



# GUIDING DG

PLANNING THE FUTURE OF  
DOWNERS GROVE



Village of Downers Grove

# COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



DRAFT | June 17, 2025

## **GUIDING DG**

Guiding DG encompasses a collection of four plans, including a:

## **COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**



## **ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION PLAN**





# **STREETSCAPES PLAN**



# **ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY PLAN**



# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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# ACRONYMS

Acronym	Definition
ADU	Accessory Dwelling Unit
ACS	American Community Survey
ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990
AADT	Average Annual Daily Traffic Count
BNSF	Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway
BDD	Business Development District
CMAP	Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning
C-PACE	Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy
CIP	Community Investment Program
DIY	Do-It-Yourself Workshop
DGEDC	Downers Grove Economic Development Corporation
DOE	US Department of Energy
DuDOT	DuPage County Division of Transportation
DWC	DuPage Water Commission
EDGE	Economic Development for a Growing Economy Tax Credit Program
EV	Electric Vehicle
EECBG	Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant
EAV	Equalized Assessed Value
ECM	Existing Conditions Memorandum
FHWA	Federal Highways Administration
GIGO	Green Infrastructure Grant Opportunities
HSIP	Highway Safety Improvement Program
IDNR	Illinois Department of Natural Resources
IDOT	Illinois Department of Transportation
IEPA	Illinois Environmental Protection Agency
IL-HTC	Illinois Historic Preservation Tax Credit Program
LSLRNA	Illinois Lead Service Line Replacement and Notification Act
MFT	Illinois Motor Fuel Tax
SBDC	Illinois Small Business Development Center
ITEP	Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
LWCF	Land and Water Conservation Fund
MPO	Metropolitan Planning Organization
OSLAD	Open Space Land Acquisition and Development
PARC	Park and Recreational Facilities Construction
PILOT	Payment in Lieu of Taxes
PUD	Planned Unit Development

Acronym	Definition
SRTS	Safe Routes to School
SSA	Special Service Area
STBGP	Surface Transportation Block Grant Program
STP	Surface Transportation Program
TIF	Tax Increment Financing
TOD	Transit-Oriented Development



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# INTRODUCTION

01



The Downers Grove Comprehensive Plan serves as the cornerstone for decision-making, guiding the Village as it pursues its vision and long-term goals. This chapter outlines how the Comprehensive Plan shapes future growth and development by serving as a guiding document for land use, housing, economic development, transportation, and infrastructure decisions. Additionally, it introduces the **Guiding DG** initiative, explaining the purpose of each of its key elements. The chapter also offers an overview of the planning process, detailing the development of this document and the community engagement efforts that informed its creation for the next 20 years.





## GUIDING DG

*Guiding DG* is a series of projects with the goal of preparing for growth over the coming decades, while improving the future livability, mobility, design, and sustainability of Downers Grove. *Guiding DG* includes the Comprehensive Plan, the Active Transportation Plan, the Downtown and Fairview Focus Area Streetscape Plan, and the Environmental Sustainability Plan.

## WHAT IS THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN?

The Comprehensive Plan (the Plan) represents the Village's official vision for the future which is intended to guide Downers Grove for the next 20 years. The Comprehensive Plan is to be used as a policy guide that outlines actions to work towards achieving the community's vision. It is designed to serve as a foundation for decision-making for the Village, and also residents, property owners, developers and other stakeholders in Downers Grove.

### Key Terminology

#### Community

*When the term community is used in this plan, it describes people and organizations. This includes residents, businesses and their employees, and other community organizations.*

#### Downers Grove

*When the term Downers Grove is used, it describes the geography of the community and properties located within the municipal boundaries.*

#### Village

*The term Village will be used to describe the Village of Downers Grove as the corporate authority and municipal organization.*

## PURPOSE OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The Comprehensive Plan represents the Village's official vision for the future, which is intended to guide Downers Grove for the next 20 years. It is the key decision-making policy guide for Downers Grove's built and natural environments. The Comprehensive Plan text and associated maps contain detailed recommendations for future development and will serve as a roadmap for the Village Council, Planning and Zoning Commission, and other boards and commissions as they assess the location, character, and extent of proposed public and private development in Downers Grove. The Plan's policies and recommendations will be implemented over time through updates to the Village's municipal code and other policy decisions that will lead to rezonings and subdivisions of land, the review and approval of development proposals and the location and construction of public improvements. The Plan is comprehensive both in breadth and scope, with recommendations for areas that encompass land use, housing, economic development, transportation, parks and recreation, and community facilities.

## ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION PLAN

The Active Transportation Plan (ATP) serves as a comprehensive vision and blueprint to transform Downers Grove into a "pedestrian first" community, focusing on improving non-motorized transportation. It includes recommendations for infrastructure improvements, connections to adjacent communities, and an action plan to enhance the overall bikeability and walkability of the community. The plan assesses current conditions, gathers resident feedback, and guides future decisions to systematically implement these enhancements.

## STREETSCAPES PLAN

The Streetscape Plan aims to enhance the public realm's appearance in the Downtown and Fairview Focus Area through landscape and hardscape improvements. It also identifies key locations for connecting Downtown and Fairview Avenue and provides preliminary design plans detailing the type, organization, and scale of proposed enhancements. The Streetscapes Plan assesses current conditions and usage patterns, incorporating stakeholder input to guide its recommendations.

## ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY PLAN

The Environmental Sustainability Plan (ESP) presents a comprehensive strategy designed to identify and manage environmental sustainability issues in Downers Grove, setting goals and strategies to reduce the community's greenhouse gas emissions and fostering a culture of environmental stewardship. The Environmental Sustainability Plan utilizes resident engagement, collaboration with the Environmental Concerns Commission, the Chicagoland's Greenest Region Compact, and sustainability planning practices to provide an actionable, pragmatic environmental framework for the Village that includes key policies, strategies, and recommendations.





