



# FOX LAKE

~ COMMUNITY REFLECTIONS ~

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COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

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**THE  
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GROUP.**

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# Introduction

## SECTION 1

## What's a Comprehensive Plan?

A comprehensive plan is a long-term vision that shapes the future growth and development of Fox Lake. It acts as a guiding document for local governments, community members, businesses, property owners, and other stakeholders to make informed decisions that align with the collective vision and goals of the community. The plan addresses a wide range of topics—both tangible and social—providing a holistic framework for development. Typical areas of focus include land use, housing, economic development, transportation, public services, environmental sustainability, and overall quality of life. Through this framework, the comprehensive plan ensures that growth is managed responsibly, balancing prosperity with sustainability to benefit future generations.

“**Fox Lake Community Reflections**,” captures the unique identity, aspirations, and potential of Fox Lake. It is a living document, designed to be revisited and updated periodically, allowing the community to adapt to evolving circumstances, seize emerging opportunities, and preserve the values that matter most to its residents. By serving as a roadmap for thoughtful and strategic decision-making, the comprehensive plan provides the tools necessary to guide Fox Lake toward a vibrant, sustainable future.

- **For Government Officials:** The comprehensive plan provides a strategic framework for decision-making, ensuring that policies and initiatives are consistent with the long-term vision of the community. It guides zoning, land use, infrastructure investment, and public services, helping government officials allocate resources wisely.
- **For Community Members:** This plan shapes the future of Fox Lake in a way that reflects residents' values and needs. It enhances the quality of life by focusing on improved public spaces, transportation options, housing opportunities, and environmental stewardship.
- **For Property Owners:** For property owners, the comprehensive plan offers a predictable path for development and neighborhood improvement. It helps ensure that future developments near your property align with the broader community vision, contributing to stable property values and a cohesive community fabric.
- **For Business Owners:** The plan fosters a business-friendly environment by identifying opportunities for economic growth and development. It supports the creation of vibrant commercial areas and helps attract new customers and investments to Fox Lake, ensuring sustainable growth for businesses of all sizes.
- **For Visitors:** Visitors benefit from a comprehensive plan that enhances the overall experience of Fox Lake. From improved public amenities and recreational spaces to better transportation and access, the plan aims to make Fox Lake an attractive destination while maintaining its charm and unique character.

# Planning Process

The planning process for Fox Lake follows a three-phase approach to guide the Village toward its future goals. Each phase builds upon the previous one, ensuring a structured path from understanding the present to achieving the desired future.



## Phase 1: Where We Are Now?

The first phase, Where We Are Now? involves building a strong foundation of knowledge. This phase includes a comprehensive analysis of data and variables that define Fox Lake today. Key areas such as land use, infrastructure, economic conditions, and housing are assessed, along with the Village's assets, strengths, and opportunities. As part of this initial phase, the team analyzed recent developments, permit data, and pending developments.

Significant effort during the first phase involves listening to the community and leadership, identifying pressing issues, and determining what is top of mind for residents. These insights lay the groundwork for an informed and thoughtful planning process that reflects the community's current state and concerns.



## Phase 2: Where We Want To Go?

The second phase, Where We Want To Go? focuses on defining the vision for Fox Lake's future. In this phase, clear goals and strategies are developed to reflect the aspirations of residents, businesses, and community leaders.

This is a collaborative phase where ideas are vetted and tested with the community to ensure alignment with local priorities. The strategies are benchmarked against the data gathered in the first phase to ensure they are realistic and feasible. By the end of this phase, a shared vision for Fox Lake's future is established, supported by actionable goals.



## Phase 3: How Do We Get There?

The final phase, How Do We Get There? focuses on implementation. In this phase, a realistic and actionable roadmap is developed, outlining the specific steps needed to achieve the vision and goals established in the previous phase. A key aspect of this phase is the emphasis on strategy synergies—the recognition that various goals and policies are interconnected. By aligning actions across multiple themes, such as housing, transportation, economic development, and environmental sustainability, the impact of each initiative is amplified.

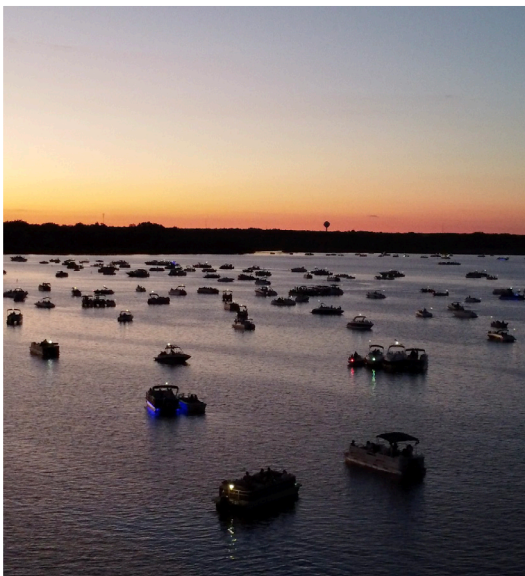
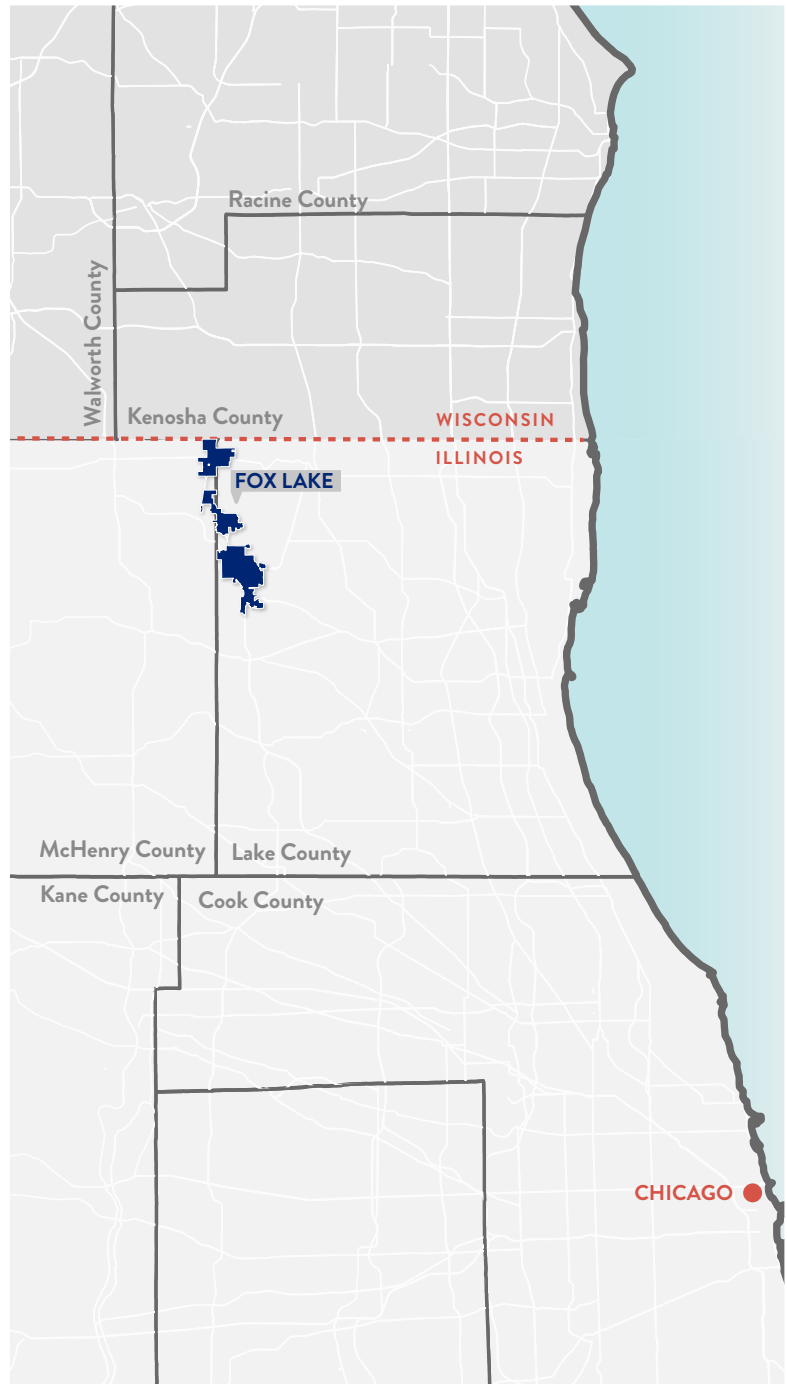
This phase includes detailed action steps, timelines, responsible parties, and resource allocation to ensure the strategies are brought to life. The plan is designed to be both practical and measurable, with clear benchmarks to guide Fox Lake toward its envisioned future.

# Regional Context & Setting

The Village of Fox Lake, located in northeastern Illinois at the Illinois-Wisconsin border, is strategically located along U.S. Route 12 providing direct access to neighboring communities and southern Wisconsin. At the heart of the region lies the Chain O'Lakes, a renowned network of interconnected waterways that epitomizes the natural beauty and recreational appeal of northeastern Illinois. Often referred to as "The Chain," this intricate system comprises 15 lakes, linked by the Fox River and a series of man-made channels, and is the most intensively used inland recreational waterway per acre in the United States.

Fox Lake is uniquely positioned within the Chain O'Lakes, nestled among three of the most significant lakes: Fox Lake, Nippersink Lake, and Pistakee Lake. This prime location places the village at the epicenter of the region's water-based activities, from boating and fishing to watersports and lakeside leisure. Additionally, Fox Lake is the last stop on the Milwaukee District North (MD-N) Metra Line, offering convenient access to the bustling Chicago metropolitan area, just 45 miles southeast of the village. This accessibility and recreational opportunity make Fox Lake an attractive destination for both residents and visitors seeking the tranquility of lakeside living within reach of major urban amenities.

As a central hub within the Chain O'Lakes system, Fox Lake is not only a gateway to these outdoor experiences but also a vibrant community that thrives on the synergy between its natural environment and the recreational lifestyle it supports.



# Planning Considerations

The Planning Considerations for Fox Lake bring forward a range of issues and opportunities that reflect feedback from the community, observations from stakeholders, and an assessment of existing conditions. As Fox Lake navigates its future, certain areas stand out for their potential to evolve or their need for attention. Through engagement with residents, business owners, and local leadership, several topics have emerged that are pivotal to the Village's ongoing development and identity. These considerations highlight both the strengths that can be built upon and the challenges that require strategic intervention to ensure long-term growth and sustainability. The following sections provide a closer look at these key areas, offering insights into what has been observed and what actions may be needed to enhance Fox Lake's potential.



## Revitalizing Downtown Fox Lake

Downtown Fox Lake is the geographic heart of the Village, located along Grand Avenue and extending toward Nippersink Lake. This area offers several existing assets, including Main Street-style commercial buildings, adjacent residential developments, proximity to US Route 12, the METRA Milwaukee District North Station (linking Fox Lake to Chicago), and the newly upgraded Lakefront Park. Despite these strengths, downtown is widely seen as needing significant physical investment, greater vibrancy, and a more defined identity. There is potential to create a denser mix of development around the METRA station, improving the area's sense of place, consolidating excess surface parking, and adding pedestrian and bicycle-friendly infrastructure—especially to improve connections across US Route 12 to the lakefront and through residential neighborhoods to the east. It's also crucial to support long-time businesses and property owners, perhaps through grants or better promoting affordable financing options for façade improvements and other building repairs.



## Housing Needs and Affordability Challenges

Fox Lake features a semi-dense mix of cottages, bungalows, ranch, and split-level homes on narrow, tree-lined streets, with a smaller number of apartments, townhomes, and condominiums. While most homes (69 percent) are owner-occupied, rental properties have been increasing over the past 15 years, including short-term rentals for tourists. Although some new residential developments have occurred, Fox Lake's housing stock is aging, as are its residents. More than half of the homes were built before 1980, and 70 percent of homeowners and renters are over the age of 45. Household income in Fox Lake is impacted by its older population, with many retirees not contributing to the reported average income of ~\$60K, which may appear low. However, this does not fully reflect the economic diversity of the community. Housing affordability remains a growing concern, with 26 percent of homeowners and 49 percent of renters spending more than 30-50 percent of their income on housing costs. This points to immediate and long-term needs, such as developing new multifamily housing—especially for seniors and moderate-income residents—and expanding rehabilitation programs to maintain affordability in the aging housing stock. Supportive services for older homeowners to help with maintenance and aging in place are also critical.



## Reimagining US Route 12 as a Gateway

US Route 12 is the main traffic corridor for Fox Lake, connecting the northern and southern sections of the Village as well as the larger Chain O' Lakes region and neighboring Wisconsin. In the Village's core, Route 12 forms the western boundary of the downtown district, dominated by car dealerships and gas stations. This layout limits east-west pedestrian movement between the downtown area and Nippersink Lake, and the corridor itself lacks the character needed to create a welcoming community gateway. Visitors are more likely to pass through than to stop and explore. As Route 12 heads south past fast-food outlets and marinas, the road widens and passes through residential neighborhoods before connecting to big-box retail at Big Hollow Road. There are also plans for new multifamily residential development in this area. Enhancing the corridor's character to make it more inviting could encourage visitors to linger and engage with local businesses.



## Enhancing Parks and Recreation Access

Fox Lake's parks and open spaces are a key asset, with the Village owning and managing over 30 acres of parkland and open space. When including additional spaces from schools and nearby forest preserves like Tanager Kames, the community benefits from a total of 178 acres of open space. However, the community is considered deficient in terms of park space and recreational facilities when measured against both national standards and local benchmarks. Recent upgrades to Lakefront Park, including new amenities such as an amphitheater, playground, pickleball courts, splash pad, beach area, and community facility, have significantly improved public access to high-quality recreation. Future plans for a pier and boat docks further highlight the Village's commitment to expanding these resources. Despite these improvements, additional investment is needed, particularly in aging playgrounds, restrooms, the half basketball court, and enhancing access to the lakefront. There is also a need for a wider variety of year-round events and activities that cater to all age groups. The Village's 18+ acres of undeveloped open space, particularly along the lakefront, offer opportunities for future park expansion to address the community's recreational needs.





## Improving Walkability and Biking Infrastructure

Fox Lake is an auto-oriented community with limited walking and biking infrastructure. An expanded network of greenways, walking paths, bike lanes, and trails would benefit both residents and visitors, especially those using the METRA station. Many areas of the Village are difficult or unsafe to navigate on foot or by bike due to missing or poor-quality sidewalks, limited lighting, and barriers like utilities. This is particularly evident along major roads such as US Route 12 and Grand Avenue. While residential streets are calmer, they offer few direct connections to amenities like downtown or the lakefront. Connections to regional attractions, such as Volo Bog State Natural Area, Tanager Kames, and Chain O' Lakes State Park, are also limited. The existing Chain O' Lakes bike path, which runs between Grand Avenue and Grant Woods Forest Preserve, is the only trail route in the Village, but more infrastructure is needed, especially for crossing Route 12 and navigating the area around Nippersink Lake.



## Expanding Public Access to the Lakefront

Fox Lake's identity is deeply tied to its lakes, with development closely intertwined with water and recreation. Since the 1890s, the Village has attracted visitors to enjoy its natural amenities. However, much of the lakefront is privately owned, limiting public access to the waterfront. Recent improvements at Lakefront Park include a new beach and swimming area, with future plans for a pier and boat slips. There is potential to expand public access at key locations, such as the terminus of Grand Avenue west of downtown and the now-closed Mineola Hotel site to the east. Community feedback has shown strong support for reclaiming additional public access to the lakefront wherever feasible, as this would enhance the Village's recreational offerings and draw in more visitors.



# A Reflection of You

## SECTION 2

### Fox Lake Reflections

Public input is essential to the planning process, as a successful plan must reflect the unique values and aspirations of the Fox Lake community. Engagement efforts were designed to ensure that voices from all fronts of the Village were heard, from leadership and residents to business owners, local organizations, and other key stakeholders. Through a series of structured events, pop-up engagements, and interactive conversations, community members were able to share their thoughts about the future of Fox Lake. While more to come, input gathered throughout the process was incorporated into the analysis, providing a well-rounded and reflective foundation for the plan. The following is an overview of the engagement process.

#### Stakeholder Listening Sessions

A series of focus groups and one-on-one listening sessions were conducted with key stakeholders who have deep connections to Fox Lake and a history of working on various Village initiatives. The planning team's engagement efforts were closely coordinated with A5's economic development branding process, ensuring that stakeholder input helped shape unique perspectives that ultimately informed the This Is The Life campaign. These interviews offered additional insights into local conditions and highlighted perspectives from different community groups. Participants included the Village Board, Planning & Zoning Commission, School Districts, Village Staff, non-profit organizations such as Promote Fox Lake, Chain O' Lakes Chamber of Commerce, as well as members of the business and real estate communities. These discussions helped capture views of decision-makers as well as the voices of residents and organizations that play a pivotal role in shaping the Village's future. The input provided through these sessions was invaluable in identifying both challenges and opportunities, grounding the planning process in real community needs and experiences. The following few pages dive into eight key themes that summarize conversations held with key stakeholders during focus group discussions.

**Business & Real Estate Community** *Promote Fox Lake*  
**PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION**  
**HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS** *Department Heads*  
*School Districts* **NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS**  
**CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**

## 1. DEVELOPMENT AND GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES

Stakeholders highlighted the need for Fox Lake to evolve its land use mix and intensity in order to keep up with neighboring communities and meet increasing demand. By focusing on mixed-use developments, Fox Lake can drive more activity in its downtown and other key areas, transforming from a predominantly seasonal town into a thriving, year-round community that serves as a destination, but more importantly, a true home for families and a balanced, vibrant place to live. Mixed-use projects, combining residential, commercial, and entertainment spaces, are seen as a way to boost the local economy and encourage more permanent residents to settle. These changes would also help Fox Lake compete more effectively with neighboring communities, which have successfully revitalized their downtowns and increased their appeal through strategic development.

## 2. DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION AND MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT

A recurring theme was the need to breathe new life into Fox Lake's downtown. Stakeholders highlighted that the downtown area, while has the potential to be charming, feels "tired" and lacks the vibrancy seen in other communities. Several mentioned the success of nearby towns like McHenry in revitalizing their downtowns through mixed-use developments and public-private partnerships. Stakeholders want to see a stronger push toward introducing mixed-use buildings that combine residential and commercial spaces, fostering a walkable community. There was a call to make the downtown more appealing to visitors and residents alike, with new restaurants, shops, and entertainment venues that capitalize on its proximity to the lake.

## 3. INFRASTRUCTURE CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Many stakeholders voiced concerns about the aging infrastructure in Fox Lake, particularly regarding roads, water systems, and public facilities. It was noted that these issues have been longstanding, with streets in need of repaving, failing drainage systems, and water mains that have not been updated in decades. Several also mentioned the opportunity to improve connectivity through bike paths and streetscape improvements, suggesting that upgrading infrastructure could enhance the quality of life for residents and make Fox Lake more appealing to newcomers. Investment in these areas was seen as crucial to supporting future development and ensuring the community remains attractive for year-round living.

*“We always think of Fox Lake as a destination but what about the people who live here? What will draw people here in the winter?”*

*“We need to revitalize the downtown and attract new businesses. Right now, people go to McHenry or Lake Geneva instead.”*

*“We have a unique opportunity to enhance downtown with mixed-use development – we just need to create the right environment.”*

*“We need better connectivity – bike paths and streetscape improvements could really bring this area together.”*

## 4. HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOOD REDEVELOPMENT

Stakeholders consistently emphasized the need for housing diversity and revitalization across Fox Lake, with particular focus on dilapidated homes in the inner circle of the city that are in desperate need of maintenance and care. These aging properties, many of which have not been upgraded in years, were seen as a major area of concern for improving the overall aesthetic and livability of the community. Some stakeholders mentioned that while Fox Lake has a large seasonal population, attracting more year-round residents would significantly benefit local businesses and enhance community engagement.

Multifamily housing and mixed-use developments were also frequently discussed, with a range of opinions. While some community members are anxious about introducing more multifamily units, others are excited about the prospect, as long as these projects meet high development standards. There is broad agreement that new housing, whether single-family or multifamily, should raise the overall quality of life in Fox Lake.

The topic of short-term rentals (STRs) was particularly divisive among stakeholders. Long-time residents expressed concern that renters who come for weekend vacations do not invest in the community, and that the owners of these properties are not committed to the long-term wellbeing of Fox Lake. However, others noted that many STR owners take great care of their properties to ensure they meet high standards for rentals. While opinions on STRs vary, the Village has implemented a cap on the number of short-term rentals, which was seen as a positive step toward maintaining balance.

## 5. TOURISM AND RECREATION

Tourism, particularly related to the lake, was highlighted as one of Fox Lake's greatest assets. Stakeholders noted the area's strong appeal to boaters, as well as its potential for expanding recreational activities both in summer and winter. However, they also acknowledged that the village needs more attractions to keep visitors coming year-round. Some mentioned ideas for new events, such as winter festivals, ice fishing, or building a resort, which could extend Fox Lake's appeal beyond the summer months. Enhancing public access to the lake and improving boat docking and parking options were also considered essential to supporting tourism growth.

“Lots of beautiful homes along the lake, but we have a lot of old, rundown homes that need attention. Some of these properties are eyesores.”

“Generally speaking, we need to attract more year-round residents. Our businesses won't thrive if we only have summer visitors.”

“People who are in opposition on STRs are mainly just not used to it - with the few exceptions it is a success and not a disaster.”

“We'll always be known as a boating destination, but during the winter, we could be doing more - ice fishing, ice sculptures, events to bring people in.”

## 6. COMMUNITY PRIDE AND ENGAGEMENT

Several stakeholders discussed the importance of fostering community pride and deeper resident engagement. While many feel Fox Lake has a strong, tight-knit community, there were concerns about a lack of involvement in maintaining and improving the village. Some pointed out that while the community shows dedication in spirit, there is a need for more active participation in local initiatives, from cleaning up neighborhoods to supporting local businesses. Encouraging a sense of ownership and pride was seen as key to moving Fox Lake forward.

## 7. SHIFTING IDENTITY AND COMMUNITY BRANDING

Many stakeholders expressed the importance of shifting Fox Lake's image away from its long-held reputation as a resort town focused on second homes, bars, and gambling. There is a strong desire to rebrand the community as a family-friendly destination with year-round appeal, where permanent residents can thrive. By improving local amenities, supporting small businesses, and creating spaces for community gathering, Fox Lake can reshape its identity and become a place that attracts families, not just weekend tourists. This shift in perception is seen as critical to fostering a stronger, more engaged community.

## 8. END OF STAGNATION AND NEW MOMENTUM

For many years, Fox Lake experienced a period of stagnation, where there was little progress in terms of development and change. However, stakeholders noted that this era is coming to an end, as the village has recently started making strides with key investments such as the \$12.5 million Lakefront Park project and several new developments in the pipeline. These moves are seen as the beginning of a new chapter for Fox Lake, signaling a more proactive and forward-thinking approach. Stakeholders stressed the importance of maintaining this momentum, ensuring that future development is strategic and realistic to keep the village moving in a positive direction.

“We need more involvement from residents – everyone needs to pitch in to make this a place people love to live.”

“Fox Lake is more than a place for second homes and bars; we need to show that it's a great place to raise a family.”

“Fox Lake has been stuck for a long time, but we're finally seeing things move forward with major investments.”

“The recent changes are promising, but we need to stay focused and keep pushing if we want real progress.”

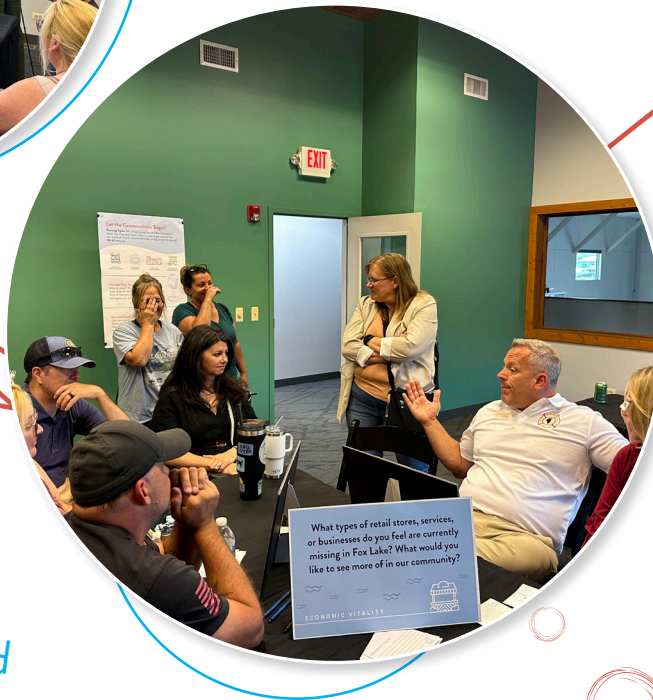
## Fox Lake Conversations

The planning process officially kicked off with Fox Lake Conversations, a community-wide engagement event held at Lakefront Park. This gathering celebrated recent achievements in the Village while setting the stage for thoughtful discussions about Fox Lake's future. The energy and enthusiasm at the event underscored the community's commitment to its growth and potential.

Participants engaged in round-table discussions, tackling important topics like housing, economic development, downtown revitalization, and placemaking. The conversations were dynamic and offered a range of perspectives on how the Village can evolve. The next few pages share a summary of the conversations held, by topic area.



“The lakes are one of Fox Lake’s biggest draws, and the reason many people chose to settle here.”



“There is a need to diversify cuisines, sit down options, fresh food options, food trucks, mom & pop shops, and more!”

## HOUSING ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION

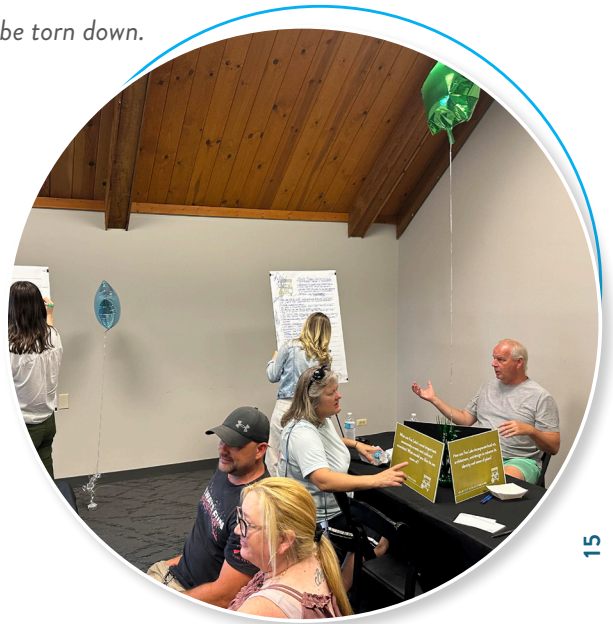
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### STRENGTHS:

- The lakes are one of Fox Lake's biggest draws and is why many people chose to settle there.
- Fox Lake is more affordable than many other communities. Still largely the case even though prices have increased a lot recently. Fox Lake offers a diverse range of price points, reflecting the community's positive economic diversity and welcoming different socio-economic groups.
- Small business owners are invested in the future of the Village and want positive change.
- Lakefront Park is a significant advantage, as it is the only public beach on the Chain O' Lakes.

### CHALLENGES:

- US Route 12 is notoriously dangerous, resembling a speedway. Safety improvements are essential. While some people cited speeding as a major issue, others highlighted concerns about traffic congestion.
- The school district rating is a factor that deters families from moving to Fox Lake.
- Participants noted that abandoned and vacant housing in poor condition is an issue, contributing to negative perceptions of Fox Lake among visitors.
- There were concerns over rental housing. While some participants were dismissive of most rental housing in general, most focused their concerns on short-term rentals in the Village.
  - Not everyone was against short-term rentals (STRs); some noted that many properties were in good condition, did not cause issues, and provided owners with an opportunity to earn extra income. However, most people considered STRs to be an issue, wanted existing codes to be enforced against these properties, and sought regulation of this use.
- Concerns over aging housing stock:
  - Many houses have aging retaining walls that need repair. Participants expressed the need for financial assistance, such as a grant program, to address this issue.
  - Some participants noted that FEMA requires waterfront property owners to elevate their properties whenever repairs are made.
- Certain older houses are in such poor condition that they simply need to be torn down.
- There is an overall negative perception of 'Section 8' housing.
- Some noted that housing quality away from the waterfront is an issue.
- Fox Lake is not seeing growth relative to neighboring communities.
  - Some residents who have lived in Fox Lake for a long time were somewhat pessimistic and didn't think that things could change much, even as they acknowledged the success of a lot of new initiatives like downtown beautification and the Lakefront Park.
  - Newer residents were optimistic and talked about an energy in Fox Lake that could enhance the area's potential.



## OPPORTUNITIES:

- People want more things to do on the waterfront. Participants expressed the need for amenities such as a public pier or more ways / attractions to draw people to walk along the water
- Target zones for new housing:
  - The undeveloped area near Culver's
  - Apartments near the train station, lakefront park, and in neighborhoods near downtown
  - One participant owns 1.1 acres of land in the area and mentioned wanting to build apartments but is concerned about neighbor pushback



## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION

### ASPIRATIONAL COMMUNITIES:

- McHenry, IL
- Antioch, IL
- Spring Grove, IL
- Arlington Heights, IL
- Grayslake, IL
- Galveston, TX

### WHAT'S GOOD ABOUT FOX LAKE?

- The lake
- Good establishments
  - Black Lung brewery
  - The Coffee Shop on 12
  - Sauce and Toss



## WHAT'S MISSING?

- Increase diversity in dining options, including sit-down restaurants, fresh food choices, food trucks, a food hall, barbecue spots, and independent fast-casual eateries.
- Introduce a health food store to meet community needs.
- Improve bike infrastructure to enhance mobility.
- Enhance sidewalk infrastructure for pedestrian safety, noting past incidents like a resident being hit by a car while walking her dog.
- Develop a simple, comfortable hotel that residents would recommend to friends, avoiding waterfront locations due to seasonality concerns.
- Focus on modern design and aesthetics to attract the younger generation engaged in social media.
- Attract big box retailers such as Costco and Home Depot.
- Open a sporting goods store to cater to active lifestyles.
- Increase adult activity options, including pickleball courts, beer gardens with games, outdoor volleyball, antique shops, mini golf, outdoor movie spaces, coffee and wine bars, and bookstores.
- Promote seasonal activities to attract tourism, similar to the viral success of Richardson Farm Fall Festival through social media marketing.

## OPPORTUNITIES FOR GROWTH

- Potential for restaurants and activities along the lakefront
- More businesses off Route 12. The Coffee Shop on 12 is a good retail example.
- Businesses that provide an experience that can be photographed and shared on social media will attract Millennials and Gen-Z.



## VILLAGE TO SUPPORT BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

- Clearly explain the use of tax incentives to residents to garner more community support. Currently, there is a misunderstanding that businesses are receiving free funding, which creates a negative environment for business.
- Enhance social media marketing to promote businesses and other amenities in Fox Lake.
- Permit real estate developers to promote their developments with signs, which are currently prohibited.
- Foster a more collaborative environment within the permitting department to support business development.

## DOWNTOWN ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION

### STRENGTHS:

- Easy connection to Metra train stop, which helps support businesses and reduces car dependency.
- Downtown can be viewed as a gateway to Fox Lake when getting off the Metra train.
- Vehicular access is generally viewed as efficient and no major concerns about traffic congestion were noted.

### CHALLENGES:

- Some residents felt it was difficult to find or locate all the businesses throughout Downtown.
- Sustaining Downtown businesses year-round, and not just during the summer months, is a challenge. Events that attract people during the winter, such as ice sculpting (with Lake Geneva's ice sculpting event as an example), were noted as potential solutions.
- Residents expressed a desire for easier and safer pedestrian access throughout Downtown, mentioning that some crosswalks are not properly striped.
- US 12 can be viewed as a barrier to pedestrians. Residents mentioned that businesses on the west side of US 12, such as Dockers Restaurant and Dairy Queen, feel like part of Downtown but are hard to access on foot due to the highway. Multiple residents suggested grade-separated (bridge or tunnel) pedestrian access across US 12 near Grand Avenue.
- There is a need for a policy or incentive program to keep Downtown properties well-maintained. Residents felt that multiple businesses and properties in the area could be considered deteriorating, with issues such as chipping paint and overgrown landscaping.
- Several residents noted that the consolidated ownership of a sizeable number of Downtown properties poses a challenge for stimulating redevelopment and reinvestment.
- Some residents felt unsafe while walking around the Downtown area. This concern was related to both the built environment not feeling inviting and the perceived potential for crime.
- There are limited activities for younger people in Downtown, leading them to seek entertainment elsewhere, such as in McHenry.



### OPPORTUNITIES:

- Increased access between Downtown and the lake/water is needed. The new Lakefront Park was mentioned as a great step in this direction.
- Wayfinding to help navigate Downtown and locate businesses was brought up numerous times.
- Some residents felt there should be more high-density residential development near Downtown, while others felt there was already enough housing in the area.
- Residents want increased pedestrian accessibility and accommodations in Downtown.

- There is a need for a gateway "feel" along Grand Avenue from US 12 into Downtown. This includes upgrading the type of businesses and land uses, as well as adding a physical gateway feature to denote the main entrance to Downtown.
- Residents mentioned the need for a Downtown Business Group or Chamber of Commerce to advocate for the awareness and growth of businesses.
- Residents wanted more high-quality businesses and amenities, such as an art gallery, bookstore, and boutique shops.

## IDENTITY & PLACEMAKING **ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION**

### PUBLIC ART AND VISUAL IDENTITY:

- Paint fox statues around the town, similar to the "Cows on Parade" in Chicago or the "Lighthouses" and "Stars" installations in Mundelein.
- Participants expressed a need for high end public art that represents what Fox Lake – possibly the pelicans? This is a touristy destination and something that is Instagram-able.

### DESTINATIONS AND CONNECTIVITY:

- Establish Fox Lake as a destination accessible by both boats and Metra trains.
- Introduce trolley cars that stop by various businesses and bars. Fox Lake should be seen as a collection of multiple destinations (e.g., downtown, lakefront, McDonald's area, among other key areas that people visit) connected by a boardwalk.
- Improve walkability and bike-ability with connecting sidewalks, as "driving everywhere is tough, and obsolete."
- Enhance the trail system to ensure completeness and connectivity.



### COMMUNITY AND ECONOMY:

- Promote local businesses to strengthen the economy bringing a Fox Lake identity into the marketing campaigns.
- Shift the town's reputation away from having a "high number of bars per capita," as noted in the Guinness World Records, to more diverse and family-friendly establishments.

### HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL EMPHASIS:

- Celebrate Fox Lake's heritage with markers identifying historic sites and structures.
- Highlight the town's sailing community and encourage more sailing activities.
- Develop art galleries, museums, and more diverse dining options, similar to those in Galveston, Texas.



## Fox Lake Tales

Alongside engaging discussions, the Lakota team launched the Fox Lake Tales podcast series, which features personal stories from residents—both longtime locals and newcomers. These narratives are shaping a shared vision for the future, capturing the diverse experiences that make up the fabric of Fox Lake.

### TALE 1

*A retired police officer who moved to the Fox Lake area in 1979 reminisces about the area's history. He recalls its popularity as a boating destination and the heyday when trains brought visitors from Chicago to enjoy resort hotels and various activities like lotus flower tours and more. While Fox Lake has changed, it remains a busy waterway with potential to become more of a destination than it is today. He notes improvements such as lakefront parks and new businesses, contrasting them with the area's past reputation for dive bars and excessive liquor licenses.*

#### Q: Did you grow up here?

**A:** No, I moved here in 1979 and joined the Round Lake Beach Police Department. I've been in the area for over 40 years.

#### Q: What do you love about Fox Lake?

**A:** I grew up on the water, so living in the Chain O' Lakes area felt natural after moving to the Chicago area post-Vietnam. It's the place to be for boaters.

#### Q: Do you think they're utilizing the water well?

**A:** Yes, Fox Lake is one of the busiest waterways in the U.S. Historically, it was a destination for people coming by train from Chicago, with fancy resort hotels and activities like lotus flower tours. Fox Lake was also known for gambling and gangsters back then.

#### Q: Do you feel like those activities have fallen away?

**A:** To some extent, yes. But with modern transportation and a busy waterway, Fox Lake could be revitalized as a destination, with activities like boating and winter sports still possible.

#### Q: How has Fox Lake changed?

**A:** It's improving. In the past, it had a rough reputation with dive bars and many liquor licenses, but now there are beautiful parks and businesses like Black Lung Brewery, and the atmosphere is changing, definitely for the better.

## TALE 2

*Michelle, a resident since 2015, bought a lake house and turned it into a short-term rental. She loves Fox Lake for its tight-knit community and rich history. She envisions Fox Lake growing into a destination like Lake Geneva, with more businesses. Her favorite memories include the Fourth of July and Christmas parades, which bring the community together with festive floats, fire departments, and decked-out Jeeps.*

### **Q: What do you love about Fox Lake?**

**A:** I moved here in 2015 after buying a lake house. The community is close-knit, with families that have been here for generations. It's growing, and I think it could become like Lake Geneva or Twin Lakes.

### **Q: Tell us more about your Fox Lake experience.**

**A:** I've had nothing but welcoming people, and I really feel that Fox Lake is growing as a community and hopefully a lot of businesses will come here. I've turned my lake house into a short-term rental, which is fun, because I can share my experience with my house. And everybody that doesn't have a lake house can come, and they can enjoy Fox Lake, as well as going on the lake.

### **Q: Do you have a favorite event or festival?**

**A:** Yes, the Fourth of July and Christmas parades are great. The community comes together with festive floats, Jeep runs, and support from local businesses and residents. Everyone gets dressed up and enjoys the parades together.

## TALE 3

*Nancy, a Fox Lake resident, moved to Fox Lake after working in nearby Round Lake. She enjoys the small community feel and local amenities like the lakeside restaurants. She started the social media group "Everything Fox Lake" after being the victim of a pedestrian accident, to engage the community and address issues like the safety of local streets and event information. The group also aims to change Fox Lake's reputation from a "party town" to a family-friendly community.*

### **Q: Why did you come to Fox Lake? And what do you like about this community?**

**A:** I used to work in Round Lake, and we'd come to Fox Lake for team lunches. When I was looking for a house, I found one here that met our needs, and we've loved the area. It's a beautiful small community with nice restaurants and a good theater.

### **Q: Why did you start the social media group "Everything Fox Lake"?**

**A:** After I was hit by a car walking my dog, I wanted a way to share local safety concerns. I noticed Fox Lake didn't have an engaged community group, so I started one. It's grown, and people now use it to discuss local events, issues, and recommendations.

### **Q: How do you think Fox Lake is changing?**

**A:** The reputation of Fox Lake as a "party town" still exists, but I want it to be known as a family-friendly community. We're working toward that by promoting local events and engaging residents.

## Pop-Up Series

Engagement didn't stop at formal meetings. The team continued gathering community input during informal settings, including the Friday Night Concert Series and the Mayor Fish Fry at Lakefront Park, where lively conversations sparked among attendees. As residents enjoyed food, music, and the festive atmosphere, they were invited to weigh in on what matters most for Fox Lake's future. Using a creative engagement exercise, participants were asked to share their thoughts on priorities that should "rise to the surface" or those that may need to "sink to the bottom." The feedback collected during this event was essential in understanding what the community values most, from everyday needs to long-term aspirations.





# The Fox Lake We Know

## SECTION 3

### Local History

Fox Lake's history is closely tied to its natural setting, the Chain O'Lakes waterway system, and its development as a popular resort destination. Images in this section are courtesy of Fox Lake (Postcard History Series).



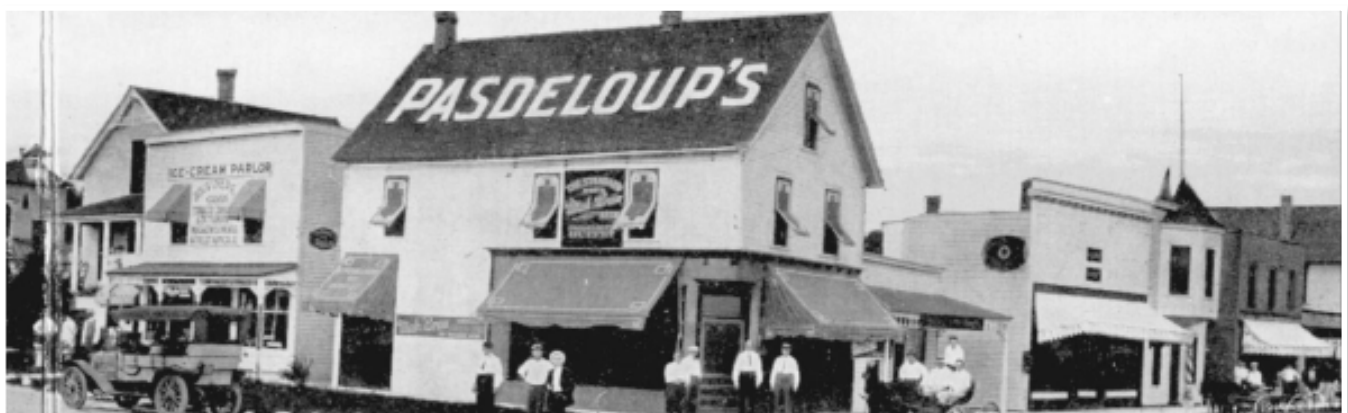
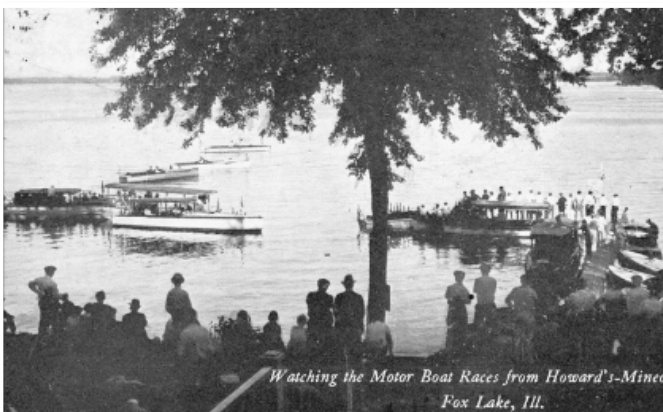
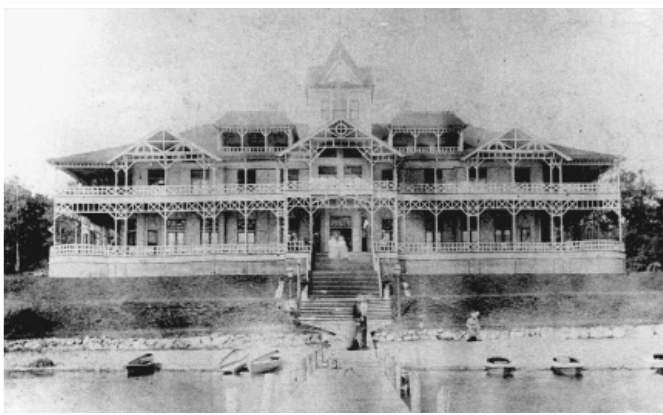
### Early History

- **Chain O'Lakes Formation:** The Chain O'Lakes formed when the Wisconsin glacier melted leaving behind numerous lakes in the Fox River Valley including Pistakee, Nippersink, Fox, and others.
- **Indigenous Inhabitants:** Before European settlement, the area around Fox Lake was inhabited by Native American tribes, primarily the Potawatomi and Miami. The rich natural resources, including the abundance of water, made it an ideal location for fishing, hunting, and gathering.
- **Early Settlers:** The area was known as the Fox Lake Region in the early years and remained sparsely settled into the 1880s due to its challenging terrain, characterized by wetlands that made travel difficult through most of the year. In the late 1800s, wealthy sportsmen discovered Fox Lake's beauty and navigable channels and began constructing clubhouses along its shores. Before the development of roads and trains, the area was accessed by steamboats.



## Development as a Resort Destination

- **The Railroad:** The arrival of the railroad in the 1880s significantly boosted Fox Lake's development, with the opening of the Fox Lake Station in 1901. The Milwaukee Road Railroad made the area more accessible, particularly to residents of Chicago seeking a getaway from the city. Fox Lake, with its clear waters and natural beauty, quickly became a popular resort destination.
- **The Resort Boom:** Transportation improvements brought significant interest to the area, resulting in the rapid construction of clubhouses, resorts, hotels, cottages, and vacation homes to accommodate the influx of visitors and Fox Lake began to be recognized as a vacationer's getaway destination. The Mineola Hotel, which still stands today, was built in 1894. Featuring 100 rooms, it was the largest wooden structure in Illinois.
- **Incorporation:** The Village was incorporated in 1907 with roughly 400 year-round residents and a summer population of 20,000, driven by the necessity to ensure local control over businesses and resorts, manage services, and establish regulations. This move also aimed to prevent county leaders from regulating drinking and gambling activities at the numerous resorts.
- **Prohibition Era:** The 1920s brought Prohibition, but this didn't dampen Fox Lake's popularity. In fact, the area became a hotspot for speakeasies and clandestine drinking establishments. Chicago gangsters, including members of Al Capone's outfit, were known to frequent Fox Lake, and it became part of the broader story of Prohibition-era Chicago.





## Post-World War II Era

- **Suburbanization:** Between 1930 and 1950s, the nature of Fox Lake began to change. The rise of the automobile and improved highways made the area even more accessible, leading to more permanent residences rather than just vacation homes. The village saw significant growth as people moved out of Chicago and other urban areas, seeking suburban and semi-rural lifestyles.
- **Recreational Activities:** Throughout the 20th century, Fox Lake continued to be a center for recreational activities, especially boating, fishing, and other water sports. In 1945 the State Park was established encompassing 6,900 acres within the Chain, adjacent to Fox Lake. The State Park preserves and protects this unique ecosystem and creates an outdoor destination for boating, fishing, camping, and hiking.

## Fox Lake Today

- **Lakeside Community:** In recent decades, Fox Lake has continued to grow, blending its historical resort identity with suburban development. While it still attracts tourists, it is also home to a growing population of year-round residents seeking an outdoor way of life.
- **Community and Culture:** Today, Fox Lake is a diverse community with a rich cultural heritage. The village hosts various events throughout the year, celebrating its history and the natural beauty of the region. The recent development of Lakefront Park has continued this celebration and created a new place to foster community and events.

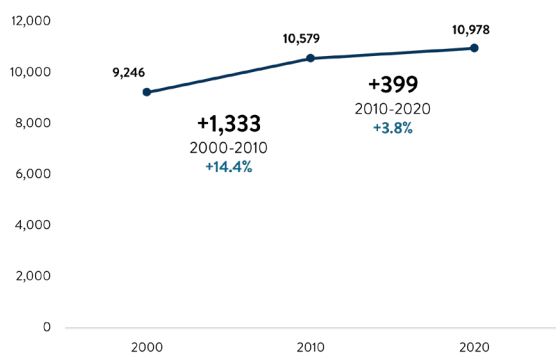


# Community Profile

## Population Change

Between 2010 and 2020, Fox Lake gained approximately 400 residents and experienced a population growth of roughly 3.8 percent. According the U.S. Census, Fox Lake had 10,978 residents in 2020. The Village's population increased by 1,732 between 2000 and 2020, with most of that growth occurring in the early 2000s. These growth patterns largely mirror those occurring in Lake County peer communities. Communities like Antioch, Johnsburg and Lake Villa similarly saw strong population growth in the 2000s followed by a slowdown in growth during the 2010s. Average household size in Fox Lake decreased from 2.35 in 2010 to 2.18 in 2020, matching similar trends occurring across Lake County. Decreases in average household are the result of fewer families with children and more single-person households in Fox Lake.

**Figure 1:** Fox Lake Population Growth



Source: U.S. Census (2000, 2010, 2020), SB Friedman

**Figure 2:** Fox Lake Population Growth Compared to Peer Communities

	2000	2010	2020	2010-2020 PERCENT CHANGE
Village of Fox Lake	9,246	10,579	10,978	3.8%
Lake County	644,356	704,596	714,342	1.4%
Village of Antioch	8,860	14,430	14,622	1.3%
Village of Johnsburg	5,391	6,337	6,355	0.3%
Village of Lake Villa	6,078	8,741	8,741	0.0%
Village of Lakemoor	2,751	6,071	6,182	2.7%
Village of Volo	180	2,929	6,122	109.0%



**4,911**

Households in 2020



**2.18**

Average HH Size in 2020

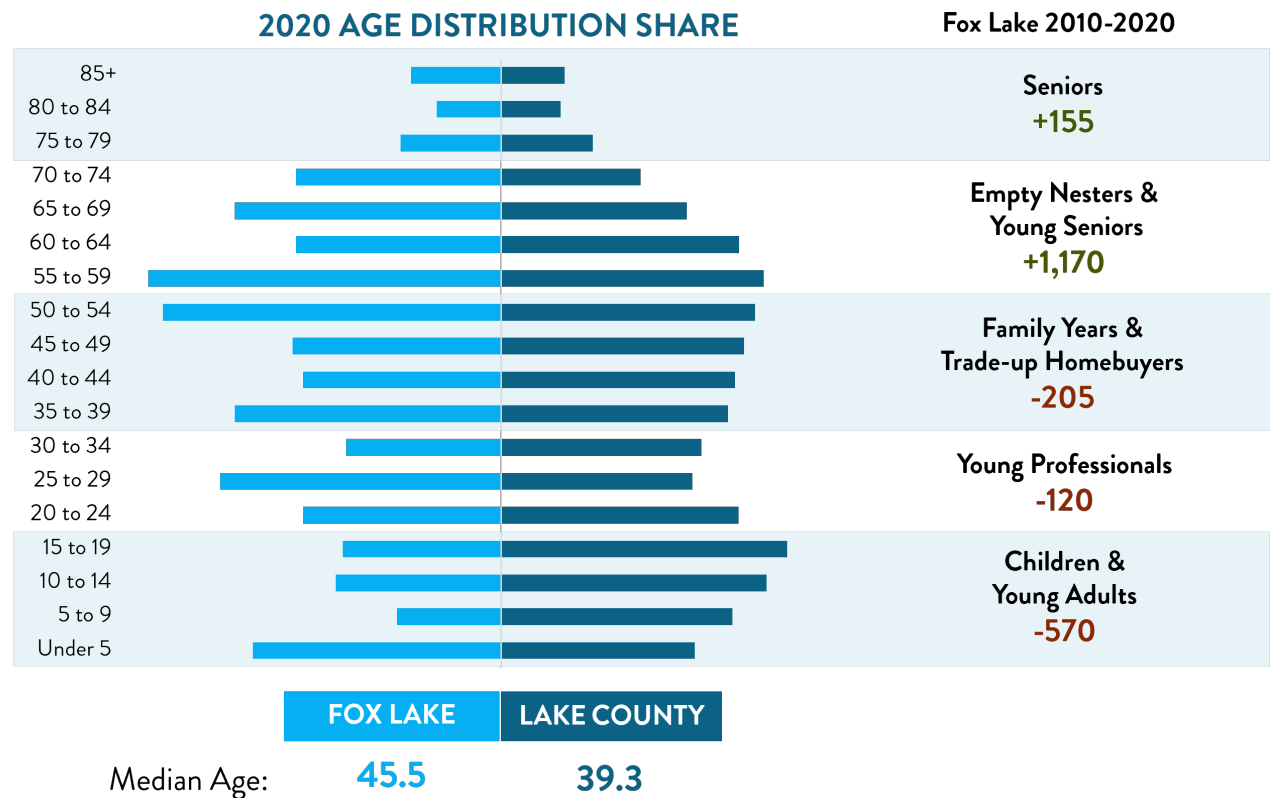
# Population Composition

Compared to Lake County, Fox Lake has a higher median age, which indicates that village residents are aging in place. While Lake County has a relatively even population distribution across all age cohorts, Fox Lake is skewed toward older adults. Over 45 percent of the Fox Lake population is age 50 or older, as opposed to 36 percent in Lake County. Conversely, only 19 percent of the Village population is younger than 19, as opposed to 27 percent in Lake County.

Between 2010 and 2020, the median age of village residents increased from approximately 39 to 46 years old. During this time, total population increased by 399 people. However, population growth was not even across age cohorts. Fox Lake experienced a loss of 650 people ages 5 to 24, a loss of 765 people ages 30 to 49, and a gain of 1,545 residents ages 50 years and older.

While the Lake County population overall is also aging, it is aging to a lesser extent, with the median age increasing from 37 to 39 years old since 2010.

Figure 3: Fox Lake Population Composition



Source: U.S. Census (2000, 2010, 2020), SB Friedman

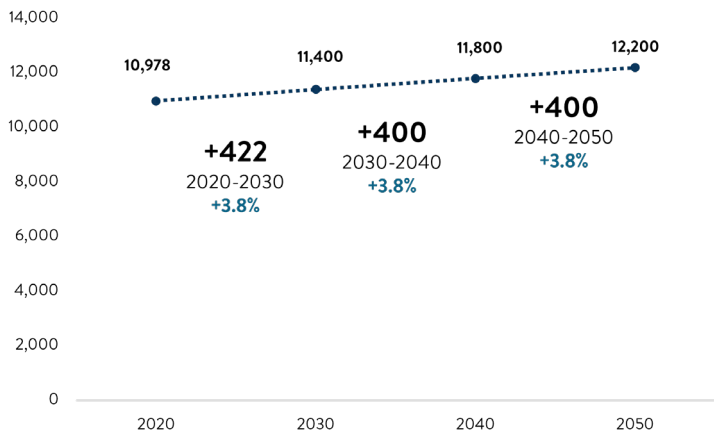
# Population Projections

By the year 2050, the population of Fox Lake is projected to grow by 12 percent. Between 2010 and 2020, Fox Lake grew by 3.8 percent as it added nearly 400 residents. If this historic growth rate continues through 2050, Fox Lake’s population would rise to approximately 12,200.

Average household size decreased between 2010 and 2020. However, assuming average household size remains constant through 2050, the projected population growth would translate into 590 new households in Fox Lake.

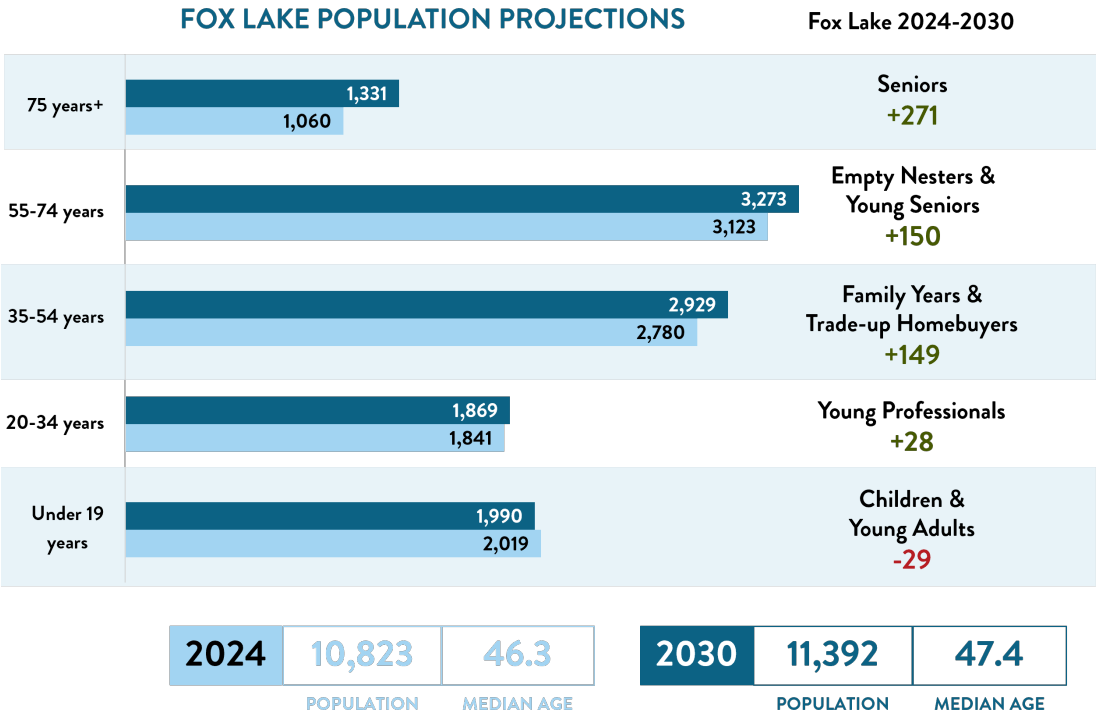
Between 2024 and 2030, the population of Fox Lake is projected to grow by approximately 570 residents. The age groups that are anticipated to grow the fastest include Seniors and Empty Nesters. The youngest age cohort is forecasted to decline, continuing the shift toward an older population.

**Figure 4:** Fox Lake Projected Population Growth



Source: U.S. Census (2010, 2020), SB Friedman

**Figure 5:** Fox Lake Population Projections by Age Group



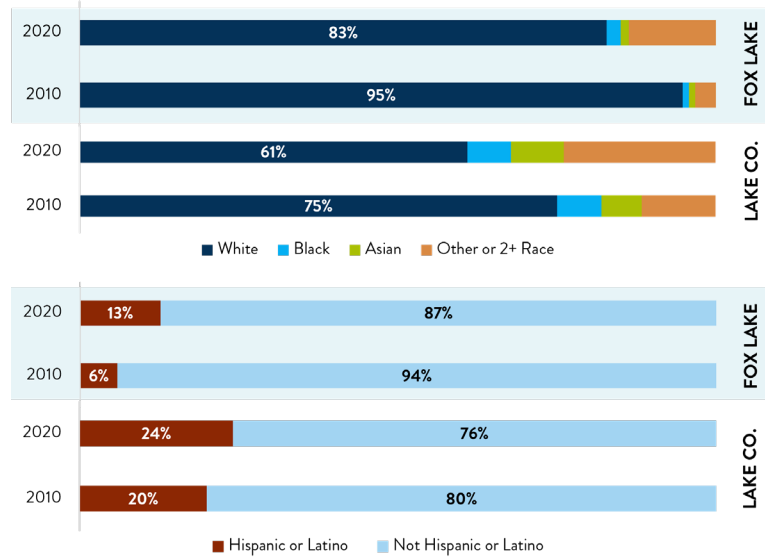
Source: U.S. Census (2010, 2020), SB Friedman

## Race/Ethnicity

Fox Lake is less diverse than Lake County, though racial diversity has increased over the last decade. In 2010, 95 percent of Fox Lake's population was White; in 2020, 83 percent of the population was White. This trend was driven in large part by significant growth in the share of residents that identify as two or more races.

