

Village of Siren

Façade Improvement Guidelines



**PRESERVING COMMUNITY HERITAGE AND
MAINTAINING THE INTEGRITY OF THE SMALL TOWN**

Adopted: November 8, 2012

**VILLAGE OF SIREN
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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The Village of Siren would like to thank the Northwest Regional Planning Commission, who assisted the Village in the development of these guidelines and the Burnet County Development Association (BCDA), who provided the financing for the development of these guidelines.

Resolution 2012-07

Resolution for the Adoption of the Village of Siren Façade Improvement Guidelines

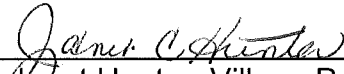
WHEREAS, the Village Board of the Village of Siren, Burnett County, Wisconsin, has developed a Façade Improvement Guidelines Plan for the Village of Siren, and

WHEREAS, the Façade Guidelines Plan is to be used as a guide to aid prospective businesses within the Business Façade Corridor (BFC) to obtain loans through the Northwest Wisconsin Regional Economic Development Fund (NWREDF) fund, and

WHEREAS, all maps and other materials noted and attached as exhibits to the Façade Guidelines Plan are incorporated into and made a part of the Village of Siren Façade Improvement Guidelines.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Village Board of the Village of Siren accepts and adopts the Village of Siren Façade Improvement Guidelines Plan.

APPROVED AND ADOPTED THIS 8th day of November, 2012.



Janet Hunter, Village President

ATTEST:



Ann L. Peterson, Clerk

Village of Siren Façade Improvement Guidelines

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Village of Siren

Façade Improvement Guidelines

INTRODUCTION

Façade design features and streetscape improvements that enhance the visual quality of the historic elements of the downtown and business district areas are encouraged because they help to preserve community heritage while also strengthening economic viability. New and existing buildings that present a good design image can also help provide a strong setting for commerce.

These guidelines seek to encourage façade renovation and streetscapes within the designated downtown and business district areas in a manner that will promote a degree of visual continuity, retain historic integrity, and encourage creative design solutions. The guidelines do not dictate styles, but rather suggest choices for achieving design compatibility within the districts. The guidelines can also help to protect property values by encouraging improvements that maintain buildings as viable assets.

Good design will extend the life of a building, improve the market image of the business housed inside, and enhance the overall character of the Village of Siren. Consciously or unconsciously, people react to the visual quality of their environment. Commerce is a primary function of downtown, and buildings, storefronts and storefront windows constantly provide clues about the character of the businesses found there.

Although these guidelines are specifically written for current or future buildings in the Business Façade Corridor (BFC), many of the principles can be applied to commercial buildings in other parts of Siren, especially where pedestrian activity is desired.

History

In July 2011, the Burnett County Development Association (BCDA) allocated funds to prepare a façade guidance document for the Villages of Grantsburg, Siren and Webster and the unincorporated community known as Danbury, in the Town of Swiss. The guidance document will assist the communities and businesses in identifying types of façade improvements for the communities and will assist businesses in seeking façade improvement funding through the Northwest Wisconsin Regional Economic Development Fund (NWREDF).

Over the years, retail customer habits have changed dramatically, requiring local businesses to be savvy in providing local residents and tourists with products that meets existing demands. The overall façade of the retail store is a very important element in

attracting local residents and tourists. In the competitive retail market, profit margins are often small, making it difficult for local businesses to make necessary façade and other building repairs with cash - compounding this is the difficulty in getting conventional bank financing due to the overall national banking problems.

To enable local businesses in the Village of Siren the ability to access façade improvement funding, this project proposes to develop community-based façade improvement guidelines addressing local desires. Development of the façade improvement guidelines will enable businesses access to loan funding through the NWREDF to beautify the downtown and business district areas and eliminate potential slum and blight conditions. Existing blight and slum elimination is critical to maintaining the local business community and services area residents are accustomed to having within their community.

Program Guidelines Description

The program will offer the opportunity for business owners to bring their front and rear façades (customer entrances or highly visible areas) up to standards set forth in the Village of Siren Façade Improvement Guidelines. Improvements requested by a business owner will be initially reviewed by the Village of Siren Buildings, Grounds & Parks Committee, and with NWREDF financing approval; the property owner will be eligible for up to \$20,000 loan with a 2.0% interest rate. The payments for said loan will be required on a monthly basis. The loan shall not exceed 10 years or date of property transfer, whichever comes first. Reasonable security will be required for 100% of the loan and payments may be deferred for two years. Projects approved for this program must comply with all applicable Village of Siren building codes and ordinances.