## OVERVIEW OF THE PLANNING PROCESS

To adequately guide Downers Grove over the next 20 years, the Plan is the product of a community-driven planning process that includes engagement with residents, business owners, local officials, Village staff, and other key stakeholders. The comprehensive planning process is comprised of the following steps:



## HOW WAS THIS PLAN CREATED?

The Village initiated the planning process for *Guiding DG* in December 2023. The planning process was organized around the objectives of accurately capturing and reflecting community hopes and values, being comprehensive, and being innovative and future-oriented, while being practical to implement.

The approach used to create the *Guiding DG Comprehensive Plan* included these major components:

- **Engagement** – A core part of the process was identifying and developing consensus around key areas of interest, priorities, and strategies for moving forward. To ensure the process was inclusive and reflected the perspectives of the entire community, both online and in-person activities were undertaken, including online surveys and mapping tools, in-person interviews and focus group discussions, workshops, multiple steering committee meetings and working sessions, open houses, community pop-ups, and more.
- **Inventorying and Assessing** – Before planning could proceed, the process required a comprehensive inventory and assessment of existing conditions, regulations, current and past plans, and the physical attributes of the community to establish a thorough understanding of the community's context.
- **Data Analysis** – To ensure the formulation of realistic land use planning recommendations, the process required extensive research of demographic and market data, including population trends and market conditions.
- **Establishing a Vision** – All input received through the extensive community engagement and outreach was analyzed to identify shared community aspirations, values, and priorities. These were shaped into a vision — a strong statement of the kind of community Downers Grove is and can be in the future.
- **Developing Plans** – From the insights gained from community and stakeholder feedback, the Plan and focus area plans were developed. They include innovative but practical recommendations to help the Village achieve its vision, goals, and objectives.
- **Implementation Strategies** – Finally, once the core elements of the Plan were developed, an implementation strategy was established to help put the Plan into action.

## USING THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The Comprehensive Plan serves the following key functions:

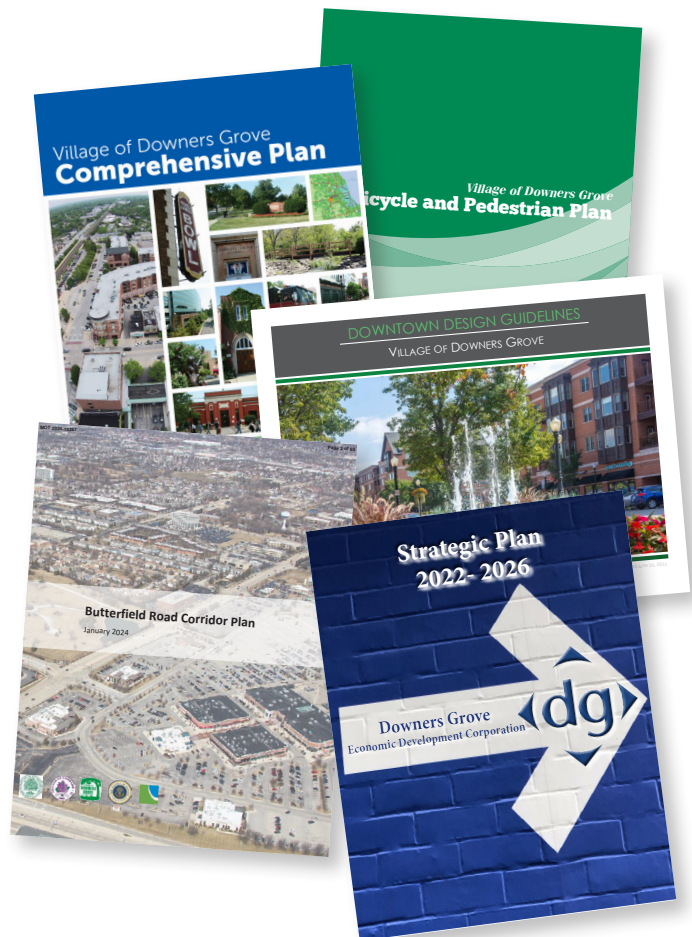
- **Communicate the Village's Vision** – The Plan is a statement of the community's vision for how it grows and changes over the coming years. The Plan identifies the community's priorities and charts a path for long-term growth.
- **Inform Development Proposals** – The Plan is a long-term guide by which to measure and evaluate public and private proposals that affect the physical and economic environment of the community. The Plan assists in the evaluation of development proposals and helps ensure that proposed development supports the Village's long-term objectives.
- **Provide Direction** – The Plan is a guide for zoning and subdivision regulations, the official zoning map, and decisions influenced by these regulations. The Village should consider amendments to regulations in order to support the long-term goals of the Plan.
- **Coordinate Initiatives** – The Plan informs planning initiatives that affect the community at the local, county, and regional levels. The Plan aids and informs efforts related to housing, transportation, transit, trails, natural resources, economic development, and recreation.
- **Identify Future Studies** – The Plan establishes a path forward but cannot address every issue faced by the community in sufficient detail. It helps identify additional studies and future action steps to address specific needs.
- **Inform Decision Making** – The Plan is a valuable source of information for the Village Council, Planning and Zoning Commission, Historic Preservation and Design Review Board, Village Staff, as well as local organizations, businesses, developers, and residents.
- **Assist CIP and Budgeting** – The Plan informs the development of the Village's Community Investment Program (CIP) and budgeting which establishes priority expenditures and the sequence of capital improvement programming.

## PAST PLANS AND STUDIES

It is important that the *Guiding DG Comprehensive Plan* respects relevant past planning efforts that have shaped the community into what it is today. The review of the Village's past plans and studies ensures existing community policies and goals are carried forward within the Plan where relevant.

Below is a list of the plans and studies that were reviewed and consulted in the processes of creating *Guiding DG*.

