtown. The limitations have been summarized in Table 13-2.

Table 13-1
St. Germain Downtown District Opportunities

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1. Location in center of lake district.
 2. Active town center commercial district.
 3. Traffic volume on STH 70.
 4. Year-round multi-use trails.
 5. Town facilities (Softball diamonds, park, community center, chamber of commerce.)
 6. Frontage road, setback from highway.
 7. Well-defined, buffered residential area (Holiday residential area).
 8. Wooded character on one side of commercial highway.
 9. Northwoods character of many facilities.
 10. Active promotion by Chamber of Commerce.
 11. Non-develop able land (Cemetery, school property, utility-owned land).
 12. Not over developed.
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Table 13-2
St. Germain Downtown District Limitations

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1. Linear commercial strip, not compact.
 2. Traffic speed on STH 70.
 3. Difficult pedestrian crossing STH 70.
 4. Loss of public access to lake.
 5. Recent insensitive development siting and design.
 6. Unclear guidelines.
 7. Non-develop able land (Cemetery, utility-owned land).
 8. STH 70 alignment.
 9. STH 70 and STH 155 intersection design.
 10. Power poles/above ground utilities.
 11. Lack of public utilities (sewer and water).
 12. Funding to accommodate improvements (lack of).
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As the downtown directives were built into draft concepts, the Planning and Zoning Committee held a public informational meeting on December 1, 1998 at the town hall. Twenty-eight downtown district business owners attended. The draft concepts were discussed in detail as to the purpose and intent of plan design. The business owners felt the draft concepts were in accord with their perception of future growth and development of the downtown. The public meeting participants also discussed at length downtown strategy and "desires" of the planning process. Table 13-3 represents sixteen desires summarized from the meeting.

Table 13-3
St. Germain Downtown District Desires

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1. Create a viable, active, safe, attractive, functional, and memorable downtown district for the town of St. Germain.
 2. Enhance the image and identify of the town of St. Germain.
 - ♦ Community features (historical, informational).
 - ♦ Preservation of natural features--pines and lakes.
 3. Create business opportunities.
 4. Promote the economic health of the town.
 5. Create functional and safe pedestrian and traffic circulation.
 6. Support community and resort-oriented activities.
 7. Create a cohesive identify through control of design character.
 8. Expand the commercial center to serve surrounding residents and resort users...all in a setting of pine forests and lakes.
 9. Protect and enhance community assets:
 - ♦ Natural pine forests and lakes.
 - ♦ "Northwoods" rustic character.
 - ♦ Supports community activities.
 10. Protect tree stands and lakes.
 11. Create consistent, "Northwoods" site and architectural character.
 12. Continue to encourage community activities (i.e. softball, flea market).
 13. Encourage business development to serve resort area needs.
 14. Improve visual, public access to Little St. Germain Lake.
 15. Improve safety, particularly for pedestrians.
 16. Enhance system of year-round multi-use trails.
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Generally, the Planning and Zoning Committee and downtown business owners felt the downtown has substantial opportunity to maintain and revitalize its appeal based on the character of many of the existing buildings and lack of overdevelopment. Business and structure appearance improvements, landscaping, increased pedestrian access from activity areas and from the highway, and increased business activity in concert with northwoods character should be the focus. New building design, or modification to existing structures, should portray the rustic, northwoods theme. Parking should be coordinated and provided as to minimize the vehicle/pedestrian conflict. Utilities should be buried. Landscape buffers should be maintained and incorporated in to site design. Downtown lighting should be established to identify the visitor they are in the "downtown". Signage and storefront lighting should be coordinated and standardized. Trail developments should tie the lakefront to the active commercial areas, school and park/recreational facilities. New commercial activity should be developed and coordinated with the town's land use plan to create a vibrant, local center for business and leisure.

The desires, limitations, and opportunities were incorporated into the design process by Dean Proctor Design, a landscape and urban design architect, to modify the draft concept plans. The concept plans were reviewed and modified by the St. Germain Planning and Zoning Committee, to meet the intent of the future desired state of the downtown area.

13.3 Downtown Conceptual Design Plans

Preferred Land Use

Based upon the input process facilitated during the downtown development public informational meeting, the Planning and Zoning Committee meetings, and the review and study of the draft concepts, the St. Germain downtown conceptual design plans were developed and are discussed below.

Map 13-1 - St. Germain Master Plan and Guidelines

Map 13-1 is an aerial, birds-eye perspective of the St. Germain Downtown Business District. Specific land area "zones" were analyzed and actions recommended to afford the town the ability to discuss and channel energy to specific areas or to the downtown as a whole. The analysis "zones" recommendations are included on the poster-sized concept located at the town hall. For purposes of this document, the concept plan has been reduced. The zone recommendations are provided below for reference.

