



—LAKE GENEVA STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN—

THINK-TANK REPORT

WISCONSIN, USA

FEBRUARY 2026





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This report summarizes the outcomes of the Lake Geneva Think-Tank held on January 8 and 10, 2026. Approximately 60 community members and City staff participated in the Think-Tank and developed the scenarios presented in this report. This report has been produced as part of the Lake Geneva Strategic Action Plan project which aims to develop a new community vision and strategic action plan that will guide community decision-making for the next five years.

These reports and the associated data analysis are available on the project portal:

<https://lab2.future-iq.com/lake-geneva-sap/>

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THINK-TANK HOSTED BY:



Updated February 26, 2026



future→iq

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OVERVIEW OF THE STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN PROCESS

The City of Lake Geneva Strategic Action Plan project will produce the City's first ever Strategic Action Plan that will guide decision-making for the next 5 years.

The project is a robust, inclusive, and forward-looking community planning process. The Strategic Action Plan is intended to guide the City's future and assist the Common Council with assessing and prioritizing needs and projects to ensure the most efficient and effective use of City time and resources as well as the development of a governance process that is reflective of current best practices for municipal operations. The strategic planning process will begin with the creation of a Community Vision for Lake Geneva. The Community Vision will set the stage and provide the foundational strategic pillars of the Strategic Action Plan. Public involvement and input are critical components of the strategic planning process and stakeholders will be provided both in-person and online opportunities to engage with this project.

More details about the overall strategic planning process may be viewed on [Lake Geneva's project portal](#).



"My hope for this process is that we move forward with a clear, shared trajectory for what Lake Geneva can be. By focusing on community-wide synergy, we can bridge the gap between our historic legacy and our future potential. When our residents feel heard and our goals are realigned, we create a plan that isn't just a document on a shelf, but a living roadmap for a thriving, unified community."
-Community Survey Respondent





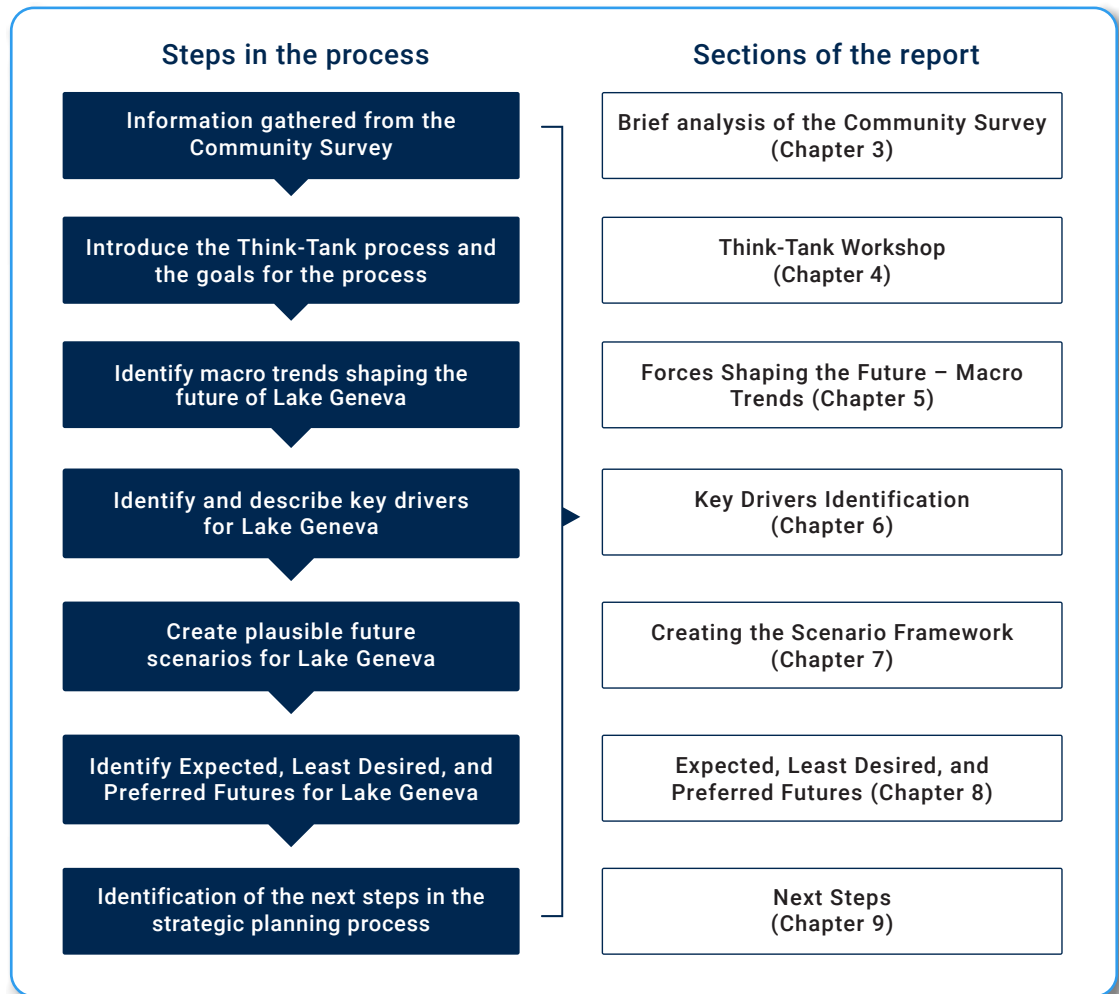
The importance of visioning for the future has been highlighted as extremely important to the future of Lake Geneva as community members and stakeholders look to the grand challenges ahead.

1.0 | HOW TO READ THIS REPORT

This report lays out the findings from the Lake Geneva Think-Tank and each key step in the process. More details about the overall strategic planning process may be viewed on Lake Geneva’s project portal at: <https://lab2.future-iq.com/lake-geneva-sap/>.

The Think-Tank process built a range of future possible directions for Lake Geneva.

This work represents robust ‘future gazing’ where community members considered possible directions and the impacts and consequences of those directions. The process, and the report, then drill down deeper into what people saw as the optimal or preferred future. This understanding helps lay the groundwork for figuring out what next steps to take. The draft vision for Lake Geneva will be further explored and validated during project initiatives taking place in February/March 2026.





»»»» 2.0 | INTRODUCTION

This scenario-based Think-Tank report summarizes the visioning workshop that took place on January 8 and 10, 2026. The Think-Tank workshop was conducted as an initial step in the project to develop a vision and Strategic Action Plan that will guide Lake Geneva’s development for the next 5 years. The components of the visioning work to date have been comprised of:

The Lake Geneva Think-Tank workshop allowed community members to take a ‘deep-dive’ into strategic visioning and future-thinking through a scenario-planning process.



KEY STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

Initial interviews were held with key stakeholders and Alderpersons to gather input and to further understand the many perspectives on current and future aspirations for Lake Geneva.



COMMUNITY SURVEY

An extensive survey was completed by 158 community members at the time of the Think-Tank. The survey aimed to understand stakeholder perspectives on current conditions in the city, as well as their aspirations for the future. The survey remained open through February 28, 2026.

“Lake Geneva’s long-term success depends on protecting what makes it special: the lake, connected greenspace, wildlife, and a small-town scale that still feels human....Focus economic development on locally owned businesses, year-round livability, and ‘gentle’ housing options that help workers and older adults stay in the community.”
-Community Survey Respondent



THINK-TANK WORKSHOP

The Lake Geneva Think-Tank was held on January 8 and 10, 2026. At this workshop, participants learned about current conditions and macro trends impacting Lake Geneva, and participants produced four plausible potential futures for the City.



THINK-TANK PARTICIPANT HEATMAPS

Think-Tank participants completed heatmaps at the end of the Think-Tank to express their Least Desired, Expected, and Preferred future scenarios for Lake Geneva, looking out to 2035. The results are examined in this report.





3.0 | SURVEY RESULTS: KEY STAKEHOLDER INPUT

Prior to the Think-Tank, an extensive community survey was conducted to gather insight into the community’s perceptions of trends influencing Lake Geneva’s future, including people’s satisfaction with living and/or working in Lake Geneva, and the importance of the strategic positioning of Lake Geneva in the region. At the time of the Think-Tank, approximately 158 people had responded to the survey that was promoted on the project portal, City website, social media platforms, a utility bill flyer, and hard copy flyers posted around the City.

A selection of survey results are presented for the purposes of this report. All interactive results will be available in real time on the project portal.

Respondent profile information is available on the project portal, and includes information such as age, ethnicity, length of time living in Lake Geneva, length of time working in Lake Geneva, and Aldermanic district location. The following sections are preliminary results of the survey as of the Think-Tank. The complete community survey results will be posted to the project portal after the survey closes on February 28, 2026.

YOUR INPUT IS NEEDED! JOIN THE CITY OF LAKE GENEVA STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN PROJECT

The City of Lake Geneva has embarked on a visioning and planning project that will produce the City's first ever Strategic Action Plan. This project will run through March 2026, and will rely heavily on community and stakeholder inputs. The outcome of the participatory process will produce a robust, comprehensive, and sustainable Strategic Action Plan that will guide decision-making over the next 5 years.

TAKE THE SURVEY
The Lake Geneva Community Survey is now open. Have your say and tell us what your ideas are for the Strategic Action Plan - how do you want Lake Geneva to be in 5 years? Please encourage others to take the survey!
tinyurl.com/LGSAP-Comm-Survey

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
David De Angelis, City Administrator, City of Lake Geneva
David Beurle, Chief Executive Officer, Future IQ

¡SE NECESITA SU OPINIÓN! ÚNASE AL PROYECTO DEL PLAN DE ACCIÓN ESTRATÉGICO DE LA CIUDAD DE LAKE GENEVA

La Ciudad de Lake Geneva ha iniciado un proyecto de visión y planificación que dará como resultado el primer Plan de Acción Estratégico en la historia de la ciudad. Este proyecto se desarrollará hasta abril de 2026 y dependerá en gran medida de la participación de la comunidad y de los grupos de interés. El resultado será un Plan de Acción Estratégico sólido, integral y sostenible que guiará la toma de decisiones durante los próximos 5 años.

PARTICIPE EN LA ENCUESTA
La Encuesta Comunitaria de Lake Geneva ya está abierta. Comparta su opinión y díganos cuáles son sus ideas para el Plan de Acción Estratégico - ¿cómo le gustaría que fuera Lake Geneva dentro de 5 años? ¡Por favor, anime a otras personas a participar en la encuesta!
tinyurl.com/LGSAP-Comm-Survey

PARA MÁS INFORMACIÓN:
David De Angelis, Administrador Municipal, Ciudad de Lake Geneva
David Beurle, Director Ejecutivo (CEO), Future IQ

“Lake Geneva is lucky to have residents and visitors who genuinely love this community and its natural resources. I hope this strategic plan honors that love by prioritizing transparency, stewardship, and decisions that reflect the values of the people who care most about this place. Thank you for the opportunity to respond to this survey.”

-Community Survey Respondent

“This is a good survey with lots of stuff going on. Lotta hard work with this the more we can define what we want to do and set timelines for doing things the better.”

-Community Survey Respondent

Data Insight

- The greatest number of respondents at the time of the survey have lived in Lake Geneva for 0-5 years (26%), followed by 6-10 years (17%) and 41 years or longer (17%), 21-30 years (14%), 11-20 years (11%), and 31-40 years (105). 3% of respondents don't live but do live in Lake Geneva, and 2% are visitors to the City.

