



CHAPTER 2:

NORTH FISH HATCHERY ROAD OPPORTUNITY ANALYSIS

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CHAPTER 2: NORTH FISH HATCHERY ROAD OPPORTUNITY ANALYSIS

I. TRANSPORTATION

Issues:

North Fish Hatchery Road is a multimodal corridor with a number of issues, or deficiencies, for motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists and transit users that need to be addressed. These include:

1. North Fish Hatchery Road is a very wide arterial with a great deal of pavement and limited landscaping or streetscape features, which creates an “Anywhere U.S.A.” atmosphere, and encourages high speed traffic – when traffic volumes permit.
2. Automobile access to/from north Fish Hatchery Road is difficult and often dangerous, particularly all left-hand turning movements.
3. Automobile and pedestrian access between private properties on the same side of the road either does not exist or is inconvenient. Similarly, access to neighborhoods behind businesses bordering north Fish Hatchery Road on the west side does not exist between Post Road and Greenway Cross. This is an exceptionally long distance without one or two access points.
4. Sidewalks along north Fish Hatchery Road are not connected to businesses; pedestrians must walk on driveways to access businesses.
5. Pedestrian crossings on north Fish Hatchery Road are dangerous, inconvenient, and undesirable. There are also too few crossings.
6. Traffic volumes average 42,000 cars/day on north Fish Hatchery Road within the study area boundary. Alternative routes accompanied by some traffic calming along north Fish Hatchery Road should be identified in order to better serve all modes of transportation.
7. Greenway Cross is the only cross street that intersects north Fish Hatchery Road inside the study area, a factor which limits access to adjoining neighborhoods and puts a great deal of stress on north Fish Hatchery Road which must serve all businesses along the corridor and act as a major throughway. The next intersection does not occur until McKee Road, a significant distance from the southern boundary of the study area.
8. The intersections within the study area function reasonably well for through traffic and right turn movements but drivers have difficulty making left turn movements. Further their ability to move traffic at the current level of service has compromised safe pedestrian movement and crossing.
9. The road has many private driveways to off-street parking lots, which affects traffic circulation and pedestrian safety.
10. Currently the difficulty associated with exiting and re-entering traffic on north Fish Hatchery Road diminishes the positive effect of the high traffic counts.

11. Many businesses on the west side of the study area are difficult to access from north Fish Hatchery Road. Without an alternative drive to the west these businesses are in many ways isolated from both the existing uses to the east, and new developments to the west.
12. The shared bicycle/bus/right-turn lane does not serve its intended purpose. Many automobiles use this lane as a third lane, and it is not safe for bicyclists. Consequently, there is effectively no north-south bicycle route into the City or along this corridor.
13. Traffic is a problem, according to the public, on local roads in adjacent neighborhoods on the west side of the north Fish Hatchery Road. Many people cut-through these streets at high speeds. Traffic calming or enforcement should be addressed in these areas.

Opportunities:

The following opportunities should be considered to improve north Fish Hatchery Road as a multimodal transportation corridor and as a pedestrian-friendly and walkable neighborhood business district.

1. Extend Post Road to create a new cross street connection on north Fish Hatchery Road, and to improve access to uses along the west side of the road. Include pedestrian crosswalks that are easy to see and offer a pedestrian refuge island in the median. Post Road has already been extended in Madison to the City of Fitchburg boundary.
2. Consider extending other existing streets across north Fish Hatchery Road (e.g. Traceway Drive, Pike Drive) to better integrate the east and west sides of the study area, and break-up the super-block pattern that characterizes current development in the study area. Further, future developments should reinforce this new circulation pattern by including new streets that connect to the existing street network in the study area as well as the larger region.
3. Consolidate private driveways into shared access driveways that serve multiple businesses thereby minimizing left turn movements along north Fish Hatchery Road. This might also create an opportunity to extend medians.
4. The low density of development or undeveloped land surrounding many of the commercial areas provides opportunities for alternative streets to the rear of businesses along both sides of north Fish Hatchery Road. These streets or alleys would alleviate pressure on North Fish Hatchery, eliminate multiple access points, provide an alternative north-south bicycle connection and safe and convenient access to parking at the rear of businesses.
5. If the Bowman properties develop, incorporate linkages between this corridor and the regional trail and greenway system by providing connections to the Capital City Bicycle Trail and the Nine Springs E-Way. These linkages should add value to the Bowman properties as well.
6. Improve community-wide transit service from the Madison Metro South Transfer Point. Provide safe and convenient transit stops along both sides of north Fish Hatchery Road to ensure safe access to transit for all residents, customers and businesses.

