Scenic Byway Community Design - Osage

Case #1 - Osage

Description of community,

Osage is a quaint community nestled in the red cedar forest of northern Minnesota. The downtown precinct coupled with a necklace of lake associated park land creates an armature from which the Scenic Byway can be based. The LTM model predicts little or no growth for this area.

where its located on the Byway

Osage is west of park rapids on HWY. 34 on Straight LAKE. This area is the threshold of the forest region associated with Northern Minnesota

Why this community was chosen

Osage is a great location to do this study because it beautifully illustrates the potential seen in an area where forecasted growth will not be an issue. The idea here is to help Osage to organize its existing resources, natural and social, in an attempt to make cognitive connections between physical forms or places. Associating resources into a decernable system will be a paramount concern.
Existing Conditions

**LAND DESIGNATIONS**
- Highway 34
- Residential Property
- Department of Natural Resources Land
- Lions Club Land

**IMPORTANT STRUCTURES**
- Historic Church
- Grocery Store
- Cafe
- School
- Community Center
- Bait Shop
- Tavern

**IMPORTANT NATURAL FEATURES**
- Wetlands
- Beach Area
- Straight Lake
- Red Cedar Forest
- Wier Structure
- Straight River

**KEY LOCATIONS**
- Community Center, historic red structures, food market
- Lack of Definition along HWY. 34
Historic Church

Community Center

DNR fishing Pier

Lions Park picnic structure
Character Analysis

Straight Lake

Historic Structures

Retail Node
Opportunities & Constraints

You will probably note that some items are on both the opportunities and constraint lists. Constraints are not negative things, just areas in which it is important to exercise caution in the design work. Certain areas will have special needs or restrictions that it is important to be aware of.

Areas of Opportunity

Visibility Signage for Entry Marking
Gateway Entrance Location
Rest Stop on DNR Land
Commercial Retail Node
Open Space and Recreation
Trail Head Rest Area & Interpretive Center
Public Space
Beach Trail
Scenic Boardwalk
Fishing Pier

Areas of Constraint

Residential Areas
Historic Church
Wetlands
Design Strategies
for Improvements Along the Lake Country Scenic Byway

Osage has a unique opportunity to enhance their town identity and pedestrian connections by making design improvements to the Lake Country Scenic Byway, HWY 34. The linear corridor through the town provides the armature from which the community can organize and arrange the existing natural/cultural amenities, create defined edges and sense of place.

The existing corridor is undefined and relatively open. By creating “bump-outs”, new sidewalks, crosswalks, and street tree plantings, Osage will create the visual and physical elements that establishes a sense of place. A new sidewalk trail loops on both sides of HWY 34, connect the community center, market, tavern, bait shop, historic structures, boat launch, iron sculptors studio, cafe, beach, rest stop/trailhead, and existing parks.

By maintaining a 30 MPH speed limit between the two new town gateways Osage becomes a destination and memorable location along the Lake Country Scenic Byway. Using the HWY. 34 corridor as the organizing feature Osage can create a community loop by continuing the alley of trees accompanied by a sidewalk through the residential neighborhood to connect the lakefront, beach, school, and historic church. The lake front and pier structure are redesigned to improve connectivity and extend the trail along the north side of the road. The Boardwalk and redesigned pier structure directly connect the DNR park and new trailhead/restop area with the beach and community nodes. The future Heartland Trail will run parallel HWY.34 through Osage effectively becoming a local extension of the regional recreation system.
DESIGN RECOMMENDATIONS

Focus Area

DNR Boat Launch Park

Issues

Trail Connections:
- to Byway
- to Lake
- to Beach
- to Community Nodes
Projected Lack of Future Growth
Existing Neighborhoods
Community Appearance and Identity
Views

Section A1-A2

Ramp

Stairway to Boardwalk

New Nature Trail
Ramp

Hwy 34

Boardwalk Trail

Scenic Byway
Rest Stop/Trailhead Facilities

Section A1-A2
Focus Area

New Main Street Intersection, and Gateway Signage

Creating a boulevard or alley of trees along the Scenic Byway is an excellent opportunity to positively enhance the intrinsic values of the byway and the natural resources Osage already possesses. This arrangement of street tree plantings will act as a screen to the existing residential areas. Similarly, the plantings will be opened up and placed further apart in the community node areas creating an invitation to regional recreational resource users who are driving along the scenic byway.

The plan also calls for the creation of gateway signage areas to be created at the east and west entrances to Osage. These signage features are modeled after the State Forest signage currently used which takes the form of two horizontally stacked Obolosk structures with a wooden town nameplate. This form is already part of the vernacular signage vocabulary of the north woods which is easily recognized and automatically associated with the regional recreational system.
New Gateway Signage Obolesk Structures

Lake Country Scenic Byway included into design of Markers

Town Name Plate

Stacked Brick Face
Limestone, or Split Field Stones Construction

Blue Berry Planter
with red fall foliage

Here the Byway becomes the armature linking natural and cultural resources throughout Osage inviting travel to the area.