Applicant Eligibility

Property owners of a structure located within the BFC may apply for the façade program. See attached map of the Village of Siren's BFC. Newly constructed buildings are also eligible.

Timetable

Unless otherwise agreed upon in writing, work on a project must commence within six months of approval. The project shall be completed within 12 months after receiving NWREDF approval.

APPLICATION PROCEDURES:

Application, Approval and Payment Procedures: A proposed renovation must receive NWREDF's administrative committee approval prior to commencement of work. Any work begun prior to approval may be ineligible for the façade program. Final approval of the façade improvements must be given prior to the final disbursement of NWREDF funds.

The following are the steps involved in applying for the program:

1. Contact the Village of Siren for program information and design guidelines.
2. The applicant must submit a formal project plan directly to the Village of Siren Buildings, Grounds & Parks Committee that includes copies of the design plan, sketches, photographs, project cost estimates, a construction schedule and evidence that property taxes are current.
3. Once the formal project plan is approved by the Village of Siren, the complete formal project plan will be submitted to the NWREDF Program Administrator along with all attachments and documentation of action taken.
4. The NWREDF Program Administrator, upon receiving the formal project plan, will contact the business and provide a NWREDF application form. Potential businesses will fill out an application and return it to the Program Administrator.
5. The Project Administrator will review the final application submitted by the applicant for completeness and set up a meeting of the NWREDF Administrative Committee to review the final application.
6. Upon approval of the final application, the Program Administrator shall prepare a letter of commitment and close the loan pending the availability of funds.
7. Construction occurs. During construction, changes to the approved design plans must be reviewed and approved by both the Village of Siren and the Program Administrator, or funding may be rescinded and all funds will become due and payable immediately. Any changes made without approval may disqualify the loan and full repayment of loan could be required.
8. The Project Administrator will prepare a project financial report and provide the Village of Siren with updates and proof that approved renovation is complete.
9. NWREDF will make payment(s) of pre-authorized loan amount (less any previously paid deposit) to contractor upon completion.
10. NWREDF will inform borrower of annual repayment information.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

An individual storefront should have a simple, unified façade design that serves as a frame for the windows that display goods or reveal services offered inside. If the façade design and its colors are too “wild,” they will detract from merchandising, and if they are too plain, they will not draw enough attention. A visually pleasing balance is the goal. The guidelines that follow are intended to help property owners find that balance.

Based on the 2002 study, “*Village of Siren Commercial and Industrial Redevelopment Plan*”, recommendations on an architectural theme on the STH 35/70 corridor have been identified. Prior to that study and the 2001 tornado, business owners within the corridor have taken it upon themselves to develop a “northwoods” architectural theme to their buildings and building facades. The same can be said for some businesses in the downtown Main Street zone. It has been recommended that the Village, along with business owners the local Chamber of Commerce and others meet to discuss future redevelopment themes, as there are differing viewpoints as to what kind of development theme(s) should be implemented.

By applying concepts throughout the downtown and business district, a sense of visual continuity can be achieved or maintained. These guidelines have general principles that allow room for individual solutions. At the same time, if each business owner applies the guidelines to his or her project, the overall image of the downtown and business district will appear more strongly coordinated. It is important to note, however, that because there are many historic periods represented in the downtown, uniformity is not the goal. Much of the richness of the downtown comes from its variety of historic styles.

GUIDELINES FOR EXISTING BUILDINGS

Scope of Project

Decide the overall scope of the project. Will it be a major overhaul of the front or exterior? Or only minor repairs and improvements? Below are some basic steps to follow in determining a general approach.

1. First, check for critical maintenance or safety issues.
 - If the roof leaks, if floors are sagging, repairs to the structure or weather-protective systems may be a priority before facade or exterior renovation.
2. Next, evaluate the condition of the building front or exterior.
 - Is the original design intact? If so, preservation and maintenance should be the overall approach.