The share of Fox Lake residents who identify as Hispanic or Latino more than doubled between 2010 and 2020, growing from six percent to 13 percent in 2020.

**Figure 6:** Fox Lake Racial and Ethnic Composition



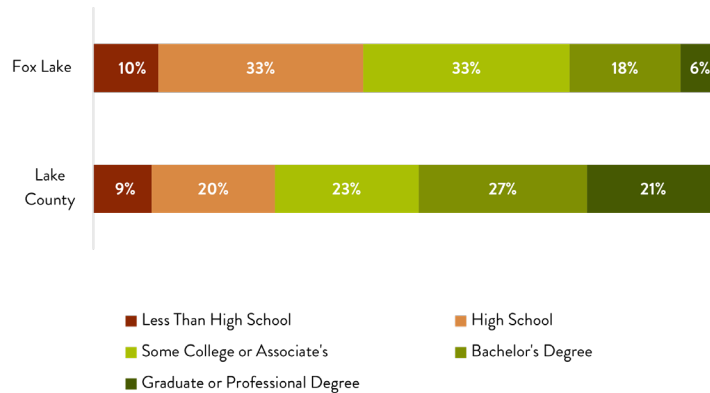
Source: ACS (2010), U.S. Census (2010, 2020), SB Friedman

## Educational Attainment

Approximately 24 percent of Fox Lake's adult population (age 25 and older) held a bachelor's degree or higher in 2022. Meanwhile, 48 percent of Lake County's adult population held a bachelor's degree or higher.

Relative to the county, Fox Lake has a higher share of residents with some college or an associate's degree, but not a bachelor's degree.

**Figure 7:** Adult Educational Attainment

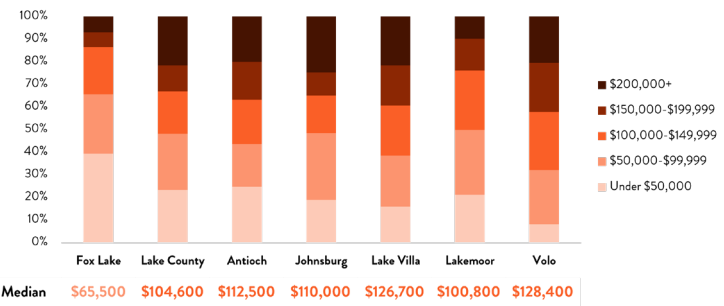


Source: ACS (2022), SB Friedman

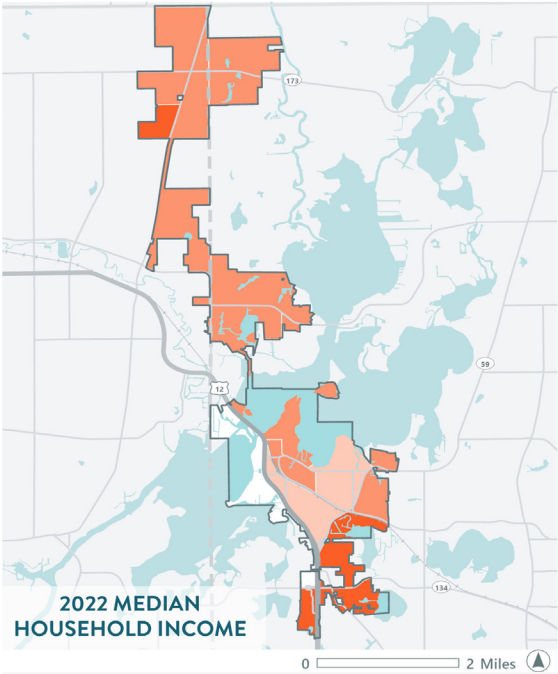
# Household Income

Household incomes in Fox Lake are on average lower than incomes in peer communities. Median household income in Fox Lake increased from \$56,100 in 2010 to \$65,500 in 2022. Comparatively, Lake County has a higher 2022 median income of \$104,600. Fox Lake has a high share of seniors, who have lower incomes than Fox Lake residents as a whole. Excluding senior households, approximately 41 percent of households in Fox Lake earn more than \$100,000. Seasonal residents are not included in the median income estimate. Seasonal homes account for ±6 percent of housing in Fox Lake.

Figure 8: 2022 Household Income



Source: U.S. Census (2010), ACS 5-Year Estimate (2022), ESRI Business Analyst, Lake County, McHenry County, SB Friedman



# Resident Occupations

Fox Lake’s residents work in a similar mix of industries as Lake County residents. 20 percent of all employed Fox Lake residents work in Healthcare, Education, and Social Assistance. For both Fox Lake and county residents, Healthcare, Education and Social Assistance is the largest employment sector, followed by Retail and Wholesale Trade.

Figure 9: Resident Occupations

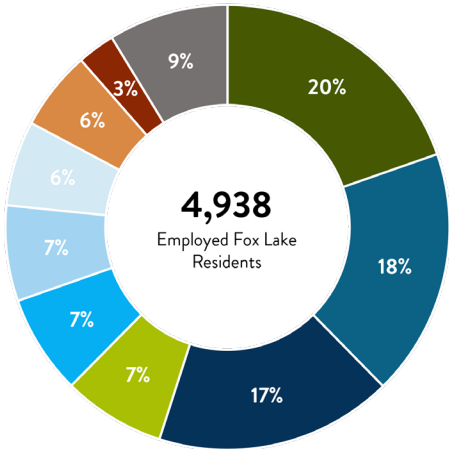


Figure 10: Fox Lake Versus Lake County Resident Occupations

2021 EMPLOYMENT BY SECTOR	FOX LAKE RESIDENTS	LAKE COUNTY RESIDENTS
Healthcare, Education, and Social Assistance	971	65,589
Retail and Wholesale Trade	888	53,201
Manufacturing and Mining	855	52,751
Accommodation and Food Services	368	20,690
Administration	357	24,552
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	343	26,957
Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate	305	22,743
Construction	285	11,407
Public Administration	135	7,535
Other	431	29,059
TOTAL	4,938	314,484

Source: U.S. Census Longitudinal Employer-Housing Dynamics (LEHD), SB Friedman

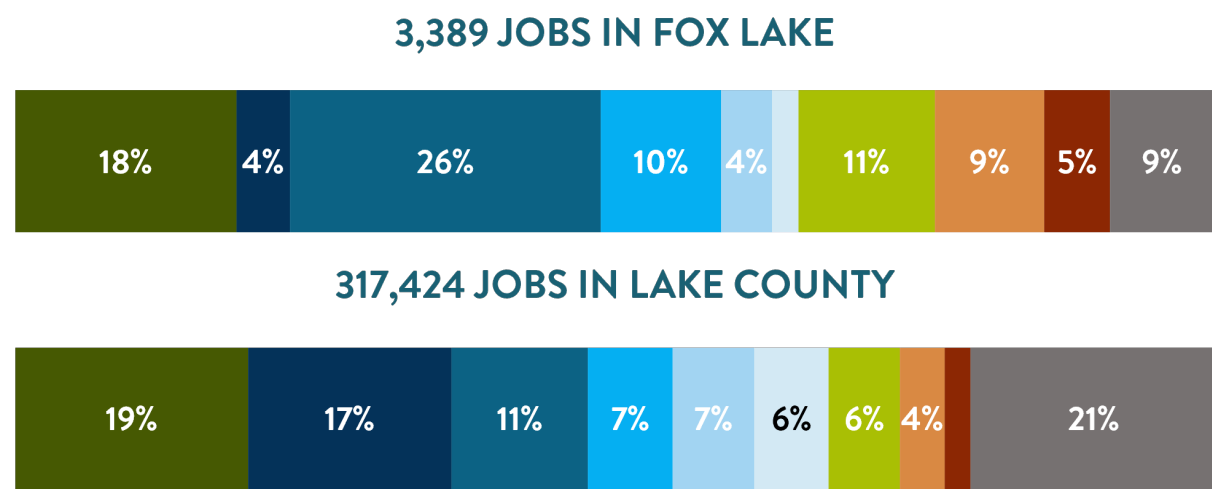
# Village Employment Composition

Over 25 percent of jobs in Fox Lake are in Retail and Wholesale Trade. Fox Lake jobs are primarily concentrated in Retail and Wholesale Trade, Healthcare, Education and Social Assistance, and Accommodation. Lake County, comparatively, has high job concentrations in Healthcare, Education and Social Assistance, Manufacturing and Mining, Retail and Wholesale Trade, and Administration. Jobs in Fox Lake account for 1.1 percent of jobs in Lake County.

**Figure 11:** 2021 Jobs by Sector in Fox Lake Versus Lake County

2021 EMPLOYMENT BY SECTOR	FOX LAKE WORKERS	LAKE COUNTY WORKERS
Healthcare, Education and Social Assistance	878	62,810
Manufacturing and Mining	625	54,894
Retail and Wholesale Trade	386	36,912
Administration	341	22,863
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	309	21,989
Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate	186	20,135
Accommodation and Food Services	143	19,160
Construction	152	12,176
Public Administration	75	6,889
Other	294	66,485
TOTAL	3,389	317,424

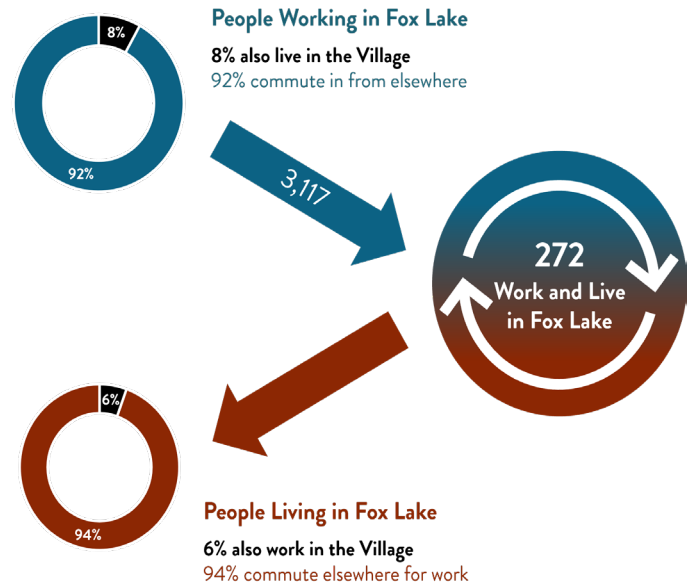
**Figure 12:** 2021 Employment Composition in Fox Lake Versus Lake County



Source: LEHD, SB Friedman

## Commuting Patterns

There are 272 Fox Lake residents (5.5 percent) who also work in Fox Lake. Over 4,600 Fox Lake residents commute out of the village for work, while 3,100 people work in the village but live elsewhere. Fox Lake residents most frequently commute to Chicago, Waukegan, McHenry or Gurnee for work. The Fox Lake workforce largely lives in Chicago and surrounding municipalities including Round Lake Beach, McHenry and Spring Grove.



## Demographic Takeaways

Fox Lake is a stable community on the northwestern edge of Lake County. With just nearly 11,000 residents, Fox Lake is a small municipality relative to surrounding peer communities. Limited population growth in recent years is in part due to the existing population aging in place. While the village has seen marginal growth in population since 2010, growth patterns vary substantially by age cohort. The village has experienced a decline in younger residents that was entirely offset by an increase in senior residents.

Fox Lake residents have incomes lower than those of surrounding peer communities. There are a very limited number of Fox Lakers who both live and work in the village, however the job sectors present in Fox Lake closely mirror the job-sector breakdown of Fox Lake residents working elsewhere.



# Fox Lake Board & Commissions

The Boards and Commissions in Fox Lake play a vital role in the community's wellbeing and bring together diverse perspectives and expertise to guide the village's growth and operations. These bodies provide essential oversight, ensuring that the village's policies and projects align with the needs and interests of its residents. By addressing specific areas such as planning, safety, and emergency services, these bodies help the village manage resources effectively, respond to community needs, and maintain a high quality of life for residents. Their advisory role is crucial in creating informed policies, enhancing civic engagement, and supporting sustainable development.

- **Mayor (Village President):** The Mayor is independently elected to a four-year term and serves as the functional head of government for the Village, as well as President of the Village Board. The Mayor's responsibilities include setting program/policy agendas, representing the Village at official meetings and in intergovernmental relationships, and appointing local officials - with the advice and consent of the Board - including the Village Administrator, Police Chief, and others.
- **Village Board (VB):** The Village Board consists of six Trustees and the Mayor that meet bimonthly. Trustees are elected to "at large" positions for four-year terms. The Village Board is responsible for making policy decisions, passing ordinances, and managing the overall governance of the village. Trustees also serve on at least one of three Strategic Planning Teams: Economic Development, Infrastructure, and Recreation. The purpose of these Strategic Planning Teams is to set priorities, objectives, funding recommendations, and performance measurements for Village projects.
- **Village Administrator:** Appointed by the Mayor and the Village Board, the Village Administrator is responsible for the day-to-day leadership of and oversight of all Village departments. This includes appointment of Village staff to assist or lead commissions and committees, program administration, policy recommendations, labor relations, contract administration, and public communications.
- **Planning and Zoning Commission (PZC):** Established in 2017 following the consolidation of the Village's Plan Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals, the seven member PZC is charged with updating and amending the Village's comprehensive plan and zoning ordinance. Other responsibilities include holding hearings and reviewing proposed development plans, rezonings, variances, and special use permits. Commissioners are appointed by the Mayor and the Village Board and must live in the community. The PZC meets once a month.
- **Fire & Police Commission:** The Fire and Police Commission consists of three members appointed by the Mayor and Village Board. The FPC is responsible for appointing all members of the Village's Police and Fire Department, as well as establishing rules for appointments or removals from these positions including applicant testing and status of officers in the police academy. The FPC meets monthly.
- **9-1-1 Committee:** The 911 Committee, the Emergency Telephone Systems Board, meets quarterly and consists of the Chiefs of the Village's Police and Fire Departments, a staff member from each respective department, and a Village resident or someone residing in its 911 service area. Near future plans, as part of a broader Lake County initiative, will result in the consolidation and dissolution of the local 911 center.



# Fox Lake Analyzed

## SECTION 4

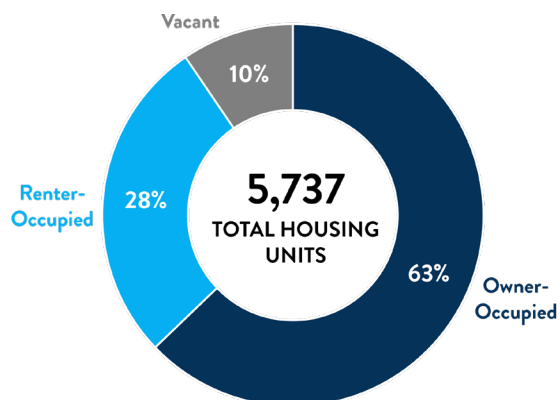
### Residential Market Assessment

#### Housing Tenure

Most Fox Lake households are homeowners. As of 2022, owner-occupied households comprise ±3,600 units, or 63 percent of total units in Fox Lake compared to Lake County where owner-occupied households comprise 70 percent of total units. Renter-occupied households comprise ±1,600 units, or 28 percent of total units in Fox Lake similar to Lake County at 25 percent.

A tenth of housing units in Fox Lake were vacant in 2022 compared to five percent of households in Lake County. These include homes that are available for rent or for sale, and those that have been rented or sold, but are not yet occupied. The vacant figure also includes homes that are used for seasonal, recreational or occasional use.

Figure 13: 2022 Housing Tenure



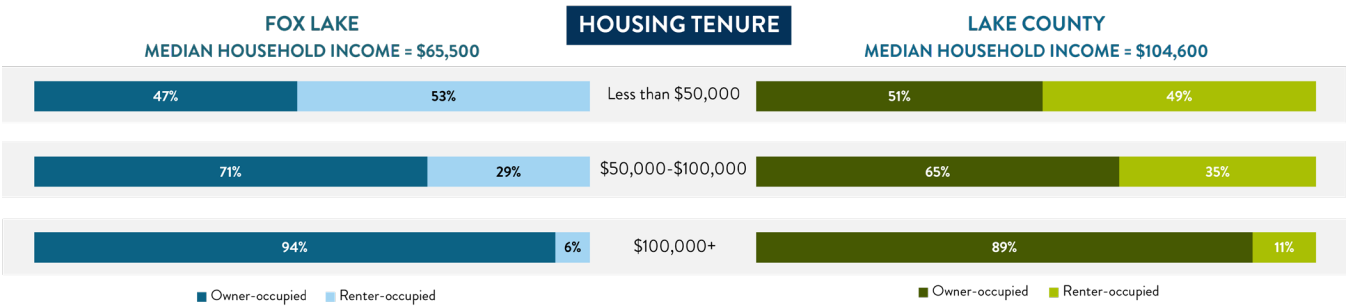
Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates (2022), SB Friedman



In both Fox Lake and Lake County, the homeownership rate grows as household income increases. A little more than half of Fox Lake households that earn less than \$50,000 are renters. Households that earn more than \$50,000, meanwhile are much more likely to own their home. Among households that earn above \$100,000 annually, very few (6 percent) are renters.

Similarly, most Lake County households are homeowners. However, the county has a higher share of households earning above \$50,000 that rent than Fox Lake. These households—particularly those earning above \$100,000—are more likely to be choice renters, often selecting to live in buildings in walkable locations with amenities.

**Figure 14:** 2022 Housing Tenure by Income



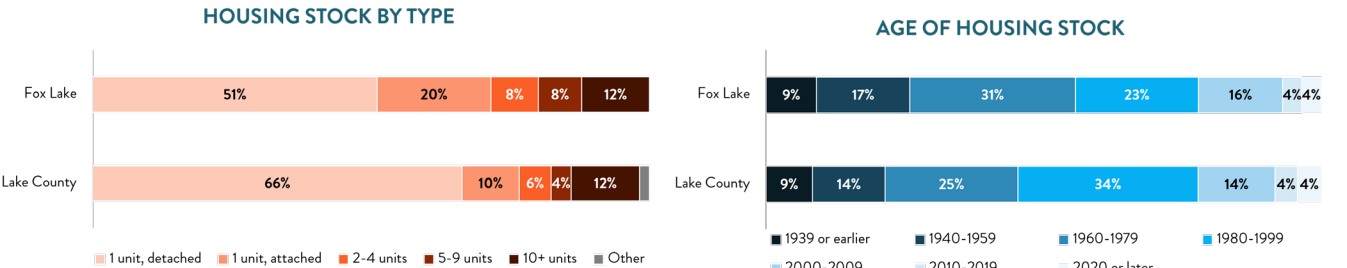
Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates (2022), SB Friedman

## Housing Stock

Fox Lake has more diversity of housing stock than the county as a whole. Single-family homes account for most of Fox Lake’s housing stock; 71 percent of Fox Lake homes are single-family, compared to 76 percent in Lake County. However, relative to Lake County, Fox Lake has a much larger share of attached single-family homes (i.e., townhomes). Attached single-family homes are primarily located within age-restricted subdivisions or along waterfront areas. Fox Lake also has a higher proportion of homes in 2–4- and 5–9-unit buildings.

Most Fox Lake homes were built in the late 20th century. More than half (54 percent) of all existing homes in Fox Lake were built between 1960 and 1999. Nearly a quarter (24 percent) of Fox Lake homes were built after 2000.

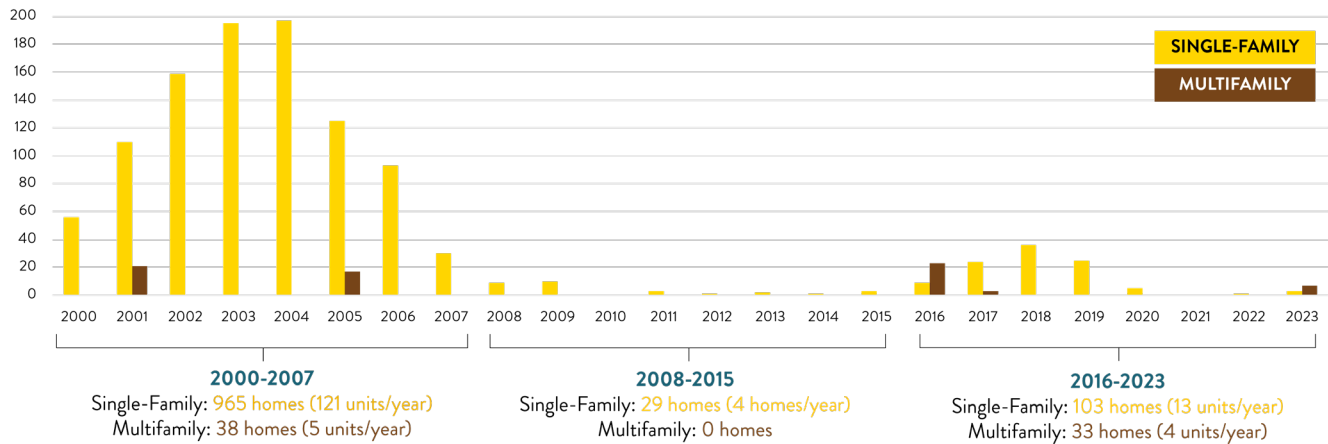
**Figure 15:** Housing Stock by Type & Age



Source: US Census Bureau, SB Friedman

# Housing Tenure

**Figure 16: Residential Development**



Source: SB Friedman, U.S. Census Building Permits

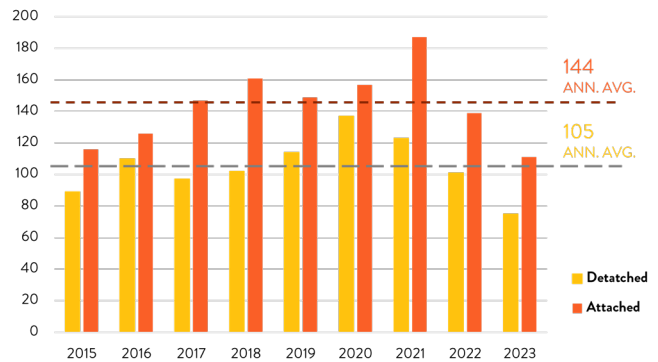
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**Figure 17: Home Sales Over Time**



Source: Midwest Real Estate Data Multiple Listing Service (MLS), SB Friedman

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## New Housing Permits

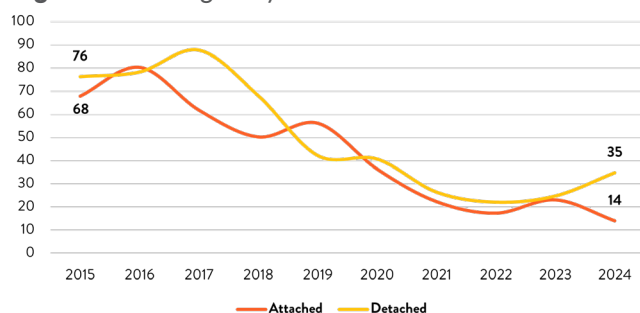
There has been minimal new housing developed in Fox Lake since the Great Recession. Similar to many Lake County communities, residential development in Fox Lake peaked in the early 2000s and has yet to return to pre-Recession levels. Residential development throughout the 2000s was largely single-family detached housing. The pace of development started to increase from 2016–2019 but slowed again following the COVID pandemic.

## Home Sales Over Time

The number of annual home sales has declined by 40 percent since 2021. The absence of new housing unit development has implications on the for-sale market for the existing inventory. Since 2015, 250 homes have been sold annually in Fox Lake, on average. Attached homes only represent 36 percent of all owner-occupied residential units in Fox Lake, but account for 58 percent of home sales over this period, exceeding the number of sales of detached homes in every year from 2015 to 2023.

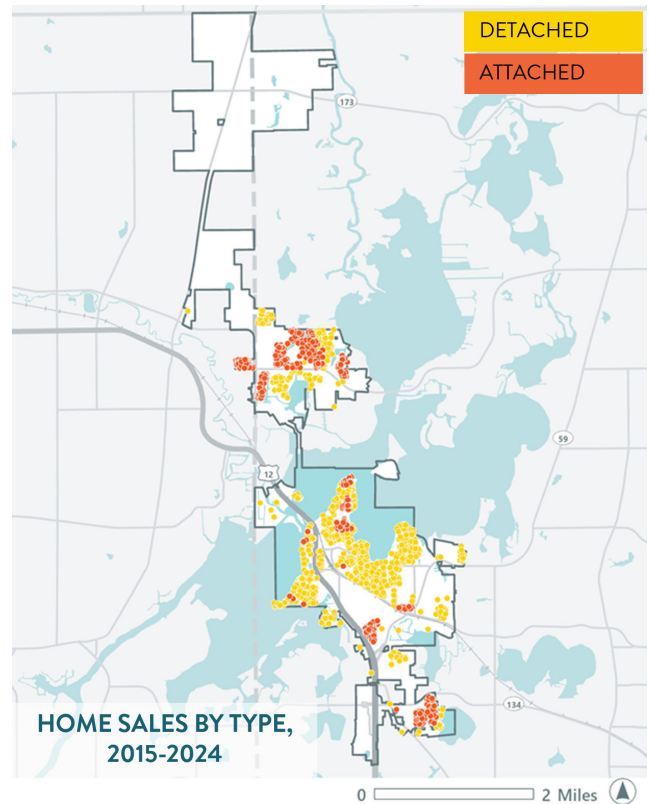
As interest rates started to rise in 2022, the number of attached and detached home sales declined. The total number of home sales in 2023 was 40 percent lower than for 2021.

**Figure 18: Average Days on Market**



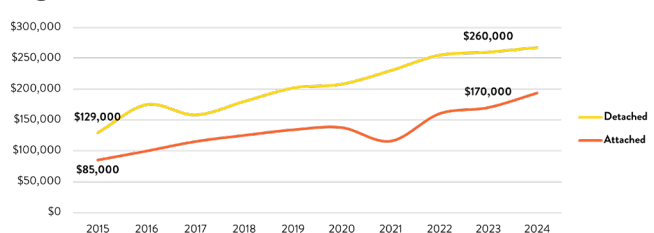
Source: Esri Business Analyst, MLS, SB Friedman

**Figure 20: Homes for Sale by Type, 2015–2024**



Source: Esri, MLS, S&P Dow Jones Indices LLC, SB Friedman

**Figure 19: Median Home Sales Price Over Time**



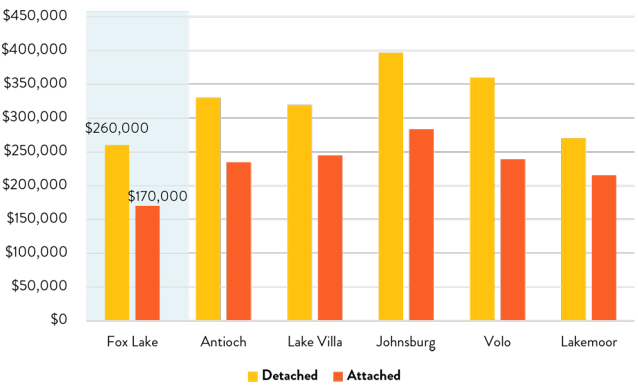
Source: Esri, MLS, S&P Dow Jones Indices LLC, SB Friedman

# MEDIAN HOME PRICES IN PEER COMMUNITIES

Homes in Fox Lake are generally more affordable than in other Lake County peer communities. Even with rapid increases in sales prices, Fox Lake remains more affordable than many Lake County peer communities. Across Fox Lake in 2023, the median detached home sold for \$260,000, while the median attached home sold for \$170,000.

Meanwhile, in peer communities the median sales price for detached homes ranged from \$270,000 to \$397,000. The median sales price for attached homes ranged from \$215,000 to \$283,000.

Figure 21: Median Home Sales Prices, 2023



Source: MLS, SB Friedman

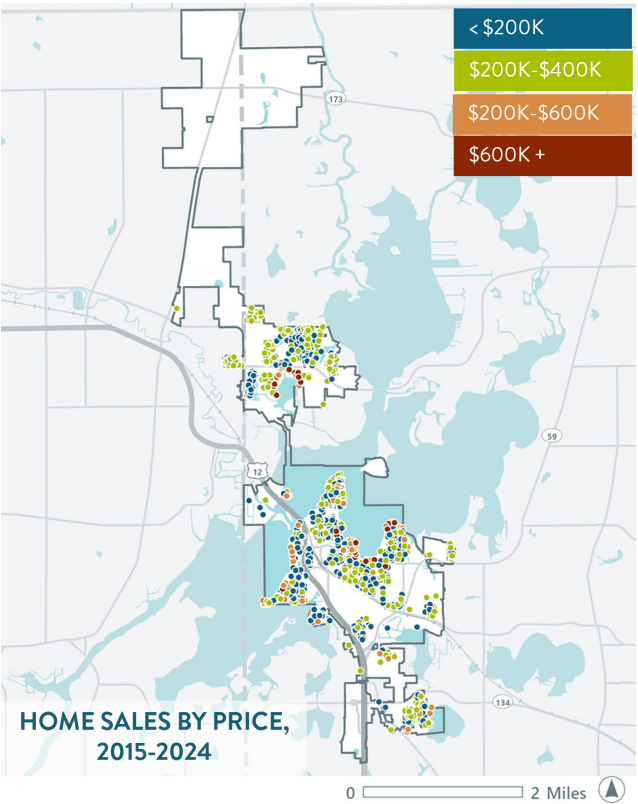
# Residential For-Sale Supply

Fox Lake is a more affordable community relative to other Lake County peer communities. In 2023, nearly three-quarters (74 percent) of all homes sold in Fox Lake sold for less than \$400,000. A quarter (25 percent) of homes sold for less than \$200,000.

The for-sale housing market in Fox Lake is segmented geographically. Nearly all homes sold for more than \$400,000 in the last decade are located on the waterfront. Conversely, most homes located inland sold for less than \$400,000.

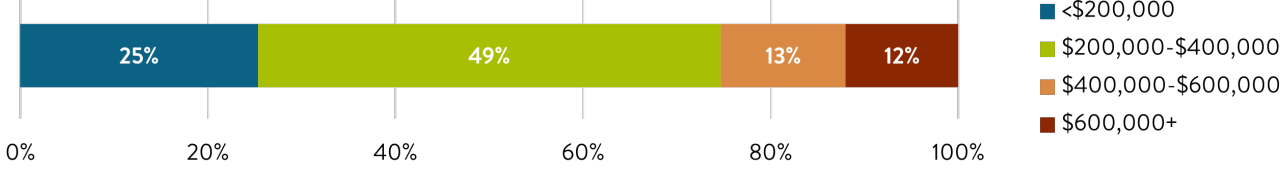
Over the last decade, home price has not appeared to impact the time on market. Between 2015 and 2024, higher-cost homes (those over \$400,000) reported similar time on market prior to sale as lower-cost homes. The relatively consistent time on market indicates demand for homes of all price points in Fox Lake.

Figure 22: Homes for Sale by Type, 2015-2024



Source: Esri, MLS, SB Friedman

Figure 23: Total Home Sales By Price, 2023



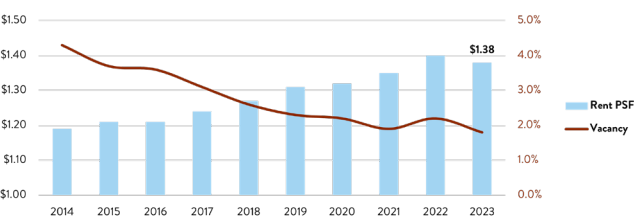
Source: Esri, MLS, SB Friedman

# Commercial Multifamily

There are 23 multifamily rental properties in Fox Lake, totaling 519 units. These properties are low- and mid-rise properties, ranging in size from 5 to 105 units. The most recent rental multifamily development in Fox Lake was the 100-unit Thomas Place, an independent living facility, at Fox Lake completed in 2010.

In 2023, the average market-rate multifamily per square foot rent in Fox Lake was \$1.38. Average rent has increased steadily, growing by 1.7 percent annually, on average, between 2014 in 2023. While no multifamily properties were built over this period, the vacancy rate fell from 4.3 percent to 1.8 percent. A vacancy rate below 5 percent indicates a constrained rental market.

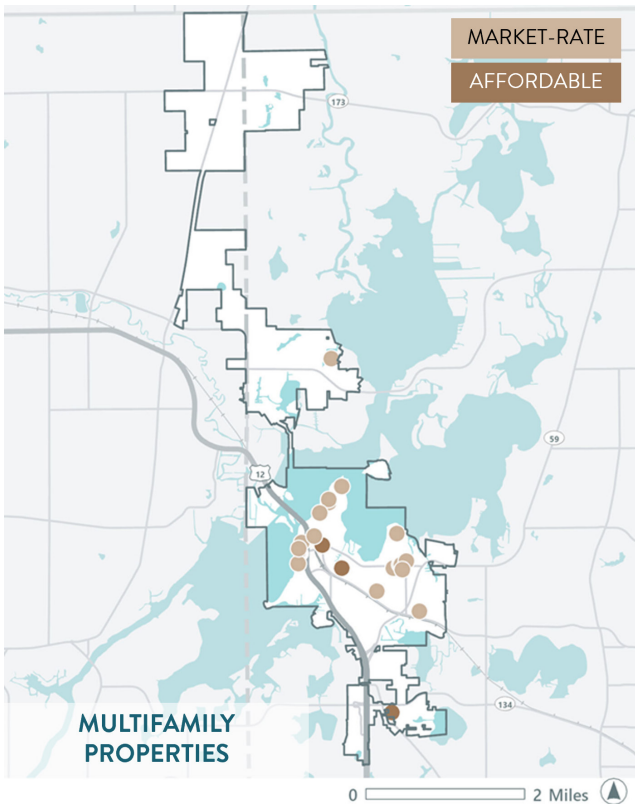
Figure 24: Average Multifamily Rent and Vacancy



Source: CoStar, Esri, SB Friedman



Figure 25: Multi-Family Properties



Source: CoStar, Esri, SB Friedman

# Seasonality

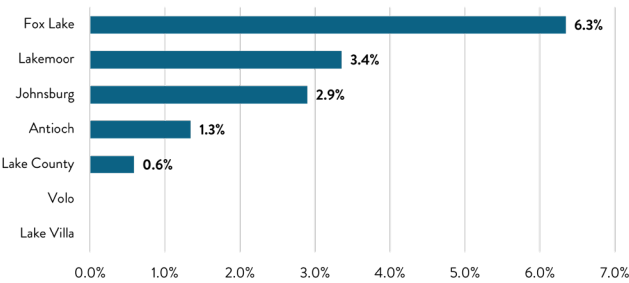
Fox Lake has a higher share of homes used seasonally compared to peer communities. According to U.S. Census Data, homes identified for seasonal, recreational or occasional use comprised approximately 6 percent of Fox Lake’s total housing stock. Fox Lake has double the share of seasonal housing relative to peer communities, which range from 0-3 percent. Across all of Lake County, seasonal homes are 0.6 percent of the total county housing stock.

**Figure 26: Seasonal Homes Comparison**

	Total Housing Units	Total Seasonal Housing Units	Seasonal Share of Total Housing
Village of Fox Lake	5,737	364	6.30%
Lake County	269,416	1,572	0.60%
Village of Antioch	5,451	73	1.30%
Village of Johnsburg	2,553	74	2.90%
Village of Lake Villa	3,136	--	0.00%
Village of Lakemoor	2,476	83	3.40%
Village of Volo	2,226	--	0.00%

Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates (2022), SB Friedman

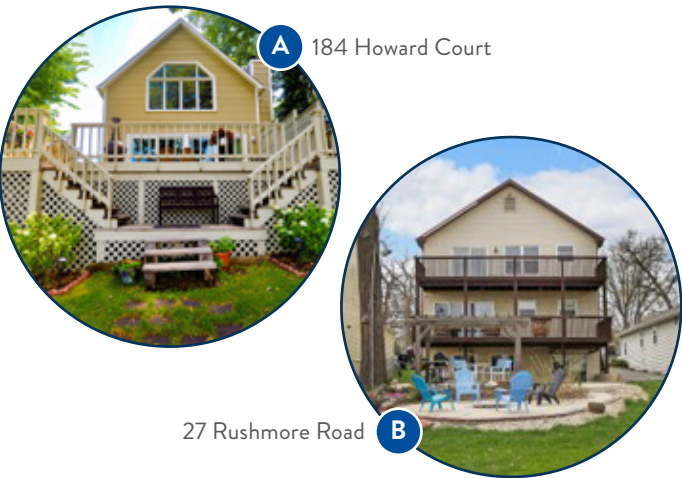
**Figure 27: Seasonal Homes As Share of Total Housing**



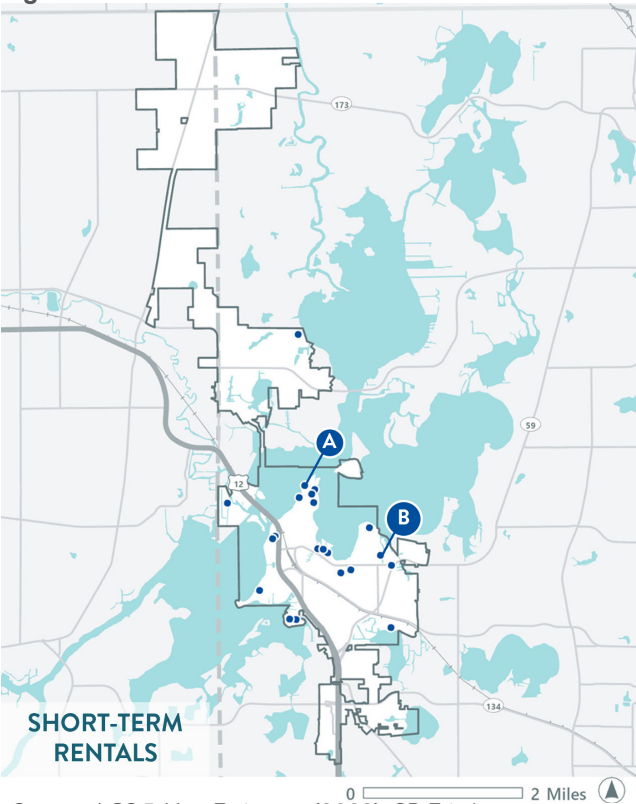
Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates (2022), SB Friedman

## SHORT-TERM RENTALS

The Village of Fox Lake allows for short-term rentals when granted a special use permit by the Village Board. The Municipal Code limits the total number of licenses issued annually to 60. Currently, there are 49 active licenses for short-term rental properties in Fox Lake. However, in July 2024 the Board issued a moratorium on additional short-term rental license applications until January 2025. Most short-term rental properties are located on or near the waterfront.



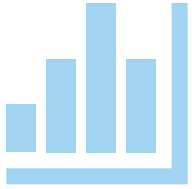
**Figure 28: Short-Term Rentals**



Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates (2022), SB Friedman

# Key Residential Considerations

Despite minimal recent development, many market factors point to growing housing demand.



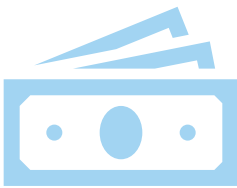
## POPULATION GROWTH

The village's population increased by 3.8 percent between 2010 and 2020. If this historic rate of growth continues, Fox Lake's population would rise to 12,268 by 2050. In the near-term, the greatest population growth is anticipated among seniors (age 75 and up).



## HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

There has been minimal new housing developed in Fox Lake since the Great Recession. Only 132 single-family homes have been permitted in the village since 2008. Meanwhile, the last rental multifamily development to be completed in Fox Lake was in 2010. Recently, a 154-unit and a 140-unit multifamily project were informally reviewed by the Planning and Zoning Commission.



## SALE PRICES AND RENTS

On average, median sales prices for both detached and attached homes have grown at a compound annual growth rate of 9 percent between 2015 and 2023. This significant price appreciation indicates that there is strong demand for homes in Fox Lake. Housing in Fox Lake continues to be affordable relative to Lake County overall.



## DAYS ON THE MARKET

Homes on the market in Fox Lake sell quickly. In 2023, both detached and attached homes sold after approximately 25 days, on average. The decreasing time on market suggests that housing inventory is limited and/or in high demand in Fox Lake.



## VACANCY RATE

The multifamily vacancy rate fell from 4.3 percent in 2014 to 1.8 percent in 2023. A vacancy rate below 5 percent indicates a constrained rental market. Over the same period, multifamily rents have grown steadily, indicating a constrained rental market in Fox Lake.

# Retail

## Retail Typologies

Retail clusters are categorized into three major typologies based on several factors: Downtown Retail, Regional-Serving and Community-Serving. Typologies differ based on scale, number and type of anchors, and size of trade area. More detail on retail typologies of Fox Lake and regional retail centers is provided on following pages.

### DOWNTOWN RETAIL

- DOWNTOWN / EXPERIENTIAL**
- Mixed-use
  - Ground-floor retail
  - Walkable pedestrian environment
  - **SIZE VARIES**

### REGIONAL-SERVING

- REGIONAL MALL / SUPER-REGIONAL MALL**
- Anchored by 2+ full-line department stores
  - **~500,000-1,000,000+ SF**

- LIFESTYLE CENTER**
- Upscale national-chain specialty stores
  - Dining/entertainment focus
  - **~250,000-500,000 SF**

- POWER CENTER**
- 2+ category-dominant freestanding anchors of ~100,000+ SF
  - General merchandise, home improvement
  - **~250,000-750,000 SF**

### COMMUNITY-SERVING

- COMMUNITY CENTER**
- 1+ category-dominant freestanding anchors of ~100,000+ SF
  - -- OR --

- 1+ grocer anchors of ~50,000+ SF and additional category dominant retailers
- **~100,000-250,000 SF**

- NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER**
- 1+ grocer anchors of ~50,000 SF or more
  - Additional supporting retail
  - **~75,000-150,000 SF**

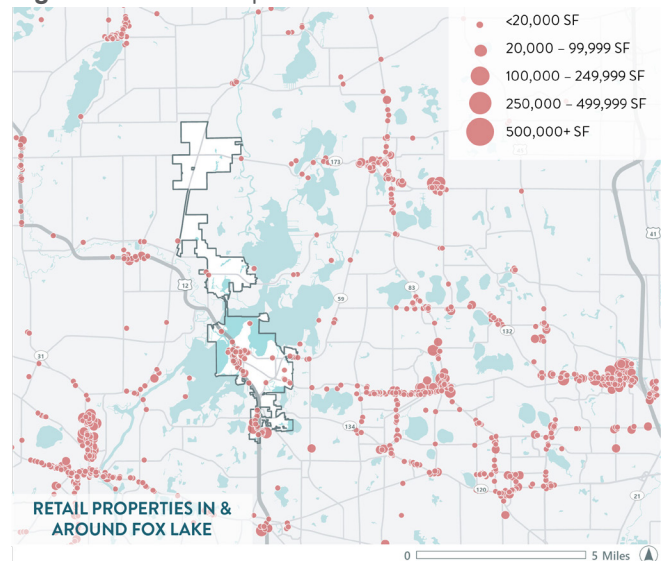
- FREESTANDING/ STRIP RETAIL**
- Small convenience center with goods and services
  - Limited trade area
  - **~5,000-150,000 SF**

## Regional Retail

Fox Lake residents have retail options within the village as well as throughout the region. Fox Lake has approximately 740,000 square feet of retail. Most retail within the village is located along US-12. The two largest retail nodes within the village are located downtown near the Metra station and at the intersection of Route 12 and Big Hollow Road. Despite an increasing number of residents living on the northern side of Fox Lake, there is very limited retail north of Nippersink Creek.

There are larger concentrations of retail immediately to the east and west of Fox Lake in Round Lake Beach and McHenry.

**Figure 29: Retail Properties in & Around Fox Lake**

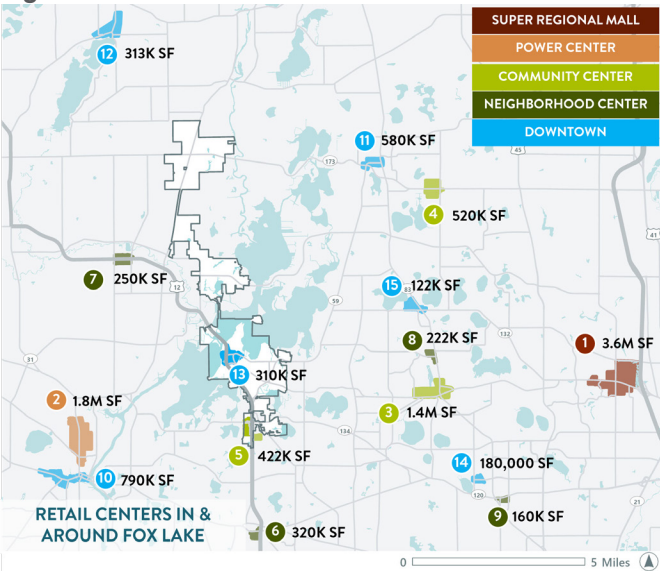


Source: CoStar, Esri, SB Friedman

# REGIONAL RETAIL CENTERS

Fox Lake is surrounded by established community- and regional-serving retail centers. Fox Lake has traditional downtown retail within its core and a community center on its southern end. Outside of Fox Lake, there is a robust supply of retail centers. Retail in the Village competes with other nearby downtowns, such as McHenry and Antioch, and nearby major retail clusters including Shops at Fox River/McHenry Commons and Gurnee Mills Mall.

**Figure 30:** Retail Centers in & Around Fox Lake



13

Downtown Fox Lake

	Retail Center	SF	Major Retailers
1	Gurnee Mills Mall	3.6M	Walmart Supercenter, Sam's Club
2	Shops at Fox River/McHenry Commons	1.8M	Walmart Supercenter, Meijer, Home Depot
3	Rollins Crossing	1.4M	Meijer, Tony's Fresh Market, Home Depot
4	Walmart Center	520K	Walmart Supercenter, Menard's, ALDI
5	Volo Commons	422K	Jewel-Osco, Menard's, Home Depot, ALDI
6	Woodman's	320K	Woodman's Food Market
7	Spring Grove Shopping Center	250K	Jewel-Osco
8	Walmart Center	222K	Walmart
9	Maple View	160K	Jewel-Osco, Ace Hardware
10	Downtown McHenry	790K	
11	Downtown Antioch	580K	
12	Downtown Lake Geneva	313K	
13	Downtown Fox Lake	310K	
14	Downtown Grayslake	180K	
15	Downtown Lake Villa	122K	

Source: CoStar, Esri, SB Friedman

## Retail in Fox Lake

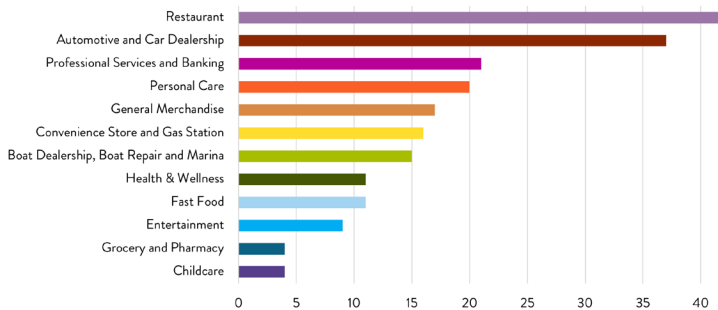
The majority of retail in Fox Lake is within the southern half. Much of Fox Lake's retail is traditional, downtown format retail located along Grand Avenue or US-12. The downtown also contains a small neighborhood center, Fox Lake Town Center. The Village is served by a community center, Fox Lake Crossing, located near the intersection of US-12 and Big Hollow Road. Volo Commons, located in Volo but near the same US-12 and Big Hollow intersection, serves the residents of Fox Lake as well.

Between Grand Avenue and Big Hollow Road are a variety of retail uses along US-12, including auto-services and fast-food retailers. Additional freestanding retail exists on the village's east side, with a cluster around Rollins Road. Retail on the north side is minimal, with a strip center and restaurant.

## RETAIL COMPOSITION

Restaurants, auto dealerships and professional services comprise nearly 50 percent of retail businesses. There are over 200 businesses occupying commercial real estate in Fox Lake. The greatest share of businesses are restaurants (20 percent). Combining restaurants with fast food businesses, dining establishments accounts for 25 percent of businesses. Due to its location on the Chain O'Lakes, Fox Lake also has a concentration of boat dealerships and marinas.

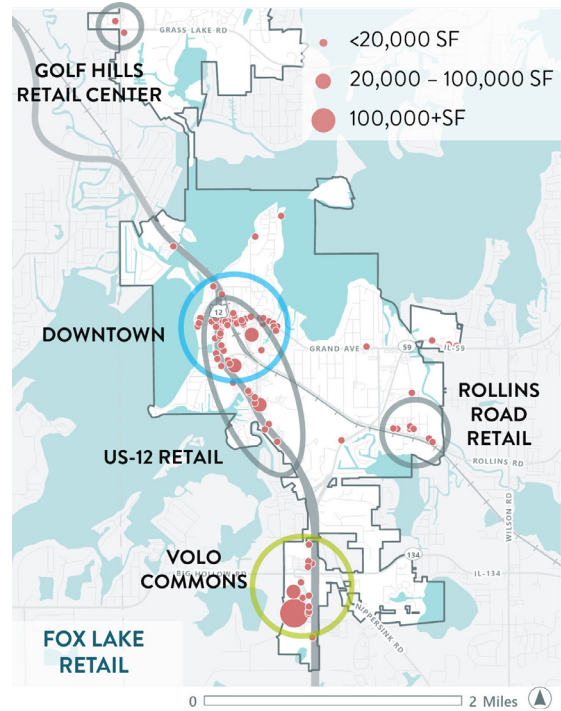
**Figure 33:** Business Retail Composition



Source: SB Friedman, Village of Fox Lake

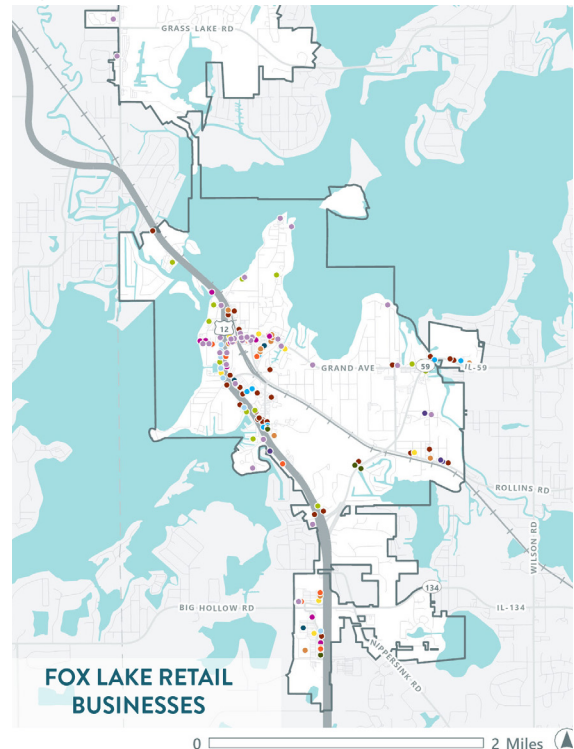


**Figure 31:** Fox Lake Retail



Source: CoStar, Esri, SB Friedman

**Figure 32:** Fox Lake Retail Businesses

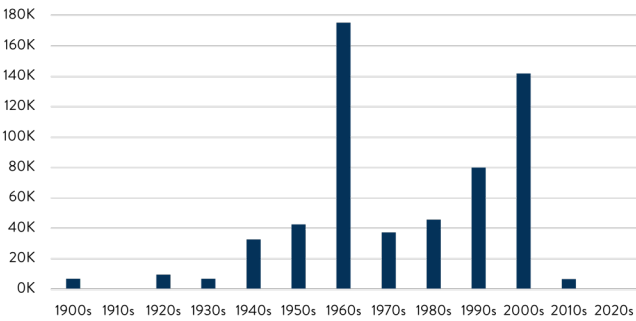


Source: SB Friedman, Village of Fox Lake

Fox Lake has had limited retail development over the last decade. Most of the existing retail stock in the village was built in the late-20th century. Over the last decade, there have only been four free-standing retail buildings developed in Fox Lake, a Thornton’s gas station in the downtown, a Dunkin along Route 12 in the downtown, a Culver’s along Route 12 south of downtown, and a Valvoline oil change near Volo Commons.

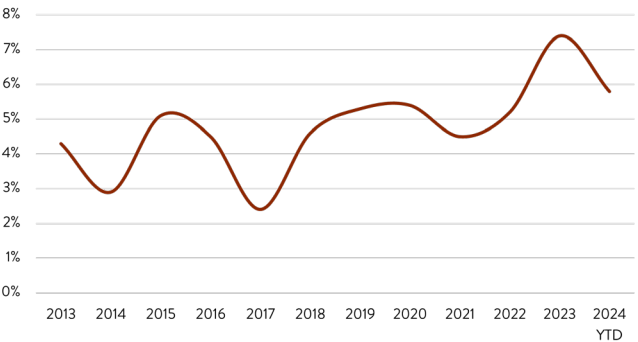
Vacancy has fluctuated between 2.5 percent and 7.5 percent since 2014. According to CoStar, the current retail vacancy rate is 5.8 percent. Retail triple net rents averaged above \$10/SF since 2013. Retail properties currently listed for rent are listed around \$10/SF, on average.

Figure 34: Retail by Decade Built



Source: CoStar, SB Friedman

Figure 35: Retail Vacancy



Source: CoStar, SB Friedman

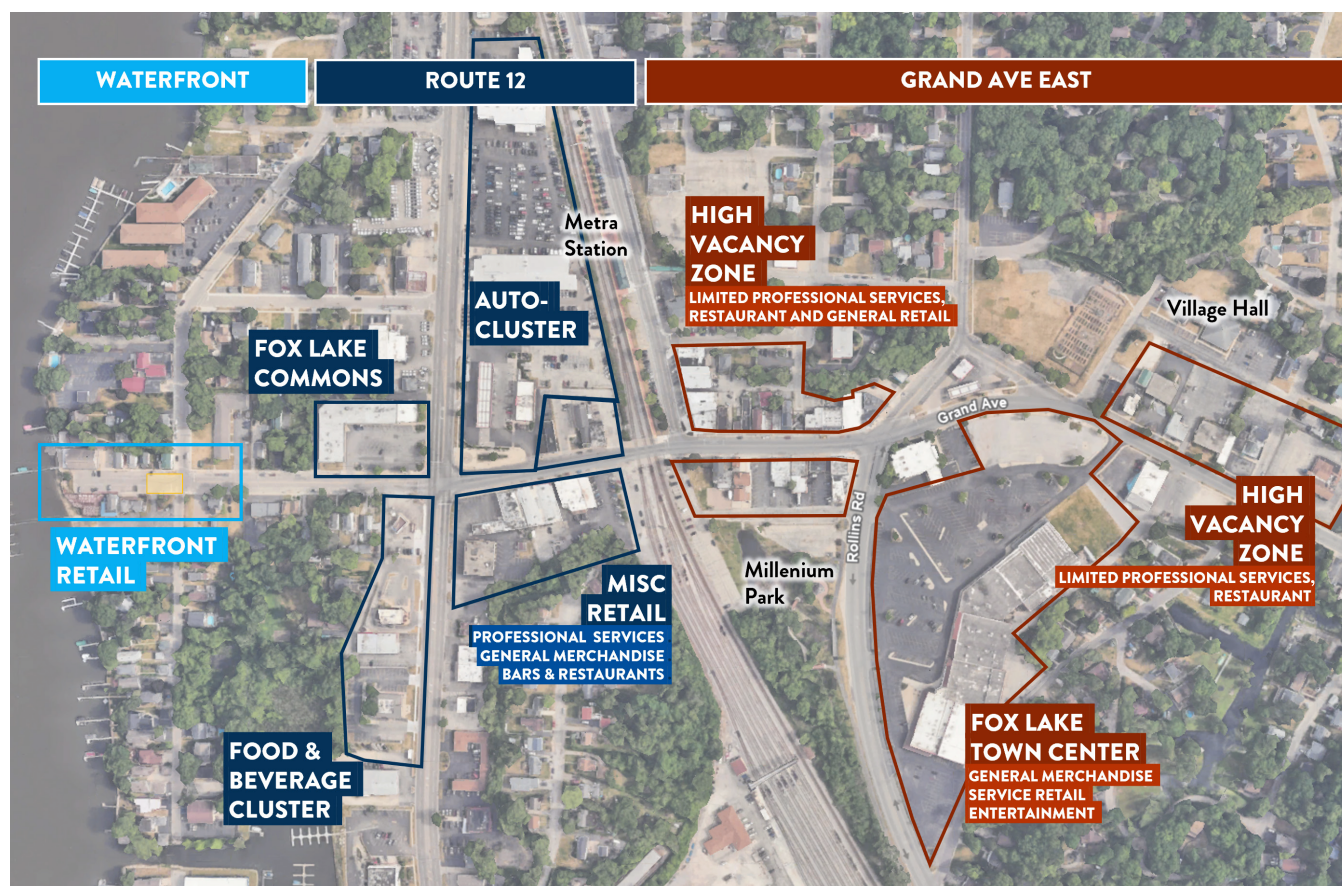


## Downtown Retail

While downtown retail is close geographically, existing conditions segment retail into subzones. The core downtown area of Fox Lake is approximately a half-mile stretch from east to west. The downtown has strong fundamental characteristics including access to a Metra station, waterfront and Millennium Park. However, downtown retail is fragmented, and existing land use has resulted in a disconnected retail landscape. Retail can be characterized into three major zones:

- **Waterfront:** The smallest zone, the waterfront retail located on Grand Avenue west of Route 12 includes multiple tenants that cater to the tourist population including Docker's Restaurant and The Coffee Shop.
- **Route 12:** Retail properties along Route 12 are among the best occupied in downtown. Retail is auto-oriented and a mix of auto repair, dealerships, food and beverage, and general merchandise. While well occupied, retail on Grand Avenue feels inconsistent with the walkable environment elsewhere in the downtown.
- **Grand Avenue East:** Properties along Grand Avenue east of the rail line are a combination of mixed-use buildings with no setbacks, and large-lot, single-use retail buildings. Irrespective of building form, properties within the Grand Avenue East zone have higher vacancy than observed elsewhere in Fox Lake and the downtown.