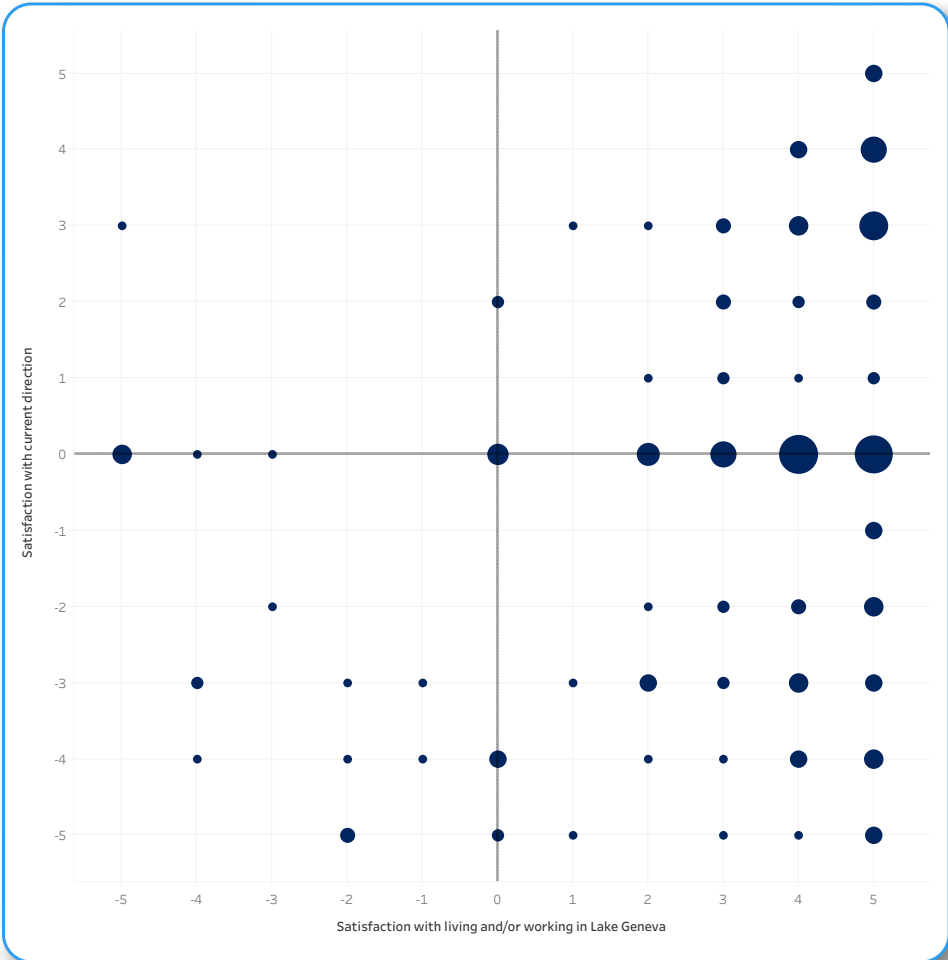


3.1 | LIVING AND WORKING IN LAKE GENEVA

Survey respondents were asked how satisfied they are living and/or working in Lake Geneva and how they feel about the overall current direction of Lake Geneva and the changes that are occurring. Respondents were asked the questions below which were then combined to produce the following chart.

How happy are you about living / working in Lake Geneva?
 -5 = Very unhappy
 0 = Neutral
 +5 = Very happy

How do you feel about the overall current direction of Lake Geneva and the changes that are occurring?
 -5 = Very concerned
 0 = Neutral
 +5 = Very excited



Survey charts reflect 211 survey responses as of January 15, 2026.

"I have loved living and working in this community. The lake, the ability to enjoy it freely, and the deep roots I have here with friends and family are what make this place feel like home."
 -Community Survey Respondent

Data Insights

- The size of the circle denotes the popularity of the response. This chart shows that respondents feel mostly happy about living / working in Lake Geneva, but there is more a more muted response for the current direction and changes that are occurring. This will be further explored in the strategic planning process.
- These results can be filtered on the portal according to age, ethnicity, length of time living in Lake Geneva, length of time working in Lake Geneva, and Aldermanic district location.



3.2 | CURRENT DIRECTION AND ABILITY TO ADAPT

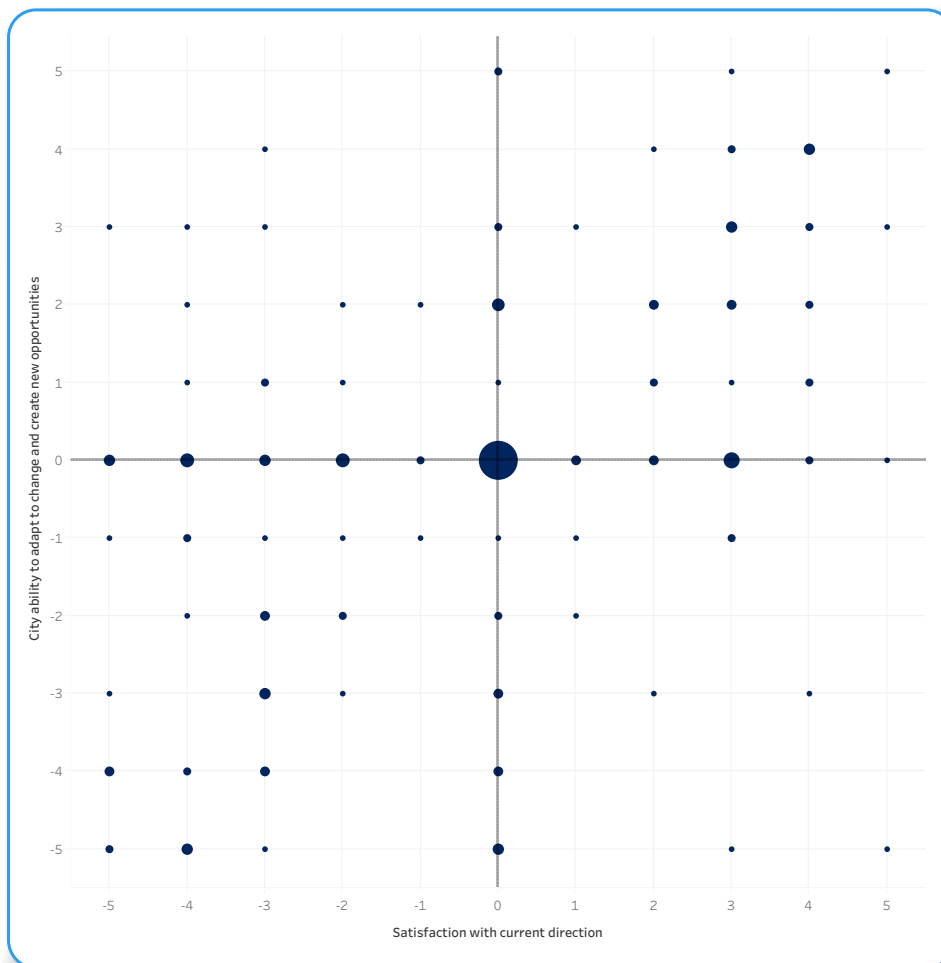
Survey respondents were asked about the overall current direction of Lake Geneva, and about how well equipped Lake Geneva is to adapt to future change, and move quickly to create and seize new opportunities. Respondents were asked the questions below which were then combined to produce the following chart.

How do you feel about the overall current direction of Lake Geneva and the changes that are occurring?

-5 = Very concerned
0 = Neutral
+5 = Very excited

Currently, how well equipped is lake Geneva to adapt to future change, and to move quickly to create and seize new opportunities?

- 5 = Poorly equipped
0 = Neutral
+5 = Very well equipped



Survey charts reflect 211 survey responses as of January 15, 2026.

“Explore smart city technologies to improve infrastructure and services, identify areas in local services or products that new businesses could fill to foster economic growth, continued community engagement through festivals and activities.”

-Community Survey Respondent

Data Insights

- The size of the circle denotes the popularity of the response. This chart shows that respondents have varying views on these two questions, with many quite neutral in their response. These results will be further explored in the strategic planning process.
- These results can be filtered on the portal according to age, ethnicity, length of time living in Lake Geneva, length of time working in Lake Geneva, and Aldermanic district location.



3.3 | IMPORTANCE OF SHARED VISION AND STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN

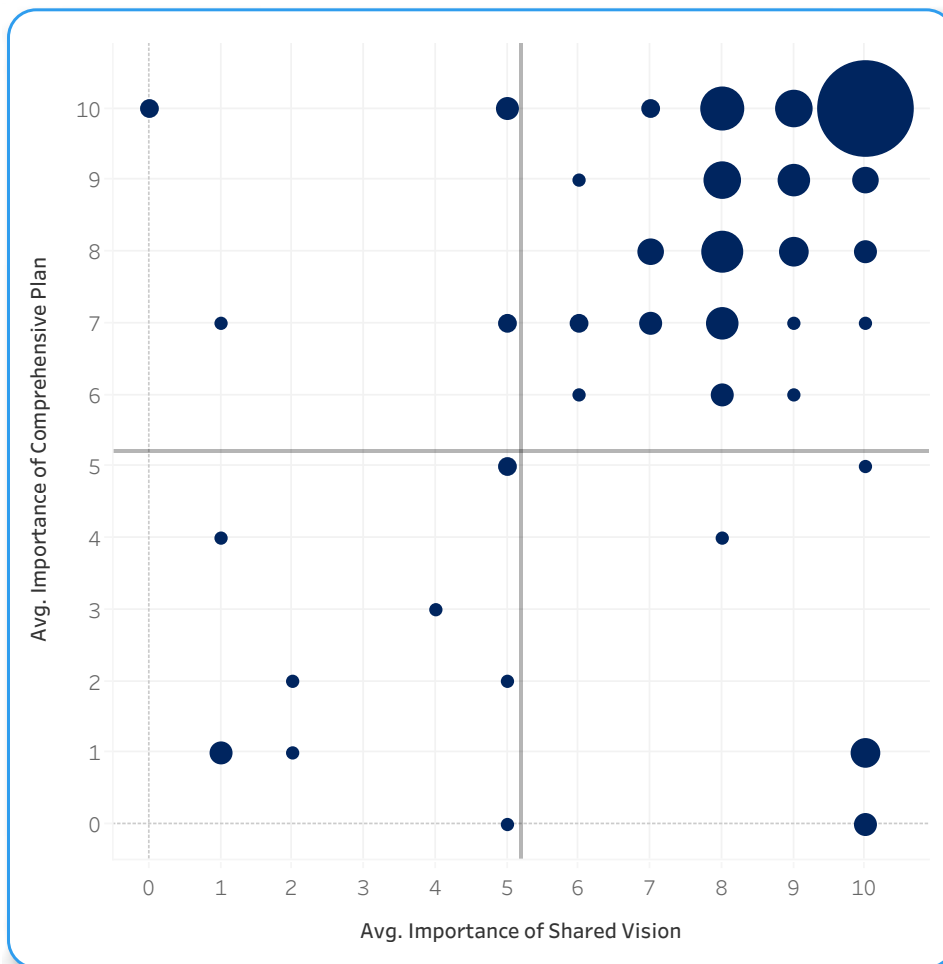
Survey respondents were asked how important it is to have a shared vision and a Strategic Action Plan for the future of Lake Geneva. Respondents were asked the two questions below, which were then combined to produce the following chart.

How important is it to have a shared community vision for the future of Lake Geneva?

1 = Not important
10 = Very important

How important do you think it is for the community of Lake Geneva to have a Strategic Action Plan?

-1 = Not important
10 = Very important



Survey charts reflect 211 survey responses as of January 15, 2026.

"[I'm excited] to finally have a vivid picture of what's next for Lake Geneva, and I'm hopeful we can all pull in the same direction to get there."
-Community Survey Respondent

Data Insights

- The size of the circle denotes the popularity of the response. This chart shows that the majority of respondents think that a shared vision and Strategic Action Plan are both important to the future of Lake Geneva.
- These results can be filtered on the portal according to age, ethnicity, length of time living in Lake Geneva, length of time working in Lake Geneva, and Aldermanic district location.