- Does the original design survive, but with some alterations? If so, restoration and compatible alterations should be the overall approach.
- Is the facade or exterior significantly altered, or totally lacking detail? If so, consider two options:
 - a) Reconstruct the original design if it has merits; or
 - b) Develop a totally new design that is compatible with the character of downtown.

Overall Contribution or Image

Determine how much of the original front or exterior exists. Evaluate its contribution to the history of downtown or to the overall business image of the area. Then choose an approach from those listed in Step 2. (above). It is worth the trouble to locate old photos, postcards, newspaper photos, descriptions, sketches, or original plan documents to determine the original appearance of the building.

Categories

1. Original Design Intact

Buildings in this category have changed very little from the time they were constructed. Original ornament and detail, if part of the design, are still intact. Some portion of the façade may require maintenance and repair, but no new design work is necessary. In these cases, preservation of the original design is the preferred option. (It may also be the only option if the owner wishes to take advantage of any historic preservation tax credits and/or desires to obtain official historic building designation.)

2. Original Design Slightly Altered

If the basic character of the original design can still be seen, but some elements have been removed or changed, the building falls into this category. For example, an ornamental cornice may have existed at the top of the wall, but is now missing, or upper story windows may now be blocked with plywood panels. If early photographs or original architectural drawings can be found, it may be easier to determine the changes that have been made. Restoration of the original design is one option in this case. Another choice is to restore some details while adding some new elements that are compatible with the original. For example, a missing cornice might be reconstructed. At the same time, a new shop entrance could be constructed that is not a copy of the original, but which uses the typical elements usually found on buildings downtown. From an historic perspective, it is preferable that such added elements be clearly different than the original rather than an imperfect copy.

3. Original Design Significantly Altered

These buildings have a plain front that is without any ornamentation or detail. This may be a result of a covering that hides original designs, or because the façade was constructed without ornamentation. New buildings often fit into this category. As a result, the façade is featureless, and usually fails to relate well to more historic buildings in the area. For such a situation, the Guidelines encourage reconstruction of the original design, or the development of an entirely new design which is compatible with the older buildings.

Design can occur in any period, and what is oldest may not necessarily be the best. For example, an elaborately designed alteration done in the 1920's or 1930's may be more worthy of preservation than the plain brick façade of the 1910's that it changed. Professional architectural help may be useful in making such judgments.

4. New Construction

Once the building category and general approach to renovation have been determined, the owner can proceed to the Guidelines that follow.

General Building Characteristics for New and Existing Buildings

1. The façade or exterior has ornament and detail that provides interest to pedestrians.
2. The first floor level has a large glass area that allows pedestrians to see goods and activities inside. Avoid the use of some modern semi-reflective or reflective glazing that makes it difficult to see goods in the window due to reflections in the glass.
3. The front of the store is placed immediately at the sidewalk edge, helping to enclose the pedestrian zone.
4. Signs are sized and positioned to be read by pedestrians.
5. The second story, where existing, is more solid than the first, with smaller windows. This is also the location for larger signs visible to motorists on the street half a block away. The size and design of the sign is important to consider so it does not overpower the building and is appropriate to the building's style.
6. The use of materials such as brick, stone, decorative block, sealed wood and glass are encouraged.
7. The entrance is recessed.

Guidelines for Typical “Downtown” Buildings (New and Existing)

1. Respect the original design character of the building.
 - a. Analyze the building to determine which elements are essential to its character.
 - b. Do not try to make it older or newer than it really is.
 - c. Avoid theme designs (such as “wild west”) that do not reflect the original character of the building.
 - d. Respect the character established within the block.
2. Maintain the original size and shape of the storefront opening.
 - a. Large panes of glass that fit the original opening at the display level are encouraged. These allow pedestrians to see goods and activities inside.
 - b. If the alignment of the storefront wall at the sidewalk is not essential to its historic character, it may be recessed. In these cases, the line at the sidewalk should be retained by the use of other elements such as planters or changes in floor material.
 - c. If the original storefront is missing, greater variety of alignment may be considered. However, it should fit within the context of the block. If most other storefronts are strongly aligned and of historic value, then the new fronts should maintain this line.
3. Maintain recessed entries where they exist.
 - a. If the original recessed entry has been removed, consider re-establishing one. It need not be positioned in the original location if that does not work with the interior layout.
 - b. Where feasible, position the recess so it will reinforce the pattern of entrances established in the block.
 - c. Use doors with large areas of glass where feasible, as these will enhance the visibility of the business to customers. (Remember, even “e” glass is quite reflective and should be avoided along with all other reflective glazings.)
4. Maintain the bulkhead or kickplate that is found below the display window.