Figure 36: Downtown Subareas

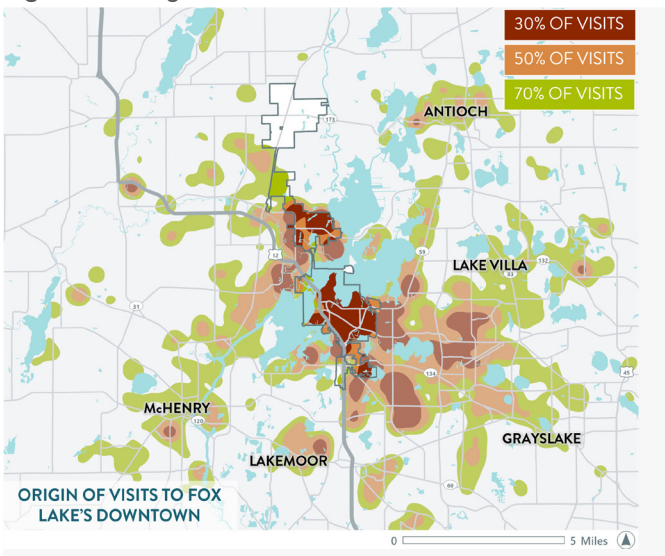


Source: Google Earth, SB Friedman

# DOWNTOWN VISITATION TRADE AREA

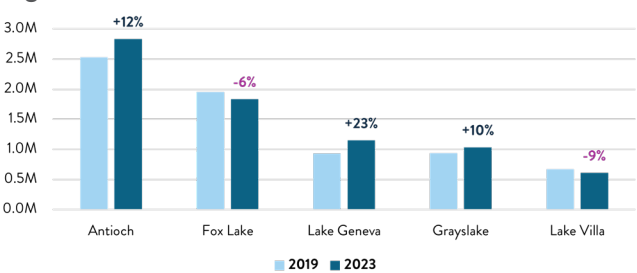
Fox Lake’s downtown had 1.8 million visits in 2023. Most visitors came from Fox Lake or immediately adjacent communities such as Lake Villa and McHenry. Fox Lake’s downtown compares positively to Lake County peer communities in terms of total annual visitors. However, between 2019 and 2023 the number of total visits to downtown Fox Lake declined by 6 percent and average daily visits to downtown Fox Lake have been slow to recover to pre-COVID levels. Over the same period, many peer communities experienced increases in downtown visits. Visitation data from 2024, although a partial year, indicates Fox Lake experienced a slight recovery through the first eight months of the year.

Figure 37: Origin of Visits to Fox Lake’s Downtown



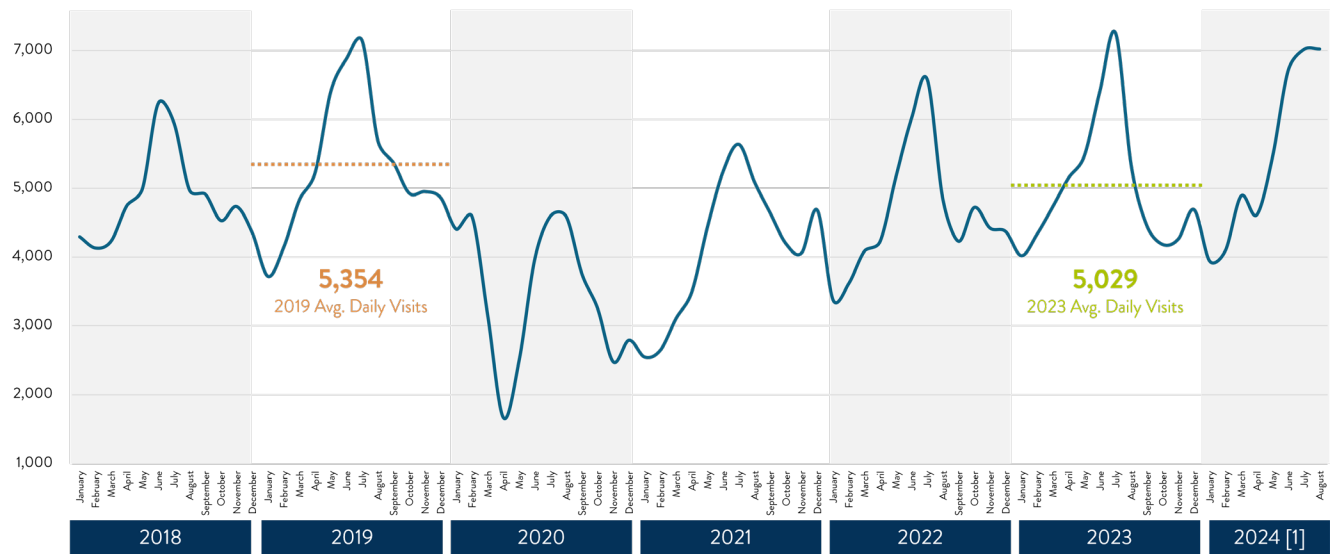
Source: Placer.ai, SB Friedman

Figure 39: Total Annual Visits to Downtown



Source: Placer.ai, SB Friedman

Figure 38: Downtown Visitation Trends Over Time

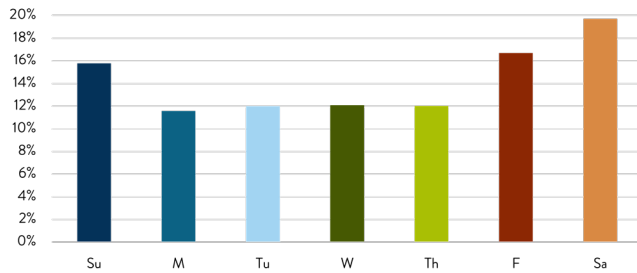


[1] YTD as of August 18, 2024  
Source: Placer.ai, SB Friedman

## DOWNTOWN VISITATION WEEKLY PATTERNS

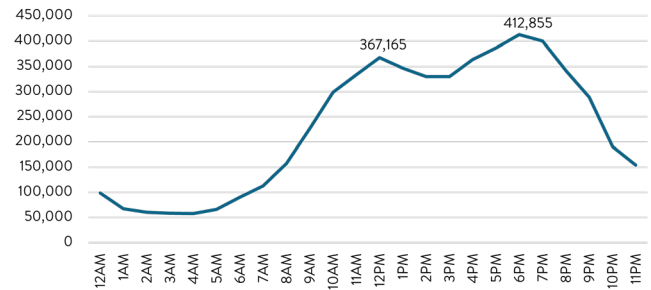
Weekends and mealtimes are most popular times to visit downtown Fox Lake. Visitor counts are highest in downtown Fox Lake on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays. Over half of all downtown visits occur on those three days; Saturdays are the most popular, accounting for 20 percent of visits to downtown in 2023. Downtown visits peak during mealtimes (11am-1pm and 5pm-7pm). While the number of visits remains relatively high between the lunch and dinner peaks, the number of visits drops sharply after 8pm, indicating a lack of evening destinations within the downtown.

**Figure 40:** Percentage of Total Visits by Day, 2023



Source: Placer.ai, SB Friedman

**Figure 41:** Total Annual Visits by Time of Day, 2023



Source: Placer.ai, SB Friedman

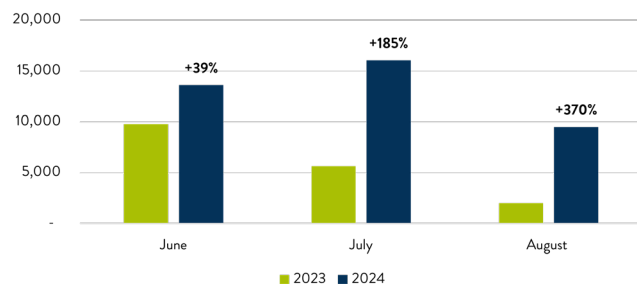
## LAKEFRONT PARK VISITATION TRENDS

Fox Lake recently completed the first phase of a \$12.5 million improvement to Lakefront Park. Investments included an outdoor amphitheater, pickleball courts, a splash pad, playground, nature play area, and restroom facilities, as well as the only public access beach on the Chain O' Lakes. The improved park opened to the public in June 2024 and have already had a marked impact on visitation patterns. Summer visitors at the Lakefront Park more than doubled from 2023 attendance of 17,400 to 2024 summer attendance of 39,200.

The park is connected to lakefront commercial property along Nippersink Boulevard.

According to Placer.AI, most Lakefront Park visitors are coming from home (63%) or work (5%). When they leave the Lakefront Park, most visitors also go home (64%) or to work (3%). Black Lung Brewing, which is adjacent to the Lakefront Park is one of the top destinations for Lakefront Park visitors. Very few visitors to Lakefront Park visit Downtown Fox Lake before or after visiting the park.

**Figure 42:** Lakefront Park Monthly Attendance



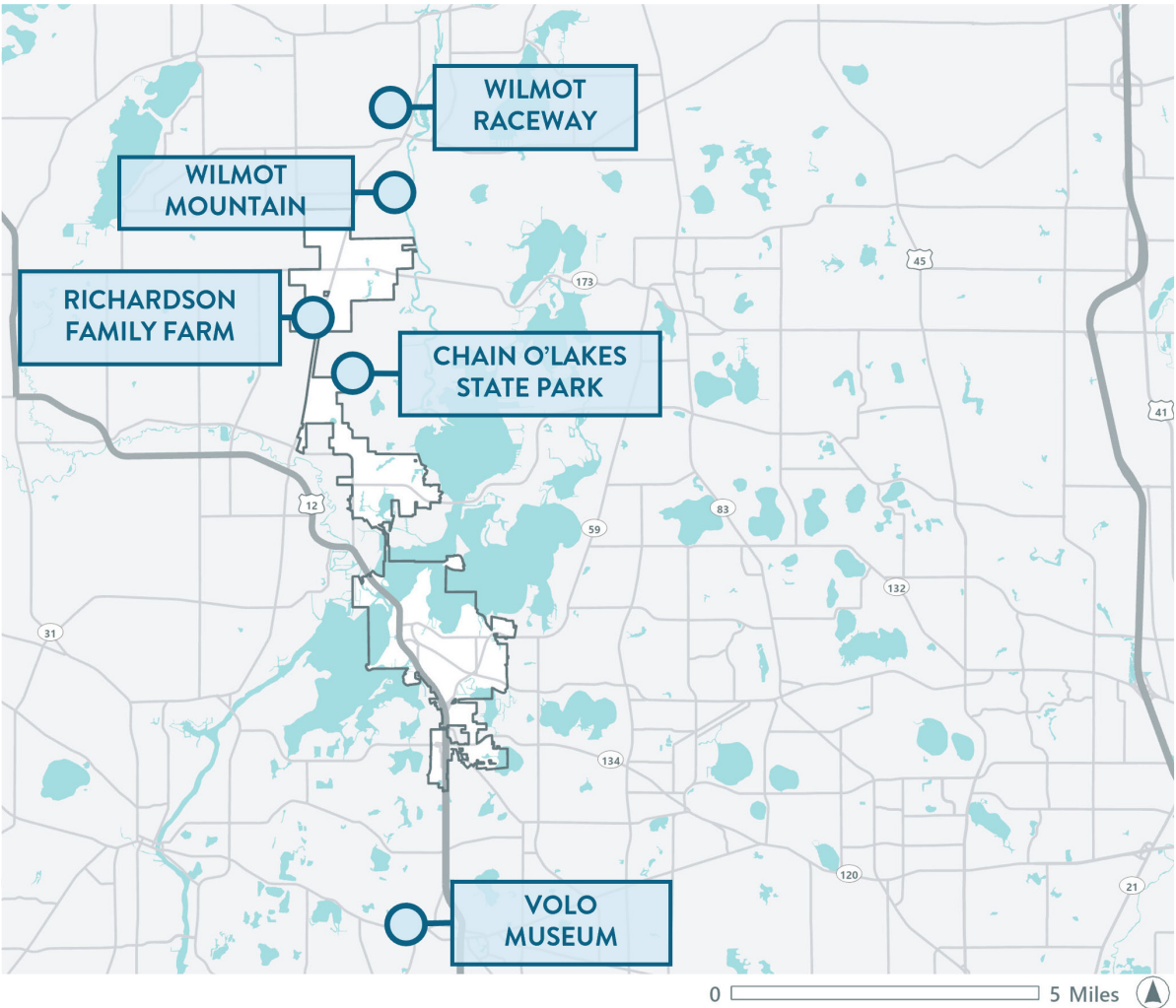
Source: Placer.ai, SB Friedman



# Regional Attractions

Attractions within and near Fox Lake attract hundreds of thousands of visitors from across the Chicagoland area. The regional nature of attractions often means that visitors are making a day-trip to the area for specific uses. Existing auto-oriented retail in Fox Lake likely benefits from these visitors (e.g., gas stations, fast food). However, there may be additional opportunities to leverage the tourism anchors to benefit entrepreneurs and retailers within Fox Lake.

Figure 43: Regional Attractions



	<b>WILMOT RACEWAY</b> 185.8K VISITS IN 2023		<b>CHAIN O'LAKE STATE PARK</b> 24.7K VISITS IN 2023 [1]
	<b>WILMOT MOUNTAIN</b> 139.7K VISITS IN 2023		<b>VOLO MUSEUM</b> 113.0K VISITS IN 2023
	<b>RICHARDSON FAMILY FARM</b> 191.4K VISITS IN 2023		

[1] Based on Fox Den Campground.  
Source: Esri, Placer.ai, SB Friedman

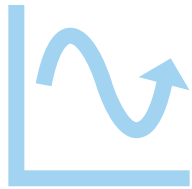
# Key Retail Considerations

Regional tourism and local consumer patterns impact retail performance in Fox Lake.



## RETAIL INVENTORY

Fox Lake is home to downtown, auto-oriented, and community-serving retail. There is minimal retail on the village's north side; most is concentrated on the south side, especially around downtown and along US-12. Restaurants and bars dominate the business composition in Fox Lake, but there are few entertainment and grocery options.



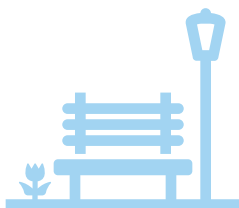
## RETAIL PERFORMANCE

Retail deliveries have slowed in Fox Lake. Over the last decade, there have only been four free-standing retail buildings developed in Fox Lake. Vacancy has fluctuated between 2.5 percent and 7.5 percent since 2014. Based on retail properties that have been up for lease recently, current rents are around \$10/SF, on average.



## REGIONAL COMPETITION

Residents leave Fox Lake to shop at large regional-serving retail centers in places like McHenry and Gurnee. Fox Lake residents constitute a small share of visitors to retailers in and around Fox Lake.



## DOWNTOWN VISITATION

Visitation in Downtown Fox Lake varies substantially seasonally. Year round, weekends and mealtimes are the most popular times to visit Downtown Fox Lake. Since the renovation of the Lakefront Park, visits to the area have more than doubled.



## TOURISM SEASONALITY

Tourism to the Chain O' Lakes peaks in the summer. As a result, Fox Lake and its businesses see a lot more visitors in the peak summer months, and relatively few visitors off-peak. The seasonality of the tourism season makes it difficult for some retailers to operate year-round.

# Community Land Use

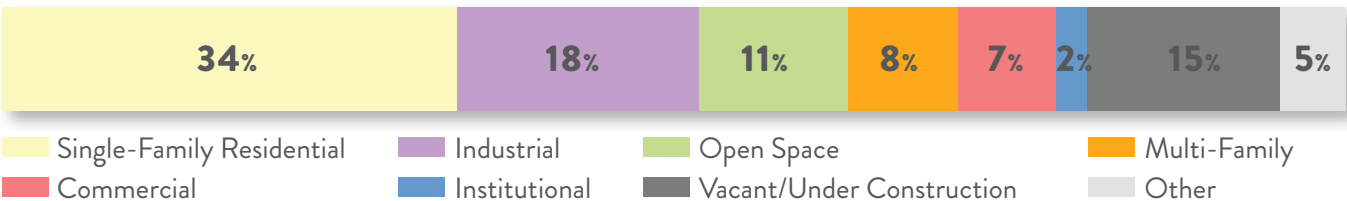
Assessing community land use establishes a baseline for understanding how land is currently used and organized within a community —whether for residential, commercial, industrial, or recreational purposes. This assessment sheds light on existing infrastructure, housing, economic activities, and public amenities. Analyzing land use patterns can reveal inefficiencies, such as incompatible land uses or underutilized areas and can highlight areas for new development, preservation, or conservation. These insights form a foundation for making informed, strategic decisions that balance growth, sustainability, and quality of life.

In Fox Lake, the predominant land use is residential (42 percent), and these areas are distributed throughout the community, with concentrations around the lakefront, downtown, and in neighborhoods east and west of Route 12. Of the residential areas majority are comprised of single-family housing (34 percent) with pockets of multi-family options (8 percent) which provide access to diverse housing opportunities and support higher density living for people in different life stages.

Industrial land use is the second most common land use category (18 percent), primarily concentrated on the north side of Fox Lake, largely due to several large quarry properties. Commercial land use makes up 7 percent of the land area, primarily clustered along US Route 12, strategically positioned to serve both local and regional needs. Other commercial areas include the downtown along Grand Avenue and along other major arterial roads.

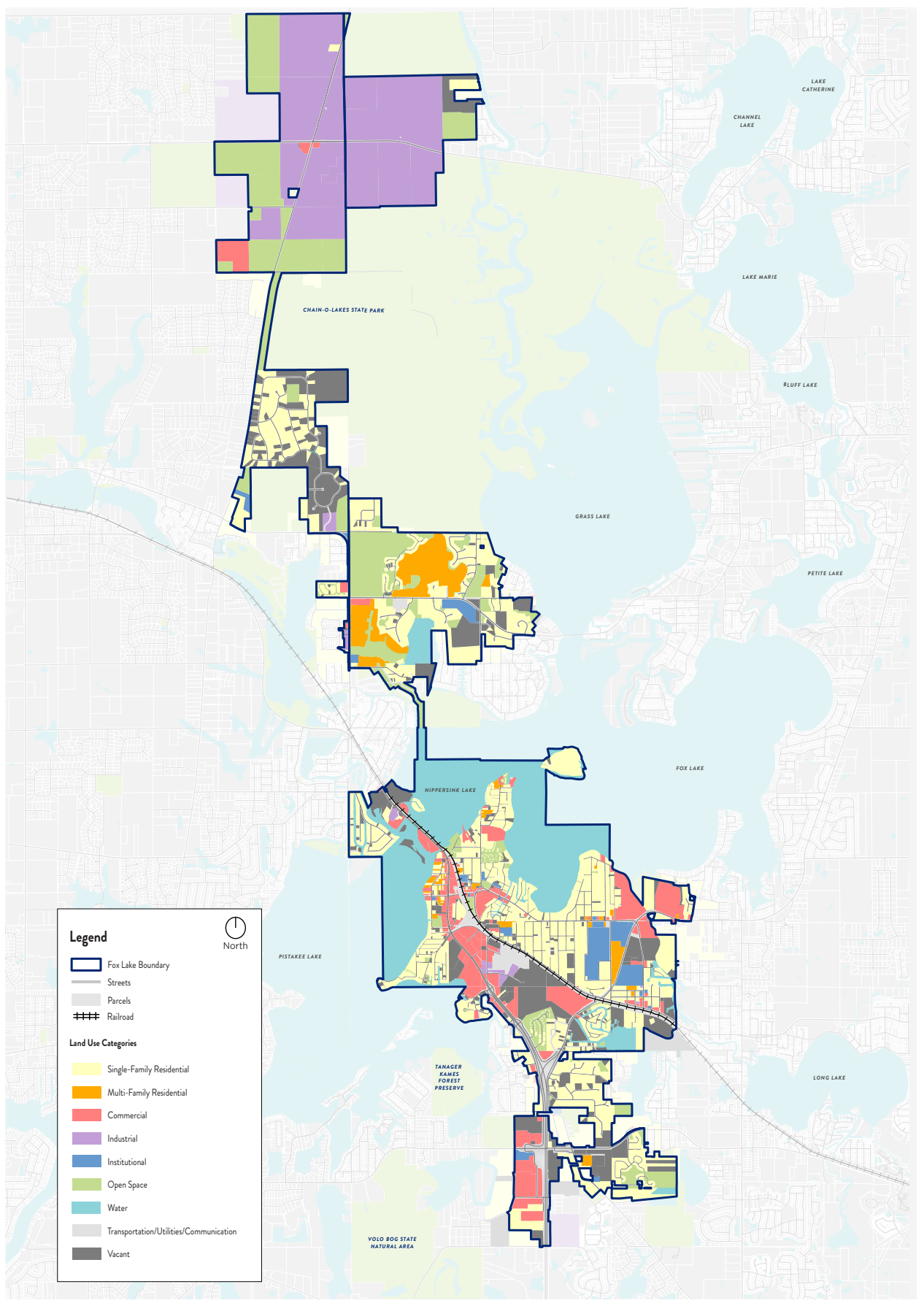
As of 2020, approximately 15 percent of the Village’s land area is either vacant or under construction. This includes parcels classified as residential, commercial, industrial, or agriculture by the Lake County Assessor, but are either currently vacant or in development, including undeveloped parcels within residential subdivisions. Open space, institutional, and other uses such as transportation, communications, utilities and waste management comprise the remaining 18 percent of Fox Lake’s land area.

**Figure 44:** Land Area by Use (2020)



Source: CMAP Parcel-Based Land Use Inventory Categories 2020

Figure 45: Existing Land Use Map



# Zoning Ordinance

The Fox Lake zoning ordinance serves as a key tool for managing land use and development within the Village. By dividing the community into distinct zoning districts, the ordinance regulates where certain activities can occur, promoting orderly growth while safeguarding public health, safety, and welfare. It plays a significant role in shaping Fox Lake's identity by preserving the character of different areas and encouraging a balanced mix of land uses.

The ordinance designates 13 zoning districts, each tailored to specific types of development, such as residential, commercial, and industrial. Each district includes its own set of regulations, including building height limits, lot sizes, setbacks, and parking requirements, ensuring that development is compatible with the surrounding environment.

Last updated in May 2024, the zoning ordinance reflects the Village's commitment to fostering development that enhances the quality of life for Fox Lake residents while supporting sustainable growth and preserving community character.



## Residential Districts

- **E-1 Estate District (Twenty Acre Minimum Area):** Establishes an area for single-family dwellings on spacious lots where access to minimal community services is appropriate.
- **R-1 One-Family Residence District (Ten Acre Minimum Area):** Provides an area for low density single-family housing with supporting services such as recreational, institutional, and educational amenities.
- **R-2 One-Family Residence District (Ten Acre Minimum Area):** Promotes higher density single-family residential areas with a blend of community services. Lot size, setback, and bulk requirements differentiate this district from R-1.
- **R-3 General Residence District (One Acre Minimum Area):** Supports a high-density urban environment with multi-family housing within proximity to essential services and amenities.
- **R-4 High Density General Residence District (One Acre Minimum Area):** Establishes a higher-density multi-family urban environment than R3 through variations in lot size, setback, and bulk requirements.



## Commercial Districts

- **D Downtown Business District:** Defines an area that is a mixed-use district with the intention of serving a pedestrian scale shopping experience. Street level must be business while the upper floors can support businesses or residential uses. The Downtown Business District includes the area between Grand Avenue, York Street, and Pistakee Road.
- **B-2 General Retail and Limited Service District (Twenty Thousand Square Feet Minimum Area):** Establishes a district for the retail sale of goods and services that at a neighborhood scale. Uses include Downtown Business District scale retail with the addition of grocery stores, service and repair shops and automobile sales.



- **B-3 Commercial Service and Wholesale District (One Acre Minimum Area):** Supports retail and wholesale sale of goods and services that are highway oriented and cater to the local community and attract a regional draw. Uses include highway-oriented services and commercial recreation such as convention centers and golf courses.
- **B-4 Resort Business District (One Acre Minimum Area):** Promotes an area for short term occupancy by visitors and vacationers, with recreational facilities and access to natural recreation resources such as resorts and hotels.
- **B-5 Marina District (One Acre Minimum Area):** Provides a district for water-oriented commercial uses such as boat sales, rentals, and launches as well as restaurants.



## Industrial Districts

- **M-1 Limited Manufacturing District (Twenty Thousand Square Feet Minimum Area):** Establishes an area for light industrial uses that will have minimal disturbance to neighboring properties with high standards of performance prescribed to ensure a healthy environment.
- **M-2 General Manufacturing District (Fifty Acre Minimum Area):** Defines an area for heavier industrial uses that can cause disturbance to neighbors and property with high standards of performance prescribed to ensure a safe environment.

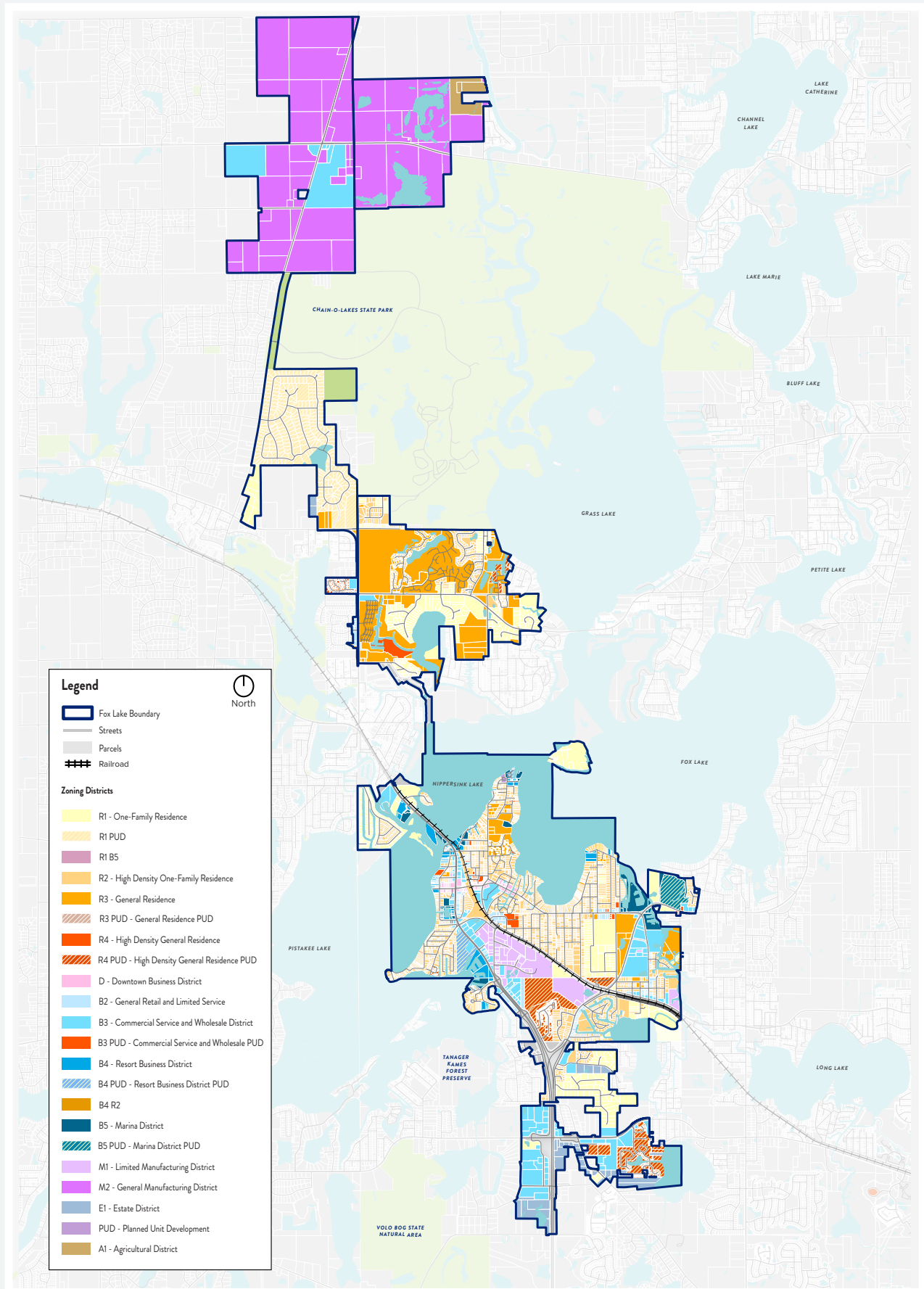
## Other Districts

- **A-1 Agricultural District (Five Acre Minimum Area):** Supports land for agricultural purposes such as stables, nurseries and landscaping, garden centers, farming, and seasonal attractions, among others.

## Planned Unit Development District (PUD)

The Planned Unit Development process encourages enhanced land development design by offering flexibility from strict zoning regulations, allowing for innovative and unconventional projects. It permits any use allowed in any zoning district, provided it meets the criteria outlined in specific sections of the ordinance. The process streamlines project reviews by combining the design review with zoning amendments. This approach promotes variety and flexibility and facilitates desirable developments that might otherwise face challenges under traditional zoning guidelines.

**Figure 46: Zoning Districts Map**



# Urban Character of Fox Lake

Fox Lake, Illinois, is a community defined by its complex geographical layout, unique natural features, and diverse built environment. Situated within a patchwork of lakes, forests, and suburban clusters, the Village's urban character reflects the many layers of its history, land use, and community development.



## Village Boundary and Connectivity

One of the most significant aspects of Fox Lake's structure is the way its boundaries create a fragmented sense of place. The Chain O' Lakes State Park, a central natural feature of the region, is notably outside the Village's jurisdiction. This has resulted in disconnected pockets of development, where areas of Fox Lake are separated by large expanses of parkland or open water but are linked by major roadways. These roadways—primarily U.S. Route 12 and Illinois Routes 59 and 134—serve as the principal arteries connecting the various parts of the Village, from industrial lands in the north to residential enclaves and lakeside areas further south.



## Industrial Lands in the North

To the north, in McHenry County, Fox Lake presents a more utilitarian character. This northernmost part of the Village, particularly north of the Chain O' Lakes State Park and James Road, is dominated by industrial uses, including quarry land and mining operations. The landscape here is starkly different from the residential areas that define the southern sections of the community, with the quarry's presence contributing to a rugged, industrial atmosphere that influences nearby land use. This area is somewhat isolated from the rest of Fox Lake, both in terms of physical distance and character. However, its future land use and the establishment of stronger connections to the broader village will be key considerations for the Comprehensive Plan.



## The Transition South

As you move south of the industrial area and the Chain O' Lakes State Park, the character of Fox Lake begins to shift, blending gradually into more suburban and residential land uses. This portion of the Village, especially as it approaches Spring Grove to the west, is characterized by sprawling single-family developments. These homes, often on large lots, offer a more rural or semi-rural feel, reflecting a typical suburban neighborhood layout but with a connection to the natural landscape. The residential clusters here serve as a transition between the industrial north and the more water-oriented communities further south, creating a layered sense of development that reflects both the open land and the increasing density of the Village.



## Lakeside Communities and Residential Clusters

Moving south, Fox Lake's identity becomes intertwined with the lakes and waterways that frame much of the Village. East of the Fox Lake Country Club, the residential landscape is defined by its proximity to the lakes. This area is particularly notable for the way the lakes and channels wind through the neighborhoods, interjecting natural beauty directly into the built environment. Here, homes are often positioned to take full advantage of the water views, and the density of housing begins to increase. While still primarily single-family residences, the layout becomes tighter, and newer developments are increasingly common. This blend of older homes with more recent construction adds a dynamic quality to the area, as the character shifts from sprawling suburban lots to denser, more integrated residential communities that take full advantage of their lakeside locations.



## Route 12 - A Commercial Artery

As the Village moves south toward its more urbanized center, Route 12 emerges as a defining feature of Fox Lake. This major roadway not only connects the northern and southern sections of the Village but also serves as a central commercial corridor. However, the character of Route 12 is more focused on serving transient populations and vehicle-oriented businesses. It is home to numerous car dealerships and large-format retail stores, creating a commercial strip that feels disconnected from the historic or pedestrian-friendly downtown that residents might envision for Fox Lake. Despite being considered the Village's primary commercial area, this part of Route 12 lacks a cohesive urban identity, and its car-centric design contributes to a less engaging streetscape. Although efforts have been made to enhance the area, it remains a challenge for the community to fully integrate this commercial spine with the rest of Fox Lake's more traditional or residential character.



## Downtown Fox Lake

While Route 12 dominates the commercial landscape, Fox Lake's true downtown lies directly east of the main thoroughfare, along Grand Ave. The downtown corridor is home to 1-2 story commercial buildings, the majority of which were built in the 1910s and 1920s and have seen better days. The condition of these buildings and the overall vibrancy of the downtown have deteriorated over time, with much of the area now appearing run-down and underutilized. However, these buildings offer a glimpse into Fox Lake's past and hold the potential for revitalization efforts that could reshape the heart of the community. As redevelopment opportunities emerge, the Village has the chance to reinvest in this historic core, transforming it into a more vibrant, pedestrian-oriented downtown that complements the community's lakeside charm.



## Waterfront Estates and Lakeside Living

On the fringes of the Village, where the urban character is shaped by the natural environment, Fox Lake is home to a different kind of residential development. The lakeside edges of the community are dotted with large, exclusive waterfront estates. These homes, often sprawling mansions with expansive views of the lakes, represent the most affluent side of Fox Lake's residential offerings. While accessible through peripheral roads, many of these homes also have direct access to the lakes, allowing for a unique lifestyle centered around water recreation and privacy. These waterfront properties are some of the most sought-after in the Village, combining luxury with the natural beauty of the Chain O' Lakes.



## Neighborhood Clusters and Residential Life

In contrast to the luxury homes along the water, much of Fox Lake's residential core is defined by smaller, more modest single-family homes. These neighborhoods, often arranged in clusters, provide the backbone of the Village's housing stock. Accessible through arterial roads, these areas have a distinctly neighborly vibe, with close-knit communities and homes that reflect the middle-class character of the region. These clusters form a network of smaller residential areas that are interspersed between the lakes and commercial corridors, offering a quieter, more family-oriented atmosphere within the broader urban fabric of Fox Lake.



# Parks & Open Space

Open space in Fox Lake is provided by several key entities, including the Village of Fox Lake, Fox Lake School District, and the Chain O'Lakes State Park (managed by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources), among others. The Fox Lake Parks and Recreation Department operates and maintains eight recreational sites, offering a mix of passive and active green spaces, including parks, lakefront access, and indoor facilities, totaling 39 acres of open space. The recreational assessment in this chapter focuses specifically on the parks and open spaces owned and operated by the Fox Lake Parks and Recreation Department, excluding those managed by other providers.

The School District offers other recreational resources to Fox Lake including elementary, middle, and high school green spaces. These are excluded from the level of service analysis because they are only accessible to the public outside of regular school hours and activities. While special use recreational areas are both local amenities and regional recreational destinations, they are also excluded from the analysis due to access issues and cost barriers and include areas such as marinas, state parks, and the waterway system.

## Fox Lake Parks and Recreation Department

The Fox Lake Parks and Recreation Department operates with a small, dedicated team led by a Program and Events manager. Currently, there is no official department head for Park and Recreation. The team consists of three individuals who manage park spaces and programming, primarily by working with external vendors to offer adult and youth events. This approach allows the department to efficiently provide recreational opportunities for the community.

# Level of Service Assessment

The Level of Service (LOS) analysis assesses how well Fox Lake's parks compare to industry standards while also evaluating how effectively these recreational offerings meet both current and future needs. Originally developed in the 1980s, the National Parks and Recreation Association (NRPA) established benchmarks for this assessment, designed to be practical, equitable, and adaptable to local context. This LOS analysis considers both acreage and distribution to evaluate the availability of green space and its ease of access relevant to where concentrations of community residents live in Fox Lake. While valuable, LOS is just one of several tools used to guide future planning.

## Acreage LOS

The Acreage LOS evaluates whether Fox Lake provides sufficient parkland per person to meet recreational needs, often measured in acres per 1,000 residents. According to the 2023 NRPA Agency Performance Review, communities with populations under 20,000 should aim to provide 10 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents. For a local benchmark, Fox Lake's subdivision ordinance sets the standard at 6 acres per 1,000 residents.

With a current population of 10,978, Fox Lake should provide 110 acres of combined mini, neighborhood, and community parkland based on national standards and 66 acres based on local standards. However, the village currently offers only 39 acres of park and active recreation space. This results in a deficit of 71 acres when compared to NRPA's benchmark and 27 acres when measured against local standards. This shortfall underscores the need for additional parkland to better meet the community's recreational demands.

# Fox Lake Open Space Inventory

The Village of Fox Lake manages eight parks that offer a variety of recreational opportunities for residents. While the parks are generally in fair condition, it was noted that some, such as Eagle Point Park and Kings Island Park, have not been updated or maintained as regularly in recent years. However, Millennium Park, located near downtown, is the next priority for parks and recreation planning, with plans to transform it into a vibrant community gathering space featuring new amenities. Veterans Park, known for its sports fields, is frequently used by Grant Township and nearby childcare facilities. Data from Placer AI shows increased traffic to the area, generating additional sales tax revenue from nearby fast-food outlets and gas stations. Additionally, Lakefront Park, a cornerstone of the mayor’s vision to provide public access to the waterfront, represents a \$12.5 Million investment. This redevelopment has created a destination along the lakefront, offering amenities such as a beach, amphitheater, and recreational spaces, further enhancing the Village’s public spaces and access to the water.

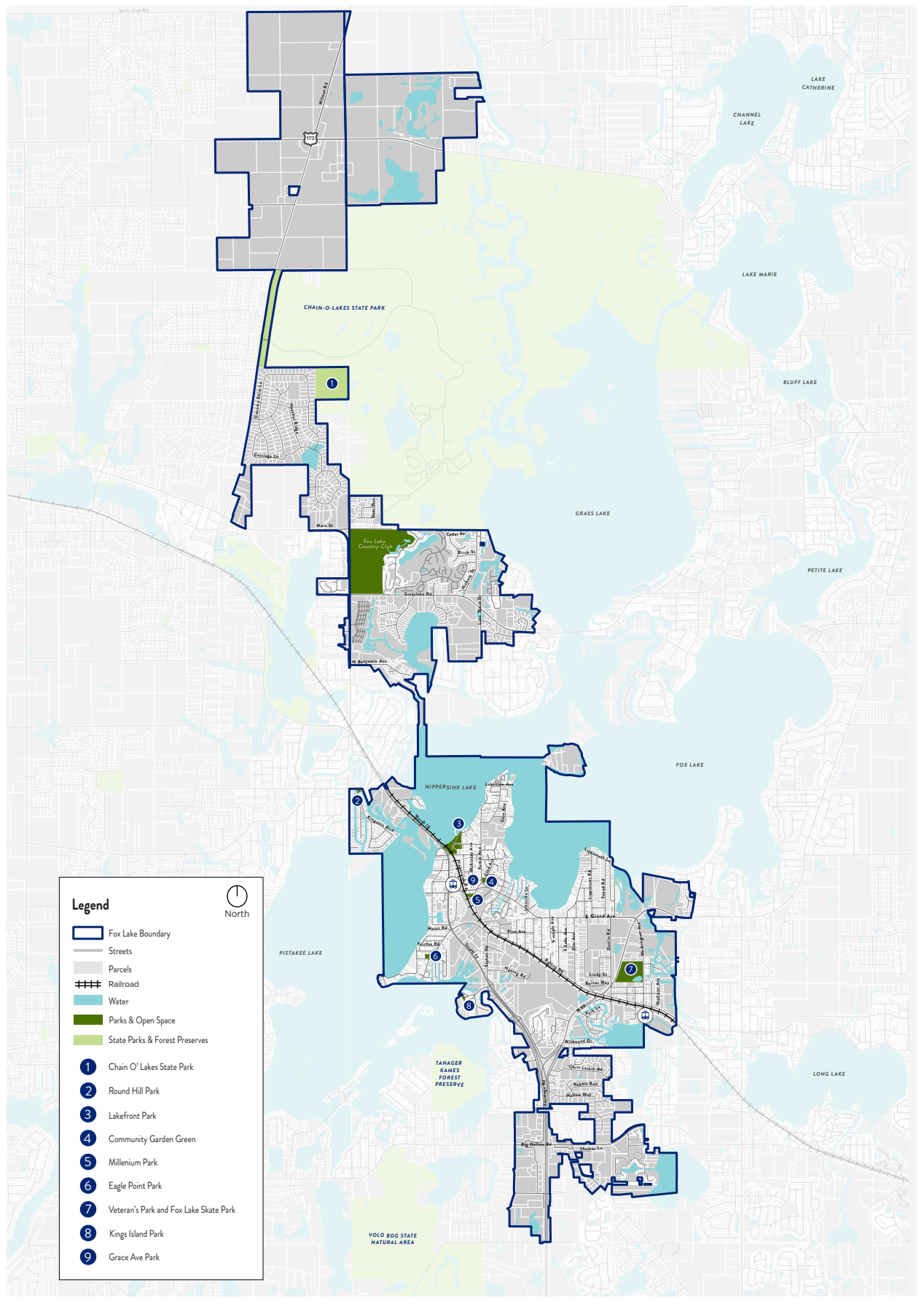
These parks, along with the others in the system, are categorized into three classes based on their size and intended use, providing a structured approach to understanding the variety of recreation options available in Fox Lake. Below is a more technical breakdown of how the parks are classified:

- **Mini Parks:** Mini Parks are often one acre or less and meet the need for a walkable, drop-in recreation experience that includes elements such as playgrounds, picnic areas, and seating.
- **Neighborhood Parks:** Neighborhood Parks are typically an acre to five acres in size and remain the basic unit of park and open space systems. They are generally designed for active and passive recreation and community gathering with recreational elements such as playgrounds, picnic areas, sports fields, and trail systems. These parks are designed to be walkable and are typically uninterrupted by physical barriers.
- **Community Parks:** Community Parks tend to be larger than ten acres in size and focus on meeting community-wide recreation needs and in certain instances serve regional significance, offering a variety of activities and amenities for people of all ages to stay active. Elements in these parks include playgrounds, pavilions, trails and path systems, multiple sport courts, and fields.

Figure 1: Fox Lake Park Inventory

Park	Amenities	Type	Acreage
1. Round Hill Park	Picnic Area, playground, lake access	Mini	0.4
2. Lakefront Park	Program facility, amphitheater, picnic area, walking paths, playground, splash pad, pickleball courts, fishing, lake access	Community	17.8
3. Community Garden Green	Pavilion, garden, ice rink	Neighborhood	2.1
4. Grace Avenue Park	Bench, fountain	Mini	0.4
5. Millennium Park	Pavilion, garden, trails	Community	3.9
6. Eagle Point Park	Basketball, playground	Neighborhood	0.7
7. Veteran’s Park and Fox Lake Skate Park	Concession stand, picnic area, playground, pavilion, skate park, diamond fields	Community	12.2
8. Kings Island Park	Picnic area, playground, boat dock, lake access	Neighborhood	1.1

Figure 2: Fox Lake Park Inventory



## Distribution LOS

The Distribution LOS analysis evaluates the geographic spread of parks to ensure the equitable availability of parkland based on NRPA classification standards. This analysis aims to identify how many residents are served by each park, with service areas defined by park type as follows:

- **Mini Parks:** Accessible within a 0.25-mile radius or a 5-10-minute walk
- **Neighborhood Parks:** Accessible within a 0.5-mile radius or a 10-15-minute walk
- **Community Parks:** Accessible within a 1.0-mile radius or 5-minute drive

For Mini and Neighborhood Parks, service area boundaries are adjusted for major pedestrian barriers that hinder walkability, such as the Metra line, Route 59, Route 12, Big Hollow Road, and Chain O'Lakes canals. The Parks and Open Space LOS map illustrates these service areas, with darker areas on the map highlighting sections of the community that are best served by multiple parks and recreation amenities.

An assessment of park distribution reveals that the northern portion of Fox Lake, north of the Chain O'Lakes, is significantly underserved by parks and open spaces. While this area is close to Chain O'Lakes State Park, the areas that are largely residential lack access to local parks within walking distances or a short drive from their homes. Similarly, the southern part of the village also lacks access to parks, notably neighborhood and mini parks, which could provide more amenities and strengthen community ties in existing neighborhoods.

In contrast, the central portion of Fox Lake, surrounding the downtown, is well-served by community and neighborhood parks, particularly with the addition of the new Lakefront Park. However, the Chain O'Lakes and Route 12 create barriers to accessibility and walkability for residents. Establishing more mini and neighborhood parks within residential areas would improve park access and walkability.

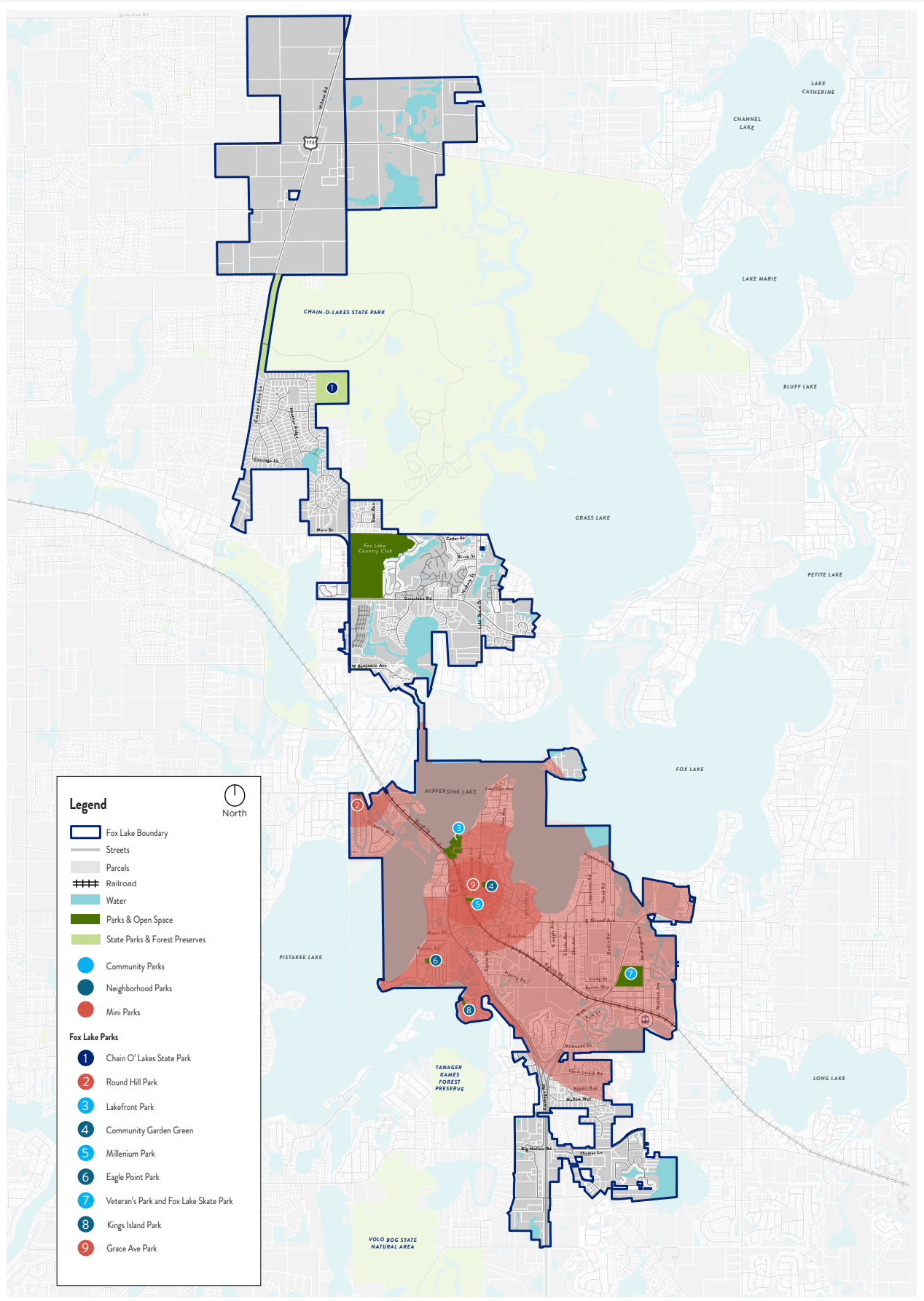
While traditional parkland is crucial for recreation, it's important to acknowledge that Fox Lake offers unique recreational opportunities with its extensive access to water. Many subdivisions include public access points to the Chain O'Lakes, allowing residents to enjoy water-based activities such as boating, fishing, and kayaking, which serve as valuable recreational amenities not typically found in other communities. These access points provide recreation opportunities that enhance the quality of life for residents and are a defining feature of Fox Lake.

Currently, 24 percent of Fox Lake residents (approximately 2,639 people) live within walking distance (0 to 0.5-mile radius) of a Mini or Neighborhood Park. This figure increases to 65 percent (about 7,147 residents) when Community Parks are included, indicating that more than half of the community has access to recreational spaces.

To further enhance recreational opportunities, the village should prioritize the inclusion of public parks and open spaces in new developments, develop additional neighborhood parks in the northern and southern areas, continue to add public access points to the water in new subdivisions, and strengthen the pedestrian trail system linking current parks.

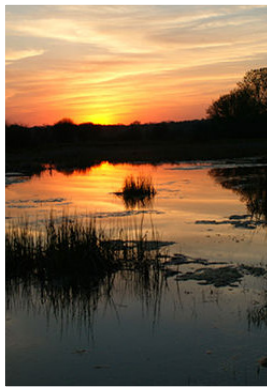


Figure 3: Park LOS Analysis



# Natural Resources

The Chain O'Lakes is the defining natural feature of Fox Lake, shaping both its identity and its landscape. In addition to the lakes, the village benefits from the surrounding network of county forest preserves, state parks, and natural areas that enhance recreational opportunities for residents and visitors alike. These regional assets, including waterbodies, forest preserves, wetlands, and ecological corridors, provide critical habitats for a variety of species. Together, they contribute to Fox Lake's environmental resilience, offering ongoing opportunities for preservation, recreation, and ecological enrichment.



## The Chain O'Lakes

Fox Lake is centrally located within three of the 15 lakes that make up the Chain O'Lakes waterway system: Fox Lake, Nippersink Lake, and Pistakee Lake. This interconnected system begins at the Illinois-Wisconsin border and follows the Fox River. In Fox Lake, public lakefront access is primarily limited to Lakefront Park, just north of downtown. This park is notable for being the first public space with a beach along the Chain O'Lakes system, offering both local and regional access to the water. In addition to Lakefront Park, many residential subdivisions in Fox Lake provide public access points to the water, allowing residents to engage in recreational activities such as boating, fishing, and kayaking. For broader public access beyond these points, residents without a private boating slip can visit Chain O'Lakes State Park to the northeast.



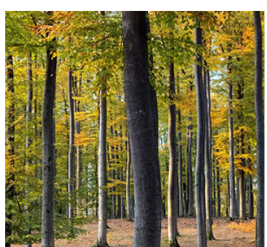
## Chain O'Lakes State Park

Located directly east of Fox Lake, with a portion extending into the Village limits, Chain O'Lakes State Park offers extensive water-based recreation. The park borders several lakes—Grass Lake, Lake Marie, Nippersink Lake, and the Fox River—and contains Turner Lake, a 44-acre lake fully within its boundaries. Visitors can engage in activities such as boating, fishing, seasonal hunting, and skiing. With seven picnic areas, over 20 miles of trails, campsites, and youth group areas, the park is a significant recreational resource for the region.



## Volo Bog State Natural Area

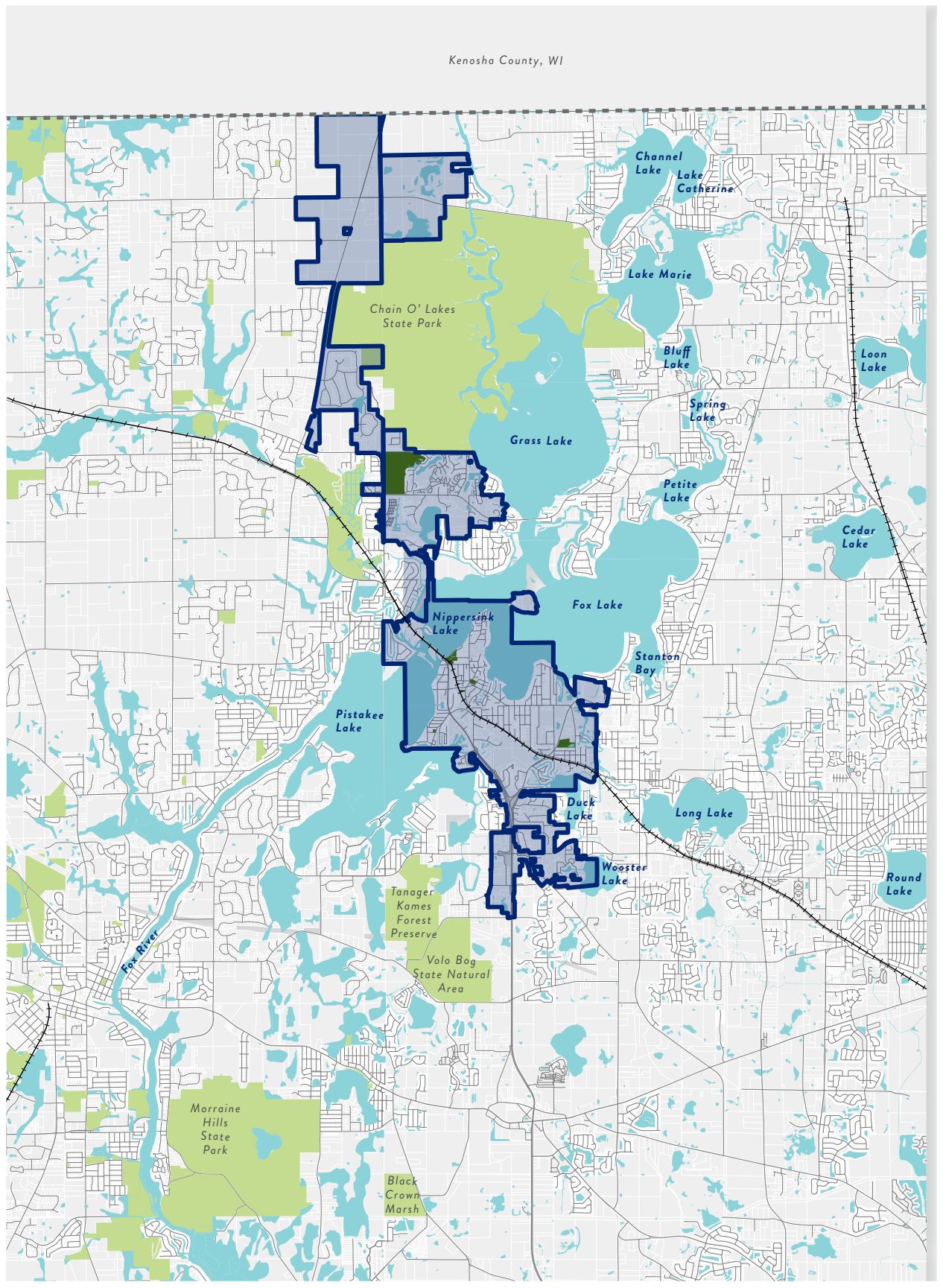
Southwest of Fox Lake lies Volo Bog, the only open-water bog in Illinois, designated as a National Natural Landmark in 1972. This unique ecological site offers visitors the chance to explore various vegetational stages along its floating boardwalk, from the marshy perimeter to the open-water center. The area also includes a Visitor Center, featuring classrooms, a gift shop, offices, restrooms, historical exhibits, a library, and a picnic area, making it an important educational and recreational site.



## Tanager Kames Forest Preserve

Tanager Kames, a 160-acre forest preserve managed by the Lake County Forest Preserve, lies between Redhead Lake and Meyers Bay of Pistakee Lake. Its notable feature is a 17-acre kame, a rare glacial landform in northeastern Illinois. The preserve is undergoing restoration to enhance its dry gravel hill prairies and to improve native habitats along the Chain O'Lakes waterway, ensuring it continues to support biodiversity and recreational activities.

Figure 4: Chain O’Lakes and Green Spaces



# Quality of Life

Quality of life is more than what can be seen or measured—it's the essence of a community's well-being and spirit. In Fox Lake, quality of life encompasses the experiences, values, and connections that define daily life for residents. It is shaped not just by physical surroundings but by the institutions, services, and shared moments that foster a sense of belonging and security. From schools and local events to the services that support safety and community cohesion, quality of life is the foundation upon which a brighter future is built.

## Education

Fox Lake is recognized throughout the region for great educational institutions, including its public schools and library, which provide diverse learning opportunities for the community's youth.

### SCHOOL DISTRICTS

- **Fox Lake Grade School District 114:** Serving elementary and middle school students, District 114 includes Lotus Elementary School (PK-4) and Stanton Middle School (5-8). The district supports 640 students and is dedicated to fostering continuous improvement for student growth and learning.
- **Grant Community High School District 124:** A Future Ready School, Grant Community High School serves 1,900 students and covers a 30-square-mile area, preparing students for college, careers, and life. It serves multiple communities, including Fox Lake and nearby areas.
- **Gavin School District 37:** This district includes Gavin Central Elementary School and Gavin South Middle School, offering a comprehensive curriculum for younger students. The district is focused on providing a supportive environment for student development and academic success.
- **Big Hollow School District 38:** District 38 includes Big Hollow Primary School, Big Hollow Elementary School, and Big Hollow Middle School, offering a continuum of education from early childhood through middle school. The district emphasizes creating a strong foundation for lifelong learning.



### PUBLIC LIBRARY

The Fox Lake Public Library District serves over 25,000 residents across Lake and McHenry Counties. With a collection of more than 80,000 volumes and a staff of nine full-time and nine part-time employees, the library provides a wide array of services, from book and audio material loans to access to public computers and various educational and recreational programs.

# Community Events

Fox Lake offers a variety of community events that celebrate the village's rich heritage, culture, and natural beauty. These events foster a strong sense of belonging and pride among residents, bringing people together through celebrations that highlight the village's unique identity. From farmers markets to concert series and parades, there is something for everyone to enjoy throughout the year.

The Parks and Recreation Department manages these events, with a strong focus on community engagement, particularly in the years following the COVID-19 pandemic. Events like the annual fishing derby, which is set to expand next year in partnership with the Lions Club Derby, demonstrate the department's commitment to growing and enhancing community traditions. The department continues to strengthen partnerships to manage these events more efficiently while increasing their reach and impact.

In addition to traditional events such as farmers markets, concerts, and holiday celebrations, parks and recreation planning across the country is expanding to include health and wellness programming. Fox Lake is aligning with this trend by considering new initiatives, such as a locally led nutrition program, and incorporating wellness-focused activities. Programs like these reflect the department's commitment to evolving beyond traditional recreational offerings to include services that promote holistic well-being for the community.

Below is an overview of some of Fox Lake's signature events.

