

VILLAGE OF DOWNERS GROVE
Report for the Village
2/18/2025

SUBJECT:	SUBMITTED BY:
Guiding DG: Comprehensive Plan and Related Projects - Comprehensive Plan Focus Areas	Stan Popovich, AICP Director of Community Development

SYNOPSIS

The preliminary Focus Area Plans for the Guiding DG Comprehensive Plan will be presented for Council consideration.

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT

The Village Council has identified the Comprehensive Plan and related projects as Priority Action Items for 2023-2025

FISCAL IMPACT

N/A

RECOMMENDATION

The Council should review, discuss and provide feedback on the preliminary Focus Area Plans. This commentary will allow the Village’s Guiding DG consultant, Houseal Lavigne (HL) to further refine these items for the Comprehensive Plan.

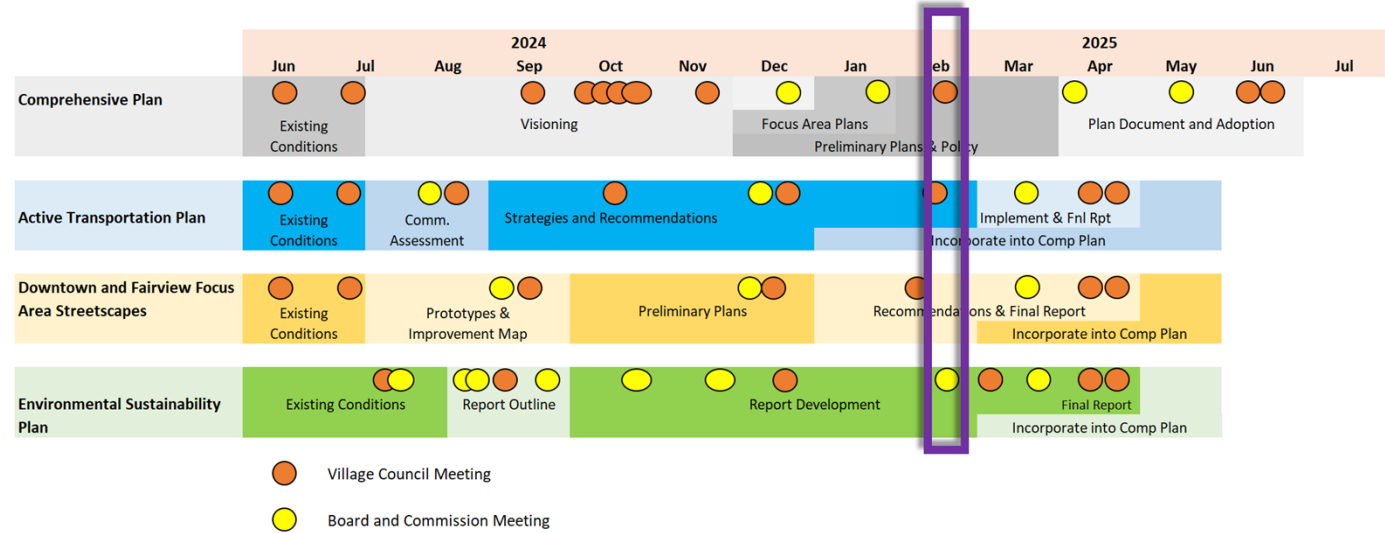
BACKGROUND

Throughout the fall and winter, the Village and HL have presented various sections of the Comprehensive Plan for Council review. The next section ready for Council review is the preliminary Focus Area Plans. Focus Area Plans present specific recommendations for three areas of the Village that have unique challenges and considerable opportunities. The three areas are:

- Ogden Avenue (I-355 to Lacey Road)
- Belmont Road (Prairie Avenue to Maple Avenue)
- 75th Street (Main Street to Devereux Road)

The Focus Area Plans include recommendations on land use, redevelopment, connectivity, mobility and character. The Plans also provides site specific recommendations for Opportunity Sites, which are sites that have high redevelopment potential, with the three focus areas.

Schedule



ATTACHMENTS

Preliminary Focus Area Plans

07

FOCUS AREAS

The Guiding DG Comprehensive Plan provides specific recommendations for West Ogden Avenue, Belmont Road, and 75th Street, three areas of the community facing unique challenges and considerable opportunities.

The Focus Areas include site-specific improvements related to future land use, potential development, connectivity, and overall design and character. These address the issues and opportunities specific to each Focus Area while also demonstrating how broader vision and themes of the Comprehensive Plan can be applied.

VILLAGE DESIGN TOOLKIT

The Village Design Toolkit provides a set of key improvements and recommendations that can be applied throughout the Village and in all Focus Areas. Aligning with community input, the toolkit aims to improve the commercial vitality, preserve character, and enhance the appeal of the Focus Areas.



Gateway Signage

Gateway signage acts as a welcoming landmark for a community, district, or notable location. It typically shows the area's name along with design elements that highlight its unique identity and character. Gateway signage establishes a sense of arrival and distinction while enhancing the area's visual appeal. Gateway features should be prominent and incorporate Village branding. They should have a consistent design and well-maintained landscaping, creating a cohesive identity for the community.



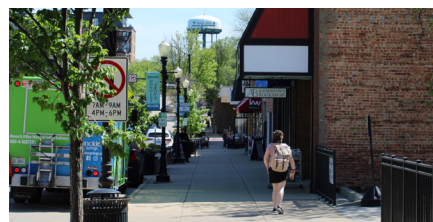
Parking Reduction

Reducing pavement where possible decreases the heat island effect, while covering large parking lots with solar panels capitalizes on existing sun exposure. The Village should encourage property owners to reduce the number parking stalls where possible and explore outlot development opportunities. The Village should review its zoning parking requirements and consider reducing the minimum and reexamining its maximums parking regulations.



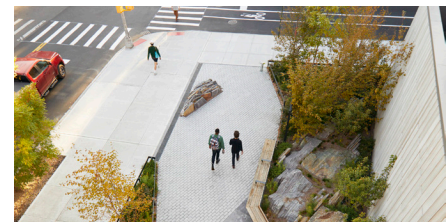
Buffering and Screening

Buffering creates a transition between residential areas and nearby commercial or industrial developments. This involves landscaping, fencing, setbacks, or sound barriers to minimize noise, visual disturbances, and other impacts. Hedgerows, low masonry walls, privacy fence, and small berms are landscaping techniques that are promoted and utilized to screen parking.



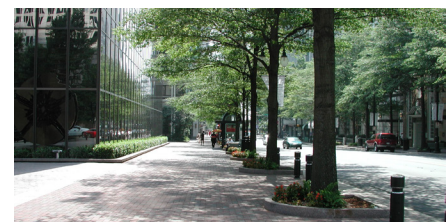
Sidewalk Improvements

Upgraded, ADA compliant, and complete sidewalks encourage pedestrian activity, which supports businesses and creates a more inviting environment for residents and visitors. Enhanced connectivity ensures better access for people of all abilities and reduces dependency on vehicles. These improvements also contribute to public safety, reducing potential hazards for pedestrians while encouraging walking as an active transportation option. All developments are required to provide adequate, safe, and attractive pedestrian circulation between buildings on the same site and connectivity to the adjacent site or public sidewalk and trails.



Streetscape Improvements

Streetscape improvements enhance the aesthetic appeal of public streets and surrounding areas through various improvements such as street trees, decorative lighting, benches, art installations, and upgraded sidewalks. Streetscape improvements uplift the pedestrian realm and enhance the appearance of a corridor.



Landscaping Improvements

A well-maintained landscape enhances a commercial property's appeal and atmosphere, drawing in customers and having a positive visual impact on surrounding areas. Landscaping includes street yards, interior yards, parking lot landscape islands, parking lot landscape divider medians, and trees. Landscaping has the potential to reduce the heat island effect of areas with extensive pavement. As Downers Grove redevelops, the Village should continue to enforce its zoning landscape requirements. The Village should consider reviewing its landscaping requirements to ensure alignment with best practices and the Guiding DG Environmental Sustainability Plan.



Roadway Connections

New roadway connections improve accessibility within Downers Grove. By establishing new connections, visitors and residents enjoy easier access to various sites and a more integrated transportation network.



Bicycle Improvements

The major corridors within Downers Grove are largely designed for car travel, with few on- and off-street bicycle facilities and trails. Bicycle improvements would expand the enjoyment of the Focus Areas to those beyond solely auto users. Throughout the Downers Grove, the Village should continue to develop an active transportation system that incorporates interconnected paths, sidewalks, and on-street bikeways, as guided by the Guiding DG Active Transportation Plan.



Pedestrian Crossing Improvements

Pedestrian crossing improvements involve enhancing the safety and accessibility of locations where pedestrians cross streets. Improvements can include marked crosswalks, pedestrian signals, and refuge islands where people can stand safely. The Village should work with DuDOT and IDOT to incorporate pedestrian crossing improvements where possible, in accordance with the Guiding DG Active Transportation Plan.



Intersection Improvements

Intersection improvements enhance the safety and efficiency of intersections for all users, including pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers. These enhancements may include upgrading traffic signals, improving signage, creating dedicated turn lanes, and increasing visibility. The Village should work with DuDOT, IDOT, and other relevant entities to prioritize the safety and functionality of existing intersections and implement necessary improvements.



Public Transportation Improvements

There are several Pace Bus stops located along major corridors within Downers Grove. Most of these stops are signs lacking shelters, benches, or sidewalk connections. These bus stops should be improved for safety and to be more welcoming. Improvements such as overhead shelters, seating, lighting, and signs that track the arrival time of the next bus improve the overall public transit experience. Overhead shelters can incorporate solar panels to capitalize on the sun exposure of major corridors.



Manage Natural Space

Downers Grove is home to diverse natural spaces and uses. The Village should adopt tailored strategies to manage these spaces and their roles within each Focus Area. Preserving natural spaces requires safeguarding and maintaining areas with ecological and aesthetic significance as development progresses. Additionally, the Village should explore opportunities to enhance the natural environment, such as promoting the use of native plants, increasing biodiversity within the community, and removing concrete to restore natural landscapes.

WEST OGDEN AVENUE

Ogden Avenue is one of the heaviest traveled commercial corridors in the western suburbs. The corridor has an Average Annual Daily Traffic count (AADT) of 27,700 vehicles per Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) counts conducted in 2022. In Downers Grove, the western part of Ogden Avenue — from Walnut Avenue to Stonewall Avenue — is auto-oriented, featuring lodging, office buildings, retail, multifamily developments, fast food restaurants, auto dealers, and several vacant and underutilized parcels. In the Guiding DG community survey, about 32% of respondents described the character of Ogden Avenue as a weakness.

