

Village of

Shorewood Hills



Comprehensive Plan

Adopted: December 15, 2009

Village of Shorewood Hills Comprehensive Plan 2010-2030

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A Special Note

Much of the discussion of Village of Shorewood Hills history contained in this document was drawn from *Shorewood Hills: An Illustrated History*, by Thomas D. Brock, copies of which are available for purchase at Village Hall.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 1

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION 5

A. Village Historical Background.....6

B. Community Description and Regional Context.....7

C. Community Character8

D. Purpose of the Comprehensive Plan8

E. Wisconsin’s Smart Growth Legislation9

F. Organization of the Comprehensive Plan..... 10

CHAPTER TWO: ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES 13

A. Demographic and Population Trends and Forecasts 14

B. Key Planning Issues and Opportunities 17

C. Overall Goals and Objectives 19

CHAPTER THREE: LAND USE 21

A. Existing Land Use..... 22

B. Future Land Use..... 25

C. Goals, Objectives and Policies..... 27

D. Recommendations 28

CHAPTER FOUR: AGRICULTURAL, NATURAL, AND CULTURAL RESOURCES 33

A. Background Information 34

B. Historic Resource Inventory 35

C. Historic Districts 36

D. Archeological Resources 37

E. Water Resources..... 37

F. Environmental ‘Pockets’ 38

G. Agricultural Resources..... 39

H. Threatened & Endangered Species 39

I. Wetlands, Floodplains, Soils..... 39

J. Metallic and Non-Metallic Mineral Resources..... 40

K. Goals, Objectives and Policies..... 40

L. Recommendations 40

CHAPTER FIVE: UTILITIES AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES 45

A. Existing Facilities and Services 46

B. Goals, Objectives and Policies..... 54

C. Recommendations 55

CHAPTER SIX: TRANSPORTATION 61

A. Background 62

B. Goals, Objectives and Policies..... 71

C. Recommendations 72

CHAPTER SEVEN: HOUSING 81

A. Housing Characteristics 82

B. Residential Design..... 84

C. Goals, Objectives & Policies 84

D. Recommendations..... 85

CHAPTER EIGHT: INTERGOVERNMENTAL FRAMEWORK.....95

A. Intergovernmental Context..... 96

B. Existing Intergovernmental Cooperation Efforts..... 96

C. Existing Plans..... 97

D. Goals, Objectives and Policies 100

E. Recommendations..... 101

CHAPTER NINE: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT 105

A. Introduction 106

B. Existing Economic Profile..... 106

C. Employment Trends and Forecasts 111

D. Types of Economic Activity Desired..... 112

E. Environmentally Contaminated Sites (“Brownfields”) 112

F. Economic Development Programs..... 113

G. Goals, Objectives & Policies 118

H. Recommendations..... 118

CHAPTER TEN: IMPLEMENTATION.....119

A. Plan Adoption..... 120

B. Implementation Measures..... 120

C. Plan Monitoring, Amendments, and Update 123

D. Internal Consistency 124

APPENDIX: RESOLUTIONS131

MAPS

Map 1-1: Regional Context 11

Map 3-1: Existing Land Use 29

Map 3-2: Future Land Use 31

Map 4-1: Historic Resources..... 41

Map 4-2: Natural Landscape..... 43

Map 5-1: Utilities 57

Map 5-2: Community Facilities 59

Map 6-1: Road Network & Traffic Counts 75

Map 6-2: Planned Road Network Improvements 77

Map 6-3: Bicycle & Transit Network..... 79

Map 7-1: Housing – Year Built..... 87

Map 7-2: Assessed Value of Residential Parcels 89

Map 7-3: Residential Improvement Value to Land Value Ratio 91

Map 7-4: Single Family Home Square Footage..... 93

Map 8-1: Surrounding Area Plans 103

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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This Comprehensive Plan has been prepared in compliance with §66.1001, otherwise known as Wisconsin's "Smart Growth" legislation. Originally begun in 2002, the comprehensive planning process was set aside for a time while the Village completed various amendments to its ordinances, completed two neighborhood plans, and created a Tax Increment District (TID). The process was re-started in early 2009.