Town of St. Germain Master Plan and Guidelines-Activity Zones

Holiday Estates Residential Area

- ◆ Small-lot residential development

STH 70/Sunrise Lane Buffer Area

- ◆ Maintenance and enhancement of existing vegetation
- ◆ Year-round, multi-use trail system

Sunrise Lane Frontage

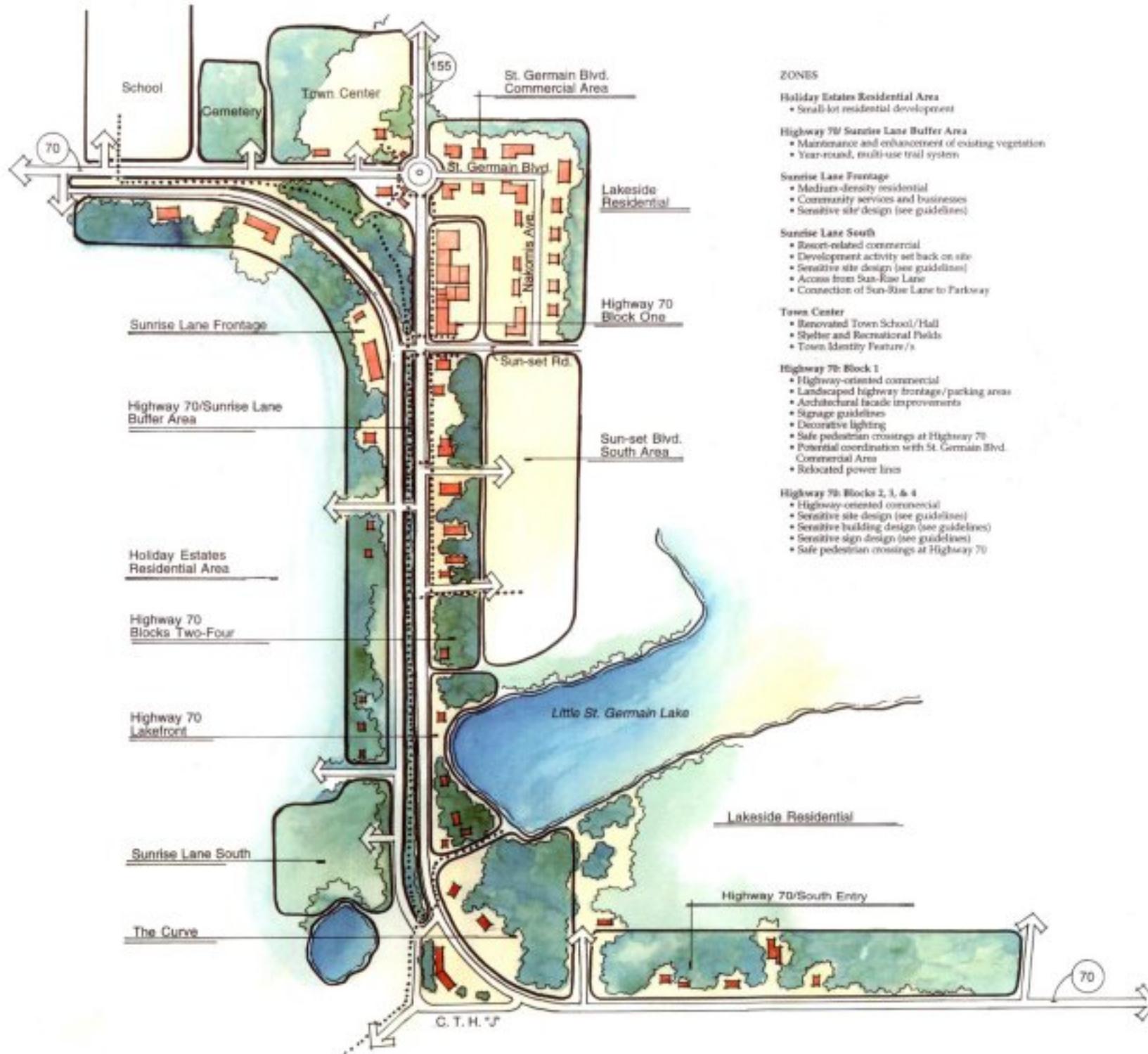
- ◆ Medium-density residential.
- ◆ Community services and business.
- ◆ Sensitive site design (see guidelines).