The West Ogden Avenue Focus Area features many lots with relatively shallow depths, limiting the types of development that can occur. The lots west of Belmont Road/Finley Road have larger lot sizes, creating greater opportunities for redevelopment. Much of the existing developments have large parking lots that exceed demand and create swaths of underutilized land along the corridor.

The West Ogden Avenue Focus Area offers a variety of commercial opportunities for the corridor. It consolidates and reconfigures lots along Ogden Avenue, particularly east of Belmont Road/Finley Road, with shared parking strategies. The Focus Area Plan identifies multifamily residential on the corridor while improving the buffering and screening and the pedestrian connection of existing single-family neighborhoods within proximity to the Focus Area. Enhanced streetscape elements and bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure improve the experience along West Ogden Avenue.


















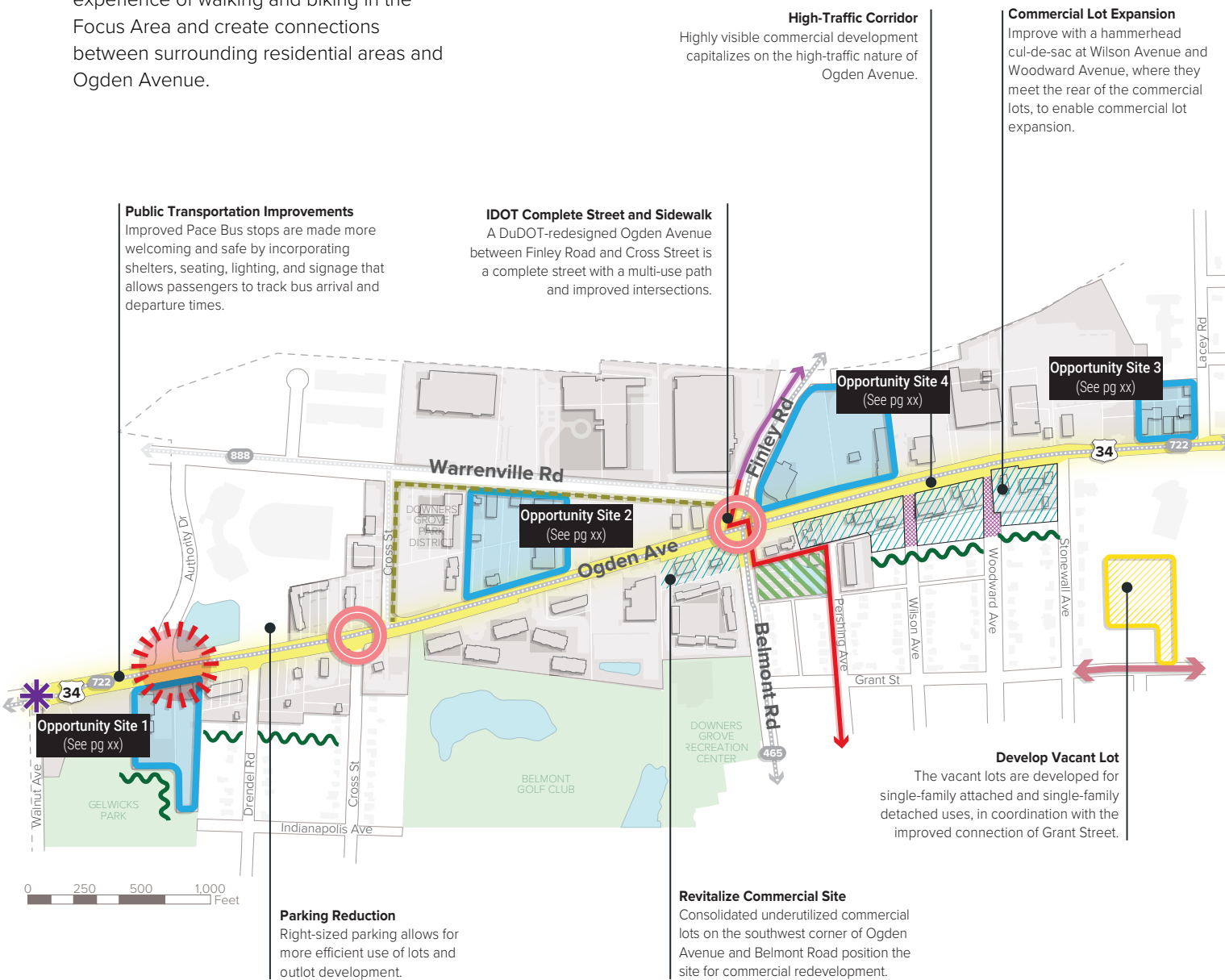
FOCUS AREA: WEST OGDEN AVENUE

IMPROVEMENT FRAMEWORK

The West Ogden Avenue Focus Area transforms the corridor into a gateway to the community and a regional commercial destination, attracting more auto dealerships and hotels and fostering a cohesive, active space. Lot consolidation and reconfiguration enable modern commercial uses and the introduction of additional mixed residential uses. Active transportation infrastructure and streetscaping improvements improve the experience of walking and biking in the Focus Area and create connections between surrounding residential areas and Ogden Avenue.

IMPROVEMENTS

-  Redevelopment Opportunities
-  Underutilized Property
-  Property Consolidation
-  Right-of-Way Vacation
-  Gateway Signage
-  Buffering and Screening
-  Streetscape Improvements
-  Manage Natural Space
-  Roadway Connections
-  Potential Signalized Intersection
-  Pedestrian Crossing Improvements
-  Existing Pace Route
-  Proposed Sidewalk
-  Proposed Shared-Use Path
-  Proposed Undetermined ATP Facility Type



Commercial Lot Expansion

West Ogden Avenue's commercial corridor faces challenges due to shallow lot dimensions, particularly east of Belmont Road. These lot sizes make it difficult to develop sites that meet contemporary needs for building footprints, tenant spaces, and parking.

Recommendations:

- o Evaluate the potential to vacate right-of-ways on a case-by-case basis to support desirable developments.
- o Incorporate hammerheads at select side streets to use Village-owned right-of-way for commercial development and parking while maintaining pedestrian connections to neighborhoods.

- o Consider rezoning non-residential lots within 300 feet of Ogden Avenue to commercial districts as they become available, facilitating incremental redevelopment aligned with the corridor's long-term vision.
- o Promote shared parking arrangements through cross-access between consolidated lots, reducing curb cuts and enhancing pedestrian safety by minimizing vehicular conflicts.
- o Encourage the consolidation of lots to create parcels at least 300 feet deep, expanding opportunities for commercial development.
- o Permit residential properties to be combined with adjacent commercial lots on a case-by-case basis.

Belmont Road to Stonewall Avenue

The commercial area south on Ogden Avenue between Belmont Road and Stonewall Avenue is ripe for lot expansion improvements. Placing a hammerhead at Wilson Avenue and Woodward Avenue, where they meet the rear of the commercial lots, would enable commercial lot expansion. Buffering and screening residential areas would ensure neighbors are minimally impacted by noise, traffic, and the appearance of parking lots and storage areas introduced by the new commercial development.

Commercial Lot Expansion

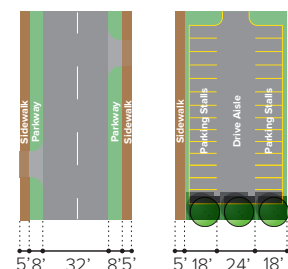
LEGEND

- Area available for commercial development
- Vacated right-of-ways
- Commercial areas
- Sidewalks

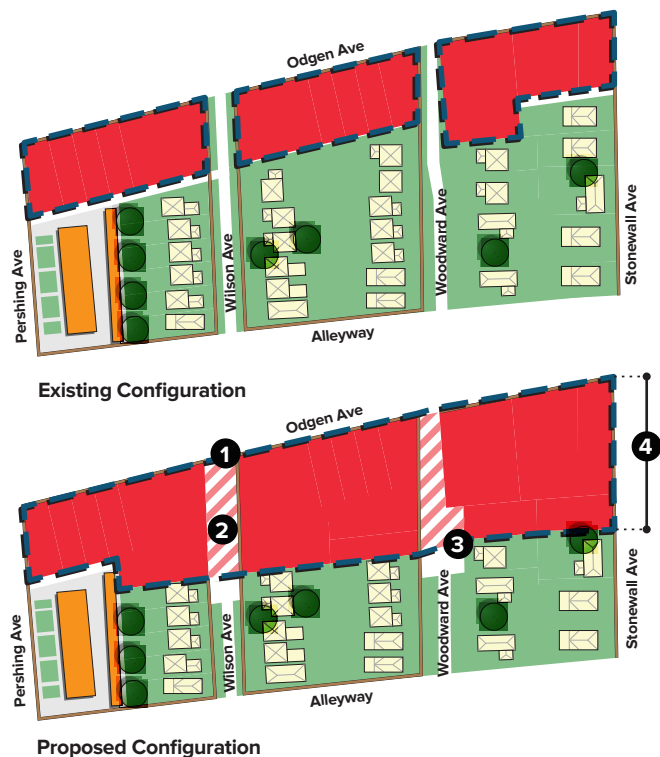
CALLOUTS

- Limit vehicular access but maintain pedestrian connectivity
- Develop additional public parking
- Hammerhead cul-de-sac
- 300 feet lot depth

60' Right-of-way 60' Public parking



A vacated 60-foot right-of-way can support standard off-street parking for local businesses



Streetscape Improvements

Integrating streetscape improvements along Ogden Avenue can position the Focus Area to serve as an attractive gateway to the community.

Recommendations:

- o Work with IDOT to widen sidewalks to a standard width while maintaining street yards to separate pedestrians from Ogden Avenue.
- o Where possible based on existing condition, redevelopment and curb cut reductions, consider replacing the center turn lane with a raised, landscaped median to improve visual appeal and traffic flow.

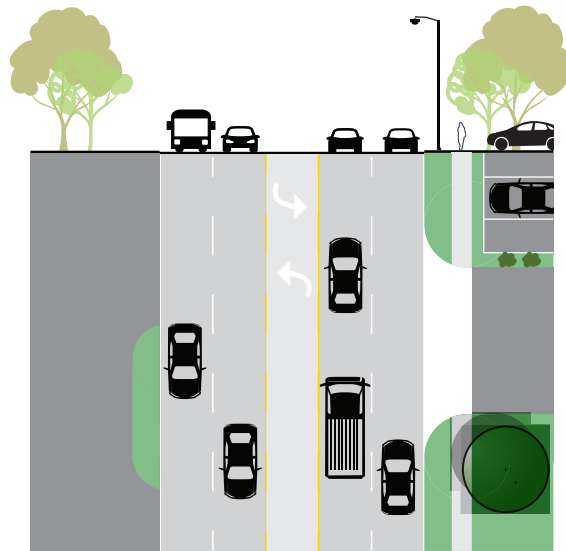
Landscaping Improvements

Encouraging landscape improvements in the Focus Area can enhance the visual appeal of Ogden Avenue.

