



The Village of Winthrop Harbor



The Necessity for Change: A Plan for Economic Development 2010

A Report by the Winthrop Harbor Economic Development Commission



*The Necessity for Change:
A Plan for Economic Development*

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Purpose

The enclosed report was produced by the Village of Winthrop Harbor Economic Development Commission (EDC) under direction of the Mayor and Board of Trustees.

Globally, terms like *uncertainty* and *financial crisis* are used to describe the state of the economy. The same can be said of our local economy and the resultant impact of this climate on our community—**if we do not secure new, non-residential revenue streams, we will not be able to sustain our current level of municipal services, nor invest in ongoing and necessary capital improvement/infrastructure projects.** Each year the cost of providing services increases at a faster pace than revenues. Using available surpluses accumulated during high residential growth periods and deferring infrastructure repairs has allowed the Village, so far, to operate in the black. Looking into the future, however, we see cause for concern and the *Necessity for Change.*

The following Economic Development Plan provides a historical context of economic development in and around the Village of Winthrop Harbor, a current status report, and lays out an ambitious, yet achievable, strategic economic agenda for the next 5 years. This plan identifies specific goals and objectives which leverage the Village's unique strengths. The plan articulates a set of measurable strategies and actions to facilitate economic growth and opportunity. The intent of this document is not to be an exhaustive strategic agenda, but rather it is intended to provide guidance and direction for economic development efforts and resource allocation.



Economic Development Commission

The Village of Winthrop Harbors Economic Development Commission (EDC) is an advisory panel comprised of citizen volunteers who are dedicated to the economic well being of our Village.

Economic Development Commission Roster:

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| <i>Chairman:</i> | Margo Nelson | <i>Members:</i> | Kenneth A. Jones |
| <i>Vice-Chairman:</i> | Buddy Hargett | | Kurt Melander |
| <i>Secretary:</i> | Shelly Walker | | Gary Powell |
| | | | Cyril A. Race |
| | | | Carl Simmons |
| | | | Julie Gonka |
| | | <i>Members at Large:</i> | Robert Long |
| | | | Terry Isaacs |

EDC Purpose:

The express purpose of the Economic Development Commission is to foster the economic development of Winthrop Harbor in order to improve the quality of life and overall economic welfare of all its citizens.

EDC Objective:

The objective of the EDC is to promote the development, establishment and expansion of commercial, industrial and professional enterprises in Winthrop Harbor which will increase the value of the non-residential tax base of the Village.



Summary of Activities & Accomplishments:

Throughout its existence, the Commission has advised the Village Board on economic development and business issues, undertaking numerous initiatives designed to attract new investment and support existing businesses. These include:

- Implementation of a TIF District at the northeast corner of Sheridan Road and 7th Street
- Hired a full time Economic Development Director to help implement the Village's economic development plan
- Secured construction funding in excess of \$2 million for the 7th Street Streetscape improvements
- Inventoried all commercial properties within the Village
- Conducted assessment regarding potential uses for commercial properties
- Created and instituted downtown summer concert series
- Secured funding for improving sidewalks along Sheridan Rd
- Established flower pot downtown beautification program
- Active pursuit of lakefront clean-up and fulfillment of the original Master Plan for North Point Marina
- Oversaw the painting of the Sheridan Road pedestrian bridge as a key structure in the appearance of the business district and as a marketing tool
- Worked with Metra on the expansion of the parking lot, addition of a warming station, and the shift to a pay parking lot, thereby improving the aesthetic appeal and creating a revenue stream to assist with the cost of maintenance of the train station parking area



Historical Context

In the over 100 years as an incorporated community, Winthrop Harbor has been an agricultural settlement, an industrial blue collar town, an upscale residential community, and a “drive thru” bedroom community.