- **Pelican Palooza:** Every spring, Fox Lake celebrates the majestic migration of the American White Pelican with a two-week event spread across the village's parks and public spaces. Activities include a photo contest, children's crafts and photo exhibits at the library, a scavenger hunt, and more. The festival emphasizes the village's connection to wildlife and conservation.
- **Friday Night Concert Series:** From June to August, Lakefront Park transforms into a vibrant outdoor concert venue every Friday night. Residents and visitors gather with chairs, blankets and even boats to enjoy performances by local musicians and enjoy local food and beverage vendors.
- **Farmers Market:** Held every Tuesday during the summer at Lakefront Park, the Farmers Market brings together local farmers, artisans, and craftspeople. Visitors can browse fresh produce, homemade goods, and handcrafted items, supporting local businesses while enjoying the community atmosphere.



- **Celebrate Fox Lake:** Held the Saturday before Independence Day, this all-day celebration is a tribute to the vibrant culture and close-knit spirit of Fox Lake. The event features live music, food and drink vendors, a parade through the village, a car show, and a fireworks display.
- **National Night Out:** Hosted by the Police Department, this event focuses on fostering community partnerships and promoting safety. Held at Lakefront Park, it features local vendors, games, activities, and opportunities for residents to engage with local law enforcement in a welcoming environment.
- **Mayor's Fish Fry:** The Mayor's Fish Fry is a cherished tradition that brings the community together at Lakefront Park. Residents gather for a laid-back evening of fried fish, good company, and conversation, strengthening the bond between local leadership and the public.
- **Cardboard Boat Race & Youth Fishing Derby:** This popular event invites people of all ages to put their creativity and engineering skills to the test by building human-sized boats out of cardboard to race against others.
- **Fall Festival:** In partnership with Grant Township, Fox Lake hosts an annual Fall Festival at the Grant Township Center. This all-day event features live music, crafts, pumpkin carving, food, refreshments, a pie eating contest, inflatables, a petting zoo, and much more.
- **Pumpkin Jubilee:** Held in late October at Lakefront Park, the Pumpkin Jubilee is a fall-themed celebration featuring artisan craft vendors, food, live music, a kids' costume contest and parade, and pumpkin carving activities.
- **Halloween Howl:** Sponsored by the Fox Lake Police Department, this free event offers residents a safe and fun way to celebrate Halloween. Kids enjoy trick-or-treating, hot dogs, hot chocolate, hayrides, and festive games at Lakefront Park.
- **Festival of Lights:** Fox Lake hosts its annual Festival of Lights, featuring the Kris Kringle Winter Market. The festival includes a parade that starts at Grant High School and ends in a tree lighting ceremony at Millennium Park.



“ Fox Lake needs to focus more on programming that goes around to the different neighborhoods of the community. ”

“ Marketing and recreation go hand in hand – the parks department needs to amp up their marketing efforts. ”

# Safety

Multiple agencies, including the Fox Lake Police Department, Fire Protection District, Fox Waterway Agency, and various county entities, collaborate to ensure the safety and security of Fox Lake. These resources play a vital role in maintaining the community's high quality of life for both residents and visitors.

## Fox Lake Police Department

The Fox Lake Police Department is dedicated to delivering high-quality police services, fostering a safe environment for those living, working, and visiting the area. Located along Route 59, the department employs 30 officers and eight administrators who manage a range of services, including investigations, Community Services, and general operations. Emergency dispatch is contracted by the Village and has been actively involved in the county-wide initiative to consolidate dispatch services, which will soon be managed by the new County agency, Lake Consolidated Emergency Communication (LakeComm).



## Fox Lake Fire Protection District

The Fox Lake Fire Protection District offers comprehensive fire and emergency medical services (EMS) to Fox Lake, Lakemoor, Volo, Round Lake, Ingleside, and surrounding unincorporated areas. The district operates from three fire stations, with Stations 2 and 4 located in Fox Lake. Beyond emergency services, the district provides a variety of educational programs, such as CPR training, the Explorers Program, and car seat safety courses. Additionally, the district employs 10 divers specialized in water and ice rescue operations.

## Fox Waterway Agency

The Fox Waterway Agency is responsible for maintaining and enhancing the Fox River and Chain O'Lakes waterway for recreational and environmental purposes. Their mission is "to restore environmental quality, minimize flooding, promote tourism, and enhance the quality of life along the waterway for residents and users alike." The agency collaborates with local landowners, organizations, and government agencies, offering services such as dredging, topsoil recycling, emergency response, and implementation of capital projects.

## Public Action to Deliver Shelter (PADS)

In collaboration with county agencies, the Village of Fox Lake extends its essential services to address issues it cannot manage alone. One such issue, raised by key stakeholders and the community, is homelessness. The village has partnered with regional resources like PADS Lake County to provide shelter, support, and services for individuals experiencing homelessness or a housing crisis.

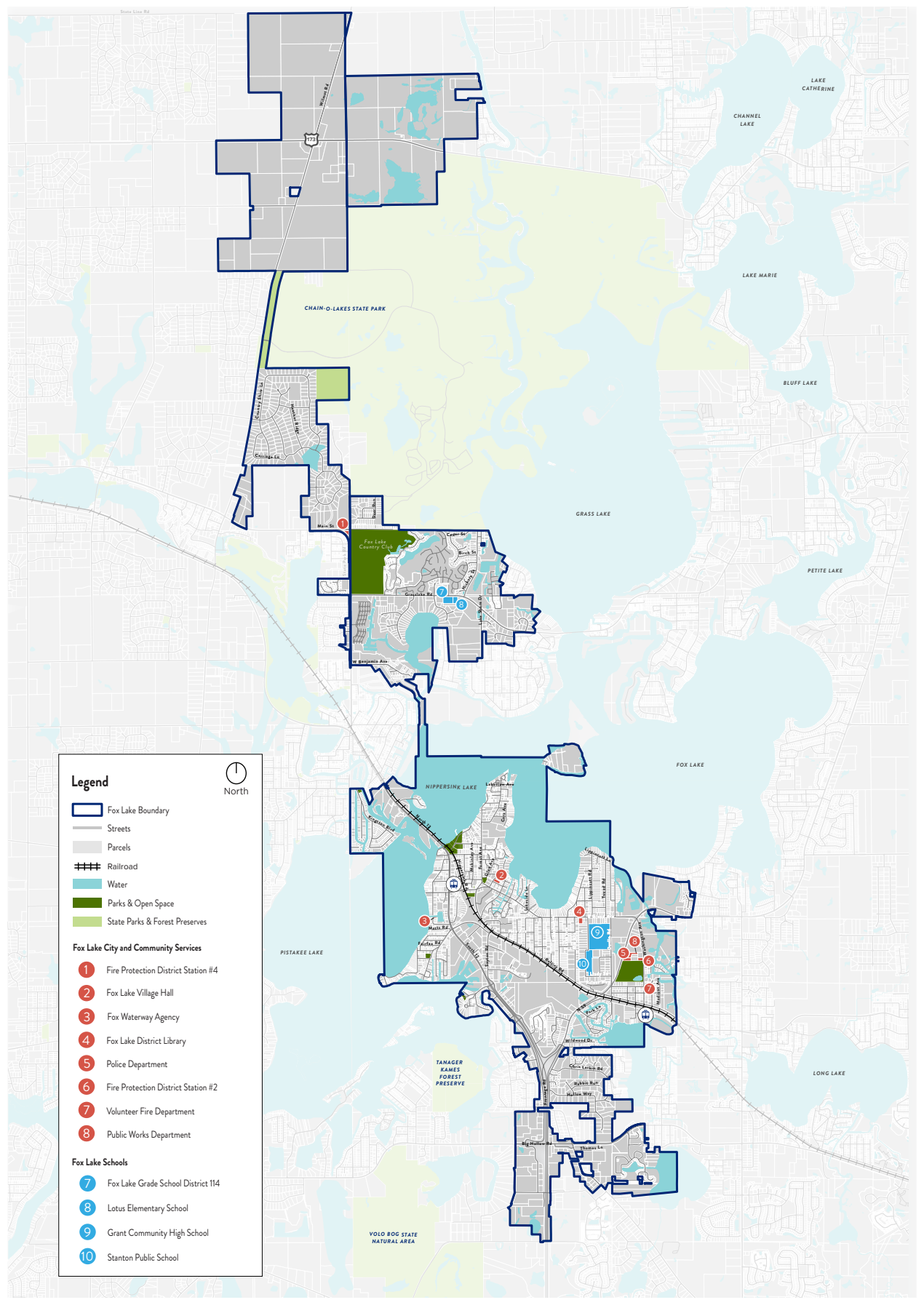
# Village Services

Village services play a crucial role in maintaining high standards in infrastructure, sanitation, and public amenities. The Village of Fox Lake's municipal services are primarily administered from Village Hall on Thillen Drive, just east of the downtown area. Village Hall serves as the central hub for city departments, including Administration, Community Development, Economic Development, and Finance departments.

The Parks and Recreation department is dedicated to enhancing the quality of life for both residents and visitors by offering programming and recreational opportunities. The department's main facility is at Lakefront Park, which with its new design is now the heart of recreational activity in Fox Lake. Public Works includes three divisions – streets, local water and sewer, and motor pool – that operate out of the public works facility along Washington Street.



Figure 1: Community Facilities and Services



# Mobility & Connectivity

The Mobility and Connectivity Assessment for the Village of Fox Lake examines the Village's current multimodal transportation conditions, including the transit, roadway, and active transportation network. Fox Lake is connected to the broader region via U.S. 12, IL 59, IL 134 (Big Hollow Road), and Rollins Road. Multiple modes of transportation connect the Village to neighboring communities including rail, bike, and pedestrian infrastructure as well as waterways. Additionally, the Village is served by the Milwaukee District North Metra line, providing train access to Chicago Union Station. The following sections provide an assessment of Fox Lake's existing transportation network and identifies challenges and opportunities that will inform the overall Comprehensive Plan.

## Roadway Network

The primary routes through the Village that provide regional connectivity are US 12 and IL 59. Route 12 runs north-south and serves as a key commercial route through the Village and more broadly throughout the northwest suburbs of Chicago, connecting McHenry County, Lake County, and Cook County, as well as communities in Wisconsin. Additionally, IL 173 runs east-west along the northern portion of the Village and provides a full-access interchange with Interstate 94 (I-94) approximately 12 miles east of Fox Lake and within 2 miles of the Wisconsin-Illinois border. Proximity to I-94 provides broader north-south connectivity through Illinois and Wisconsin.

At the southern portion of the Village, IL 134 intersects with US 12 and runs east-west providing broader connectivity to surrounding communities such as McHenry and Round Lake. Grand Avenue connects between US 12 and IL 59 and serves as a commercial corridor providing access to the Downtown area. The broader roadway network that serves Fox Lake and provides connectivity to adjacent communities helps to create the environment for social, economic, and cultural opportunities that make Fox Lake what it is today.



## Roadway Jurisdiction

Roadway jurisdiction is an important factor regarding roadway maintenance and function. The roadway network within the Village municipal boundary is under the jurisdiction of various agencies including IDOT, Lake County Division of Transportation (LCDOT), and McHenry County Division of Transportation (MCDOT) as summarized below. With few arterial streets under Fox Lake jurisdiction, the Village has limited flexibility to control access and make improvements. However, IDOT and LDCOT should be involved in the planning process moving forward to ensure that plan recommendations are implementable along roadways where these agencies maintain jurisdiction and that they balance the needs of both Fox Lake and the region. For the sizeable number of local roads under the Village's jurisdiction, the Village has full authority to make improvements that align with its interests.

**Figure 2:** Fox Lake's Roadway Jurisdiction

Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT)	Lake County Division of Transportation (LCDOT)	McHenry County Division of Transportation (MCDOT)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• US 12</li> <li>• IL 59</li> <li>• IL 134 (Big Hollow Road)</li> <li>• IL 173</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rollins Road</li> <li>• Big Hollow Road (west of US Route 12)</li> <li>• State Park Road (south of Golf View Drive)</li> <li>• Grass Lake Road</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wilmot Road</li> </ul>

## Traffic Volumes

Traffic volumes are one factor that can help define roadway operations. These volume measurements are taken in several ways, one standard being Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT). In Fox Lake, the highest AADT volumes occur along the arterial roadways, which is common. The collector roadways through Fox Lake generally range from ~200 vpd to 2,000 vpd. Traffic volumes along both the arterial and collector roadways in the Village are considered in line with the number of lanes available on a given roadway or corridor.

- **U.S. 12:** 21,400 vehicles per day (vpd) north of Grand Avenue, 19,100 vpd south of Grand Avenue
- **IL 59:** 10,400 vpd north of Rollins Road, 12,800 vpd south of Rollins Road
- **Grand Avenue:** 7,950 vpd west of Rollins Road, 5,750 vpd east of Rollins Road
- **IL Route 134:** 10,050 vpd east of U.S. 12, 13,200 vpd west of U.S. 12
- **IL Route 173:** 8,450 vpd east of Wilmot Road
- **Rollins Road:** 7,350 vpd east of IL 59, 8,850 vpd west of IL 59
- **State Park Road:** 4,800 vpd north of Grass Lake Road (2021), 6,350 vpd south of Grass Lake Road
- **Grass Lake Road:** 6,300 vpd east of State Park Road
- **Wilmot Road:** 6,550 vpd north of IL Route 173 (2017)

# Characteristics

According to the US Census Bureau, the majority of Fox Lake residents (83 percent) work outside of Fox Lake and the majority (61 percent) work within their county of residency. These characteristics are typical for the Northeast Illinois region, as the proximity to Chicagoland and neighboring communities draws a good portion of residents outside of Fox Lake for work. Residents traveling outside the community for work increases the number of vehicles miles traveled (vmt), which leads to greater wear and tear on roadways, more traffic, and increased emissions. As such, it is beneficial for the local economy and the environment that just over 60 percent of residents work locally in Lake County.

According to Center for Neighborhood Technology (CNT), when compared with four neighboring communities: McHenry, Round Lake, Hainesville, and Grayslake, Fox Lake has lower greenhouse gas emissions per household, lower transportation costs per household, and less vehicles per household than its peer communities.

Fox Lake maintaining the lowest GHG's per household should be viewed as favorable for the Village. Providing increased opportunities for safe and convenient active transportation options, as well as establishing future land use and development frameworks that promote walking and biking can reduce dependency on vehicles for everyday transportation needs. These opportunities will be explored through this comprehensive planning process.

# Water Recreational Activities

Water recreational activities such as boating, jet skiing, swimming, kayaking, and fishing are popular pastimes on Fox Lake. Numerous marinas and related businesses provide access to the lake, supporting these activities. Additionally, many private residences along the shoreline feature private piers and docks, offering direct lake access.

However, public access to the Chain O'Lakes is limited, with Lakefront Park being the only designated public access. This limitation can be considered a barrier, as most access is restricted to Lakefront Park and private marinas.

It is also important to note that the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA), has classified Fox Lake as an impaired body of water, which may affect the ability of residents and visitors to fully enjoy its recreational opportunities. Further details about the lake's water quality are discussed in the Watershed section of the Infrastructure Section.



# Parking

Off-street parking is generally provided via parking lots for commercial and industrial land uses throughout the community, including along US 12 and Grand Avenue. The minimum off-street parking provisions within Fox Lake's Zoning Code help to ensure adequate parking is provided when future development occurs. However, minimum parking provisions, set too high, can decrease the viability of the Village's land uses as more space than is necessary is dedicated to parking. As a practical matter, some larger big-box type businesses (e.g. Menard's, Jewel-Osco) can be considered "over parked," meaning the parking lots provide more capacity than necessary. However, businesses along US 12 closer to downtown, south of Grand Avenue and north of Sayton Road, may experience parking challenges due to the right-of-way width of US 12 coupled with shallow lot sizes, which can limit the amount of land available for parking.

## Planned Improvements

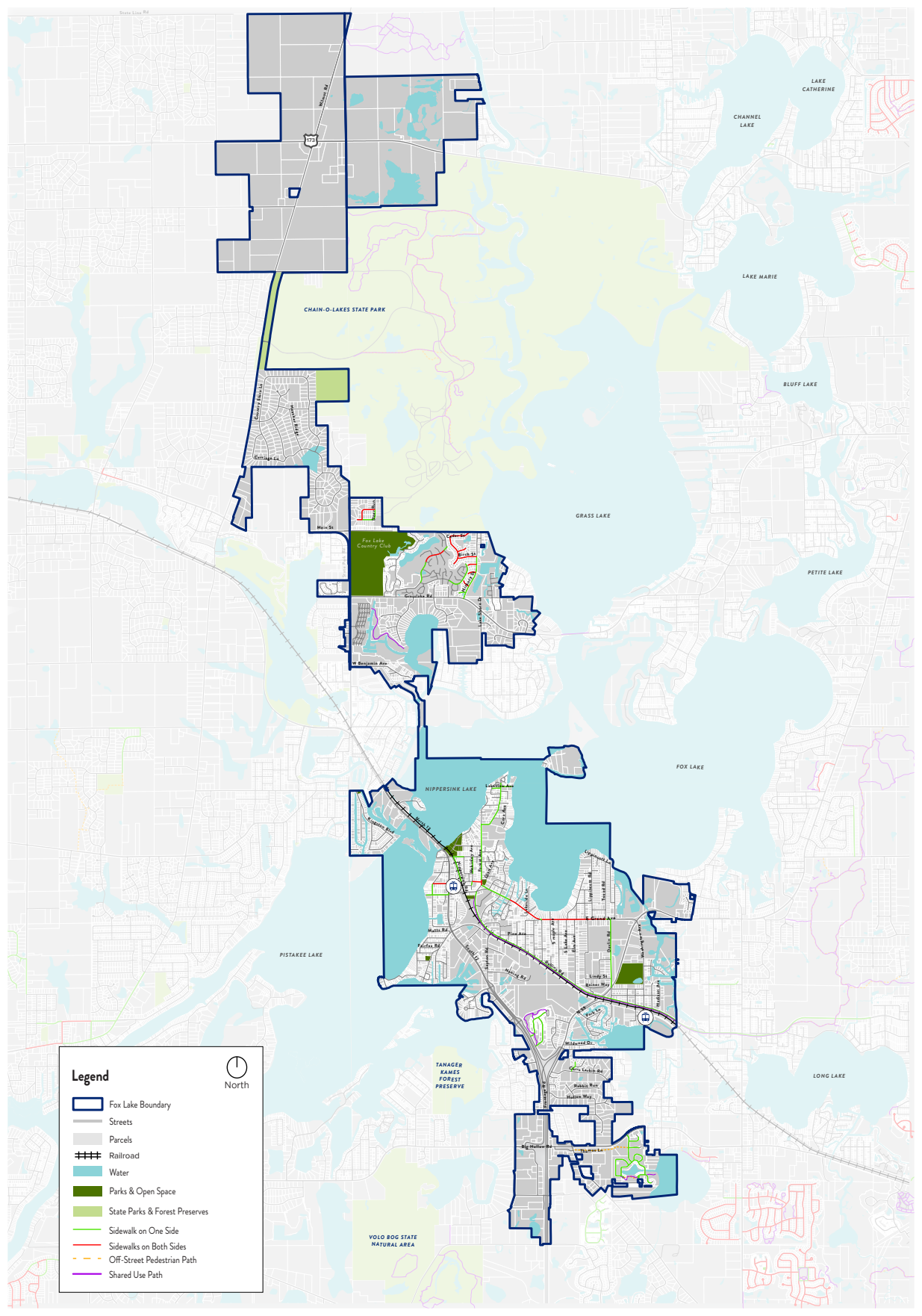
The following is a list of major planned improvements that are currently or will impact the roadway network within Fox Lake. These projects and plans will be reviewed and incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan.

- **IL 59 / Grand Avenue / Washington Avenue – Intersection Improvements (ongoing):** Intersection re-alignment to create new adjacent intersection, add left- and right-turn lanes, and construct sidewalks and multi-use paths.
- **US 12 from State Park Road to Fox Lake Road in Volo - Resurfacing (ongoing):** Smart overlay for pavement preservation and ADA improvements.
- **Sayton Road from US 12 to Rollins Road – Roadway Improvements (Planned 2025):** Widen roadway from two-lane to three-lane road including a shared center two-way left-turn lane and pedestrian/cyclist improvement options.
- **Rollins Road from Grand Avenue to Washington Avenue - Roadway Improvements (Pending 2028):** Widen roadway from two-lane to three-lane road including a shared center two-way left-turn lane and pedestrian/cyclist improvement options.

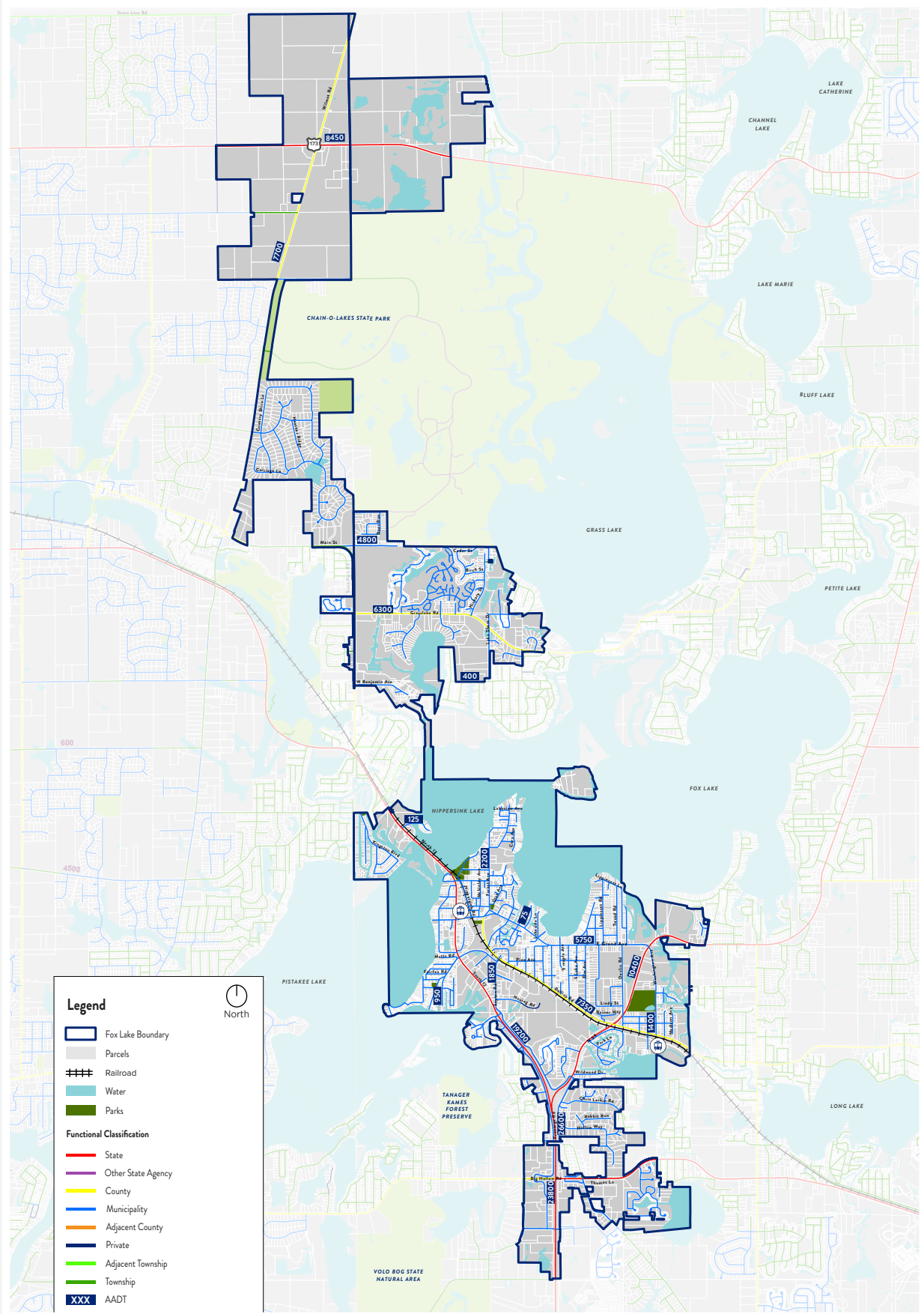
“The water is a major mode of transportation and we need to keep that in mind as we think about how accessible the lake is to the public.”



Figure 3: Pedestrian & Cycling Infrastructure Map



**Figure 4: Roadway Jurisdiction & Traffic Volumes Map**



# Active Transportation System

In general, Fox Lake can be considered a car-dependent Village with few non-motorized transportation options. A network of sidewalks along most downtown and arterial (US 12, Grand Ave) roads contribute to the Village's non-motorized transportation system. The Chain O' Lakes Bike Path is the only shared-use path that runs through Fox Lake starting in downtown and running concurrent with Rollins Road for approximately 3.2 miles until it connects with the Grant Woods South Trail in the Grant Woods Forest Preserve.

The Village of Fox Lake Greenways and Bikeways Plan was completed in 2013 and emphasized improvements in non-motorized access to the Village's lakefront, parks, and open spaces. Shared-use paths were recommended along most major roadways in Fox Lake including, US 12, IL 59, IL 134, State Park Road, Grass Lake Road, Wilmont Road, Grand Avenue, and more. Most of these roadways are outside the jurisdiction of the Village, meaning that the agency (IDOT, LCDOT, MCDOT) who has jurisdiction is largely responsible for constructing these planned shared-use paths. However, the Village can still actively participate and further these recommendations by pursuing grants to secure funding for design and construction and promoting these plans to the appropriate agency when the given stretch of roadway is due for reconstruction.

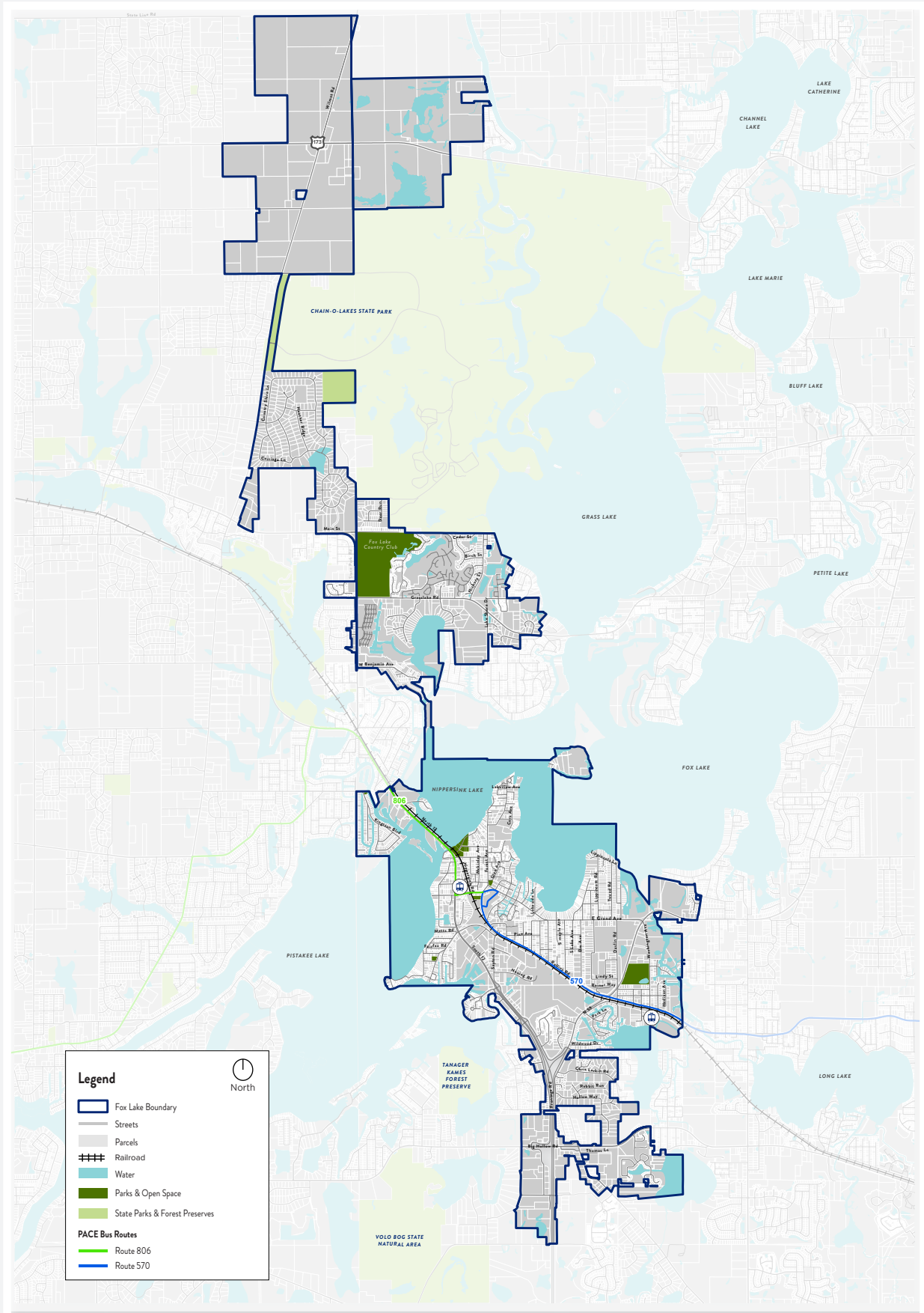
Outside of sidewalks and the Chain O' Lakes Bike Path, bike lanes are provided along Nippersink Boulevard from Grand Avenue to Oak Street (approximately  $\frac{1}{4}$  of a mile). These bike lanes provide cyclists access between downtown, the Fox Lake Metra Station, and the Lakefront Park. Expansion of the Village's on-street bicycle facilities through additional bike lanes or shared bicycle markings (commonly referred to as "sharrows") can increase Fox Lake's bicycle mobility options in a way that is often inexpensive compared to shared-use paths.

The Comprehensive Plan will explore strategies around pursuing funding for the construction of recommended shared-use paths, identify streets where bike lanes or sharrows may be feasible around downtown and its adjacent neighborhoods, and provide residents with greater access to safe, alternative transportation methods. Patrons of nearby businesses within Downtown or residents visiting the Lakefront Park are permitted to park in these spaces.

*“The Village needs to work closely with PACE and METRA to understand barriers to transit usage.”*



**Figure 5: Public Transportation Map**



# Utilities & Infrastructure

Village infrastructure includes the systems that are essential to everyday life, such as streets, water service, and sanitary sewer service lines. These systems are maintained by the Fox Lake Public Works Department which is responsible for the upkeep and maintenance of Village Buildings and Facilities, including but not limited to the Village Hall, Police Department, Community Center, Lakefront Park, Streets Department, Motor Pool, and the Water Department. Village infrastructure requires regular upkeep and maintenance to ensure safe and quality services for Fox Lake residents. Key infrastructure maintained by the Public Works Department includes:

- Water service system including three water treatment plants and four wells
- Sanitary sewer system including 50+ miles of sanitary sewer mains
- Streets, sidewalks, streetlights, traffic signal lights, and trees/landscaping within Village right-of-way

## Water Service

Water service includes the delivery of potable water to properties within Fox Lake Village limits. A well-run water service means that when residents or businesses turn on the faucet, clean and drinkable water is distributed. Water Service within Fox Lake is provided through a series of infrastructure types including three water towers, three functional treatment plants, 50+ miles of water mains, and water service lines. The Public Works Department, and more specifically the Water and Sewer Division, is responsible for delivery of water and maintenance of the system.

The three water treatment plants within the Village provide a combined capacity of 2.5 million gallons per day (MGD). The current estimated demand experienced by the system is approximately 0.7 MGD according to Village data. Furthermore, according to Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP), water demand in 2002 and 2013 was 0.99 MGD and 0.97 MGD, respectively. This means that demand has stayed relatively flat over time, despite some of the growth that was experienced in the Village. It is likely that the conservation policies and directives put in place by the Village are having an impact, and the general population is becoming more aware of water issues and strategies to conserve as climate related events become more prevalent. The Village of Fox Lake municipal code provides water conservation ordinances and groundwater protection measures to regulate water usage among residents.



## Water Source

The Village of Fox Lake receives its potable water from four wells, (#1, 4, 5, 6 and 7) that are located throughout the Village. Three of the four wells draw groundwater from shallow sand and gravel aquifers, which generally means they are less than 400 feet deep. Water drawn from shallow sand and gravel aquifers is more susceptible to contamination by pollutants from the surface, such as stormwater runoff that collects salt, gasoline, or heavy metals. The remaining well is considered a deep well and is approximately 945 feet deep. Deep wells draw from sandstone aquifers, and while less likely to become polluted from surface contaminants, contain less water to draw from and are more expensive to construct and maintain. In addition to the four existing functional wells, the Village is proactively planning for the future and has secured \$14 million in funding to construct two new well locations.

While there is no cause for concern as it relates to Fox Lake's water supply and the Village can meet current and future water needs, it is important to plan for the increased protection of water quality and conservation measures to protect water levels in the shallow sand and gravel aquifers. Fox Lake already has a lawn watering ordinance in place, which helps work toward this goal. However, there are several policies and directives that the Comprehensive Plan will consider, such as installation of green infrastructure by new development, conservation strategies for new development, and strategies for management of parks and open spaces.

## Watersheds

Within its municipal limits, Fox Lake is part of the Upper Fox River/Chain O' Lakes watershed. A watershed is a geographic area of land that drains water to a stream or lake. The Upper Fox River/Chain O' Lakes watershed is approximately 1,200 square miles and extends from Lake Catherine and Channel Lake near Antioch in the north, to Davis Lake near Wauconda in the south. According to the Chain O' Lakes Watershed-Based Plan completed in February 2024, early development in the Chain O' Lakes region was initially comprised of summer homes. Over time, the number of permanent residents has increased, thereby changing the required infrastructure to serve the residents of the area. The area has wide use of septic systems and many places where stormwater runoff goes directly into the lakes without any retention or filtration systems in place. This stormwater runoff from urban and agricultural areas can lead to high nutrient loading of the lakes. In order to reduce the risks that private septic systems can pose, the plan sets a goal to connect approximately 4,300 homes currently served by private septic systems to public sewer systems. The Village of Fox Lake owns and operates the Northwest Regional Water Reclamation Facility (NWRWRF), which treats wastewater for several communities in the northwest region of Lake County and is actively working to connect more residents to public sewer systems. However, a good number of homes (~820) are not within the NWRWRF Facility Planning area, which requires coordination with other agencies and municipalities.

According to the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA), Fox Lake is an impaired body of water, which means the water quality of the lake does not meet the agency standards. The 2020 Upper Fox River/Chain O' Lakes Watershed Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Report details the reduction in pollutants needed for the watershed to satisfy water quality standards. Nippersink Lake and Fox Lake, which occupy a combined 2,382 acres, drain into the Pistakee Lake. Both lakes are used primarily for fishing, boating, and swimming and exceed the TMDL target for total phosphorous and total suspended solids. To improve water quality, some of the applicable best management practices outlined in the TMDL report include field borders, conservation tillage practices, conservation crop rotation, and filter strips. The Comprehensive Plan will seek to further the goals and strategies of the watershed plan and TMDL report where appropriate, such as reviewing developing plans for sediment removal and the prevention of nutrient release.

# Stormwater

Stormwater includes the collection and distribution of water generated by weather events, intended to reduce flooding and protect the health of local water systems, like the Nippersink Creek in the northwest part of the Village. Older communities, such as Fox Lake, have sewer systems that can be over 100 years old. Over time, maintenance can be deferred and the system not maintained or upgraded to meet the demand of increasing rainfall, which can increase the chance of flooding.

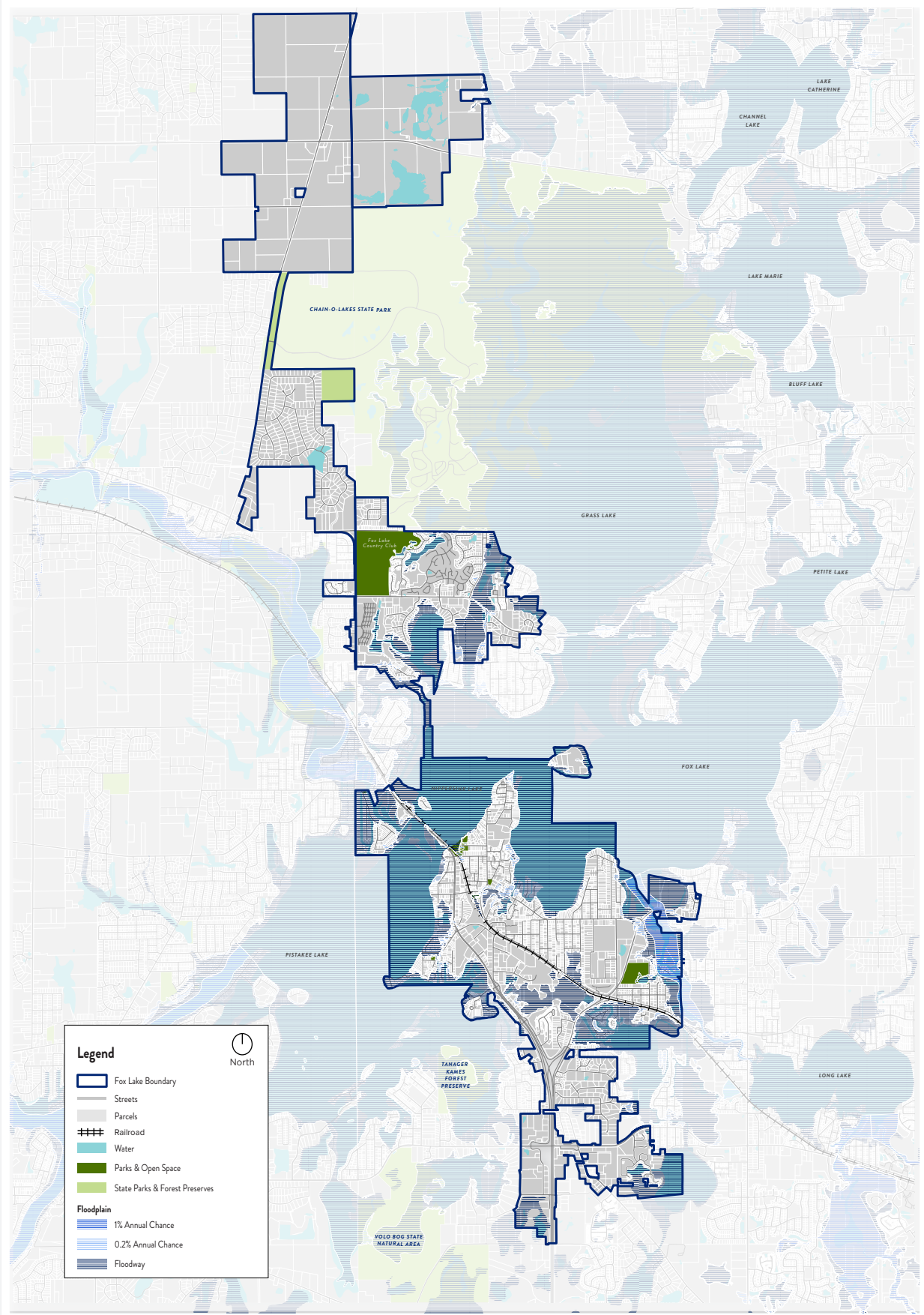
Large portions of the Village of Fox Lake are located within a Federal Emergency Management's (FEMA) mapped floodplain. Current regulatory floodways within City limits include Nippersink Creek and Squaw Creek. The floodplain map depicts the 1 percent Annual Chance Flood Hazard and 0.2 percent Annual Chance Flood Hazard in Fox Lake. The 1 percent annual floodplain is largely located along the shorelines of Fox Lake, Nippersink Creek, and Squaw Creek in the center of the Village and impacts homes along the shore. This designation means that land within this boundary has a 1 percent chance every year of receiving flood impacts from a storm with a 100-year magnitude. Furthermore, the 0.2 percent annual floodplain is primarily located along the Fox Lake Shoreline. This designation means that land within this boundary has a 0.2 percent chance every year of receiving flood impacts from a storm with a 500-year magnitude.

Extra regulation is placed on development that occurs within the floodplain to ensure that the development is safe, and that it does not increase the hazard to existing property. The Lake County Storm Water Management Commission Watershed Development Ordinance (WDO), which Fox Lake has adopted, requires a permit for projects that are in floodplain areas, impact wetlands, hydrologically disturb more than 5,000 square feet, or modify site drainage. These designations cover most development or redevelopment activity that would occur within the Village. The comprehensive planning process will consider the location and impact that floodplains can have on future land use designations and density.

Lake and McHenry counties participate in FEMA's National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), which helps provide flood insurance to property owners, renters, and businesses within participating communities. The Village of Fox Lake does not participate in the NFIP.



**Figure 6: Floodplain Map**



# Sanitary Sewer Services

Wastewater and sewer services in Fox Lake include the collection of wastewater from most properties within the Village. The system relies 50+ miles of gravity sanitary sewers and 26 lift stations to transport wastewater to the Northwest Regional Water Reclamation Facility (NWRWRF). The Fox Lake Public Works Department is responsible for inspecting both existing and new sanitary sewer lines throughout the Village.

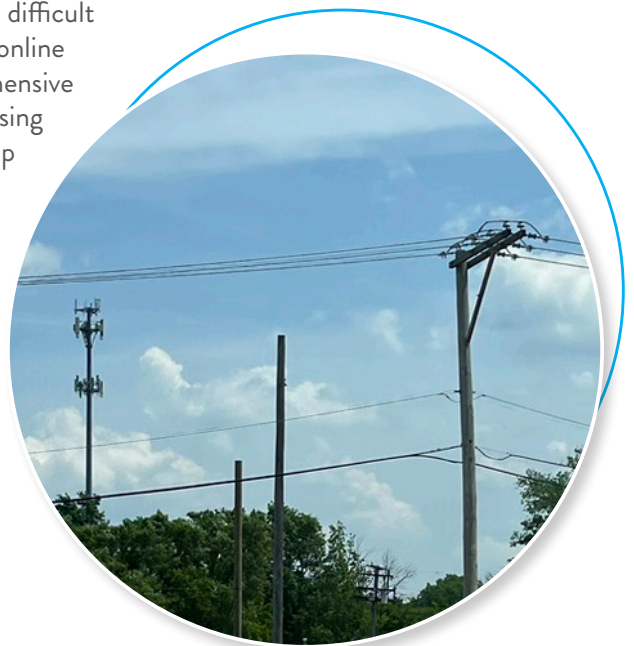
The NWRWRF is owned and operated by the Village of Fox Lake, located at 200 Industrial Avenue and through an intergovernmental agreement with Lake County provides service to several communities in the northwest region of Lake County, including Ingleside, Long Lake, Round Lake, Round Lake Park, Round Lake Heights, Round Lake Beach, Hainesville, Lake Villa, Antioch, Volo, parts of unincorporated Lake County, and the Lakes Region Sanitary District.

The most recent NWRWRF Assessment was completed in 2024 and outlines the current state of the wastewater system, along with anticipated upgrades and associated cost to maintain a state of good repair into the future. To meet limits set as it relates to total phosphorous discharged from the facility, the NWRWRF is planning to convert to an advanced activated sludge biological process, alongside its existing chemical phosphorus removal by 2029. The new process is more efficient and the upgrade is estimated to cost approximately \$10.3 million.

# Telecommunications

Broadband services are offered throughout Fox Lake with a choice of multiple providers. The main providers of broadband services within Fox Lake are Comcast (Xfinity), Frontier, and Mediacom, as well as through newer 5G Home Internet services via T-Mobile, AT&T, or Verizon, however these services require mobile phone plans with the respective provider. According to 2018-2022 CMAP and US Census Estimates, 11-12 percent of Fox Lake households have no internet access, and 10-11 percent of Fox Lake Households do not have access to a computer/smartphone. These metrics exceed that of Lake County and the Chicagoland region, which has estimates of about 5-6 percent, and 7-8 percent of households with no internet access, respectively.

Several different factors can lead to a higher percentage of households without internet access in Fox Lake. Namely, affordability of the services, aging population, and physical coverage of properties by the utility providers. Lack of access to the internet can make it difficult for residents to purchase products online, pay bills online, attend online educational opportunities, apply for jobs, and more. The Comprehensive Plan will seek to identify the areas within the Village where increasing internet access is needed most and provide strategies that can help increase affordability for residents.



# Streets

The streets that comprise the Village of Fox Lake are how residents and businesses navigate and conduct their daily activities. Well paved and maintained streets can help to facilitate increased economic, social, and cultural opportunities. A Roadway Inventory was conducted in 2019 that evaluated the pavement conditions along 50 centerline miles of roadway within the Village. A rating system was used to evaluate roadway conditions on a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being the best rating. Approximately 26 of the 50 evaluated miles were rated 1-3, resulting in approximately half of the total length of street network rated as “poor” condition. The Roadway Inventory report notes that in 2012, approximately 26% of the roadway network was rated as “poor” condition, indicating deteriorating conditions over time. In order to address this, the report recommended a 5-year road program with budget allocations to effectively target maintenance efforts. The Village has been implementing the program to improve conditions and is actively working with the CMAP to conduct a new Roadway Inventory in order to plan for the coming 5 years. The comprehensive plan will help investigate funding sources and opportunities to reduce the financial impact of roadway maintenance on the Village.





# The Comprehensive Plan

## SECTION 5

### FOX LAKE'S VISION

*The future of Fox Lake builds on the character that has always made the village special: its family-run shops, welcoming neighborhoods, and the everyday rhythms of life along the water. Downtown grows into a place where small businesses thrive and music spills into the streets, where dining and gathering feel as natural as the lake breeze. Neighborhoods hold their distinct charm while offering new opportunities for residents of every generation, connected by trails, parks, and open spaces that lead back to the water's edge. The Chain O'Lakes remains Fox Lake's anchor, a backdrop for sunsets that draw people together and views that continue to captivate. This vision is about a resilient, year-round community that celebrates its history and natural setting while embracing the vitality and creativity of the people who call it home.*

# Guiding Themes

THEME #1:  
**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

THEME #2:  
**THE DOWNTOWN**

THEME #3:  
**LAND USE & DEVELOPMENT**

THEME #4:  
**NEIGHBORHOODS & HOUSING**

THEME #5:  
**PARKS & RECREATION**

THEME #6:  
**COMMUNITY BUILDING**

THEME #7:  
**MOBILITY & CONNECTIVITY**

THEME #8:  
**INFRASTRUCTURE**



## THEME #1

# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

While Fox Lake's economy is closely tied to Chain O'Lakes summer tourism, a healthy, more resilient economy depends on year-round economic activity. Enhancing business diversity can help drive local economic development while still growing Fox Lake's tourism sector. Currently, restaurants (including fast food), auto dealerships, and professional services comprise more than half of Fox Lake's retail businesses.

Through economic development initiatives that support existing and new small businesses, Fox Lake can encourage further investment in the village. By helping address the challenges that small business owners face, Fox Lake can help them grow and succeed, further contributing to the village's long-term economic vitality. Additionally, fostering local and regional partnerships will create a more resilient and dynamic business landscape.

**Goal 1.1:** Strengthen business development and attraction in Fox Lake.

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**Goal 1.2:** Foster a thriving small business community in Fox Lake.

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**Goal 1.3:** Expand Fox Lake's tourism economy.

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**Goal 1.4:** Elevate Fox Lake's image as a premier recreational destination.

## Goal 1.1: Strengthen business development and attraction in Fox Lake.

Fox Lake's economy is closely tied to the Chain O'Lakes; therefore, summer tourism is a significant driver for local business. However, fostering a thriving, sustainable economy requires year-round business activity that serves both residents and visitors. Strengthening the local business environment will involve ongoing collaboration with existing business owners, targeted strategies to attract new businesses, and investments in infrastructure that support commercial growth.

Attracting a diverse mix of businesses, including sit-down restaurants, entertainment venues, and specialty retail, will help meet community needs while enhancing Fox Lake's appeal as a destination. Supporting entrepreneurs and small businesses through initiatives like resource-sharing, streamlined permitting, and economic incentives will encourage further investment in Fox Lake. Additionally, fostering partnerships between the village, local organizations, and regional economic development agencies will create a more resilient and dynamic business landscape.

**Strategy 1.1.1:** Identify target commercial tenants for Fox Lake and identify suitable locations for potential commercial development outside of downtown.

*Areas around Fox Lake continue to grow in population, further catalyzing the retail market. High occupancy within existing centers outside of downtown points to potential for new retail development near existing centers and in zones currently underserved by retailers.*

**Strategy 1.1.2:** Promote and market village businesses to residents of surrounding communities and neighborhoods.

*Fox Lake recently completed a brand refresh to streamline messaging around village amenities for residents and tourists alike. Levering the This is the Life brand will increase regional awareness of Fox Lake businesses which can lead to greater patron visits, foot traffic, and profits for local businesses.*

**Strategy 1.1.3:** Continue building relationships and communicating with local businesses and entrepreneurs to identify needs and opportunities.

*More frequent touchpoints with Fox Lake's business community can help the Village shape its strategic business and economic development programs to be more effective.*

**Strategy 1.1.4:** Reduce barriers to entry for business creation in Fox Lake.

*Narrow profit margins in the retail and restaurant industries make substantial tenant improvements cost prohibitive. Many aging spaces in Fox Lake require building improvements to meet tenant needs. Direct assistance through grants or passive assistance through streamlined approvals can lower the cost of these essential improvements and unlock opportunities.*

**Strategy 1.1.5:** Support the creation of a regional economic development corporation (EDC) whose toolkit would support Fox Lake's business community.

*Economic development corporations have more flexibility related to structure incentives to attain and retain investment than municipalities. A regional EDC could streamline and centralize regional economic development efforts.*

## Goal 1.2: Foster a thriving small business community in Fox Lake.

Small businesses are the backbone of Fox Lake's economy, shaping the village's unique character and enhancing its sense of community. Residents consistently express appreciation for the value that local businesses bring, from personalized service to distinctive products and experiences. However, small business owners often face challenges in navigating regulatory processes, securing funding, and accessing resources that can help them grow and succeed. By investing in entrepreneurship and addressing key barriers to success, Fox Lake can cultivate a diverse, resilient small business community that contributes to the village's long-term economic vitality.

**Strategy 1.2.1:** Continue encouraging infill development and redevelopment of retail focused on convenience and neighborhood-serving retail within Fox Lake.

*Retailer space preferences have shifted over the past decade. Modern retail tends to be smaller, focused on higher quality experiences, and tailored to local context. Infill development in Fox Lake can provide space that meets these evolving needs.*

**Strategy 1.2.2:** Sponsor and/or host gatherings of small business owners to help local retailers exchange ideas and collaborate on events.

*Knowledge sharing events help build a business community and catalyze small business growth and development.*



## Goal 1.3: Expand Fox Lake's tourism economy.

**Fox Lake's proximity to the Chain O'Lakes is one of its greatest assets, drawing visitors for boating, fishing, and waterfront recreation. As the village's largest economic driver, tourism presents significant opportunities for growth and diversification. Expanding and promoting businesses and activities that complement the lake—including dining, lodging, outdoor recreation, and cultural attractions—will enhance the visitor experience while boosting the local economy. By strategically developing the tourism sector, Fox Lake can build a more resilient economy that benefits both visitors and residents alike.**

**Strategy 1.3.1:** Support redevelopment of strategic lakefront opportunity sites that could catalyze broader investment within the village, such as the Sayles property and the Mineola property.

*Developing these large sites with active uses that complement the lake can catalyze broader economic development in the village and offers significant potential to grow Fox Lake's tourism economy.*

**Strategy 1.3.2:** Explore partnerships with nearby Lake County tourism partners such as Wilmot Mountain, Wilmot Racetrack, Richardson Family Farm, Chain O'Lakes State Park, and the Volo Museum – to increase tourist awareness of downtown Fox Lake.

*According to mass mobile data, these nearby tourist destinations attract hundreds of thousands of visitors from across the Chicagoland area. A formal or informal partnership could help Fox Lake capture some of these visitors and attract more patrons to local businesses.*

**Strategy 1.3.3:** Leverage the recently developed Lakefront Park to attract visitors to Fox Lake.

*Summer visits to the Lakefront Park jumped from 17,400 in 2023 to 39,200 in 2024 after park improvement were completed. Continuing to attract additional visitors to public places and programming creates an opportunity for local businesses to benefit as well.*

**Strategy 1.3.4:** Connect Chain O'Lakes tourism to downtown Fox Lake.

*Thousands of people visit the Chain O'Lakes each year. Directing these visitors downtown can support small businesses and generate additional economic activity locally.*



## Goal 1.4: Elevate Fox Lake's image as a premier recreational destination.

Fox Lake's identity is deeply connected to its natural setting, the Chain O'Lakes waterway system, and its rich history as a beloved resort destination. By enhancing its recreational assets, celebrating its cultural heritage, and strengthening its year-round offerings, Fox Lake can reinforce its reputation as a vibrant hub for outdoor adventure, community events, and cultural experiences. Investing in tourism, public art, and destination branding will attract visitors, support local businesses, and instill a strong sense of pride among residents.

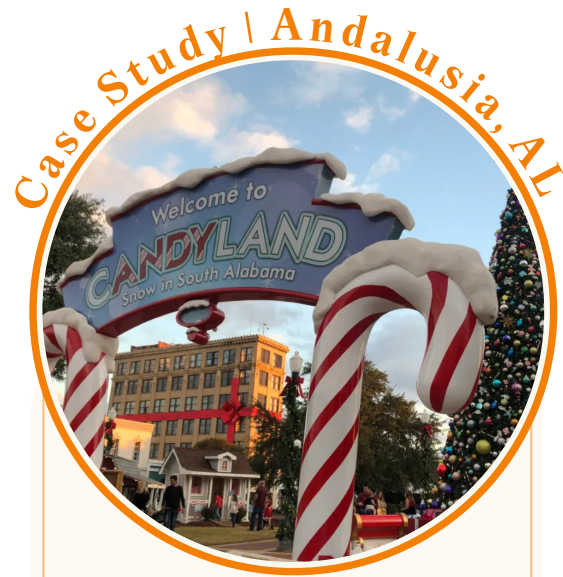
**Strategy 1.4.1:** Build capacity to support year-round events and programming that advance economic development goals.

*Expanding Village programming will increase the village's attractiveness as a destination for visitors and residents alike.*

**Strategy 1.4.2:** Continue to collaborate with Promote Fox Lake to celebrate the village's recreational and cultural legacy by highlighting its rich history.

**Strategy 1.4.3:** Promote public art and cultural installations to celebrate Fox Lake's recreational spirit.

**Strategy 1.4.4:** Expand community events and programming to activate different areas of Fox Lake and stimulate local economic activity.



### Christmas in Candyland

Christmas in Candyland was designed by the Andalusia Chamber of Commerce in 2013 to increase recreational options for children. Christmas in Candyland features a variety of attractions, including:

- **Candyland Cottage Village:** a child-sized village, with cottages sponsored by local businesses
- **Snow Show:** artificial snow every hour
- **Ice skating and snow tubing**
- **Visits with Santa, Elsa, and other characters**

According to the City, December retail sales and lodging receipts have increased 35% and 50%, respectively, since the project's inception. The program attracts thousands of visitors every December, with the Mayor citing 70,000 visitors in December 2020.



“

By supporting small businesses, and creating spaces for community gathering, Fox Lake can reshape its identity and become a place that attracts families.

”



## THEME #2

# THE DOWNTOWN

Downtown Fox Lake is fragmented into multiple zones with several breaks in connectivity as users move east to west. In its current form, downtown largely attracts people during mealtimes. Through strategic economic development initiatives and increasing mixed-use development, Fox Lake can cultivate a thriving downtown, leading to long-term prosperity, increased employment opportunities, and improved quality of life. Elevating the development potential of lakefront sites can also attract investment and enhance Fox Lake's destination appeal. Recent success in this strategy includes Fox Lake's Lakefront Park, which saw visitation patterns double in the year following substantial public investments. Ultimately, there is potential to become a more connected, vibrant, walkable downtown.

**Goal 2.1:** Improve, enhance, and expand the vibrancy of downtown Fox Lake.

**Goal 2.2:** Develop and enact targeted economic development initiatives to support the downtown Fox Lake business environment.

**Goal 2.3:** Support business development downtown to maintain and improve the economic base and create a sense of place.

**Goal 2.4:** Cultivate a vibrant public realm in downtown Fox Lake.

**Goal 2.5:** Maximize Development Potential of New Opportunity Sites in Downtown Fox Lake.

**Goal 2.6:** Strengthen walkability and connectivity to boost downtown vitality and accessibility.

## Goal 2.1: Improve, enhance, and expand the vibrancy of downtown Fox Lake.

Downtown Fox Lake has strong fundamental characteristics, including access to a Metra Station, a public waterfront, and Millennium Park. However, downtown retail is fragmented, and existing land use has resulted in a disconnected retail landscape. Strategic placemaking initiatives, combined with a focused effort to increase residential development—through mixed-use buildings, attached single-family homes, and apartments—can help generate foot traffic, support existing businesses, and attract new investment to create a more vibrant, walkable downtown.

**Strategy 2.1.1:** Focus downtown efforts on placemaking to enhance vibrancy and walkability.

*Vibrancy and walkability are essential to creating a destination environment focused on consumer experience.*

**Strategy 2.1.2:** Encourage residential development within proximity of the downtown core and near the Metra station to create a “built-in” consumer base.

*Downtown retail businesses will be more successful in a consumer-dense environment, and the Village’s tax base will benefit from increased population and economic activity.*

**Strategy 2.1.3:** Support the placemaking efforts of local businesses.

*This will strengthen business presence downtown and contribute to local character.*

**Strategy 2.1.4:** Develop and market fall, winter, and spring programming to attract additional visitors to downtown businesses year-round.

*The Village tourism economy is heavily dependent on 6 months of peak activity, which makes year-round entrepreneurship challenging. Developing additional seasonal programming can increase tourism activity year-round and support small businesses.*



## Goal 2.2: Develop and enact targeted economic development initiatives to support the downtown Fox Lake business environment.

To foster a thriving economic environment, Fox Lake is committed to implementing strategic initiatives that bolster local downtown business development and enhance the area's overall economic health. This goal seeks to transform the downtown area into a vibrant hub of activity that attracts both residents and visitors by nurturing a supportive environment for businesses and enhancing the appeal of the locale. The focus is on creating sustainable economic growth that can lead to long-term prosperity, increase employment opportunities, and improve the quality of life for the community.

**Strategy 2.2.1:** Establish a Special Service Area (SSA) to manage and fund improvements downtown.

*Special taxing districts provide a mechanism to fund downtown improvements. Districts also designate a specific entity to lead marketing, beautification, and infrastructure improvement efforts.*

**Strategy 2.2.2:** Implement a 'Shop Local' campaign to encourage community support for downtown businesses, increasing local spending and economic vitality in the area.