Sunrise Lane South

- ◆ Development activity set back on site.
- ◆ Sensitive site design (see guidelines).
- ◆ Access from Sunset Lane.
- ◆ Connection of Sunset Lane to Parkway.

SAINT GERMAIN DOWNTOWN DISTRICT

Conceptual Master Plan and Guidelines



ZONES

- Holiday Estates Residential Area**
 - Small lot residential development
- Highway 70/ Sunrise Lane Buffer Area**
 - Maintenance and enhancement of existing vegetation
 - Year-round, multi-use trail system
- Sunrise Lane Frontage**
 - Medium-density residential
 - Community services and businesses
 - Sensitive site design (see guidelines)
- Sunrise Lane South**
 - Resort-related commercial
 - Development activity set back on site
 - Sensitive site design (see guidelines)
 - Access from Sun-Rise Lane
 - Connection of Sun-Rise Lane to Parkway
- Town Center**
 - Renovated Town School/Hall
 - Shelter and Recreational Fields
 - Town Identity Feature /s
- Highway 70: Block 1**
 - Highway-oriented commercial
 - Landscaped highway frontage/parking areas
 - Architectural facade improvements
 - Signage guidelines
 - Decorative lighting
 - Safe pedestrian crossings at Highway 70
 - Potential coordination with St. Germain Blvd. Commercial Area
 - Relocated power lines
- Highway 70: Blocks 2, 3, & 4**
 - Highway-oriented commercial
 - Sensitive site design (see guidelines)
 - Sensitive building design (see guidelines)
 - Sensitive sign design (see guidelines)
 - Safe pedestrian crossings at Highway 70

- Highway 70: Lakeshore**
 - Visual connection to Little St. Germain Lake
 - Potential public access to lake
 - Potential lake-oriented commercial
 - Safe pedestrian crossings at Highway 70
 - Sensitive site design (see guidelines)
 - Water quality protection
- The Curve**
 - Coordinated development of commercial sites
 - Highway-oriented Commercial
 - Sensitive site design (see guidelines)
 - Sensitive building design (see guidelines)
 - Sensitive sign design (see guidelines)
- Highway 70: South Entry**
 - Highway-oriented commercial
 - Sensitive site design (see guidelines)
 - Sensitive building design (see guidelines)
 - Sensitive sign design (see guidelines)
 - Preserve existing Northside structures
- Sun-set Blvd. South Area**
 - Potential community-oriented commercial
 - Potential medium-density residential
 - Improved appearances of existing service areas and rear entries
 - Connection to lakeside resorts (trails)
- St. Germain Blvd. Commercial Area**
 - St. Germain Blvd. improvements
 - Hwy. 70 & 155 intersection improvements
 - New commercial development
 - Centralized parking area
 - Infill commercial
 - Visible commercial attraction at end of St. Germain Blvd.
 - Potential traffic loop
 - Potential northern extension of Nakomis Ave.
- Lakeside Residential**
 - Existing resorts and residences
 - Additional resort residential
 - Water quality protection



Town Center

- ◆ Renovated town school/hall.
- ◆ Shelter and Recreation Fields.
- ◆ Town Identify Features.

STH 70: Block 1

- ◆ Highway-oriented commercial.
- ◆ Landscaped highway frontage/parking areas.
- ◆ Architectural facade improvements.
- ◆ Signage guidelines.
- ◆ Decorative lighting.
- ◆ Safe pedestrian crossings at STH 70.
- ◆ Potential coordination with St. Germain Blvd. commercial area.
- ◆ Relocated power lines.

STH 70: Blocks 2,3, &4

- ◆ Highway-oriented commercial.
- ◆ Sensitive site design (see guidelines).
- ◆ Sensitive building design (see guidelines).
- ◆ Sensitive sign design (see guidelines).
- ◆ Safe pedestrian crossings at STH 70.

STH 70: Lakefront

- ◆ Visual connection to Little St. Germain Lake.
- ◆ Potential public access to lake.
- ◆ Potential lake-oriented commercial.
- ◆ Safe pedestrian crossings at STH 70.
- ◆ Sensitive site design (see guidelines).
- ◆ Water quality protection.

The Curve

- ◆ Coordinated development of commercial sites.
- ◆ Highway-orientated commercial.
- ◆ Sensitive site design (see guidelines).
- ◆ Sensitive building design (see guidelines).
- ◆ Sensitive sign design (see guidelines).

STH 70: South Entry

- ◆ Highway-orientated commercial.
- ◆ Sensitive site design (see guidelines).
- ◆ Sensitive building design (see guidelines).
- ◆ Sensitive sign design (see guidelines).