In the 1970s, the State of Illinois, through its power of eminent domain, purchased 178 properties on the Winthrop Harbor lakefront. This property would later be absorbed into the North Unit of the Illinois Beach State Park and North Point Marina. Parallel to losing significant taxes and development potential, Winthrop Harbor also made zoning decisions that created a less than traditional downtown. Replacing the more traditional compact downtown, Winthrop Harbor instead chose to allow a sprawl of 15 blocks for potential retail development along Sheridan Road.

In the last 20 years, Winthrop Harbor’s population has continued to grow slowly. Available land for new developments has decreased, and the Village has become landlocked by surrounding communities. Small businesses have come and gone, in most cases with minimal positive impact.



Current Context: The Necessity for Change

Winthrop Harbor is a lakefront community, boasting the largest freshwater marina in the United States. Seated halfway between Chicago and Milwaukee, with the convenience of a recently expanded Metra stop, each year close to 3 million people visit Illinois Beach State Park and North Point Marina. Visitors take advantage of available world class recreational options such as boating, charter fishing, as well as enjoying the unique natural resources the area provides. In addition to being a destination community for recreation, Winthrop Harbor is also a safe place to raise children, with a close proximity to metropolitan resources and amenities in Chicago and Milwaukee. The Village's downtown, however, lacks the presentation normally found in a resort town. This provides an opportunity for redevelopment that when complete, will more adequately reflect the quality of the remainder of the community.

The State of Illinois has shown apathy towards ownership of the Village's lakefront and the potential economic benefit to pursuing long-standing development plans. These plans would add amenities necessary to increase visitation, while protecting the ongoing viability of the existing marina operation. The value of the lakefront as a critical tool to achieving the Village's economic development goals cannot be overstated. Additional lakefront development would broaden the appeal of our Village to non-boater visitors, significantly increasing the potential for attracting high traffic volumes that business investors look for in selecting sites. It is therefore necessary for the Village to continue to encourage the State to market development opportunities such as a hotel/resort, a high end restaurant and retail shops.

The promise of our Village, both in preservation and progress, lies purely in our ability to increase our business-based revenue streams. The quality of life in Winthrop Harbor—safety, sound infrastructure, fiscal conservatism, and high quality middle class housing are all at risk if we do not proactively take charge of our future through comprehensive planning and communication.

Today, as has been the case historically, through a series of strategic staffing realignments and modest tax increases, Winthrop Harbor remains in the black financially. In looking forward, however, it becomes apparent that a change in planning is necessary to ensure future financial stability. A balance must be achieved between residential and commercial development. To date the vast majority of recent development has come in the form of new housing. This type of development has the short term benefit of providing an influx of building fees while under construction, but the long term cost to continue to offer municipal services cannot be sustained on residential property tax alone.



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In fact, property tax collections tend only to cover normal operating expenses and do not provide for longer term capital improvements to the Village infrastructure: roads, water and sewer operations. The best option for funding these improvements will come from commercial development—which provides property tax as well as sales tax. It is sales tax revenue that will make the difference in sustaining Village services.

Increased sales tax revenues will not only mean that much needed infrastructure improvements can be made, but that funding will be available for other important local initiatives. Beloved events, such as the annual Fun Fair, Memorial Day Parade and Downtown Concert Series along with desired services such as the Village Newsletter and shuttle bus service would be less at risk due to budget constraints.

The merits of progress for progress' sake do not stand on their own; nor do those of nostalgia. Winthrop Harbor—a safe, quiet, lakefront community, must revise it's comprehensive planning to take control of the Village's future, rather than allowing the certainty of increased demands on infrastructure and increased demands by residents to dictate an unsupported financial future-state. Increasing sales tax revenues is the most effective method of addressing our financial necessities, and the vision and action steps outlined in this document lay a foundational plan for sustaining the quality of life that our residents have come to expect.



Vision & Planning

Winthrop Harbor recognizes the importance of long term planning in ensuring financial stability and quality of life for its residents. With this in mind, plans for economic growth are intended to accomplish the following goals;

- Improve the quality of life of Village residents
- Support the existing business base
- Encourage increased or new economic investment
- Increase non-residential based revenues to support Village services and infrastructure

To achieve these goals a comprehensive plan is being pursued that includes inventorying existing resources, incorporating other existing strategic plans, market analysis, development of incentives and a marketing campaign. This report is a key part of the marketing campaign, and will serve as a point of reference to aid Village decision making.