4.0 | SCENARIO-BASED THINK-TANK WORKSHOP

The Lake Geneva Think-Tank Workshop was conducted on January 8 and 10, 2026, in La Riviera Ballroom (first day) and the Lake Geneva Middle School (second day). The workshop explored how Lake Geneva could evolve looking out to 2035 and consisted of:

- A review of global trends and the impact of these trends on Lake Geneva
- Assessment of Lake Geneva’s strengths and weaknesses
- Formulation of the different plausible scenario ‘spaces’ and development of detailed narratives and descriptions of each scenario
- Examination of the impact and consequences of each scenario on various aspects of community evolution and development trajectory in Lake Geneva
- Identification of the preferred future and potential critical action steps to achieve the preferred future



Scenario planning provides a way to explore various plausible futures. This adds a richness and depth to the discussions about preferred future, and a consideration of the intended and unintended consequences.

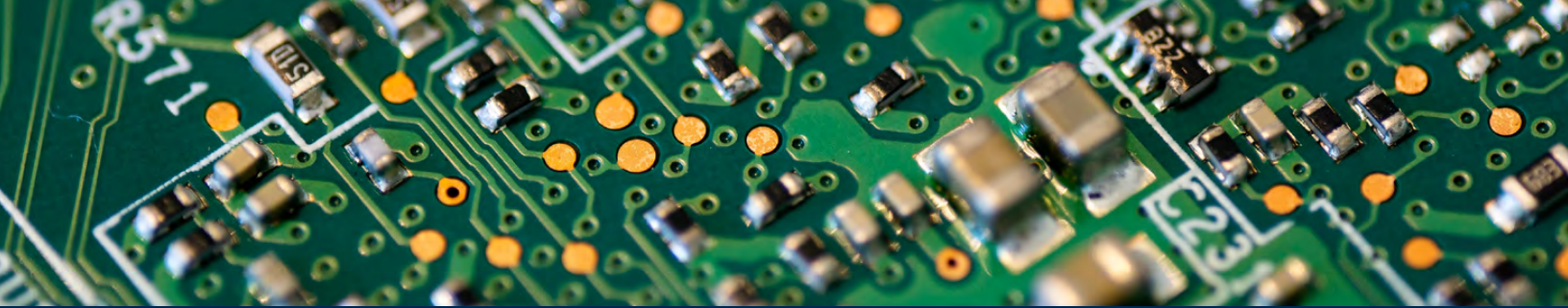
The Think-Tank began with an in-depth presentation on future trends and global conditions in Lake Geneva, as well as a brief review of survey data before moving on to conduct scenario planning for the City. Future iQ’s scenario planning process provides a methodology from which to explore plausible futures and takes into consideration the implications of various future scenarios. The process aimed to:

- Deepen the understanding and examination of how external events and local conditions could shape decision-making
- Identify and understand the key influences, trends, and dynamics that will shape Lake Geneva looking out to 2035
- Create and describe four plausible long-term scenarios for Lake Geneva
- Begin exploring alignment around a shared future vision for Lake Geneva



The scenarios developed during this Think-Tank workshop and outlined in this report are important to provide a framework to discuss future possible outcomes and implications for the future of Lake Geneva. Workshop deliberations can assist in identifying key strategic actions for the City and how various groups might best contribute to future developments.





5.0 | FRAMEWORK FOR ANALYSIS – KEY THEMES SHAPING THE FUTURE

Think-Tank participants explored the forces of change shaping the future of Lake Geneva, including three key areas of emerging macro trends and forces of change. Perceptions around the nature of impact of these trends, both in terms of size and timing of impact, were explored to gauge how important participants consider the trends. Participants discussed the emerging trends on global, regional and local scales, and related them directly to Lake Geneva in terms of how well prepared they considered the City.

Specifically, the key trend areas included:

- **Demographics, population, and mass urbanization**
- **Energy, food, water, and climate change**
- **Technology and the speed of change**

Of relevance to the discussion on trends is the speed and scale of change occurring. Newly developed innovations are being implemented globally and locally at all scales, thereby changing the face of industries and society in a rapid and profound way. Velocity and trajectory are key elements that often create resistance to change and require clear communication and outreach to promote trust around the purpose of change. Think-Tank participants emphasized the need for increased intentional regional collaboration as well as consistent communication and messaging from the City to provide transparency as the community pursues its preferred future.

In the face of accelerating speed of change, the key to long-term resiliency for Lake Geneva is the ability to anticipate change, adapt, and remain agile in response to emerging trends.

“Lake Geneva should position itself as Southeast Wisconsin’s conservation-forward, small-town lake community; a place that protects greenspace and wildlife while offering high-quality, low-impact recreation and year-round wellbeing tourism, not high-volume commercialization.”

-Community Survey Respondent



6.0 | KEY DRIVERS IDENTIFICATION

Drivers are events, trends, developments, catalysts, or forces that actively influence or cause change. The top 20 drivers for Lake Geneva are seen to shape the future of the City.

With the background of external trends, Think-Tank participants produced drivers that they considered most likely to shape the future of Lake Geneva. The drivers were discussed at a small group level and then at the wider workshop level. The scope of each driver was clarified, and any similar drivers were grouped, and new drivers added, until a list of twenty unique key drivers were identified.

6.1 | DRIVER DESCRIPTIONS

Key drivers shaping the future of economic development in Lake Geneva, as identified and developed in small working groups by the Think-Tank participants:

(Please note that these drivers are not in any particular order.)



LACK OF CONTROL OVER SHORT-TERM RENTALS

We need more affordable housing in Jasper. This is an opportunity to attract more diversity and workers by varying housing stock. If we do nothing, growth will be stymied. Change is needed to fill the gaps to have a healthy workforce that enables all ages to be able to move here and stay.



INCREASING PRICE OF REAL ESTATE

The increasing price of real estate will price out fixed income, younger professionals and young families. Ideally, more flexible mixed-use development (duplex, triplex, ADUs) will allow people with a variety of incomes to live in Lake Geneva.



RELATIVE HIGH DESIRABILITY OF LAKE GENEVA

The Lake needs to be protected and preserved to keep it usable for all. Preservation efforts need to be feasible and funded. Keep the Lake beautiful, clean, and safe for all users including boats and fishing.



LACK OF WORKFORCE HOUSING

Currently essential workers and young families can't afford to live in the community, and businesses have difficulty finding staff. Reducing Airbnbs and second homes would free up more housing. We need to work with the County for sustainable growth and housing.



DECLINING SCHOOL ENROLLMENT

Demographic change (aging population) and affordability issues are causing a decline in school enrollment. Young families cannot afford to live in Lake Geneva. We need reverse this trend and attract families to the community.



TREND TO BE A RETIREMENT DESTINATION

Lake Geneva attracts people from larger cities (Milwaukee and Chicago) with its relative affordability that allows retirement income to go further. The demand has increased house prices and strained resources. There is a danger of losing our historical charm if we become too crowded.



COMPETING ENTITIES

There are numerous entities that have competing interests in Lake Geneva (formal entities and residential interests). This causes divisiveness within the community. Need to promote unity, facilitate communication and accountability to make a unified vision for the City a reality.



MANAGING NATURAL RESOURCES

This is a priority to preserve the Lake by monitoring invasive species and runoff. The Hillmoor property is another opportunity for the community to embrace preservation and environmental sustainability. Suggest planting more trees for air quality.



6.1 | DRIVER DESCRIPTIONS (CONT.)



LACK OF AVAILABLE SPACE TO EXPAND

Growth needs land. Lack of vacant land in the City places limits on new home construction and starter homes and drives up the price of housing and short term rentals. This also encourages tear-down-rebuilds.



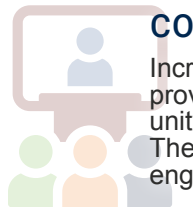
LACK OF SENSE OF COMMUNITY

With the loss of local media and the rise of social media, the community has become fragmented. We need more diversity in all ways – economic, racial, etc. This could be a strength if we portray ourselves as a welcoming community. Sense of community is important to our mental and physical health.



ECONOMIC GROWTH AND DIVERSIFICATION

The City's growth has been largely due to the tourism industry drawn by the Lake and high quality of life in the City. Efforts should be made to diversify retail and retain agricultural areas.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Increased community engagement will provide more sense of community and unity, especially for year-round residents. The City needs to increase opportunities for engagement such as festivals and events.



LACK OF THIRD SPACES (GATHERING SPACES)

The City needs to develop its social infrastructure - third spaces where community members can gather. The Hillmoor property has the potential to serve this need.



MAINTAINING COMMUNITY SAFETY

Community safety is good and we want to keep it that way. Efforts should be made to maintain a high level of safety as the City grows and tourism increases.



RETENTION OF SMALL BUSINESS COMMUNITY

Support for small independent businesses especially Downtown will maintain the community's charm and attractiveness. Economic incentives could be provided to keep rents low to encourage small businesses and limit chain access to the Downtown.



LACK OF REGIONAL INFLUENCE

The City should collaborate and participate more in regional initiatives. Collaboration on projects could reduce overall costs and build municipal relationships.



PRESERVE HISTORICAL CHARM AND CHARACTER

Lake Geneva's historical charm and character are tremendous assets for residents and visitors alike. The location has long been a draw for large City visitors and it would be detrimental to the community if the City lost this unique identity.



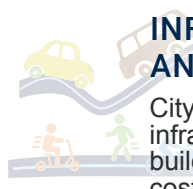
LACK OF PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Lack of public transportation makes it difficult to get around the City without a car (this creates congestion, especially in the summer). More connectivity is needed to provide accessibility to different areas of the City. Walkability and bikability need improvement also.



LACK OF COMMUNICATION TOOLS

The public does not feel very informed about what is happening in the City. There needs to be more communication from the City in various formats about events, initiatives, and the potential for engagement.

