
Draft Shared Vision of Three Lakes in 2030

For the Design Wisconsin Team a vision is “a description of the desired future.” We summarized these vision ideas from the hopes, and aspirations people have for the future Three Lakes. The Design Wisconsin Team had two main sources. First, 580 community members answered the open-ended questions in the community survey. Second, 30 people talked about five topics in 20 online focus-groups. Examples of questions we asked in the focus groups are:

- Imagine it’s 2030, and you’re in a hot air balloon over downtown, What do you hope to see?
- What do you want the housing in Three lakes to say about the community?
- What are our biggest opportunities for the natural environment in Three Lakes?
- What can the people of Three Lakes do to support and grow good ideas and good leaders?
- In what ways would you like to see your community grow and develop?

The volunteer Design Wisconsin Team professionals will draw physical plans and recommended strategies based on what the community has expressed in these vision statements. The collaboration between Three Lakes and Design Wisconsin aims to inspire the community to move towards this vision.

We title this a “draft” shared vision because Three Lakes need to determine what hopes and aspirations they share. That means more conversations with people from different parts of the community. These are some questions about a statement that may help find agreement. Do enough of us . . .

- think this is true?
- want to see this happen?
- want to work together to make this possible?

Overview

Three Lakes is the gateway to the chain of lakes, a vibrant small town downtown, and a place where our hearts feel at home. It is known as a good place for families with children. When our children grow up they like to bring out-of-town friends to Three Lakes and show off their hometown.

We are lake, forest and downtown people. Some of us live in Three Lakes year-round. Some of us live here part of the year. Some are commuters. Visitors, many of whom are regulars, help to fuel our local economy. We all want Three Lakes to thrive for the next generations.

We have different perspectives and needs yet we do share a vision. We know what is important and make plans to accomplish those goals. We work together to find the money, time and talent needed to succeed. We understand how seasonal residents, year-round residents and visitors support each other. For example, year-round residents provide the businesses and services seasonal residents and tourists want. They need a good school. Property taxes paid by seasonal and full-time homeowners and businesses support the school and town roads.



Three Lakes is what happens when you have a nice small town with strong schools among healthy lakes within the beautiful Northwoods. It is cherished and sustained by a variety of friendly people enjoying our unique natural environment and working together to build community.

Growth and Development

We have a reputation for care. We care for our land, lakes and downtown. We care for each other. We care enough to work together. Collaboration by Town government, civic organizations and businesses make it possible to grow in creative, well managed ways. We set goals as a community and achieve them. For example, we built the aquatic center with provisions for future maintenance. We help new businesses succeed and existing businesses grow.

Our reputation of small town caring and our healthy natural environment attracts new families to Three Lakes every year. The parents take a job in town, work remotely or start a business here. The children thrive in our high quality school. Everyone enjoys the outdoors in many ways in each season. We make new residents feel welcomed in our community.

Housing

Three Lakes has a variety of home types in different locations around town. The new families and single people find quality homes. The homes meet the needs of people across all incomes and ages, and respect our natural environment. Those needs include:

- Broadband internet and cell phone service
- Affordable
- Standard amenities such as garage and storage for rental homes
- Care options at housing for elders

Well kept homes and our attractive and active downtown compliment each other in ways everyone can feel at home in Three Lakes.

Natural Environment

The lakes and forest are why we are here. We welcome visitors and encourage one another to enjoy the lakes and woods in many different ways.

Collaboration among organizations such as the Three Lakes Waterfront and the Fish and Wildlife Improvement associations help us protect and enjoy our lakes, and encourage land stewardship, water safety and good water quality. Residents and visitors cherish the woods and the bears, deer, wolves, turtles and other wildlife that also make Three Lakes home. The Town (Plan Commission) works with property owners to maximize the environmental and community benefits of development and redevelopment.

Our environmental stewardship education ranges from neighbor-to-neighbor conversations to information and wayfinding kiosks at key locations around the whole 99 square miles. Residents and visitors understand the importance of protecting our natural environment and learn how to live with nature for our continued enjoyment and to protect our property investments. We work with county officials and state agencies to fund landowner education and enforcement.



Access to our healthy lakes, woods and open spaces enables a wide range of outdoor recreational activities. Thanks to the efforts of many people and organizations there are two new public lake access points. An expanding network of trails connects us to the lakes. Activities such as golf, disc golf, bocce ball, pickleball, and playgrounds also draw people outdoors.

Downtown

Downtown has a unique look and character that reflects our northwoods location and culture. We remodel and construct new buildings as necessary to offer a variety of business and visitor accommodations. We established a new “heart of downtown” that we lost with the cherished Oneida Village Inn. Coordination by the Town, locally owned businesses and cultural institutions makes it happen. Every building is occupied. Mainstreet is pedestrian-friendly and we made some new outdoor gathering places. We have the capacity to accommodate all our valued visitors.

Year-round programs for all ages at the Center for the Arts, the new supper club with regular entertainment, and the aquatic center make a vibrant downtown. Community events offer many activities that celebrate all our residents, no matter how many days of the year they call Three Lakes “home.” We explore and pursue local ideas such as how to connect downtown to the chain of lakes via Cy Williams Park and Maple Lake.

Leadership

We know how to encourage people to lead and mentor them along the way. Long standing leaders and new leaders work together. Open formal leadership positions often have two or more candidates. Community decision making is open and clear. People participate in decision making events from any location. Community leaders in Town government and other organizations are mindful of the interests of all the people who care about Three Lakes. We find the money to get done what the community agrees to do.

We welcome the leadership of our business leaders, seasonal and permanent residents. Their ideas, time, financial resources, skills, and most of all their determination makes Three Lakes successful. Plus, when working together in harmony we have fun and many hands make light work. We also welcome youth into Town government and civic organization leadership circles.