Another key factor in building a plan that will attract the type of investment that will meet the Village's goals is to introduce long-term development standards. It has been proven in many successful areas in Lake County and throughout the United States, that high standards attract quality development. Having high standards will improve the overall image of Winthrop Harbor, improve the lifestyle of our residents, while at the same time creating a business environment offering the best chance for successful, sustained economic prosperity.

The Village's potential will be maximized by a strong commitment to creating an identity as a tourist destination and by focusing efforts on commercial development over residential. The Village can generate more revenue from commercial development than it can from residential development. The same piece of land if used for a business will not only generate property tax, but also sales tax. A business also has less need for costly services, such as schools, resulting in additional revenue to be used to support other, under-funded, services.



Strategic Goals for Economic Development

Goal: Increase annual sales tax revenue from \$150,000 in 2009 to \$500,000 by 2015.

Action Strategy

- Develop marketing strategies for key developable commercial parcels
- Encourage and facilitate the creation of a vibrant commercial center at the NEC of 9th Street and Lewis Avenue
- Secure a regional retailer, such as a lifestyle grocer, to anchor the 9th/Lewis development
- Attract sales tax revenue generating retailers, restaurants and target destination entertainment venues
- Develop incentive packages to be used to attract large-scale retail sales tax producing businesses for Board approval
- Attract and retain sales tax revenue-generating businesses
- Encourage and facilitate private development of key properties
- Create marketing materials targeted towards retailers, restaurants, and commercial brokers highlighting the regional consumer profile
- Maintain a current database of available land and office/retail space
- Attract a large senior housing facility to support retail stores
- Revisit properties previously deemed as undevelopable, including Stateline property adjacent to Mangel Field (Village owned property)

Goal: Create an effective business development environment that promotes a consistent Village image.

Action Strategy

- Streetscape completion
- Sign ordinance
- Landscape ordinance
- Lighting ordinance
- Review building setback guidelines for Sheridan Road developments
- Develop strategy for public parking and alleyway traffic along Sheridan Road and adjacent neighborhood
- Conduct a survey of Village businesses to ascertain their overall satisfaction with Village services, and possibly identify areas for improvement.
- Review and recommend revisions as necessary, zoning for commercial or potential commercial locations



Goal: Improve residential value without increasing tax percentage.

Action Strategy

- Support the formation of a local charter high school as an additional educational option for residents, and as a means of improving property values and economic development
- Partner with local realtors to create a community profile that promotes the Village's quality of life, recreational opportunities, and education
- Promote lakefront recreation to residents, schools and other communities
- Encourage redevelopment of older homes
- Explore moderate density housing options for babyboomers nearing retirement

Goal: Establish a core image/vision that promotes Winthrop Harbor as a lakefront tourism community.

Action Strategy

- Create a tourism/marketing component on the Village's website to promote events, lodging, and business opportunities/development
- Increase community events
- Develop tourism marketing materials for placement at the over-Interstate Oasis
- Focus marketing efforts to target people commuting or visiting
- Leverage State marketing, Marina/Skipper Buds/West Marine marketing, and Charter Captain marketing opportunities
- Support Charter Fishing Associations' efforts to relocate spawning salmon that were relocated by DNR to Waukegan harbor.
- Update and distribute the business directory on an annual basis. Consider creation of a print or electronic version that is limited to Shop/Dine/Explore
- Partner with the Lake County Convention and Visitor's Bureau
- Support the proposed Waukegan Airport expansion
- Encourage improvements to existing lodging facilities and market key properties for additional lodging options
- Partner in hosting regional sporting/lakefront events
- Improve lakefront signage
- Support Metra yard expansion in Kenosha
- Continue shuttle service
- Promote off-season activities such as ice skating and snow shoeing
- Support the addition of a cross-lake ferry (passenger and vehicle) at North Point Marina
- Work with Lake County Forest Preserve for development of trails and/or attractions for the Spring Bluff Forest Preserve