This Plan contains the nine elements required by state statute, each containing a summary of current conditions, data, maps, and goals, objectives, policies, and recommendations. Village decisions regarding zoning and land use must be consistent with this Plan and any future amendments. The nine elements contained in the plan, along with the goal(s) contained in each element, are summarized below:

- Issues and Opportunities
 - Goal: Preserve the sense of community life where people live, work, shop, go to school, play, socialize and participate in decision making.
- Land Use
 - Provide a balance of commercial, residential, and public land uses to serve current and future Village residents.
- Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources
 - Preserve and protect those features that reflect the unique history and natural geography of the Village.
- Utilities and Community Facilities
 - Maintain excellent level of Village services, and capitalize on opportunities to mesh facility improvements with other goals of the Comprehensive Plan.
- Transportation
 - Provide a safe and efficient transportation system that meets diverse needs and multiple users.
 - Enhance the quality of life in the Village by reducing the negative impacts of transportation and auto traffic.
 - Make the entire Village pedestrian and bicycle friendly.
 - Engage Village residents, business and property owners, Village staff, Village government, WisDOT, and the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) in resolving local transportation and traffic concerns.
 - Support and accommodate multiple modes of transportation.
 - Recognize the far-reaching effects of transportation system improvements or modifications.
 - Provide safe pedestrian and bicycle access to areas adjacent to the Village.
- Housing
 - Provide a variety of housing for all Village residents.
- Intergovernmental Framework
 - Increase discourse and cooperation with surrounding units of government.

- Economic Development
 - Achieve a mix of local businesses that offers conveniences for local residents, helps reduce automobile trips, and preserves both the character and tax base of the Village.
- Implementation (no goals are part of this section)

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

I. INTRODUCTION

The Village of Shorewood Hills will face a number of planning-related concerns in the coming years. Some have been persistent problems, such as storm water management and flood abatement or traffic management issues. Others may have only recently entered the public consciousness. These include the changing scale and character of established neighborhoods and the relative lack of affordable or senior housing. As a Village long known for its strong sense of community, rich architectural heritage, and beautiful physical setting, these issues, if left unchecked, may undermine the high quality of life enjoyed by Shorewood Hills residents. The comprehensive planning process provides both an open forum to discuss these and other issues and a medium by which to communicate the community's *vision* to a wider audience.

A. VILLAGE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Village of Shorewood Hills has been an important entity in the development of the west side of the Madison, Wisconsin area. Shorewood Hills began as a series of separate real estate plats in the period just before and after World War I, which were incorporated into the Village in 1927. These real estate plats were, to a great extent, the vision of one man: John C. McKenna. They were McKenna's first major development in the Madison area; he later went on to develop other plats on both the east and west side of Madison.

When first formed, the Village of Shorewood Hills was a remote area far from the city of Madison. After World War II, the city grew out to meet the Village, and later to surround it, but Shorewood Hills has remained a high-quality residential neighborhood whose residents have contributed extensively to the life of the area.

The area that is now the Village of Shorewood Hills was primarily farm land in the 19th century. The Milwaukee and Mississippi Railroad extended a line through the area in 1856, helping open up the west side of Madison. John McKenna's first plat, called College Hills, was established in 1912 on land from the Jacob Breitenbach farm. It was given its name because of its location just west of the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and originally catered to university professors. The second part of College Hills was established in 1915 on land from part of the Lewis Post farm.

The beginning of World War I delayed the development of College Hills. After the war, McKenna began a new series of plats between Lake Mendota and University Avenue, which he called Shorewood. The streets for both College Hills and Shorewood were laid out by the noted landscape architect O.C. Simonds, and were designed to emphasize the natural beauty of the area. In the post World War I building boom, Shorewood and College Hills both grew rapidly, and by the time of incorporation in 1927 there were 52 houses and 205 residents. At the time of incorporation, the city of Madison remained focused on the land on the Isthmus between Lakes Mendota and Monona, and there was no opposition to the establishment of the Village.