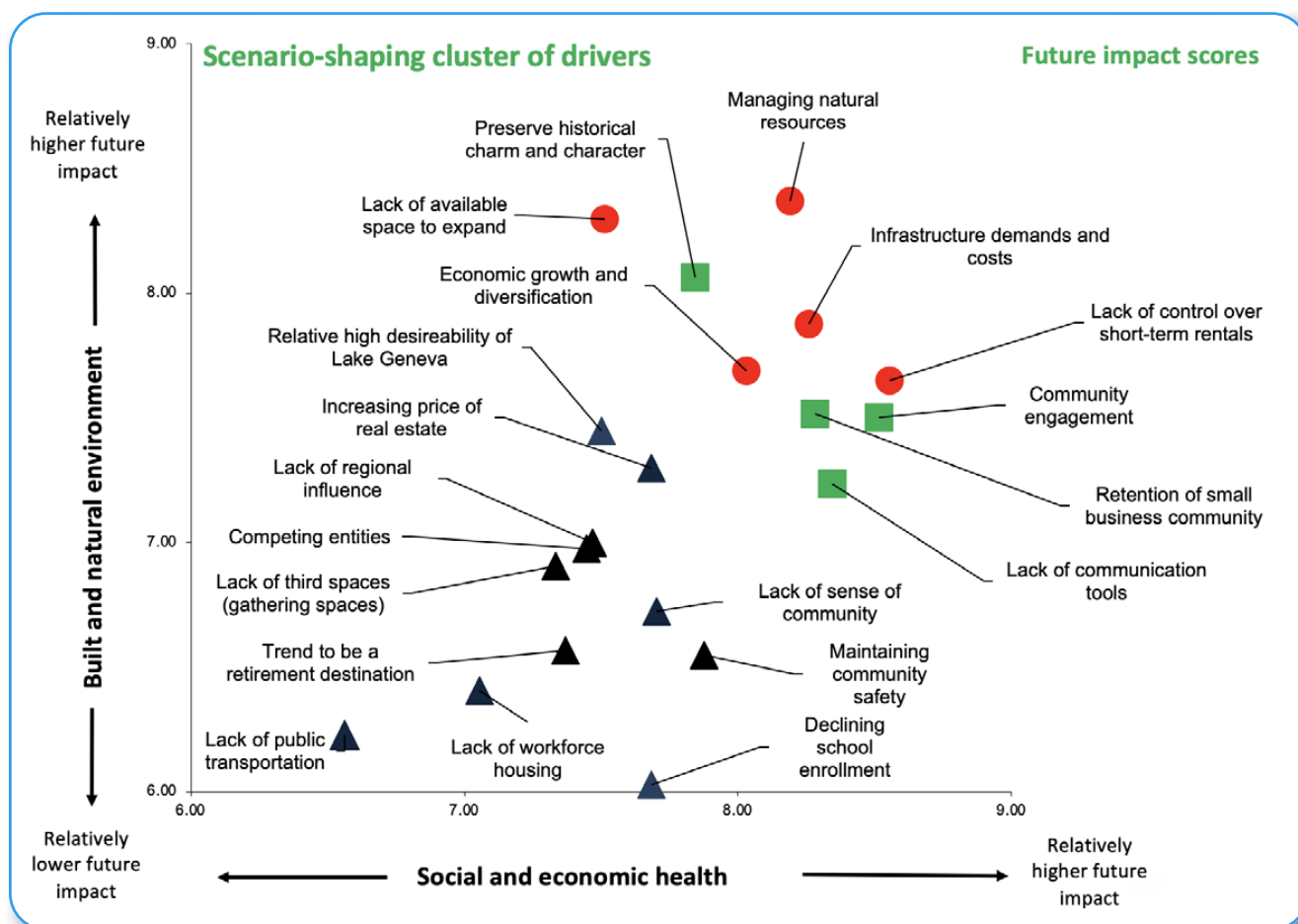


INFRASTRUCTURE DEMANDS AND COSTS

City growth is putting more demands on our infrastructure and it costs more to maintain and build new systems. This is driving up overall costs for those who choose to live in the City.

6.2 | IDENTIFYING SCENARIO SHAPING CLUSTERS OF DRIVERS

After agreement on the drivers, Think-Tank participants rated each of the twenty key drivers in terms of the size of impact on the future of Lake Geneva. The scale used was 1 - 10 (1 = low relative future impact; 10 = very high relative future impact). The individual ratings by each participant were pooled and averaged, providing an overall rating for each driver by the entire group of participants. Then, a scatter diagram of the drivers, based on size of impact was developed. The diagram represents the driver assessment in terms of built and natural environment and social and economic health. The process illustrated below show the clusters of drivers that were seen as most critical in shaping the future – these clusters are termed ‘Scenario-shaping clusters of drivers.’



Data Insights

- The most impactful drivers for social and economic health were clustered around the dimensions of community engagement, preserve historical charm and character, retention of small business community, and lack of communication tools.
- The most impactful drivers for built and natural environment were clustered around managing natural resources, lack of control over short-term rentals, infrastructure demands and costs, lack of available space to expand, and economic growth and diversification.





6.3 | CLUSTER MAP DEVELOPMENT AND SCENARIO AXIS

Grouping similar drivers into two categories, clusters of drivers were identified by adding a thematic name linking the drivers in the clusters.

These themes became the basis for the two axes on the scenario matrix that define the four scenario 'spaces', with quadrants either towards or away for each driver cluster. These quadrants were used to formulate four plausible scenarios. The two axes were defined as 'Development Approach' and 'Community Character.'

The two axes of the scenario matrix were developed through the thematic clustering of the key drivers identified by Think-Tank participants.

FUTURE-SPLITTING THEMES BASED ON CLUSTERS OF DRIVERS

DEVELOPMENT APPROACH

- Managing natural resources
- Lack of control over short-term rentals
- Infrastructure demands and costs
- Lack of available space to expand
- Economic growth and diversification

COMMUNITY CHARACTER

- Community engagement
- Preserve historical harm and character
- Retention of small business community
- Lack of communication tools



ADDITIONAL IMPORTANT DRIVERS:

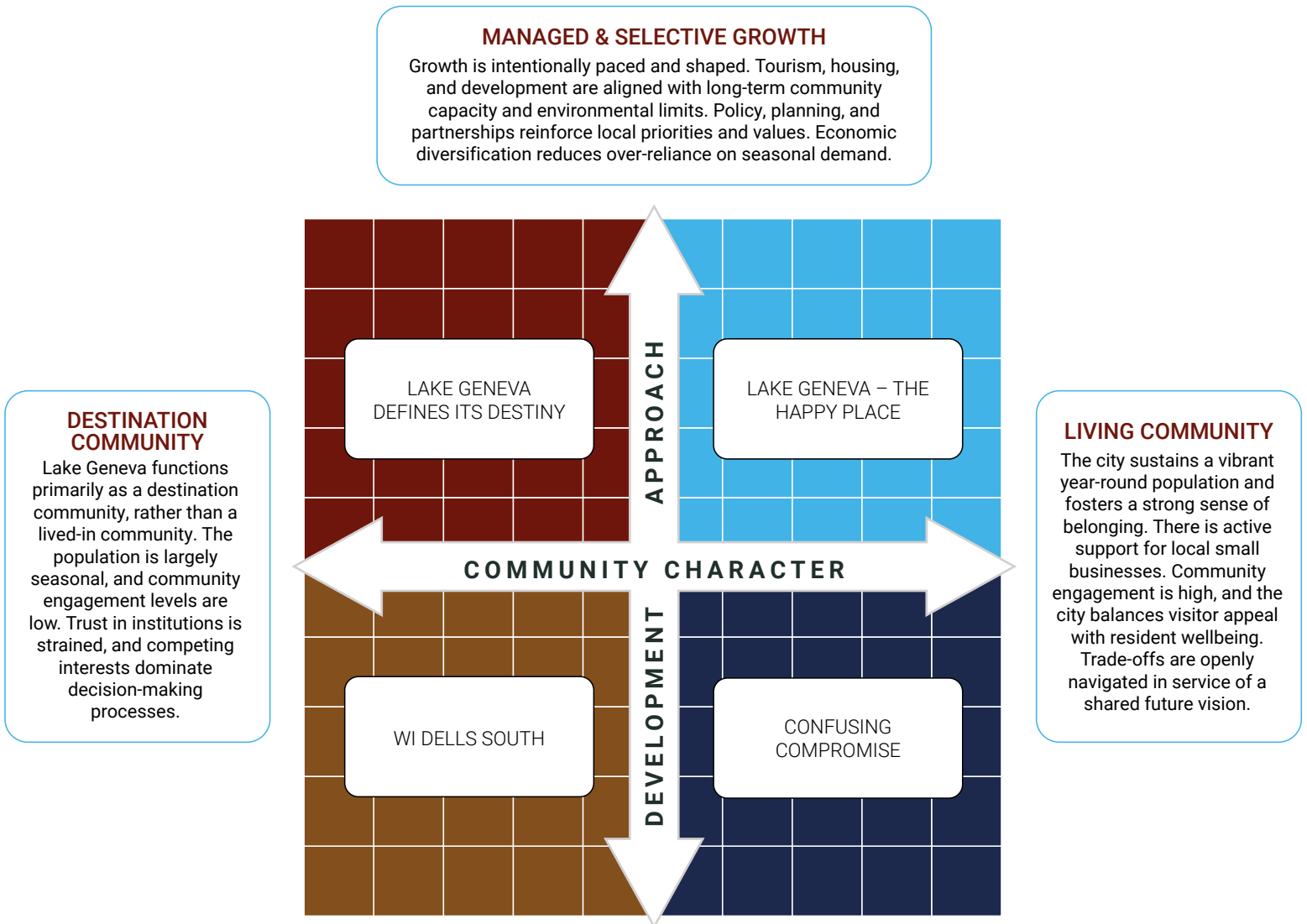
- Increasing price of real estate
- Relative high desirability of Lake Geneva
- Lack of workforce housing
- Declining school enrollment
- Trend to be a retirement destination
- Competing entities
- Managing natural resources
- Lack of sense of community
- Lack of third spaces (gathering spaces)
- Maintaining community safety
- Lack of public transportation



7.0 | CREATING THE SCENARIO FRAMEWORK

Workshop participants were presented with the scenario matrix, defined by the two major axes, 'Development Approach' and 'Community Character'.

Brief descriptions were also attached to the end points of each driver axes. Participants were divided into four groups to develop a narrative for each scenario. Each group was asked to describe the characteristics of Lake Geneva in 2035 under the conditions of the scenario quadrant that they had been given. After the characteristics were established, Think-Tank participants were asked to devise major events or headlines of how the scenario occurred using the years 2027, 2030 and 2035, and to give their scenario a descriptive name. The name is intended to represent the description of the scenario in the form of a short title. Narratives, descriptions, and names of each scenario as developed by the workshop participants are included in the following sections.



MARKET-DRIVEN GROWTH
Growth is largely shaped and driven by external market forces, investors, visitors, and regional trends. High demand for real estate and tourism development place pressure on local systems. Short-term rentals increase, resulting in further shifts in housing balance and affordability.



7.1 | SCENARIO A: LAKE GENEVA DEFINES ITS DESTINY

This scenario forecasts a future where Lake Geneva strives to maintain a development approach that manages its growth selectively. Strategic investments prioritize the tourism industry, with visitor-generated revenue helping to offset increasing infrastructure and service demands. The community works hard to strike a careful balance between the needs of both year-round and seasonal residents.

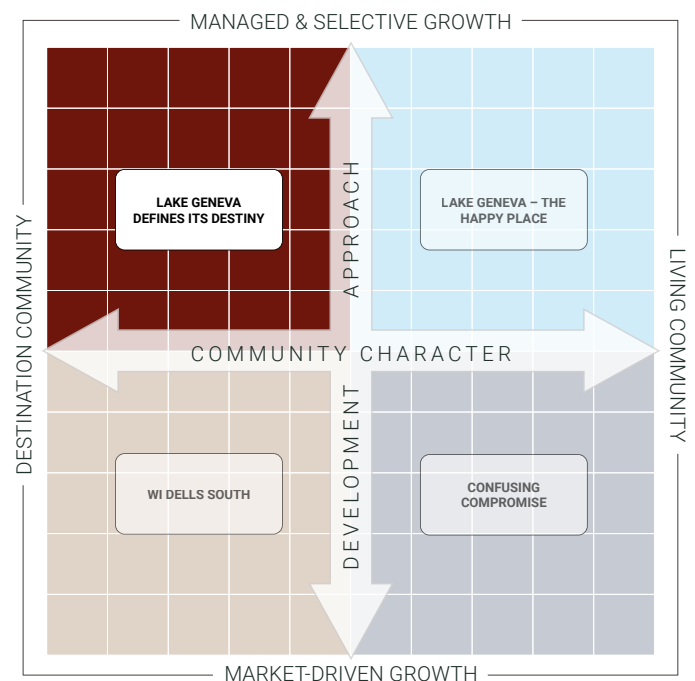
The City of Lake Geneva functions primarily as a destination community that highly values its greatest asset – the Lake. Environmental regulations are enacted to protect the Lake and access is limited. The City seeks to build strong relationships with nearby municipalities to address the growing demands on local infrastructure and Lake preservation. Single-family homes, short-term rentals, and tourist accommodations continue to dominate the housing market and competition rises with an influx of seasonal residents and retirees. Escalating housing costs discourage young families and moderate-wage workers from settling in the City, contributing to declining school enrollment. Over time, the population ages, and the community’s sense of year-round cohesion gradually weakens.