SWOT Analysis

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| <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Strengths</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lakefront: 1500 slips, one of the largest charter fleets on the Great Lakes, 2 Beaches ▪ District 1 School System ▪ Established TIF district ▪ Metra stop with expanded parking ▪ Safe community and a great place to raise a family ▪ Proximity to Chicago/Milwaukee and their amenities ▪ Closeness to major airports in Chicago and Milwaukee and regional airport in Waukegan | <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Weaknesses</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Distance from Interstate ▪ Perception of ZB High School ▪ Limited in-town job opportunities ▪ Limited tax base ▪ Limited land bank ▪ Low daytime population ▪ Lack of events ▪ Lack of core identity ▪ Overstretched “Downtown” ▪ Lack of feasibility studies on key properties ▪ Limited local shopping ▪ Lakefront is controlled by 3 different governing bodies, none of which is Winthrop Harbor |
| <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Opportunities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Available land ▪ Promotion of trails and recreation ▪ Streetscape Project ▪ Improved identity focus on web and events/recreation ▪ TIF District ▪ Property annexation review and strategy ▪ Continued growth of and partnership with the Chamber of Commerce ▪ Regional Tourism Promotion ▪ Privatization of North Point Marina ▪ Development of Spring Bluff Forest Preserve ▪ Attraction of babyboomers looking for a north shore alternative ▪ Transit oriented development | <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Threats</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Economic uncertainty ▪ Unemployment ▪ Limited funding available ▪ Franchisors avoidance of smaller communities ▪ State control of lakefront ▪ Regional perception ▪ Nostalgic paralysis ▪ Competing communities ▪ Image as “just a small town/rural community” |



Key Properties

NE Corner 9th Street and Lewis Avenue

The 9th street and Lewis parcel is the largest available development site in the Village with 125 acres. With a limited amount of land in the Village remaining to be developed, it is very important that the development of this site serves the best interest of the Village.

Current Situation

This site was approved under a PUD for the development of 300 housing units and approximately 150,000 square feet of commercial on the northeast corner. Like similar planned land developments in other communities, the recent downturn in the economy caused progress on these plans to cease.

While retail development is still most desirable based on expected sales tax revenues which would be generated for the Village, current market conditions have caused us to consider alternative uses such as a mixed use business park. Ultimately the market will decide what the best opportunity for development of this key parcel will be.

Next Steps

Marketing materials have been created to pursue the primary objective of attracting regional retailers as anchor tenants. It is likely that unless our market demographics change to support the type of retail center that we desire, the Village will have to create a competitive package of incentives that are attractive to these tenants. Generally speaking, we expect that such an incentive package could include sales tax rebates, property tax abatement and participation in providing improved infrastructure.

Should the market not accept this site for retail use the Village should consider alternative uses such as a mixed use business park with the goal of increasing property tax and attracting quality, high paying jobs to the Village. To this end we intend to coincide our marketing with that of Lake County and the effort to attract biopharmaceutical and/or advanced manufacturing companies to the area. An incentive package will likely be required to create interest in Winthrop Harbor by these companies; property tax abatements, work force training and high tech infrastructure such as fiber optics are usually offered to attract this type of investment. Additional potential uses for this property could include a satellite location for a College or Technical School.

The alternative uses proposed are departures from existing Village planning therefore it would be necessary to seek Planning and Zoning and Village Board approval to amend the Comprehensive Plan to permit this type of development.



The Triangle – TIF District

In an effort to encourage redevelopment of this key land parcel in the downtown business corridor, the Village established a TIF District for the area commonly known as "The Triangle." This area encompasses approximately 8 acres of land and is located at the northeast corner of Sheridan Road and 7th Street at the only entry way to North Point Marina, the largest freshwater marina in the United States.