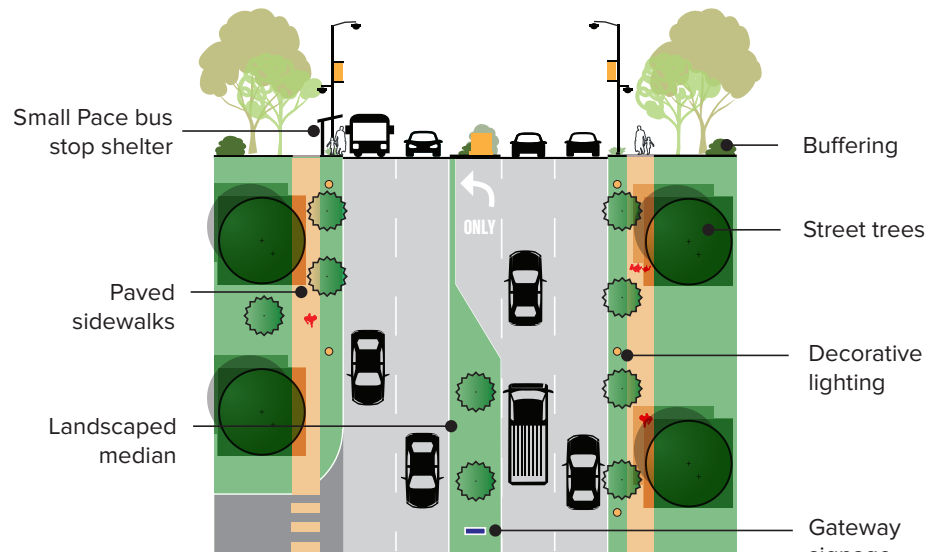
Recommendation:

- o Work with property owners to incorporate landscaping improvements to enhance the area's visual appeal.

Ogden Avenue Streetscape Improvements



Existing Streetscape



Proposed Streetscape



Pedestrian Crossing Improvements

Community outreach identified crossing Ogden Avenue as a problem for pedestrians.

Recommendation:

- o Work with IDOT to prioritize pedestrian improvements along Ogden Avenue to improve users' safety.

Potential Signalized Intersection

Signalized intersections enhance the safety and efficiency of intersections for all users, including pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers.

Recommendation:

- o Work with DuDOT, IDOT, and other relevant entities to monitor the need for additional signalized intersections to cross West Ogden Avenue.

Roadway Connections

Establishing new roadway connections can enhance access and unlock development potential for adjacent vacant parcels.

Recommendations:

- o Explore a potential roadway connection along Grant Street, just east of Stonewall Avenue.
- o Collaborate with the Illinois Tollway to maintain and improve road connections and active transportation links over the I-88/I-355 corridor.

Public Transit Improvements

Enhancing public transit infrastructure along Ogden Avenue will support better accessibility.

Recommendation:

- o Work with Pace to upgrade bus stops along Routes 722 and 465 for improved passenger experience.

Parking Reduction

Reducing parking areas can optimize land use and improve pedestrian safety by decreasing curb cuts and vehicular conflicts.

Recommendation:

- o Promote shared parking arrangements between neighboring commercial developments to maximize space and efficiency.



Bicycle Improvements

Creating safe pathways for cyclists along Ogden Avenue enhances the existing active transportation network.

Recommendation:

- o Support DuDOT's redesign plans for Belmont Road/Finley Road and Cross Street, including a shared-use path along Ogden Avenue, extending it throughout the Focus Area for consistent cyclist safety.

Sidewalk Improvements

Filling gaps in the sidewalk network along Ogden Avenue will foster better connectivity and safety.

Recommendation:

- o Improve sidewalk links, particularly along Woodward Avenue and Pershing Avenue, to ensure continuous pedestrian access and integration with the commercial corridor.

Manage Natural Space

To mitigate environmental impacts in the Focus Area, natural areas should be buffered from any new development.

Recommendation:

- o Preserve the wetland adjacent to commercial developments near Lee Avenue, Pershing Avenue, and Walnut Avenue.

Work with Downers Grove Economic Development Corporation

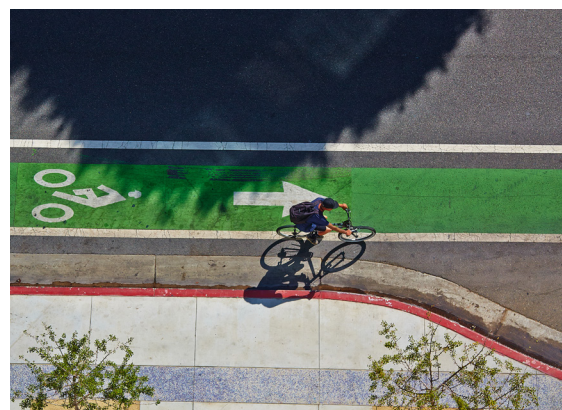
Continue collaboration with the DGEDC to ensure economic growth and success.

Recommendation:

- o Conduct a gap analysis of Ogden Avenue to assist in attracting new businesses that may be underrepresented along the corridor.



Public Transit Improvements



Bicycle Improvement



Sidewalk Improvement

Redevelopment Opportunities

Opportunity sites are areas within the Focus Area that have high redevelopment potential. The identified sites and their redevelopment would have a dramatic effect on the look and feel of the Focus Area. Redevelopment of the West Ogden Avenue Focus Area can attract additional desirable auto dealer and hotel uses, create activated spaces, and create a more cohesive corridor.

Ogden Avenue and Authority Drive

OPPORTUNITY SITE #1

The site at Ogden Avenue and Authority Drive offers development potential, benefiting from its strategic location near a newly constructed hotel and the planned Walnut Park Athletic Center to the south. The large property lends itself to a mixed-use development approach, featuring commercial uses along Ogden Avenue and multifamily residential to the south, adjacent to the park. Site layout should minimize visual impacts on nearby residential areas, incorporate landscaping and fencing to maintain privacy and aesthetics, and mitigate impacts on neighboring Belmont Prairie. A physical connection from residential areas to the park would enhance community integration, while access to the neighborhood would be facilitated by extending Indianapolis Avenue. Cross-access with neighboring commercial properties should be explored to reduce curb cuts along Ogden Avenue, improving traffic flow and safety. This multi-faceted development approach can maximize the site's potential while harmonizing with its surroundings.

Ogden Avenue and Warrenville Road

OPPORTUNITY SITE #2

The site at Ogden Avenue and Warrenville Road offers a prime opportunity for redevelopment. Its substantial size and strategic location make it well-suited for a new car dealership or medical office building of high-quality design. Consolidating the multiple properties creates an optimal redevelopment site. The building should be positioned toward Ogden Avenue, with parking strategically placed to the side or rear to enhance visual appeal. Primary access should be provided from Ogden Avenue, with secondary access on Warrenville Road, and the number of curb cuts minimized to ensure traffic efficiency. Thoughtful landscaping, including perimeter and interior lot treatments, will soften the visual impact of the building and parking areas.

Alternatively, the southern portion of the site along Ogden Avenue can accommodate commercial uses similar to those at Ogden Avenue and Main Street, while the northern portion along Warrenville Road would be developed as office space or an additional hotel, offering flexibility to meet market demands.

Ogden Avenue and Lacey Road

OPPORTUNITY SITE #3

The corner site at Ogden Avenue and Lacey Road is a prime candidate for redevelopment for multifamily residential uses, aligning with the scale and style of the adjacent assisted living facility to the north. Its size and proximity to both multifamily and single-family neighborhoods present an opportunity to introduce additional residential options along Ogden Avenue. To optimize the site, the building should front Ogden Avenue, with parking positioned to the north and accessible via Lacey Road. Preserving the existing vegetation on the western edge of the property is essential to maintain a natural buffer between the residential development and nearby commercial uses. The multifamily design should prioritize community amenities, incorporating features such as plazas, patios, and pet-friendly spaces to enhance livability and foster a sense of community.



Ogden Avenue and Finley Road

OPPORTUNITY SITE #4

The Ogden Avenue and Finley Road site represents a significant opportunity to transform an underutilized, poorly connected corner into a vibrant, multi-use destination. The site suffers from poor cross-access and limited pedestrian accessibility, particularly from eastbound Ogden Avenue. Redevelopment of this prominent site would address these challenges while creating a dynamic mix of uses.

Potential redevelopment can establish a pedestrian-friendly urban environment along Ogden Avenue, with retail spaces, a signature restaurant, and a food plaza catering to nearby workers and residents. The northwest block is designed as a corporate square, combining retail, office spaces, salons, and flexible-use areas. Parking is positioned toward the rear of the site to improve visual impacts while internal access roads minimize disruptions along Ogden Avenue and Finley Road.

The proposed improvements align with best practices by fostering a pedestrian-oriented urban street experience that supports the Village's goals of creating activated commercial hubs. The redevelopment enhances accessibility, connectivity, and aesthetics of the site while creating a vibrant, mixed-use destination for Ogden Avenue that meets the needs of community residents, visitors, and businesses.