7. Provide an enhanced wayfinding system to direct north Fish Hatchery Road travelers to destinations such as the Fitchburg City Hall, Nine Springs Golf Course, Green-Tech Village, City parks, etc.
8. Since many businesses are set far back from the road, space exists for businesses to create safe, convenient and attractive pedestrian paths between the public sidewalks and their front doors. Also, encourage businesses to share parking areas and create sidewalks or pedestrian paths between their businesses.
9. Coordinate north Fish Hatchery Road transportation opportunities with current City of Fitchburg, City of Madison, Town of Madison and WisDOT reconstruction plans.

II. REDEVELOPMENT

Issues:

The North Fish Hatchery Road Improvement District offers many issues which could be addressed through future redevelopment.

1. Development of the north Fish Hatchery Road study area occurred primarily in the 1970's and 1980's. Today, its appearance, site design, architecture and overall functionality signify an aging suburban commercial corridor.
2. Much of north Fish Hatchery Road is comprised of separate building sites with limited connections from one use to another or between uses and the public street. These large gaps between uses impact street life and pedestrian character. They likely also have an impact on the corridor's economy.
3. While there are long-standing businesses that support community needs, the corridor lacks a business mix that can capitalize on its role as a neighborhood center and community gateway corridor. There are several businesses such as liquor stores and check-cashing services that create the perception that the area is in decline. Some business areas, such as Fitchburg Ridge (even with its new façade), lack a sense of place and activity, which contributes to the perception that the area is unsafe.
4. Residential uses within and adjoining the study area have the potential to stabilize and support the business district, and many of them do. However as the area has evolved it has incurred a concentration of multi-family rental units – some of which have begun to exhibit rising vacancy rates and low maintenance.
5. The corridor lacks a center of gravity or a commercial center – a place where businesses, residents, civic uses, and open spaces/recreation come together to create an anchor for northern Fitchburg.

Opportunities:

The following opportunities should be considered to enhance north Fish Hatchery Road as a neighborhood and community business district that builds on the strengths of its location, recreation and natural resource assets, traffic counts, and adjacency to a fast growing residential market.

1. There are a large number of vacant or significantly underutilized properties in the corridor that could serve as key infill development areas. New or redeveloped buildings on these properties can diversify the business and residential mix while adding greater density and a higher level of activity for the corridor. Utilize TIF funding and other financial tools to capture development increment for public improvements.
2. Develop an economic strategy that is focused on recruiting new businesses, retaining existing businesses, creating new employment opportunities and developing new housing choices.
3. Prepare comprehensive neighborhood plans for the redevelopment of adjoining multi-family rental neighborhoods that provide a strategy for diversifying the housing choices and demographics of the area while providing better connections between these neighborhoods and the north Fish Hatchery Road businesses, services and employment areas.
4. There is a tremendous opportunity at the intersection of Post Road (after the extension is constructed) and North Fish Hatchery to create a commercial center for the corridor and northern Fitchburg focal point with signature buildings on all four corners, a variety of public amenities (e.g. benches, plaza) and strong linkages across this road. Existing businesses and residences could/should be incorporated into this large-scale redevelopment.
5. The gateway intersection into the City at Greenway Cross should also be redeveloped to include signature buildings on all four corners with a major community entrance feature.
6. Relate buildings in new development, redevelopment and infill areas to north Fish Hatchery Road to establish a pedestrian scale and character.
7. Redevelop existing strip centers and stand-alone uses around “main street” principles to create a series of pedestrian-friendly business districts along north Fish Hatchery Road. “Main Street” principals include shared curb cuts and parking lots, walkways between buildings, coordinated architectural design, landscape improvements and amenities, and infill development that creates a pedestrian-friendly street face.
8. Develop new housing east of north Fish Hatchery Road along traditional neighborhood development guidelines that provide a range of new housing options for various ages and income levels.
9. Coordinate north Fish Hatchery Road redevelopment with existing neighborhood plans and current rehabilitation initiatives elsewhere in the City of Fitchburg, the City of Madison, and the Town of Madison.