- ◆ Preserve existing north woods structures.

Sun-Set Boulevard South Area

- ◆ Potential community-orientated commercial.
- ◆ Potential medium-density residential.
- ◆ Improved appearances of existing service areas and rear entries.
- ◆ Connection to lakeside resorts (trails).

St. Germain Blvd. Commercial Area

- ◆ St. Germain Blvd. improvements.
- ◆ STH 70 and 155 intersection improvements.
- ◆ New commercial development.
- ◆ Centralized parking area.
- ◆ Infill commercial.
- ◆ Visible commercial attraction at end of St. Germain Blvd.
- ◆ Potential traffic loop.
- ◆ Potential northern extension of Nakomis Ave.

Lakeside Residential

- ◆ Existing resorts and residences.
- ◆ Additional resort residential.
- ◆ Water quality protection.

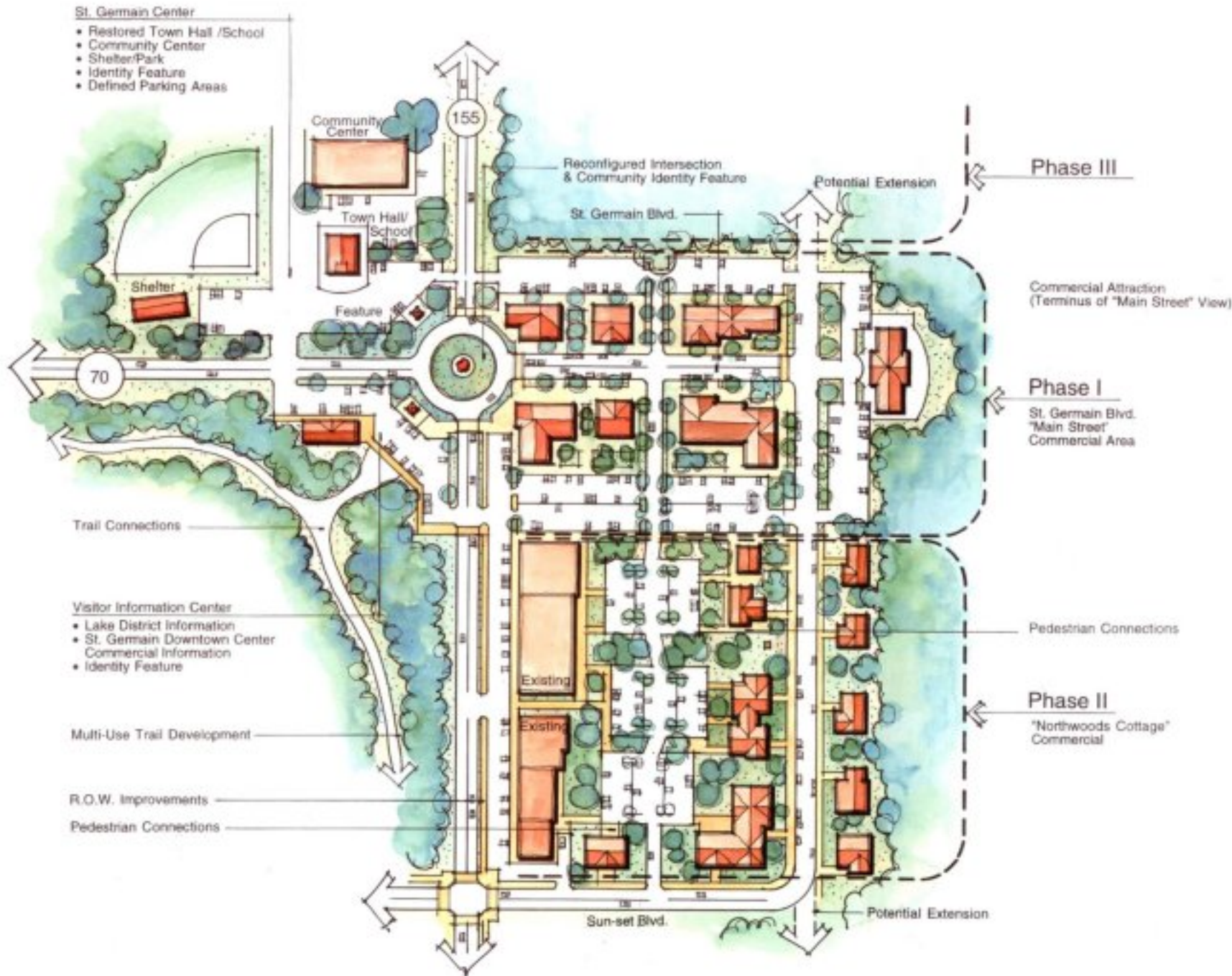
An area that is not referenced in an analysis zone is the STH 155 and STH 70 intersection. Due to volume and predominantly the speed of traffic, and due to the concept of Map 13-2 described below, redesign options were explored for the intersection. A rotary concept is identified as the preferred redesign for access to the St. Germain Commercial Boulevard Area, to reduce speed, and to allow focus on the St. Germain downtown district as a destination and place of distinction. The rotary would also include a community identity feature in the center of the circle. The rotary is the preferred conceptual design. Actual reconstruction, if and when it is to occur, will depend on community support and the express authorization of the Wisconsin District of Transportation.