Primarily a community of single-family houses, the Village is characterized by its diversity of architecture. In contrast to many Madison neighborhoods, Shorewood Hills developed over a very long period of time. There were three separate building booms: 1) in the post World War I period; 2) in the post-Depression period of the late 1930s; and 3) in the post World War II period. During

each distinct period, houses were designed reflecting the architectural styles of the time. Most of the houses were architect-designed, many by well-known Madison firms.

Although initially consisting of McKenna's residential plats, Shorewood Hills has expanded by annexations. In 1932 the Black Hawk Country Club, a thriving golf club just west of Shorewood Hills, was annexed. In 1957 the small residential plat of Garden Homes and an extensive commercial area along University Avenue were annexed from the Town of Madison.

The Shorewood Hills School and the Village of Shorewood Hills have always been administratively separate, but there have always been strong ties between them. Initially, the village school was part of a rural school district in the Town of Madison. The school offered classes from Kindergarten through 8th grade. Students went to Madison high schools on a tuition basis. As the Village and surrounding area grew, so did the school. The first part of the present school building was constructed in 1939, and additions to this building were made in 1950, 1962, and 1990. In 1962, due to a change in state law, the Shorewood Hills Elementary School was made part of the Madison school district.

Today, the Village of Shorewood Hills remains a highly desirable residential area. Its proximity to the University of Wisconsin-Madison, UW Hospital, and the City of Madison make it extremely convenient for residents. The 2000 Census showed that the Village has the highest median home value of any Dane County municipality.

B. COMMUNITY DESCRIPTION AND REGIONAL CONTEXT

The Village of Shorewood Hills is located along the shores of Lake Mendota, immediately west of the University of Wisconsin campus and less than three miles from Downtown Madison. The Village's character and its unusual layout is a response to its unique natural setting. This setting is accented by woods, rolling hills, and dramatic shoreline from which the Village takes its name. Major portions of the Village's "organic" street-plan were laid out by the noted landscape architect O.C. Simonds, whose work is reminiscent of the work of some of the most famous planners of the late 19th and early 20th Centuries. Simonds' contemporaries include Fredrick Law Olmstead, Raymond Unwin, Clarence Stein, John Nolen and other planners of the Picturesque tradition, which favors rough and wild scenery over a manicured and polished landscape.



Architecturally, the Village presents a gallery of early to mid-century styles ranging from Craftsman to Tudor Revival. The Village is also home to Frank Lloyd Wright's First Unitarian Church – one of the Wisconsin architect's most celebrated works. The Village is also known for its remarkable collection of early Modern styles ranging from Prairie to International. Many of these homes were designed during the 1940s and 1950s by a local architect named William Kaeser, who was a longtime resident of the Village.

C. COMMUNITY CHARACTER

Community character is important to Village residents, and must be central to and set the tone for the Comprehensive Plan. Throughout the planning process, it became clear that the notion of community character is central to the self-definition of the residents of the Village of Shorewood Hills. Though difficult to define, Village residents feel that it is essential to the high quality of life in the Village.

The Village prides itself in a general sense of community, civility, and friendliness. This is also expressed in a strong tradition of resident involvement and community dialogue on virtually every aspect of Village life. The Village's strong sense of civic spirit is reflected in the many special committees who dedicate volunteer time to make the Village a better place to live, and who have participated extensively in the development of this Plan. This spirit is also reflected in the Village's wide array of quality public services and the many community-sponsored events that are scheduled throughout the year.

Community character is expressed in the Village's remarkable array of residential architecture, winding streets, triangular parks, hilly terrain, shoreline, tall stands of trees, and community gathering points. The later includes the grounds of the Shorewood Hills Elementary School, which serves as a major focal point and unofficial 'Village Commons'.