III. URBAN DESIGN

Issues:

The North Fish Hatchery Road improvement district exhibits several factors which diminish the overall aesthetic of the district, a summary of these factors follows.

1. North Fish Hatchery Road is the gateway corridor leading into the City of Fitchburg, but lacks a coordinated streetscape character that is consistent with its importance. North Fish Hatchery Road has a dull and visually cluttered “anywhere U.S.A” character that results in a sense of invisibility rather than a sense of place for the gateway to Fitchburg. There is nothing to distinguish the City of Fitchburg from the City or Town of Madison along this corridor.
2. The visual character of north Fish Hatchery Road is one of a vast auto-related strip center with uses separate from the street, multiple curb cuts, parking in the front, and limited connections between uses and the public sidewalk. Much of the corridor’s building stock, site planning and private signage lack a cohesive identity.
3. North Fish Hatchery Road is a major barrier that divides neighborhoods and business districts, creating an isolated, unfriendly and unsafe environment.
4. North Fish Hatchery Road is a wide stretch of pavement that is nearly devoid of street trees or landscaping, and does not provide the level of enclosure, either through buildings fronting on the street or through street trees, that is consistent with a comfortable, human-scaled pedestrian environment – or an attractive boulevard, parkway or thoroughfare.
5. North Fish Hatchery Road lies at the center of a large interconnected open space system that is not visually apparent and has limited access from the road.

Opportunities:

The following opportunities should be considered to enhance the visual character, identity and pedestrian atmosphere of north Fish Hatchery Road.

1. Create significant entrance features at the intersection of Greenway Cross and north Fish Hatchery Road.
2. Open views and access to the Nine Springs E-Way and Golf Course to strengthen north Fish Hatchery Road’s relationship to the adjoining parks and open space system.
3. Eliminate left turn movements by creating wider medians with fewer interruptions that in turn can be a key unifying element of the streetscape with landscaping reminiscent of the Nine Springs E-Way to link the identity of north Fish Hatchery Road to the adjoining trail and greenway system.
4. Develop a coordinated streetscape theme for north Fish Hatchery Road that unifies the road as a gateway corridor into Fitchburg, with ornamental roadway lighting, street trees, banners, pedestrian amenities, etc. and buries the overhead utility lines.

5. Develop a “town square” with public gathering places, public art, pedestrian streetscape features, pedestrian scale lights, furnishings, etc. at the new intersection of Post Road and north Fish Hatchery Road.
6. Provide entrance signs that celebrate Fitchburg and identify features for new and existing neighborhoods adjacent to north Fish Hatchery Road.
7. Explore traffic calming techniques at pedestrian crossing points that include visible design features such as landscaping and colored pavements.
8. Prepare design guidelines for north Fish Hatchery Road that apply “Place-making” or “Main Street” principles to redevelopment and rehabilitation areas; establish a design theme organized around the landscape of the surrounding environmental corridors and the Fish Hatchery that the road is named after; and incorporate CPTED guidelines (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design) to reduce crime and to improve the safety of the street.

IV. LAND USE & ZONING

Issues:

1. The north Fish Hatchery Road corridor is one of the most fully developed corridors in Fitchburg and the study area lies completely within the urban service area. However, significant undeveloped and agricultural land exists along the road and immediately behind buildings and properties for much of the east side of the corridor. More intensive use of this area would make better use of existing infrastructure and alleviate pressure to develop on the urban fringe.
2. Large residential neighborhoods surround the study area on the west, and more are planned, but over the past decade many of the neighborhood supporting retail uses have left the area.
3. Significant open spaces surround the corridor area but there are no corresponding open spaces or parks within the study area, particularly not where the most people live in the high density multifamily areas.
4. The land use pattern within the area generally consists of several small parcels with the parking areas, signage and access points of individual businesses dividing up the frontage along north Fish Hatchery Road.
5. The area and adjacent neighborhoods provide limited flexibility in terms of available housing and tenure types.