The ‘Lake Geneva Defines its Destiny’ scenario conveys a future where growth is limited and historic assets are protected, but there is a growing tension over whether the City should function as a place where people visit rather than live.



SCENARIO SNAPSHOT - FUTURE IMPLICATIONS

- Demographics shift to an aging population as retirees are attracted to the City.
- There is tension between year-round residents and tourists as the demand for seasonal occupancy increases and affordable housing decreases.
- Visitor revenue helps to support infrastructure construction as demands increase.
- School enrollment declines as families leave.
- The City collaborates with regional entities to work together on infrastructure initiatives to defray costs.
- Trust in local institutions decreases when the focus is on tourist needs over resident needs.
- Historic assets are protected, but Lake health suffers with gradual overuse.



»»»» 'LAKE GENEVA DEFINES ITS DESTINY' 2035 CHARACTERISTICS

In the 'Lake Geneva Defines its Destiny' scenario, the community works hard to strike a balance between the needs of seasonal and year-round residents, but ultimately does not succeed when the cost of living becomes untenable for young families and workers.

The characteristics of this scenario convey a future where the City leans into intentionally shaping and pacing its growth to protect its greatest asset, Lake Geneva. The growing demands of the tourism economy begin to impact Lake Geneva health and resident life as competition for housing and rentals intensifies. Lake Geneva becomes a place for the wealthy and the community gradually ages out.

COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL FABRIC CHARACTERISTICS

The focus is on becoming a destination location that caters to tourists and seasonal residential needs.

- Demographic shift to an aging retirement community accelerates.
- Growth is managed to maintain small town feel but this limits access to those who can afford it.
- Trust in institutions fails when the focus becomes 'what can we do for them?'

ECONOMIC AND BUILT ENVIRONMENT CHARACTERISTICS

Development growth is managed to meet long-term planning goals and this puts limits on the tourism economy.

- Infrastructure costs rise with high tourism levels and creates tension with local residents.
- Limits are placed on development and there is high competition for short-term rental and year-round resident housing.
- Housing affordability skyrockets and it is difficult for young families to live here.

ENVIRONMENTAL AND LANDSCAPE CHARACTERISTICS

City seeks to find balance to protect the Lake and accommodate visitor and year-round resident needs.

- Residents and visitors collaborate to host world class events on the Lake.
- Visitor revenue helps to support local development of community parks and lakefront.
- Dedication to the tourist economy risks loss of control over Lake health.

2027 Headline News
 "LAKE GENEVA SUCCESSFULLY LOBBIES STATE FOR BETTER PERMANENT/SHORT-TERM LEASE RATIO"



2030 Headline News
 "FENCE COMES DOWN, BEACH IS OPEN TO EVERYONE!"



2035 Headline News
 "LAKE GENEVA THINKS BIG YET KEEPS SMALL TOWN FEEL"



7.2 | SCENARIO B: LAKE GENEVA – THE HAPPY PLACE

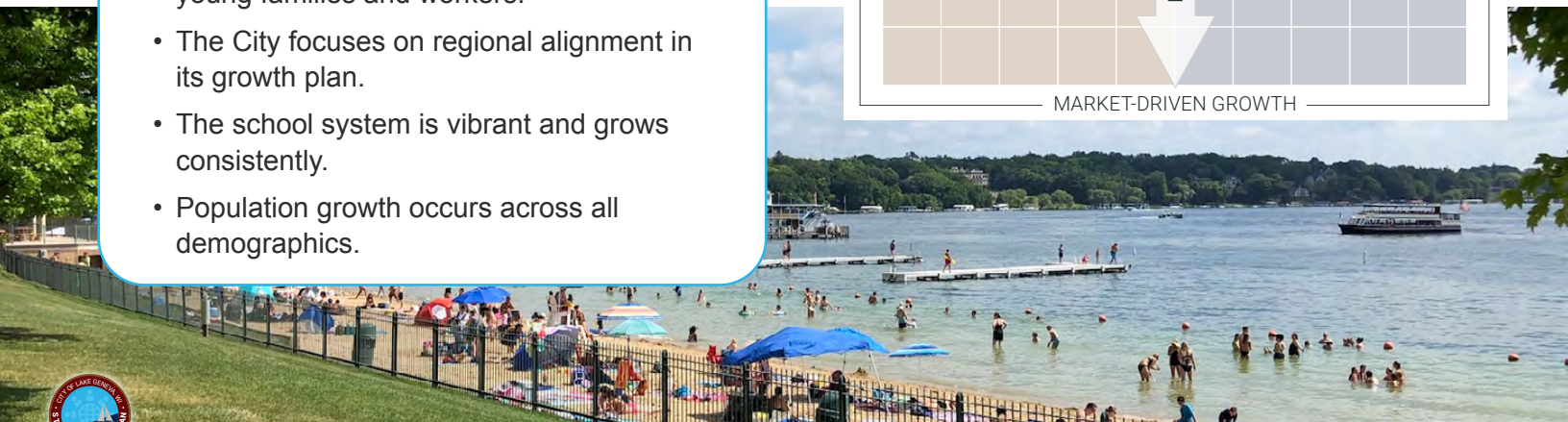
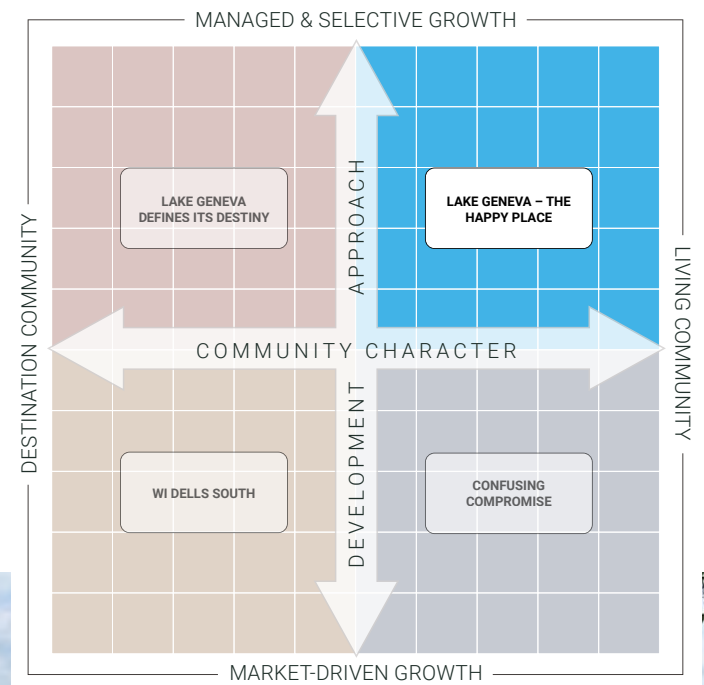
This scenario forecasts a future where Lake Geneva sustains a vibrant year-round population that fosters a strong sense of community and shared purpose. Development and growth are intentionally paced and shaped with the long-term health of the Lake a priority. Through strong regional partnerships and targeted economic diversification, the City reduces its reliance on seasonal tourism and builds a more resilient local economy.

The City sustains a vibrant year-round population, strong civic culture, and a resilient small-business ecosystem. Visitors are welcome, but resident wellbeing guides decision-making. Policies around housing, short-term rentals, and land use are coordinated and widely supported. The City manages its approach to housing, short-term rentals, and land use to increase affordability through a wider range of housing types, including mixed-use developments, duplexes, and accessory dwelling units (ADUs). Mobility and transportation options are expanded, especially in the areas of walkability, bikability, and connectivity. Access to the Lake is enhanced for both residents and visitors, while strong environmental protections ensure the Lake remains a treasured and sustainable community asset.

The 'Lake Geneva – The Happy Place' scenario conveys a future in which Lake Geneva becomes a model community - successfully balancing people, place, and prosperity while sustaining a high quality of life for residents and visitors alike.

SCENARIO SNAPSHOT - FUTURE IMPLICATIONS

- Lake Geneva is a vibrant, welcoming, year-round family-friendly community.
- City communications are improved and a strong sense of belonging emerges.
- Health of the Lake is prioritized with appropriate environmental regulations and development planning.
- Mobility options are expanded; especially walkability and bikability.
- Affordable housing and mixed-use development is increased to accommodate young families and workers.
- The City focuses on regional alignment in its growth plan.
- The school system is vibrant and grows consistently.
- Population growth occurs across all demographics.



‘LAKE GENEVA – THE HAPPY PLACE’ 2035 CHARACTERISTICS

In the ‘Lake Geneva – The Happy Place’ scenario, Lake Geneva proactively takes the steps necessary to build community prosperity and happiness for its residents. This will require consistent and clear communication to keep everyone aware of progress and moving forward.

The characteristics of this scenario convey a future where there is intentional investment in building a community that fosters a strong sense of belonging while at the same time balancing the importance of its visitors to the City. The City uses its first ever Strategic Action Plan to proactively chart a course for development and growth that protects the Lake and provides an agreed-upon vision for the future of Lake Geneva.



COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL FABRIC CHARACTERISTICS

Lake Geneva is a vibrant, welcoming, year-round, family-friendly community.

- Population growth is stable, with all demographics.
- Additional family housing is built to provide more affordability for young families and workers.
- The school system is vibrant with steady growth.



ECONOMIC AND BUILT ENVIRONMENT CHARACTERISTICS

Small businesses are supported and mobility is prioritized throughout the community.

- Workers are able to live within a 15 minute commute to the City.
- Parking is managed to meet current transportation needs throughout the year.
- There is regional alignment with a growth plan for the City.



ENVIRONMENTAL AND LANDSCAPE CHARACTERISTICS

The Lake is prioritized as the key community asset, and more third spaces are created.

- Lake Geneva is clean, beautiful and well-maintained.
- Accessibility to the Lake and parks is prioritized for visitors and residents alike.
- Lake Geneva is a walkable and bikeable City.

2027 Headline News

“LAKE GENEVA IMPLEMENTS THEIR STRATEGIC PLAN!”



2030 Headline News

“HILLMOOR OPENS AS A COMMUNITY GATHERING PLACE”



2035 Headline News

“LAKE GENEVA RATED HAPPIEST PLACE TO LIVE!”



7.3 | SCENARIO C: CONFUSING COMPROMISE

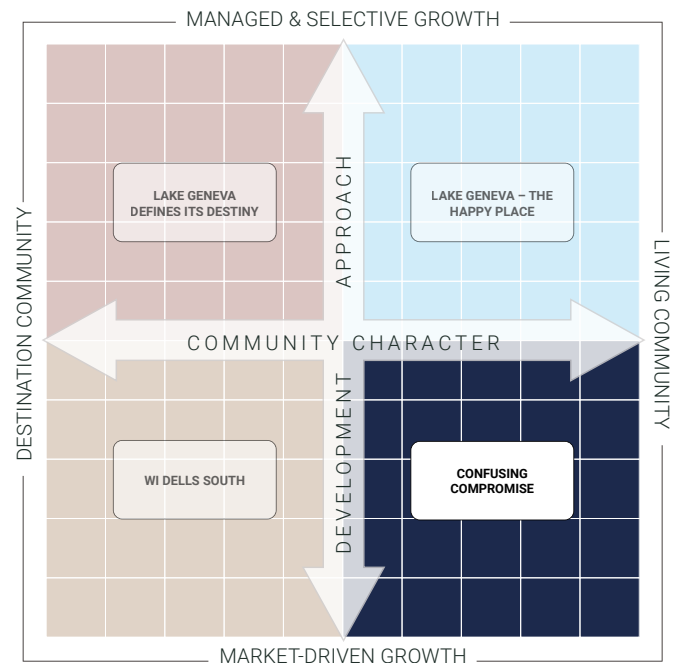
This scenario forecasts a future where Lake Geneva is committed to fostering open communication, community engagement, and improved livability throughout the community. However, these aspirations are undermined by a development approach that allows market-driven forces to dominate decisions about where and how growth occurs. As a result, policies intended to support community goals are often unclear or inconsistent, leading to confusion and misalignment over time.