*A large share of resident spending in Fox Lake leaks to surrounding communities. Implementing a Shop Local campaign can keep dollars within the community and support Fox Lake's small businesses.*

**Strategy 2.2.3:** Create a more supportive environment for small business development and retention in the downtown area by identifying and addressing key barriers to business success.

*Small businesses are essential to creating a unique, destination environment in Fox Lake. Small businesses often have unique needs and limited capacity. Direct outreach to understand small business needs can help inform the Village approach to better meeting businesses where they are.*



## **Goal 2.3: Support business development downtown to maintain and improve the economic base and create a sense of place.**

Despite strong amenities, including the Metra Station, waterfront, and Lakefront Park, downtown retail lacks cohesion. Supporting business development downtown can help create a more connected environment, generate more visits downtown, and boost the village's economic base. It could also increase the exposure of local businesses and increase profits for local businesses.

**Strategy 2.3.1:** Strengthen downtown as the village's core experiential retail corridor with additional retail, restaurant and entertainment uses to balance activity throughout the entire day.

*Mass mobile data shows that most visits to the downtown occur during meal times. A greater variety of retail uses will attract both residents and visitors downtown at other times, which will enhance vibrancy and activity.*

**Strategy 2.3.2:** Improve downtown cohesion through economic development tools, such as façade improvements, banners, and landscaping; use the new Fox Lake brand to strengthen the sense of place.

*A greater sense of character will attract more foot traffic and investment, increasing the economic base in the long-term.*

**Strategy 2.3.3:** Work to attract or support the development of destination retailers, which can drive consistent foot traffic and create a steady demand for local services and retail.

*Retail should include a mix of neighborhood serving and destination retailers. Destination retailers are ideal in tourism-heavy economies as they also attract out-of-market consumers who add net-new spending to a market.*



## Goal 2.4: Cultivate a vibrant public realm in downtown Fox Lake.

Downtown Fox Lake is set to become a more vibrant, engaging, and aesthetically pleasing space that enhances community life and supports local businesses. The focus is on transforming the area into a dynamic urban center where public interaction is woven into the everyday landscape, making it a place where residents and visitors naturally gather. By enriching public spaces, improving streetscapes, and elevating the overall downtown experience, Fox Lake aims to foster a strong sense of community and pride.

**Strategy 2.4.1:** Create and enhance public spaces in Downtown Fox Lake to foster community interaction and support local businesses.

**Strategy 2.4.2:** Enhance the streetscape and green infrastructure in downtown to improve environmental resilience and aesthetic quality.

**Strategy 2.4.3:** Promote a cohesive and active downtown experience that attracts both residents and visitors, enhancing the area's identity and vibrancy.



## Goal 2.5: Maximize Development Potential of New Opportunity Sites in Downtown Fox Lake.

To elevate the current state of downtown, Fox Lake is focused on maximizing the development potential of its prime real estate, particularly those sites near the lake. This initiative seeks to transform underutilized spaces into vibrant, high-value areas that attract both investment and community engagement. By leveraging its picturesque lakeside location, Fox Lake aims to introduce higher and better uses that complement its natural beauty and enhance its appeal as a destination. The strategic development of these areas will improve the economic landscape and enrich the community's quality of life, making downtown a thriving hub for business, recreation, and waterfront activities.

**Strategy 2.5.1:** Encourage and facilitate public-private partnerships to fund and develop mixed-use projects that can enhance the economic and social fabric of downtown.

**Strategy 2.5.2:** Establish a Design Overlay District with a Design Review Process in Downtown Fox Lake.

**Strategy 2.5.3:** Attract entertainment and water-related activities.

**Strategy 2.5.4:** Implement sustainable and community-oriented building practices.

### Case Study | Tinley Park, IL



#### *Downtown Tinley Grant Program*

The Downtown Tinley Grant Program was instituted in 2018 to facilitate retail development in the village's Oak Park Avenue corridor. Funded through tax increment financing (TIF), the program provides matching grants to eligible existing and new businesses, encouraging investment or reinvestment in their properties.

Available grants in this program include:

- **Façade Improvement Grant, up to \$35,000**
- **Code Compliance Grant, up to \$35,000**
- **Sign Grant, up to \$5,000**
- **Retail Grant, up to \$35,000**

## Goal 2.6: Strengthen walkability and connectivity to boost downtown vitality and accessibility.

Improving walkability and creating strong connections between downtown Fox Lake, the lakefront, and surrounding community assets is vital for supporting local businesses, encouraging active lifestyles, and enriching the visitor experience. An expansion of the existing wayfinding and signage program, with clear, detailed, and tactical signage can help direct residents and visitors to key destinations, including local businesses, restaurants, and attractions such as Lakefront Park. Revitalized corridors, like Grand Avenue, can encourage walking, cycling, and other non-motorized transportation, improving accessibility for both land and water-based visitors. These efforts not only foster a vibrant and welcoming downtown but also contribute to sustainable urban development by integrating the natural and built environment.

**Strategy 2.6.1:** Enhance pedestrian and bicycle mobility in Downtown.

**Strategy 2.6.2:** Create a pedestrian promenade along Grand Avenue and Nippersink Boulevard to connect the lakefront to Downtown.

**Strategy 2.6.3:** Enhance tactical wayfinding in Downtown Fox Lake.

### Case Study | Pittsburgh, PA



#### *Downtown Placemaking Grant*

The Downtown Pittsburgh Partnership launched the Downtown Placemaking Grant program in 2024 to support projects that help enliven public spaces in the city's Central Business District. Key priorities of the Downtown Placemaking Grant include enhancing the vibrancy of Downtown, driving economic growth, and fostering a deeper sense of community, creativity, and culture. Funding ranges from \$1000-\$5000 and is available to residents, non-profits, and civic organizations on a rolling basis. Grant funded projects have included public art exhibits, topical public discussions, musical events, a lunchtime meditation series, and a screening of *The Matrix* scored in real time by local DJ using a mix of Hip Hop, Soul and Funk tracks.



“

We have a unique opportunity to enhance downtown with mixed-use development – we just need to create the right environment for this to work in Fox Lake’s core.

”



## THEME #3

# LAND USE & DEVELOPMENT

Understanding how land is used today lays the foundation for shaping the future of Fox Lake. A comprehensive look at current land use patterns, residential, commercial, industrial, recreational, and beyond, offers insights into the Village's infrastructure, housing stock, economic activity, and public amenities. It also highlights inefficiencies such as underutilized parcels and mismatched land uses, helping to identify areas ripe for reinvestment, preservation, or more strategic development.

In Fox Lake, residential land dominates the landscape, making up 42 percent of total land area, with a strong emphasis on single-family homes and a few pockets of multifamily housing.

**Goal 3.1:** Enrich Fox Lake's identity and sense of place by implementing thoughtful urban design initiatives.

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**Goal 3.2:** Reimagine priority areas within Fox Lake to establish a diverse mix of land use that supports the community's housing and economic development needs.

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**Goal 3.3:** Promote responsible growth management practices to support sustainable, orderly, and well-planned development across the Village.

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**Goal 3.4:** Catalyze industrial development to boost economic growth.

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**Goal 3.5:** Enhance Workforce Expansion and Employment Opportunities in Fox Lake.

Industrial land is the second most common use at 18 percent, largely concentrated in northern Fox Lake near several quarry properties. Commercial land accounts for 7 percent, with key nodes along US Route 12, downtown Grand Avenue, and other major corridors. The remaining 33 percent consists of vacant or under-construction parcels, open space, institutional properties, and essential infrastructure.

Stakeholders consistently expressed a desire to evolve Fox Lake's land use mix to better align with regional trends and support a more dynamic, year-round community. There was strong support for expanding mixed-use development particularly in the downtown core and other strategic areas as a way to drive economic activity, attract permanent residents, and compete with neighboring communities that have successfully revitalized their downtowns.

Looking ahead, Fox Lake's land use and development strategy is focused on meeting evolving community needs and unlocking the Village's full potential. By enhancing urban design to reinforce community character, prioritizing mixed-use development, promoting responsible growth management, catalyzing industrial investment, and supporting workforce expansion, Fox Lake is taking a more strategic and inclusive approach to future development. Through these efforts, the Village can strengthen its identity, expand opportunity, and grow into a thriving, year-round community for residents, workers, and visitors alike.

### **Goal 3.1: Enrich Fox Lake's identity and sense of place by implementing thoughtful urban design initiatives.**

**Fox Lake is a community defined by its complex geographical layout, unique natural features, and diverse built environment. Situated within a patchwork of lakes, forests, and suburban clusters, the Village's urban**

**character reflects the many layers of its history, land use, and community development. Its neighborhoods, corridors, and public spaces serve as the physical expression of its unique character. By implementing intentional and cohesive urban design initiatives, Fox Lake can amplify its identity, enhance the functionality and appeal of its spaces, and foster a stronger sense of place for residents and visitors alike.**

**Strategy 3.1.1:** Strengthen and celebrate neighborhood character across the Village.

*Fox Lake is home to a diverse mix of neighborhoods, from lakeside enclaves and smaller-lot downtown blocks to expansive waterfront estates and large-lot residential areas. By clearly defining the unique identity of each neighborhood and enhancing their urban design, the Village can foster more vibrant, distinctive, and welcoming neighborhoods.*

**Strategy 3.1.2:** Elevate the identity of Fox Lake's major corridors including US Route 12, Grand Avenue, and Rollins Road.

*Fox Lake's major corridors carry significant traffic into and through the Village, yet they currently lack a strong sense of identity that reflects the community's character, attracts visitors, and encourages people to explore Fox Lake's offerings. Strategic urban design improvements, pedestrian-friendly enhancements, and activation of vacant or underutilized lots can help transform these corridors into vibrant, welcoming gateways to Fox Lake.*

**Strategy 3.1.3:** Integrate placemaking into the Village's everyday spaces.

*Placemaking can help foster a stronger sense of place by transforming everyday spaces into vibrant community assets. A coordinated approach across the Village can activate underutilized areas and encourage collaboration among local artists, organizations, businesses, and residents to celebrate Fox Lake's culture, creativity, and heritage.*

## Goal 3.2: Reimagine priority areas within Fox Lake to establish a diverse mix of land use that supports the community's housing and economic development needs.

Certain areas within Fox Lake offer strategic value to the community, with potential for change, due to factors such as developer interest, existing land use patterns, ownership, market realities, higher and better use, and location. By identifying and understanding these areas, the Village can proactively guide development to align with community goals and aspirations. Reimagining the priority areas including the downtown, lakefront, primary corridors, and target redevelopment sites, will position Fox Lake for growth and innovation, introducing new uses that strengthen the local economy, enhance quality of life, and celebrate the Village's unique character.

### Strategy 3.2.1: Redevelop key opportunity sites within the Village.

Key sites across Fox Lake offer opportunities to diversify land uses, boost economic vitality, and support more intensive development. Notable examples include the historic Mineola Hotel, the lakefront Sayles site near downtown, and a prominent site at Big Hollow Road and Route 12, a potential gateway to the Village. Thoughtful redevelopment of these and other opportunity sites can attract new businesses, residents, and visitors while advancing Fox Lake's vision for sustainable growth.

### Strategy 3.2.2: Revitalize downtown, building on the momentum of Lakefront Park.

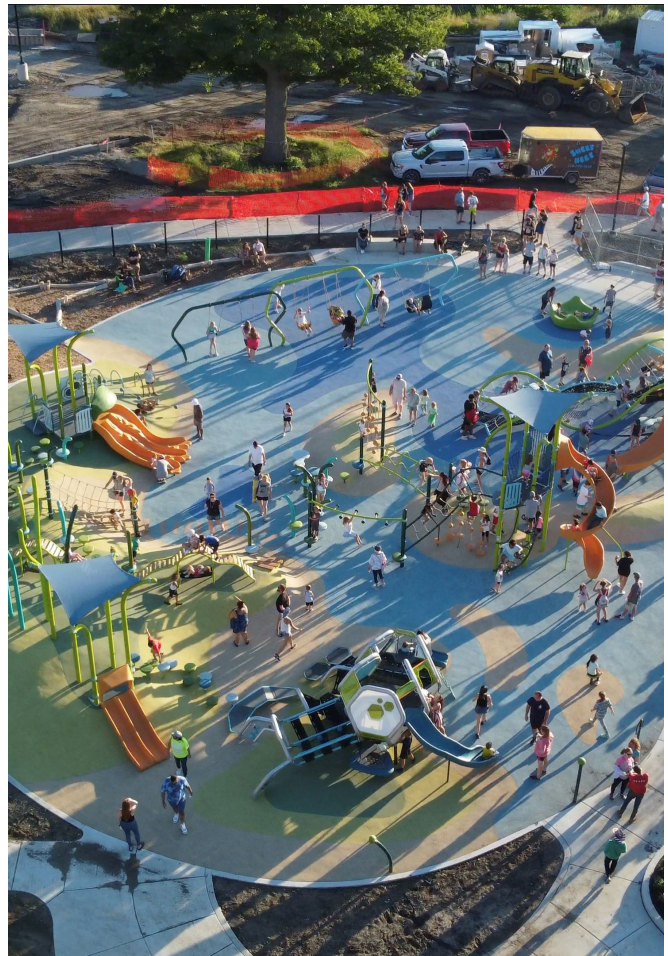
Fox Lake's downtown has been the focus of past planning efforts and with recent improvements to Lakefront Park, it is at a turning point, offering a catalytic opportunity for reinvestment. The downtown area faces challenges such as vacancies and aging infrastructure, but revitalization could greatly enhance Fox Lake's appeal as a lakeside destination. By transforming downtown, Fox Lake can not only attract more visitors but also create a lively public space that showcases the village's pride and character.

### Strategy 3.2.3: Prioritize redevelopment along the primary corridors, notably Route 12 and Grand Avenue.

Fox Lake's commercial corridors offer opportunities to reshape the Village's identity and position it as more than a pass-through community on the way to Wisconsin. These corridors have the potential to serve both local and regional shopping needs while encouraging visitors to spend time in Fox Lake.

### Strategy 3.2.4: Promote thoughtful development alongside public access to the lakefront.

The Chain O'Lakes is one of Fox Lake's greatest assets, yet public access to the waterfront remains limited. This restricts opportunities for boaters to dock and explore the Village, and for residents and visitors to enjoy the lakefront. Lakefront Park, home to the first public beach on the Chain O'Lakes, sets a strong precedent. Future development should continue to prioritize public access, creating more spaces for recreation, gathering, and connection to the water.



### **Goal 3.3: Promote responsible growth management practices to support sustainable, orderly, and well-planned development across the Village.**

Effective growth management is essential for creating a vibrant, resilient, and sustainable community that balances development with the preservation of environmental resources and community character. By fostering thoughtful land use planning and ensuring that development aligns with infrastructure capacity, the Village can support responsible growth that meets the needs of current and future residents. This goal emphasizes strategic decision-making, the identification of development opportunities, and zoning updates to ensure growth is both purposeful and beneficial for the community.

#### **Strategy 3.3.1:** Encourage strategic infill development.

Promoting infill development helps maximize the use of existing infrastructure, reduce sprawl, and preserve open space. By prioritizing development on underutilized or vacant sites within the Village's existing footprint, Fox Lake can support more sustainable growth, strengthen neighborhood character, and create walkable, connected communities.

#### **Strategy 3.3.2:** Formalize and integrate non-conforming uses to enhance community development.

Many properties in Fox Lake feature long-standing, non-conforming uses that no longer align with current zoning regulations but continue to meet community housing needs. By reviewing and updating zoning ordinances to reflect these existing conditions the Village can better support housing diversity, provide regulatory clarity, and promote reinvestment.

#### **Strategy 3.3.3:** Conduct a comprehensive zoning review and update.

Fox Lake's zoning ordinance and map have not undergone a full update in over 40 years, leading to inconsistencies between zoning regulations, existing land uses, and the Village's evolving goals. A thorough review and modernization of the zoning code will help align regulations with the Future Land Use Plan, support responsible growth, and reinforce the character of key areas like downtown and the lakefront.



#### **Placemaking Grant Program**

Charlotte's Placemaking Grant Program supports collaborative, community-based efforts to activate underutilized public spaces, implement streetscape improvements, support art and beautification efforts, and create community gathering spaces. Grants are available to neighborhood and homeowners' associations, community organizations, business and merchant organizations, individuals with project teams.

### Goal 3.4: Catalyze industrial development to boost economic growth.

Industrial land plays a significant role in Fox Lake's physical and economic landscape, comprising 18 percent of the Village's land use—the second largest category overall. Much of this land is in northern Fox Lake, where large quarry properties dominate, with additional industrial uses clustered along the railroad tracks in the central part of the Village. These areas present strong opportunities for targeted investment that can attract new businesses, create quality jobs, and expand the Village's tax base. By enhancing infrastructure, streamlining regulations, and promoting sustainable industrial practices, Fox Lake can unlock the full potential of its industrial areas while ensuring compatibility with surrounding land uses and long-term community goals.

**Strategy 3.4.1:** Secure and upgrade infrastructure to support Industrial uses in northern Fox Lake.

*To unlock the economic potential of northern Fox Lake, the Village must invest in critical infrastructure that can support future industrial development. By conducting feasibility studies, seeking diverse funding sources, and engaging community stakeholders, Fox Lake can ensure that infrastructure improvements are strategic, sustainable, and aligned with local goals.*

**Strategy 3.4.2:** Understand and support the business needs of industrial areas in Fox Lake.

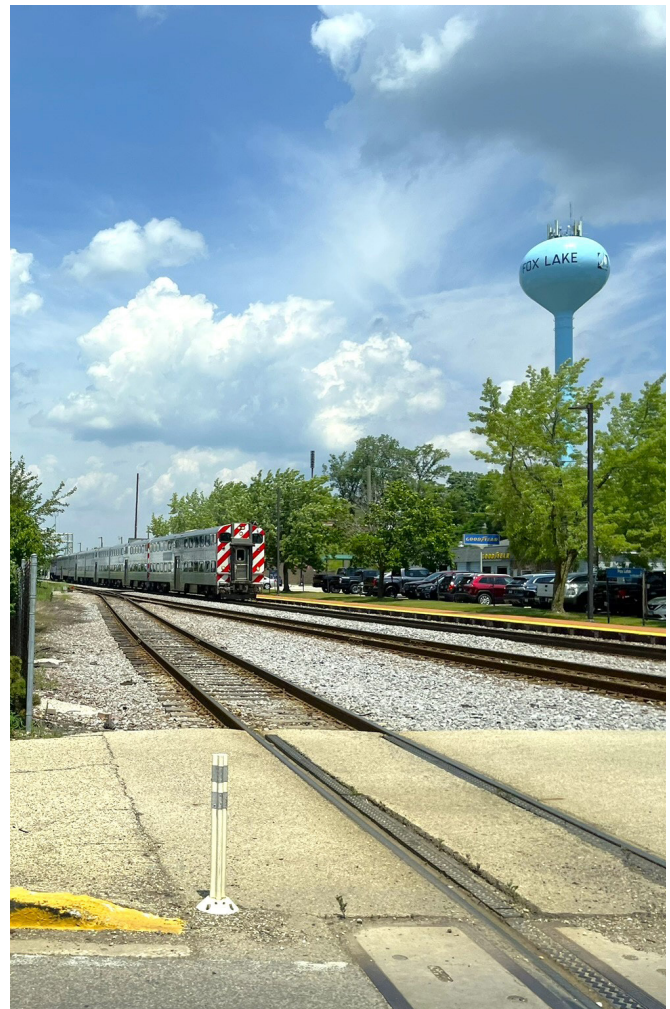
*To attract and retain industrial users, Fox Lake must actively engage with businesses to better understand their needs. Through engagement, the Village can tailor its strategies to align with real-world demand and help position Fox Lake as a responsive and business-friendly community ready for industrial investment.*

**Strategy 3.4.3:** Optimize the master plan for northern Fox Lake based on current market dynamics and stakeholder input.

*To unlock the full potential of northern Fox Lake, the Village must ensure its master plan reflects today's market realities and community priorities. Fox Lake can create a flexible roadmap that is collaborative and data-driven to support strategic development, attract investment, and guide phased implementation that benefits the entire community.*

**Strategy 3.4.4:** Attract diverse industries by tailoring incentives and enhancing collaboration opportunities.

*To diversify its economic base and remain competitive, Fox Lake must proactively attract high-growth industries. These efforts will support long-term economic resilience and position Fox Lake as a forward-thinking hub for innovation and investment.*



## Goal 3.5: Enhance Workforce Expansion and Employment Opportunities in Fox Lake.

A strong, inclusive local economy depends on expanding workforce opportunities and improving access to employment, especially for service industry workers and lower-income residents. Fox Lake aims to create a more connected and equitable labor market by addressing barriers such as transportation, housing, and skill alignment to better connect residents with meaningful employment opportunities. Coordinated efforts will help retain local talent, support economic mobility, and strengthen Fox Lake's position as a place where people can both live and work successfully.

**Strategy 3.5.1:** Improve transportation access to boost job opportunities.

Reliable and accessible transportation is essential to connecting residents with employment. Fox Lake benefits from two Metra stations and service from the Pace bus system, but additional transportation options are needed to meet the needs of all workers, especially those with non-traditional hours or limited access to personal vehicles.

**Strategy 3.5.2:** Implement a regional hiring initiative to prioritize employment for Fox Lake and nearby residents.

A regional hiring initiative can expand job opportunities for Fox Lake residents and those in surrounding communities, helping to retain local talent and reduce commute times. Prioritizing local hiring will strengthen the Village's tax base, support demand for housing, and reinforce Fox Lake's identity as a place where people can both live and work.

**Strategy 3.5.3:** Enhance local employment and volunteer engagement through a community skill-share platform.

Creating a centralized, user-friendly skill-share platform will connect Fox Lake residents with local employment and volunteer opportunities based on their unique skills and interests. Through partnerships, outreach, and ongoing support, the platform will foster a stronger, more engaged local workforce and build a culture of collaboration and shared growth across the Village.

**Strategy 3.5.4:** Support employer-assisted housing programs.

Employer-assisted housing programs can help address workforce housing needs while strengthening employee retention and reducing commute times. Partnering with major employers and small businesses, and offering local incentives through collaboration with the Chamber of Commerce, will allow Fox Lake to promote a range of housing support options, from rental assistance to shared equity investments, that make it easier for workers to live near their jobs while building momentum for long-term program success.



# Opportunity Areas

Certain areas within Fox Lake offer strategic value to the community, with potential for change driven by factors such as developer interest, existing land use patterns, ownership, market realities, and location. By identifying and understanding these areas, the village can better anticipate and manage shifts in land use, ensuring the development aligns with local goals and aspirations. Village staff, along with input from community conversations, have highlighted key locations that present unique opportunities for growth and development.

While not comprehensive, the Future Opportunity Area Map provides a high-level overview of priority areas and corridors. Collectively, these opportunity areas represent significant opportunities for increased density or more intensive land use.

## Opportunity Sites

Key sites within Fox Lake present opportunities to diversify land uses, enhance economic vitality, and increase development intensity within the community. Notable examples include the Mineola Hotel, a historic waterfront property; the Sayles site with prime access to the lakefront and downtown; and a site at the intersection of Big Hollow Road and Route 12, which could serve as a gateway to Fox Lake and support higher-density uses. Careful consideration of the future use of these key sites can catalyze reinvestment, attracting new businesses, residents, and visitors, while also aligning with the village's long-term vision for sustainable growth. Other opportunity sites throughout the community, identified on the map in orange, also offer significant potential for targeted investments.

## Priority Areas

Fox Lake's downtown has been the focus of past planning efforts and with recent improvements to Lakefront Park, it is at a turning point, offering a catalytic opportunity for reinvestment. The downtown area faces challenges such as vacancies and aging infrastructure, but revitalization could greatly enhance Fox Lake's appeal as a lakeside destination. By transforming downtown, Fox Lake can not only attract more visitors but also create a lively public space that showcases the village's pride and character.

The area around Lakefront Park presents further opportunities for expanding public access to the lakeshore, whether through commercial ventures or by extending the park and trail system. Black Lung Brewing, located east of Lakefront Park, exemplifies how investment in the park can redefine the area, signaling further potential for the waterfront as a major community amenity.

## Primary Corridors

Fox Lake's commercial corridors offer opportunities to reshape the village's identity and position it as more than a pass-through community on the way to Wisconsin. These corridors have the potential to serve both local and regional shopping needs while encouraging visitors to spend time in Fox Lake.

- **Route 12:** As Fox Lake's primary artery, Route 12 offers a pivotal chance to enhance the village's identity while diversifying the land use mix. Key development opportunities exist along the corridor that can introduce best practice in urban design, improve overall functionality and appearance, and bring new uses such as a hotel to accommodate tourists and outdoor enthusiasts.
- **Grand Avenue:** Extending from the downtown to the lake, this secondary corridor is currently a neighborhood commercial corridor with the potential to evolve into a more walkable and vibrant urban environment. Enhancing Grand Avenue could contribute to a more cohesive and lively downtown experience.

**Legend**

- Fox Lake Boundary
- Streets
- Parcels
- Railroad
- Water
- Parks & Open Space
- State Parks & Forest Preserves

**Opportunity Areas**

- Opportunity Sites
- 1. Fox Lake Country Club
- 2. Route 12 Island
- 3. Lakefront Park Adjacent
- 4. Northeast Island
- 5. Mineola Site
- 6. Sayles Property
- 7. Big Hollow Road Property
- 8. Thomas Place Property

The map shows the Fox Lake, Illinois, area with its city boundary outlined in blue. Various streets are shown in grey, and parcels are outlined in thin grey lines. Water bodies are shown in light blue, including Chain-O-Lakes State Park, Grass Lake, Fox Lake, and several smaller lakes like Catherine, Marie, Bluff, and Petite. Opportunity sites are numbered 1 through 8 and highlighted in orange. The map also shows surrounding areas like Pike Lake, Pista Lake, and Long Lake. A legend in the bottom left corner defines the symbols used, and a north arrow is located in the top right corner.

## OPPORTUNITY SITE 1

# Fox Lake Country Club - Concept A

Fox Lake Country Club spans just over 102 acres, minutes from the Chain O'Lakes. Established in 1925, the property's rolling terrain, mature trees, and open vistas provide a scenic and adaptable setting beyond its current use as an 18-hole public golf course. The site, composed of contiguous tracts of land, could support a range of future concepts. Its scale, location, and natural features make it a prime opportunity to reimagine for new uses, including quality residential neighborhoods and complementary amenities that could strengthen Fox Lake's long-term growth and appeal.



## Concept Highlights

- A ONE-STORY RETAIL USE**
  - 19,000 SF of commercial
- B ONE-STORY RETAIL USE**
  - 63,000 SF of commercial
- C ONE-STORY RETAIL USE**
  - 20,000 SF of commercial
- D PARKING LOT**
  - 693 shared parking spaces
- E TWO TO THREE STORY REAR-LOADED TOWNHOMES**
  - 105 total units (2,970 – 3,375 SF)
  - 2 car garage
- F CLUB HOUSE**
- G THREE-STORY RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT**
  - 60 – 69 residential units
  - 150 surface parking spaces
- H FRONT-LOADED SINGLE FAMILY LOTS**
  - 90 total lots (10,500 – 12,000 SF)
- I COMMUNITY OPEN SPACE**
- J PLAYGROUND/OPEN SPACE**

*This concept reimagines the Fox Lake Country Club property as a mixed-use neighborhood organized to fit seamlessly into its surroundings. The northeast portion of the site, adjacent to existing residential neighborhoods, is planned for single-family homes arranged along a connected street network and buffered by open space and natural features. To the west and southwest, along State Park Road and Grass Lake Road, the plan introduces commercial development positioned to serve both new residents and the broader community, with easy roadway access. The layout also incorporates pockets of green space and pedestrian connections, creating an integrated environment that balances housing, commerce, and open space in a walkable, well-connected setting.*

## OPPORTUNITY SITE 1

# Fox Lake Country Club - Concept B



## Concept Highlights

- A ONE-STORY RETAIL USE**
  - 19,000 SF of commercial
- B ONE-STORY RETAIL USE**
  - 63,000 SF of commercial
- C ONE-STORY RETAIL USE**
  - 20,000 SF of commercial
- D PARKING LOT**
  - 693 shared parking spaces
- E PARK**
- F TWO TO THREE STORY REAR-LOADED TOWNHOMES**
  - 105 total units (2,970 – 3,375 SF)
  - 2 car garage
- G CLUB HOUSE**
- H THREE-STORY RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT**
  - 60 – 69 residential units
  - 150 surface parking spaces
- I FRONT-LOADED SINGLE FAMILY LOTS**
  - 92 total lots (10,500 – 12,000 SF)
- J COMMUNITY OPEN SPACE**
- K PLAYGROUND/OPEN SPACE**

*This version of Country Club keeps the same overall program as the earlier concept, including single-family homes to the north and east, multi-family and townhomes in the central and western portions, and commercial uses along State Park Road and Grass Lake Road. The subtle change is most notable in the reconfiguration of the single-family parcels to define a central park space within this newly established neighborhood. This open space creates a clear focal point, strengthens the sense of community, and offers a natural gathering and recreation area that is easily accessible from surrounding blocks. The street layout has been adjusted to frame this park, improving visibility and connectivity.*

## OPPORTUNITY SITE 2

# Route 12 Island - Concept A

This island property along the Route 12 bridge between Fox Lake and Nippersink Lake, is currently home to a private club with a small-scale restaurant. Surrounded by water on all sides, the site offers direct lake access and features existing piers and marina infrastructure that provide ample boat docking. Its highly visible location makes it a recognizable landmark. While its current use serves a niche membership base, the island's combination of waterfront access, marina amenities, and proximity to downtown positions it as a unique redevelopment opportunity site.



## Concept Highlights

- A RESTAURANT**
  - 6,000 – 8,000 SF
- B 4-STORY HOTEL HAMPTON INN**
  - 90 – 100 rooms
  - 1st floor amenities (7,000 – 10,000 SF)
- C OUTDOOR TERRACE**
- D PARKING LOT**
  - 133 parking spaces total
- E BOATER SHELTER OVERLOOK**
- F EXISTING PIERS-MARINA**

*In this concept, the island becomes the site of a Hampton Inn-branded boutique hotel with up to 100 rooms, positioned to capture panoramic views of the lake and bridge. The hotel would integrate seamlessly with the existing marina, offering guests direct access to boating, fishing, and lake recreation. The building's waterfront-oriented design would create a strong visual identity, complemented by landscaped open spaces and walkways. Parking and circulation would be configured to accommodate both overnight guests and day visitors arriving by boat or car. This concept creates a year-round hospitality anchor that elevates Fox Lake's tourism offerings and strengthens its role as a gateway to the Chain O'Lakes.*

## OPPORTUNITY SITE 2

# Route 12 Island - Concept B



## Concept Highlights

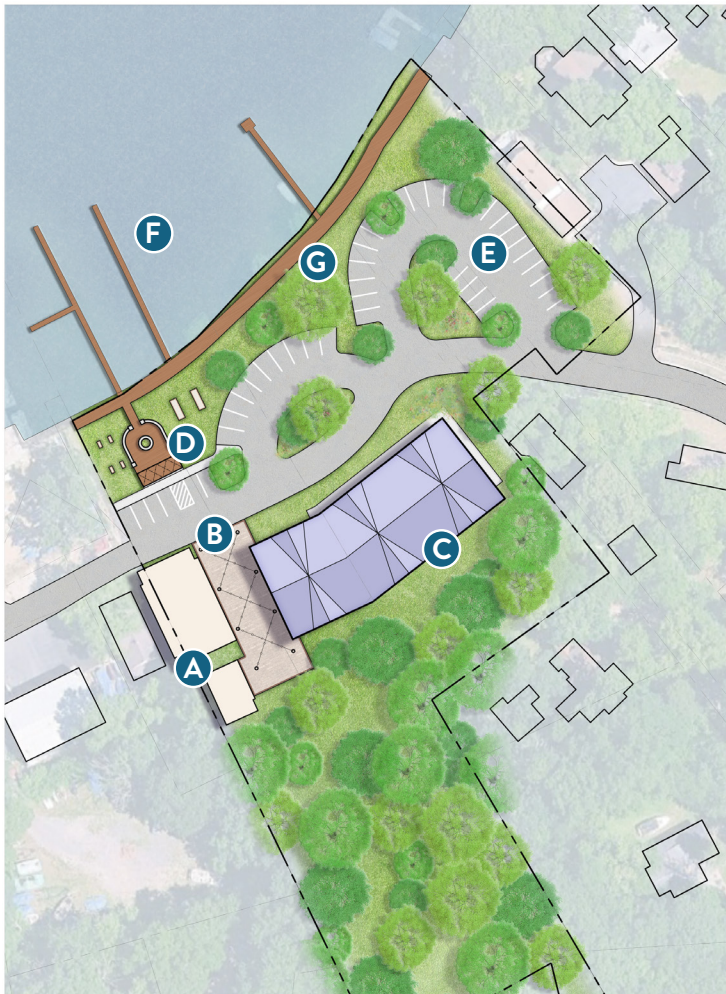
- A ONE-STORY RETAIL USE**
  - 7,500 SF of commercial
- B RESTAURANT**
  - 9,000 SF
- C OUTDOOR TERRACE**
- D PARKING LOT**
  - 90 parking spaces total
- E BOATER SHELTER OVERLOOK**
- F EXISTING PIERS-MARINA**
- G GATHERING OPEN SPACE**

*This alternative concept envisions transforming the island into a vibrant, publicly accessible waterfront hub anchored by two distinct commercial buildings. Designed as waterfront properties, these buildings could accommodate restaurants, cafés, or boutique retail, taking advantage of the surrounding marina for outdoor dining, patios, and boardwalk connections. Parking is distributed to serve both boaters and drive-in visitors, while landscaped gathering spaces and pedestrian pathways link all areas of the island. This approach leverages the site's existing boating amenities and visibility to create a lively destination that attracts both residents and visitors year-round.*

## OPPORTUNITY SITE 3

# Lakefront Park Adjacent - Concept A

The site east of Lakefront Park, currently home to Black Lung Brewery, sits along the waterfront and is connected to the park by an established trail. It is a mix of publicly and privately owned parcels, with certain properties under Village ownership. Adjacent to the brewery is a small yet fairly maintained hotel, while the remainder of the area features significant topography that rises inland from the water's edge, offering unique elevation changes and potential view corridors. Recent improvements to site access have enhanced its connectivity to the surrounding community and strengthened its relationship to nearby waterfront amenities.



## Concept Highlights

- A** EXISTING BREWERY
- B** OUTDOOR PATIO
- C** 3-STORY BOUTIQUE HOTEL
  - 40 – 45 rooms
- D** SHELTER & GATHERING SPACE
- E** PARKING LOT
  - 42 shared parking spaces
- F** EXISTING PIERS-MARINA
- G** BOARDWALK

*This concept envisions the site as a small-scale boutique hotel destination that capitalizes on its direct waterfront location and natural setting. The hotel is positioned to maximize lake views, with an adjacent public plaza and outdoor seating area that connect seamlessly to the shoreline. Parking is arranged near the building for convenient guest access while preserving open green space around the site. A pedestrian path links the hotel to a small waterfront park area with piers, providing both hotel guests and the public with opportunities for lake access, fishing, and leisure. This approach creates a year-round hospitality asset that could serve visitors seeking a scenic, walkable location close to downtown Fox Lake.*

## OPPORTUNITY SITE 3

# Lakefront Park Adjacent - Concept B



## Concept Highlights

- A TWO TO THREE STORY REAR-LOADED TOWNHOMES**
  - 15 total units (2,970 – 3,375 SF)
  - 2 car garage
- B SHELTER & GATHERING SPACE**
- C EXISTING PIERS MARINA**
- D BOARDWALK**

*In this alternative, the site is redeveloped as a residential enclave featuring a series of attached townhomes oriented to take advantage of the lakefront setting. The homes are arranged along a central drive with shared parking, while the northern edge of the site is preserved as a public waterfront park. This park space includes walking paths, landscaped seating areas, and connections to the piers, allowing residents and visitors alike to enjoy direct access to the lake. The combination of private residential units and publicly accessible open space creates a balanced development that both activates the site and maintains a valuable community amenity along the waterfront.*

## OPPORTUNITY SITE 4

# Northeast Island - Concept

This waterfront site is located along Lakeview Avenue and is currently characterized by a mix of marina-related uses. The property includes a large open gravel and paved area used for vehicle and boat storage, as well as a sizable building near the center of the site that appears to function as a warehouse or maintenance facility. Multiple boat slips line the western edge, with additional docks extending into the water along the eastern frontage. Its prominent location, expansive water frontage, and existing dock infrastructure position it as a prime redevelopment opportunity for uses that could capitalize on both land and water access.



## Concept Highlights

- A DUPLEX TOWNHOMES**
  - 10 total units (1,800 – 2,000 SF)
  - 2 car garage
- B BOARDWALK**
- C SHELTER**
- D POCKET PARK**
- E VISITOR PARKING**
  - 10 parking spaces

This concept transforms the site into a residential waterfront destination. The plan introduces several duplexes arranged to maximize water views and direct access to the dock system along the site's western edge. The layout also incorporates a pedestrian-friendly waterfront edge, connecting residences to the docks and to potential public seating or gathering areas. The site's entry from Lakeview Avenue is enhanced with a wider road and clear circulation, creating a welcoming approach that ties into the surrounding neighborhood while capitalizing on the property's expansive lake frontage.

## OPPORTUNITY SITE 5

# Mineola Site - Concept

The Mineola Hotel site occupies a prominent location along the Fox Lake waterfront, offering expansive views and direct access to the lake. While the property holds potential due to its setting, the existing hotel building is in a state well beyond repair or feasible restoration. Structural deterioration, outdated systems, and significant maintenance neglect have left the building unsuitable for reuse in its current form. Any viable redevelopment of the site would require full demolition of the existing structure.



## Concept Highlights

- A VACATION OR CONDO DUPLEX UNITS**
  - 42 total units (1,500 – 1,800 SF)
- B SHELTER**
- C POCKET PARK & PLAYGROUND**
- D PRIVATE 24' DRIVE**
- E WOODED BUFFER ZONE**
- F CONTROLLED GATE ACCESS**
- G 4-STORY HOTEL RESORT**
  - 90 – 100 rooms
- H CONFERENCE CENTER (1ST FLOOR)**
  - 15,000 – 20,000 SF
- I BOAT LAUNCH**
- J BOARDWALK & BOAT DECKS**
- K PARKING LOT**
  - 123 parking spaces

This concept transforms the Mineola Hotel site into a mixed-use waterfront destination anchored by a new hospitality building at the shoreline, with direct dock access, outdoor gathering areas, and expansive lake views. Inland, a series of smaller residential or lodging units are arranged along curving streets that follow the site's natural contours, taking advantage of significant topography changes to maximize views from multiple elevations. Generous green space and tree cover create a park-like setting, ensuring the development blends seamlessly with its surroundings while offering a combination of waterfront amenities and elevated, view-oriented accommodations.

## OPPORTUNITY SITE 6

# Sayles Property - Concept A

The Sayles property is a prominent waterfront site in Fox Lake located along Route 12, positioned between the community's primary commercial corridor and the lakefront. Its location offers strong visibility to passing traffic, direct proximity to the water, and easy access to nearby destinations, including Lakefront Park. The property's size and positioning make it a key opportunity area for redevelopment, with the potential to connect lake-oriented uses—such as restaurants, retail, or hospitality—to Fox Lake's broader commercial network, enhancing both local activity and the visitor experience.



## Concept Highlights

### A THREE-STORY MIXED-USE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

- 20,000 SF Retail | 45 - 50 Units
- 400 Total Shared Parking Spaces
- 65 - 75 Units
- Outdoor Amenity Space

### 24 WALKUP ROWHOMES OR DUPLEXES

- 2.5- to 3-Story with Garage
- Range of Unit Sizes

### B LAKEFRONT COMMERCIAL CENTER

- 8,000 SF of Retail, Restaurant, or Entertainment
- 15,000 SF Event Space
- 400 Total Shared Parking Spaces

### C FOUR-STORY HOTEL

- 100-120 Hotel Rooms
- 100,000 GSF
- Outdoor Amenity Space

This concept places the hotel directly on the lakefront, giving guests immediate access to the water, boat slips, and panoramic views. The building's orientation maximizes its connection to the shoreline, with terraces, outdoor dining, and public gathering spaces along the water's edge. Along Route 12, mixed-use buildings introduce retail, dining, or office space with active ground floors, creating a vibrant street presence while drawing visitors toward the lake. This layout blends a strong hospitality anchor with year-round commercial activity, leveraging both the scenic value of the waterfront and the visibility of Route 12.

## OPPORTUNITY SITE 6

# Sayles Property - Concept B



## Concept Highlights

### A FOUR-STORY HOTEL

- 80-100 Hotel Rooms | 170 cars
- 120,000 GSF
- Outdoor Amenity Space

### B 67 WALKUP ROWHOMES OR DUPLEXES

- 2.5- to 3-Story with Garage
- Range of Unit Sizes
- 27 Shared Parking Spaces

### COMMUNITY & AMENITY SPACES

- 1,000 SF HOA Clubhouse
- Pocket Parks & Dog Parks

In this version, the hotel is positioned along Route 12 to capture high visibility from passing traffic and offer convenient vehicular access. The lakefront is redeveloped with attached rowhomes, designed to take advantage of water views while providing a new residential component that supports downtown's long-term vitality. Shared green spaces, pedestrian walkways, and marina connections tie the residential area to the broader site, while the hotel serves as a steady driver of visitors and overnight stays.

## OPPORTUNITY SITE 6

# Sayles Property - Concept C



## Concept Highlights

### A FOUR-STORY HOTEL

- 80-100 Hotel Rooms | 170 cars
- 120,000 GSF
- Outdoor Amenity Space

### B LAKEFRONT 46 WALKUP ROWHOMES OR DUPLEXES

- 2.5- to 3-Story with Garage
- Range of Unit Sizes
- 20 Shared Parking Spaces

### RETAIL CENTER

- 14,600 GSF retail/restaurant/entertainment
- 70 cars (4-5 cars/1,000 GSF)
- Pocket Parks & Dog Parks Community Amenities

This alternative transforms the site into a multi-faceted destination centered on recreation, entertainment, and hospitality. Seasonal amenities such as an ice rink in winter and flexible event space in summer activate the lakefront, complemented by waterfront restaurants, retail, and public gathering areas. The Route 12 frontage is developed with complementary commercial uses, reinforcing the site's role as a regional draw. By blending programmed open space with dining, shopping, and seasonal activities, this concept creates a year-round hub for both residents and visitors.

## OPPORTUNITY SITE 7

# Big Hollow Road Property - Concept

This concept positions the site at the key intersection of Route 12 and Big Hollow Road as a mixed-use destination anchored by a major commercial tenant. Complementary retail and dining pads along Route 12 take advantage of high visibility, while a central cluster of smaller buildings and green space introduces a more walkable, village-like setting. Pedestrian pathways, a roundabout, and integrated water features create a connected and attractive environment that balances regional commercial uses with neighborhood character, offering both daily conveniences and community gathering spaces.



## Concept Highlights

- A ONE-STORY OF RETAIL USE**
  - 20,000 SF total
  - 109 parking spaces
- B CLUSTER OF SINGLE-FAMILY PAD**
  - 11 total units (60' x 60')
- C DUPLEX-TRIPLEX**
  - 5 total units
- D WOODED BUFFER**
- E ONE-STORY RETAIL USE**
  - 39,000 SF
  - 112 parking spaces

This concept positions the site at the key intersection of Route 12 and Big Hollow Road as a mixed-use destination anchored by a major commercial tenant. Complementary retail and dining pads along Route 12 take advantage of high visibility, while a central cluster of smaller buildings and green space introduces a more walkable, village-like setting. Pedestrian pathways, a roundabout, and integrated water features create a connected and attractive environment that balances regional commercial uses with neighborhood character, offering both daily conveniences and community gathering spaces.

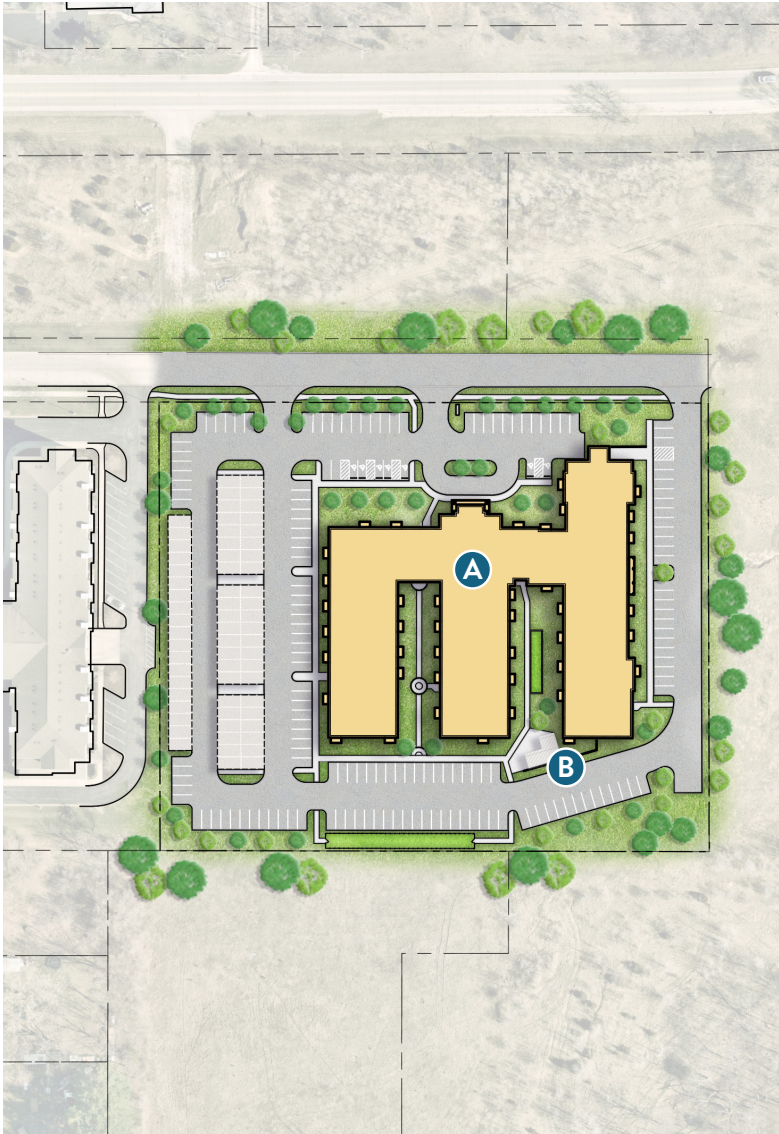
## OPPORTUNITY SITE 8

# Thomas Place Property - Concept

This site along Route 134 at Thomas Lane is well-suited for new residential development that complements the adjacent Thomas Place community and surrounding neighborhoods. With convenient access from Route 134 and a setting that balances visibility with a neighborhood feel, the property offers an opportunity to expand housing choices in Fox Lake. Its scale and location make it a strong candidate for age-targeted or multi-family housing, providing options that support local demand while reinforcing the corridor's residential character.

## Concept Highlights

- A 3-STORY RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT**
  - 148 total units
  - 231 surface parking spaces (1 – 1.5 cars/unit)
- B OUTDOOR TERRACE & SHELTER**



This site along Route 134 at Thomas Lane was originally planned for senior housing, and the existing foundation remains in place today. Building on that groundwork, the concept envisions a residential development that complements the adjacent Thomas Place community while strengthening the corridor's residential character. The layout organizes new housing around a central drive with ample landscaping, parking, and pedestrian connections, creating a welcoming neighborhood setting. With its scale, access, and existing improvements, the site is well-positioned to deliver much-needed housing in Fox Lake, offering an achievable vision that aligns with both prior planning and current community needs.

The background image shows two children in the foreground, with a blurred crowd in the background. The child on the left is wearing a purple tank top with a graphic of a parade float. The child on the right is wearing a light blue t-shirt with the text "LITTLE FIRE" and "CK" visible, and is holding a small American flag on a stick. The entire image is covered with a semi-transparent blue overlay.

“

We're open to new housing options, even multifamily, as long as the design is high-quality and it truly adds to the character of Fox Lake. This is about raising the bar for how people live here.”

”

An aerial photograph of Fox Lake, showing several boats on the water and buildings along the shoreline. The image is overlaid with a dark blue semi-transparent rectangle containing the text 'THEME #4'.

## THEME #4

# NEIGHBORHOODS & HOUSING

Home sales prices in Fox Lake have more than doubled in the past decade, and rents have grown at an average annual rate of 1.7 percent, demonstrating a rising demand for rental and owner-occupied housing. As the village's population ages, older residents will seek homes that accommodate independence and accessibility. As the older population downsizes, homes suited for families will become available, broadening the overall housing stock.

New construction of single-family and multifamily homes can provide more options for residents, ensuring that both younger households and long-term residents can remain in the community. Maintaining and improving Fox Lake's housing stock is also essential for addressing housing needs. Supporting homeowners through various programs will help preserve existing high-quality, safe, and attractive homes.

Short-term rentals are another component of the housing market which contributes to the local economy. To ensure that short-term rentals do not disrupt neighborhood cohesion and quality of life for residents, the Village should monitor the impacts of these properties.

**Goal 4.1:** Enhance the quality of homes in Fox Lake.

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**Goal 4.2:** Expand the variety of Fox Lake's housing options.

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**Goal 4.3:** Manage the impact of seasonal short-term rentals on the community.

## Goal 4.1: Enhance the quality of homes in Fox Lake.

Maintaining and improving Fox Lake's housing stock is essential for long-term neighborhood vitality and affordability. Supporting homeowners with repairs, upgrades, and financial assistance will help preserve existing homes while ensuring quality, safe, and attractive living conditions. Efforts to revitalize neighborhoods to preserve the flexibility of housing choices, stimulate reinvestment in aging apartment buildings, and promote home rehabilitation will expand housing options and strengthen the overall quality of life in Fox Lake.

**Strategy 4.1.1:** Support homeowners with critical maintenance, preservation, home repairs, and upgrades.

*More than half of the homes in Fox Lake are over 45 years old. Maintaining and preserving these homes increases opportunities for homeownership, especially for first-time buyers and young families who cannot afford homes with substantial repairs or new construction.*

**Strategy 4.1.2:** Preserve and enhance existing homes and neighborhoods to attract young families and other first-time homebuyers seeking quality homes aligned with their needs.

*Demolishing older homes reduces the inventory of naturally occurring affordable housing available to first-time homebuyers and can impact the neighborhood's fabric and character.*

**Strategy 4.1.3:** Develop architectural guidelines to preserve the unique characters of Fox Lake's various neighborhoods.



## Goal 4.2: Expand the variety of Fox Lake's housing options.

Since 2015, the median home sales price in Fox Lake has more than doubled. Meanwhile, rental rates have grown at an average annual rate of 1.7 percent over the past decade, with rental vacancies consistently remaining below 5 percent. These market dynamics highlight a rising demand for both rental and owner-occupied housing in Fox Lake. As the senior population continues to grow and age, more residents will seek to transition to homes that allow for continued independence, accessibility, and improved community connection such as single-story homes, accessible apartments, and housing near walkable and shared amenities. In turn, homes currently occupied by aging seniors will become available, broadening the overall housing stock available to all age cohorts.

Expanding the housing supply—through new construction of both single-family homes and multifamily homes—helps provide more options for residents. By fostering the development of different housing types, Fox Lake can ensure that housing opportunities are continually available to younger households and that long-term residents can remain in the community they love as they age, close to family, friends, and the vibrant lakefront lifestyle that makes this village special.

**Strategy 4.2.1:** Support the development of a variety of housing types responsive to community priorities and demographic changes.

*Market analyses indicate a need for more rental and owner-occupied housing in Fox Lake. A diverse housing stock is essential to meeting the needs of residents across the age continuum.*

**Strategy 4.2.2:** Leverage development incentives to build housing that aligns with community priorities, including transformative, mixed-use projects in central locations.

*With only a limited amount of recent development, Fox Lake needs catalyst projects to 'prove-up' the market for prospective investors. The Village can use low-risk incentives to provide gap funding for projects that meet community needs and unlock future development opportunities.*

**Strategy 4.2.3:** Publicly commit to Village housing goals, share progress with the public, and re-evaluate goals based on changes in current conditions.

*Transparency around target development outcomes is beneficial for residents, who better understand community outcomes, and prospective developers, who can see Village commitment to development outcomes. Tracking specific metrics is also helpful for the Village to regularly reassess program alignment with long-term goals.*

**Strategy 4.2.4:** Engage with developers to partner on housing development typologies that are more attainable in Fox Lake.

*Public-private partnerships can help deliver attainable housing options that the market alone may not produce.*



## Goal 4.3: Manage the impact of seasonal short-term rentals on the community.

Fox Lake's proximity to the Chain O'Lakes makes it a popular summer destination, with short-term rentals contributing to the local economy. However, an influx of seasonal rentals can affect neighborhood cohesion and quality of life for full-time residents. To ensure short-term rentals remain a benefit rather than a burden, the Village can implement proactive management strategies, including monitoring rental permits, enforcing regulations, and assessing their impact on the community. By striking a balance between tourism growth and neighborhood stability, Fox Lake can support both its residents and its seasonal economy.

**Strategy 4.3.1:** Monitor the impacts of short-term rentals and protect residential neighborhoods from unwanted impacts of tourism.

*Tracking how short-term rentals affect the community can help inform the Village's future policies regarding short-term rentals. Short term rentals can bolster the tourism economy but are often perceived as competing with affordability needs of the permanent housing inventory. It will be important to regularly reassess the relationship between these two competing needs over time.*



### ***Homeowner Housing Rehabilitation Program***

Normal's Homeowner Housing Rehabilitation Program provides grants for owner-occupied, single-family homes to address critical health and safety repairs, home modifications and accessibility improvements for the elderly and disabled, exterior accessibility ramps, and tree removal. More broadly, the Housing Rehabilitation Program is geared toward preserving Normal's stock of existing affordable housing and supporting local contracting businesses. Funded by HUD's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program, grants are available to households making less than 80% Area Median Income that are also current on their mortgage, property taxes, and homeowner's insurance.



## THEME #5

# PARKS & RECREATION

Fox Lake's current parkland inventory falls significantly short of both national and local standards, with a deficit of 71 acres when compared to the NRPA benchmark. This shortfall, coupled with the uneven distribution of parks across the community, highlights the need to expand park acreage and ensure equitable access. The northern and southern portions of Fox Lake are particularly underserved, lacking neighborhood and mini parks within walking distance. Expanding parkland and addressing these gaps will enhance residents' quality of life by providing more opportunities for daily recreation, fostering a sense of community, and improving walkability in residential areas. By strategically acquiring and developing parks in these areas, Fox Lake can meet growing demand and align with its goals for sustainable and inclusive development.

**Goal 5.1:** Expand and enhance parkland to meet community needs.

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**Goal 5.2:** Diversify and enrich recreational programming and facilities.

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**Goal 5.3:** Protect and activate natural resources in and around Fox Lake.

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**Goal 5.4:** Strengthen recreational tourism and economic development.

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**Goal 5.5:** Enhance the capacity, sustainability, and accessibility of Fox Lake's parks and recreation system.

## Goal 5.1: Expand and enhance parkland to meet community needs.

Fox Lake's current parkland inventory falls significantly short of both national and local standards, with a deficit of 71 acres when compared to the NRPA benchmark. This shortfall, coupled with the uneven distribution of parks across the community, highlights the need to expand park acreage and ensure equitable access. The northern and southern portions of Fox Lake are particularly underserved, lacking neighborhood and mini parks within walking distance. Expanding parkland and addressing these gaps will enhance residents' quality of life by providing more opportunities for daily recreation, fostering a sense of community, and improving walkability in residential areas. By strategically acquiring and developing parks in these areas, Fox Lake can meet growing demand and align with its goals for sustainable and inclusive development.

**Strategy 5.1.1:** Increase park acreage and address gaps in service areas.

*Fox Lake's park system currently falls short of meeting national standards, leaving many neighborhoods without equitable access to public green space. Expanding the amount of parkland across the community is essential to close this deficit as well as ensure that parks are an everyday part of life for all residents.*

**Strategy 5.1.2:** Improve connectivity between parks and surrounding neighborhoods.

*Access to parks is as much about proximity as it is about safe, visible, and connected routes. Some of Fox Lake's most used parks are separated from neighborhoods by barriers like Route 12 or the Metra line.*

*Improving pedestrian and bike connectivity strengthens the entire park system by linking assets together and encouraging users to explore more of what the Village has to offer. These improvements also support active transportation, reduce traffic burdens, and reinforce broader goals around public health and mobility.*

**Strategy 5.1.3:** Design and implement a lakefront boardwalk to enhance public access to the water.

*The lake is Fox Lake's most valuable natural amenity, yet much of its shoreline remains inaccessible to the public. A thoughtfully designed boardwalk invites residents and visitors to engage with the waterfront in new ways, including passive recreation, fishing, viewing wildlife, and more. Beyond recreation, a boardwalk helps connect people to the lake's identity, creates opportunities for small-scale placemaking, and brings new life to overlooked shoreline edges.*

**Strategy 5.1.4:** Develop village-wide proximity standards for specialized amenities, services, and conservation areas to better promote equity across Fox Lake.

*Some amenities, such as playgrounds, picnic shelters, and athletic fields, among others, can be better situated within reasonable reach of all residents, compared to areas of concentrated offerings. Establishing clear proximity standards helps the Village prioritize where gaps occur in current amenity distributions and ensures that future investments in recreation, wellness, and conservation resources are better balanced.*



## Goal 5.2: Diversify and enrich recreational programming and facilities.

With its mix of seasonal and permanent residents, Fox Lake requires a diverse array of recreational programs and facilities to cater to its unique community dynamics. While the Parks and Recreation Department operates with a small team, its innovative use of external vendors has allowed for creative programming. However, current offerings do not fully reflect the needs of all demographic groups, especially for year-round activities that support both seasonal vibrancy and permanent residency. Enhancing recreational facilities with modern, multi-use designs and expanding programming to include fitness, cultural events, and family-oriented activities will create more inclusive spaces and strengthen the community's identity. These improvements will also increase participation, attract visitors, and elevate Fox Lake as a destination for high-quality recreation.

**Strategy 5.2.1:** Expand year-round recreational offerings and cultural programming for a seasonal and full-time community.

