

# **SCHROEDER TOWNSHIP**

## **PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE**

**MARCH 2004**

**Prepared for:**

Cook County Board of Commissioners  
Cook County Office of Planning and Zoning  
Schroeder Town Board

**Prepared by:**

Schroeder Township Planning Committee

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Based on Schroeder citizen input

# SCHROEDER SUB-AREA PLAN

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## I. Introduction

The purpose of this document is to provide the Cook County Board of Commissioners and the Cook County Office of Planning and Zoning with citizen-based input into the revision of the “Land Use Guide Plan for Cook County, Minnesota” (1997) as it pertains to Schroeder Township.

- The “Land Use Guide Plan for Cook County, Minnesota” (1997) states in the Desired Future Conditions for West End Community Centers that “each community center has been planned through local planning processes”.
- The Cook County Office of Planning and Zoning suggested at the August 27, 2002 Schroeder Town Meeting that the Township prepare a plan to aid the County in responding to local area development requests.
- Creation of a Township Plan will allow local input into the growth process, which may affect the future configuration and tone of the community.

Schroeder and its citizens recognize the need to participate in this revision to provide township contribution toward full implementation of the County Land Use Plan.

## II. The Process

After the request by Cook County Planning and Zoning that Schroeder develop a sub-area plan, the Schroeder Town Supervisors made zoning maps available at two locations for residents to mark up with suggestions. The Township plan was discussed at fifteen meetings (both special planning sessions and regular Town Board Meetings) between October 29, 2002 and June 10, 2003; all open to public comment. During these meetings, the area was divided into distinct geographic sections:

- Highway 61 Corridor East of Taconite Harbor to Temperance River State Park
- Highway 61 Corridor from Taconite Harbor West to the County Line
- The Cramer Road
- Sugarloaf Road

Many of these meetings addressed the requests for rezoning brought forward by Minnesota Power. The Town Board provided a Letter of Recommendation to the County Planning and Zoning and Commissioners on December 10, 2002, and continues to support the plan approved by the Cook County Board of Commissioners.

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The Board decided in June 2003 to suspend sub-area planning until fall. On October 14, 2003 the Schroeder Planning Committee was formed to document the overall consensus from the previous meetings, including documented public opinions. The Committee, comprised of seven people (the three town board members, two members representing business interests and two representing permanent and seasonal residents), met in an open forum to complete the documentation prior to the Annual Town Meeting in March 2004. At the November 10, 2003 meeting, in accordance with public opinion, the Committee hired one of its members to perform the documentation, with the assistance of the Committee and any interested public attending the review meetings.

At the Annual Meeting, the Committee plans to present the written document and request final written comments be submitted to the Town Clerk within 10 business days (March 23) after the meeting. The Committee will review the final comments and make any necessary modifications for a final Town Board vote.

The resulting approved document will then be presented to the Cook County Planning and Zoning Office and the Cook County Board of Commissioners to be used as a guideline when reviewing business and zoning opportunities requested within Schroeder Township.

### **III. Schroeder's Identity**

Schroeder is a unique community within Cook County. Our town possesses:

- Historical significance as one of the original townships in Cook County and the presence of the Schroeder Area Historical Society. John Schroeder, the town's namesake, ran a significant lumber harvesting operation in the area.
- Natural characteristics such as the Cross River, Baragas Cross, Two Island River, Temperance River State Park and Sugarloaf Interpretive Center, as well as the Natural Forests which surround the township.
- Recreational opportunities abound such as: hunting, cross-country skiing, snowmobiling, snowshoeing and hiking on the Superior Hiking Trail. There are many boating and fishing opportunities from public accesses to Lake Superior at Taconite Safe Harbor and Baragas Cross or from one of the many inland lake accesses. The Lake Superior Water Trail, a kayak and canoe route, also passes through the area. The town park with picnic facilities is situated at scenic Baragas Cross. County, township and forest roads are frequent leaf- and bird-watching routes, including the noteworthy Moose Drive Fall Color Tour Loop. Construction of the paved Gitchi-Gami Bike trail will connect the town of Schroeder with the town of Tofte and eventually connect the entire length of the North Shore from Duluth to Grand Portage for bicyclists and in-line skaters.

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Schroeder Township has historically been the most “industrial” of the Cook County townships, and supports development of a place where a variety of businesses can succeed. The wide range of lands is suitable for:

- heavy industrial
- light industrial
- resort commercial
- general commercial
- home-based businesses
- varying densities and types of residential uses

## IV. Desired Future Conditions

### A. Highway 61 East from Taconite Harbor to Temperance River State Park

Current Conditions:

- This area historically contained the most recent town center and residential areas.
- Baragas Cross Road is currently zoned commercial although primary uses are residential.
- This area falls within the North Shore Management Plan (per Article 8 of the Cook County Zoning Ordinance).

Considerations:

- Land along Lake Superior that is zoned residential should remain in that classification.
- Existing businesses should be supported.
- While this is the historic town, there are challenges surrounding development (especially commercial) on some of the parcels. Environmentally sound, yet cost-effective, solutions will be needed for commercial development to thrive on these parcels.