The 'Confusing Compromise' scenario conveys a future where over time, Lake Geneva has difficulty maintaining livability and a strong sense of community when market forces increasingly drive growth and development in the City.

Growth in Lake Geneva is shaped primarily by external market pressures, investor interests, visitor demand, and broader regional trends. This approach conflicts with residents' desire for more intentional planning that supports small businesses, neighborhood character, and quality-of-life amenities needed to sustain a vibrant year-round population. Shared mobility options expand to accommodate new development, and the City adopts emerging energy technologies such as solar power and electric vehicles. At the same time, sustained demand for real estate and tourism places increasing strain on housing, infrastructure, and public services. Short-term rentals increase, and the City struggles to balance its appeal as a destination with the well-being and stability of its year-round resident community.

SCENARIO SNAPSHOT - FUTURE IMPLICATIONS

- The average age of residents increases as retirees move to Lake Geneva.
- School enrollment declines as affordability shifts.
- The City invests in third spaces/gathering spaces to foster sense of community.
- High demand for real estate and tourism development place pressure on local systems and infrastructure.
- Lack of space to expand forces local businesses to leave the area and national chains to move in.
- The Hillmoor property becomes the 'Central Park' Lake Geneva.
- Public services (fire and police) increase to support public safety.
- Short-term rentals increase in the City.



‘CONFUSING COMPROMISE’ 2035 CHARACTERISTICS

In the ‘Confusing Compromise’ scenario, the City’s laissez-faire approach to growth clashes with the community’s desire to focus on livability for its residents. Regulations and policies are not aligned and the sense of community begins to break down.

The characteristics of his scenario convey a future that propels the community onto a trajectory of clashing desires. An incremental and stewardship approach to development preserves community character, but does not provide the needed amenities and supports for new demographics or young professionals. Jasper’s reputation for inclusivity and quality learning initially attracts people, but the rate of change is discouraging and young workers and families leave for more amenable communities.



COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL FABRIC CHARACTERISTICS

The average age of residents increases as retirees are drawn to the City.

- Short-term rentals increase and take over Maple Park and the Downtown area.
- More third spaces/ gathering places are built for the community.
- School enrollment begins to decline as affordability decreases.



ECONOMIC AND BUILT ENVIRONMENT CHARACTERISTICS

Lake Geneva’s small businesses ecosystem struggles as chain businesses fill the Downtown.

- Lack of space to expand forces local businesses to leave the area.
- More mixed-use buildings and co-working spaces are built in the City.
- Public services increase and a huge parking garage is built in Downtown Lake Geneva.



ENVIRONMENTAL AND LANDSCAPE CHARACTERISTICS

The Hillmoor property becomes the ‘Central Park’ of Lake Geneva.

- Shared transportation options increase including Uber and electric buses.
- Increased development places stress on roads and local infrastructure.
- Winter and ice sports/ activities slowly decrease.

2027 Headline News
“CORPORATIONS LEAVE LAKE GENEVA DUE TO LIMITED SPACE FOR GROWTH / EXPANSION OPPORTUNITY”



2030 Headline News
“ROBO TAXIS WIDELY AVAILABLE”



2035 Headline News
“SHORT-TERM RENTALS TAKE OVER HOUSING”



7.4 | SCENARIO D: THE WI DELLS SOUTH

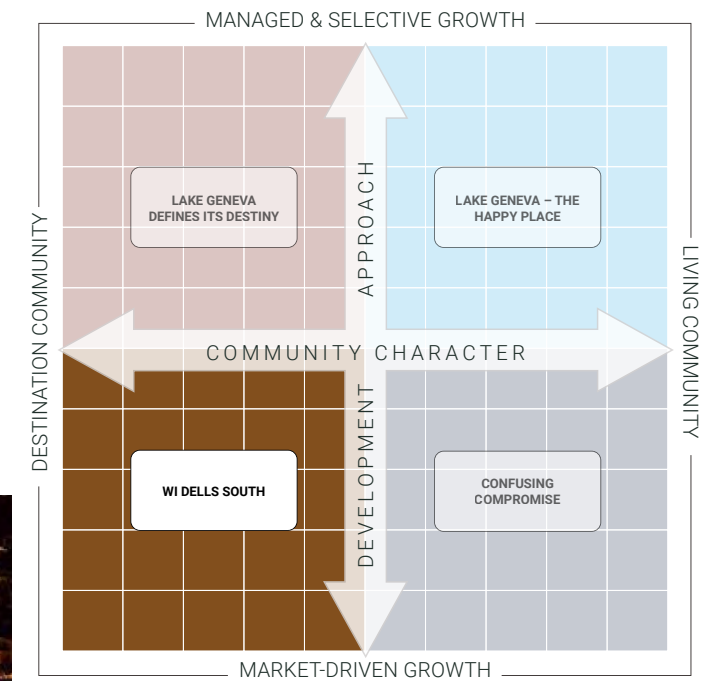
This scenario forecasts a future where Lake Geneva fully embraces its identity as a destination community. The City adopts a largely market-driven approach to growth, with public and private sectors aligned around expanding the tourism economy. Seasonal residents, visitors, and retirees come to dominate the population, while year-round residents struggle to maintain a sense of community and belonging.

The 'WI Dells South' scenario conveys a future where Lake Geneva's identity as a destination location overtakes its role as a livable community, as tourism-driven growth reshapes the City's economy, environment, and social fabric.

Priority is placed on maximizing tourism activity and supporting a lifestyle-oriented economy centered on the Lake. Investment flows heavily into short-term rentals, lakefront homes, high-rise developments, and visitor-focused amenities. As competition for tourism dollars intensifies with surrounding communities, regional collaboration diminishes. Increasing density and activity around the Lake prompt efforts to limit overuse and pollution, resulting in managed access that favors those who can afford it. Rising housing and living costs displace young families and workers, accelerating population turnover and decline in school enrollment. Over time, education services are outsourced, and trust in local institutions erodes as year-round residents feel left behind in a City shaped primarily for visitors.

SCENARIO SNAPSHOT - FUTURE IMPLICATIONS

- A market-driven tourism economy dominates growth and economic development in the City.
- Year-round population Lake Geneva declines while seasonal population increases.
- Retirees are attracted to the community and the population ages.
- School enrollment declines and education is outsourced to surrounding communities.
- As density increases, efforts are made to protect the Lake from overuse and pollution. Access is limited to those who can pay.
- Regional collaboration is strained with competition for tourism dollars.
- The City struggles to communicate and engage with more transient residents.



'WI DELLS SOUTH' 2035 CHARACTERISTICS

In the 'WI Dells South' scenario, Lake Geneva evolves into a community dominated by the tourism industry, where market-driven growth prioritizes visitors and seasonal residents over long-term community stability.

The characteristics of this scenario convey a future where Lake Geneva prioritizes the expansion of a strong tourism-driven economy. The City fully embraces its role as a destination community, while the needs of year-round residents receive less attention. Increased development and activity place stress on the Lake, compromising its long-term health. Rising housing and living costs limit access for young families and workers, leading to an aging population and a community increasingly oriented toward affluent residents.



COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL FABRIC CHARACTERISTICS

Year-round population declines as seasonal population dominates the social fabric.

- Greater demands are placed on public safety resources with an aging demographic.
- Schools and education are outsourced as school-age children don't live in the City.
- Sense of community and neighborhood character are lost as majority of population is transient or seasonal.



ECONOMIC AND BUILT ENVIRONMENT CHARACTERISTICS

The tourism industry and market forces dominate the local Lake Geneva economy.

- Regional collaboration is nonexistent as competition for tourism dollars increases.
- Small businesses consolidate to compete with larger retailers.
- Economic development is market driven and reactionary prioritizing short term over long term gains.



ENVIRONMENTAL AND LANDSCAPE CHARACTERISTICS

Lake usage increases and threatens overuse; the fight to protect Lake Geneva becomes intense.

- Streetscape lacks green spaces and recreational amenities.
- Housing types are mostly single family, apartments, high-rise rentals, and high-density.
- No long term vision exists for key building and asset development in the City.

2027 Headline News

"SCHOOL ENROLLMENTS CONTINUE TO DECLINE – CONSOLIDATION TALKS CONTINUE"



2030 Headline News

"RIVIERA TORN DOWN TO BECOME DRIVE-UP BOATER FOOD COURT"



2035 Headline News

"DEAD FISH IN LAKE NOW OUTNUMBER TOURISTS"

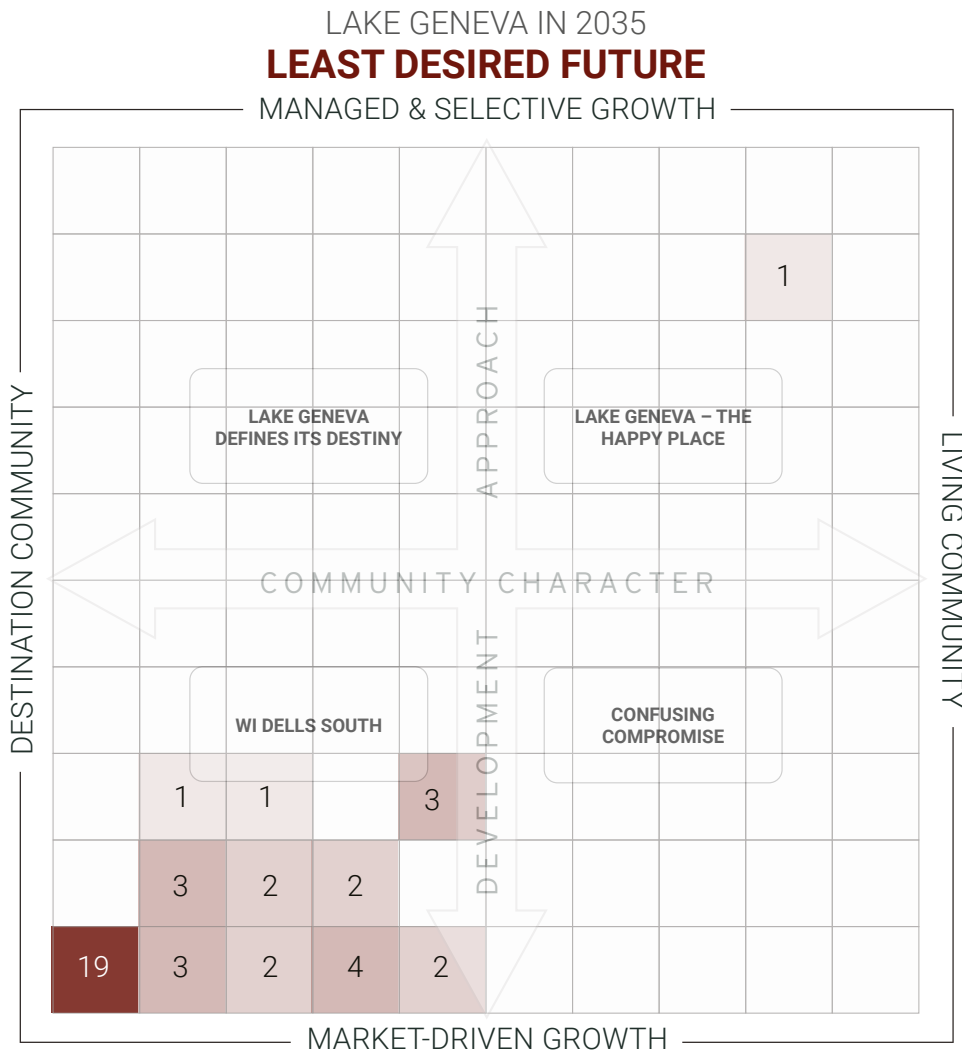


8.0 | LEAST DESIRED, EXPECTED, AND PREFERRED FUTURES

The least desired future is one where community members and stakeholders have said, 'We don't want that.' This provides leadership a mandate to change the trajectory of the community to avoid this scenario.