*Fox Lake is a place that comes alive in the summer, but the goal is to stay vibrant all year long. A community that thrives only six months at a time leaves too many stories untold and too many connections unrealized. Year-round programming turns recreation into a constant presence rather than a seasonal luxury, making parks and public spaces a regular part of everyday life for families, seniors, youth, and new residents alike. It also reshapes how people see Fox Lake, emphasizing the community as a place with rhythm, depth, and constant happenings.*

**Strategy 5.2.2:** Maximize the flexibility of Lakefront Park to encourage the use of the space as a community hub and a facility for pilot recreation offerings.

*Lakefront Park is one of the Village's most prominent community assets. Its location, size, and visibility make it a prime location for both structured events and informal daily use.*

*Continuing to treat the park as a community hub opens the door for new partnerships, pilot programs, and creative uses that can reflect the evolving interests of the community. Making the space more adaptable supports a more diverse uses from health programming to casual gathering, increasing its value to all.*

**Strategy 5.2.3:** Continue to build a knowledgebase of emerging trends and innovative park and recreation amenities to encourage active lifestyles and respond to growing community needs.

*Trends in recreation continue to shift rapidly, from new forms of fitness to technology-enabled play. By actively tracking innovations in parks and recreation, Fox Lake can stay ahead of the curve and respond to resident interests in real time. Building this internal knowledgebase also helps staff pilot new ideas, test small-scale interventions, and explore intentional partnerships. Keeping offerings fresh and relevant is key to attracting new users and sustaining long-term engagement.*

**Strategy 5.2.4:** Offer thoughtful and unique programming opportunities that appeal to the demographic makeup of Fox Lake and provide opportunities for socialization and engagement.

*Fox Lake is a mix of long-time residents, young families, retirees, and people who've just moved in. But too often, their lives don't cross. Thoughtful programming can change that. A senior walking club that ends at a playground. A storytelling night where newcomers and life-long locals swap memories. A youth volunteer day alongside veterans. These kinds of programs don't just fill time, but rather build trust, familiarity, and pride.*



## Goal 5.3: Protect and activate natural resources in and around Fox Lake.

**Fox Lake is uniquely defined by its natural resources, including the Chain O'Lakes, nearby forest preserves, Chain O'Lakes State Park, and ecological landmarks like Volo Bog and Tanager Kames. These resources not only provide recreational opportunities but also contribute to the Village's environmental resilience. However, limited public access to the waterfront, ongoing shoreline degradation, and the need for habitat preservation present key challenges. By prioritizing conservation, restoration, and low-impact access initiatives, Fox Lake can protect its natural assets while enhancing their recreational value. Forging partnerships to activate these spaces for public use through trails, educational programming, and responsible lakefront development will foster environmental stewardship and create lasting benefits for residents and visitors alike.**

**Strategy 5.3.1:** Preserve and enhance Fox Lake's unique natural assets, promoting a culture of conservation, in collaboration with other recreational agencies.

*Fox Lake's identity is primarily defined by its relationship to its natural assets. Preserving that identity calls for a coordinated and proactive approach to conservation, including habitat restoration, shoreline stabilization, and public education. By working with partners like the forest preserve, IDNR, and local nonprofits, the Village can extend its impact while cultivating a culture of stewardship that spans generations.*

**Strategy 5.3.2:** Enhance parks and open space signage and wayfinding to guide residents and visitors to Fox Lake's natural resources while providing educational information about the area's ecological and recreational assets.

*Many of Fox Lake's most scenic and ecologically significant areas are hidden in plain sight. Clear, attractive, and well-placed signage ensures these places are more discoverable while reinforcing the importance of the natural environment. Informational signage will allow better navigation and invite users to learn, linger, and develop a personal connection to the landscape.*

**Strategy 5.3.3:** Develop local rest stops or viewing areas to promote Fox Lake's natural beauty and sense of identity.

*Simple moments of pause, sitting at a scenic overlook, or pulling off for a picnic can foster appreciation for the natural environment and reinforce a sense of place. By investing in thoughtfully designed rest stops and viewing areas, the Village can create small but meaningful ways for residents and visitors to connect with the land and water. These spaces also serve as quiet branding opportunities, reflecting the community's values through design, storytelling, and stewardship.*

**Strategy 5.3.4:** Map and promote public lake access points.

*Access to the lake remains uneven and unclear for many residents, especially as many access points are tucked between private properties. Mapping and promoting formal and informal access points makes that promise real. Increased visibility of lakefront paths, easements, and launch areas invites new users and reintroduces longtime residents to hidden corners of the shoreline.*

**Strategy 5.3.5:** Collaborate with Chain O'Lakes State Park for joint programming.

*The proximity of Chain O'Lakes State Park is a tremendous regional advantage. Formal collaboration between the Village and the Park can open up new avenues for programming, tourism, and environmental education. Joint events, cross-promotion, and shared planning efforts can better connect visitors to both destinations while reinforcing regional identity.*



## Goal 5.4: Strengthen recreational tourism and economic development.

As a gateway to the Chain O'Lakes and a hub for outdoor recreation, Fox Lake is well-positioned to capitalize on its regional appeal. However, limited public access to the lakefront and underutilized park spaces restrict the Village's ability to fully harness its economic potential. By enhancing recreational amenities, hosting signature events, and marketing Fox Lake as a premier recreation destination, the Village can attract regional visitors and generate economic growth. Investments in tourism-focused infrastructure, such as public boat launches, trail systems, and visitor-friendly amenities, will not only boost local businesses but also create vibrant spaces that benefit residents and visitors alike. Strengthening recreational tourism will solidify Fox Lake's reputation as a thriving, year-round destination.

**Strategy 5.4.1:** Gather detailed visitor demographics through surveys, partnerships, and digital tracking to tailor Fox Lake's marketing and service offerings.

*Understanding who visits Fox Lake, what they value, and how they move through the community is essential for shaping effective tourism strategies. While anecdotal observations are helpful, real data allows the Village to make smarter decisions about where to invest, what to promote, and how to support local efforts. Tracking visitor patterns and preferences also helps clarify what distinguishes Fox Lake from its regional competitors.*

**Strategy 5.4.2:** Enhance and promote eco-tourism packages to leverage Fox Lake's natural assets and boost local economic growth.

*Eco-tourism ensures curating experiences that honor the environment while driving economic activity. By building packages that link various active and passive recreation such as hiking, paddling, and wildlife watching with local businesses, Fox Lake can showcase its natural beauty in a way that supports small businesses, restaurants, and lodging.*

**Strategy 5.4.3:** Feature local natural landmarks, in and around Fox Lake, in marketing materials.

*The landscapes surrounding Fox Lake tell a story, one of geology, ecology, beauty, and recreation. By featuring these natural landmarks in visual branding, tourism campaigns, and local storytelling, the Village can craft a distinct identity that resonates with residents and visitors alike. Highlighting unique places within the region, including Volo Bog or Tanager Kames promotes exploration and positions Fox Lake as a gateway to a rich and immersive outdoor experience.*



### Pop-Up Park Program

In many neighborhoods, access to active recreational facilities—such as gyms, field houses, or well-equipped parks—is limited. To address this gap, communities can bring play and fitness opportunities directly to residents through mobile, pop-up, or modular programs. In Oak Park, IL, the Park District has introduced a creative solution through its Pop-Up Park Program. Using both a van and a bike cart, the district brings crafts, games, giant blocks, and other engaging activities to neighborhoods throughout the community.

## **Goal 5.5: Enhance the capacity, sustainability, and accessibility of Fox Lake's parks and recreation system.**

**Access to parks and recreation is unevenly distributed across Fox Lake, with geographic and physical barriers such as the Metra line, Route 12, and the Chain O'Lakes canals limiting accessibility for some neighborhoods. Currently, only 27% of residents live within walking distance of a mini or neighborhood park, creating disparities in recreational opportunities. Ensuring equitable access to parks requires not only expanding parkland but also improving connectivity through pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, retrofitting existing parks for ADA compliance, and designing programs that address the needs of all residents. These efforts will ensure that Fox Lake's parks and recreation system is inclusive and accessible, fostering a stronger sense of community and improving the quality of life for everyone.**

**Strategy 5.5.1:** Develop a sustainable funding model for parks and recreation.

*Expanding and maintaining a high-quality parks and recreation system requires reliable, long-term funding that can weather budget fluctuations and changing priorities. By diversifying revenue streams, including grants, foundations, sponsorships, and thoughtful user fees, Fox Lake can build a system that supports ongoing improvements without sacrificing accessibility. Establishing a foundation or committee also creates new pathways for community involvement and shared responsibility in shaping the future of local parks.*

**Strategy 5.5.2:** Adopt best practices in park maintenance and operations.

*Strong parks are built on a foundation of consistent care. Implementing industry best practices ensures that facilities are safe, clean, and functional, increasing user satisfaction and extending the life of public assets. Clear standards for upkeep, training, and responsiveness also reflect professionalism and pride in the parks system.*

**Strategy 5.5.3:** Foster continuous improvement and capacity building in park management.

*As community needs evolve, so too must the systems that support parks and recreation. Investing in the development of staff, volunteers, and community leaders helps Fox Lake stay nimble and responsive to change. Capacity building also ensures that the system doesn't rely on a few individuals, but instead draws strength from a wide network of engaged contributors. Building institutional knowledge, cultural competency, and leadership capacity strengthens resilience across the department.*

**Strategy 5.5.4:** Modernize parks and recreation operations through technology and system improvements.

*Digital tools have transformed how people interact with public amenities, and park and programs are no exception. From registering for programs to exploring amenities, residents expect convenience, clarity, and transparency. Upgrading systems behind the scenes also helps staff operate more efficiently, track participation, and make data-informed decisions.*

**Strategy 5.5.5:** Elevate community engagement and enrich feedback collection methods.

*Moving beyond traditional surveys and passive feedback mechanisms, Fox Lake can embrace new tools that meet people where they are, including online platforms, tailored neighborhood meetings, and local events. Deepening engagement also creates champions for future projects and helps make residents feel like true partners in the system's success.*

**Strategy 5.5.6:** Enhance financial sustainability and develop new revenue streams.

*Beyond traditional funding, parks can be active contributors to the Village's economy. Event rentals, concessions, merchandise, and recreation equipment all offer opportunities to raise revenue while enhancing the visitor experience. These sources won't replace public funding but can support targeted improvements and add vibrancy to park spaces. Creative partnerships, flexible spaces, and mission-aligned revenue generation help make the system more self-sustaining over time.*

## THEME #6

# COMMUNITY BUILDING

Fox Lake is recognized throughout the region for its educational institutions, including its public schools and library, both of which serve as invaluable community resources. These institutions foster diverse learning opportunities for residents of all ages, from youth to lifelong learners. Strengthening partnerships with these organizations will promote educational growth, workforce readiness, and a culture of continuous learning. Through collaboration with the School Districts, library, and other educational partners, Fox Lake can position itself as a hub for innovation and education that supports individual growth and community vitality.

**Goal 6.1:** Support Fox Lake's educational institutions to foster a culture of continuous learning.

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**Goal 6.2:** Invest in Village services to support the evolving needs of the community.

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**Goal 6.3:** Elevate the safety and well-being of Fox Lake residents and visitors.

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**Goal 6.4:** Foster regional collaboration to enhance services and expand community amenities.

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**Goal 6.5:** Increase volunteerism and civic engagement through storytelling and technology.

## Goal 6.1: Support Fox Lake's educational institutions to foster a culture of continuous learning.

Fox Lake is recognized throughout the region for its educational institutions, including its public schools and library, both of which serve as invaluable community resources. These institutions foster diverse learning opportunities for residents of all ages, from youth to lifelong learners. Strengthening partnerships with these organizations will promote educational growth, workforce readiness, and a culture of continuous learning. Through collaboration with the School Districts, library, and other educational partners, Fox Lake can position itself as a hub for innovation and education that supports individual growth and community vitality.

**Strategy 6.1.1:** Collaborate with the School Districts to enhance educational resources.

*The Village of Fox Lake has established a partnership with local school districts through initiatives like internships, event participation, and ongoing marketing and coordination. Strengthening and expanding this collaboration can help enhance educational offerings, support student success, and ensure that Fox Lake schools remain a key asset for attracting and retaining families for years to come.*

**Strategy 6.1.2:** Partner with the Library to expand lifelong learning opportunities.

*The Fox Lake District Library serves as a vital hub for education, enrichment, and lifelong learning. Promoting existing programs, collaborating on shared resources, and supporting efforts to expand services, will help elevate the Library as a cornerstone for community engagement and a valued asset for both residents and visitors.*



## Goal 6.2: Invest in Village services to support the evolving needs of the community.

Village services are essential to maintaining a high quality of life, fostering a safe and healthy environment, and supporting economic and community growth. The Village of Fox Lake's municipal services, administered from Village Hall on Thillen Drive, provide critical functions through departments such as Administration, Community Development, Economic Development, and Finance. The Police Department plays a crucial role in ensuring public safety, working diligently to maintain peace and security for all residents. The Parks and Recreation Department enhances community life with diverse programming and recreational opportunities, while the Public Works Department ensures reliable infrastructure maintenance and services. To meet the evolving needs of the community, it is essential to invest in modernizing facilities, enhancing operational efficiency, and ensuring a well-trained and engaged workforce. These efforts will position the Village to provide responsive, sustainable, and high-quality services that reflect the community's expectations and future growth.

**Strategy 6.2.1:** Renovate and modernize facilities to adapt to the evolving needs of the community.

*Village facilities are important for providing high quality services and connecting the community together. Over time, buildings require maintenance updates, and the internal facility can become outdated. Modernizing facilities through upgrades, renovations, or new construction will ensure these essential buildings remain accessible, efficient, and aligned with current needs and resident expectations. Periodic assessments of building conditions and community usage can guide investments to maximize both function and value.*

**Strategy 6.2.2:** Attract, develop, and retain high-quality staff.

*The quality of Village services depends on the skills, expertise, and dedication of its workforce. Recruiting talented staff, offering opportunities for professional growth, and creating a supportive work environment are essential to maintaining high service standards. As community needs evolve, so too should the Village's approach to workforce development to ensure staff are prepared to meet future challenges.*

**Strategy 6.2.3:** Enhance technology and digital services to improve efficiency and accessibility.

*Expanding and modernizing the Village's technology infrastructure can improve both the efficiency of internal operations and the accessibility of services for residents. Investments in online platforms, mobile-friendly tools, and data management systems can streamline processes and make it easier for residents to engage with the Village. Regular evaluation of emerging technologies will ensure that digital services remain relevant, secure, and user-friendly.*



## Goal 6.3: Elevate the safety and well-being of Fox Lake residents and visitors.

Ensuring the safety and well-being of residents and visitors in Fox Lake is essential to maintaining the community's vibrancy and quality of life. Collaboration among key agencies—including the Fox Lake Police Department, Fire Protection District, Fox Waterway Agency, and various county entities—ensures the protection of public safety, emergency preparedness, and health services. By continuing to strengthen these partnerships and developing new programs and initiatives, Fox Lake can address the evolving needs of its community, enhance emergency response, and create a healthier environment for all.

**Strategy 6.3.1:** Support police services to enhance public health and safety.

*A well-resourced police department is critical to maintaining public safety and building trust within the community. Ongoing investments in training, staffing, and equipment can help officers respond effectively to a range of public safety challenges. Continued collaboration between police and community members will foster transparency, mutual respect, and a shared commitment to keeping Fox Lake safe.*

**Strategy 6.3.2:** Develop a health and wellness program to promote community well-being.

*Promoting health and wellness can improve the quality of life for residents. Programs that support physical activity, mental health, nutrition, and preventive care can help reduce long-term health risks. By partnering with healthcare providers, schools, and community organizations, the Village can expand access to wellness resources and create opportunities for residents to thrive.*

**Strategy 6.3.3:** Continue to support people experiencing homelessness through collaborative and comprehensive solutions.

*Addressing homelessness requires coordinated action among multiple sectors, including social services, housing providers, nonprofits, and law enforcement.*

*The Village can play a key role by facilitating partnerships, supporting outreach programs, and connecting individuals to shelter, healthcare, and employment resources. Ongoing assessment of local needs will help ensure that interventions are both compassionate and effective in reducing homelessness.*

**Strategy 6.3.4:** Partner with regional agencies to foster a safe and welcoming environment for residents and visitors, on and off the water.

*Fox Lake's identity is closely tied to its natural and recreational resources, particularly its waterways. Collaborating with regional agencies can enhance safety, promote responsible recreation, and protect the community's reputation as a welcoming destination. Joint efforts in enforcement, education, and emergency preparedness both on land and in the water will help safeguard the well-being of residents and visitors alike.*



## Goal 6.4: Foster regional collaboration to enhance services and expand community amenities.

**Fox Lake is strategically positioned to lead and participate in meaningful regional partnerships that benefit the entire area. By building strong connections with neighboring municipalities and regional agencies, the Village can strengthen service delivery, improve resource sharing, and create opportunities for joint investments in amenities and infrastructure. Collaborative efforts focused on shared challenges—such as sustainability, stormwater management, and transportation—can yield cost savings, foster innovation, and build a more connected and resilient region that better serves residents and businesses alike.**

**Strategy 6.4.1:** Identify opportunities for shared services with neighboring municipalities and counties.

*Partnering with surrounding communities to share essential services such as public works, emergency response, or administrative functions can reduce costs and improve efficiency while expanding the scope of services available to residents. Regular dialogue with neighboring jurisdictions can help identify mutually beneficial arrangements and ensure that resources are used effectively across the region.*

**Strategy 6.4.2:** Continue to leverage regional resources to invest in amenities.

*Regional partnerships can provide access to funding, expertise, and facilities that might otherwise be difficult for the Village to achieve alone. By actively seeking grants, shared-use agreements, and collaborative programming, the Village can expand amenities such as parks, trails, and cultural facilities. Working collectively with regional players will enhance the quality of life for Fox Lake residents while strengthening neighboring connections.*

**Strategy 6.4.3:** Maintain the regional treatment plant as a collaborative, multi-jurisdictional effort by supporting long-term sustainability through proactive planning and cost-sharing.

*The regional treatment plant serves multiple communities, making collaboration essential to its success. Proactive maintenance, shared investment, and coordinated planning can help ensure the plant remains efficient, reliable, and environmentally responsible over the long term. Transparent communication among participating jurisdictions will be critical to balancing operational needs with cost-sharing agreements.*

**Strategy 6.4.4:** Establish joint task forces to address regional issues.

*Many challenges such as transportation, public safety, environmental protection, and economic development extend beyond Village boundaries. Forming joint task forces with neighboring jurisdictions and regional agencies can facilitate coordinated problem-solving and resource sharing. These partnerships can help develop unified strategies that have a broader impact and build stronger regional relationships.*



## Goal 6.5: Increase volunteerism and civic engagement through storytelling and technology.

Civic engagement extends beyond voting or attending meetings, it's about giving every resident a platform to share their story, contribute ideas, and actively participate in shaping the community. Fox Lake can harness technology and storytelling to highlight diverse perspectives, amplify resident voices, and foster a deeper sense of belonging. Digital platforms and interactive storytelling initiatives can showcase personal experiences, local history, and civic initiatives, strengthening community ties. By embracing technology, the Village can remove barriers to participation, ensuring that all residents—whether they attend in-person meetings or engage remotely—have opportunities to connect and contribute. Expanding volunteerism through accessible, flexible opportunities will create a culture of civic pride, empowering residents to take an active role in improving their Village.

**Strategy 6.5.1:** Expand the 'Fox Lake Tales' podcast and develop a digital storytelling platform.

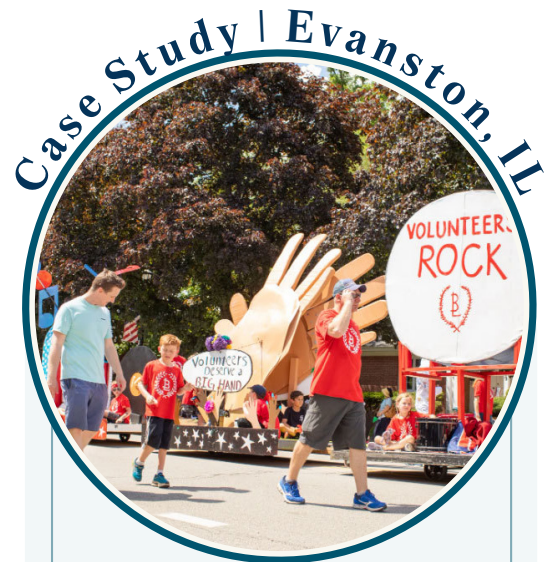
*Sharing stories about Fox Lake's history, culture, and people can strengthen community identity and inspire civic pride. Expanding the Fox Lake Tales podcast and creating a dedicated digital storytelling platform will give residents and visitors new ways to connect with the Fox Lake community. Featuring diverse voices and perspectives can foster inclusivity while encouraging more people to participate in community life.*

**Strategy 6.5.2:** Establish a centralized volunteer and civic engagement portal.

*An easy-to-use online hub for volunteer opportunities, community events, and civic initiatives can make it easier for residents to get involved. By streamlining information and sign-up processes, the Village can help match residents' skills and interests with local needs. The portal can also serve as a tool to track participation and highlight the impact of volunteers over time. Residents can easily invest their skills and time into the Village while gaining a sense of community and connection in return.*

**Strategy 6.5.3:** Develop flexible volunteering opportunities for all lifestyles.

*Busy schedules and varying personal commitments can make it challenging for residents to volunteer in traditional ways. Offering flexible opportunities such as short-term projects, virtual volunteering, and family-friendly activities can help more people engage in community service. Ensuring a range of options will allow residents of all ages and abilities to contribute to the Village in meaningful ways.*



### Volunteer Evanston

Volunteer Evanston is an initiative by the City of Evanston designed to promote volunteerism within the community. This free online platform provides a centralized space where residents can discover local volunteer opportunities, sign up for events, and track their service hours. By leveraging technology, the program aims to foster a culture of civic engagement and community involvement.



## THEME #7

# MOBILITY & CONNECTIVITY

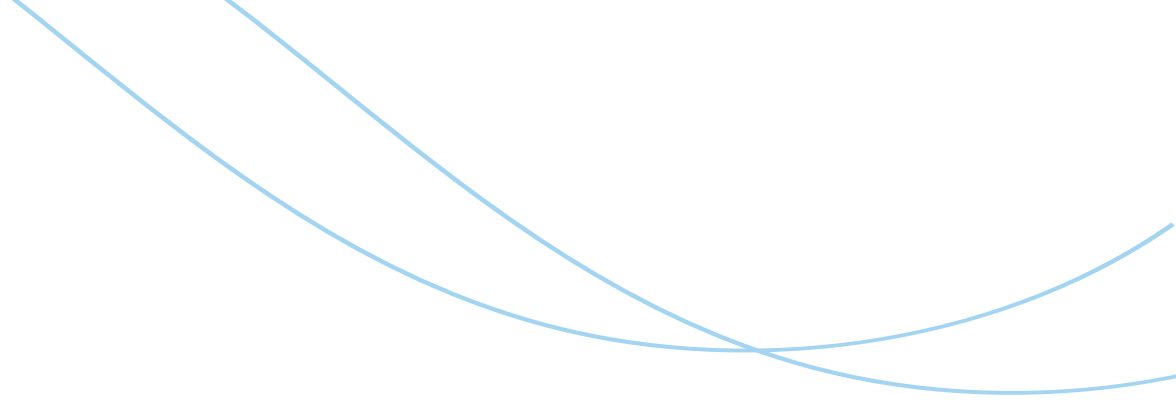
Since the early twentieth century, Fox Lake's location along the Chain O' Lakes and street network has been connecting residents, visitors, and patrons to the economic, social, recreational, and cultural opportunities that have created the Village many know and love today. The current network has been well planned and provides quick and easy access to key regional routes, such as US 12 and IL 59, which can help attract business and investment and positively contribute to all forms of development within the Village. However, there are still gaps within the bicycle and pedestrian active transportation network. The Mobility & Connectivity chapter focuses on maintaining the existing vehicular street network and explores opportunities to expand Fox Lake's active transportation network, which reflects the community's culture of outdoor recreation, as well as sustainability and environmental awareness.

### Goal 7.1:

Develop a street network that supports safe and accessible travel for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists.

### Goal 7.2:

Prioritize thoughtful mobility design to enhance quality of life and strengthen Fox Lake's sense of identity.



## **Goal 1: Develop a street network that supports safe and accessible travel for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists.**

Fox Lake's street network was primarily developed with a focus on automobiles, resulting in a car-dependent environment. This reliance on driving often translates to higher household transportation costs, reducing the money residents can spend on other goods and services within the community. While the Village offers some non-motorized infrastructure—such as the Chain O'Lakes Bike Path, sidewalks, and on-street bike lanes—the most recent guiding document, the 2013 Greenways and Bikeways Plan, emphasized the need to enhance access to the lakefront, parks, and open spaces. By designing streets that accommodate various travel modes—such as walking, cycling, and driving—and considering users of all ages and abilities, the Village can foster greater access to social, cultural, recreational, and economic opportunities while enhancing the overall quality of life.

**Strategy 1:** Prioritize street maintenance and infrastructure investment to support community connectivity and growth.

*Ensuring that streets are well-maintained enhances safety and efficiency for residents and patrons of Fox Lake. Additionally, a robust street network can attract businesses and fosters economic development, leading to a more prosperous and resilient community. Continual investment in these areas helps long-term sustainability and progress for the community as a whole.*

**Strategy 2:** Enhance bicycle and pedestrian connectivity throughout Fox Lake to support both recreational activities and daily transportation needs.

*By improving and expanding the active transportation network residents and visitors can enjoy a more active and healthier lifestyle while conveniently accessing local destinations. Additionally, expanded connectivity encourages eco-friendly transportation alternatives, which can help reduce traffic congestion and promote a greener, more sustainable environment. These enhancements can also make Fox Lake a more attractive and vibrant community, inviting further growth and development.*

**Strategy 3:** Adopt a complete streets policy which incorporates a new approach for the Village to integrate the needs of all ages, abilities, and travel modes in street design.

*Complete streets can create safer, more inclusive roadways that cater to pedestrians, cyclists, motorists, and public transit users alike. This holistic approach fosters a more connected and accessible community, enabling everyone to travel efficiently and safely regardless of their mode of transportation. Moreover, complete streets promote healthier lifestyles and contribute to the overall quality of life in the Village.*

**Strategy 4:** Ensure safe and accessible multi-modal connections across the community.

*Ensuring multi-modal connections within Fox Lake enhances overall mobility, reducing reliance on single-occupancy vehicles, and potentially reducing annual household transportation costs.*

## Goal 2: Prioritize thoughtful mobility design to enhance quality of life and strengthen Fox Lake's sense of identity.

Fox Lake's streets, sidewalks, and shared-use paths are essential to the Village's economic, social, cultural, and recreational vitality. Historically, infrastructure design has prioritized maximizing traffic flow and providing excess parking, which has not always resulted in the most efficient or valuable use of land. To better serve the community, mobility infrastructure should be viewed as an interconnected system that contributes to Fox Lake's overall economy and quality of life. Thoughtful design and strategic investment can yield significant benefits for residents and businesses. The strategies and actions below focus on right-sizing infrastructure to create a more accessible, vibrant, and sustainable community.

**Strategy 1:** Enhance transportation infrastructure to improve safety, connectivity, and identity.

Enhanced transportation infrastructure not only connects various parts of the community but also contributes to a cohesive local identity by creating well-maintained and aesthetically pleasing public spaces. Additionally, these enhancements can attract economic investment and tourism, further bolstering Fox Lake's growth.

**Strategy 2:** Optimize parking policies to support business success and promote efficient land use.

Revising parking policies can allow for more efficient use of land and maximize available space within the Village, allowing for more green areas, pedestrian pathways, and other amenities that enhance the community's appeal.

**Strategy 3:** Address sidewalk gaps in a context-sensitive manner.

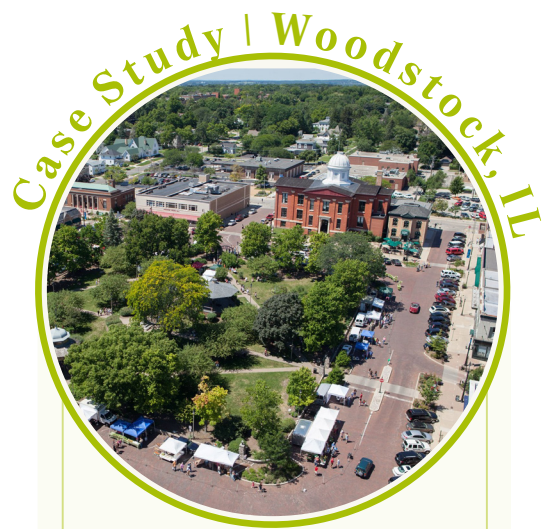
Filling in sidewalk gaps ensures continuous and safe pedestrian pathways, enhancing walkability and accessibility for all community members. Each solution should be tailored to the specific needs and characteristics of the area, promoting integration with existing landscapes.

**Strategy 4:** Improve ADA accessibility of the sidewalk network where feasible.

Ensuring sidewalks conform to ADA standards allows individuals with disabilities to navigate the community safely and independently. These improvements foster a more equitable environment and contribute to the overall quality of life and independence for community members with mobility challenges.

**Strategy 5:** Enhance crosswalks and improve crossings.

Upgrading crosswalks with clear markings, proper signage, curb extensions, and pedestrian signals can significantly increase safety for those on foot. Additionally, incorporating features such as raised crosswalks and refuge islands can make crossings more accessible and comfortable for all users, including those with mobility challenges. These improvements encourage more people to walk, promoting a healthier and more active Fox Lake.



### Complete Streets Policy

The City of Woodstock adopted a Complete Streets Policy to ensure transportation projects are designed to serve the needs of all community members. Developed in partnership with the McHenry County Department of Health's We Choose Health initiative, the policy sets a long-term vision for creating safe, accessible, and inclusive streets.



“

Route 12 just isn't safe to cross — it feels like a wall that splits the community, and we need better solutions for pedestrians and cyclists.

”



## THEME #8

# INFRASTRUCTURE

### Goal 8.1:

Ensure existing infrastructure is well maintained and has the capacity to accommodate new growth.

### Goal 8.2:

Strengthen water resiliency to ensure reliable access to clean and safe drinking water.

### Goal 8.3:

Implement stormwater management initiatives to minimize flood damage and enhance water quality.

### Goal 8.4:

Stay ahead of technological trends and foster an environment that supports sustainable energy solutions.

## Goal 8.1: Ensure existing infrastructure is well maintained and has the capacity to accommodate new growth.

A well-maintained infrastructure is essential to the quality of life in Fox Lake and plays a critical role in supporting residents, businesses, and the local economy. Reliable public services directly impact the health, safety, and overall well-being of the community. This goal provides the Village with strategies to ensure infrastructure remains efficient, resilient, and capable of meeting the evolving needs of current and future generations.

**Strategy 8.1.1:** Engage with owners and development applicants of larger tracts of land (5+ acres) to assess and plan for infrastructure needs.

*Collaboration with these stakeholders ensures that future developments are well-supported by necessary infrastructure, such as roads, utilities, and public services. Early assessment and planning can help identify potential challenges and opportunities, allowing for more efficient and sustainable growth. By aligning development plans with community goals, this proactive approach supports long-term economic stability and enhances overall quality of life for residents.*

**Strategy 8.1.2:** Create a multi-year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) to adequately plan for future water, sanitary, storm sewer, and utility infrastructure investments.

*Creation of a CIP ensures that essential infrastructure projects are prioritized and funded over the long term, providing a clear roadmap for sustainable community development. By proactively addressing future needs, the CIP helps prevent service disruptions and costly emergency repairs, enhancing overall system reliability and efficiency. Additionally, a well-planned CIP can attract investment and foster community confidence in Fox Lake's commitment to maintaining and improving vital infrastructure.*

**Strategy 8.1.3:** Prepare and implement Pavement Management Plans to maintain Village streets.

*Pavement Management Plans provide a systematic approach to assessing, prioritizing, and addressing pavement maintenance needs, ensuring that streets remain safe and functional over time. By regularly evaluating pavement conditions and scheduling timely repairs, the Village can extend the lifespan of its roadways and optimize maintenance budgets.*



## Goal 8.2: Strengthen water resiliency to ensure reliable access to clean and safe drinking water.

A resilient and secure drinking water system is crucial for the health, well-being, and economic stability of Fox Lake. As environmental challenges and uncertainties grow, proactive investments in water infrastructure are critical to safeguarding the community's access to a reliable and clean water supply, protecting public health, and supporting future development.

**Strategy 8.2.1:** Assess the long-term sustainability of Fox Lake's existing water sources (shallow aquifers).

*Evaluating Fox Lake's existing water sources helps ensure that they can meet the community's needs both now and in the future. By understanding the capacity and potential risks to these aquifers, the Village can develop effective management and conservation strategies.*

**Strategy 8.2.2:** Continue to educate the community on water conservation to improve system capacity management.

*Raising awareness about water conservation helps Fox Lake residents understand the importance of preserving this resource. Effective education programs can lead to reduced water consumption, easing the demand on existing water systems.*

**Strategy 8.2.3:** Strengthen cybersecurity preparedness for village-controlled infrastructure systems.

*By strengthening cybersecurity preparedness, the Village can protect critical infrastructure from potential cyber threats and vulnerabilities. Regular system updates and employee training ensures that infrastructure systems remain resilient and secure.*



## Goal 8.3: Implement stormwater management initiatives to minimize flood damage and enhance water quality.

Flooding can cause substantial damage to infrastructure, homes, and businesses, leading to financial loss and displacement for residents. Effective stormwater management reduces these risks by preventing excess water from overwhelming drainage systems while also protecting the environment by minimizing soil erosion and preventing pollutants from entering lakes and rivers. By investing in stormwater management strategies, Fox Lake can enhance flood resilience, improve water quality, preserve ecosystems, and promote public health.

**Strategy 8.3.1:** Enhance flood resilience through proactive planning.

*By identifying flood-prone areas and improving infrastructure and flood management strategies, Fox Lake can better prepare for and mitigate the impact of flooding events. Proactive planning not only protects property and infrastructure, but also improves the safety and well-being of residents.*

**Strategy 8.3.2:** Protect water quality to preserve ecosystems and public health.

*Clean and pollutant-free water sources are essential to maintaining healthy ecosystems and supporting water recreational activities in Fox Lake. The below action steps contribute to the overall sustainability and vitality of Fox Lake, its water sources, and more broadly the Chain O' Lakes.*



## Goal 8.4: Stay ahead of technological trends and foster an environment that supports sustainable energy solutions.

The nationwide shift toward sustainable energy sources is accelerating, with the growing adoption of electric vehicles (EVs) and increasing reliance on solar energy to power the electric grid. Proactively preparing for these advancements ensures that Fox Lake remains a forward-thinking, sustainable, and resilient community. By establishing policies and infrastructure that support these technologies, the Village can encourage innovation, enhance energy efficiency, and promote long-term environmental and economic benefits.

**Strategy 8.4.1:** Prepare for increased use of electric vehicles (EVs).

*By expanding EV charging infrastructure and incorporating EV-friendly policies, Fox Lake can support the growing number of electric vehicle users. Additionally, accommodating EVs can attract environmentally conscious residents and businesses to the community.*

**Strategy 8.4.2:** Aspire to become a solar energy ready community.

*The following action steps aim to position the Village with a better understanding of regulating and adopting solar energy systems that meet Fox Lake's needs. These initiatives can reduce reliance on non-renewable energy sources and may lower energy costs for residents and businesses over time.*

### Case Study



### FEMA Community Rating System

The FEMA Community Rating System (CRS) is a voluntary program under FEMA's National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) that incentivizes communities to implement floodplain management practices exceeding the NFIP's minimum requirements. Communities participating in CRS can earn discounts on flood insurance premiums for their residents by engaging in activities that reduce flood risk.



# Implementation

## SECTION 6

### Putting the Plan into Action

The future of Fox Lake will be shaped not only by vision, but by the community's commitment to action. While the vision laid out in this Plan is ambitious, it represents a long-term aspiration, one that promotes the Village's potential and desire for change.

Progress must be realistic and aligned with the Village's financial capacity, political will, and physical conditions. Market trends, development readiness, and strong public-private partnerships will all play a role in shaping the pace and form of change. Ultimately, success will depend on a shared commitment to advancing the goals in this Plan and a willingness to adapt as conditions evolve.

This section outlines the policy tools, organizational structures, partnerships, phasing strategies, and implementation priorities needed to bring the Plan to life. It builds on past planning efforts and current momentum, drawing on community input, existing assets, and Fox Lake's unique role as a regional waterfront destination.

### Opportunity Site Framework

To help guide phasing and strategic investment in Fox Lake, each opportunity site can be evaluated using a scoring framework based on five key criteria. These criteria reflect the Village's goals around implementation readiness, community benefit, catalytic impact, and partnership potential, drawing from national best practices.

While this framework suggests scoring sites on a scale from 1 to 5, it's important to recognize that not all criteria are strictly objective. Some are quantitative and easily measured (e.g., public ownership, grant eligibility), while others, such as catalytic potential or readiness, are more nuanced and multifaceted, often blending physical condition with strategic judgment.

The goal is not mathematical precision but practical direction. When in doubt, we recommend leaning toward lower scores to reflect uncertainty or barriers that may not be fully understood. The purpose of this exercise is to elevate high-impact, feasible, and community-aligned sites, not to produce perfect ranking.

This framework should be used collaboratively, with input from staff, stakeholders, and local partners, and should be revisited over time as conditions change. Example sites are provided to demonstrate how the framework can be applied and to spark discussion.

# Framework Criteria

## 1. READINESS

*How soon can the site be activated or redeveloped?*

- Ownership clarity (e.g., Village-owned vs. multiple private owners)
- Environmental condition (e.g., brownfield vs. clean)
- Existing tenant leases (short-term vs. long-term)
- No major infrastructure hurdles

**Sites with higher readiness can be implemented more quickly and deliver visible early wins.**

## 2. CATALYTIC POTENTIAL

*Will development on this site influence adjacent blocks or shift market perception?*

- Prominent location (e.g., Grand Avenue frontage, corner site)
- Proximity to other public investments (e.g., parks, streetscape upgrades)
- Ability to anchor new activity (e.g., mix of housing and retail)
- High visibility to residents and visitors

**Sites with strong catalytic potential can spark broader reinvestment and help redefine the image of downtown.**

## 3. FUNDING & PARTNERSHIP POTENTIAL

*Does the site align with available funding or attract private-sector interest?*

- Eligible for grants (e.g., OSLAD, DCEO, RAISE)
- Potential to bundle with other investments
- Strong interest from private or nonprofit partners

**Sites that align with funding or partner interest can be timed strategically to leverage outside resources.**

## 4. PUBLIC OWNERSHIP OR LEVERAGE

*Does the Village own the site or have influence over it?*

- Owned outright by the Village
- Located adjacent to public land (e.g., parks, streets)
- Leverage through incentives or policy tools (e.g., TIF)

**Sites with public control or leverage are easier to shape, activate, and ensure alignment with the community's vision.**

## ALIGNMENT WITH COMMUNITY VISION

*Does the site support the type of development the community wants to see?*

- Supports placemaking, housing, or retail
- Reflects lakefront identity and values
- Reinforces goals voiced during engagement

Rather than scoring Alignment as a fifth equal-weighted criterion, we recommend treating it as a final lens and a way to resolve “close calls” between sites that may score similarly on other criteria.

Because Alignment reflects deep community values and public trust, it serves as a strategic compass that can validate or challenge site priorities. For example, a site that scores highly in readiness and catalytic potential but conflicts with long-standing community goals may not be the right place to start. Conversely, a site that may score more modestly across the board but clearly embodies the vision and values expressed in this Plan may be worth advancing sooner.

In short, alignment can elevate a site or temper expectations. It's the community filter through which every decision should ultimately pass.

# Implementation Matrix

The implementation matrix serves as a practical, working document to guide Village staff in carrying out the Plan's goals and strategies. It is not a static tool, but one that is meant to be updated annually as progress is made, conditions evolve, and new opportunities arise. The matrix supports transparency, accountability, and alignment by tracking implementation over time and helping decision-makers stay focused on what matters most. Each action is categorized with detailed information to guide effective follow-through and collaboration. Each action item in the matrix includes the following:

## PRIORITY

- **High:** Identified as essential or foundational
- **Medium**
- **Low**

## TIME FRAME

- **Immediate:** 0–1 years
- **Short-term:** 1–5 years
- **Mid-term:** 5–10 years
- **Long-term:** 10+ years
- **Ongoing:** Implemented across the life of the plan

## PARTNERS

- Stakeholders involved or required to support implementation.

## TYPE

- **Capital Improvements:** Infrastructure projects and facility investments.
- **Policies and Programs:** New or revised guidelines, processes, or services.
- **Regulations and Standards:** Updates to zoning, codes, or design criteria.
- **Partnerships and Collaboration:** Coordination with other agencies, organizations, or stakeholders.
- **Targeted Planning:** Focused plans for specific areas, corridors, or themes.
- **Financial Planning:** Focused investments for future Village improvement.
- **Public Information and Outreach:** Engagement and marketing initiatives with the community.

## METRICS FOR SUCCESS

- Measurable indicators used to evaluate progress and impact over time.

## Theme 1: Economic Development

	Priority	Time Frame	Partners	Type	Metrics for Success
<b>Goal 1.1: Strengthen business development and attraction in Fox Lake.</b>					
<b>Strategy 1.1.1: Identify target commercial tenants for Fox Lake and identify suitable locations for potential commercial development outside of downtown.</b>					
Identify character districts and market zones for commercial investment that can be used within village promotional materials.	Medium	Short-Term	Village	Targeted Planning	Promotional materials completed; number of marketing packages distributed; inquiries received from developers; new businesses locating in targeted zones
Work with commercial property owners and real estate brokers to identify target tenants for commercial districts.	High	Ongoing	Village; property owners	Partnerships and Collaboration	Number of outreach meetings held; retail vacancy rate reduction; square footage of newly leased space
Maintain an inventory of available commercial properties.	Medium	Ongoing	Village	Policies and Programs	Database updated quarterly; accuracy verified; number of views/downloads by prospective tenants
Conduct outreach with the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity to identify priority sites which align with state economic development priorities and may be available for funding.	Low	Short-Term	Village; DCEO	Partnerships and Collaboration	Number of sites identified; funding applications submitted; state support or grant dollars awarded
Conduct a review of the existing zoning code and map to ensure the ordinance allows for desired commercial tenants in the appropriate areas.	Low	Mid-Term	Village	Regulations and Standards	Amendments adopted; number of projects expedited due to updated zoning; feedback from developers
<b>Strategy 1.1.2: Promote and market village businesses to residents of surrounding communities and neighborhoods.</b>					
Increase the amount and frequency of information on the Village's website and other communication platforms, such as social media and weekly newsletters.	High	Ongoing	Village	Partnerships and Collaboration	Number of visits completed annually; survey response rate; retention rate of existing businesses
Engage other parties, like the Chain O'Lakes Chamber of Commerce, in promoting village businesses.	High	Ongoing	Chain O'Lakes Chamber; Non-profits	Partnerships and Collaboration	Number of joint campaigns; increase in Chamber membership; attendance at co-hosted events
<b>Strategy 1.1.3: Continue building relationships and communicating with Local Businesses and entrepreneurs to identify needs and opportunities.</b>					
Continue conducting businesses retention visits and regularly conduct business community surveys.	Medium	Ongoing	Village	Partnerships and Collaboration	Number of visits completed annually; survey response rate; retention rate of existing businesses

	Priority	Time Frame	Partners	Type	Metrics for Success
Educate Local Businesses on available funding programs and identify opportunities for expanded outreach.	Low	Ongoing	Village; Chain O'Lakes Chamber	Partnerships and Collaboration	Number of participants in workshops; funding applications submitted; total grant/loan dollars awarded
Continue facilitating relationships between Local Businesses and the Chain O'Lakes Chamber of Commerce.	Low	Ongoing	Village; Chain O'Lakes Chamber	Partnerships and Collaboration	Number of networking events hosted; attendance; reported collaborations
<b>Strategy 1.1.4: Reduce barriers to entry for business creation in Fox Lake.</b>					
Consider implementing new incentive programs such as Special Service Areas (SSA) and sales tax abatements.	Low	Mid-term	Village	Policies and Programs	SSA implemented; incentive program adopted; number of businesses benefiting; economic impact analysis results
Identify opportunities, including technology changes, to improve the permitting and approvals process to reduce upfront costs (e.g., special use permits, awning permits, sign permits, additional ordinance reform, etc.).	Medium	Mid-term	Village	Regulations and Standards	Average permit review time reduced; customer satisfaction survey results; increase in permits issued
Identify opportunities to expand administrative approval for minor commercial zoning district special use permits to reduce the administrative approval burden on developers and businesses.	Medium	Mid-term	Village	Regulations and Standards	Number of permits approved administratively; processing time saved; developer feedback
<b>Strategy 1.1.5: Support the creation of a regional economic development corporation (EDC) whose toolkit would support Fox Lake's business community.</b>					
Conduct surveys and meetings with business owners to assess interest and discuss the potential scope of an EDC.	High	Short-term	Village; Local Businesses	Partnerships and Collaboration	Survey responses collected; interest level documented; report presented to Village Board
Identify and recruit founding members who are influential local business leaders to champion the EDC.	Low	Mid-term	Village; Local Businesses	Partnerships and Collaboration	Number of members committed; diversity of representation; leadership team established
Organize informational sessions about the benefits of supporting the EDC, including networking opportunities, advocacy, and shared resources.	Low	Mid-term	Village; Local Businesses	Partnerships and Collaboration	Sessions held; attendance; post-session follow-up interest
Launch the EDC with a high-profile event that underscores its role in economic development and community engagement.	Low	Mid-term	Village; Local Businesses	Partnerships and Collaboration	Event attendance; media coverage; membership sign-ups
<b>Goal 1.2: Foster a thriving small business community in Fox Lake.</b>					
<b>Strategy 1.2.1: Continue encouraging infill development and redevelopment of retail focused on convenience and neighborhood-serving retail within Fox Lake.</b>					
Use local economic development tools to support building rehabilitation to bring more commercial spaces up to contemporary business standards and support redevelopment in key areas.	Medium	Mid-term	Village; property owners	Policies and Programs	Number of rehab projects completed; permit activity; increase in property values

	Priority	Time Frame	Partners	Type	Metrics for Success
Reevaluate the Village's incentive policies to ensure they align with the business community's needs.	Medium	Mid-term	Village	Policies and Programs	Policy review completed; recommendations adopted; number of businesses utilizing updated incentives
Maintain strong relationships with commercial property owners to identify needs and opportunities for development and re-tenanting.	High	Ongoing	Village; property owners	Partnerships and Collaboration	Number of meetings held; properties re-tenanting; vacancy rate change
Develop and adopt commercial-specific architectural guidelines that define and maintain the different commercial corridors and areas in Fox Lake.	Low	Mid-term	Village	Regulations and Standards	Guidelines adopted; compliance rate for new projects; design quality ratings
<b>Strategy 1.2.2: Sponsor and/or host gatherings of small business owners to help local retailers exchange ideas and collaborate on events.</b>					
Establish a business-to-business network that encourages resource-sharing, such as equipment, materials, or services, helping small businesses reduce costs and improve efficiency.	Medium	Short-term	Village; Chain O'Lakes Chamber; Local Businesses	Partnerships and Collaboration	Number of participants; collaborations formed; cost savings reported by members
Organize educational workshops that focus on practical business skills and opportunities for collaboration, providing mentorship to help small businesses thrive and connect with regional partners.	Medium	Mid-term	Village; Chain O'Lakes Chamber	Policies and Programs	Workshop attendance; satisfaction surveys; number of mentorship pairings
<b>Goal 1.3: Expand Fox Lake's tourism economy.</b>					
<b>Strategy 1.3.1: Support redevelopment of strategic lakefront opportunity sites that could catalyze broader investment within the village, such as the Sayles property and the Mineola property.</b>					
Conduct a market study and prepare design concepts to better understand potential uses of specific opportunity sites.	High	Short-term	Village	Targeted Planning	Study completed; design concepts reviewed; developer interest generated
Issue a request for proposals from developers in partnership with private property owners for strategic lakefront opportunity sites.	Medium	Mid-term	Village	Policies and Programs	RFPs issued; proposals received; projects initiated
Consider providing public assistance to support redevelopment of strategic lakefront properties.	Medium	Mid-term	Village	Financial Planning	Funding allocated; leveraged private investment; construction starts
<b>Strategy 1.3.2: Explore partnerships with nearby Lake County tourism partners such as Wilmot Mountain, Wilmot Racetrack, Richardson Family Farm, Chain O'Lakes State Park, and the Volo Museum – to increase tourist awareness of downtown Fox Lake.</b>					

	Priority	Time Frame	Partners	Type	Metrics for Success
Foster conversations between Fox Lake businesses and surrounding tourism entities to create more visibility of Fox Lake businesses.	Low	Ongoing	Wilmot Mountain; Wilmot Racetrack; Richardson Family Farm; Chain O'Lakes State Park; Volo Museum	Partnerships and Collaboration	Number of joint promotions; visitors referred; cross-promotions executed
Partner with nearby tourism attractions in advertising efforts.	Medium	Short-term	Village; Chain O'Lakes Chamber	Partnerships and Collaboration	Campaign reach; visitor counts; website traffic from partner referrals
Develop and market seasonal programming for non-summer months to attract additional tourists year-round.	Medium	Short-term	Village; Chain O'Lakes Chamber	Partnerships and Collaboration	Program attendance; repeat visitor rates; off-season business sales
Market public events which support Local Businesses through online media such as flyers with QR codes, Village newsletters, and Village social media accounts.	Medium	Short-term	Village	Public Information and Outreach	Social media impressions; QR code scans; newsletter open rates
<b>Strategy 1.3.3: Leverage the recently developed Lakefront Park to attract visitors to Fox Lake.</b>					
Expand seasonal programming to draw additional visitors to Lakefront Park and Fox Lake.	High	Immediate	Village	Partnerships and Collaboration	Event attendance; visitor spending; park use data
Continue the Friday night concert series and continue to partner with food trucks and other vendors.	High	Ongoing	Village	Policies and Programs	Number of concerts; vendor participation; attendee satisfaction
Once built, market the public pier in Lakefront Park to boaters and other Chain O'Lakes visitors.	High	Immediate	Village; Chain O'Lakes Chamber	Policies and Programs	Pier usage data; increase in boating visitors; sales in nearby businesses
<b>Strategy 1.3.4: Connect Chain O'Lakes tourism to downtown Fox Lake.</b>					
Provide lakefront users and visitors with promotional materials for the downtown (e.g., downtown map, vouchers provided by downtown businesses, etc.).	Medium	Short-term	Village; Chain O'Lakes Chamber; Illinois Office of Tourism; Visit Lake County	Partnerships and Collaboration	Materials distributed; redemption of vouchers; downtown foot traffic

	Priority	Time Frame	Partners	Type	Metrics for Success
Partner with downtown businesses to offer vouchers, discounts, or special promotions to encourage lake visitors to explore downtown.	High	Ongoing	Village; Chain O'Lakes Chamber; Illinois Office of Tourism; Visit Lake County	Partnerships and Collaboration	Promotions redeemed; participating businesses; sales increase
Work with regional tourism agencies to promote Fox Lake events, downtown Fox Lake, and Chain O'Lakes attractions.	Medium	Short-term	Village; Chain O'Lakes Chamber; Illinois Office of Tourism; Visit Lake County	Partnerships and Collaboration	Campaign reach; increase in visitor inquiries; event attendance growth

#### Goal 4: Elevate Fox Lake's image as a premier recreational destination.

##### Strategy 1.4.1: Build capacity to support year-round events and programming that advance economic development goals.

Establish an events committee jointly led by the Parks Department and Economic Development staff to coordinate planning and promotion efforts.	High	Immediate	Village; Promote Fox Lake	Partnerships and Collaboration	Committee established; number of coordinated events; event attendance
Explore the feasibility of hiring an events coordinator to lead events and streamline logistics, marketing, and stakeholder engagement.	Medium	Short-term	Village	Policies and Programs	Feasibility study completed; position created; coordinator hired
Encourage local volunteerism and recruit community members with relevant expertise to support event planning and implementation.	Medium	Short-term	Village; School Districts; Civic Groups; Volunteer Organizations	Community Engagement	Volunteer hours logged; number of events supported; volunteer retention rate
Develop a community event grant program to empower grassroots organizations, neighborhood groups, and residents to host their own events that reflect local values and interests.	Medium	Mid-Term	Village; Local Foundations; Promote Fox Lake; Chain O'Lakes Chamber	Financial Planning	Grants awarded; event variety; geographic diversity

##### Strategy 1.4.2: Continue to collaborate with Promote Fox Lake to celebrate the village's recreational and cultural legacy by highlighting its rich history.