FOCUS AREA: WEST OGDEN AVENUE

OPPORTUNITY SITE



DEVELOPMENT EXAMPLES



A Ogden Avenue & Main Street, Downers Grove, IL



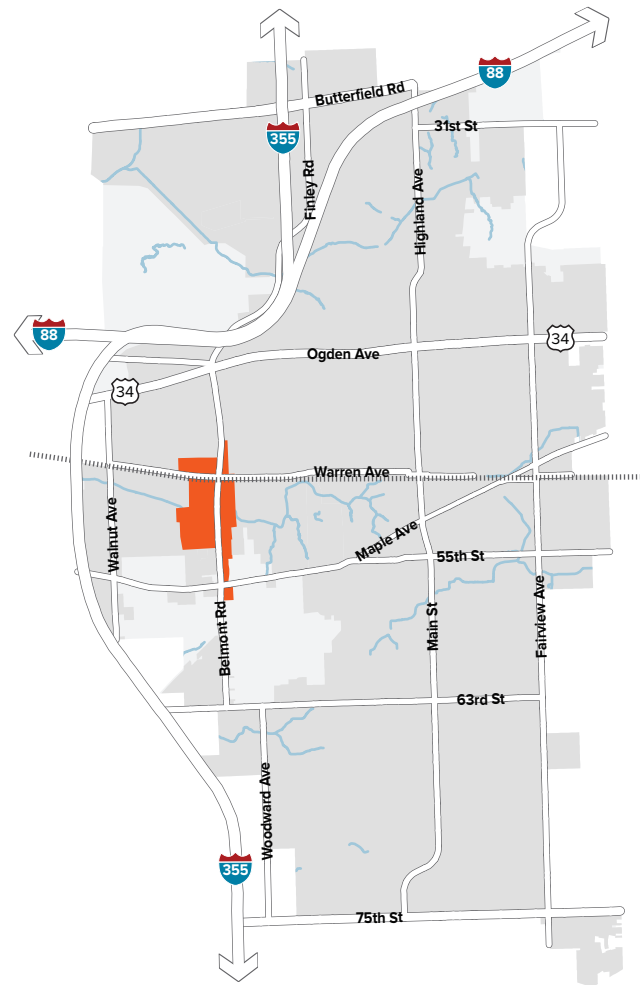
B 7001-7003 South Howell Avenue, Oak Creek, WI

BELMONT ROAD

The Belmont Road corridor stretches from Prairie Avenue to Maple Avenue, encompassing the Belmont Metra station and the edge of Ellsworth Business Park, a 351-acre business park. The corridor features a mix of multifamily and single-family residential. There is little commercial development in the area, except for a neighborhood retail center at the southwest corner of Belmont Road and Maple Avenue. Thirty percent of Guiding DG community survey respondents indicated the Belmont Road corridor could use improvements.

The Belmont Road Focus Area and associated Ellsworth Business Park have limited modern industrial spaces. Dining options are scarce, leaving employees and nearby residents underserved. The parking lots at the Belmont Metra station are not optimized and fail to align with commuters' needs, compounded by a lack of retail tailored to this demographic. Limited parking within the industrial park further restricts opportunities for entertainment uses. Additionally, unannexed land pockets between Wisconsin Avenue and Maple Avenue create jurisdictional challenges.


















The Belmont Road Focus Area repositions the area's industrial uses while fostering mixed-use transit-oriented development (TOD) around the Belmont Metra station. It creates various sizes and types of industrial spaces and consolidates lots along the Metra tracks for TOD that incorporates transit-supportive retail, townhome, multifamily, entertainment, incubator space, and artisan and light manufacturing uses. The Belmont Road Focus Area improves the appearance of the corridor and reintroduces nature into the area by "greening" the creek. In conjunction with redevelopment projects, the Village should consider working with property owners to improve the cohesiveness of the area. The Village should work with property owners to annex the land east of Belmont Road that is surrounded by Downers Grove.



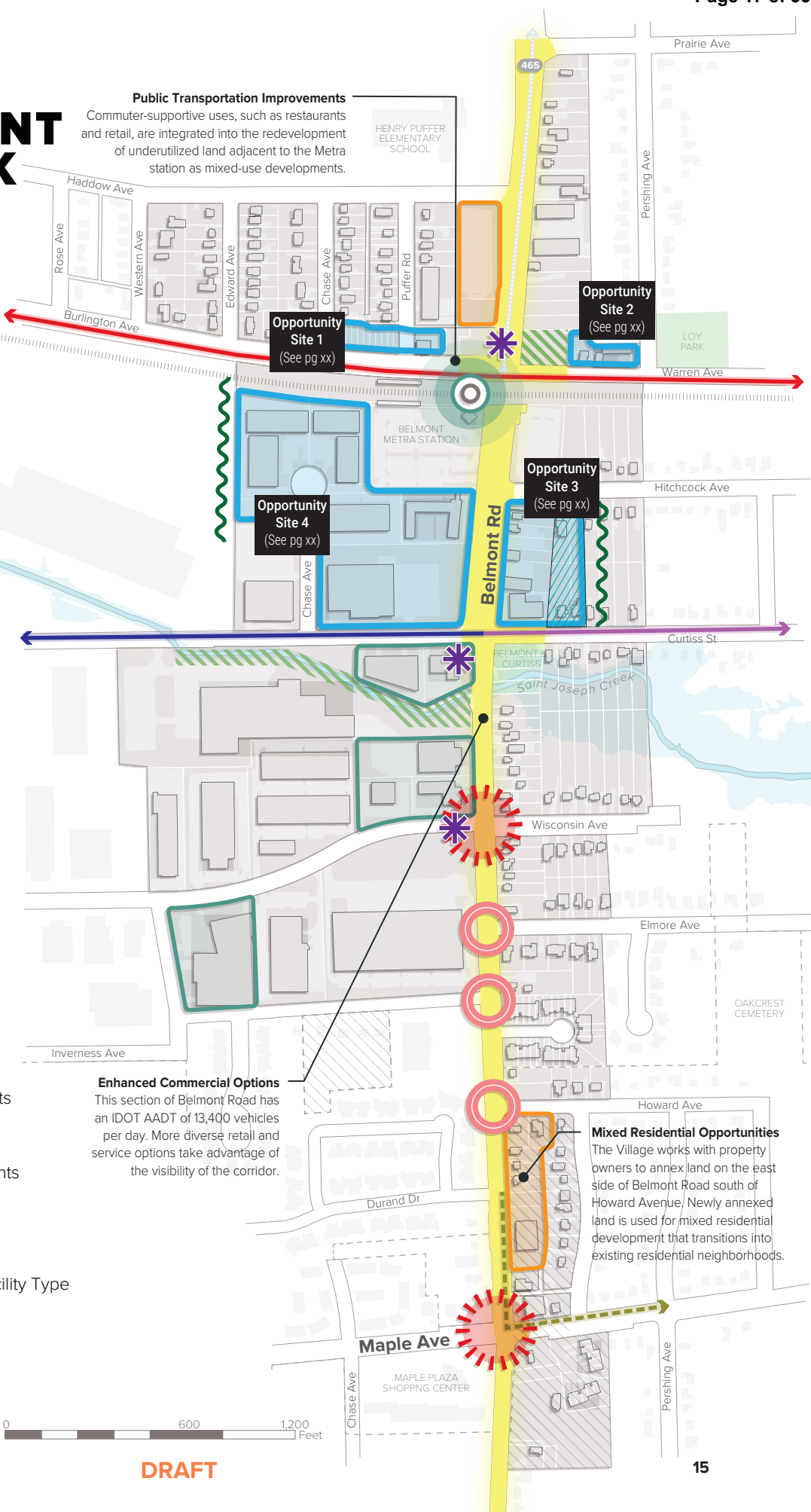
FOCUS AREA: BELMONT ROAD IMPROVEMENT FRAMEWORK

The Belmont Road Focus Area focuses on transit-oriented development, introducing a mix of residential and commuter-supporting commercial uses directly south of the Belmont Metra station. Small- and mid-size industrial and office development should be integrated into the business park to enable affordable artisan manufacturing, incubator spaces, and ghost kitchen spaces. The business park includes limited entertainment uses. Greening the existing paved creek reintroduces nature into the area and enhances Belmont Road's connection to Downers Grove's ecological assets.

IMPROVEMENTS

-  Redevelopment Opportunities
-  Mixed Residential Opportunities
-  Obsolete Industrial Space
-  Property Consolidation
-  Gateway Signage
-  Buffering and Screening
-  Streetscape Improvements
-  Manage Natural Space
-  Intersection Improvements
-  Pedestrian Crossing Improvements
-  Existing Pace Route
-  Public Transportation Improvements
-  Proposed Unprotected Bike Lane
-  Proposed Shared-Use Path
-  Proposed Undetermined ATP Facility Type
-  Proposed Sidewalk
-  Annexation Considerations

Public Transportation Improvements
Commuter-supportive uses, such as restaurants and retail, are integrated into the redevelopment of underutilized land adjacent to the Metra station as mixed-use developments.



Enhanced Commercial Options
This section of Belmont Road has an IDOT AADT of 13,400 vehicles per day. More diverse retail and service options take advantage of the visibility of the corridor.

Mixed Residential Opportunities
The Village works with property owners to annex land on the east side of Belmont Road south of Howard Avenue. Newly annexed land is used for mixed residential development that transitions into existing residential neighborhoods.



Gateway Signage

The Belmont Road Focus Area is a major industrial, commercial, and transit focused area of the community. The industrial park does not feature any signage alerting visitors that they have entered the area.

Recommendation:

- o Incorporate gateway features to create a cohesive identity with consistent design and landscaping.

Buffering and Screening

The Focus Area features industrial and commercial uses to the west of Belmont Road in close proximity to low-density residential uses to the east.

Recommendations:

- o Buffer and screen industrial and commercial uses from Belmont Road and Curtiss Street with landscaping and fencing.
- o Incorporate landscaping solutions to improve the appearance of industrial park areas.

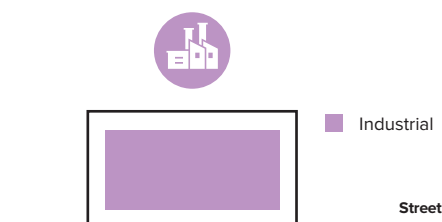
Retrofit Industrial Structures

Many of the Focus Area's industrial structures have become obsolete by contemporary economic trends. Retrofitting obsolete industrial structures can encourage small-scale production enterprises, such as small batch bakeries or furniture makers, to meet current light industrial and manufacturing demands.

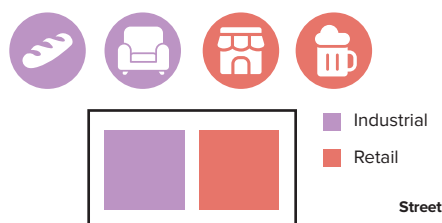
Recommendation:

- o Collaborate with the Downers Grove Economic Development Corporation (DGEDC) to retrofit obsolete single-tenant industrial spaces as multi-tenant buildings to accommodate smaller users.

Industrial Structure Redevelopment



Existing Industrial Space



Development Scenario



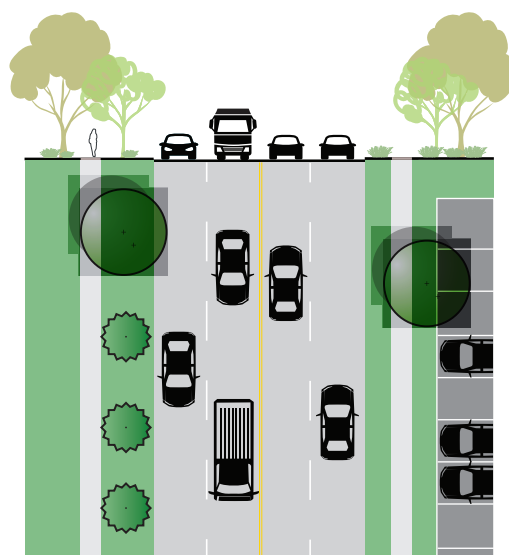
Streetscape Improvements

Belmont Road is an arterial road that sees over 13,000 vehicles per day. The existing right-of-way is approximately 80 feet wide. The typical cross-section includes sidewalks on both sides of the street, street yards on at least one side, and two travel lanes in each direction.