- Bike and Pedestrian Plan (2013)
- Comprehensive Plan (2017)
- Downtown Design Guidelines (2021)
- DGEDC Economic Development Strategy Plan (2022-2026)
- Greenest Region Compact Report (2023)
- CMAP Butterfield Road Corridor Plan (2024)



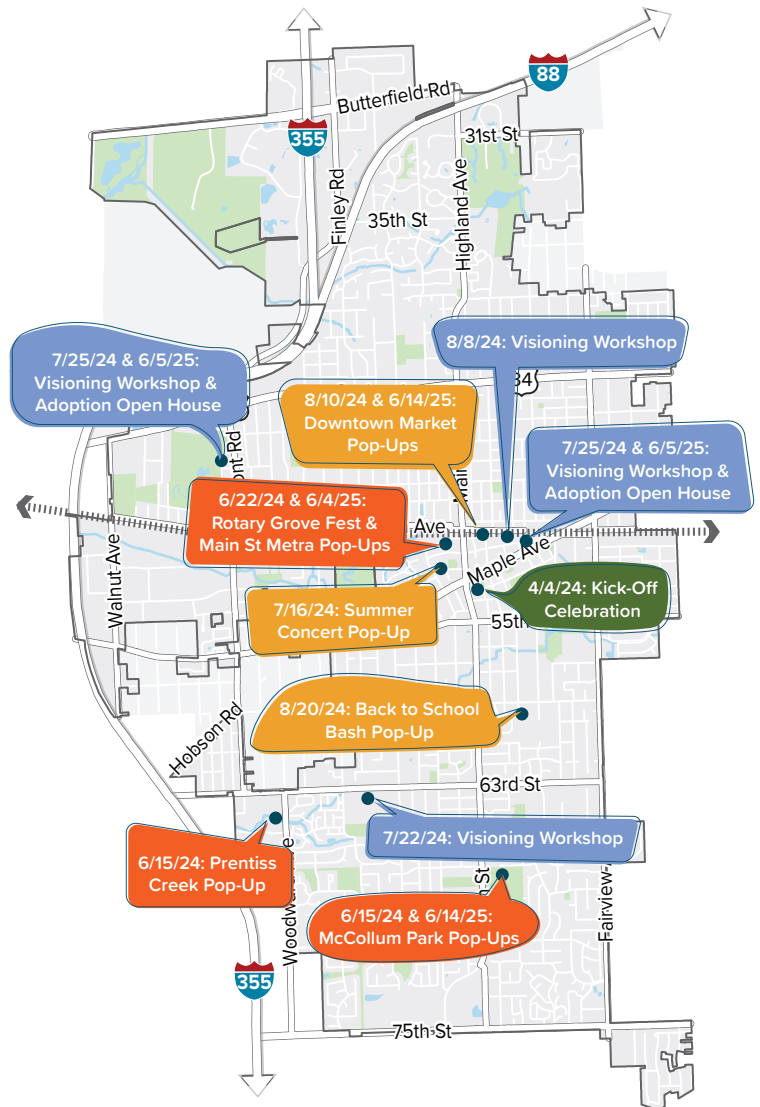
# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Informed by a planning process dedicated to engaging stakeholders, the Comprehensive Plan is responsive to the community and addresses the issues and opportunities most important to Downers Grove residents and stakeholders. Public engagement included both in-person and online outreach events.

## OUTREACH CONDUCTED

The planning process engaged over 2,800 individuals through a combination of in-person and online community outreach tools and exercises including:

- Kick-Off Participants – 250
- Key Stakeholder Interviews – 24
- Online Community Survey Participants – 1,517
- Online Business Community Survey Participants – 195
- map.social maps – 63
- Community Visioning Workshop Participants – 49
- Pop-Up Participants – 751
- Business Workshop Participants – 9
- DIY Kit Workshop Participants – 8
- Adoption Open House Participants – 8

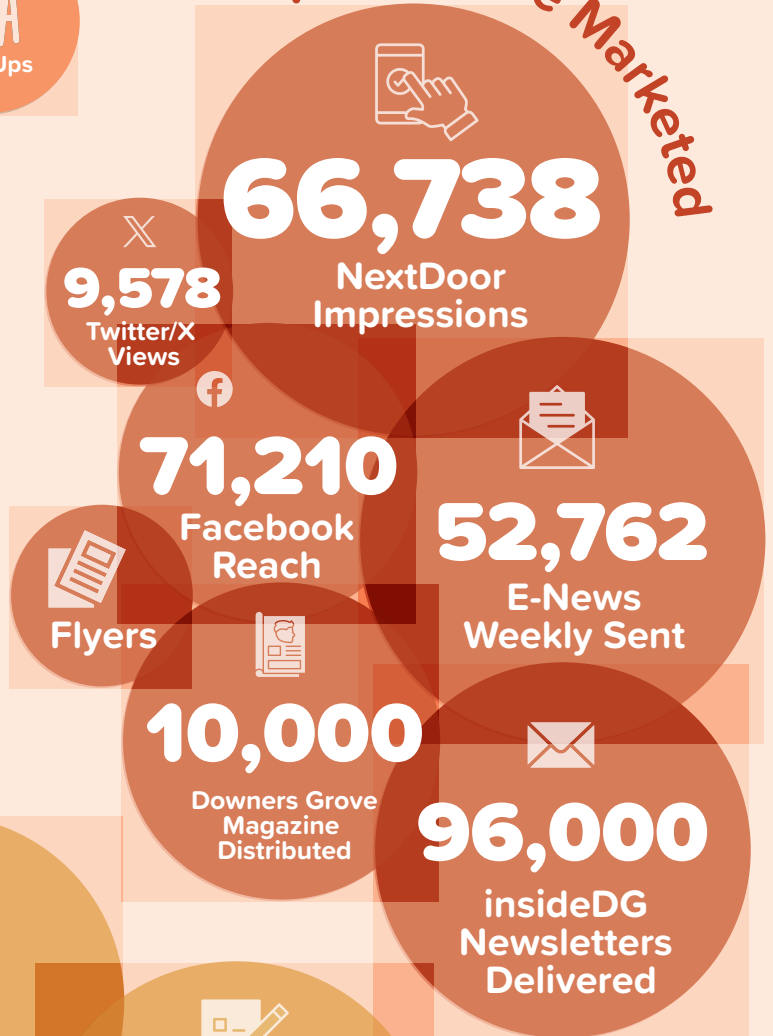




## How We've Engaged



## How We've Marketed



## How Many We've Reached



## IN-PERSON OUTREACH

In-person engagement was conducted with various groups to identify issues, opportunities, strengths, and assets in Downers Grove. These efforts were part of the initial outreach for the Comprehensive Plan and supported the development of the Active Transportation Plan, the Streetscapes Plan, and the Environmental Sustainability Plan.