Opportunities:

1. Expand and intensify development on land within the study area to better utilize the existing infrastructure and adjacent open space amenities.
2. The area boasts one of the most convenient locations in Fitchburg and the greater Madison metro area and has the potential to enhance the existing mix of uses to include: outpatient

medical services, city-wide retail destinations, neighborhood supporting retail, professional office space, restaurants and civic spaces.

3. Provide a greater variety of housing choices within and surrounding the study area including but not limited to: owner-occupied condominiums and town/row houses, apartments over retail or office space, affordable senior housing, and single-family housing units.
4. Develop a neighborhood plan for the Ridgewood Country Club Apartments.
5. Connect the adjacent Nine Springs E-Way to the study area via a northern route for the Capital City Trail and/or the addition of connecting parkland to the corridor in the form of small pocket parks or green plazas.
6. Coordinate land uses and redevelopment on several of the smaller parcels that comprise the study area to establish a cohesive land use pattern that will improve the function of the corridor for living, shopping and working.
7. Expand access to the eastern portion of the study area to spur development of a greater mix of and intensity of land uses.
8. Integrate the business district with existing and future neighborhoods.
9. Expand civic uses in the study area to better integrate the north Fish Hatchery Road district with the City of Fitchburg.
10. Capitalize upon the study area's convenient location and access to mass transit through further development of outpatient medical support services, senior housing, and other senior support facilities.
11. Land uses adjacent to the E-Way must be developed with environmentally sound practices to ensure preservation of this unique natural amenity.
12. The City should work with the Bowman family to create a master plan for the development of their properties in a way that achieves the family's and City's goals and objectives, and in a way that protects the nearby environmentally sensitive areas.
13. Amend the land use designations and zoning classifications for properties within this corridor during the Comprehensive Planning process to implement the community's vision for this corridor.

1. IMPROVED ACCESS

Pedestrian Facilities

- A. Safe and attractive crossings at intersections
- B. Improve linkages to businesses and between businesses and neighborhoods

Bicycle Facilities

- C. Connection with Capital City Bike Trail through Golf Course and Greenway
- D. Improve on-road bicycle lanes for north-south traffic
- E. Extend off-street bike trail from Hatchery Hill to Greenway Cross

Automobiles

- F. New/Extended streets and intersections
 - a. Extend Post Rd. and connect to Latham Dr. and Index Rd.
 - b. New mid-block intersection on N. Fish Hatchery Rd. between Post Rd. and Greenway Cross
 - c. Extend Traceway Rd. through Foremost Farms property if it is redeveloped, and connect to Post Rd.
- G. Improve traffic flow through:
 - a. Shared access and parking areas between businesses
 - b. Limit driveways and left-hand turning movements on N. Fish Hatchery
- H. Improve access to rear of properties fronting N. Fish Hatchery Rd. from Index Rd.
- I. Traffic calming on local roads