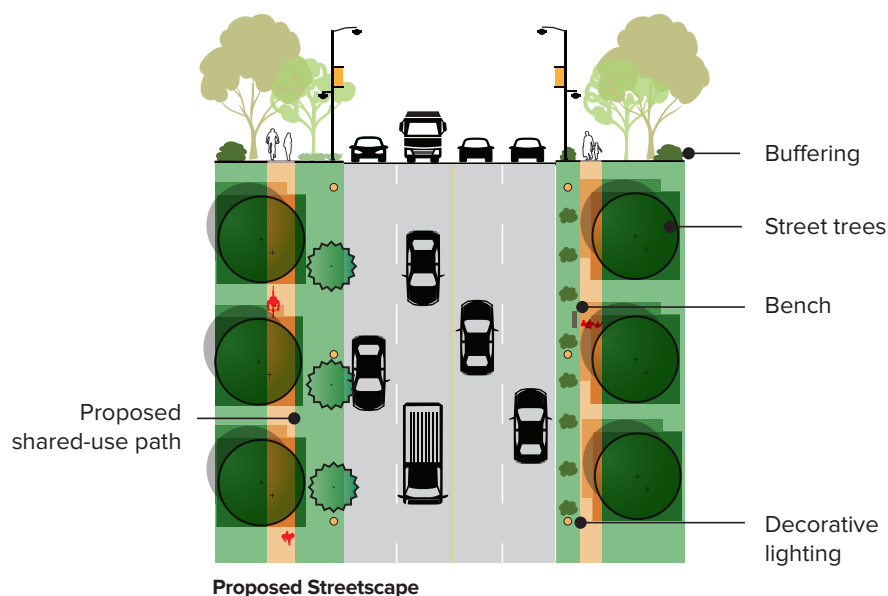
Recommendation:

- o Work with DuDOT to integrate streetscaping along the road to enhance the appearance of the corridor with street trees, decorative lighting, and upgraded sidewalks.

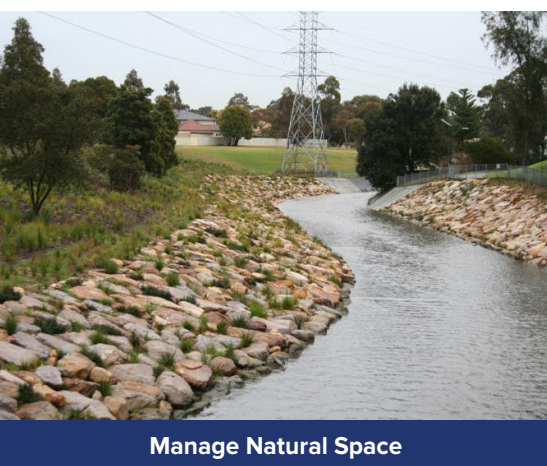
Belmont Road Streetscape Improvements



Existing Streetscape



Proposed Streetscape



Manage Natural Space

Manage Natural Space

Saint Joseph Creek is currently inaccessible to those working or walking nearby due to the absence of a pathway and sections being enclosed by slanted concrete.

Recommendation:

- o Work with property owners to naturalize concrete-lined areas adjacent to Saint Joseph Creek to improve connectivity and enhance stormwater management.

Pedestrian Crossing Improvements

No signalized intersections on Belmont Road between Curtiss Street and Maple Avenue make it difficult for pedestrians to cross Belmont Road.

Recommendation:

- o Work with DuDOT to examine the possibility of a signalized crossing at Belmont Road and Wisconsin Avenue to provide an intermediate crossing opportunity between the two streets.



Intersection Improvement

Intersection Improvements

There are no signalized intersections on Belmont Road between Curtiss Street and Maple Avenue, making it difficult for visitors to cross Belmont Road and easily enter and exit Ellsworth Business Park.

Recommendations:

- o Work with DuDOT to incorporate a traffic signal at the intersection of Belmont Road and Wisconsin Avenue.
- o Improve the intersection of Belmont Road and Maple Avenue with greenery and enhanced pedestrian crossings as annexation occurs.



Pedestrian Crossing Improvement



Sidewalk Improvements

Belmont Road has sidewalks along both sides of most of the street, but gaps exist, especially closer to Maple Avenue. Curtiss Street only has sidewalks on the north side of the road.

Recommendations:

- o Incorporate pedestrian amenities for those working and living in the area as the Belmont Focus Area redevelops.
- o Prioritize sidewalk improvements along Belmont Road and Curtiss Street to close existing gaps.

Bicycle Improvements

The Belmont Road Focus Area lacks any bicycle infrastructure, limiting non-vehicular access and use of the area.

Recommendations:

- o Install shared-use paths on the west side of Belmont Road and on the north side of Curtiss Street throughout the Focus Area.
- o Reinforce Warren Avenue as a critical bike throughfare with a protected cycle track.

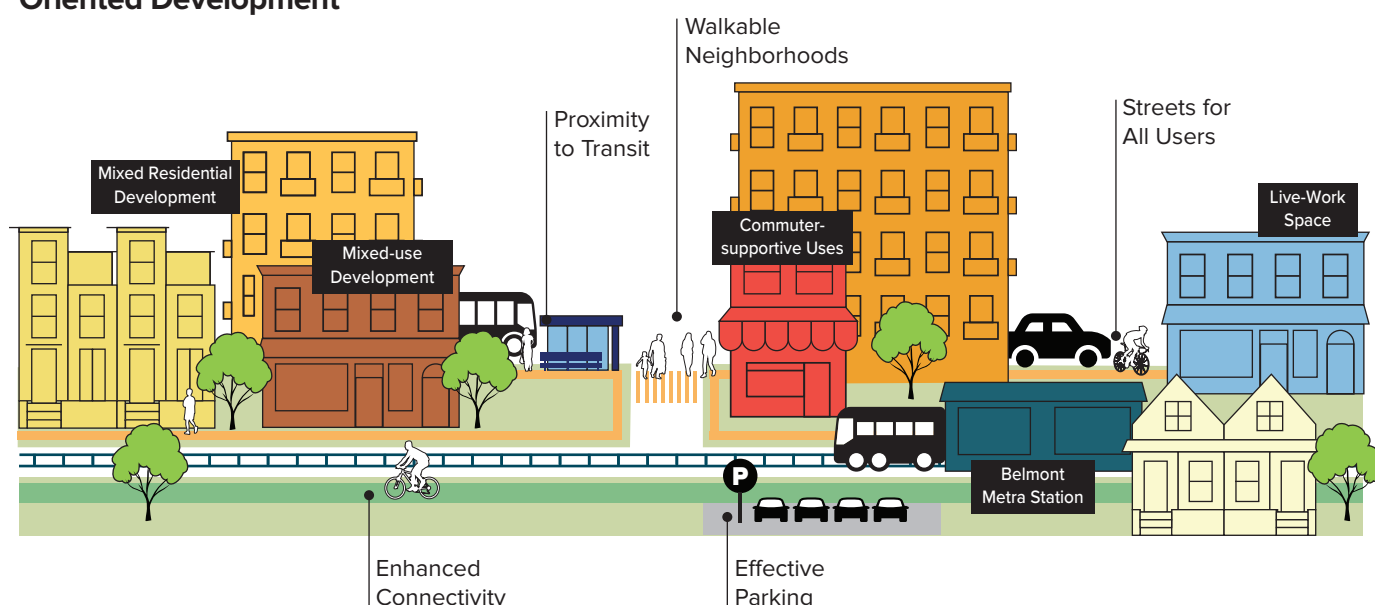
Public Transportation Improvements

The Belmont Metra station lacks surrounding amenities.

Recommendation:

- o Redevelop underutilized land adjacent to the Belmont Metra station as mixed-use buildings including restaurants and retail.

Elements of Transit-Oriented Development



Redevelopment Opportunities

Redevelopment of identified opportunity sites would transform the look and feel of the Focus Area. A reimagined Belmont Road Focus Area incorporates transit-oriented development with commuter-supportive retail, modern industrial and artisan manufacturing uses, and office spaces while maintaining the affordable nature of the area.

Burlington Avenue and Puffer Road

OPPORTUNITY SITE #1

The opportunity site at Burlington Avenue and Puffer Road presents a promising location for development — vacant but ripe for transformation into high-density residential or commuter-oriented commercial uses. Given its proximity to transit, the site is particularly suited for duplexes, townhomes, apartments, or condominiums that capitalize on the demand for transit-accessible housing. The portion between Chase Avenue and Puffer Road could accommodate either single-family attached or multifamily units, while the smaller section between Puffer Road and the southbound ramp onto Belmont Road may be more appropriate for a limited number of single-family attached units. Consolidating the site by vacating Puffer Road could further enhance its development potential as a unified property. To ensure compatibility with the surrounding neighborhood, buildings should front Burlington Avenue with parking located at the rear, and fencing and landscaping should provide a buffer to existing residential areas to the north. This approach would maximize the site’s potential while maintaining harmony with the community.