- a. If the bulkhead or kickplate is missing, one option is to design a reconstruction of the original from old photographs.
 - b. If original information is not available, another option is to design a new, simplified kickplate that retains the original character.
 - c. Appropriate materials are painted wood, glazed tile, or painted metal.
 - d. Coordinate the color scheme of the kickplate with other façade elements.
5. Preserve the transom (clerestory) if it exists.
- a. Use glass if possible. Preserve original prism glass or decorative designs where they exist. Original glass block, if missing, can usually be replaced fairly easily.
 - b. Use the space as a sign or decorative panel. Keep the inside background a dark color, similar to the way glass is perceived.
 - c. Retain the shape and proportions of the original opening.
 - d. If the interior ceiling is now lower than this glass line, pull the dropped ceiling back from the window to maintain the window's historical dimensions.
6. Preserve the size and shape of upper story windows.
- a. Consider reopening the windows if they are presently blocked. Window shades or curtains, in colors that coordinate with other accent trim, are encouraged.
 - b. If lower ceilings are necessary, pull the ceiling back from the window to maintain the original height at the window.
 - c. If the budget cannot include reopening the windows, consider using shutters to define the original window dimensions.
 - d. Where upper story windows can be maintained, consider using curtains that repeat colors used on first floor awnings and trim. This is especially useful where upper floors are vacant. In this way, the second story can reinforce the color scheme of the store below, and the upper story will not show its vacancy as clearly.
7. Consider using fabric awnings to provide weather protection and create interest. This is particularly useful for buildings that are quite simple.

- a. The awning should fit the dimensions of the storefront opening, to emphasize these proportions. It should not obscure ornamental details. Operable or fixed awnings are appropriate.
 - b. Mount the top edge to align with the top of the transom, or to align with the framing that separates the transom from the main display window.
 - c. Align awnings with others on the block, where feasible. Exact alignment is not critical, and proper clearance to sidewalk must be maintained.
 - d. Coordinate the color of the awning with the color of the entire building. Fabric awnings are encouraged and striped awnings can add interest.
 - e. On some buildings, horizontal metal canopies may be appropriate where there is historic precedence for their being used on similar buildings.
 - f. Rough-sawn wood, plastic, shake or asphalt shingles, or rolled tar paper are not appropriate for awnings of canopies. Fake mansard roofs are also inappropriate.
8. Preserve original ornamentation and details of the façade and/or exterior.
- a. Where portions of details have been removed, refer to photographic evidence of the earlier condition, and look for details that may have been removed.
 - b. Where exact reconstruction of details is not feasible, consider developing a simplified interpretation of the original in which its major forms and lines are retained.
 - c. Ornamental caps or cornices at the top of the façade are encouraged.
 - d. Consider highlighting details with accent colors or lighting.
9. Avoid concealing original facade materials.
- a. If original material has been covered, uncover it if feasible.
 - b. If portions of the original must be replaced, use a material similar to the original in color and texture.
 - c. Highly reflective materials are discouraged because they create glare and therefore discourage pedestrian activity.
 - d. Look for decorative brick patterns that are integral parts of the façade design. These especially merit preservation.

10. Leave brick unpainted where feasible.
 - a. This is especially appropriate for historic buildings.
 - b. If the brick is already painted, avoid paint removal schemes that damage the finish with abrasives methods. Sandblasting, for example, will damage the finish and accelerate erosion.
 - c. Consider repainting the brick rather than stripping the finish down to bare brick. Recognize that this will require repainting periodically.
11. Use roof forms similar to those established on the block.
 - a. Most roofs present a flat parapet to the street. This is encouraged.
 - b. In any case, use roof forms that will strengthen the horizontal alignment of cornices and parapets along the street.
 - c. Fake mansard and shed roofs are inappropriate because they are out of character with the original façade designs.
 - d. Avoid concealing the original roof line.

SPECIAL GUIDELINES

Plain Front Buildings

Some buildings in the downtown area do not appear to have historic features or even contemporary ornamentation. Many were built as simple fronts. Others are actually cover-ups on older buildings. These Special Guidelines apply to such buildings in addition to the General Guidelines in this document.