The highest projected value to the Village of the Triangle is for it to serve as a catalyst for future development by being developed as a town center. In support of this objective a new zoning classification was created and implemented over this area. CBD (Central Business District) permits uses that include a mix of commercial, residential, municipal and open space.

Current Situation

In 2006 a TIF District was established and the property zoning was changed to CBD (Central Business District) which allows up to 6 stories of mixed-use development. A Call for Request for Proposals (RFPs) in November 2007 resulted in a proposal from a developer in January 2008. Further Development Agreement negotiations continued until June 2009 when the developer, based on the current market conditions, decided to walk away from the project.

Next Steps

A plan to repackage the project with the current market conditions in mind would be necessary to attract future interest. Doing so might include phasing the overall project which would reduce investor risk. Once developed the new marketing plan will require Village Board approval.

If the Village Board agreed with the new marketing plan the next step would be to issue Request for Qualifications (RFQ) instead of Request for Proposals (RFP). RFQs tend to narrow the field of interested developers and are more readily accepted in the marketplace. Developers are more likely to respond to RFQs as opposed to RFPs since they cost less to prepare.



7th Street South (Bluff Property)

The Bluff property provides a 600 ft frontage on 7th Street and is located across from the Metra Station on the road to North Point Marina. The available acreage runs south to 11th Street and includes 29 acres of land overlooking North Point Marina and Lake Michigan.

Current Situation

This property is currently zoned for residential, though it shows more promise to the Village as commercial or mixed-use. It is uncertain what percentage of the land is wetlands, and what the cost to build or abate would be.

Multiple uses for this property have been suggested, including condos, retail, and lodging. The Station Area & Streetscape Plan adopted by the Village in 2008 contemplates transit oriented development given its proximity to the Metra station. This type of development would seem to be the highest and best use for this key parcel.

Next Step

This property is the closest developable land to the lakefront not controlled by the state or county forest preserve. Zoning status should be reviewed and updated to match that use which supports the greatest potential for the Village. Additional marketing materials will be created and used to solicit commercial and residential developers.

North Point Marina Hotel/Restaurant Parcels

The North Point Marina Hotel Parcel overlooks the marina basin and is part of the marina master development plan. This location is ideal for a hotel/convention center or hotel/indoor water park. The marina is the largest inland marina in the United States with 1,500 boat slips and an average daily boater population of 3,000. The marina complex attracts nearly 1 million annual visitors, including 25,000 fishing enthusiasts booking charters from 40 commercial docks.

Current Situation

The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) controls this property and it will be necessary to work collaboratively with the state to revive the master development plan for the site. The Village is pursuing effective ways to encourage action by the state to repackage and market this opportunity. Contacts have been made at all levels from local management to elected officials as well as obtaining support for the idea of lakefront development from Lake County Tourism, and neighboring communities.

Recent action by the DNR in securing funds to properly maintain the public areas at the marina, offer encouragement that the state may be willing to pay more attention to marketing this key asset.



Next Steps

To attract hotel investors, the Village will need to prove the case that the area can be a tourist destination. This can be achieved by the completion of other key projects such as the 7th Street Streetscape project, the Metra expansion and the redevelopment of the Triangle. The Metra expansion is complete and the Streetscape project began in the spring of 2010.

Political will by the state legislature and the cooperation of the state department that controls this parcel will be necessary to realize the development plan for this property.

SE Corner Sheridan & Russell

Located on the southeast corner of Sheridan Road and Russell Road (commonly known as State Line Road), is a prime location for future development. It consists of nearly 12 acres of land, with almost 600 feet of Sheridan Road frontage, is zoned B1 and currently comprises a single family residence and vacant land.

Current Situation

This key parcel has been aggressively marketed by a commercial real estate company as a potential location for a big box retailer. A relatively high asking price, current market conditions and the fact that approximately 2/3 of the property is designated ADID wetlands are likely the cause of the property remaining on the market for an extended period of time.