Warren Avenue and Pershing Avenue

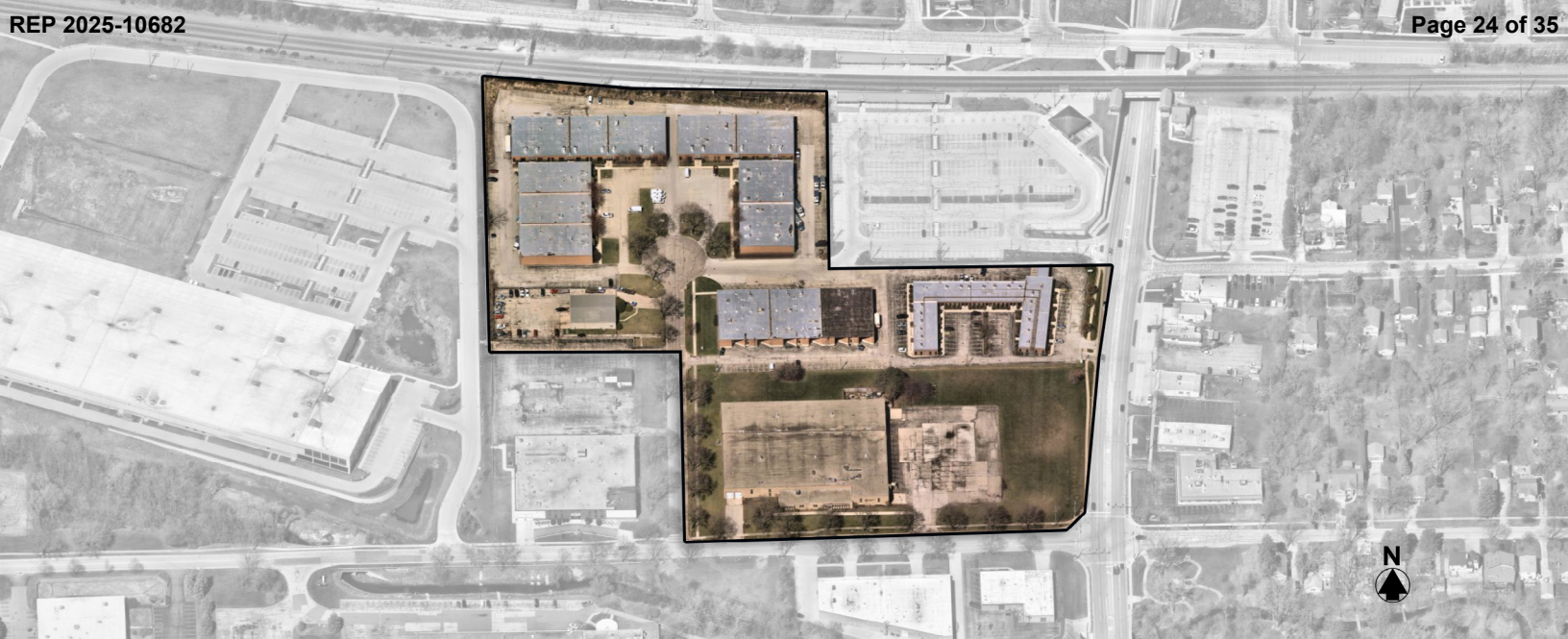
OPPORTUNITY SITE #2

The opportunity site at Warren Avenue and Pershing Avenue is ideal for high-density, mixed-income residential uses given its strategic proximity to transit. To optimize its potential, buildings should front Warren Avenue, with parking strategically placed at the side or rear to enhance the streetscape. Access to parking could be facilitated through the Village-owned property to the north, minimizing disruptions and enhancing traffic flow. To avoid conflicts with the adjacent northbound ramp onto Belmont Road, direct site access in this area should be limited. Thoughtful design considerations, including fencing and landscaping, will be essential to create a buffer between any new development and the existing residential properties to the north, ensuring a smooth integration into the surrounding neighborhood.

Belmont Road and Hitchcock Avenue

OPPORTUNITY SITE #3

The site at Belmont Road and Hitchcock Avenue offers a valuable opportunity for transit-oriented development, with a focus on mixed-use and commercial projects catering to commuters and residents. Consolidating the lots would create a cohesive development footprint for two- or three-story buildings, with active ground-floor uses and multifamily residences on the upper floors. The northern corner of the site is ideal for commercial uses such as a coffee shop, café, or corner store to serve the surrounding community, while the southern corner could feature multifamily amenities like a gym, indoor pet area, or leasing office. Small-scale office spaces could also be integrated into the ground floor. Building frontage should align with Belmont Road to enhance street presence, with site access provided via Hitchcock Avenue and Curtiss Street. Maintaining existing vegetation along the eastern edge is crucial to preserve natural buffers, while additional fencing and landscaping would ensure privacy for adjacent residential properties. This approach would create a vibrant, transit-oriented community hub.



Belmont Road and Curtiss Street

OPPORTUNITY SITE #4

The Belmont Road site offers a unique opportunity to transform underutilized land into a dynamic development that enhances the surrounding area while supporting commuters, residents, and artisans. Located south of the Belmont Metra Station, this site has the potential to redevelop into live/work spaces and vibrant mixed-use areas, creating a stronger connection between residential, commercial, and industrial uses.

The plan envisions mixed-use buildings with ground-floor commercial spaces and upper-level multifamily units south of the Metra parking lot. Retail spaces along the parking lot and Belmont Road cater to commuters with amenities like coffee shops and convenience stores. Outdoor gathering spaces provide opportunities for seating, amenities, and access to nearby natural features like Saint Joseph Creek and the park at Belmont Road and Curtiss Street.

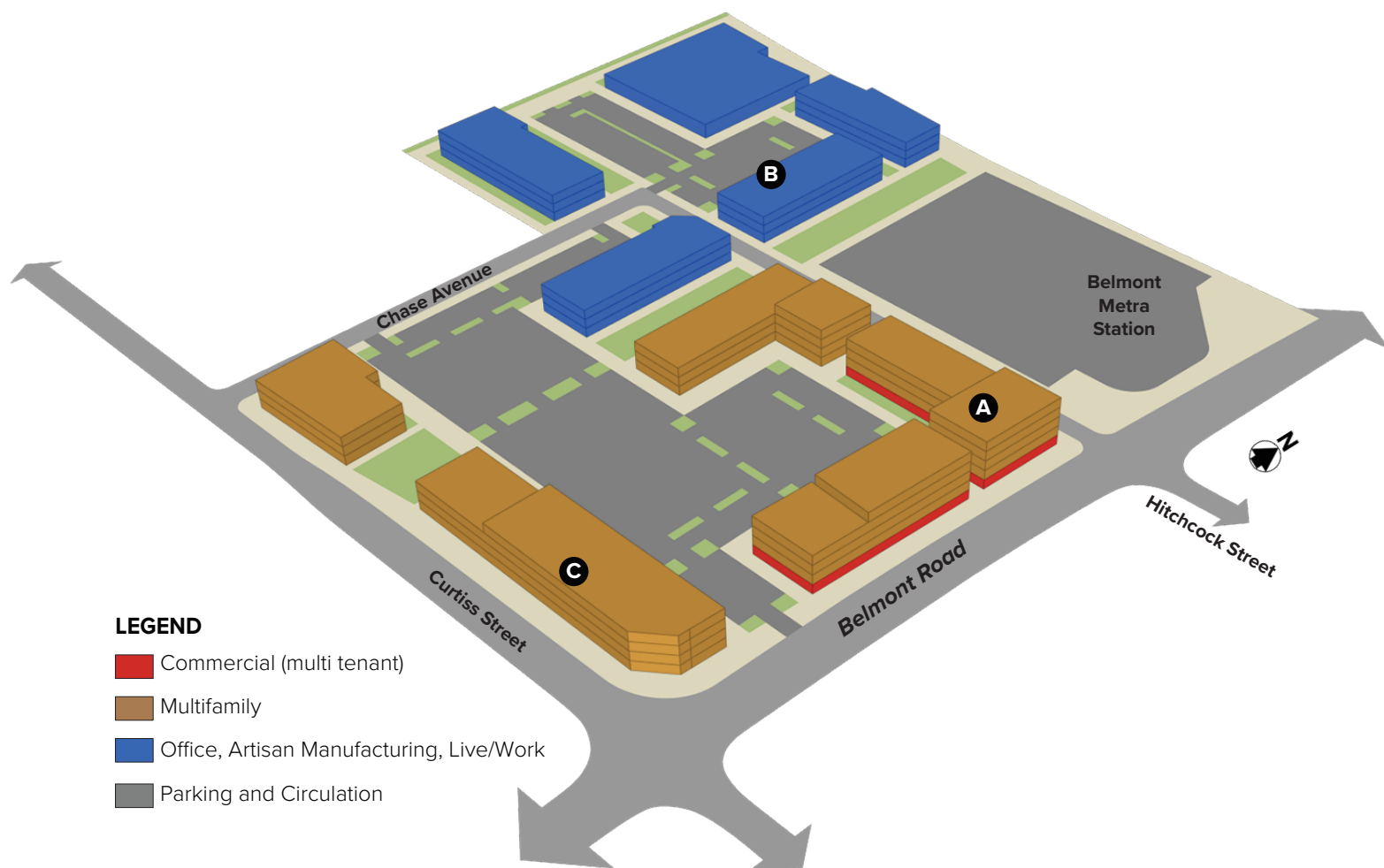
West of the station, live/work spaces support artisan manufacturing, providing opportunities for craftspeople, makers, and small businesses. This innovative approach reimagines underutilized industrial land while creating a buffer to existing industrial uses. Parking is located at the rear and interior of the block to preserve the pedestrian-oriented design.

Inspired by successful regional examples like The Shops of Uptown in Park Ridge, Illinois, this redevelopment prioritizes connectivity, functionality, and aesthetics, attracting visitors and enhancing the area's appeal as a destination for both locals and commuters.



FOCUS AREA: BELMONT ROAD

OPPORTUNITY SITE



LEGEND

- Commercial (multi tenant)
- Multifamily
- Office, Artisan Manufacturing, Live/Work
- Parking and Circulation

DEVELOPMENT EXAMPLES



A The Shops of Uptown,
Park Ridge, IL



B Elgin Artspace Lofts,
Elgin, IL



C Avant at the Arboretum Apartments,
Lisle, IL

DRAFT

75TH STREET

75th Street serves as a southern gateway to Downers Grove, and is a primary shopping destination serving the Downers Grove and neighboring Darien and Woodridge communities. The area features two large retail centers: The Grove Shopping Center and Downers Park Plaza. The Grove Shopping Center is the largest retail center in Downers Grove. It was built in 1986 as a semi-enclosed outdoor mall but was converted into an open strip mall in 2002. Across the street to the east, Downers Park Plaza is a 265,000 square-foot strip mall anchored by big box stores with a large shared parking lot. In the Guiding DG community survey, about 49% of respondents described the character of 75th Street as negative.

The 75th Street Focus Area transforms the area through redevelopment while recognizing the economic reality and restrictions of redeveloping the shopping center. The Focus Area sees a future in which complete redevelopment of The Grove shopping center is possible. It transforms the area with multifamily, mixed-use, entertainment, and hotel development to create a regional destination as a monumental gateway to the community.



