Preserving this character emerged as one the Village Residents' top concerns during the planning process. The Village encourages design, development and participatory practices that further the Village's community spirit and its sense of place. The Village recognizes that its special character can be eroded incrementally through the loss of historic structures and the introduction of new structures that do not reflect or complement the Village's intimate surroundings. The Village seeks an environment where homeowners are free to express individual design options, but within a common framework that emphasizes a common scale and sense of proportion and a shared sensitivity toward the impact of individual design decisions on overall neighborhood character.



D. PURPOSE OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The primary role of this Comprehensive Plan is to draw upon the collective wisdom of Village residents, the Plan Commission, and other community leaders to create, design, and implement a vision for the future of the Village of Shorewood Hills. It will accomplish this by designing a desired future and the public services and actions needed to support such a future. A central piece of the Plan is the Future Land Use Map which prescribes combinations, patterns, and arrangements of future land uses based on such factors as: the environment, interactions between certain grouped activities, and the need for supportable levels of public infrastructure and services.

Another purpose of the Plan is to provide a foundation for the Village's land use regulations; particularly its zoning ordinance, and any necessary amendments that may be needed to that ordinance. The Comprehensive Plan may also help identify, prioritize, and sequence projects included in updates to the Village's capital improvements plan.

Finally, the role of the Plan is to serve as a compilation of the various reports, studies, plans and other documents that helped to inform it, and that provided the technical basis for many of its recommendations. To date, much of this information existed in "single source" form only. The role of the Comprehensive Plan is to synthesize this body of work, and to set forth recommendations that organize and reconcile the multiple concerns to which they speak.

E. WISCONSIN'S SMART GROWTH LEGISLATION

Wisconsin's planning legislation, first adopted more than five decades ago, was significantly changed with passage of the state's 1999-2000 biennial budget. On October 27, 1999, Governor Thompson signed 1999 Wisconsin Act 9 into law. Two amendments have subsequently been made for technical reasons¹. The law is usually referred to as Wisconsin's smart growth legislation.

Local units of government (counties, towns, villages, and cities) are not required to adopt a comprehensive plan. However, if a local unit of government wants to regulate land use after January 1, 2010, it must have an adopted plan and must make land use decisions consistent with the plan. Section 66.1001 of the Wisconsin State Statutes requires that a comprehensive plan address the following nine elements: Issues and Opportunities; Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources; Economic Development; Housing; Utilities and Community Facilities; Transportation; Land Use; Intergovernmental Cooperation; and Implementation. Comprehensive plans are to be adopted by the governing body through an ordinance. As such, an adopted plan becomes more than a reference document with no consistency requirements.