	Priority	Time Frame	Partners	Type	Metrics for Success
Launch a Walk of Fame featuring plaques and markers commemorating significant historical figures, landmarks, and events that shaped Fox Lake's history as a resort and recreation destination.	Medium	Mid-Term	Village; Promote Fox Lake, Fox Lake Historical Society; School Districts	Regulations and Standards	Plaques installed; guided walk participation; visitor feedback
Partner with local historians, museums, and organizations to develop guided boat and walking tours showcasing historical sites, folklore, and the village's unique heritage.	Medium	Short-Term	Village; Fox Lake Historical Society; Local Historians; Tourism Operators	Partnerships and Collaboration	Tours created; attendance; participant satisfaction
Enhance marketing efforts to promote Fox Lake's history, outdoor activities, and signature events through digital storytelling, social media campaigns, and tourism partnerships.	High	Ongoing	Village; Chain O'Lakes Chamber; Promote Fox Lake; Visit Lake County	Marketing and Promotion	Impressions; social engagement; media coverage
Create a "Living History" program with reenactments, pop-up exhibits, and interactive storytelling events to bring the past to life for residents and visitors.	Medium	Mid-Term	Village; School Districts; Performers; Re-enactment Groups	Community Engagement	Events hosted; attendance; participant feedback
Develop themed festivals and seasonal celebrations that highlight Fox Lake's past, such as a "Resort Era Revival" event or a "History on the Water" weekend featuring boat parades and historical demonstrations.	High	Short-Term	Village; Local Businesses; Promote Fox Lake	Partnerships and Collaboration	Festival attendance; local sales during event; visitor satisfaction
<b>Strategy 1.4.3: Promote public art and cultural installations to celebrate Fox Lake's recreational spirit.</b>					
Install large-scale public art pieces, murals, and sculptures in high-traffic areas, parks, and along the waterfront to create a visually engaging experience that celebrates the lake's recreational lifestyle.	High	Short-term	Village; Local Artists; Parks Department	Capital Improvements	Installations completed; public interaction; site foot traffic
Develop a cultural and recreational trail system that links public art installations, historic sites, and scenic viewpoints through walkable and bike-friendly routes.	Medium	Mid-term	Parks Dept.; IDNR; Tourism Agencies	Targeted Planning	Trail segments completed; trail use counts; connected destinations

	Priority	Time Frame	Partners	Type	Metrics for Success
Establish an artist-in-residence program to create rotating, site-specific works that reflect the community's connection to nature, water, and history.	Medium	Mid-term	Art Orgs.; Local Universities	Policies and Programs	Artists selected; works created; community engagement
Integrate interactive art elements such as musical installations, augmented reality features, or kinetic sculptures that engage visitors in new and dynamic ways.	Medium	Long-term	Village; Donors	Targeted Planning	Installations completed; usage data; visitor engagement
Host annual public art competitions to encourage community participation and showcase local talent, culminating in new permanent or temporary installations each year.	Medium	Short-term	School Districts; Local Artists; Cultural Groups	Partnerships and Collaboration	Entries submitted; competition attendance; installations created
<b>Strategy 1.4.4: Expand community events and programming to activate different areas of Fox Lake and stimulate local economic activity.</b>					
Organize mobile events, such as traveling food truck festivals, mobile farmers' markets, and outdoor fitness pop-ups, to draw visitors and spending to underutilized areas and commercial corridors.	High	Immediate	Village; Food vendors; Local Farmers; Fitness Providers	Partnerships and Collaboration	Events held; attendance in targeted areas; vendor participation
Develop a "Community Event Hub" on the Village's website where residents can suggest and vote on new event ideas, ensuring innovation and diverse programming that drafts foot traffic to Local Businesses.	Medium	Short-term	Village	Partnerships and Collaboration	Page visits; event ideas submitted; votes cast
Partner with Non-profits and businesses to co-sponsor events providing resources, volunteers, and marketing support to enhance visibility, economic impact, and community reach.	High	Ongoing	Village; Local Businesses; Nonprofits	Partnerships and Collaboration	Sponsorship dollars raised; events co-hosted; attendance
Maintain a public list of local artisans, food vendors, entertainers, and service providers to encourage hiring from within the community and keep event spending local.	Medium	Short-term	Village; Chain O'Lakes Chamber	Policies and Programs	List completed; number of hires; share of local providers used
Develop a system to measure attendance, vendor sales, and local business performance during event periods to guide future investment and programming decisions.	Medium	Mid-term	Village; Local Businesses; Event Co-ordinators	Policies and Programs	Attendance; vendor sales; local business revenue during events

## Theme 2: Fox Lake Downtown

	Priority	Time Frame	Partners	Type	Metrics for Success
<b>Goal 2.1: Improve, enhance, and expand the vibrancy of downtown Fox Lake.</b>					
<b>Strategy 2.1.1: Focus downtown efforts on placemaking to enhance vibrancy and walkability.</b>					
Invest in public art, landscaping, streetscaping and safety improvements.	High	Ongoing	Village; SSA (if applicable); Property Owners	Capital Improvements	Total investment in placemaking improvements in the downtown
Pursue state grants for a downtown plaza and other placemaking investments.	High	Mid-term	Village; DCEO; Lake County	Financial Planning	Grant dollars awarded
Consider tactical closures of minor streets, such as School Court, for community events like food truck festivals or wine walks.	Medium	Mid-term	Village	Policies and Programs	Number of visitors to Downtown
Utilize incentives, such as designating special service areas (SSA), to fund signage or façade improvements.	Medium	Mid-term	Village; SSA (if applicable)	Policies and Programs	Number of improvements funded
<b>Strategy 2.1.2: Encourage residential development within proximity of the downtown core and near the Metra station to create a “built-in” consumer base.</b>					
Consider proactively acquiring additional strategic sites near the Metra or within downtown to facilitate transit-oriented development residential opportunities.	High	Mid-term	Village	Targeted Planning	Acres of land acquired
Refine the zoning code to allow flexibility in residential uses, such as live/work and mixed-use, in the downtown commercial districts.	Medium	Long-term	Village	Regulations and Standards	Building permit activity
Utilize incentives, such as Business Development District (BDD), to support residential and mixed-use projects that would not occur but-for the public assistance.	High	Ongoing	Village	Policies and Programs	Building permit activity
Reduce or waive fees for residential projects that align with community priorities.	Medium	Short-Term	Village	Regulations and Standards	Building permit activity
Create a Shovel-Ready Program that streamlines and expedites the permitting process for residential development.	High	Short-Term	Village	Policies and Programs	Building permit activity
Conduct outreach to residential developers to identify potential partners and increase awareness of Village sites and incentives.	Medium	Short-Term	Village	Partnerships and Collaboration	Building permit activity
Provide incentives to help property owners conduct architecture and engineering assessments on second floor spaces and evaluate the feasibility of renovating for residential use.	Low	Mid-term	Village	Policies and Programs	Total square feet renovated
Host a neighborhood Open House to showcase available residential properties in and around the downtown and generate excitement for living downtown.	Low	Mid-term	Village	Partnerships and Collaboration	Number of Open House attendees

	Priority	Time Frame	Partners	Type	Metrics for Success
<b>Strategy 2.1.3: Support the placemaking efforts of Local Businesses.</b>					
Expand space for cafés, outdoor dining, and other opportunities for sidewalk seating to create destinations with more social activity and interaction downtown.	Medium	Ongoing	Village; Local Businesses	Partnerships and Collaborations	Number of visitors to downtown Fox Lake
Encourage pop-up shops, event spaces, and more flexible commercial leases to support the activation of currently vacant commercial storefronts.	Low	Ongoing	Village; property owners	Partnerships and Collaborations	Leasing activity
Sponsor downtown-wide events to support retail businesses (e.g. art nights).	High	Mid-term	Village; Local Businesses	Partnerships and Collaborations	Number of visitors to downtown Fox Lake
Market events on the Village website, social media, and newsletters and through partners to expand visitor reach.	Medium	Ongoing	Village	Public Information and Outreach	Online and social media engagement
Collaborate with Local Businesses to host “Women’s Nights Out” featuring women-owned businesses, networking opportunities, and themed activities.	Low	Mid-term	Village; Local Businesses	Partnerships and Collaborations	Number of visitors to downtown Fox Lake
Develop a rotating themed market series (e.g., artisan markets, night markets, vintage fairs) to provide opportunities for small businesses and local creators.	Low	Mid-term	Village; Local Businesses	Partnerships and Collaborations	Number of visitors to downtown Fox Lake
Engage local restaurants and breweries in culinary events, such as a “Taste of Fox Lake” festival or chef-led cooking demonstrations.	Low	Mid-term	Village; Local Businesses	Partnerships and Collaborations	Number of visitors to downtown Fox Lake
<b>Strategy 2.1.4: Develop and market fall, winter, and spring programming to attract additional visitors to downtown businesses year-round.</b>					
Emphasize different seasonal activities throughout the year, such as hayrides and pumpkin pop-ups in the fall, ice skating in the winter, and easter egg hunts in the spring.	Low	Ongoing	Village	Partnerships and Collaboration	Number of visitors to Fox Lake; number of social media impressions
Market downtown events and other programming on the Village website, social media, and newsletters and through Village of Fox Lake partners to expand visitor reach.	Low	Ongoing	Village; Chain O’Lakes Chamber	Partnerships and Collaboration	Number of visitors to Fox Lake; number of social media impressions
<b>Goal 2.2: Develop and enact targeted economic development initiatives to support the downtown Fox Lake business environment.</b>					
<b>Strategy 2.2.1: Establish a Special Service Area (SSA) to manage and fund improvements downtown.</b>					
Advocate for and facilitate the establishment of an SSA, working closely with downtown property owners and other stakeholders to outline the benefits and responsibilities.	High	Short-Term	Village; property owners; Non- profits	Targeted Planning	SSA implemented

	Priority	Time Frame	Partners	Type	Metrics for Success
Develop a clear budget and plan for the use of SSA funds, focusing on marketing, beautification, and infrastructure improvements.	Medium	Mid-term	Non-profits	Policies and Programs	SSA budget created
Collaborate with a newly developed 501(c)(3) non-profit organization or a Village managed Economic Development Commission to act as the service provider for the SSA, establishing a governance structure that includes representatives from Local Businesses and property owners.	Medium	Mid-term	Village	Policies and Programs	SSA implemented
Work with the service provider to define the types of initiatives that will be supported by the SSA funding.	Medium	Mid-term	Village	Partnerships and Collaboration	N/A
Create a transparent reporting system to show the impact of SSA investments to stakeholders and the community.	Low	Mid-term	Village	Policies and Programs	Public portal
<b>Strategy 2.2.2: Implement a ‘Shop Local’ campaign to encourage community support for downtown businesses, increasing local spending and economic vitality in the area.</b>					
Design and implement a ‘Shop Local’ campaign using both digital and traditional marketing methods to highlight the value of supporting Local Businesses.	High	Short-Term	Village; Local Businesses; Chain O’Lakes Chamber	Partnerships and Collaboration	Share of sales tax collections attributable to Local Businesses
Coordinate with Local Businesses to offer discounts, loyalty programs, and special event promotions that encourage frequent visits.	Low	Short-Term	Village; Local Businesses	Partnerships and Collaboration	Number of small business programs
Organize themed shopping days or weekends, such as “Small Business Saturdays,” that feature activities, entertainment, and sales.	Medium	Mid-term	Village; Local Businesses	Partnerships and Collaboration	Number of small business events
Use social media platforms to regularly feature Local Businesses, share their stories, and promote community support.	Medium	Ongoing	Village; Local Businesses; Chain O’Lakes Chamber	Partnerships and Collaboration	Number of social media posts; total social media impressions
<b>Strategy 2.2.3: Create a more supportive environment for small business development and retention in the downtown area by identifying and addressing key barriers to business success.</b>					
Conduct a small business needs assessment to survey existing and potential small business owners to gather insight into key challenges.	High	Short-term	Village; Local Businesses	Partnerships and Collaboration	Number of survey respondents
Host a series of small business roundtables with downtown business owners, aspiring entrepreneurs, and local partners to validate findings from the assessment and foster trust with the business community.	Low	Short-term	Village, Chain O’Lakes Chamber; Local Businesses	Partnerships and Collaboration	Number of roundtable participants

	Priority	Time Frame	Partners	Type	Metrics for Success
Develop a downtown business resource toolkit based on the identified needs and promote available resources.	Medium	Short-term	Village	Policies and Programs	Completed downtown business resource toolkit
Create feedback loops through annual surveys to ensure responsiveness and evaluate the program.	Low	Mid-term	Village; Chain O'Lakes Chamber	Partnerships and Collaboration	Number of survey respondents
<b>Goal 2.3: Support business development downtown to maintain and improve the economic base and create a sense of place.</b>					
<b>Strategy 2.3.1: Strengthen downtown as the village's core experiential retail corridor with additional retail, restaurant and entertainment uses to balance activity throughout the entire day.</b>					
Educate nearby brokers, land use attorneys, business owners, and developers about desired types of development and tenants.	High	Short-term	Village	Partnerships and Collaboration	N/A
Provide assistance navigating the process to relocate to the downtown.	Low	Mid-term	Village	Policies and Programs	Number of new businesses
Enhance code enforcement to encourage investment and rehabilitation of older commercial and mixed-use structures.	High	Short-term	Village	Regulations and Standards	Building permit value
Conduct business outreach to raise awareness of available resources for business owners and encourage businesses to leverage Fox Lake's façade improvement program, TIF district funds, and business district funds.	Medium	Short-term	Village	Partnerships and Collaboration	N/A
<b>Strategy 2.3.2: Improve cohesiveness of downtown through economic development tools, such as façade improvements, banners, and landscaping; use the new Fox Lake brand to strengthen the sense of place.</b>					
Designate an SSA downtown to provide funding to business owners for façade improvement, signage, landscaping, and other enhancements to commercial properties and public space.	High	Mid-term	Village; SSA (if applicable); Non-profits	Targeted Planning	Establishment of SSA
Further leverage incentives, such as BDD, to support small businesses improvements, address critical vacancies, and make physical improvements that add to the downtown's character.	Medium	Ongoing	Village; Property Owners; Local Businesses	Policies and Programs	Investment activity
Increase awareness of the Fox Lake brand amongst the local business community.	Medium	Ongoing	Village	Public Information and Outreach	N/A
<b>Strategy 2.3.3: Work to attract or support the development of destination retailers, which can drive consistent foot traffic and create a steady demand for local services and retail.</b>					
Initiate discussions with potential destination retailers and businesses.	Low	Long-term	Village	Partnerships and Collaboration	Number of new retailers

	Priority	Time Frame	Partners	Type	Metrics for Success
Develop a package of incentives, such as tax breaks or reduced utility rates, to attract these institutions to downtown Fox Lake.	Medium	Mid-term	Village	Policies and Programs	Number of new retailers
Help make sites “shovel ready” by ensuring adequate infrastructure is in place to support the needs of the destination retailers, including transportation and utilities.	Medium	Long-term	Village	Capital Improvements	Investment activity
<b>Goal 2.4: Cultivate a vibrant public realm in downtown Fox Lake.</b>					
<b>Strategy 2.4.1: Create and enhance public spaces in Downtown Fox Lake to foster community interaction and support Local Businesses.</b>					
Develop multifunctional shared streets, plazas, parks, and parking lots that can host markets, festivals, and community gatherings.	Medium	Mid-term	Village	Capital Improvements	Number of activated public spaces; frequency of public events
Create a local program that encourages temporary public space activations tailored to Fox Lake. This could include pop-up parks, outdoor galleries, and temporary event spaces	Medium	Short-term	Village; Artists; Event Planners; Local Nonprofits	Policies and Programs	Number of temporary activations per year
Designate areas for permanent public art installations that reflect local culture and history.	Medium	Mid-term	Village; Artists; Historical Societies	Policies and Programs	Number of permanent public art installations
<b>Strategy 2.4.2: Enhance the streetscape and green infrastructure in downtown to improve environmental resilience and aesthetic quality.</b>					
Implement a comprehensive urban greening plan that includes tree planting along streets with little to no current canopy.	High	Mid-term	Village	Capital Improvements	Number of trees planted; square footage of shaded sidewalk areas
Upgrade street furniture to improve aesthetics and comfort, incorporating sustainable materials and innovative designs.	Medium	Mid-term	Village	Capital Improvements	Number of new or upgraded street furniture installations
Establish green roofs and walls on suitable downtown buildings to enhance environmental resilience and aesthetic value.	Medium	Long-term	Village; Property Owners	Partnerships and Collaboration	Square footage of green infrastructure added
<b>Strategy 2.4.3: Promote a cohesive and active downtown experience that attracts both residents and visitors, enhancing the area’s identity and vibrancy.</b>					
Launch a unified branding and signage program to strengthen downtown identity and navigability.	High	Short-term	Village	Policies and Programs	Completion of branding/signage program; wayfinding usage satisfaction
Coordinate with Local Businesses and organizations to schedule regular downtown events that attract residents and visitors.	High	Ongoing	Village; Local Businesses; Property Owners	Partnerships and Collaboration	Number of downtown events per year
Develop a strategy for integrating technology into the public realm, such as interactive digital kiosks and free public Wi-Fi zones.	Low	Long-term	Village	Public Information and Outreach	Digital engagement metrics

	Priority	Time Frame	Partners	Type	Metrics for Success
<b>Goal 2.5: Maximize Development Potential of New Opportunity Sites in Downtown Fox Lake.</b>					
<b>Strategy 2.5.1: Encourage and facilitate public-private partnerships to fund and develop mixed-use projects that can enhance the economic and social fabric of downtown.</b>					
Identify key development projects that could benefit from public-private partnerships.	High	Short-term	Village	Targeted Planning	Number of public-private partnerships executed
Enforce design standards that require new buildings to have transparent, active ground floors that engage with the street.	Low	Mid-term	Village	Regulations and Standards	Increased leased retail space
Develop a legal and administrative framework to guide public-private partnerships, ensuring transparency and mutual benefits.	High	Short-term	Village	Policies and Programs	Number of public-private partnerships executed
Promote the consolidation of adjacent properties to create larger development sites, facilitating more impactful mixed-use projects that can transform the downtown landscape.	High	Ongoing	Village	Targeted Planning	Investment activity
Launch a call for private sector partners who are interested in investing in downtown revitalization projects.	Low	Short-term	Village	Partnerships and Collaboration	N/A
Hold community consultations to ensure public support and input on the proposed development projects.	Medium	Ongoing	Village	Partnerships and Collaboration	Number of engagements
Negotiate and finalize partnership agreements that detail each party's contributions, responsibilities, and benefits.	Medium	Mid-term	Village	Policies and Programs	Number of public-private partnerships executed
Advocate at County level for Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding to support projects that align with County priorities within Fox Lake.	Medium	Ongoing	Village; Lake County	Partnerships and Collaboration	Grant dollars awarded
<b>Strategy 2.5.2: Establish a Design Overlay District with a Design Review Process in Downtown Fox Lake.</b>					
Set up a Design Review Board composed of professionals in architecture, urban planning, and local business to review project proposals and ensure they meet the design guidelines.	High	Short-term	Village; Local Professionals; Architects	Regulations and Standards	Design Review Board established
Assign a qualified staff member or consultant to oversee design reviews until the Design Review Board is operational.	High	Immediate	Village	Policies and Programs	Design review process initiated
Hold informational sessions to explain the design guidelines to property owners, developers, and the public.	Medium	Short-term	Village; Property Owners	Partnerships and Collaboration	Number of participants in informational sessions
Ensure that the Design Review Board works closely with the Planning Commission to integrate design standards with broader planning efforts.	High	Short-term	Village	Partnerships and Collaboration	Regular check ins or joint meetings

	Priority	Time Frame	Partners	Type	Metrics for Success
Periodically review and update the guidelines and the review process to keep them relevant and effective.	Medium	Ongoing	Village	Policies and Programs	Frequency of revisions
<b>Strategy 2.5.3: Attract entertainment and water-related activities.</b>					
Partner with developers to explore the feasibility of entertainment venues like theaters, breweries, or water-based attractions that link downtown to Fox Lake.	Low	Mid-term	Village	Partnerships and Collaboration	N/A
Design public spaces that can accommodate seasonal water-related activities, such as kayak rentals or waterfront dining.	Medium	Long-term	Village	Capital Improvements	N/A
Implement zoning incentives that encourage the development of tourist-attracting facilities and businesses.	Low	Long-term	Village	Regulations and Standards	Number of new businesses
<b>Strategy 2.5.4: Implement sustainable and community-oriented building practices.</b>					
Develop guidelines that promote sustainable building practices, such as energy-efficient designs and materials.	Low	Long-term	Village	Policies and Programs	Sustainable building guidelines adopted
Require new developments to include public amenities like plazas, courtyards, or balconies that enhance community interaction.	Medium	Ongoing	Village; Developers; Property Owners	Regulations and Standards	Number of new developments with public amenities
Advocate for designs that minimize the visual impact of parking facilities, integrating them behind or beneath buildings.	High	Ongoing	Village; Developers; Property Owners	Regulations and Standards	Number of developments with concealed parking
<b>Goal 2.6: Strengthen walkability and connectivity to boost downtown vitality and accessibility.</b>					
<b>Strategy 2.6.1: Enhance pedestrian and bicycle mobility in Downtown.</b>					
Allocate budget resources for public works to install low-cost tactical mobility enhancements, such as curb bump-outs with bollards, shared bicycle lane markings, updated crosswalk striping, flex posts, jersey barriers, or planters.	High	Mid-term	Village	Capital Improvements	Number of tactical mobility elements installed
Ensure new developments provide ample space for pedestrians, including pedestrian plazas, streetscape amenities, outdoor dining areas, gathering spaces, and connections to parks, recreational areas, and the water.	Medium	Ongoing	Village; Developers; Property Owners	Regulations and Standards	Number of new developments with intentional pedestrian spaces

	Priority	Time Frame	Partners	Type	Metrics for Success
Explore the feasibility of installing street trees or green infrastructure along Grand Avenue to enhance the pedestrian experience.	Medium	Short-term	Village	Targeted Planning	Completion of feasibility study
Consider widening sidewalks and removing the split-level sidewalks along Grand Avenue from Nippersink Boulevard to Holly Avenue to improve walkability and comfort.	Medium	Long-term	Village	Capital Improvements	Sidewalk improvements
<b>Strategy 2.6.2: Create a pedestrian promenade along Grand Avenue and Nippersink Boulevard to connect the lakefront to Downtown.</b>					
Modify on-street parking to create a wider, more comfortable pedestrian route along Grand Avenue between the lakefront and US 12.	Medium	Mid-term	Village	Capital Improvements	Completion of promenade
Remove on-street parking from one side of the street and reduce travel lane width.	Low	Mid-term	Village	Capital Improvements	Completion of street reconfiguration
Extend streetscape design elements, such as streetlights and signage, from Downtown to the waterfront to create a cohesive experience.	High	Short-term	Village	Capital Improvements	Continuity of streetscape elements
Link the pedestrian promenade along Grand Avenue to a waterfront overlook, providing enhanced views and access to the lakefront.	Medium	Long-term	Village	Capital Improvements	Construction of overlook completed / utilization of overlook
<b>Strategy 2.6.3: Enhance tactical wayfinding in Downtown Fox Lake.</b>					
Develop a focused signage package that emphasizes tactical directions for parking, pedestrian pathways, and key local amenities.	Medium	Short-term	Village	Targeted Planning	Signage package developed
Improve and clarify parking signage for the Downtown Metra parking lot to enhance user experience and accessibility.	High	Immediate	Village, Metra	Capital Improvements	Improved signage, higher utilization rates
Allocate budget resources for public works to advance current wayfinding efforts to guide residents and visitors to key destinations within Downtown and the broader community.	Medium	Medium-term	Village	Financial Planning	Funding allocated / spent
Enhance visibility and accessibility of downtown bus stops by installing clear signage, designated waiting areas, and route information to encourage public transportation use.	High	Short-term	Village; Transit Agencies	Targeted Planning	Number of upgraded bus stops, higher utilization rates

## Theme 3: Land Use & Development

	Priority	Time Frame	Partners	Type	Metrics for Success
<b>Goal 3.1: Enrich Fox Lake's identity and sense of place by implementing thoughtful urban design initiatives.</b>					
<b>Strategy 3.1.1: Strengthen and celebrate neighborhood character across the Village.</b>					
Conduct a neighborhood character assessment to evaluate land use and zoning, building form, public amenities, architectural character, and connectivity.	Low	Mid-Term	Village; Neighbor-hood Orgs	Targeted Planning	Completed assessment; public input sessions held
Establish distinct neighborhood identities or districts across the Village based on the assessment.	Low	Mid-Term	Village; Local Residents	Policies and Programs	Number of identity themes adopted; community feedback
Update and modernize zoning regulations to align with the neighborhood identities and foster the desired identity within each district.	Low	Mid-Term	Village	Regulations and Standards	Updated zoning ordinance adopted
Establish localized design standards and guidelines for the architectural character of the neighborhood districts.	Low	Long-Term	Village; Consultants	Regulations and Standards	Design guidelines completed and adopted
Improve the public realm with signage, walkability, lighting, and landscaping to define the neighborhood identities.	Low	Mid-Term	Village; IDOT; Lake County	Capital Improvements	Number of public realm upgrades completed
Identify and activate underutilized areas for community use.	High	Mid-Term	Parks & Rec; Neighbor-hood Groups	Partnerships and Collaboration	Number of sites activated for public use
<b>Strategy 3.1.2: Elevate the identity of Fox Lake's major corridors including US Route 12, Grand Avenue, and Rollins Road.</b>					
Introduce consistent streetscape elements such as lighting, signage, and landscaping.	Medium	Long-Term	Public Works; IDOT; Developers	Capital Improvements	Linear feet of streetscape added
Work with developers and business and property owners to incentivize pedestrian friendly design along the corridors.	Low	Long-Term	Village; Private Sector	Partnerships and Collaboration	Number of new pedestrian-friendly developments
Coordinate actively with state and regional transportation agencies to advocate for the installation of sidewalks, crosswalks, and bike lanes along Rollins Road and Route 12.	Medium	Ongoing	IDOT; Lake County; McHenry County	Capital Improvements	Miles of sidewalk added; bike lane mileage
Prioritize improvements that create connections between major corridors and neighborhoods, parks, and amenities.	Medium	Mid-Term	Village	Targeted Planning	Number of corridors with improved connectivity
Partner with property owners to activate vacant lots or storefronts.	High	Ongoing	Local Businesses; Chain O'Lakes Chamber	Partnerships and Collaboration	Number of lots/storefronts activated

	Priority	Time Frame	Partners	Type	Metrics for Success
<b>Strategy 3.1.3: Integrate placemaking into the Village's everyday spaces.</b>					
Identify key areas for placemaking opportunities (vacant lots, underused parks, etc.).	High	Ongoing	Village	Targeted Planning	Priority list completed; site list published
Establish a placemaking grant program to empower individuals to execute projects.	Low	Short-Term	Village	Policies and Programs	Program launched; grants awarded
Partner with local artists to install murals, sculptures, or art that reflect the Village's culture and history.	High	Short-Term	Village; Local Artists; School Districts	Partnerships and Collaboration	Number of public art pieces completed
Integrate elements that make public spaces usable year-round.	Medium	Long-Term	Village (Parks Department)	Capital Improvements	Continued usage year-round
Activate waterfront spaces with placemaking initiatives.	High	Short-Term	Village (Parks Department); IDNR	Capital Improvements	Waterfront events hosted; usage metrics
Collaborate with Local Businesses, schools, and community groups to co-sponsor placemaking activities.	High	Short-Term	Local Businesses; Chain O'Lakes Chamber	Partnerships and Collaboration	Number of collaborative placemaking projects
<b>Goal 3.2: Reimagine priority areas within Fox Lake to establish a diverse mix of land use that supports the community's housing and economic development needs.</b>					
<b>Strategy 3.2.1: Redevelop key opportunity sites within the Village.</b>					
Increase awareness of development opportunities utilizing marketing materials, the "This is the Life" campaign, and strategic partnerships to promote key opportunity sites to investors, developers, and businesses.	Medium	Short-Term	Village; Development & Real Estate Community	Policies and Programs	Number of inquiries from developers; number of distributed materials
Attract and engage developers for target sites, leveraging concept plans as a visual and strategic tool to communicate the community's vision and potential for redevelopment.	High	Short-Term	Village; Development & Real Estate Community, Brokers	Partnerships and Collaboration	Number of meetings held; number of Interested parties
Leverage financial and regulatory incentives, such as expedited review processes, setback flexibilities, and parking reductions to ensure that new developments align with community priorities.	High	Mid-Term	Village	Policies and Programs	Number of incentives applied; number of Aligned developments
Provide clear guidelines, zoning support, and pre-development assistance to reduce barriers and facilitate the timely and high-quality redevelopment of key sites.	Medium	Mid-Term	Village	Regulations and Standards	Time saved in permitting; number of Projects assisted

	Priority	Time Frame	Partners	Type	Metrics for Success
<b>Strategy 3.2.2: Revitalize downtown, building on the momentum of Lakefront Park.</b>					
Advance implementation of the Downtown Master Plan to bring the community's vision for a vibrant, connected, and welcoming downtown to life.	High	Short-Term	Village; Real Estate Communi- ty	Targeted Planning	Milestones achieved in Plan; project starts
Encourage a diverse mix of residential, retail, office, and entertainment uses to create a vibrant, walkable downtown.	High	Ongoing	Village; Real Estate Communi- ty	Policies and Programs	Number of mixed-use developments
Support adaptive reuse of existing buildings to preserve historic character while attracting new businesses and residents.	Medium	Short-Term	Village; Real Estate Com- munity; Property Owners	Policies and Programs	Number of reuse projects; buildings preserved
Engage with developers and property owners to encourage new development that aligns with the community's long-term goals.	Medium	Ongoing	Village; Real Estate Communi- ty; Local Businesses	Partnerships and Collaboration	Number of engagement meetings; projects initiated
Utilize incentives, zoning flexibility, and public-private partnerships to facilitate investment in underutilized properties.	Medium	Mid-Term	Village; Real Estate Com- munity; Property Owners	Policies and Programs	Number of partnerships; incentives applied
Review and modernize the Downtown Business Zoning District to support new development and a mix of uses.	High	Mid-Term	Village	Regulations and Standards	Updated zoning ordinance adapted
<b>Strategy 3.2.3: Prioritize redevelopment along the primary corridors, notably Route 12 and Grand Avenue.</b>					
Conduct a thorough inventory of underutilized, vacant, or aging properties along Route 12 and Grand Avenue to evaluate their potential for redevelopment.	High	Short-Term	Village; Property Owners	Targeted Planning	Inventory completed; properties identified
Create tailored redevelopment strategies for each corridor, incorporating land use, transportation, urban design, and economic development considerations.	Medium	Mid-Term	Village; IDOT	Targeted Planning	Corridor plans; tailored corridor strategies
Proactively market opportunity sites to developers and businesses that support the Village's long-term objectives.	Medium	Ongoing	Village; Chain O'Lakes Chamber	Public Information and Outreach	Number of sites marketed; Number of inquiries
Utilize Fox Lake's Business Development Districts (BDDs) to offer financial incentives to attract new businesses, enhance infrastructure, and support redevelopment efforts.	High	Mid-Term	Village	Policies and Programs	Number of BDD-funded projects

	Priority	Time Frame	Partners	Type	Metrics for Success
<b>Strategy 3.2.4: Promote thoughtful development alongside public access to the lakefront.</b>					
Offer incentives for projects that incorporate publicly accessible waterfront spaces, including boardwalks, parks, and boat launches.	Medium	Short-Term	Village; Parks Department	Policies and Programs	Number of projects with public access
Encourage businesses that enhance the waterfront experience, such as restaurants, boutique shops, recreational outfitters, and event spaces.	Medium	On-Going	Village; Chain O'Lakes Chamber	Partnerships and Collaboration	New business openings; increased waterfront activity
Ensure public access in every waterfront neighborhood.	High	Mid-Term	Village	Capital Improvements	Number of new access points created
Provide financial support for lakefront projects that incorporate green infrastructure, flood mitigation, native landscaping, and sustainable building practices to protect water quality and natural habitats.	Medium	Mid-Term	Village; Environmental Agencies	Capital Improvements	Number of green infrastructure features installed
Implement zoning and design guidelines that prioritize walkability, scenic views, and seamless waterfront integration.	High	Mid-Term	Village	Regulations and Standards	Guidelines adopted; site plans reviewed
Ensure lakefront-adjacent zoning districts support compatible land uses while protecting water quality and environmental integrity.	Medium	Mid-Term	Village; Environmental Agencies	Regulations and Standards	Updated lakefront zoning; fewer variances requested
Establish a lakefront construction ordinance that protects and preserves the shoreline and water quality.	Low	Long-Term	Village	Regulations and Standards	Ordinance adopted; number of permits issued under new standards
<b>Goal 3.3: Promote responsible growth management practices to support sustainable, orderly, and well-planned development across the Village.</b>					
<b>Strategy 3.3.1: Encourage strategic infill development.</b>					
Conduct a comprehensive inventory of vacant and underutilized properties within neighborhoods and along commercial corridors.	Medium	Short-Term	Village	Targeted Planning	Inventory completed; properties identified
Develop criteria for identifying priority infill sites based on infrastructure availability, connectivity, and compatibility.	High	Short-Term	Village	Policies and Programs	Criteria adopted; priority list published
Partner with developers and community organizations to create pilot projects that demonstrate successful infill development.	High	Mid-Term	Village; Housing Agencies; Community Groups	Partnerships and Collaboration	Number of pilot projects completed
Offer financial or regulatory incentives, such as expedited permitting or density bonuses, to encourage infill development.	Medium	Mid-Term	Village	Policies and Programs	Incentives utilized; new infill projects approved

	Priority	Time Frame	Partners	Type	Metrics for Success
<b>Strategy 3.3.2: Formalize and integrate non-conforming uses to enhance community development.</b>					
Review current zoning ordinances to identify discrepancies between the existing non-conforming uses (such as smaller lots, multiple dwelling units on one property, duplexes) and modern housing needs.	High	Short-Term	Village	Regulations and Standards	Report completed; map of affected areas
Propose zoning amendments that would legalize these existing configurations, aligning them formally with Fox Lake's development and housing strategies.	High	Short-Term	Village	Regulations and Standards	Amendments adopted
Gather feedback to ensure that proposed zoning changes reflect the community's preferences and needs.	Medium	Short-Term	Village; Local Residents	Partnerships and Collaboration	Number of participants; feedback incorporated
Create a public information campaign to educate property owners on zoning changes and opportunities.	Medium	Mid-Term	Village	Public Information and Outreach	Campaign launched; engagement metrics
<b>Strategy 3.3.3: Conduct a comprehensive zoning review and update.</b>					
Review and update zoning codes to ensure alignment with the Future Land Use Plan and growth management goals.	High	Immediate	Village	Regulations and Standards	Zoning code revised and adopted
Incorporate form-based codes, architectural design guidelines, and overlay districts to guide development in key areas such as the downtown and the lakefront.	Medium	Short-Term	Village	Regulations and Standards	Form-based code adopted; overlays implemented
Develop zoning recommendations that promote higher-density residential and mixed-use developments in designated growth areas.	Medium	Short-Term	Village	Targeted Planning	Recommendations published; rezonings initiated
Establish a clear process for periodic zoning code reviews and updates remaining economically competitive and fitting the changing needs of Fox Lake residents.	Medium	Mid-Term	Village	Policies and Programs	Review process adopted; schedule published
<b>Goal 3.4: Catalyze industrial development to boost economic growth.</b>					
<b>Strategy 3.4.1: Secure and upgrade infrastructure to support industrial uses in northern Fox Lake.</b>					
Conduct feasibility studies to evaluate the economic impacts, as well as environmental and social impacts of developing infrastructure in northern Fox Lake.	Medium	Mid-Term	Village	Targeted Planning	Feasibility report completed; Recommendations adopted
Aggressively pursue state and federal grants and consider municipal bonds as a method to finance infrastructure upgrades.	High	Short-Term	Village	Policies and Programs	Grant applications submitted; funding secured
Involve residents and key stakeholders in the infrastructure planning process to align development with community needs and expectations.	Medium	Short-Term	Village; Public Engagement Consultants	Partnerships and Collaboration	Number of participants; Feedback incorporated

	Priority	Time Frame	Partners	Type	Metrics for Success
Develop a phased infrastructure plan addressing the critical need for sewer and water.	High	Mid-Term	Village; Engineering Consultants	Capital Improvements	Plan completed; phase implementation initiated
Incorporate green infrastructure and sustainable practices in the development plans to ensure long-term environmental health.	Medium	Long-Term	Village; Environmental Consultants	Capital Improvements	Percentage of green features included; reduced runoff reports

### Strategy 3.4.2: Understand and support the business needs of industrial areas in Fox Lake.

Conduct a market demand study to analyze industrial trends and interests, identifying key sectors and their needs.	High	Immediate	Village; Economic Development Consultants	Targeted Planning	Study completed; sectors identified
Participate in roundtable discussions and site tours for businesses that have shown interest in northern Fox Lake or other sites, to discuss their specific needs and expectations.	Medium	Short-Term	Village; Local Businesses	Partnerships and Collaboration	Number of meetings; feedback summary created
Leverage industry networking events to promote northern Fox Lake, along with other areas, at industry expos and conferences, potentially attracting a diverse group of potential tenants and investors.	Medium	Ongoing	Village; Regional Partners	Public Information and Outreach	Number of events attended; investor contacts gained
Maintain ongoing communication with interested parties, ensuring they are engaged and informed throughout the development process.	High	Ongoing	Village	Partnerships and Collaboration	Frequency of communication; number of follow-ups

### Strategy 3.4.3: Optimize the master plan for northern Fox Lake based on current market dynamics and stakeholder input.

Review and update the master plan for northern Fox Lake to ensure it meets current industry demands and aligns with the community's goals and aspirations.	High	Short-Term	Village	Targeted Planning	Master plan updated and adopted
Encourage current industry needs based on feedback from potential businesses, as well as clean energy industries, tech industries, and distribution centers, among other uses.	Medium	Mid-Term	Village; Industry Partners	Public Information and Outreach	Number of aligned businesses engaged
Engage stakeholders in the planning process through workshops and public forums.	Medium	Mid-Term	Village; Chain O'Lakes Chamber	Partnerships and Collaboration	Number of workshops held; participant feedback
Work with the property owners in northern Fox Lake to develop a roadmap for implementation and plan phasing.	Medium	Mid-Term	Village; Private Landowners	Partnerships and Collaboration	Roadmap finalized; agreements initiated

	Priority	Time Frame	Partners	Type	Metrics for Success
<b>Strategy 3.4.4: Attract diverse industries by tailoring incentives and enhancing collaboration opportunities.</b>					
Develop sector-specific incentive packages that offer expedited permitting processes and other tailored benefits to attract key industries such as technology, renewable energy, and advanced manufacturing.	High	Short-Term	Village	Policies and Programs	Packages created; number of inquiries received
Implement targeted incentives such as property tax abatements, enterprise zone benefits, or utility rate discounts that are specifically designed to attract and retain businesses in high-growth industries.	High	Mid-Term	Village	Policies and Programs	Number of businesses utilizing incentives
Facilitate educational partnerships, forging connections with regional educational and research institutions, focused on innovation transfer.	Medium	Mid-Term	Village; Local Colleges and Universities; Workforce Boards	Partnerships and Collaboration	Number of active partnerships; training programs created
<b>Goal 3.5: Enhance workforce expansion and employment opportunities in Fox Lake.</b>					
<b>Strategy 3.5.1: Improve transportation access to boost job opportunities.</b>					
Work with Metra to offer discounted or subsidized transit passes for service industry workers to make commuting more affordable.	Medium	Mid-Term	Village; Metra; Pace	Partnerships and Collaboration	Number of discounted passes issued
Introduce flexible shuttle services that align with shift timings in major employment centers, ensuring reliable transportation for workers who have evening or irregular shifts.	Medium	Long-Term	Village; Transportation Providers	Capital Improvements	Shuttle routes established; ridership data
Enhance bike lanes and pedestrian paths from residential areas to major employers to encourage walking and biking, particularly for those without cars.	High	Long-Term	Village; IDOT; Lake County	Capital Improvements	Miles of new paths installed; usage
<b>Strategy 3.5.2: Implement a regional hiring initiative to prioritize employment for Fox Lake and nearby residents.</b>					
Offer financial incentives such as tax breaks or subsidies like reduced permit fees to businesses that meet or exceed regional hiring guidelines.	High	Short-Term	Village	Policies and Programs	Incentives utilized; jobs created
Promote the regional hiring initiative through a marketing campaign that informs businesses and residents about the program, its benefits, and how to participate.	Medium	Mid-Term	Village; Marketing Consultant	Policies and Programs	Campaign reach; business participation
Encourage information sharing between businesses and industries regarding hiring practices, share successes, and discuss challenges with finding employees.	Medium	Ongoing	Village; Chain O'Lakes Chamber	Partnerships and Collaboration	Number of forums held, shared resources developed
Collaborate with Lake County Workforce Development Board to share hiring information and cohost events with the community.	High	Short-Term	Village	Partnerships and Collaboration	Number of events held; Job placements tracked

	Priority	Time Frame	Partners	Type	Metrics for Success
<b>Strategy 3.5.3: Enhance local employment and volunteer engagement through a community skill-share platform.</b>					
Develop a user-friendly platform that allows residents and prospective workers to list their skills and interests, and search for employment and volunteer opportunities.	Low	Mid-Term	Village	Policies and Programs	Platform launched; user registrations
Work with the Chain O' Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce to conduct workshops to demonstrate how to use the platform and assist in setting up profiles.	Medium	Mid-Term	Village; Nonprofits	Partnerships and Collaboration	Number of workshops held; profiles created
Reach out to Local Businesses and non-profit organizations to encourage them to post job and volunteer opportunities on the platform.	Medium	Ongoing	Village; Chain O'Lakes Chamber	Partnerships and Collaboration	Number of postings; engagement metrics
Monitor key performance indicators such as the number of active users, number of job/volunteer matches made, and user satisfaction rates to evaluate the platform's effectiveness.	Low	Long-Term	Village	Policies and Programs	Number of matches; user satisfaction rating
<b>Strategy 3.5.4: Support employer-assisted housing programs.</b>					
Conduct meetings with major employers in the area, including large businesses, hospitals, schools, and retail centers, to discuss the benefits of the housing assistance program.	Medium	Short-Term	Village; Large Em-ployers	Partnerships and Collaboration	Number of employers engaged; pilot interest expressed
Collaborate with the Chain O' Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce to gauge interest and potential commitment from smaller businesses as well.	Medium	Mid-Term	Village; Chain O'Lakes Chamber	Partnerships and Collaboration	Level of participation; survey results
Encourage various housing assistance options that employers can offer to their employees, such as rental subsidies or shared equity investments.	Low	Mid-Term	Village; Developers	Policies and Programs	Types of programs initiated; employee participation
Propose local tax incentives for businesses that participate in the employer-assisted housing program, such as property tax rebates or deductions in corporate taxes.	Medium	Mid-Term	Village	Policies and Programs	Incentive program adopted; businesses enrolled

## Theme 4: Neighborhoods & Housing

	Priority	Time Frame	Partners	Type	Metrics for Success
<b>Goal 4.1: Enhance the quality of homes in Fox Lake.</b>					
<b>Strategy 4.1.1: Support homeowners with critical maintenance, preservation, home repairs, and upgrades.</b>					
Connect homeowners to Illinois Housing Development Authority (IHDA) payment assistance programs and other state or county home ownership programs.	High	Ongoing	Village; IHDA	Partnerships and Collaboration	Grant dollars awarded to homeowners
Establish an income-qualified home improvement and maintenance grant that focuses on emergency repairs, accessibility improvements for seniors, and energy efficiency.	Medium	Mid-term	Village	Policies and Programs	Grant dollars awarded to homeowners
Establish a lending program that supports homeowners undertaking larger rehab projects such as energy retrofits, finishing basements or attics, additions, etc.	Low	Long-term	Village	Policies and Programs	Investment activity
Stimulate redevelopment of existing unrenovated apartments to improve building quality and/or units.	Medium	Long-term	Village	Policies and Programs	Number of units renovated
<b>Strategy 4.1.2: Preserve and enhance existing homes and neighborhoods to attract young families and other first-time homebuyers seeking quality homes aligned with their needs.</b>					
Develop neighborhood plans suited for young families and first-time homebuyer households.	Medium	Long-term	Village	Targeted Planning	Neighborhood plans completed
Conduct a comprehensive needs assessment based on community input, data collection, and historic preservation.	Medium	Long-term	Village	Targeted Planning	Completed comprehensive needs assessment
Strive to improve housing and residential conditions that support housing diversity, home rehabilitation, and infill development.	Medium	Long-term	Village	Policies and Programs	Investment activity
Provide educational workshops on home maintenance, energy efficiency, and navigating local building codes.	Low	Long-term	Village	Policies and Programs	Number of residents engaged
<b>Strategy 4.1.3: Develop architectural guidelines to preserve the unique characters of Fox Lake's various neighborhoods.</b>					
Develop and adopt neighborhood-specific architectural guidelines that define and maintain the character-defining features of the different areas in Fox Lake.	Medium	Long-term	Village	Regulations and Standards	Adopted architectural guidelines
Consider creating an architectural review board or committee that works with homeowners and developers to ensure renovations and new developments are in harmony with the neighborhood's character.	Low	Long-term	Village	Regulations and Standards	N/A
Encourage new construction that complements the existing architectural style and scale of the neighborhood, ensuring that it enhances rather than detracts from the established character.	Low	Ongoing	Village	Regulations and Standards	Building permit activity

	Priority	Time Frame	Partners	Type	Metrics for Success
Offer workshops and resources to educate property owners on the architectural significance of their homes and the benefits of preserving these features.	Low	Mid-term	Village	Policies and Programs	Number of residents engaged
<b>Goal 4.2: Expand the variety of Fox Lake's housing options.</b>					
<b>Strategy 4.2.1: Support the development of a variety of housing types responsive to community priorities and demographic changes.</b>					
Conduct outreach to developers of specialty housing product types to increase awareness of Village development sites.	Low	Short-term	Village	Partnerships and Collaboration	Number of developers engaged
Conduct a review of the existing zoning code to ensure the code allows for specific housing typologies including age-targeted housing and small-lot single family homes.	Medium	Long-term	Village	Regulations and Standards	Building permit activity
Ensure that zoning regulations allow for multifamily housing development in target areas.	High	Mid-term	Village	Regulations and Standards	Zoning code revisions
Eliminate minimum lot sizes and reduce set-back and minimum parking requirements.	Medium	Long-term	Village	Regulations and Standards	Zoning code revisions
Identify areas where additional housing units may be appropriate through rezoning; targeting areas along arterial streets, at major intersections, or near amenities for multifamily residential uses including townhomes, apartments, or condominiums.	High	Short-term	Village	Targeted Planning	N/A
Host public meetings to gain community input on suitable areas for development and specific housing needs.	Medium	Short-term	Village	Targeted Planning	Number of residents engaged
Explore strategies to expand necessary infrastructure to northern Fox Lake near Route 173 and Wilmont Road for new housing development	Medium	Long-term	Village	Targeted Planning	N/A
<b>Strategy 4.2.2: Leverage development incentives to build housing that aligns with community priorities, including transformative, mixed-use projects in central locations.</b>					
Utilize Village-owned land for housing development, prioritizing development that may need public assistance to be market feasible.	Medium	Mid-term	Village	Policies and Programs	Building permit activity
Consider reducing or waiving Village fees for housing projects that align with community priorities.	Low	Short-term	Village	Regulations and Standards	Building permit activity
Explore ways to streamline and expedite the permitting process.	Medium	Mid-term	Village	Regulations and Standards	Time to permit approval
Utilize incentives, such as tax increment financing (TIF), to support projects that would not occur but for public assistance.	High	Ongoing	Village	Policies and Programs	Building permit activity

	Priority	Time Frame	Partners	Type	Metrics for Success
Consider modifying parking requirements for projects near Metra stations based on market need.	Medium	Short-term	Village	Regulations and Standards	Building permit activity
<b>Strategy 4.2.3: Publicly commit to Village housing goals, share progress with the public, and re-evaluate goals based on changes in current conditions.</b>					
Adopt a formal framework identifying Village affordable housing goals, strategies and policies.	Medium	Short-term	Village	Policies and Programs	Established Village housing goals
Evaluate the condition and affordability of housing stock on a regular basis to ensure the housing stock meets local needs.	Low	Ongoing	Village	Targeted Planning	N/A
<b>Strategy 4.2.4: Engage with developers to partner on housing development typologies that are more attainable in Fox Lake.</b>					
Conduct developer outreach to identify potential development partners.	Low	Ongoing	Village	Partnerships and Collaboration	Number of developers engaged
Continue to update the Village webpage with developable sites to increase awareness of potential locations for specific housing types.	Medium	Ongoing	Village	Partnerships and Collaboration	N/A
Issue RFPs for developers for housing development types that align with Village-goals, such as mixed-use housing, and housing attainable to first-time homebuyers on Village-owned land or opportunity sites.	High	Short-term	Village	Partnerships and Collaboration	Number of public-private partnerships executed
<b>Goal 4.3: Manage the impact of seasonal short-term rentals on the community.</b>					
<b>Strategy 4.3.1: Monitor the impacts of short-term rentals and protect residential neighborhoods from unwanted impacts of tourism.</b>					
Regularly assess the number and location of short-term rental permits.	Medium	Short-term	Village	Regulations and Standards	Short-term rental permit database created
Monitor the performance of existing short-term rentals.	Medium	Ongoing	Village	Regulations and Standards	N/A
Enforce existing regulations of short-term rentals to manage their impact on the community.	High	Ongoing	Village	Regulations and Standards	Number of complaints related to short-term rentals
Consider creating a zoning overlay to allow for short-term rentals in specific residential zones.	Low	Mid-term	Village	Regulations and Standards	Zoning code revisions

## Theme 5: Parks & Recreation

	Priority	Time Frame	Partners	Type	Metrics for Success
<b>Goal 5.1: Expand and enhance parkland to meet community needs.</b>					
<b>Strategy 5.1.1: Increase park acreage and address gaps in service areas.</b>					
Conduct a detailed land-use and feasibility study to identify parcels suitable for park development in underserved areas.	High	Short-term	Village; Parks & Rec Dept; Planning Consultant	Targeted Planning	Study completed; priority parcels identified
Work with developers and negotiate land dedication requirements for new residential developments to include public park spaces.	Medium	Mid-term	Village; Developers	Policies and Programs	Number of new developments with dedicated parkland
Seek partnerships with organizations like land trusts or conservation groups to assist with land acquisition funding or donations.	Medium	Short-term	Parks & Rec Dept; Conservation Organizations	Partnerships and Collaboration	Number of parcels acquired or conserved
Leverage grants, such as the Illinois Open Space Land Acquisition and Development (OSLAD) grant, to secure funding for parkland expansion.	High	Short-term	Parks & Rec Dept; IDNR; Grant Consultants	Policies and Programs	Grant funding awarded
Create an incentives program to encourage private land donations for public parks.	Low	Long-Term	Parks & Rec Dept; Legal Counsel	Policies and Programs	Program created and promoted
<b>Strategy 5.1.2: Improve connectivity between parks and surrounding neighborhoods.</b>					
Develop a comprehensive pedestrian and bike plan to connect residential areas to parks, prioritizing underserved neighborhoods.	High	Short-term	Village; Parks & Rec Dept; Consultant	Targeted Planning	Plan adopted; trail gaps identified
Install pedestrian bridges or crossings in areas where natural or man-made barriers block access.	Low	Long-Term	IDOT; Public Works Dept	Capital Improvements	Number of new crossings constructed
Add lighting, signage, and safety features along trails and sidewalks leading to parks to encourage use.	Medium	Short-term	Parks & Rec Dept; Public Works	Capital Improvements	Safety features added; user satisfaction surveys
Partner with IDOT and Metra to explore creative solutions for safe crossings over major barriers like Route 12 and the train line.	High	Long-Term	IDOT; Metra; Village Engineer	Partnerships and Collaboration	MOU or design concept completed
Establish a monitoring program to measure usage of new infrastructure and make adjustments based on resident feedback.	Low	Long-Term	Village; Parks & Rec Dept; Consultant	Public Information and Outreach	System in place and baseline metrics gathered

	Priority	Time Frame	Partners	Type	Metrics for Success
Extend the Chain O'Lakes Bike Path to Lakefront Park and create new connections linking community assets and neighborhoods to the trail.	High	Mid-term	Parks & Rec Dept; IDOT; Consultant	Capital Improvements	Path extension completed and connected assets
<b>Strategy 5.1.3: Design and implement a lakefront boardwalk to enhance public access to the water.</b>					
Evaluate the potential for easements along the Chain O'Lakes, particularly at the southern end, to expand public access points and enhance shoreline activation.	High	Short-term	Village; Property Owners; Parks & Rec Dept	Policies and Programs	Number of easement agreements identified
Engage private landowners and state agencies to explore shared-use agreements that facilitate expanded public access.	Medium	Mid-term	IDNR; Property Owners	Partnerships and Collaboration	Number of agreements established
Develop a dedicated funding mechanism to support the planning, construction, and maintenance of the boardwalk.	High	Mid-term	Village; Parks & Rec Dept	Financial Planning	Funding secured and mechanism in place
Initiate discussions with property owners to explore opportunities for lakefront improvements and strategic interventions.	Medium	Short-term	Village	Public Information and Outreach	Meetings held and opportunities documented
<b>Strategy 5.1.4: Develop village-wide proximity standards for specialized amenities, services, and conservation areas to better promote equity across Fox Lake.</b>					
Quantify village-wide demand per planning area and cross reference with the amenities level of service analysis.	High	Short-term	Village; Parks & Rec Dept	Policies and Programs	Report published with service gap maps
Identify appropriate minimum number of amenity thresholds per amenity type.	Medium	Short-term	Parks & Rec Dept	Targeted Planning	Benchmarks established for each amenity
Explore evolving trends and themes, such as climate change, healthy equity, and virtual programming, to identify specialized amenities annually.	Low	Ongoing	Parks & Rec Dept; Consultant	Policies and Programs	Trends report developed each year
Close amenity gaps in high-need communities and areas with underserved populations.	Medium	Long-Term	Parks & Rec Dept; Community Organizations	Capital Improvements	Number of gaps closed annually
<b>Goal 5.2: Diversify and enrich recreational programming and facilities.</b>					
<b>Strategy 5.2.1: Expand year-round recreational offerings and cultural programming for a seasonal and full-time community.</b>					
Conduct community surveys and focus groups to identify program interests for different demographic groups, including families, youth, and seniors.	High	Short-term	Village	Public Information and Outreach	Number of survey/focus group participants; range of interests identified

	Priority	Time Frame	Partners	Type	Metrics for Success
Create seasonal activities such as winter festivals, cross-country skiing programs, ice fishing, resorts, summer camps, and fall nature walks.	High	Mid-Term	Village; Local Non-prof-its; Re-gional Park Partners	Programs and Policies	Number of seasonal programs implemented annually
Leverage the lakefront and parks for outdoor movie nights, live music series, food truck festivals, and interactive workshops that create a dynamic community atmosphere.	Medium	Ongoing	Village; Food Ven-dors; Event Planners	Programs and Policies	Number of events per year; event attendance
Partner with Local Businesses and organizations to co-sponsor events, offering a mix of recreational, cultural, and wellness-focused activities.	Medium	Ongoing	Village; Local Businesses; Non-prof-its	Partnerships and Collaboration	Number of co-sponsored events; business participation
Establish mobile or pop-up recreation programs to bring activities to neighborhoods underserved by fixed facilities.	Medium	Short-Term	Village	Capital Improvements	Number of pop-up programs; geographic reach
Work with a third-party vendor to develop, market, and deploy scavenger hunts and other web and virtually hosted events.	Medium	Mid-Term	Village; Tech Ven-dors	Partnerships and Collaboration	Number of digital/virtual events; participation levels
Develop a Fox Lake Passport Trail to encourage exploration and engagement with local attractions, amenities, and businesses.	Low	Long-Term	Village; Chain O'Lakes Chamber	Policies and Programs	Number of trail completions; local business engagement
Launch a "Fox Lake in Motion" initiative, incorporating walking tours, bicycle parades, and fitness challenges to encourage residents to explore different parts of the Village.	Medium	Short-Term	Village; Parks & Rec Dept; School Districts	Programs and Policies	Resident participation; health and activity tracking

**Strategy 5.2.2: Maximize the flexibility of Lakefront Park to encourage the use of the space as a community hub and a facility for pilot recreation offerings.**

Reach out to local organizations, such as local churches, the School Districts, non-profits, and community groups, to collaborate on events and activities that can be hosted at Lakefront Park.	High	Short-Term	Village; School Districts; Faith-Based Orgs; Non-prof-its; Com-munity Groups	Partnerships and Collaboration	Number of partner MOUs; number of co-hosted events; partner diversity
Create a more welcoming atmosphere that builds flexibility and comfort for users, including a community bulletin board and display of artwork created by residents.	Medium	Short-Term	Village; Local Art-ists; School Districts	Capital Improvements	Boards installed; artworks displayed per quarter; visitor satisfaction

	Priority	Time Frame	Partners	Type	Metrics for Success
<i>In collaboration with local health organizations and providers, provide wellness amenities and services, such as counseling services that can make the Park more valuable to residents.</i>	Medium	Mid-Term	Village; Local Health Providers; Hospitals/ Clinics	Partnerships and Collaboration	<i>Number of wellness activations; participant counts; repeat participation</i>
<i>Host additional regular low-key events such as potluck dinners, game nights, and other activities that bring residents together and foster a sense of community and ownership of the space.</i>	High	Ongoing	Village; Neighborhood/HOA Groups; Non-profits	Policies and Programs	<i>Events per quarter; average attendance; return-visitor rate</i>
<i>Host wellness and outdoor recreation events, such as guided nature walks, group kayaking days, and community-wide yoga sessions at the lakefront.</i>	High	Short-term	Village; Outfitters/ Instructors	Policies and Programs	<i>Events delivered; total participants; instructor/vendor retention</i>
<b>Strategy 5.2.3: Continue to build a knowledgebase of emerging trends and innovative park and recreation amenities to encourage active lifestyles and respond to growing community needs.</b>					
<i>Actively research, test, and implement new park facilities and programs to respond to emerging trends.</i>	Medium	Ongoing	Village; Peer Park Agencies; Vendors	Targeted Planning	<i>Number of pilots tested; pilots adopted; participation growth</i>
<i>Review opportunities to expand low- or no-cost programming in areas that may be lacking based on local community need, interest, grant opportunities, and funding availability.</i>	Medium	Short-Term	Village; Non-profits; Grant-makers	Policies and Programs	<i>% of offerings low/no cost; attendance increases; budget leveraged</i>
<i>Explore an urban agriculture program that provides resources and support to residents interested in gardening, emphasizing the importance of local food systems and community gardening.</i>	Low	Long-Term	Village; School Districts; University Extension; Non-profits	Policies and Programs	<i>Gardens established; plots subscribed; volunteer hours</i>
<i>Explore technology integration, providing virtual programming opportunities, including online fitness classes, arts and crafts, and other activities.</i>	Medium	Short-Term	Village; Library; IT Partners	Policies and Programs	<i>Virtual sessions offered; registrations; completion/ engagement rates</i>
<i>Continue to explore pop-up programming, such as playstreets, green alleys, pop-up gardens, and temporary art installations, among other forms of tactical urbanism strategies that activate underutilized spaces.</i>	Medium	Short-Term	Village; Local Artists; School Districts; Businesses	Policies and Programs	<i>Number of pop-ups; neighborhoods reached; attendee feedback</i>
<i>Explore pilot programming to further activate the Chain O'Lakes, including floating movie night, nighttime paddle tour, yoga on the water, paddleboat racing, and more.</i>	High	Mid-Term	Village; IDNR/ Waterway Authorities; Outfitters; Marinas	Partnerships and Collaboration	<i>Pilot events executed; safety record; attendance; sponsor interest</i>

	Priority	Time Frame	Partners	Type	Metrics for Success
<b>Strategy 5.2.4: Offer thoughtful and unique programming opportunities that appeal to the demographic makeup of Fox Lake and provide opportunities for socialization and engagement.</b>					
Work with the School Districts to monitor demographic changes.	High	Ongoing	Village; School Districts	Targeted Planning	Biannual demographic briefings; program adjustments made
Enhance accessibility and inclusivity in recreational programming by offering adaptive outdoor activities, multilingual event promotion, and diverse cultural celebrations.	Medium	Short-Term	Village; Disability Advocates; Cultural Orgs	Policies and Programs	Number of adaptive programs; languages used; participation by target groups
Explore storytelling and oral history projects as a means to preserve Fox Lake's heritage through administered programs.	Medium	Short-Term	Village; Library; Historical Societies	Policies and Programs	Stories recorded; events held; archive views/downloads
Encourage community service programs, such as planting a community garden, cleaning up a park, and other activities tailored to bring people together towards a common goal.	Medium	Long-Term	Village; Non-prof-its; Service Clubs; School Districts	Policies and Programs	Volunteer hours; projects completed; participant retention
Encourage multi-generational programming, including cross-generational mentorship programs, where older and younger generations share knowledge.	Medium	Long-Term	Village; Senior Groups; School Districts; Veterans Groups	Policies and Programs	Mentorship matches; session attendance; satisfaction ratings
<b>Goal 5.3: Protect and activate natural resources in and around Fox Lake.</b>					
<b>Strategy 5.3.1: Preserve and enhance Fox Lake's unique natural assets, promoting a culture of conservation, in collaboration with other recreational agencies.</b>					
Collaborate with environmental organizations to restore and protect critical habitats, including shoreline areas and native plantings.	High	Ongoing	Village; En-vironmental Orgs; IDNR; Forest Preserve District	Capital Improvements; Policies and Programs	Acres restored; Number of restoration projects completed
Develop a natural resource management plan to monitor water quality, invasive species, and ecosystem health.	High	Short-Term	Village; En-vironmental Consultants	Policies and Programs	Plan completion; Number of monitoring activities conducted
Assist in creating low-impact trails in sensitive areas to allow for recreation while minimizing environmental disruption.	Medium	Mid-Term	Village; Parks & Rec Dept; Trail Groups; IDNR	Capital Improvements	Miles of trail created; environmental impact assessments completed

	Priority	Time Frame	Partners	Type	Metrics for Success
Promote educational programs that teach residents and visitors about conservation efforts and how they can contribute.	Low	Ongoing	Village; School Districts; Environmental Orgs	Policies and Programs	Number of programs; attendance figures; survey results
Manage invasive species along the waterfront edge, including Phragmites, Cattails, Buckthorn, Teasel, and Reed Canary.	Medium	Ongoing	Village; Environmental Contractors; Volunteer Groups	Policies and Programs	Number of invasive species removed; % reduction in targeted species
<b>Strategy 5.3.2: Enhance parks and open space signage and wayfinding to guide residents and visitors to Fox Lake's natural resources while providing educational information about the area's ecological and recreational assets.</b>					
Assess current signage to identify areas where additional or clearer signs are needed.	High	Short-Term	Village; Parks & Rec Dept	Policies and Programs	Assessment report completion
Design and install informative, visually appealing signs that guide visitors to and through natural areas and to identify important landmarks.	Medium	Mid-Term	Village; Graphic Designers; Fabricators	Capital Improvements	Number of signs installed; visitor navigation feedback
Ensure that all new signage meets accessibility standards to accommodate all visitors.	Medium	Ongoing	Village; Accessibility Advocates	Policies and Programs	% of signage ADA compliant
Update digital maps and GPS data to include new or updated signage for easier navigation by visitors.	Medium	Short-Term	Village; GIS Specialists	Policies and Programs	Digital map updates completed; online map usage statistics
<b>Strategy 5.3.3: Develop local rest stops or viewing areas to promote Fox Lake's natural beauty and sense of identity.</b>					
Identify strategic locations for rest stops or viewing areas that offer natural beauty and are convenient for travelers.	High	Short-Term	Village; IDOT; County	Targeted Planning	Number of sites identified
Design these facilities to include amenities like parking, picnic areas, restrooms, and informational kiosks about the regional natural resources.	Low	Mid-Term	Village; Architects; Contractors	Capital Improvements	Design completion; amenities included
Incorporate local art and craftsmanship into the design of the rest stops to reflect the community's culture and support Local Businesses.	Medium	Mid-Term	Village; Local Artists	Policies and Programs	Number of art pieces installed; local artist participation
Ensure that these new developments are environmentally sensitive, using sustainable materials and designs.	High	Ongoing	Village; Environmental Consultants	Policies and Programs	% sustainable materials used
Engage the community in the planning process to gather input and build local support for the developments.	Medium	Short-Term	Village; Residents	Public Information and Outreach	Number of engagement sessions; participation levels