FOCUS AREA: 75TH STREET

IMPROVEMENT FRAMEWORK

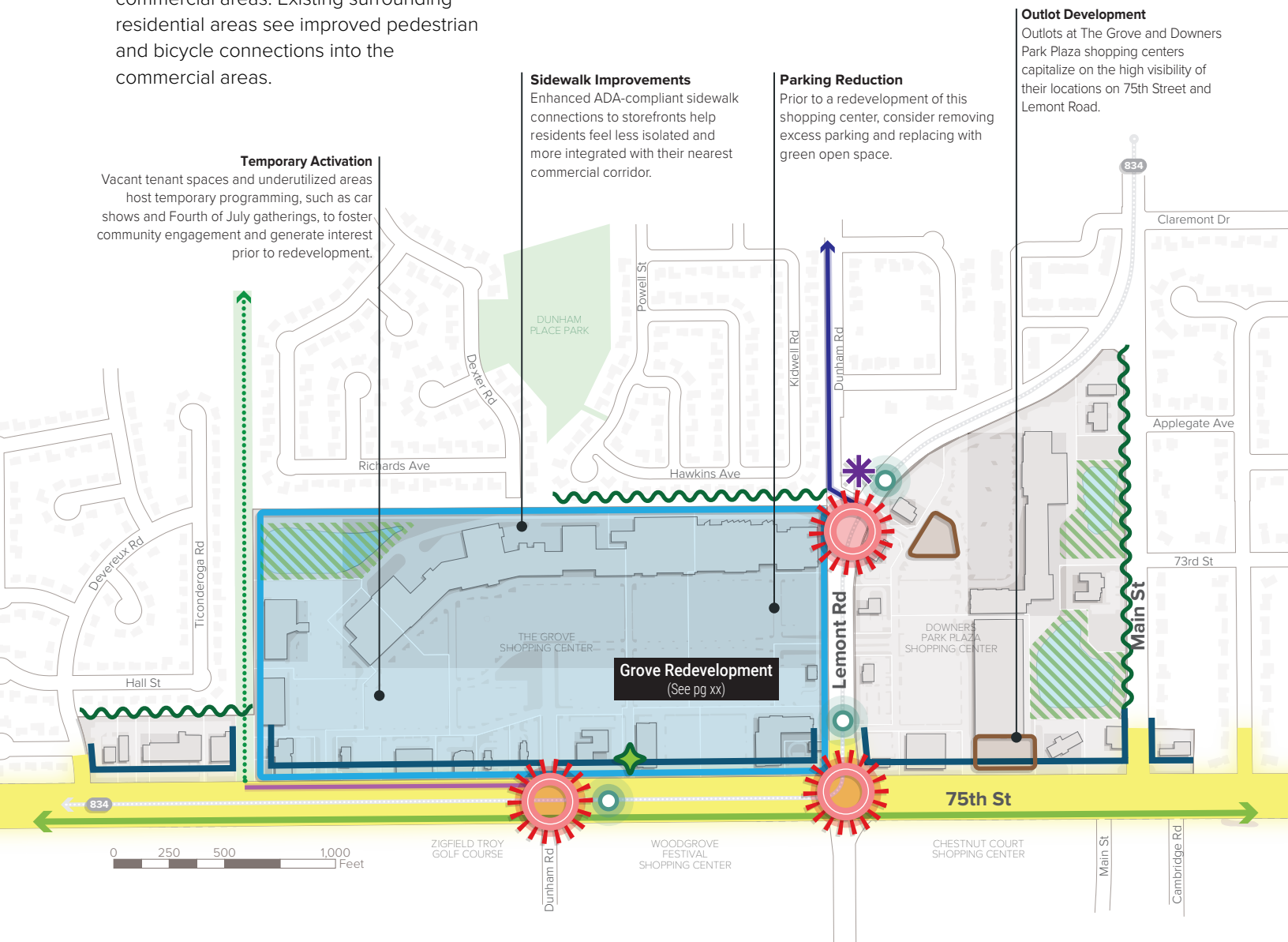
The 75th Street Focus Area enhances the area as a gateway to the community and repositions it into an entertainment and residential destination. Existing commercial development embraces restaurant and entertainment uses while repurposing excess parking and pavement into green, activated gathering spaces. The framework incorporates medium- and high-density residential development into underutilized commercial areas. Existing surrounding residential areas see improved pedestrian and bicycle connections into the commercial areas.

IMPROVEMENTS

-  Redevelopment Opportunities
-  Potential Outlot Sites
-  Façade Improvement
-  Gateway Signage
-  Buffering and Screening
-  Streetscape Improvements
-  Manage Natural Space
-  Intersection Improvements
-  Pedestrian Crossing Improvements

-  Curb Cut Reduction
-  Existing Pace Route
-  Public Transportation Improvements
-  Existing Multi-Use Path
-  Proposed Trail and Grid Connector Path
-  Proposed Shared-Use Path
-  Proposed Unprotected Bike Lane

NOTE: Any proposed improvements will align with the recommendations presented in the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan.





Façade Improvement

Façade Improvement

The Focus Area features commercial buildings that require façade improvements. These improvements involve upgrading and renovating a building's exterior to enhance its visual appeal.

Recommendation:

- o Promote and incentivize façade enhancements along 75th Street.



Gateway Signage

Gateway Signage

Gateway signage enhances the overall user experience by creating a welcoming environment for visitors and residents. The Focus Area has a small-scale gateway feature, making it difficult for travelers to identify.

Recommendation:

- o Prioritize integrating and enhancing gateway signage on Lemont Road.

Buffering and Screening

The Focus Area comprises a blend of residential neighborhoods and commercial land uses. Implementing buffering and screening features can minimize potential disruptions between these adjoining residential and commercial spaces while improving the area's visual appeal.

Recommendations:

- o Collaborate with property owners to implement buffering features between residential and commercial areas.
- o Screen all surface parking lots from primary roadways.
- o Ensure rooftop utilities, loading docks, dumpsters, and utility boxes are screened from public view.

Reduce Curb Cuts

Curb cuts provide a transition between sidewalks and streets, typically for vehicle access to driveways or parking lots. Excessive curb cuts can lead to increased traffic congestion and reduced pedestrian safety.

Recommendation:

- o Ensure redundant and unnecessary cuts are eliminated to improve safety and efficiency.



Manage Natural Space



Parking Reduction

Excessive surface parking in poor condition disrupts connectivity in the Focus Area.

Recommendations:

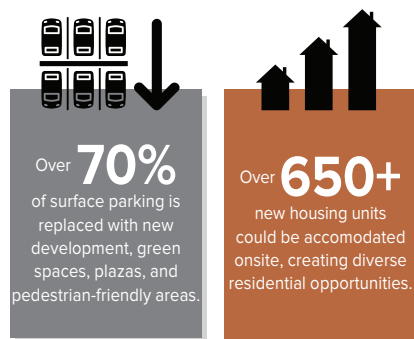
- o Enhance pedestrian experience in large surface parking lots with well-defined walkways.
- o Repave and stripe existing parking lots to improve their appearance and functionality.
- o Repurpose parts of parking lots for outlot development to better leverage land for sales tax-generating uses.

Parking Reduction Improvements in the Grove

A reduction of parking could result in additional housing development or expanded public space.



Existing Configuration



Reduced Parking Configuration

See page 31 for a model showcasing redevelopment potential for the Grove.

LEGEND

- 1** Expand green space for public plaza and open space
- 2** Housing developments



Public Transportation Improvement



Streetscape Improvement



Bicycle Improvement

Intersection Improvements

The Focus Area requires intersection Improvements to enhance traffic flow, reduce congestion, and improve safety for all road users.

Recommendation:

- o Collaborate with DuDOT to upgrade signalized intersections at 75th Street and Lemont Road, 75th Street and Dunham Road, and Lemont Road and Dunham Road.

Public Transportation Improvements

Public transportation improvements involve upgrading bus stops and facilities to ensure they are safe, accessible, and inviting for all passengers.

Recommendation:

- o Collaborate with Pace to enhance bus stops along Pace Bus Route 834, which travels south on Lemont Road and west along 75th Street.

Pedestrian Crossing Improvements

Upgraded crosswalks, signals, and safety features are essential to enhance pedestrian safety and accessibility.

Recommendation:

- o Collaborate with DuDOT to identify additional locations for proposed pedestrian crossings within the Focus Area to improve safety and accessibility.

Bicycle Improvements

Bicycle infrastructure in the Focus Area is limited and needs expansion. There is one on-street striped bicycle lane heading north on Dunham Road. The portion of 75th Street that is in Downers Grove – the north side of the road – lacks any bicycle infrastructure.

Recommendations:

- o Implement a multi-use trail around The Grove, connecting 75th Street, Lemont Road, and Dunham Road.
- o Provide adequate bicycle parking should be provided near the main entrances to buildings.



Sidewalk Improvements

Several gaps in the sidewalk network hinder pedestrian access to shopping centers and The Grove.

Recommendations:

- o Prioritize adding sidewalks to connect patrons to storefronts.
- o Ensure all sidewalks comply with ADA standards to improve accessibility.

Streetscape Improvements

Streetscape improvements can elevate the Focus Area's visual appeal and encourage pedestrian activity.

Recommendation:

- o Work with DuDOT to integrate landscaping and streetscape elements along 75th Street.

Landscaping Improvements

To improve the Focus Area's visual appeal and mitigate the environmental impact of impervious surfaces, the Village should adopt comprehensive landscaping enhancements.

Recommendation:

- o Collaborate with property owners and DuDOT to implement landscaping improvements for commercial properties and right-of-way areas.

Manage Natural Space

The Village should actively pursue opportunities to conserve the natural environment in the Focus Area during redevelopment.

Recommendations:

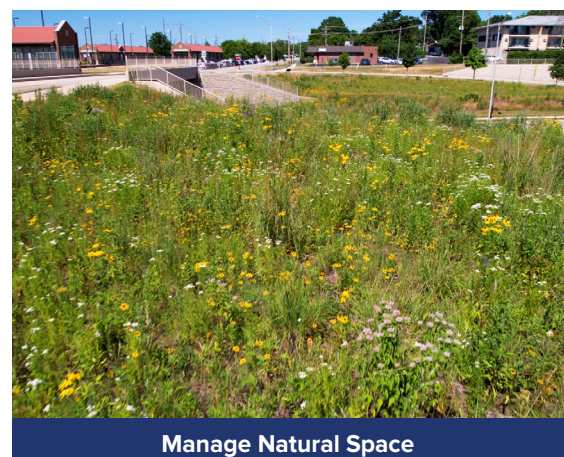
- o Prioritize protecting the existing wetland near shopping centers.
- o Incorporate pollinator gardens and native planting into new development sites.



Sidewalk Improvement



Streetscape Improvement



Manage Natural Space



The Grove

OPPORTUNITY SITE

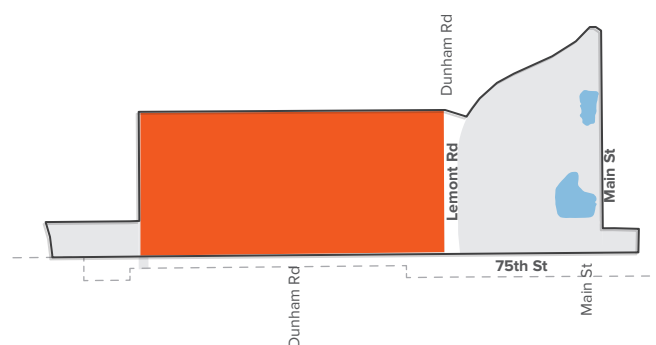
Despite its location in the community, The Grove has not kept pace with modern developments and regional needs. Its multiple ownership structure, underutilized parking lot, and lack of connectivity make the area difficult for redevelopment. The success of outlot development in the area indicates a need to update The Grove to meet the needs of the contemporary consumer. Surface-level improvements can revitalize the shopping center as much as possible while maintaining existing ownership restrictions. Envisioning a future where The Grove is completely redeveloped includes a mixed-use center that catalyzes change in the 75th Street Focus Area with innovative economic tools and incentives.

