

VIEW FROM CITY HALL: BUSINESS CENTER EXPANSION CRITICAL TO CITY'S GROWTH

By: Chad Pelishek, Director of Planning and Development

In February, the City of Sheboygan engaged Ruekert Mielke, Inc. in association with Hitchcock Design Group to perform preliminary planning for an expansion of the City's current business park. The current Sheboygan Business Center is approximately 90 percent full and if the City wants to stay competitive in the local manufacturing market, expansion of the park is critical. The Five Year Strategic Plan adopted in late 2016, identified the expansion and development of an expanded business park as one of the key objectives. To accomplish this goal, it is necessary to do detailed planning to determine the available opportunities, yield and position in the marketplace. Based upon this information, along with discussions with the City's development team and representatives from the Sheboygan County Economic Development Corporation, multiple lot and street configurations were studied and delivered. The analysis considered existing parcel boundaries, municipal borders and possible phasing boundaries since it is unlikely the expanded business park can be built all at once. Another key element, identified by city staff, was to consider flexibility in the lot configurations that would allow for varying lot sizes to accommodate the desires of potential buyers.

The most logical location for the City to expand its business park is south of the current business center. The City currently owns a 55 acre parcel between South Business Drive and I-43. This property will also be the location of new elevated water storage tank to be constructed by the Sheboygan Water Utility in 2018 to serve this area with city water service. The business center expansion could include as much as 400 additional acres that can be developed in phases over time. The plan indicates sites in a range of sizes, including larger sites up to 20+ acres. The plan is intended to be flexible and allow for development of sites varied in size based on need. The preferred plan outlines zones for different land use/tenant types. The office/manufacturing zone is intended to accommodate smaller scale uses including corporate offices, light industrial, and smaller scale manufacturing and warehousing. The large manufacturing zone is intended to accommodate uses with a need for larger sites to support their operations. The plan also addresses infrastructure and storm water management and sustainability. The City envisions the new park to embrace sustainability as a theme. Green infrastructure components and low-impact development practices with such things as bioswales, rain gardens, green roofs, and rainwater harvesting and distribution. Implementation and phasing will occur as the City acquires property and based on demand.

The city anticipates phase one of the project to occur on city owned property and vacant farmland located north of Sunset Road to the north site of Stahl Road. The City's Industrial Park fund would pay any future land purchases. This fund was established to collect payments from sale of property in our current business center and allow it to be used to purchase additional acreage for expansion. To accommodate the large costs associated with developing the park, the City anticipates the need to create a tax incremental district (TID). When the City created a TID to develop the current business center in 1993, after the district closed, the excess funds in the district were paid back to surrounding taxing jurisdictions which included the Kohler School District, Sheboygan Area School District, Lakeshore Technical College and Sheboygan County. The proposed timeline calls for the purchase of property in phase one to occur in late 2017. The City will work with the consultant to start design and engineering

related to the park in 2017 and possibly bid infrastructure in early 2018 and construction next summer.
To view the preferred plan, please visit the following link: <http://tinyurl.com/y95d7m43>