Alternative uses might include a strip mall fronting Sheridan Road with condos to the rear, a hotel with an incorporated restaurant or an assisted living facility.

Next Step

Marketing materials will be developed and distributed to potential users highlighting the positive attributes of this parcel. It may be necessary to recommend a re-zoning of the property to permit mixed-use development and/or an assisted living facility.



ATTACHMENT 1: A Brief History of Winthrop Harbor

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| 1829 | US Government signs a treaty agreeing to purchase what is present day Northern Illinois and Southern Wisconsin from the Potawatomi, Chippewa, and Ottawa Tribes, thus opening the area to white settlers. |
| Early 1830s | First settlers Nelson Landon and Jeremiah Stowell arrive to the area, followed soon by their wives. They build their homes and raise families. |
| 1837 | Reverend Salmon Stebbins arrives as the first minister (Methodist). His daughter Emily opens the areas first school in her home. |
| 1841 | The winter of 1841-1842 was severe, killing off much of the game and livestock, resulting in famine. |
| 1850 | Benton Township was formed. The first town meeting was held in a building at the corner of Main Street (7 th) and Park Avenue. |
| 1854 | First mill constructed by Loren Sibley. |
| 1855 | C&NW Railway completes its line, linking Chicago and Milwaukee. |
| 1856 | J.A. Conelly builds a home (which still stands) on the southeast corner of Sheridan Road and the Wisconsin State Line, where he operates a large farm. |
| 1871 | First Post Office established with the name Spring Bluff. The name remains for 20 years, until it is changed to Winthrop Harbor in 1891. |
| 1883 | Developer J.H. Van Vlissingen purchases 2700 acres near the Wisconsin State Line with the intent of developing an exclusive residential subdivision. |
| 1888 | Spring Bluff School District is formed. |
| 1890 | A two-story brick structure at 346 Sheridan Road opens as an inn and stage stop. Inscribed in the foundation is “Hope This Will Be A Good House.” The structure still stands today. |
| 1899 | Van Vlissingen turns over his land to the Winthrop Harbor and Dock Company, who plan development of an Industrial Park and Residential Development on the lakefront. |
| 1899 | <p>First manufacturing, Simpson Manufacturing Corporation opens. Their primary business is brick forming and handling machinery; they open a plant on the north side of Main Street (7th), east of the railway.</p> <p>A second manufacturer, Western Telephone Construction Company—a builder of telephone boxes and switchboards, also locates along the railway.</p> <p>Before the Great Depression, a robust retail environment exists in the area along Sheridan Road, north of Main Street (7th). Many small businesses exist, including a livery, blacksmith, hotel, bakery, restaurants, various retails establishments, and even an A&P Grocery Store.</p> |



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| 1901 | The Post Office moved to a new location on 3 rd Street, along the railway. It will later move to the corner of 7 th Street and Sheridan Road before settling in its current location in Harbor Plaza at Sheridan and 12 th Street. |
| 1901 | Village is incorporated on July 15, 1901. First Village Board Meeting is held in an office at Main Street (7 th) and Park Avenue. |
| 1901 | Village authorizes Chicago Telephone Company to begin service. |
| 1902 | The Winthrop Harbor Dock Company donates its remaining holdings to the Village. |
| 1902 | Austin Machinery Corporation, a heavy equipment manufacturer of ditching and trenching machinery, begins operation. They employ workers from as far away as Kenosha and Waukegan. |
| 1902 | Walters and Repko Marine Boiler Company, which builds steam engines for ships, constructs and operates two plants north of the Austin factory. |
| 1904 | Property at Main Street (7 th) and College Avenue is purchased and a single story school is constructed. In 1915 a second story is added. This building, with several additions, still stands as Spring Bluff School. |
| 1905 | First water system installed with 60,000 gallon elevated storage tank on Kirkwood Avenue. It was fed by a natural flowing well at 6 th Street and College Avenue. Water was delivered daily by a wagon cart with large barrel. The Village later buys this facility from Byron Knight for \$500 and adds pumping equipment and water mains. |
| 1909 | North Shore Railway (Interurban Electric Line) is authorized by the Village to construct tracks, offering passenger service from Chicago to Milwaukee and towns in between. The line closes in 1963. |
| 1910-1913 | Sometime within these years Andrew Carnegie met with Village Officials to discuss a land purchase for a steel mill. No agreement could be reached so Carnegie took his plans to Gary, Indiana. |
| 1916 | Winther Motor Truck Company occupies the former Western Telephone location and builds trucks for the military. After the war, they convert to building automobiles, commercial trucks, and fire engines. In 1925 their business fails and they close. |
| 1918 | Sheridan Road is paved as a two-lane highway. It is later widened to four lanes in 1973. |
| 1919 | First local Boy Scout Troop is organized. American Legion Post established. Winthrop Harbor Volunteer Fire Department established. |
| 1910 to 1920 | Farming flourishes in the Village. Dairy farms, fox farms, mink ranches, horse ranches, a chicken farm, a raspberry patch, and a nursery all prospered during this time. |