12. Whenever feasible, uncover original facade materials.
 - a. These materials are often more durable and more interesting than later coverings.
 - b. These materials may also provide an overall design idea for other building elements.
 - c. If the building is a more recent addition to the street, it is important to retain its simple original features, such as storefront glass, recessed entry, etc.

13. If uncovering is not feasible, develop a new design that will reinforce generic characteristics of other buildings on the block.
 - a. Develop a new contemporary façade, using traditional storefront elements described above, or:
 - b. Develop a simple design with a unified paint scheme, and an awning and sign as accents.
 - c. An inexpensive option is to develop a decorative paint scheme for the plain front.

Rear Entrances

14. Develop the rear entrance for shared public and service access where feasible.
 - a. Use an overall scheme of materials and colors that coordinate with the main façade.
15. Avoid concealing original materials when enhancing rear entrances.
16. Screen service equipment and trash containers.
 - a. Look for opportunities to cluster trash containers with other users on the block.

Illumination

17. Use lighting to highlight building features.
 - a. Consider spotlights on ornamental brackets or decorative moldings.
18. Use lighting to unify the building composition at night
 - a. The display window lighting should remain the dominant element. Do not overpower this with extensive lighting on other façade elements.
19. Balance the color and intensity of lighting among building features.
 - a. Sign lighting should be balanced in color and intensity with light in display windows.
 - b. Warm-color light is preferred.

- c. Fixtures should be concealed, or very simple, and appropriate to the period of the building.

Signs

Signage shall be designed to blend with the character of the neighborhood, and shall not detract from the general streetscape.

20. These types of signs may be considered:
 - Flush-mounted
 - Free-standing
 - Projecting
 - Window
 - Awning
 - Monument
 - Product display
 - Wall Murals (Ghost Signs)
21. Position flush-mounted signs so they will fit within architectural features.
22. Locate projecting signs along the first floor level of the façade, not above.
23. Where several businesses share a building, coordinate signs.
24. Mount signs so they will not obscure any architectural details.
 - a. Locate flush signs so they do not extend beyond the outer edges of the building front.
25. Sign materials should be compatible with the facade materials.
 - a. Painted wood and metal are encouraged.
26. Illuminate signs in such a way as to enhance the overall composition of the façade.
27. Indirect light sources are preferred.

Color

28. Use color schemes that will complement other buildings nearby.
 - a. Look to see if colors used by others in the block may be incorporated into the scheme.

29. Use color to coordinate facade elements in an overall promotion.
 - a. Use only one base color for the majority of the background wall surface.
 - b. Base colors should be muted earth tones or pastels.
30. Reserve bright colors for accents only.
 - a. Use bright colors only in small amounts.
 - b. Consider accent colors for signs, awnings, and entrance doors.

STREETSCAPE

Streetscape refers to urban roadway design and conditions as they impact street users and nearby residents. Streetscaping recognizes that streets are places where people engage in various activities, including but not limited to motor vehicle travel. Streetscapes are an important component of the *public realm* (public spaces where people interact), which help defines a community's aesthetic quality, identity, economic activity, health, social cohesion and opportunity, not just its mobility.

Programs to improve streetscape conditions can include changes to the road cross section, traffic management, sidewalk conditions, landscaping, street furniture (utility poles, benches, fencing, garbage cans, etc.), building fronts, and materials specifications. It also involves improving signage.

Streetscaping must be a concerted effort between business owners and the community. When possible, new construction or rehabilitation of the components of street design should be done in a consistent manner with regards to the façade improvement guidelines.