Transit

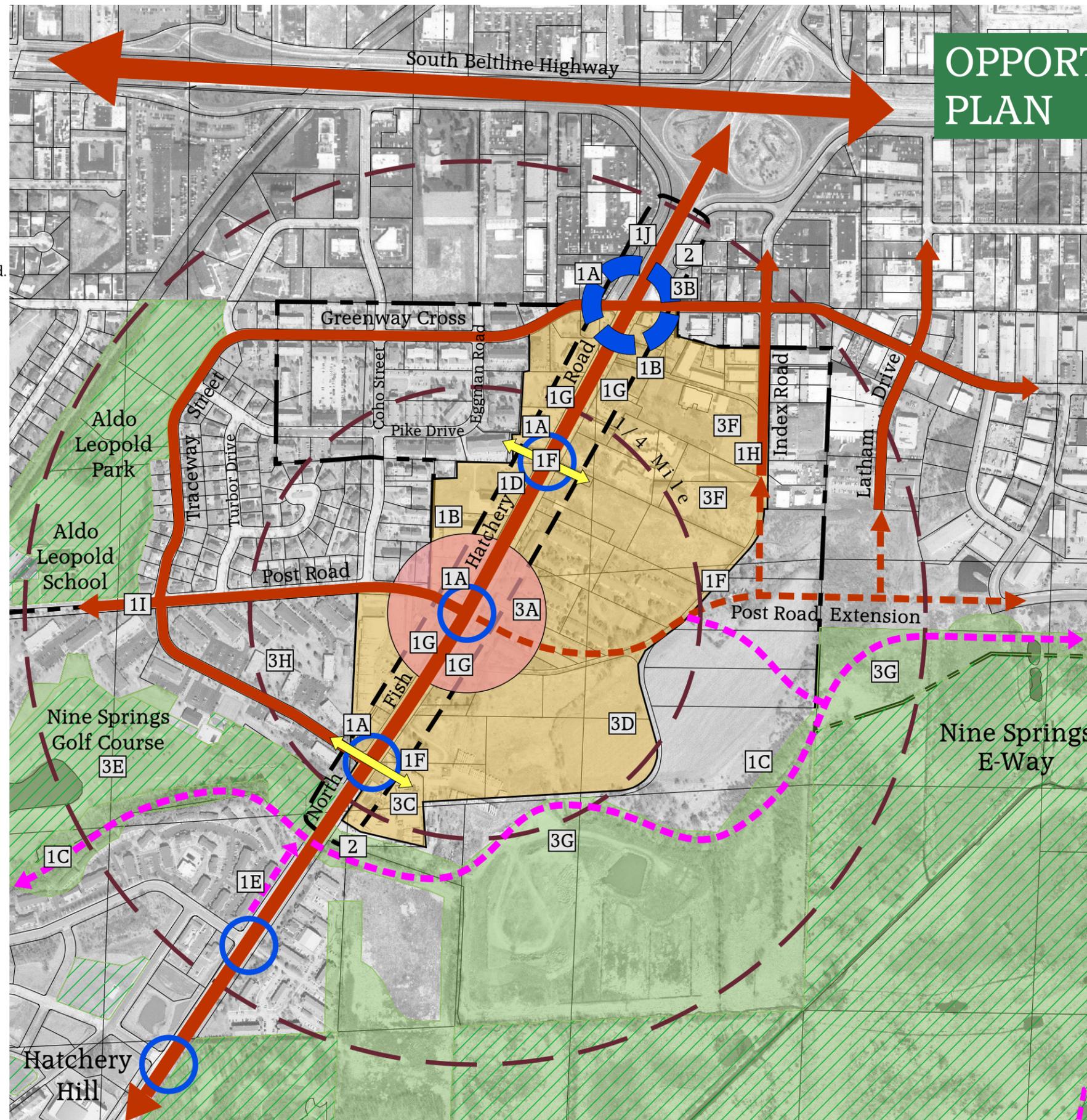
- J. Maintain and Improve Service

2. THEME AND IDENTITY

- A. Streetscape improvements - bury overhead utility lines, median, coordinated family of streetscape amenities, wayfinding
- B. Design guidelines for private properties
- C. Integrate corridor into the E-Way, green/open space to establish the community's environmental character and identity, including medians, private landscaping and terrace between streets and sidewalks

3. LAND USE AND REDEVELOPMENT

- A. Potential Commercial Center
 - a. Mixed uses with commercial, residential, civic and open spaces
 - b. Community/neighborhood focal points
- B. Gateway
 - a. Entrance features
 - b. Redevelopment/rehabilitation of existing buildings
- C. Foremost Farms, Inc.
 - a. Potential long-term relocation and redevelopment
 - b. Traceway Road extension through property to link to Post Road
- D. Bowman Undeveloped Properties
 - a. Mixed-use near or along N. Fish Hatchery, limited neighborhood commercial/mixed use along Post Rd., and residential near and abutting E-way
 - b. Integrate bike path linkages to regional system
 - c. Create neighborhood park(s) and recreation facilities
- E. Golf Course?
- F. Create opportunities for redevelopment and infill at the rears of parcels bordering N. Fish Hatchery Rd. along Index Rd.
- G. Create parks and recreation facilities in/along E-way if possible
- H. Ridgewood Apartments
 - a. Stabilize and rehabilitate



OPPORTUNITIES PLAN

North Fish Hatchery Road Improvement District Fitchburg, Wisconsin

Legend

- Study Area
- Environmental Corridor
- Parks and Open Space
- Fitchburg City Limits
- Gateway

Plan Purpose

The Opportunities Plan identifies a general set of possibilities for improving multimodal access, establishing a theme and identity, and guiding future land use and redevelopment along and around North Fish Hatchery Road.



0 1/16 mi 1/8 mi

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