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| 1920s | Gordon Fire Works Company locates in the former Austin Machinery building. This business is short lived and closes in 1930. Monarch Lock Company locates to Sheridan Road between 4 th and 5 th Street, but closes in 1923. |
| 1920s | Village is losing its industrial base and turns its focus to becoming an exclusive residential community. Oak Shore Subdivision is planned north of Main Street (7 th), between Lake Michigan and the railway. To the South of Main Street will be a golf course. This area is landscaped with sunken gardens, a marble plaza with a central monument, and ornamental shrubs. At its entrance stand two massive ornamental stone gates. |
| 1922 | The Oak Shore developer erects two tall granite columns and ten marble pillars along Main Street (7 th). They remained for 48 years before being taken down. |
| 1926 | Johanson & Son Dairy begin operation at 3 rd Street and the Railway. |
| 1927 | Main Street (7 th) is paved. |
| 1930s | Depression Era takes its toll on the Village. Manufacturing is gone and unemployment is estimated to have reached 90% in the Village. |
| 1936 | Village purchases its first park—500 feet of lakefront beach at a cost of \$8,000. Today this area is part of North Point Marina within Illinois Beach State Park. |
| 1939 | Population reaches 600 people. |
| 1940s | Lake Michigan rises and floods most of the area east of the railway. Flooding continues into the early 1950s before subsiding. |
| 1950 | Population has grown quickly to 1,765 people. |
| 1954 | Sherman Shore Subdivision is established along the lakeshore north of Main Street (7 th). 140 home are built. |
| 1956 | Village Hall and Police Station are constructed adjoining the Fire Department on the west side of Sheridan Road between 8 th and 9 th Street. |
| 1959 | Westfield School is constructed. Later additions are built in 1964 and 1969. |
| 1961 | Winthrop Harbor's own Jackie Bingert becomes Miss Illinois. Jackie was a teacher at Westfield school. |
| 1962 | Winthrop Harbor VFW is organized. |
| 1970s | The Village now has 44 businesses. The retail corridor experiences somewhat of a rebirth. |
| 1971 | State of Illinois, through its power of eminent domain, negotiates to purchase or condemn 178 homes along the Winthrop Harbor lakefront. This land will go on to become part of Illinois Beach State Park. As a result, the Village and School District suffer a severe loss in tax revenues. |



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| 1976 | BFI opens a landfill site west of the Village. After three years of negotiations, Winthrop Harbor loses a bid to annex the site, and a source of tax revenue is lost to Zion. |
| 1980 to 2010 | Winthrop Harbor continues to slowly grow in population to just under 7,000 people. Available land for development has decreased, as the Village becomes landlocked between Lake Michigan and surrounding communities. Retail is dispersed along a fifteen block stretch of Sheridan road, beginning at State Line, with no traditional downtown district. |