### Key Stakeholder Interviews

**Participants: 24**

As a part of the community engagement phase of the planning process, confidential interviews were conducted with individuals and small focus groups to discuss existing conditions and opportunities within Downers Grove. A total of 15 interviews were held with 26 participants, conducted either in person or virtually. Each session lasted approximately 45 minutes and followed a conversational format, guided by a consistent set of questions about the community.

### Kick-Off Workshops

**Participants: 49**

Kick-off workshops were conducted for Village staff, the Planning and Zoning Commission, Historic Preservation and Design Review Board, Transportation and Parking Commission, Environmental Concerns Commission, the business community, and the general public. Each workshop was structured around four prompts:

1. Identify five (5) issues or concerns facing the Downers Grove community.
2. List, in order of importance, the three (3) most important issues discussed thus far.
3. Identify three (3) specific projects or actions that you would like to see undertaken in Downers Grove.
4. What are the primary strengths and assets of the Downers Grove community?

The goal was to encourage discussion, build consensus, explore potential recommendations, and recognize what residents value most about Downers Grove.





## Community Kick-Off Event

**Participants: 250**

The Village hosted the first official public event of the *Guiding DG* planning process on April 4th, 2024. The kick-off event allowed residents, business owners and operators, and other key stakeholders to discuss the community and provide visioning input. The input received guided the planning process to inform the Comprehensive Plan, the Active Transportation Plan, the Streetscapes Plan, and the Environmental Sustainability Plan.

Participants engaged in a range of interactive exercises designed to gather high-level input on how participants feel about Downers Grove and encourage them to think critically about the future of development.

## Do-It Yourself Workshops

**Participants: 8**

Do-It-Yourself (DIY) workshop kits were provided to engage residents at the local or neighborhood level. Community groups had the opportunity to use these kits to facilitate their own workshops, gathering input outside of formal planning activities, resulting in one kit with eight completed surveys.

## Staff-led Workshops

**Participants: 116**

In May 2024, staff held in-person workshops with both students and seniors. Sessions were conducted at Downers Grove North and Downers Grove South High Schools, with a total of 102 student participants. An additional workshop was held at Immanuel Residences, engaging 14 senior residents. These workshops helped ensure that voices from different generations were heard, making the engagement process more inclusive and reflective of the broader community.

## Pop-Ups

**Participants: 751**

Pop-ups were held at established community events and popular locations that draw a range of residents. Designed to connect with the community in familiar environments, each pop-up featured interactive activities, project materials, local prizes, and fun swag. Over 750 individuals were engaged at nine pop-up events located at the YMCA Back to School Bash, Downtown Market (twice), Main Street Metra Station, Downers Grove Summer Concert, Rotary Grove Fest, Prentiss Creek, and McCollum Park (twice). These pop-ups drew a diverse crowd, and a large share of the participants were under 18.

Over

**60%**

of pop-up participants  
were under the age of 18





## ONLINE OUTREACH

### Project Website

A dedicated interactive project website, *guidingdg.com*, was created to support the planning process and inform the public. The website contained information, updates, workshop details, meeting notices, and will offer project documents such as public review drafts and memorandums. The website also hosted outreach tools, including the online questionnaire and map.social.

### Community Survey

Participants: 1,517

The survey addressed a range of topics—including housing, commercial areas, transportation, sustainability, community services, and overall character—while identifying key strengths and challenges. Participants also had the option to complete a separate Bike and Pedestrian Survey, which helped guide the development of the *Guiding DG Active Transportation Plan*.

### Business Community Survey

Participants: 195

A separate Business Community Survey was developed for business owners in Downers Grove. This survey explored the challenges and opportunities businesses face throughout the community, along with the perceived strengths and weaknesses of the current business environment. Business owners were asked to weigh in on the impact of potential commercial, industrial, and residential developments on their operations.