Landscape Guidelines

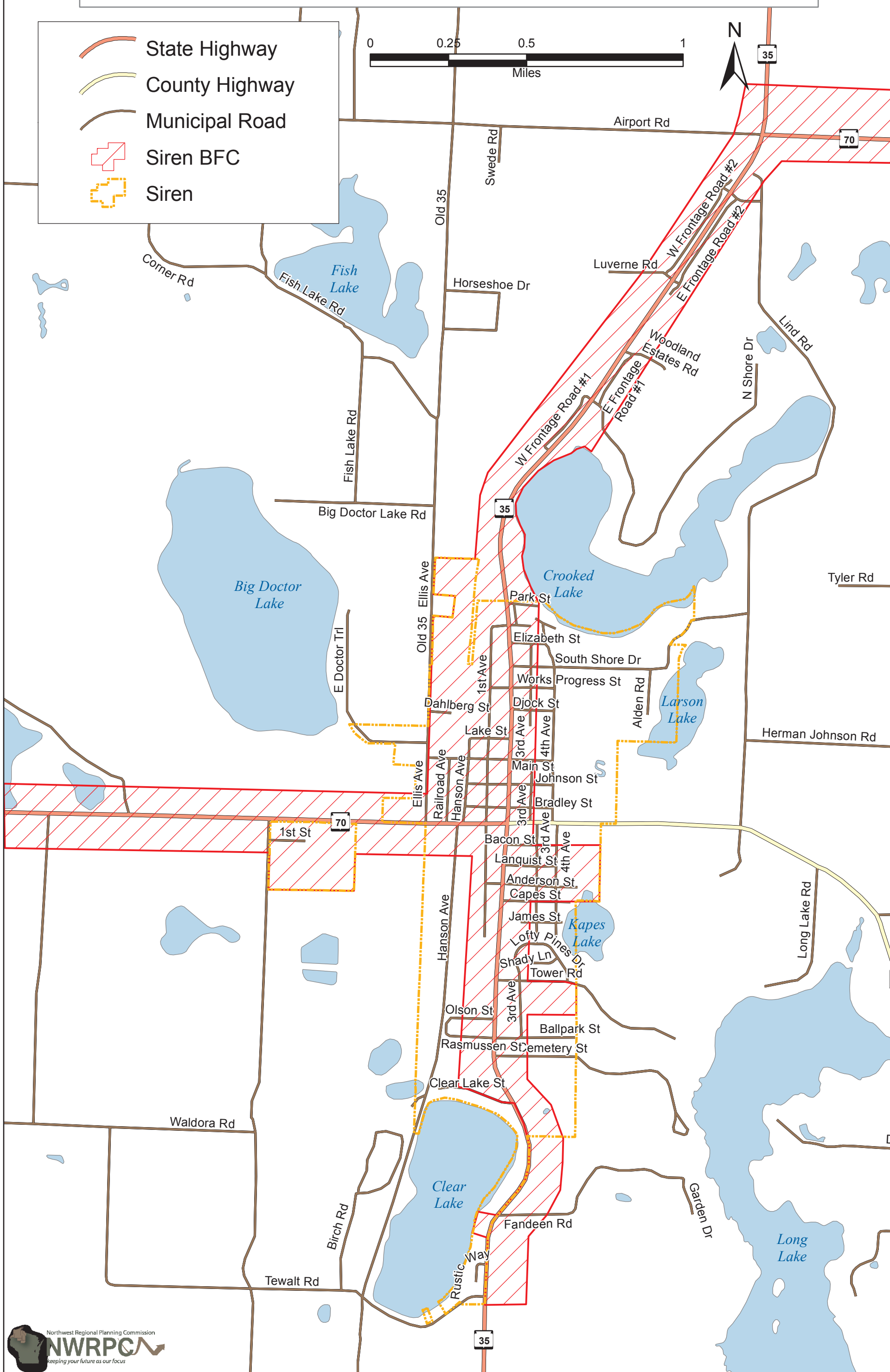
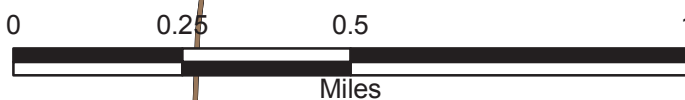
Streetscape design plans will primarily use native plants (flowering and non-flowering and trees. These plants may be placed at focal points, interpretive displays, and other activity centers along the entryway corridor. For appropriate landscape plant to use, consult “*A Guide to Selecting Landscape Plants for Wisconsin*” by E.R. Hasselkus.

References

- ✓ Keeping Up Appearances ©1995 National Main Street Center, National Trust for Historic Preservation
- ✓ Rice Lake Main Street Design Guidelines
- ✓ Village of Siren Commercial and Industrial Redevelopment Plan, 2002

Siren Business Facade Corridor

-  State Highway
-  County Highway
-  Municipal Road
-  Siren BFC
-  Siren



BUILDING COMPONENTS