Grove Redevelopment

The opportunity site transforms the shopping center by introducing multifamily and mixed-use development while enhancing connectivity and creating a vibrant community hub. Currently, the area lacks sufficient multifamily housing and entertainment options, particularly within The Grove shopping center. Redevelopment balances residential uses, commercial development, public spaces, and natural areas to serve residents, visitors, and surrounding neighborhoods.

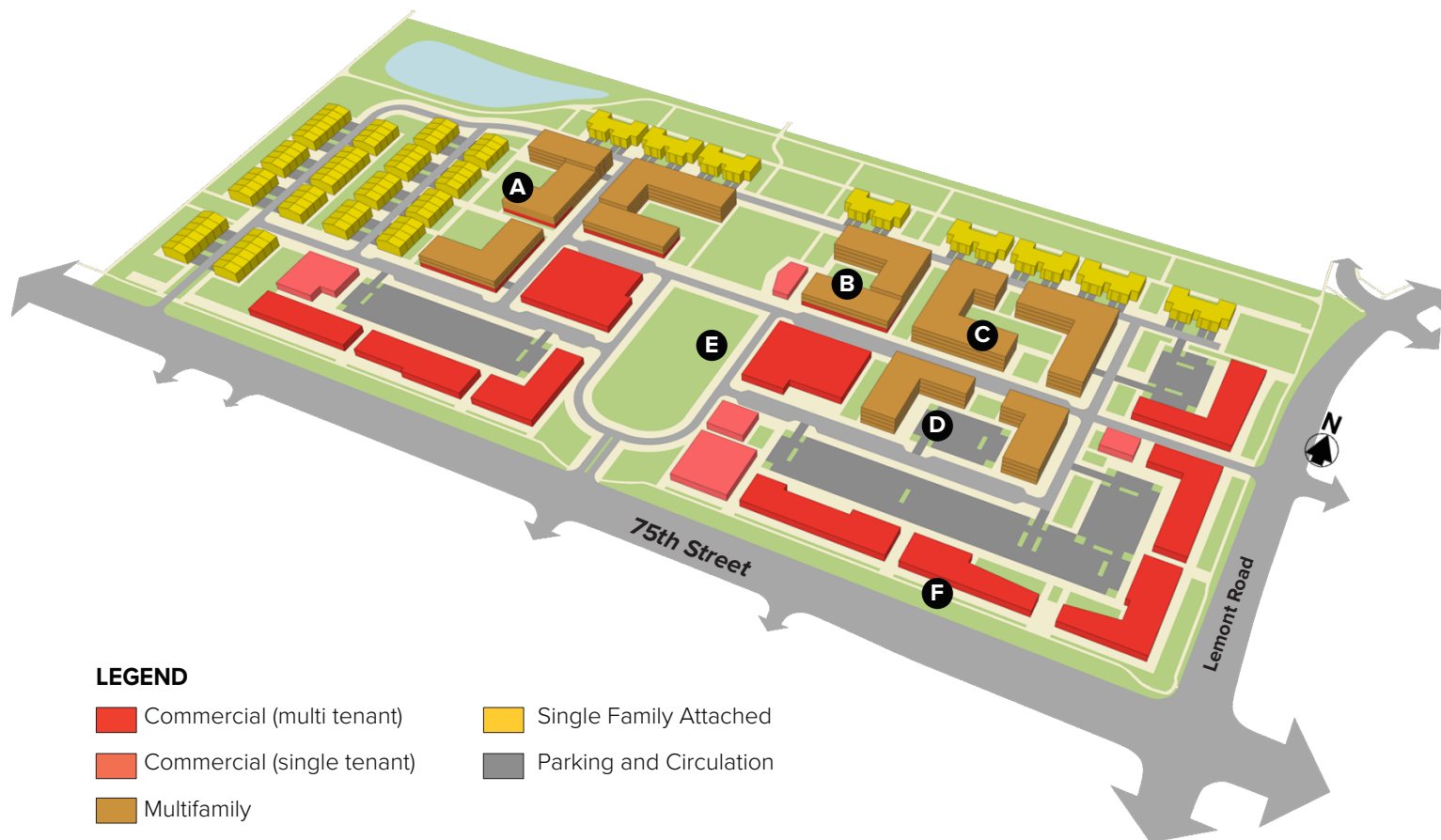
A boulevard-style main entry with decorative pavers sets the tone for an attractive, accessible site. The development features larger-scale entertainment uses and a central public plaza designed for year-round events, creating a dynamic gathering space. Commercial spaces, including single- and multi-tenant buildings, front 75th Street and Lemont Road, buffering multifamily residential buildings located interior to the site. Ground-floor commercial spaces in mixed-use buildings near the plaza activate the street and invite pedestrians.

Rear-loaded single-family attached homes and open spaces buffer the site from surrounding single-family neighborhoods, ensuring a smooth transition and preserving the area's character. Parking is right-sized and strategically placed, with much of the residential parking integrated into buildings. Improved circulation and controlled access points enhance traffic flow, while a multi-use trail connects pedestrians and cyclists to the site and nearby neighborhoods. Private amenity spaces within multifamily buildings further improve residents' quality of life. These improvements prioritize connectivity, functionality, and community-focused design while creating a highly walkable, bikeable, and attractive destination.








FOCUS AREA: 75TH STREET

OPPORTUNITY SITE



LEGEND

- | | |
|--|---|
|  Commercial (multi tenant) |  Single Family Attached |
|  Commercial (single tenant) |  Parking and Circulation |
|  Multifamily | |

DEVELOPMENT EXAMPLES



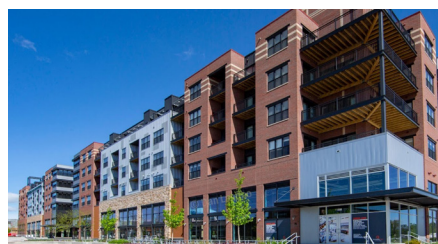
A Atworth, Vernon Hills, IL



C Alta Wren, Morrisville, NC



E The Arboretum, South Barrington, IL



B Synergy, Wauwatosa, WI



D Watermark at The Grove, Elgin, IL



F 22nd Street - Oak Brook, IL

DRAFT

Economic Development Considerations for Grove Redevelopment

Redeveloping The Grove presents an opportunity to transform an aging mall with excessive parking into a lively, mixed-use area that better serves the community. Previously, The Grove has struggled to redevelop given its divided ownership, restrictive agreements, underutilized parking, and lack of connectivity to surrounding neighborhoods. To reimagine The Grove, the Village, through DGEDC, will need to collaborate with landowners, investors, and public entities to support the project and help developers secure financing.

Achieving Comprehensive Plan objectives, such as increasing affordable housing, improving resiliency through green infrastructure, and incorporating community spaces, will depend on identifying the desired development pattern at a policy level through the Comprehensive Plan. Subsequently, the Village will need to examine the suitability and feasibility of the development, and identify funding measures and incentives to address financing gaps. The following considerations and approaches will factor in to the success of The Grove transformation.

Engagement with Stakeholders

Through the Guiding DG planning process, many stakeholders in the community identified The Grove as one of the most important places to improve in Downers Grove. As redevelopment occurs, continuing to collaborate with community members, developers, and local organizations will help ensure that redevelopment plans align with the needs and desires of the community. Open dialogue and ongoing engagement will help garner public support for the project.

Suitability Analysis

The Village and DGEDC should work with current landowners to conduct a suitability analysis assessing the site's market potential and identifying barriers to development in alignment with the desired development pattern, such as retail vacancy, current level of maintenance, restrictions on redevelopment, and site conditions.

Zoning Incentives

Offering zoning incentives, such as density bonuses or reduced parking requirements, can attract developers to invest in the site. For instance, developments that include affordable housing or sustainable design elements could receive favorable zoning considerations, making projects more appealing and feasible.

Leverage Excess Parking for New Uses

The surplus parking areas at The Grove can be repurposed for new developments, such as mixed-use and multifamily, and include more green space. Utilizing these areas can address housing needs and improve environmental sustainability onsite.

Zoning Updates to Encourage Mixed-Use Development

Encouraging a blend of residential, commercial, and public spaces can revitalize the area and reduce the need for extensive parking. Mixed-use developments often benefit from shared parking arrangements and increased foot traffic, enhancing economic activity and community engagement. The shopping center is currently a Planned Unit Development. Any redevelopment of this shopping center should take advantage of the flexibility provided by a Planned Unit Development.

Gap Analysis

The Village should continue to engage with the DGEDC to do a gap analysis of the 75th Street corridor to assist in attracting new businesses that may be underrepresented.

Local Incentives

To redevelop The Grove, Downers Grove should combine public and private financing strategies. Key actions the Village and DGEDC may consider include:

- **Property Purchase and Assembly.** The Village can purchase available outlots or portions of the property to sell to a developer for a reduced fee based on a development agreement.
- **Tenant Relocation.** The Village can facilitate tenant relocation to spaces within the new development or other suitable sites.
- **Sales Tax Rebates.** The Village can enter into revenue-sharing agreements with businesses and developers to rebate a portion of sales tax they collect within The Grove.
- **Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Districts.** A TIF would fund development projects within The Grove. Property tax rates applied to increases in property value that occur after the district is established are used to fund projects, reserving a portion of tax revenues for economic development rather than general governance.
- **Business District Tax Rebates.** The Village can designate The Grove a business district and administer an additional tax on goods and services sold within the district. The additional tax can be used to pay for development costs or can be rebated to a business or a developer for improvements within the district.

Other Incentives and Related Practices

- Streamlined Development Review and Permitting Practices
- Discounted Land Sales
- Façade Improvement Grants (applicable to those buildings that would remain onsite)
- Revolving Loan Programs
- Business Improvement District
- Special Service Area

State and Federal Programs

- Enterprise Zones
- High Impact Business Program
- The Economic Development for a Growing Economy (EDGE) Tax Credit Program
- Community Development Block Grant
- Green incentive programs
- Programs to facilitate attainable and affordable housing