8.1 | LEAST DESIRED FUTURE

The Least Desired Future is defined as 'the future that you think will be the most undesirable (or least optimal or least desired) for the future of Lake Geneva.' Most Think-Tank participants considered Scenario D, 'WI Dells South' to be the Least Desired scenario for Lake Geneva.



This grid displays the plausibility level assigned by the workshop participants. The darker the color, the greater the aggregate weighted plausibility score.

"The proliferation of short-term rentals is a real detriment to this being a community – a community of friends and neighbors whose kids go to school and play together; a community where neighbors know one another."

-Community Survey Respondent

Future Insights

- The intensity of color in the extreme lower left of the scenario matrix indicates that the majority of the Think-Tank participants did not want the 'WI Dells South' scenario for their future. This means a pivot from the status quo to intentional change for the community.
- The corners of the scenario matrix indicate the extreme versions of the scenarios.

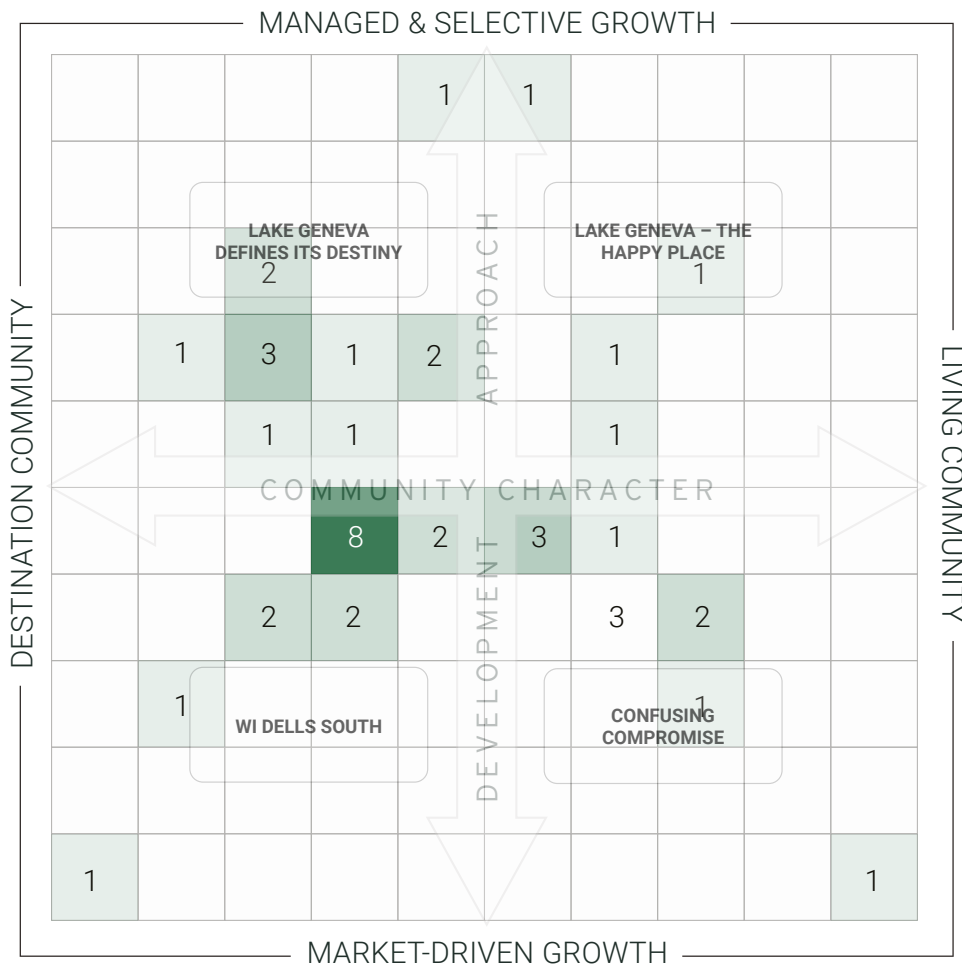


8.2 | EXPECTED FUTURE

The expected future is one deemed most likely to happen if there is no change in the current trajectory of Lake Geneva. Most participants believed that Scenario D, 'WI Dells South' was most likely the scenario that represented the expected future for Lake Geneva. To a lesser extent, some participants thought that Scenario A, 'Lake Geneva Defines its Destiny', Scenario C, 'Confusing Compromise', and Scenario B 'Lake Geneva – The Happy Place' could also be the possible expected future.

The Expected Future represents the future that is most likely to happen if the community does nothing to change direction or trajectory.

LAKE GENEVA IN 2035 EXPECTED FUTURE



This grid displays the plausibility level assigned by the workshop participants. The darker the color, the greater the aggregate weighted plausibility score.

"Lake Geneva is unique due to the Lake. That has always been the attraction and always will be. I would like to see the city accentuate its unique niche, not arbitrarily create a new one."
-Community Survey Respondent



Future Insights

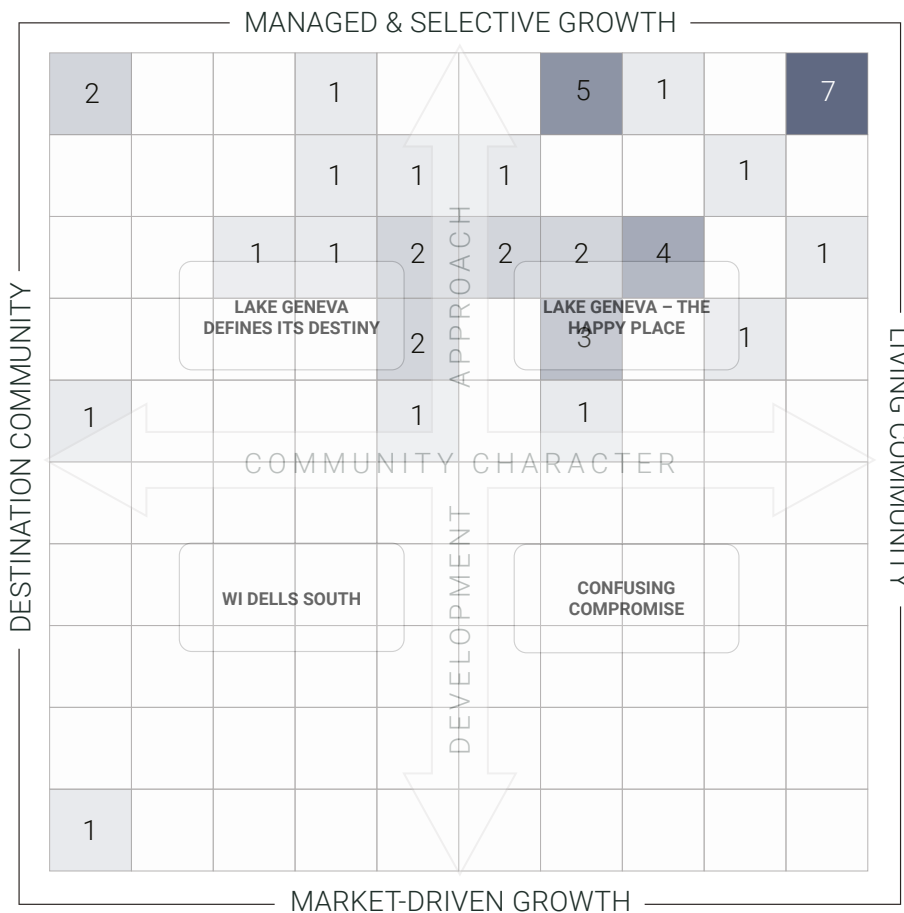
- The heat map shows more movement along the Development Approach axis than the Community Character axis for the expected future of Lake Geneva.
- The data also shows that many people think that the expected future will not see much change from the status quo and that the community will maintain its current trajectory over the next 10 years if nothing is done to alter course.

8.3 | PREFERRED FUTURE

Think-Tank participants expressed a notable preference for Scenario B, 'Lake Geneva – The Happy Place' as the Preferred Future for Lake Geneva in 2035. Think-Tank participants discussed the consequences of inaction and the need to take decisive action now to redirect the City's trajectory over the next 5 years. There was a sincere desire by participants to build on and leverage the City's location with intentional planning for growth, with a commitment to preserving its small town feel and building more sense of community.

Getting to the Preferred Future requires collaboration, alignment of vision, and strong leadership. Think-Tank participants showed a clear desire for increased community communications and collaboration as well as a willingness to be more intentional about planning for change to achieve the preferred future for Lake Geneva.

LAKE GENEVA IN 2035 PREFERRED FUTURE



This grid displays the plausibility level assigned by the workshop participants. The darker the color, the greater the aggregate weighted plausibility score.

"The future has to hold change. That is the nature of a future and the nature of Lake Geneva. We need to make sure everyone (not just those with financial means) is welcome to be a community member - and that their membership in this community is valued."

-Community Survey Respondent

Future Insights

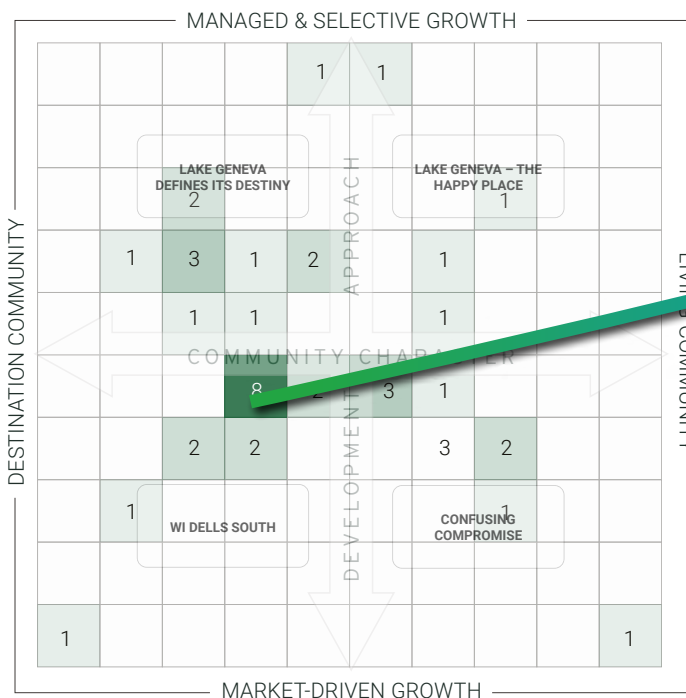
- The concentration of color in Scenario B, 'Lake Geneva – The Happy Place' indicated a close alignment of thinking among Think-Tank participants, and a significant appetite for change along both axes.
- Arriving at a point of consensus among stakeholders about the preferred future is very important to the visioning process as it provides a sense of cohesion, agreement, and balanced solutions going forward.