71%

of Community Survey respondents  
have lived in Downers Grove for 10+ years

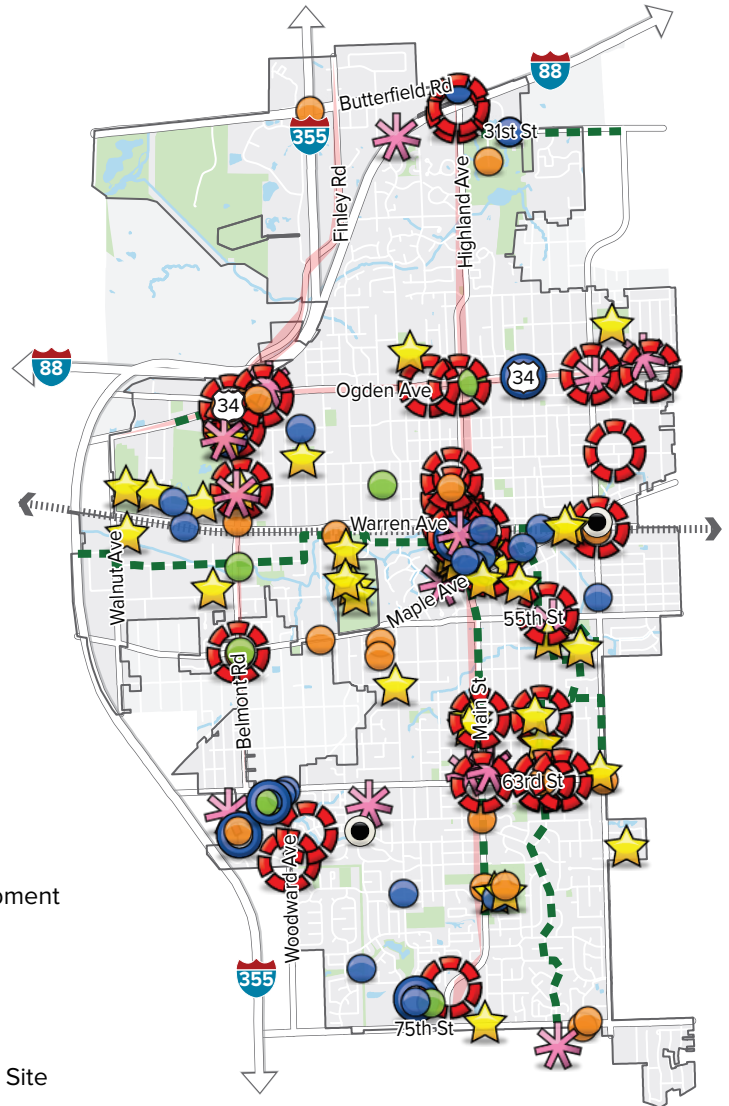




## map.social

**Data points: 307**

map.social is an online mapping tool that allows participants to pinpoint issues and opportunities in Downers Grove on a personalized map. Points identify assets and opportunities, such as public services, priority development sites, new bike routes and paths, and desired uses and developments. Site users placed points on the map to identify issues such as problematic intersections, poor building appearance, and public safety concerns.



## map.social Features

- |                            |                             |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| ★ Community Asset          | ● Desired Use/Development   |
| ⊗ Problematic Intersection | ● Poor Appearance           |
| ● Public Safety Concern    | ⊙ Other                     |
| ⊙ Undesirable Use          | — Bikeways and Trails       |
| ✱ Key Transit Destination  | ■ Development Priority Site |





## ENGAGEMENT THEMES

Given residents' active participation, themes began to emerge from all the community engagement that was conducted. The following section takes those themes and organizes them, providing a summarized description of what was heard.

### Housing for All



Community input revealed a strong desire to preserve the historic and residential character of Downers Grove while addressing a significant need for more diverse and affordable housing options. While residents valued the quality and character of existing neighborhoods, a majority expressed the need for a broader range of housing types—affordable units, senior housing, homes for young professionals, and starter homes for new families.

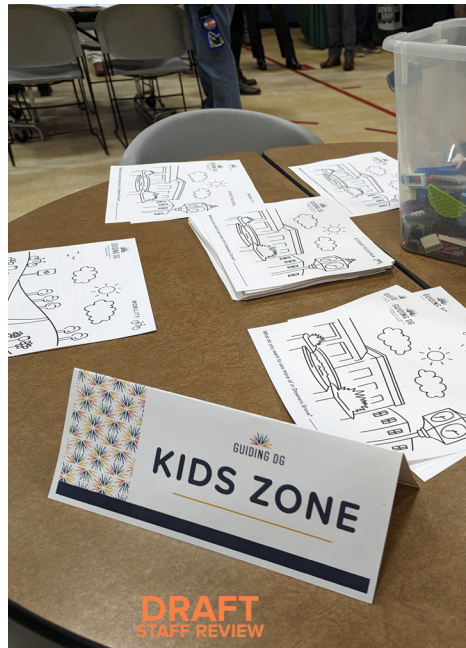
*Keep Downers Grove affordable. We want our kids to be able to afford to live here.” - Pop-Up Participant*

*“We need a greater range in affordability of housing.”  
- Pop-Up Participant*

Slightly over half of survey respondents (51%) identified the lack of affordable housing as a community weakness, and 56% felt senior housing would positively impact the area. Participants across surveys, stakeholder interviews, and workshops consistently noted the shortage of affordable housing, especially for seniors and accessible starter homes near Downtown and business areas.

Concerns were raised about teardowns of older, affordable homes being replaced by high-end construction, which residents felt was pricing out future generations. There were also calls for mixed-use developments—including apartments, townhomes, and accessory dwelling units—that respect the scale and character of existing neighborhoods. While many participants were open to higher-density development, they emphasized height restrictions and appropriate locations, especially to preserve single-family neighborhoods.

Residents envisioned expanding housing along key corridors such as 75th Street, with specific interest in a mixed-use development, combining retail and housing, at 75th Street and Lemont Road. Across all feedback formats, the community stressed the importance of including affordable units in new developments, avoiding overdevelopment on major corridors, and protecting historic homes, brick streets, and iconic trees.





## Keep it Local



Community members highlighted the importance of promoting mixed-use development to improve walkability and neighborhood vitality. There was strong interest in improving retail spaces, retaining existing businesses, and attracting new ones, especially those that will result in new jobs. While anchor stores were seen as necessary, there was a clear preference for local vendors over national chains. Only 48% of survey respondents viewed the current mix and availability of shopping options as a strength.

Challenges to business development were noted, including high startup costs that are seen as restrictive. Stakeholder interview participants proposed a designated “business development zone” with more flexible regulations that maintain community character. Many also suggested regular meetings between the Village and the business community to build understanding around upcoming initiatives.

Corridors such as Ogden Avenue, Woodward Avenue, 63rd Street, and Main Street were repeatedly identified for retail improvements. Key development opportunities were noted at Belmont Road and Curtiss Street, Woodward Avenue and 63rd Street, and the AT&T building site located downtown.

Participants emphasized supporting local businesses; 62% of business owners named it the most impactful improvement in Downers Grove. Pop-up feedback reinforced this, highlighting Downtown businesses, dining, and shopping among the most celebrated features while calling for a greater variety of businesses. Downtown design and outdoor dining also emerged as priorities, with a focus on balancing aesthetics and functionality.

*“Small businesses are what made DG what it is today and I think people forget that.”*

*- Business Survey Participant*



DRAFT  
STAFF REVIEW



## Green Spaces and People Places

Community members expressed strong support for advancing sustainability, expanding green infrastructure, and investing in recreation and community gathering spaces. Across all engagement efforts, participants emphasized preserving Downers Grove's natural beauty while improving environmental practices and public amenities.

Top sustainability priorities included protecting water and air quality, reducing waste, and promoting renewable energy. While increased access to parks and recreation was seen as a major strength, meeting energy needs through renewable sources was identified as a key area for improvement. Community suggestions included solar projects, EV charging stations, expanded recycling, improved stormwater management, and greater sustainability education.

Participants also supported native landscaping, bioswales, composting, and reduced lawn maintenance. Stakeholders emphasized the need for education around invasive species, alternative lawn care, and tree preservation.