	Priority	Time Frame	Partners	Type	Metrics for Success
<b>Strategy 5.3.4: Map and promote public lake access points.</b>					
Create a user-friendly digital map highlighting all formal and informal public access points to Fox Lake, including easements between residential parcels, shoreline paths, and existing launch areas.	High	Short-Term	Village; GIS Specialists	Policies and Programs	Map completion; online visits
Incorporate QR codes at key access points that link to themed self-guided journeys (e.g., “Sunset Walks,” “Fishing Spots,” “History Along the Lake”), potentially using mobile-friendly platforms.	Low	Mid-Term	Village; Tourism Orgs	Policies and Programs	Number of QR codes installed; scans tracked
Design interpretive signs with local lore, photos of historic lakefront recreation, and facts about native wildlife to enrich the visitor experience.	Medium	Mid-Term	Village; Historical Societies	Capital Improvements	Number of signs installed; visitor feedback
Launch a “Find Your Way to the Water” campaign to increase awareness of lesser-known access points, especially for residents living away from the lakefront.	High	Short-Term	Village; Marketing Firms	Policies and Programs	Campaign reach; engagement rates
Partner with the local high school, park district, or artist groups to create custom markers or pavement stencils that guide pedestrians and cyclists to the lake.	Low	Long-Term	Village; School Districts; Artists	Policies and Programs	Number of markers installed; community involvement
Identify underutilized or overlooked public parcels near the shoreline and assess opportunities for low-cost enhancements (e.g., benches, native landscaping, or bike racks) that make access points more welcoming.	Medium	Mid-Term	Village; Parks & Rec Dept	Targeted Planning	Number of parcels enhanced
Incorporate lake access information into broader Village wayfinding and tourism materials, ensuring alignment with downtown, trail, and park signage systems.	Medium	Short-Term	Village; Tourism Orgs	Policies and Programs	Updated wayfinding materials completed
Promote seasonal lake access tips via the Village website and social media—such as winter ice fishing locations or safe summer swim spots—to help residents engage with the lake year-round.	Medium	Ongoing	Village; Marketing Firms	Policies and Programs	Number of posts; engagement metrics
<b>Strategy 5.3.5: Collaborate with Chain O’Lakes Chamber State Park for joint programming.</b>					
Coordinate with IDNR staff to co-host events that start in Fox Lake and culminate in the State Park, such as guided paddle trips, wildlife photography hikes, or “history on the water” tours.	High	Short-Term	Village; IDNR	Policies and Programs	Number of joint events; attendance
Organize an annual “Fox Lake to the Forest” weekend event featuring live music at Lakefront Park, followed by camping, night hikes, or stargazing at the park’s group campground.	Low	Long-Term	Village; IDNR; Local Musicians	Policies and Programs	Event attendance; participant satisfaction

	Priority	Time Frame	Partners	Type	Metrics for Success
Develop co-branded trailhead kiosks at key entry points (such as boat launches or trail connections) featuring maps, safety tips, ecological facts, and cross-promoted events.	Low	Long-Term	Village; IDNR	Capital Improvements	Number of kiosks installed
Host pop-up Village engagement booths at State Park events (like canoe or fishing derbies) to connect with regional visitors and promote Village amenities.	Medium	Short-Term	Village; IDNR	Policies and Programs	Number of booths; engagement interactions
Work with IDNR and local schools to create a field trip series called “Learn Outside,” where students begin in Village parks and end with hands-on ecology lessons in the State Park.	Medium	Mid-Term	Village; IDNR; School Districts	Policies and Programs	Number of field trips; student participation
Collaborate with State Park naturalists to offer seasonal workshops in Village-owned spaces (like the library or community center) as pre-programming for on-site events.	Medium	Ongoing	Village; IDNR	Policies and Programs	Number of workshops held; attendance
Provide logistical support (e.g., shuttle service, bike valet, or kayak rentals) during large State Park events to reduce parking pressure and connect visitors to Fox Lake businesses.	Low	Mid-Term	Village; IDNR	Policies and Programs	Number of events supported; services provided
Feature a “State Park Spotlight” in Village newsletters and digital media highlighting upcoming events, trail conditions, and seasonal recreation tips.	Medium	Ongoing	Village; IDNR	Public Information and Outreach	Number of spotlights published; readership
Pursue a formal partnership or MOU with IDNR outlining shared goals for tourism, conservation education, and coordinated programming to solidify long-term collaboration.	High	Short-Term	Village; IDNR	Policies and Programs	MOU signed; shared goals established
<b>Goal 5.4: Strengthen recreational tourism and economic development.</b>					
<b>Strategy 5.4.1: Gather detailed visitor demographics through surveys, partnerships, and digital tracking to tailor Fox Lake’s marketing and service offerings.</b>					
Conduct surveys during events to collect data on visitor demographics, preferences, and satisfaction.	High	Short-Term	Village; Park & Rec Dept; Chain O’Lakes Chamber	Targeted Planning	Number of surveys completed; demographic report produced; changes to marketing strategy implemented
Partner with mobile apps and social media platforms to analyze geolocation data, understanding where visitors are coming from and their movement patterns within Fox Lake.	Low	Long-Term	Village; Tourism Tech Ven- dors	Targeted Planning	Geolocation data reports; visitor origin mapping; program/service adjustments
Encourage Local Businesses to collect ZIP codes and other relevant visitor information during transactions to help map visitor origins and spending habits.	Low	Ongoing	Village; Chain O’Lakes Chamber; Local Busi- nesses	Targeted Planning	Number of businesses participating; visitor origin data compiled; updated visitor profiles

	Priority	Time Frame	Partners	Type	Metrics for Success
<b>Strategy 5.4.2: Enhance and promote eco-tourism packages to leverage Fox Lake’s natural assets and boost local economic growth.</b>					
Collaborate with local lodgings, restaurants, and shops to create eco-tourism packages that offer discounts or special perks, making them attractive to all visitors interested in experiencing the natural and cultural offerings of Fox Lake.	High	Short-Term	Village; Chain O’Lakes Chamber; Local Businesses	Policies and Programs	Number of packages created; participating businesses; bookings generated
Develop themed itineraries that combine outdoor activities with local dining, such as a “Trails to Ales” tour that includes a morning hike followed by libations at a local eatery or tavern.	Medium	Short-Term	Village; Park & Rec Dept; Local Businesses	Policies and Programs	Number of itineraries produced; distribution reach; bookings from itineraries
Utilize the Village’s website, social media, and local tourism offices to actively promote these packages.	High	Ongoing	Village; Chain O’Lakes Chamber	Public Information and Outreach	Website traffic; social media engagement; package sales
Create attractive package deals for different seasons, such as Winter Wonderland or Spring Bloom to attract visitors year-round.	Medium	Mid-Term	Village; Park & Rec Dept; Local Businesses	Policies and Programs	Number of seasonal packages; visitor counts in off-peak seasons
Coordinate with travel influencers and bloggers to feature these packages, enhancing broader outreach.	Low	Mid-Term	Village; Chain O’Lakes Chamber; Media Partners	Public Information and Outreach	Number of influencer posts; reach/impressions; package sales
Expand eco-tourism initiatives such as guided nature tours, birdwatching excursions, and conservation-focused outdoor education to attract environmentally conscious visitors.	Medium	Mid-Term	Village; Park & Rec Dept; Environmental Orgs	Policies and Programs	Number of tours; participant satisfaction; repeat visitation
<b>Strategy 5.4.3: Feature local natural landmarks, in and around Fox Lake, in marketing materials.</b>					
Update promotional materials to include high-quality images and descriptions of local natural landmarks.	High	Short-Term	Village; Park & Rec Dept; Chain O’Lakes Chamber	Policies and Programs	Number of updated materials; distribution reach; feedback from visitors
Develop interactive content such as maps and virtual tours that feature natural areas.	Medium	Mid-Term	Village; Park & Rec Dept; Tech Vendors	Policies and Programs	Number of interactive tools created; usage stats
Engage with regional travel bloggers, magazines, and newspapers to increase coverage and interest.	Low	Mid-Term	Village; Chain O’Lakes Chamber; Media Outlets	Public Information and Outreach	Number of published features; estimated audience reached

	Priority	Time Frame	Partners	Type	Metrics for Success
Use social media platforms to regularly post about local landmarks and conservation efforts, engaging the community and potential visitors.	Medium	Ongoing	Village; Park & Rec Dept	Policies and Programs	Number of posts; engagement metrics; increase in site visits
Add “Nature on Display” pop-up exhibits to downtown storefronts during shoulder seasons, showcasing local flora and fauna, trail maps, and recreation guides.	Medium	Long-Term	Village; Park & Rec Dept; Local Businesses	Policies and Programs	Number of exhibits; visitor counts; feedback from attendees
<b>Goal 5.5: Enhance the capacity, sustainability, and accessibility of Fox Lake’s parks and recreation system.</b>					
<b>Strategy 5.5.1: Develop a sustainable funding model for parks and recreation.</b>					
Investigate a variety of funding sources including grants, sponsorships, and partnerships to supplement traditional funding.	High	Short-Term	Village; Park & Rec Dept; Chain O’Lakes Chamber	Targeted Planning	Number of funding sources identified; total funds secured
Strategically implement and adjust user fees for programs and facilities to ensure accessibility while supporting maintenance and operations.	Medium	Mid-Term	Village; Park & Rec Dept	Policies and Programs	Fee structure adopted; revenue generated; participation levels maintained
Establish a Parks Foundation to solicit donations, manage endowments, and fund significant park improvements and expansions.	High	Mid-Term	Village; Park & Rec Dept; Community Volunteers	Policies and Programs	Foundation established; Number of donors; annual contributions
<b>Strategy 5.5.2: Adopt best practices in park maintenance and operations.</b>					
Implement asset management systems to efficiently track maintenance needs, schedule repairs, and manage park resources.	High	Short-Term	Village; Park & Rec Dept	Policies and Programs	System implemented; Number of assets tracked; reduced emergency repairs
Provide ongoing training for maintenance personnel on sustainable practices and the latest park maintenance technologies.	Medium	Ongoing	Village; Park & Rec Dept	Policies and Programs	Number of trainings held; staff participation; improved maintenance ratings
Establish routine preventative maintenance schedules to extend the lifespan of facilities and reduce long-term costs.	High	Short-Term	Village; Park & Rec Dept	Policies and Programs	Maintenance schedules adopted; decrease in unplanned repairs
Develop and maintain high standards for park cleanliness and safety to ensure a welcoming environment for all users.	Medium	Ongoing	Village; Park & Rec Dept	Policies and Programs	Inspection scores; resident satisfaction ratings
<b>Strategy 5.5.3: Foster continuous improvement and capacity building in park management.</b>					
Increase the cultural competencies and diversity of park staff to better reflect and serve the community.	Low	Mid-Term	Village; Park & Rec Dept	Policies and Programs	Diversity metrics; staff cultural competency training completions
Engage residents in leading community programs, enhancing local involvement and ownership.	Medium	Ongoing	Village; Park & Rec Dept	Policies and Programs	Number of resident-led programs; participant counts

	Priority	Time Frame	Partners	Type	Metrics for Success
Implement succession planning for critical staff positions to maintain continuity and service quality.	High	Short-Term	Village; Park & Rec Dept	Policies and Programs	Succession plans completed; leadership continuity maintained
Regularly convene park department leadership to evaluate operational effectiveness and adapt strategies as needed.	Medium	Ongoing	Village; Park & Rec Dept	Targeted Planning	Number of leadership meetings; documented operational changes

#### Strategy 5.5.4: Modernize parks and recreation operations through technology and system improvements.

Implement an online registration platform that allows residents to easily sign up for programs, reserve facilities, and make payments through mobile or desktop devices.	Medium	Short-Term	Village; Park & Rec Dept	Policies and Programs	Platform launched; Number of online transactions
Integrate program registration with attendance tracking, volunteer coordination, and communication tools to streamline event management and reduce manual processes.	Medium	Mid-Term	Village; Park & Rec Dept	Policies and Programs	System integration completed; staff time saved
Use digital dashboards and reporting tools to monitor program participation, facility usage, and community interest—helping staff adapt offerings based on real-time and recent data.	Medium	Ongoing	Village; Park & Rec Dept	Targeted Planning	Dashboard operational; data-informed program changes made
When fully established, consider adding a resident portal with customized user profiles, allowing families to view their activity history, upcoming registrations, and receive personalized program recommendations.	Low	Long-Term	Village; Park & Rec Dept	Policies and Programs	Portal launched; resident usage rates
Provide staff training on new digital systems to ensure efficient use and maintain high-quality customer service during the transition.	High	Short-Term	Village; Park & Rec Dept	Policies and Programs	Number of staff trained; improved service efficiency
Explore adding text and email reminders for registered participants to reduce no-shows and boost attendance at events and programs.	Medium	Short-Term	Village; Park & Rec Dept	Policies and Programs	Number of reminders sent; attendance rate improvement

#### Strategy 5.5.5: Elevate community engagement and enrich feedback collection methods.

Implement interactive tools such as virtual town halls, real-time feedback webpages, and dedicated social media channels that facilitate direct dialogue and engagement with community members.	High	Short-Term	Village; Park & Rec Dept	Policies and Programs	Number of participants; feedback volume
Develop an online and mobile-friendly guide that not only lists park amenities, programs, and events but also includes video tours, user-generated content, and augmented reality experiences that bring the parks to life digitally.	Medium	Mid-Term	Village; Park & Rec Dept	Policies and Programs	Guide launched; usage analytics
Appoint enthusiastic residents as park ambassadors who can gather feedback, spearhead community events, and serve as the face of Fox Lake's parks and recreation in their neighborhoods.	Low	Long-Term	Village; Park & Rec Dept; Community Volunteers	Policies and Programs	Number of ambassadors; events hosted

	Priority	Time Frame	Partners	Type	Metrics for Success
Implement data analytics to track usage patterns and feedback trends, which can be used to tailor programs and facilities to better meet the specific needs and preferences of different community groups.	Medium	Ongoing	Village; Park & Rec Dept	Targeted Planning	Reports produced; program adjustments made
Schedule annual or biannual consultation sessions that are strategically marketed to ensure diverse community participation, focusing on collecting structured feedback that informs future park developments and policy adjustments.	Medium	Ongoing	Village; Park & Rec Dept	Targeted Planning	Number of sessions; diversity of participants
<b>Strategy 5.5.6: Enhance financial sustainability and develop new revenue streams.</b>					
Pass a percent-for-parks ordinance to secure additional funds dedicated to community open spaces.	<b>High</b>	Short-Term	Village; Park & Rec Dept	Policies and Programs	Ordinance adopted; annual revenue generated
Support the establishment and growth of a comprehensive nonprofit Park Foundation to spearhead fundraising and promotional efforts.	<b>High</b>	Mid-Term	Village; Park & Rec Dept	Policies and Programs	Foundation activity; annual donations
Develop additional event spaces within parks that capitalize on natural views and settings to generate rental revenue.	Low	Mid-Term	Village; Park & Rec Dept	Capital Improvements	Number of spaces created; rental revenue
Implement concession stands in popular parks to improve visitor experience and increase revenue through sales of food, beverages, and merchandise.	Medium	Short-Term	Village; Park & Rec Dept	Capital Improvements	Number of concession stands; sales revenue
Offer rental services for recreational equipment like kayaks, bicycles, and sports gear to enhance visitor enjoyment and generate additional income.	Low	Mid-Term	Village; Park & Rec Dept	Capital Improvements	Rental revenue; Number of rentals
Explore and apply for grants and alternative funding sources to address unmet needs and enhance park services.	Medium	Ongoing	Village; Park & Rec Dept	Targeted Planning	Number of grant applications; funds awarded

## Theme 6: Community Building

	Priority	Time Frame	Partners	Type	Metrics for Success
<b>Goal 6.1: Support Fox Lake's educational institutions to foster a culture of continuous learning.</b>					
<b>Strategy 6.1.1: Collaborate with the School Districts to enhance educational resources.</b>					
Continue to partner with the high school to create internship opportunities with the Village departments, offering hands-on experience.	High	Ongoing	Village; School Districts	Policies and Programs	Number of internships offered; student participation; post-internship feedback
Develop a Mayor for the Day program with the School Districts to give students a chance to experience the responsibilities of the mayor and learn how local government works.	Medium	Short-Term	Village; School Districts	Policies and Programs	Program launched; Number of participants; participant satisfaction
Facilitate mentorship programs and job shadowing initiatives by connecting Local Businesses with students.	Medium	Mid-Term	Village; School Districts; Local Businesses	Targeted Planning	Number of mentorship matches; Number of shadowing sessions
Highlight the School Districts' achievements through Village communication channels, including social media, newsletters, and community events.	High	Ongoing	Village; School Districts	Policies and Programs	Number of features; engagement on posts; community awareness ratings
Collaborate with schools to introduce workforce development programs and career readiness workshops.	Medium	Mid-Term	Village; School Districts; Workforce Agencies	Policies and Programs	Number of workshops; attendance rates; post-workshop survey results
Partner with the School Districts to host joint events that celebrate academic achievements and community involvement.	Medium	Short-Term	Village; School Districts	Policies and Programs	Number of events; attendance; media coverage
Partner with schools and youth organizations to develop teen-led events, such as youth art shows, talent showcases, and leadership-building workshops.	Medium	Mid-Term	Village; School Districts; Youth Organizations	Policies and Programs	Number of teen-led events; youth participation rates
<b>Strategy 6.1.2: Partner with the Library to expand lifelong learning opportunities.</b>					
Increase public awareness of existing library programs through the Village's communication channels.	High	Ongoing	Village; Library	Policies and Programs	Number of promotions; increase in program attendance
Encourage stronger collaborations between the Parks Department and the Library, sharing resources and community open spaces for educational workshops and events.	Medium	Short-Term	Village; Library; Park & Rec Dept	Targeted Planning	Number of joint events; attendance levels
Partner with the library to co-host educational workshops on topics such as technology, financial literacy, and community history.	Medium	Short-Term	Village; Library	Policies and Programs	Number of workshops; attendance; participant feedback
Support efforts to modernize library spaces to accommodate workshops, maker labs, and study areas.	High	Mid-Term	Village; Library	Infrastructure	Renovations completed; usage of new spaces

	Priority	Time Frame	Partners	Type	Metrics for Success
Work with the library to offer technology training sessions, particularly for older adults and residents seeking job skills.	Medium	Short-Term	Village; Library	Policies and Programs	Number of sessions; attendance rates; skill improvements reported
<b>Goal 6.2: Invest in Village services to support the evolving needs of the community.</b>					
<b>Strategy 6.2.1: Renovate and modernize facilities to adapt to the evolving needs of the community.</b>					
Invest in energy efficient and sustainable building practices to reduce operational costs and environmental impacts.	High	Ongoing	Village; Sustainability Consultants	Infrastructure	Number of upgrades; reduction in utility costs
Modernize key Village facilities to meet current and future service demands.	High	Mid-Term	Village; Architects; Contractors	Infrastructure	Renovations completed; user satisfaction ratings
Evaluate facility usage and efficiency by assessing all municipal buildings to identify opportunities for space optimization and future renovations.	Medium	Short-Term	Village	Targeted Planning	Completion of facility assessments; recommendations implemented
Implement placemaking efforts to modernize facilities and create appealing environments that attract and retain high-quality talent.	Medium	Mid-Term	Village; Design Firms	Infrastructure	Number of placemaking upgrades; employee recruitment/retention rates
<b>Strategy 6.2.2: Attract, develop, and retain high-quality staff.</b>					
Invest in staff training programs that focus on professional development, leadership, and technical skills.	High	Ongoing	Village; Training Providers	Policies and Programs	Number of trainings; participant evaluations
Improve recruitment strategies by offering competitive salaries, benefits, and growth opportunities that attract skilled professionals.	High	Short-Term	Village; HR Consultants	Policies and Programs	Applicant volume; fill time for vacancies
Develop wellness initiatives that support staff's overall health and wellbeing.	Medium	Ongoing	Village; Wellness Providers	Policies and Programs	Number of initiatives; staff participation rates
Continue modernizing computer and technology equipment to allow for flexible work arrangements.	Medium	Short-Term	Village; IT Vendors	Infrastructure	Equipment upgrades completed; remote work participation
Implement community engagement efforts to foster strong relationships between staff and residents.	Medium	Ongoing	Village; Community Groups	Policies and Programs	Number of engagement events; resident satisfaction survey scores
Establish employee recognition programs to celebrate achievements and reinforce a positive organizational culture.	Medium	Short-Term	Village	Policies and Programs	Number of recognitions; staff morale survey results
<b>Strategy 6.2.3: Enhance technology and digital services to improve efficiency and accessibility.</b>					
Upgrade digital infrastructure to streamline municipal operations and improve service delivery.	High	Mid-Term	Village; IT Vendors	Infrastructure	System uptime; efficiency gains reported

	Priority	Time Frame	Partners	Type	Metrics for Success
Expand online services, such as permitting, bill payments, and service requests, to enhance accessibility and convenience for residents and businesses.	High	Short-Term	Village; IT Vendors	Policies and Programs	Number of services online; usage rates
Implement data-driven decision-making by adopting software and analytics tools to improve resource allocation and operational efficiency.	Medium	Mid-Term	Village; IT Vendors	Policies and Programs	Number of tools implemented; efficiency metrics improved
Improve cybersecurity measures to protect municipal systems, sensitive data, and resident information.	High	Ongoing	Village; Cyber-security Firms	Capital Improvements	Number of security incidents; compliance with security standards
Explore smart city technologies, such as traffic management systems and IoT-enabled infrastructure, to enhance public services and sustainability.	Medium	Long-Term	Village; Tech Partners	Targeted Planning	Feasibility studies completed; pilot projects launched

### Goal 6.3: Elevate the safety and well-being of Fox Lake residents and visitors.

#### Strategy 6.3.1: Support police services to enhance public health and safety.

Assess current staffing levels and identify areas for expansion or resource improvement to meet growing community needs.	High	Short-Term	Village Police; HR	Targeted Planning	Staffing plan completed; recruitment targets met
Invest in ongoing training programs focused on de-escalation, mental health awareness, and emergency medical response to enhance public safety and service delivery.	High	Ongoing	Village Police; Training Providers	Policies and Programs	Number of trainings; skill improvement scores
Expand community policing efforts to foster trust between residents and law enforcement, focusing on neighborhood engagement and proactive crime prevention.	Medium	Ongoing	Village Police; Community Groups	Policies and Programs	Number of community interactions; crime rate trends
Implement new technologies such as real-time data systems, and advanced communication tools to improve coordination and accountability.	Medium	Mid-Term	Village Police; IT Vendors	Policies and Programs	Technology deployed; operational efficiency gains

#### Strategy 6.3.2: Develop a health and wellness program to promote community well-being.

Work with local community centers or partner with the Parks and Recreation Department to provide fitness and wellness programs for all age groups.	Medium	Short-Term	Village; Park & Rec Dept; Community Centers	Policies and Programs	Number of programs; participation rates
Partner with local health agencies to offer mental health resources, counseling services, and community workshops that reduce stigma and promote emotional well-being.	Medium	Ongoing	Village; Health Agencies	Policies and Programs	Number of sessions offered; participant feedback

	Priority	Time Frame	Partners	Type	Metrics for Success
Launch campaigns to raise awareness about healthy lifestyle choices, preventative care, and available healthcare services, including vaccination programs and fitness challenges.	Medium	Short-Term	Village; Health Agencies	Public Information and Outreach	Number of campaigns; reach and engagement metrics
Offer wellness programs for Village employees, focusing on stress management, physical health, and overall well-being to improve employee morale and productivity.	Medium	Ongoing	Village; Wellness Providers	Policies and Programs	Participation rates; employee satisfaction surveys
<b>Strategy 6.3.3: Continue to support people experiencing homelessness through collaborative and comprehensive solutions.</b>					
Partner with regional and county organizations that specialize in homelessness prevention, offering shelter, food, and support services.	High	Ongoing	Village; County Agencies; Nonprofits	Policies and Programs	Number of individuals served; housing placements
Work with housing developers and nonprofits to create affordable and supportive housing options for individuals transitioning out of homelessness.	Medium	Mid-Term	Village; Developers; Non-profits	Targeted Planning	Number of units developed; occupancy rates
Create outreach programs to connect individuals experiencing homelessness with essential services, including healthcare, employment opportunities, and addiction treatment.	High	Short-Term	Village; Nonprofits; Service Providers	Policies and Programs	Number of people engaged; service uptake rates
Launch awareness campaigns to educate the public about homelessness and its root causes, encouraging community involvement in solutions and reducing stigma.	Medium	Short-Term	Village; Advocacy Groups	Policies and Programs	Number of campaigns; community attitude survey results
<b>Strategy 6.3.4: Partner with regional agencies to foster a safe and welcoming environment for residents and visitors, on and off the water.</b>					
Collaborate with the Fox Waterway Agency to maintain the waterway for recreational use, improve navigability, restore environmental quality, and enhance overall quality of life.	High	Ongoing	Village; Fox Waterway Agency	Policies and Programs	Number of projects completed; water quality metrics
Strengthen partnerships with local, county, and state law enforcement agencies to improve water and land-based safety.	High	Ongoing	Village; County & State Law Enforcement	Policies and Programs	Number of joint operations; safety incidents reduced
Work with environmental organizations and agencies to implement conservation initiatives that protect the long-term health of the lake and its surrounding ecosystems.	Medium	Ongoing	Village; Environmental Orgs	Policies and Programs	Number of initiatives; ecological health indicators
Enhance water safety education and enforcement by partnering with boating organizations and safety groups to provide public outreach, training programs, and resources for responsible recreation on the lake.	Medium	Short-Term	Village; Boating Orgs	Policies and Programs	Number of trainings; boating incidents reduced

	Priority	Time Frame	Partners	Type	Metrics for Success
Coordinate with regional tourism and economic development agencies to promote Fox Lake as a premier recreational destination while ensuring a balance between economic growth and environmental stewardship.	Medium	Ongoing	Village; Regional Tourism Agencies	Targeted Planning	Number of promotions; visitor satisfaction scores
Develop emergency preparedness and response plans in collaboration with regional agencies to address extreme weather events, flooding, and other hazards that may impact the lakefront and surrounding communities.	High	Mid-Term	Village; Regional Agencies	Targeted Planning	Plan completion; response time improvements

#### Goal 6.4: Foster regional collaboration to enhance services and expand community amenities.

##### Strategy 6.4.1: Identify opportunities for shared services with neighboring municipalities and counties.

Continue to support and coordinate the transition to consolidate dispatching services through Lake County's shared service initiative, ensuring a smooth shift in police and emergency response operations during FY26.	High	Short-Term	Village; Lake County	Policies and Programs	Successful transition; service continuity metrics
Collaborate with neighboring communities to develop shared recreational programs, including sports leagues, cultural events, and joint park enhancements.	Medium	Mid-Term	Village; Park & Rec Dept; Neighboring Municipalities	Policies and Programs	Number of shared programs; participation rates
Partner on infrastructure maintenance, road repairs, snow removal, and equipment sharing to optimize resources.	Medium	Ongoing	Village; Neighboring Municipalities	Policies and Programs	Number of joint projects; cost savings achieved
Develop intergovernmental agreements (IGAs) to formalize cooperative efforts and streamline regional service delivery.	High	Short-Term	Village; Neighboring Municipalities	Targeted Planning	Number of agreements executed; service efficiencies gained

##### Strategy 6.4.2: Continue to leverage regional resources to invest in amenities.

Seek joint grant opportunities to fund shared projects, such as parks, trail systems, and community centers.	High	Short-Term	Village; Neighboring Municipalities; Grant Agencies	Targeted Planning	Number of grants secured; total funding received
Work with transportation authorities to improve transit connections, including expanded service routes and enhanced commuter facilities.	Medium	Mid-Term	Village; Transportation Authorities	Targeted Planning	Number of new or expanded routes; ridership data
Collaborate on infrastructure projects that benefit multiple municipalities, such as regional stormwater systems or broadband networks.	Medium	Long-Term	Village; Neighboring Municipalities	Targeted Planning	Number of projects completed; regional impact metrics

	Priority	Time Frame	Partners	Type	Metrics for Success
Establish cooperative agreements for library, senior services, and youth programming to expand access to educational and recreational opportunities across the region.	Medium	Mid-Term	Village; Libraries; Senior and Youth Service Providers	Policies and Programs	Number of agreements; participation in shared services
<b>Strategy 6.4.3: Maintain the regional treatment plant as a collaborative, multi-jurisdictional effort by supporting long-term sustainability through proactive planning and cost-sharing.</b>					
Conduct a comprehensive maintenance and capital improvement assessment every three years, or as needed.	High	Ongoing	Village; Regional Partners	Targeted Planning	Assessment completion; recommendations implemented
Reassess the long-range funding plan that accounts for projected costs and aging infrastructure.	High	Mid-Term	Village; Regional Partners	Targeted Planning	Updated funding plan; alignment with budget
Reevaluate service rates periodically to align with operating and maintenance needs.	Medium	Mid-Term	Village; Regional Partners	Policies and Programs	Rate adjustments completed; cost recovery achieved
Explore external funding opportunities, including grants or low-interest loans, to offset capital costs.	Medium	Short-Term	Village; Grant Agencies	Targeted Planning	Number of applications submitted; funding awarded
Maintain transparent communication with regional partners about plant performance and future financial requirements.	High	Ongoing	Village; Regional Partners	Policies and Programs	Number of updates provided; partner satisfaction surveys
<b>Strategy 6.4.4: Establish joint task forces to address regional issues.</b>					
Partner with neighboring municipalities to address environmental issues, including watershed protection, renewable energy, and flood mitigation strategies.	High	Ongoing	Village; Neighboring Municipalities; Environmental Orgs	Policies and Programs	Number of initiatives launched; environmental impact measures
Establish a task force to explore solutions to housing affordability, share best practices, and coordinate regional policy efforts.	Medium	Mid-Term	Village; Neighboring Municipalities; Housing Orgs	Targeted Planning	Task force formed; recommendations developed
Form a regional task force to improve emergency preparedness, coordinate protocols, and develop shared training programs.	High	Short-Term	Village; Neighboring Municipalities; Emergency Services	Targeted Planning	Joint training sessions; response time improvements

	Priority	Time Frame	Partners	Type	Metrics for Success
Collaborate on regional economic initiatives, such as marketing campaigns, workforce development programs, and business attraction efforts.	Medium	Ongoing	Village; Chain O'Lakes Chamber; Regional Economic Dev. Orgs	Policies and Programs	Number of campaigns; business growth indicators

## Goal 6.5: Increase volunteerism and civic engagement through storytelling and technology.

### Strategy 6.5.1: Expand the 'Fox Lake Tales' podcast and develop a digital storytelling platform.

Enhance the 'Fox Lake Tales' podcast with resident interviews, local history spotlights, and discussions on community initiatives, showcasing the voices shaping Fox Lake.	High	Short-Term	Village; Historical Societies; Residents	Policies and Programs	Number of episodes produced; listener engagement
Launch a digital storytelling platform where residents can submit personal stories, photos, or videos highlighting their neighborhood experiences and civic contributions.	High	Mid-Term	Village; IT Vendors	Policies and Programs	Platform launch; submissions received
Develop a "Day in the Life" video series featuring diverse community members—youth, seniors, business owners, and volunteers—sharing their perspectives on life in Fox Lake.	Medium	Mid-Term	Village; Local Film- makers; Residents	Policies and Programs	Number of videos produced; views and shares
Host live storytelling events where residents share personal experiences about community engagement, local traditions, and their vision for Fox Lake's future.	Medium	Ongoing	Village; Cultural Orgs	Public Information and Outreach	Number of events; attendance levels

### Strategy 6.5.2: Establish a centralized volunteer and civic engagement portal.

Develop a user-friendly app and website that alerts residents to upcoming public meetings, volunteer opportunities, and community events, ensuring easy access to civic life.	High	Short-Term	Village; IT Vendors	Policies and Programs	Platform launch; user registrations
Integrate interactive features that allow residents to submit feedback, participate in surveys, and join virtual town halls to engage with local government from anywhere.	Medium	Short-Term	Village; IT Vendors	Policies and Programs	Number of responses; engagement rates
Launch a Village-wide volunteer hub that connects residents with organizations, service projects, and event opportunities based on their interests and availability.	High	Mid-Term	Village; Nonprofits	Policies and Programs	Number of volunteer listings; participation levels
Create a volunteer matching program to pair residents with specific skills (e.g., graphic design, carpentry, teaching) to community projects and local nonprofits.	Medium	Mid-Term	Village; Nonprofits	Policies and Programs	Number of matches made; volunteer hours logged

	Priority	Time Frame	Partners	Type	Metrics for Success
<b>Strategy 6.5.3: Develop flexible volunteering opportunities for all lifestyles.</b>					
<i>Offer micro-volunteering options that allow residents to contribute in small ways, such as virtual mentoring, short-term event support, or quick neighborhood beautification projects.</i>	Medium	Ongoing	Village; Nonprofits	Policies and Programs	<i>Number of opportunities; participation rates</i>
<i>Host family-friendly volunteer days, where people of all ages can participate in meaningful activities like park cleanups, community gardening, and holiday drives.</i>	Medium	Short-Term	Village; Park & Rec Dept; Ser- vice Clubs	Policies and Programs	<i>Number of events; family participation levels</i>
<i>Establish a “Fox Lake Beautification Challenge,” encouraging neighborhoods to compete in small-scale projects like landscaping, mural painting, and public space enhancements.</i>	Medium	Mid-Term	Village; Neigh- borhood Groups	Policies and Programs	<i>Number of projects completed; resident participation</i>
<i>Create an ongoing “Adopt-a-Project” program, where individuals or groups can commit to maintaining public gardens, trail cleanups, or small infrastructure improvements.</i>	Medium	Ongoing	Village; Nonprofits	Policies and Programs	<i>Number of projects adopted; maintenance quality</i>
<i>Incorporate or expand upon recognition programs like the Mayor’s Anchor Award to reinforce civic pride and identity.</i>	Medium	Ongoing	Village	Policies and Programs	<i>Number of recognitions; volunteer retention</i>
<i>Establish a rotating “Fox Lake Neighborhood Festival” series volunteer opportunity, bringing mini street fairs, block parties, and themed events to different parts of the Village.</i>	Medium	Mid-Term	Village; Park & Rec Dept; Neigh- borhood Groups	Policies and Programs	<i>Number of festivals; volunteer participation</i>
<i>Launch a Hometown Pride Program to celebrate community spirit and resident contributions.</i>	Medium	Ongoing	Village	Policies and Programs	<i>Number of recognitions; volunteer retention</i>

## Theme 7: Mobility & Connectivity

	Priority	Time Frame	Partners	Type	Metrics for Success
<b>Goal 7.1: Develop a street network that supports safe and accessible travel for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists.</b>					
<b>Strategy 7.1.1: Prioritize street maintenance and infrastructure investment to support community connectivity and growth.</b>					
Utilize the CMAP-funded street categorization plan as a foundational tool to guide annual budgeting, capital improvements, and maintenance schedules across the Village's roadway network.	High	Immediate	Village; Public Works; CMAP; IDOT; CDOT	Financial Planning	Creation of multi-year infrastructure improvement plan; passing of budget(s) in alignment with plan
Establish a transparent, multi-year infrastructure improvement plan that outlines priorities for street resurfacing, sidewalk repair, and curb improvements based on the CMAP assessment.	High	Short-Term	Public Works	Capital Improvements	Adoption of improvements plan; completion of first pilot project; number of miles of sidewalk repaired and streets resurfaced
Allocate dedicated funding in the Village budget each year to ensure consistent investment in critical street repairs, especially in areas serving schools, downtown, and commercial corridors.	High	Short-Term	Village	Financial Planning	Funding allocated; miles of streets repaired
Create a public-facing "Streets Dashboard" that tracks ongoing and upcoming improvements, reinforcing accountability while helping residents understand timelines and progress.	Medium	Short-Term	Village; Adjacent Municipalities	Policies and Programs	Dashboard created; user engagement
Continue to coordinate street repairs with other public works and utility projects to minimize disruption and maximize cost-efficiency.	High	Ongoing	Village; Adjacent Municipalities	Partnerships and Collaboration	Alignment of projects; dollar amount of potential cost benefit
Consider developing a community outreach campaign (e.g., "Fixing Fox Lake's Foundations") to explain how improved street infrastructure contributes to safety, walkability, property values, and local business growth.	Medium	Short to Mid-Term	Village; Local Businesses	Policies and Programs	Adoption of ordinance; completion of first pilot project; infrastructure projects initiated / completed
<b>Strategy 7.1.2: Enhance bicycle and pedestrian connectivity throughout Fox Lake to support both recreational activities and daily transportation needs.</b>					
Conduct a feasibility analysis for dedicated or shared-use bicycle facilities that include a review of bicycle accommodation options, right-of-way availability, jurisdiction, timeline, grant funding, and cost estimates.	High	Short-Term	Public Works; CMAP; IDOT	Policies and Programs	Creation of feasibility analysis for proposed bicycle facilities
Seek grant funding to support design and implementation tasks such as Illinois Department of Transportation's (IDOT) Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program (ITEP), Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Program, and Chicago Metropolitan Agency of Planning's (CMAP) Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) Program.	Medium	Short to Mid-Term	Village; Public Works; IDOT; CMAP	Financial Planning	Grant funding secured for proposed bicycle facilities

	Priority	Time Frame	Partners	Type	Metrics for Success
Pursue Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) funds to complete Regional Greenways and Trail Plan projects, including shared-use paths along US 12, State Park Road, Main Street, Wilmot Road, and Grass Lake Road.	Medium	Short to Mid-Term	Village; Public Works; Adjacent Municipalities	Policies and Programs	Construct one segment of the greenways and trails every 3-5 years
<b>Strategy 7.1.3: Adopt a complete streets policy which incorporates a new approach for the Village to integrate the needs of all ages, abilities, and travel modes in street design.</b>					
Pass a binding Complete Streets ordinance or policy statement.	High	Short-Term	Village; Public Works	Policies and Programs	Complete Street Ordinance adopted
Engage political leaders, educate stakeholders and form partnerships to communicate the need for safe streets and gather support in advancing a Complete Streets Policy.	Medium	Short to Mid-Term	Village; Local Partners	Partnerships and Collaboration	Engagement rates; workshops held
Set clear goals, be tailored to the needs of Fox Lake, and ensure that improvements address the needs of underserved and vulnerable communities in Fox Lake, such as the growing elderly population.	High	Short-Term	Village; Public Works; Neighborhood Organizations; School Districts; Senior Citizen Organizations	Targeted Planning	Goals set; engagement rates with vulnerable communities
Set implementation guidelines including design standards, a project prioritization framework, and clear performance metrics that track and report on progress.	High	Short-Term	Village; Public Works	Regulations and Standards	Guidelines set; performance metrics set forth met
<b>Strategy 7.1.4: Ensure safe and accessible multi-modal connections across the community.</b>					
Develop an ADA Transition Plan to ensure accessible and compliant facilities across all buildings, public parks, and institutions.	Medium	Short-Term	Village; Public Works	Policies and Programs	RFP developed to procure local consultant for the ADA Transition Plan
Assess community interest and identify opportunities to address sidewalk gaps.	Medium	Short to Mid-Term	Village; Local Residents	Targeted Planning	Engagement rates with local residents
Require sidewalk installations as a part of new development to complete the Village network	High	Immediate	Village; Public Works	Policies and Programs	Number of new developments installing sidewalks
Collaborate with IDOT to conduct a speed study along US 12 between Kings Road and Oak Street.	Medium	Short to Mid-Term	Village; Public Works	Regulations and Standards	RFP developed to procure local consultant for US 12 speed study

	Priority	Time Frame	Partners	Type	Metrics for Success
<b>Goal 7.2: Prioritize thoughtful mobility design to enhance quality of life and strengthen Fox Lake's sense of identity.</b>					
<b>Strategy 7.2.1: Enhance transportation infrastructure to improve safety, connectivity, and identity.</b>					
Coordinate with IDOT to install landscape medians at community gateways and other segments along US 12.	Low	Ongoing	Village; Public Works; IDOT	Partnerships and Collaborations	Landscape medians and other street improvements assessed and implemented
Improve at-grade rail crossings along the Metra MD-N line by pursuing grant funding through the Illinois Commerce Commission's (ICC) Crossing Safety Improvement Program to upgrade warning devices at locally managed rail crossings.	Medium	Immediate to Short-Term	Village; Public Works; METRA	Capital Improvements; Targeted Planning	ICC grant secured; warning signs upgraded
Install automatic flashing light signals and gates at Riverside Island Drive.	Medium	Short to Mid-Term	Village; Public Works	Capital Improvements; Targeted Planning	Flash lighting installed at target locations
Assess rail crossings at Oak Street, Grand Avenue, Sayton Road, and Jefferson Street to identify potential equipment upgrades or street approach reconstructions.	Medium	Short to Mid-Term	Village; Public Works; METRA	Capital Improvements; Targeted Planning	Rail crossings assessed and improved / replaced
Establish a quiet zone for the railroad tracks.	Low	Long-Term	Village; Public Works	Targeted Planning	Quiet zone established
<b>Strategy 7.2.2: Optimize parking policies to support business success and promote efficient land use.</b>					
Assess and update Village parking requirements, including off-street parking and minimums, to reflect modern development patterns and support efficient land use.	High	Immediate to Short-Term	Village; Development & Real Estate Community	Regulations and Standards	Parking minimums ordinance revised
Establish a shared-parking ordinance to maximize land and parking resource efficiency for complementary land uses.	High	Immediate to Short-Term	Village	Regulations and Standards	Shared parking established
Develop and adopt bicycle parking standards within the Village ordinance.	High	Immediate to Short-Term	Village	Regulations and Standards	Bicycle parking improved
Consider transitioning the Downtown Metra parking spaces to free parking after typical weekday commuting hours in the afternoon and on weekends to increase the parking supply for Downtown businesses and help support redevelopment efforts.	Medium	Short-Term	Village; METRA; Local Businesses	Policies and Programs	Availability of Downtown parking improved; increase in traffic to Local Businesses

	Priority	Time Frame	Partners	Type	Metrics for Success
<b>Strategy 7.2.3: Address sidewalk gaps in a context-sensitive manner.</b>					
Using the sidewalk gap analysis provided, conduct a sidewalk and right-of-way audit to confirm where gaps exist and assess feasibility for new installations.	Medium	Immediate to Short-Term	Village; Public Works	Capital Improvements	Sidewalk audit conducted
Prioritize filling sidewalk gaps within a ¼ mile of schools, parks, community destinations, and key intersections.	Medium	Mid-Term	Village; Public Works; School Districts	Targeted Planning	Sidewalk gaps filled
Where sidewalks cannot be added due to narrow roads or lack of easements, consider alternative treatments such as shared streets, painted pedestrian zones, or traffic calming improvements.	Medium	Short to Mid-Term	Village; Public Works	Targeted Planning	Categories of alternative treatments developed
Integrate sidewalk improvements into the capital planning and subdivision review process.	High	Immediate	Village	Capital Improvements	Integration complete
Use mapping tools to identify and promote walkable routes even where full sidewalk continuity is not possible.	Low	Short-Term	Village; Public Works	Policies and Programs	Maps developed; walkable routes promoted on various communication channels
<b>Strategy 7.2.4: Improve ADA accessibility of the sidewalk network where feasible.</b>					
Focus ADA upgrades on high-traffic areas and community destinations, such as near schools, municipal buildings, and transit stops.	Medium	Short to Mid-Term	Village; Public Works	Targeted Planning	ADA upgrades implemented at key destinations (number per year)
Include ADA accessibility as a scoring factor when evaluating and prioritizing street and sidewalk improvement projects.	High	Immediate to Short-Term	Village; Public Works Dept	Policies and Programs	Street and sidewalk improvements scoring created / updated
Collaborate with residents and disability advocates to identify key areas of need and ensure improvements align with real-world mobility experiences.	Medium	Immediate to Short-Term	Village; Public Works; Local Residents	Policies and Programs	Engagement rates; key areas of need identified
<b>Strategy 7.2.5: Enhance crosswalks and improve crossings.</b>					
Install high-visibility crosswalks with safety features such as pedestrian signals, adequate lighting, and curb extensions to reduce crossing distances.	Medium	Ongoing	Village; Public Works	Capital Improvements	High-visibility crosswalks and safety features installed
Install curb extensions to shorten crossing lengths and slow vehicular traffic along major corridors.	Medium	Short to Mid-Term	Village; Public Works; IDOT; LCDOT	Capital Improvements	Curb extensions installed
Improve all railroad crossings by ensuring adequate sidewalks and signage is present approaching railroad tracks.	Medium	Long-Term	Village; Public Works; IDOT; LCDOT; ICC; METRA	Targeted Planning	Railroad crossings improved

## Theme 8: Infrastructure

	Priority	Time Frame	Partners	Type	Metrics for Success
<b>Goal 8.1: Ensure existing infrastructure is well maintained and has the capacity to accommodate new growth.</b>					
<b>Strategy 8.1.1: Engage with owners and development applicants of larger tracts of land (5+ acres) to assess and plan for infrastructure needs.</b>					
Ensure water, sanitary, storm sewer, and utility infrastructure is appropriately sized during the development reviews to accommodate adjacent future growth.	High	Immediate, Ongoing	Village; Public Works; NRWRF; Adjacent Municipalities	Capital Improvements	Future utility needs projected
Pursue recapture agreements when appropriate to help offset upfront infrastructure costs for developers.	Medium	Ongoing	Village; Public Works Dept	Policies and Programs	Reduction in infrastructure costs; recapture agreements pursued
Foster collaboration between the Village, developers, and neighboring municipalities to coordinate infrastructure planning and development including sharing data and aligning development timelines.	Medium	Ongoing	Village; Real Estate and Development Community; Adjacent Municipalities	Partnerships and Collaborations	Increased collaborative efforts; data sharing; timelines better aligned
Explore implementing incentive programs, such as expedited permitting and density bonuses, for developers who incorporate sustainable infrastructure practices including renewable energy sources, green building materials, and innovative water management systems.	Medium	Short-Term	Village; Real Estate and Development Community	Policies and Programs	Incentive programs deployed; number of projects focused on sustainable infrastructure
Align infrastructure improvements with Village streets pavement improvements, as feasible.	High	Ongoing	Village; Public Works Dept	Capital Improvements	Infrastructure projects aligned
<b>Strategy 8.1.2: Create a multi-year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) to adequately plan for future water, sanitary, storm sewer, and utility infrastructure investments.</b>					
Develop a formalized CIP that acts as a planning tool for the improvement of the Village's infrastructure including elements such as budget allocations, grants, loans, and other financial resources.	High	Short-Term	Village; Public Works Dept; NRWRF	Capital Improvements	CIP created and updated; percentage of projects completed on schedule; budget alignment with CIP
Update CIP regularly to ensure the Village is proactively planning for infrastructure maintenance and investment.	High	Ongoing	Village; Public Works Dept	Policies and Programs	Year-over-year alignment of budget to CIP priorities
Update the water and sewer master plan from 2015 to align with the CIP.	Medium	Short to Mid-Term	Village; Public Works Dept; NRWRF, IEPA	Policies and Programs	Master plan updated and adopted; list of priority projects integrated into CIP; cost estimates and phasing identified

	Priority	Time Frame	Partners	Type	Metrics for Success
<b>Strategy 8.1.3: Prepare and implement Pavement Management Plans to maintain Village streets.</b>					
Adopt and implement the Pavement Management Plan (2026-2030), currently being prepared with funding support provided by the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP).	High	Immediate to Short-Term	Village; Public Works Dept; CMAP; Consultant	Regulations and Standards	Miles resurfaced per year; pavement condition index improvement; five-year plan milestones met
Budget within the CIP to conduct an updated Pavement Management Plan toward the end of the lifecycle (2030) of current plan underway.	Medium	Short-Term	Village; Public Works Dept	Financial Planning	Funding reserved in CIP; procurement for update completed; updated plan delivered before 2030
<b>Goal 8.2: Strengthen water resiliency to ensure reliable access to clean and safe drinking water.</b>					
<b>Strategy 8.2.1: Assess the long-term sustainability of Fox Lake's existing water sources (shallow aquifers).</b>					
Draft and adopt a Comprehensive Water Master Plan to assess the existing water supply and infrastructure, evaluate long-term sustainability, and forecast future demand based on the future land use map.	Medium	Mid-Term	Village; Public Works Dept; CLCJAWA; FEMA; IEPA	Regulations and Standards	Plan adopted; demand and supply projections completed; priority capital list with costs and timelines
Explore partnering with Central Lake County Joint Action Water Agency (CLCJAWA) to transition to Lake Michigan as an alternative water source.	Low	Long-Term	Village; Public Works Dept; CLCJAWA	Partnerships and Collaborations	Feasibility analysis completed; memorandum of understanding executed if viable; preliminary cost and timeline defined
Apply for Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) grant program to fund projects identified in the Comprehensive Water Master Plan.	Medium	Mid-Term	Village; Public Works Dept; FEMA	Financial Planning	BRIC application submitted; application scored and advanced; award amount and local match identified
Pursue funding through the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) Wastewater and Drinking Water Loan Program to secure low-interest loans for drinking water, stormwater, and wastewater projects.	Medium	Mid-Term	Village; Public Works Dept; IEPA	Financial Planning	Loan application submitted; loan approved; projects obligated and under contract
<b>Strategy 8.2.2: Continue to educate the community on water conservation to improve system capacity management.</b>					
Review the existing lawn watering ordinances and create an educational bulletin or flyer to increase awareness and compliance.	Medium	Immediate to Short-Term	Village; Public Works Dept	Policies and Programs	Ordinance review completed; bulletin produced and mailed with utility bills; website post published
Distribute educational materials with water bills to reach residents and businesses.	Low	Immediate to Short-Term	Village; Public Works Dept; Local Businesses	Public Information and Outreach	Number of bill inserts distributed; open and click rates for digital notices; measured reduction in peak-day usage compared to prior year

	Priority	Time Frame	Partners	Type	Metrics for Success
Develop and maintain a dedicated water conservation page on the Village's website featuring tips and resources for residents and businesses.	Low	Immediate to Short-Term	Village; Public Works Dept	Public Information and Outreach	Page launched; page views and average time on page; number of downloads of conservation materials; customer inquiries resolved
<b>Strategy 8.2.3: Strengthen cybersecurity preparedness for village-controlled infrastructure systems.</b>					
Leverage Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) cybersecurity resources to enhance system security.	Medium	Short-Term	Village; Public Works Dept; IT Dept; NWRWRF	Targeted Planning	EPA resources reviewed; gap checklist completed; priority actions logged with owners and dates
Conduct a comprehensive cyber risk assessment to identify vulnerabilities in the Village's infrastructure systems.	Medium	Short-Term	Village; IT Dept	Targeted Planning	Assessment completed; vulnerabilities ranked; remediation plan approved; staff training completed
Develop and implement a cyber response plan to mitigate potential threats and ensure system resiliency.	Medium	Short to Mid-Term	Village; IT Dept	Policies and Programs	Response plan adopted; incident drills conducted twice per year; mean time to detect and respond documented
<b>Goal 8.3: Implement stormwater management initiatives to minimize flood damage and enhance water quality.</b>					
<b>Strategy 8.3.1: Enhance flood resilience through proactive planning.</b>					
Participate in FEMA's Community Rating System (CRS), a voluntary incentive program, that provides reductions in flood insurance rates for communities that implement floodplain management practices that exceed the minimum requirements of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP).	Medium	Mid-Term	Village; Public Works Dept; Lake County SWC	Policies and Programs	CRS application submitted; CRS class achieved; estimated annual insurance savings for residents documented
Develop a Stormwater Master Plan (SMP) to assess urban and local drainage issues, identify storm sewers in need of replacement, analyze overland flow paths and ponding areas, identify funding opportunities, and prioritize infrastructure improvements.	Medium	Mid-Term	Village; Public Works Dept; Consultant; Lake County SWC	Targeted Planning	Plan adopted; priority project list with costs and phasing; at least two funding applications submitted
Facilitate voluntary property buyouts in flood-prone areas, such as the inlet east of Downtown, Manitou Creek, and Eagle Point, to reduce long-term flood risks.	Low	Ongoing	Village; Public Works Dept; Property Owners	Capital Improvements; Partnerships and Collaborations	Number of buyouts completed; acres removed from risk; structures demolished and sites stabilized

	Priority	Time Frame	Partners	Type	Metrics for Success
Explore opportunities to transform buyout lots into future park spaces or naturalized open areas that provide community benefit and enhance flood resilience. Utilize the Lake County Stormwater Management Commission's Voluntary Floodplain Buyout Program as a potential funding source for property acquisitions.	Low	Ongoing	Village; Public Works Dept; Parks and Rec Dept; Lake County SWC	Capital Improvements; Partnerships and Collaborations	Acres restored; native plantings established; maintenance plan adopted; public access and signage installed where appropriate
<b>Strategy 8.3.2: Protect water quality to preserve ecosystems and public health.</b>					
Implement watershed-based projects outlined in the Chain O' Lakes Watershed-Based Plan and the forthcoming Manitou Creek - Fish Lake Drain Watershed Plan Update.	High	Medium to Long-Term	Village; Public Works Dept; IEPA; IDNR; Watershed Partners	Capital Improvements; Partnerships and Collaborations	Number of plan projects advanced; pollutant load reductions estimated; external funds awarded
Continue working with the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) and the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) to implement watershed plan recommendations.	Medium	Medium to Long-Term	Village; Public Works Dept; IEPA; IDNR	Partnerships and Collaborations	Interagency work plan executed; quarterly coordination meetings held; progress memos issued
Apply for IEPA's 319 Grant Program to implement projects such as an infiltration basin at the Manitou Creek Fox Lake junction, wet detention basins west of Dunns Lake near the Vacation Village Pavillion, and rains gardens along the Dunns Lake shoreline and near Mineola Bay northeast of Downtown.	High	Short-Term	Village; Public Works Dept; IEPA; Consultant	Financial Planning	319 application submitted; award amount; match secured; project agreements executed
Implement green infrastructure solutions within Village right-of-way and on Village property to address environmental concerns, reduce stormwater runoff, and promote sustainability.	Medium	Ongoing	Village; Public Works Dept; Parks and Rec Dept	Capital Improvements	Number of rain gardens, bioswales, and permeable installations; estimated stormwater volume captured; maintenance schedule initiated
Apply for IEPA's Green Infrastructure Grant Opportunities (GIGO) program to support green infrastructure projects in Fox Lake.	Medium	Short-Term	Village; Public Works Dept IEPA	Financial Planning	GIGO application submitted; award amount; projects completed within grant terms
Join and actively participate in the Fox River Ecosystem Partnership (FREP) to advance conservation and restoration efforts for the Fox River Watershed.	Medium	Immediate to Short-Term	Village; Public Works Dept; FREP	Partnerships and Collaborations	Membership established; meeting attendance; joint projects or trainings completed

	Priority	Time Frame	Partners	Type	Metrics for Success
Partner with the Fox River Study Group (FRSG) to develop a robust water monitoring program and identify strategies for improving water quality.	Low	Medium to Long-Term	Village; Public Works Dept; FRSG	Partnerships and Collaborations	Monitoring plan in place; sampling events completed; annual data shared and reviewed
Collaborate with Friends of the Fox River to support water quality monitoring.	Low	Ongoing	Village; Friends of Fox River	Partnerships and Collaborations	Volunteer monitoring days held; sites monitored; results posted to Village website

### Goal 8.4: Stay ahead of technological trends and foster an environment that supports sustainable energy solutions.

#### Strategy 8.4.1: Prepare for increased use of electric vehicles (EVs).

Establish a plan for EV charging infrastructure that considers public property, right-of-way, and private property.	Medium	Short-Term	Village; Public Works Dept; Consultant; IEPA; ComEd	Targeted Planning, Capital Improvements	EV charging plan adopted; priority sites identified; funding sources mapped; first installations scheduled
Ensure EV charging stations are available in long-term parking areas, such as schools, shopping centers, vacation rentals, public institutions, and workplaces.	Medium	Ongoing	Village; Public Works Dept; School Districts; Local Employers; ComEd	Capital Improvements; Partnerships and Collaborations	Number of public chargers installed; utilization rates; customer satisfaction from users
Apply for the Illinois EPA grant program to increase EV usage and charging accessibility.	High	Short-Term	Village; Public Works Dept; IEPA	Financial Planning	Applications submitted; total award dollars; chargers installed through grant programs
Apply for the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus and ComEd Powering Safe Communities Grant Program, which provides grants up to \$10,000 for local electrification projects and public safety projects.	High	Immediate to Short-Term	Village; Public Works Dept; ComEd; Metropolitan Mayors Caucus	Financial Planning	Applications submitted; awards received; projects completed within grant timelines

	Priority	Time Frame	Partners	Type	Metrics for Success
<b>Strategy 8.4.2: Aspire to become a solar energy ready community.</b>					
Work toward SolSmart designation, which helps municipalities streamline solar permitting, reduce barriers, and encourage local solar development.	Medium	Short to Mid-Term	Village; Public Works Dept; SolSmart	Policies and Programs	SolSmart designation achieved; permitting checklist published; average permit review time reduced
Explore opportunities to modernize and clarify zoning codes to support the growing use of solar infrastructure for all property types, ensuring consistency, encouraging innovation, and streamlining future installations.	Medium	Short-Term	Village; Public Works Dept	Regulations and Standards	Code amendments adopted; number of solar permits issued year over year; staff guidance posted online
Provide guidance and incentives to residents and businesses interested in installing solar panels, including information on permitting, financial incentives, and best practices.	Medium	Short-Term	Village; Local Residents; Local Businesses	Regulations and Standards; Public Information and Outreach	Web guidance published; workshops held; applications for incentives tracked; installed kilowatts added community-wide

A large body of water, likely a lake or bay, is filled with numerous small boats, possibly pontoon boats, scattered across the surface. The scene is captured during sunset or sunrise, with a warm, orange glow on the horizon. The entire image is overlaid with a semi-transparent red filter. In the center, the text "This is a plan for you, by you." is written in a white, serif font, flanked by large, stylized quotation marks.

“  
This is a  
plan for  
you, by you.”