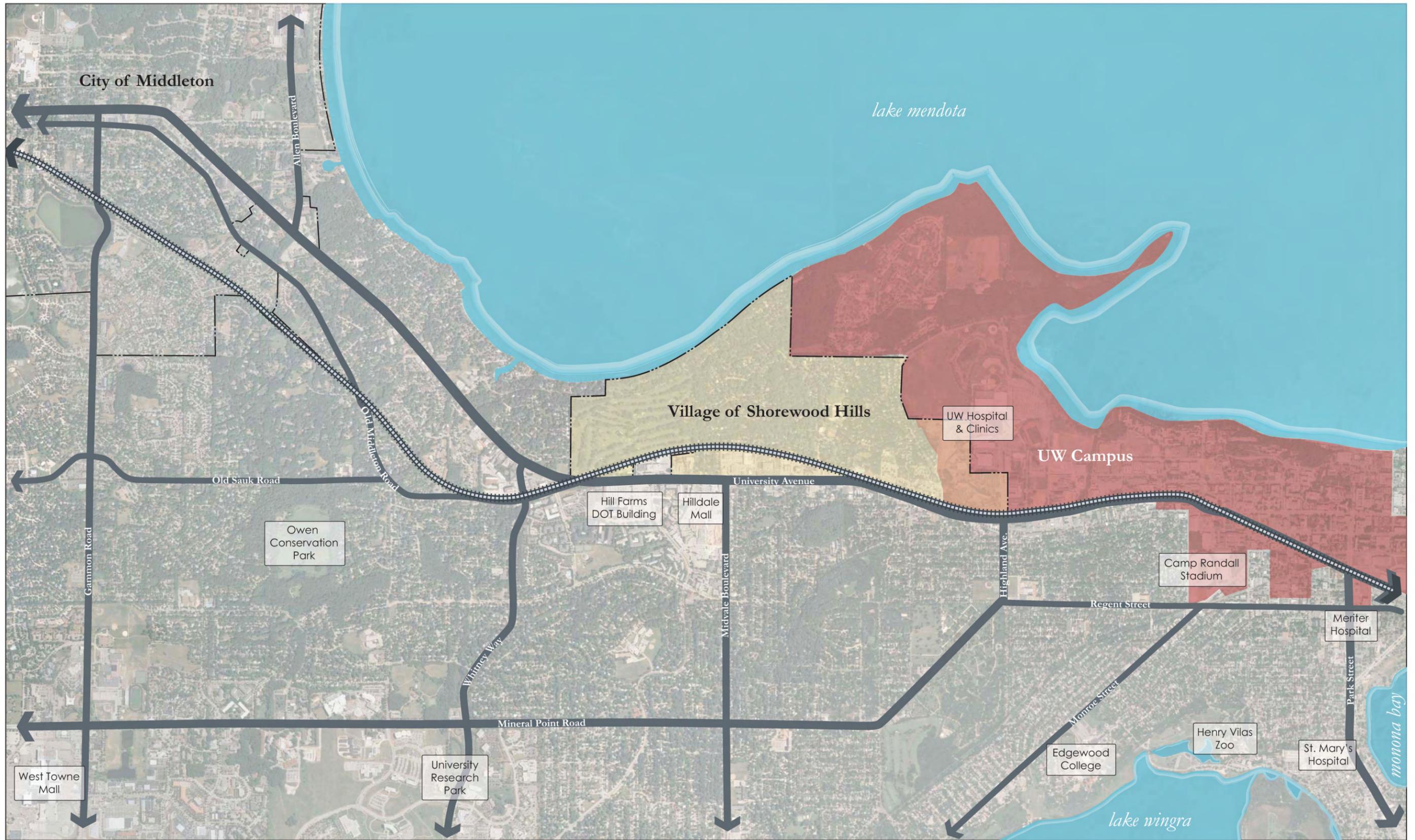
The legislation requires written procedures on public participation be adopted by the local government. The Village of Shorewood Hills adopted public participation procedures for the comprehensive planning process on March 18, 2002. The procedure included a public visioning forum, publicly noticed Plan Commission meetings, an alternative development scenario workshop, a public presentation of the draft plan, and a formal hearing on the draft plan. The Village "paused" the Comprehensive Planning process in early 2003 to focus on needed zoning ordinance revisions. Before resuming the process in early 2009, it also completed two neighborhood plans for areas along University Avenue that were gathering redevelopment interest from developers. Due to the time elapsed between the original adoption of the public participation plan, the Village included additional public participation measures prior to the aforementioned public presentation and formal hearing.

This plan has been prepared to comply with state requirements. In the absence of this plan the Village could not take actions with regard to zoning, subdivision regulations, or official mapping after January 1, 2010. This plan is intended to provide a horizon of 20 years.

¹ Amendments were included in AB 872 in May of 2000 and 2001 Wisconsin Act 16 signed in August 2001.

F. ORGANIZATION OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The Comprehensive Plan is organized into ten chapters. Each chapter contains background information on the specific subject of the chapter, e.g., transportation, land use, etc.; a discussion of major goals, objectives, and policies; and detailed recommendations on ways to achieve the stated goals and objectives. The final chapter, Implementation, provides specific strategies to carry out the Plan.



Regional Context Map

