ABSTRACT

Title of Thesis: ARE TRADITIONAL TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES APPLICABLE TO THE PRESERVATION OF LAKE GENEVA, ITS ECONOMY AND ITS HERITAGE?

Degree Candidate: Lynn Ellen Wheeler

Degree and Year: Master of Arts in Historic Preservation, 2003

Thesis directed by: Cheryl A. Inghram, MAI

Welch Center for Graduate and Professional Studies

Goucher College

Lake Geneva, Wisconsin is known as the Newport of the Midwest, where wealthy Chicagoans built elaborate "cottages" many designed and landscaped by noted architects. Prior to becoming a Gilded Age resort, Lake Geneva was a grain-milling center. The history and culture of both eras of development are manifest in the historic resources of the area.

Through statistical analysis of regional tourism data and the extrapolation of the results to Lake Geneva, this thesis makes the case that an economy dependent upon heritage tourism is likewise dependent on preservation of its historic resources. Moreover, the economic benefits of heritage tourism are multiplied exponentially as tourist expenditures are recycled through the economy.

Preservation issues are developed through case studies of past and present situations involving preservation of historic properties. Research and analysis of the various tools and techniques of historic preservation, results in the identification of

numerous federal, state and local mechanisms applicable to the preservation issues identified.

This thesis concludes that potential threats to Lake Geneva historic resources are not immediate rather, they are long-term and the result of economic and social pressures that impinge upon the historic properties. Furthermore, the tools and techniques to mitigate future threats are available. The greatest threat to Lake Geneva's historic resources is the lack of long-term planning for the future protection of the area's historic assets, economic growth and community development.

If the past is a predictor, one thing is certain, change will occur. Lake Geneva must anticipate change, not merely respond to it.