Community events and festivals were widely appreciated, though stakeholders noted opportunities for improvement in timing, location, and family-friendly offerings. Residents also called for expanded library services, more parking, and new branches—especially in south Downers Grove and near Belmont Road and 63rd Street.

*"I really appreciate the strong presence of events in the Downtown area. I'd love to see even more local businesses get involved in Village-run events and be highlighted through Village efforts." - Business Survey*





**More Ways to Move**

Improving transportation safety and connectivity for all users—pedestrians, drivers, cyclists and transit riders—was a consistent theme across community engagement efforts. Beyond easing traffic congestion, participants emphasized the need for expanded infrastructure to support walking, biking, and public transit.

Pedestrian and cyclist safety ranked as the top travel concern, with 57% of survey respondents identifying it as a priority. Speeding vehicles, gaps in the sidewalk network, poor sidewalk conditions, and unsafe crossings were frequently cited as barriers. Areas specifically mentioned for improvement included Maple Avenue west of Fairview Avenue and key pedestrian crossings at 63rd Street and Fairmount Avenue.

Participants expressed strong support for protected bike lanes, improved connectivity to regional trails, and clearer wayfinding signage. Public transit improvements—such as a town-wide shuttle and dedicated services for seniors—were also commonly suggested to improve access and mobility. Stakeholders noted a need for better education around street safety and mobility guidelines.

Although 94% of business owners said they and their employees drive to work, there was interest in expanding non-car transportation options. At pop-up events, bikeability and walkability were the fourth most discussed topic, accounting for roughly 6.3% of all comments.

*“Residents, especially seniors and people with disabilities, struggle to get around without a car. - Pop-Up Participant*

**Welcome to DG**

Throughout the engagement process, community members emphasized the importance of making Downers Grove a more inclusive and welcoming place for people of all ages, backgrounds, and income levels. Many expressed a desire for greater diversity in the community—racial, generational, economic, and cultural—and called for more inclusive services and policies to support that vision.

Affordable housing, improved senior services, expanded transportation options, and better support for people with disabilities and low-income residents were frequently mentioned. Stakeholders noted service gaps and called for greater awareness of the needs of underrepresented and under-resourced groups.

Cultural vibrancy also emerged as a key theme. Participants advocated for expanded public art, less restrictive mural ordinances, and more cultural references and installations that reflect the community’s identity. Suggestions included rotating art displays, seasonal attractions, and celebrating local history as a point of community pride and a way to support local business vitality.

Pop-up feedback reinforced the value residents place on a strong sense of community and proximity to family and friends. Participants called for expanded bilingual programming, improved accessibility, and spaces that bring people together.

Overall, the community envisioned Downers Grove as a place that supports and celebrates diversity, strengthens community connections, and fosters belonging for all.





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# COMMUNITY PROFILE

02

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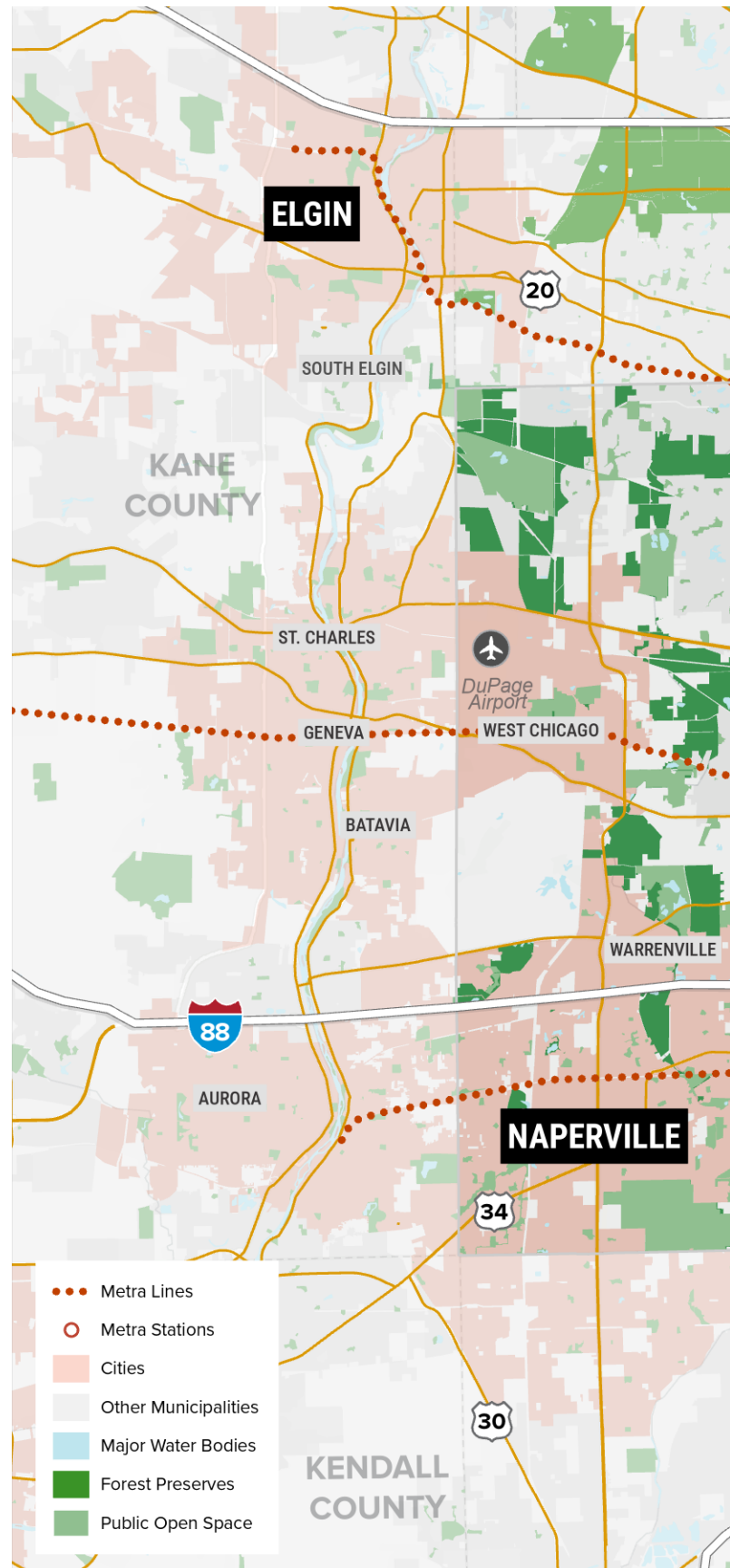
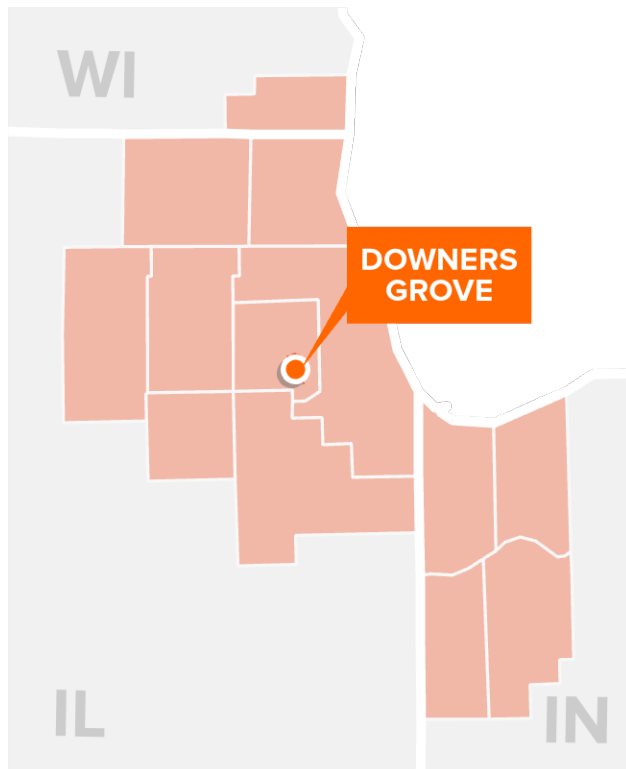
The Community Profile chapter provides a snapshot of Downers Grove's current conditions as the Village plans for the next 20 years. This understanding of the Village's current state, needs, and opportunities forms the foundation of the Village's vision and goals. The following section offers an overview of the Village's regional context, existing land use, and demographic trends.