Map 13-2 - The St. Germain Boulevard Commercial Area

Map 13-2 encapsulates an idea to expand downtown development along St. Germain Boulevard. The plan is a phased approach relative to location and timing of development. The expanded commercial sector will incorporate community orientated businesses and commercial developments with increased pedestrian access with buildings and site design of northwoods character. The concept includes clustering of the development to reduce the dependence of the automobile, therefore in creating the availability of pedestrian access to several businesses from one convenient parking location.

Phase I includes developing the north, south, and east areas along St. Germain Boulevard. The east terminus of the area should have a building or development that "anchors" the Boulevard in terms of an attraction or establishment that draws people to the zone. Phase II includes the

Map 13-2 ST. GERMAIN BLVD. COMMERCIAL AREA



St. Germain Downtown Conceptual Design Plan





Figure 13-1
SITE DESIGN
GUIDELINES

St.Germain Downtown
 Conceptual Design Plan

expansion to the south of Phase I along Nakomis and Hathaway Avenues, to Sun-Set Boulevard. Land uses would include new community commercial businesses and the renovation and conversion of existing residential structures to commercial in the Phase II area. Common, centralized parking areas are planned to access both the existing and proposed new businesses for both Phase I and II. Phase III, expansion of the St. Germain Commercial Boulevard to the north of Phase I and II, would occur in the event that Phase I and Phase II were developed substantially to warrant the expansion. Land uses in Phase III would be consistent with those in the previous phases.

In addition, Figure 13-1 was developed to show more detail relative to the future character of the St. Germain Downtown District, including architecture and design, setback areas, pedestrian access, parking, signage, lighting, and landscaping. The street scape designs should be consulted as development proposals are being reviewed or as improvements are made.

13.4 Recommended Downtown Implementation Strategy

Several implementation techniques are recommended to achieve the desired results of the downtown area improvements. The recommendations are key to plan success. The implementation strategy includes the following recommendations.

1. Assess public sewer and water utilities for the downtown area.
It is absolutely imperative the town of St. Germain evaluate the feasibility of public sewer and water in the downtown area. The lack of suitable soils for the disposal of on-site, private septage alone warrants public services be provided. In addition, however, there are three key additional points for consideration 1) In planning for the downtown land use, the density associated with downtown development was planned to be serviced with public utilities per the direction of the Planning and Zoning Committee, and 2) To realize the full potential of an expanded commercial sector and increased economic opportunity in the downtown and in the town as a whole, sewer and water services would be necessary to achieve the planned density, and 3) Due to the proximity of the downtown area to Little St. Germain Lake and to the high groundwater in the area, existing and additional development may have serious negative effects on water quality.
2. Develop design review standards for commercial and multi-family developments.
To ensure new development is within the intent of the concept plan and more specifically "small town character," design review standards should be developed. The standards should address building appearance, landscaping, setbacks, signage, lighting, parking and green space areas relative to proposed developments.
3. Develop pedestrian access.
Trails and sidewalks should be developed which link the downtown "zones", and link the downtown to other activity areas in the town. The town should pursue a grant through the Wisconsin Department of Transportation enhancements program to initiate this effort.

4. Consider establishing a business improvement district (BID) in the downtown.
A business improvement district can help cover the costs of commercial improvements, including street scape development. Due to the low density of businesses in the central business district, the BID process may not generate substantial funding, however. The process is recommended for evaluation as an organized business improvement district may have the ability to leverage funds through grant programs. Additional information regarding the Wisconsin Business Improvement District program is detailed in Section 14, Implementation Strategy.

5. Consider a site control and/or land acquisition plan.
A municipality will have control of the type and location of development if the municipality controls, by ownership, key parcels of property. The town of St. Germain may want to assess the potential of land acquisition to help facilitate commercial development in the downtown district.