8.4 | GETTING TO THE PREFERRED FUTURE

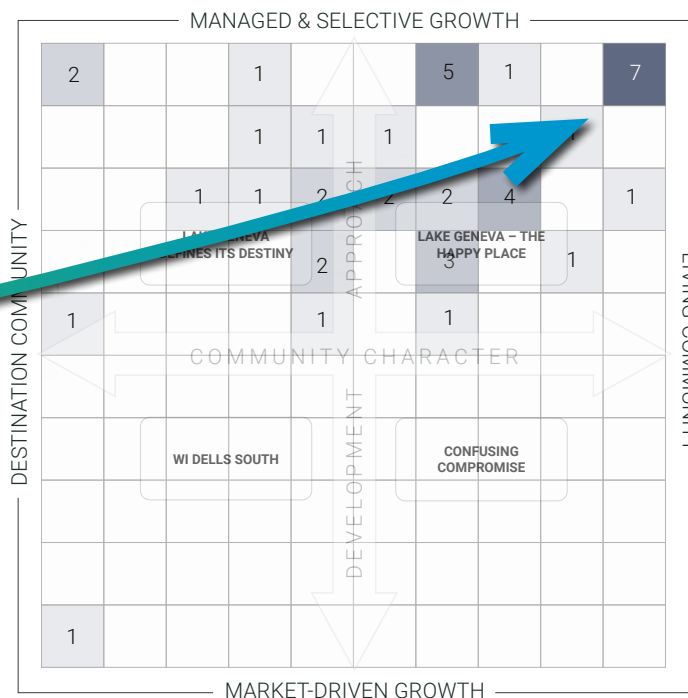
Think-Tank participants discussed the ramifications and implications of failing to achieve the Preferred Future. While there was strong alignment among Think-Tank participants that Scenario B, 'Lake Geneva – The Happy Place,' represented the preferred future scenario, it was also recognized that reorienting the current trajectory from a varied view on the Expected Future will require significant collaboration, communication, and leadership in the community.

Because of the long-term nature of the scenario planning methodology, stakeholders often see the 'distant future vision (2035)' as unattainable and unrealistic. However, this underestimates the progress that can be made during the intervening years, and the cumulative positive impacts of change.

LAKE GENEVA IN 2035
EXPECTED FUTURE



LAKE GENEVA IN 2035
PREFERRED FUTURE



Future Insights

- The Think-Tank scenario planning process is a significant step in the City's planning process to define collectively how Lake Geneva will strategically plan to achieve its preferred future.
- Consistent communications about how and why Lake Geneva needs to pursue its preferred future will be an important part of how changes will be made in the community.

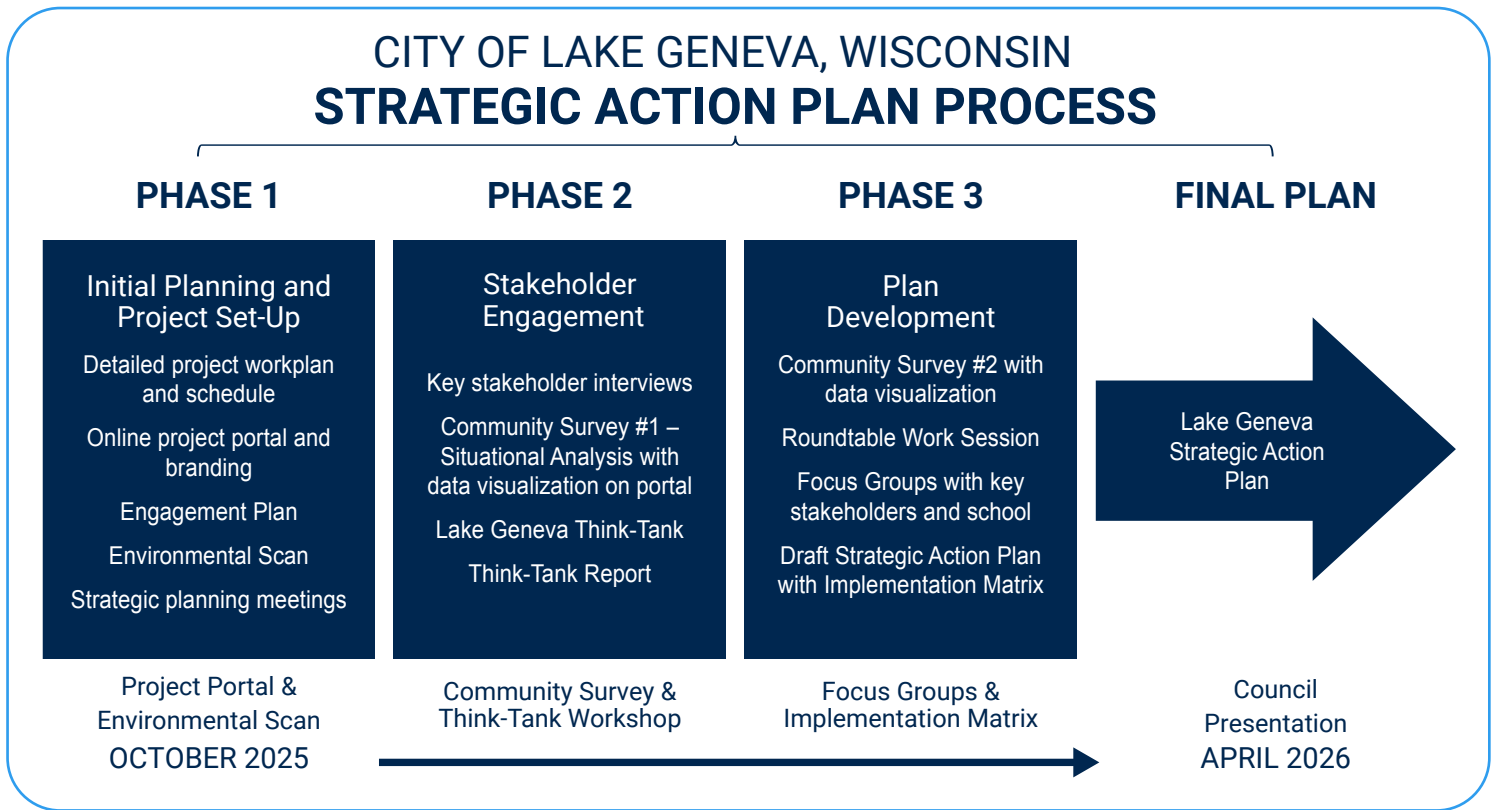
"We should elevate our waterfront, our restaurants, shopping, food variety, parking. We should just be the best at everything, and make sure that this access to the local people is free and awesome and easily accessible. There's no reason why with the resources of this community that we can't be the best."

-Community Survey Respondent

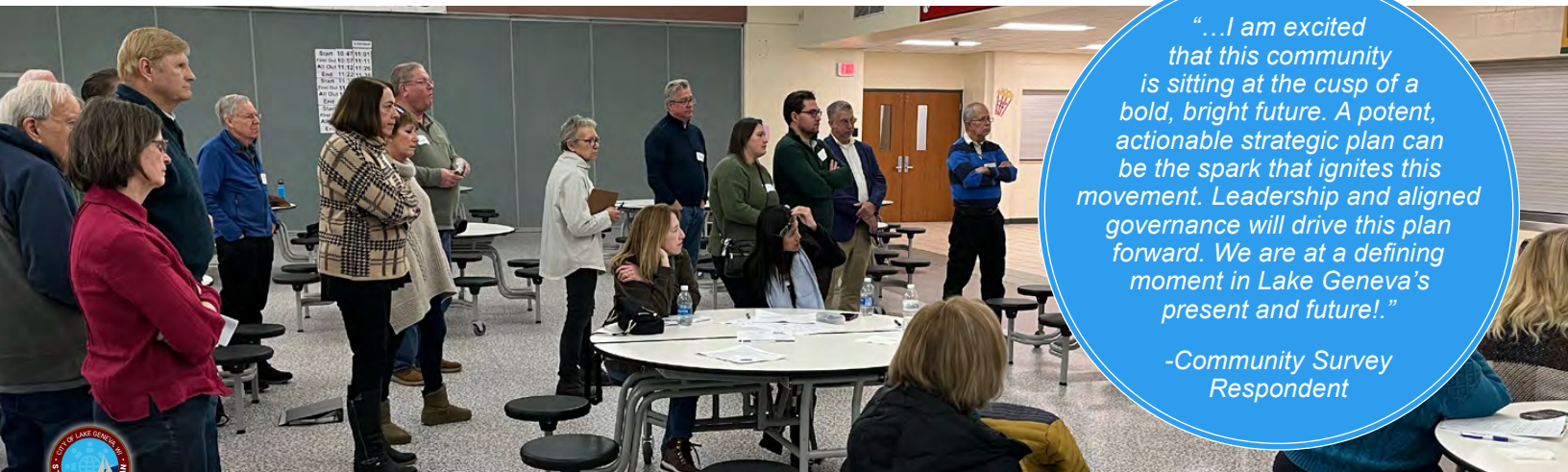


9.0 | NEXT STEPS IN THE PLANNING PROCESS

Following the Think-Tank, this Think-Tank Report was written and published for distribution. The project will then move on to phase three of the strategic action planning process for the City.



- **February 2026:** Strategic Pillar Roundtable with Common Council; Community Update Session; High School Session with Senior Homeroom students; Tourism Session.
- **March 2026:** Community Survey #2; Strategic Pillar Focus Groups with City Staff and Common Council; Community Future Summit; draft Strategic Action Plan.
- **April 2026:** Onboard new Common Council into the planning process; final presentation and approval of the Strategic Action Plan.



“...I am excited that this community is sitting at the cusp of a bold, bright future. A potent, actionable strategic plan can be the spark that ignites this movement. Leadership and aligned governance will drive this plan forward. We are at a defining moment in Lake Geneva’s present and future!”

-Community Survey Respondent



»»»» 10.0 | ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Community members have engaged in this visioning and planning process with great enthusiasm. Their passion and interest have ensured discussions are open, thoughtful, and reflective of the myriad of perspectives that exist within Lake Geneva. This dedication is also reflective of the deep commitment participants have to the future of the City.

We would like to thank La Riviera for hosting the first Session of the Think-Tank on January 8, and Lake Geneva Middle School for allowing us to use the cafeteria for the second session of the Think-Tank on January 10, 2026.

Additionally, our appreciation is extended to the Board of Aldermen, and in particular to Mayor Todd Krause, City Administrator David De Angelis, and Building Inspector and Zoning Administrator Renee Hanlon, who meet on a weekly basis with the project team and provide the local expertise that helps guide this project. Their time and dedication are greatly appreciated.

LAKE GENEVA BOARD OF ALDERMEN

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»»»»» 11.0 | FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more information on the Jasper comprehensive planning process, please contact:

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Please stay connected to the Lake Geneva Strategic Action Plan project at:

<https://lab2.future-iq.com/lake-geneva-sap/>

WELCOME TO THE
CITY OF LAKE GENEVA, WI
STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN
PROJECT

Save the Date - Community Update February 17, 2026!

Curious about where we are in the Strategic Planning Process? Join us for a Community Update to weigh in on the preferred future for Lake Geneva that emerged at the Think-Tank Workshop, learn about preliminary goals from the Community Survey, and where we go from here.

Date: February 17th
Time: 6:30pm

WELCOME TO THE
CITY OF LAKE GENEVA, WI

Existing Conditions Report
January 2026

CITY OF LAKE GENEVA
STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN





»»»» 12.0 | ABOUT FUTURE IQ

Future iQ specializes in applying innovative tools and approaches to assist municipalities, organizations, regions and industries shape their economic and community futures. With nearly two decades of experience, the company has a global clientele spanning three continents. To learn more about Future iQ, and our recent projects visit www.future-iq.com or by email at info@future-iq.com.

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— LAKE GENEVA STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN —

THINK-TANK REPORT

WISCONSIN, USA

FEBRUARY 2026