2015 Conditions:

- The area adjacent to Highway 61 will be the focal point for commercial development. Mixed uses of residential and general commercial are to be encouraged.
- Rezoning of Baragas Cross Road to residential, with the exception of Hwy 61 frontage and Lamb’s Resort parcel, is supported.
- Throughout the corridor, land adjacent to Lake Superior maintains its special lakeshore residential status.
- Development maintains or complements the scenic characteristics of the corridor.

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## **B. Highway 61 from Taconite Harbor West to the County Line**

### Current Conditions:

- With the exception of the Taconite Harbor area and Satellite Country Inn, the area is zoned as residential.
- Minnesota Power recently brought forward rezoning requests which were supported by the Town Board in a Letter of Recommendation to the County Planning and Zoning and County Commissioners (December 10, 2002). The Township continues to support the plan approved by the Cook County Board of Commissioners.
- This area falls within the North Shore Management Plan (per Article 8 of the Cook County Zoning Ordinance).

### Considerations:

- The discussions that took place pertaining to this area included the largest diversity of opinions and presented the planning committee with the greatest challenges for building consensus.
- The issues of spot zoning, future business development and preservation of current uses were all considered and discussed.

### 2015 Conditions:

- Businesses existing in 2004 remain and continue to prosper.
- Residential uses continue and growth occurs in such a manner that the scenic characteristics of the corridor are preserved.

## **C. The Cramer Road**

### Current Conditions:

- Near Hwy 61, The Cramer Road (Cook County 1) is zoned for commercial and residential uses.
- As The Cramer Road continues away from Highway 61, there is an area with current and historical uses including gravel pits, landfills, a bioremediation site, a heavy industrial fly-ash disposal site and a former county garage site, buffered from residential areas by forty acres owned by the State of Minnesota.
- As The Cramer Road continues past Sugarloaf Road, uses are primarily larger FAR-1 and FAR-2 zoned lots.
- Minnesota Power recently brought forward rezoning requests which were supported by the Town Board in a Letter of Recommendation dated December 10, 2002 to the

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County Planning and Zoning and the County Commissioners. The Township continues to support the plan approved by the Cook County Board of Commissioners.

## Considerations:

- The community of Schroeder has historically had an industrial foundation, as evidenced by the Taconite Harbor facility. Historical uses in this area, along with a desire to maintain a diverse business base, were the foundations for the decisions regarding this area.

## 2015 Conditions:

- Extension of the community areas on Highway 61 (see Section A) are to be encouraged in the commercially zoned areas of The Cramer Road.
- The area supports significant residential developments as proposed by Minnesota Power and supported by the Town Board.
- Further up the road in T.58N-R5W, the NW and NE  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the NW  $\frac{1}{4}$  of Section 4, the NW and NE  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the NE  $\frac{1}{4}$  of Section 4, the NW and NE  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the NW  $\frac{1}{4}$  of Section 3, and the NW  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the NE  $\frac{1}{4}$  of Section 3, seven forty-acre parcels are supported for development as light industrial.

## D. Sugarloaf Road

### Current Conditions:

- With the exception of two developments (one with FAR-3 zoning and the other with mixed FAR-1 and 2), the area is zoned FAR-1.
- The area contains an existing bioremediation business, significant wetland areas and close proximity to a large gravel pit.
- This area excludes the intersection of Sugarloaf Road and Highway 61, as the intersection falls within the North Shore Management Plan (per Article 8 of the Cook County Zoning Ordinance).

### Considerations:

- Most of this area was zoned FAR-1 between 1965 and 1981 when Erie Mining, the State of Minnesota and Consolidated Paper owned virtually all of these parcels with no intention of developing. Consolidated Paper's parcels were sold to individual buyers in the early 1990's, and MN Power has begun developing or selling excess lands. The privately held

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parcels, not located within the Northshore Management Areas, are suitable for greater density development.

- Sugarloaf Rd, The Cramer Rd, and Hwy 61 make a sensible loop for future services such as bus and mail service.
- Much of the area along Sugarloaf Road has close proximity to existing electrical and telephone service.

## 2015 Conditions:

- FAR-3 zoning of ¼ mile on either side of Sugarloaf Road is supported, where conditions permit.
- No change is supported for the areas beyond ¼ mile at this time. Additional development projects should follow the standard approval process.

## E. Special Areas:

### 2015 Conditions for Interior Waterways

- The Township recognizes the environmental sensitivity of the interior lakes, rivers and streams and recommends lot sizes and densities be designed for long term environmental sustainability based on the site conditions and the natural physical limitations of the area.

### 2015 Conditions for Forest Service and DNR Lands

- Public lands continue to be managed for the benefit of public recreational and economic concerns, maintaining the current blend of motorized and non-motorized access opportunities and encouraging all users to be wise stewards.
- The Township supports conforming with current zoning on all privately held lands within these public lands.

## V. Summary

The citizens of Schroeder developed this document as their contribution toward full implementation of the county's "Land Use Guide Plan for Cook County, Minnesota", and is intended to guide the Cook County Office of Planning and Zoning and the Cook County Board of Commissioners in all subsequent decisions impacting land use in Schroeder Township.

Schroeder recognizes its unique sense of place on the North Shore, and seeks to create a functional blend of residential and business uses while maintaining and complementing the scenic characteristics of the area.