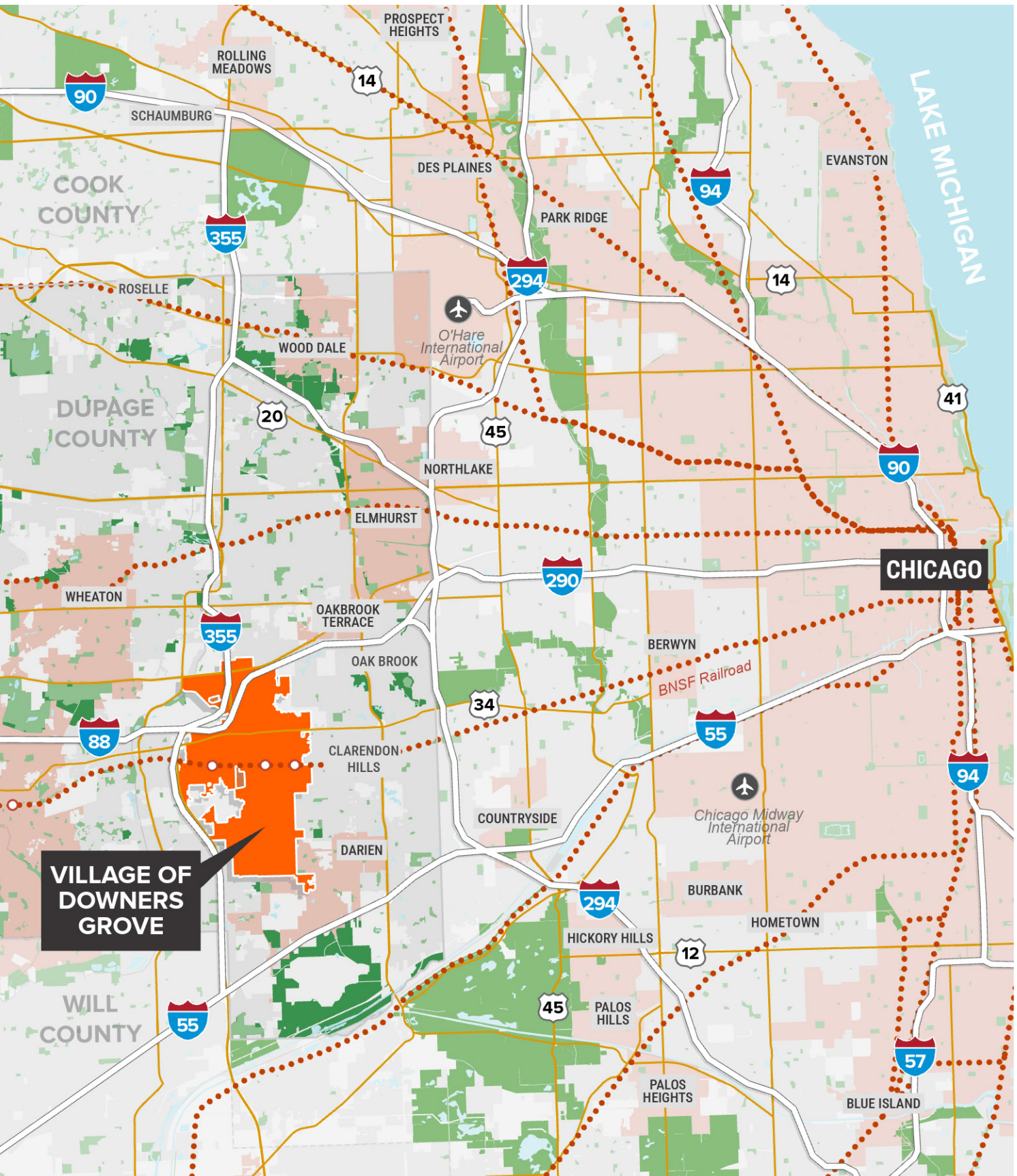
## REGIONAL SETTING

Downers Grove, located in DuPage County in northeastern Illinois, is approximately 20 miles west of Chicago. Downers Grove is a part of the Chicago-Naperville-Elgin Combined Statistical Area, which has a population of over nine million people. The community sits in a desirable location within the region, offering direct access to Chicago and surrounding destinations through the regional Metra BNSF train line, regional Pace bus routes, regional connector highway Ogden Avenue, and Interstate 88, Interstate 355, Interstate 294, and nearby Interstate 55. Downers Grove covers an area of 14.80 square miles and a population of 49,996 people, as of 2022. It serves as headquarters for several businesses, including Advocate Aurora Health. The local economy is bolstered by retail areas along Ogden Avenue and Butterfield Road, as well as an attractive Downtown that features numerous boutiques, restaurants, and historical buildings.

Chicago-Naperville-Elgin MSA





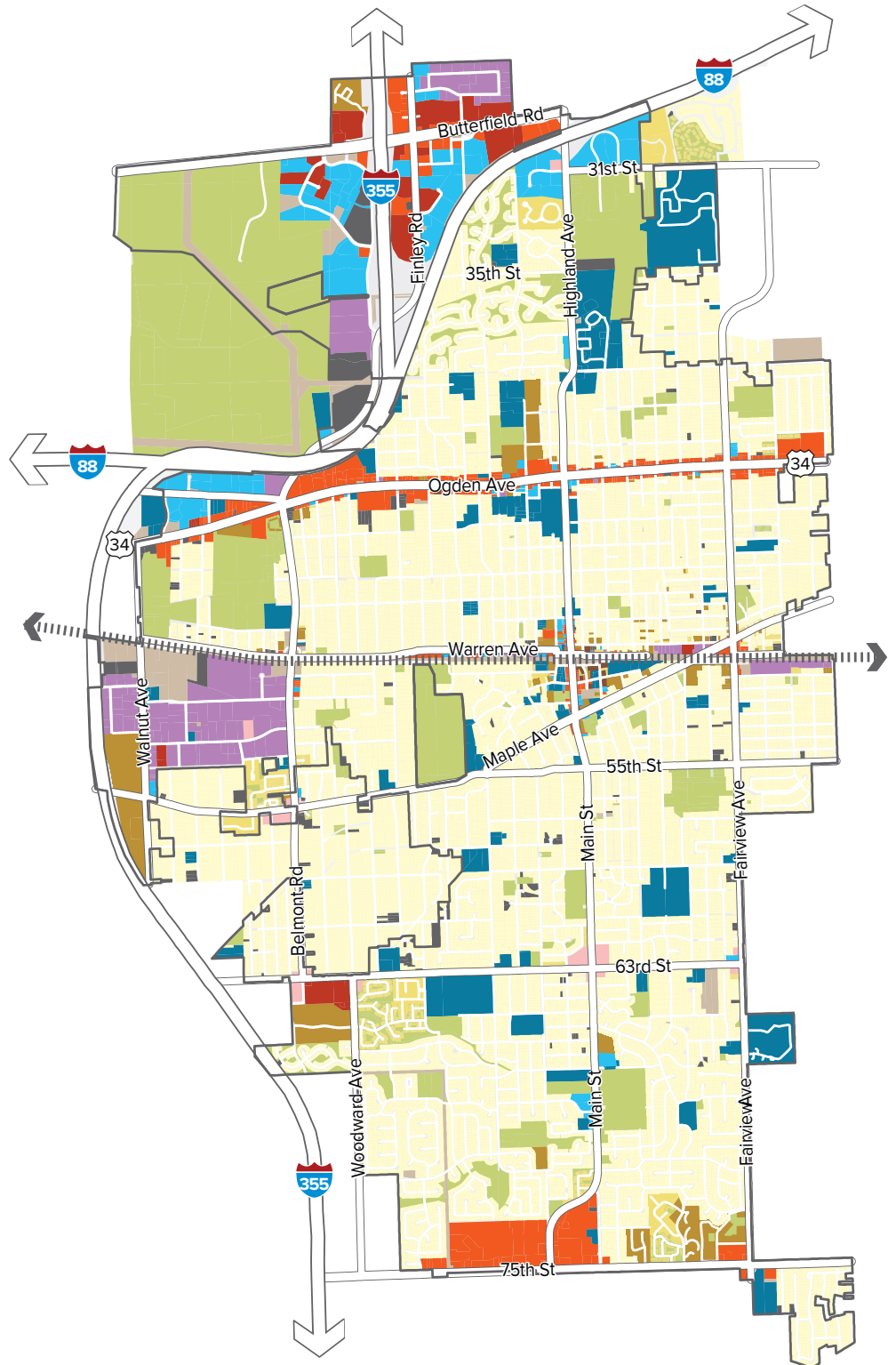




## EXISTING LAND USE

All parcels within Downers Grove and its planning area were categorized into one of 13 land use types. The existing land use inventory is based on data the Village collected and verified through a reconnaissance survey conducted in 2024. The existing land use inventory helped identify growth patterns and analyze existing conditions based on current demographic conditions. Detailed analysis of existing conditions can be found in the Existing Conditions Memorandum (ECM); the findings and key takeaways from the ECM have informed the development of the Comprehensive Plan.

- Single-Family Detached
- Single-Family Attached
- Multifamily
- Neighborhood Commercial
- Corridor Commercial
- Regional Commercial
- Mixed-use
- Office
- Industrial
- Public/Semi-Public
- Parks and Open Space
- Utilities and Transportation
- Vacant and Undeveloped



## DEMOGRAPHIC SNAPSHOT

The demographic snapshot analyzes the current attributes of Downers Grove's population. Data was pulled from the U.S. Census, including the American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates and the Decennial Survey. By studying and analyzing these attributes, Village leaders can identify trends and patterns within the community, empowering the Village to address residents' needs more effectively, deliver essential services, and anticipate future demands. The demographic information informed the Comprehensive Plan to ensure it addressed existing trends, issues, and opportunities.

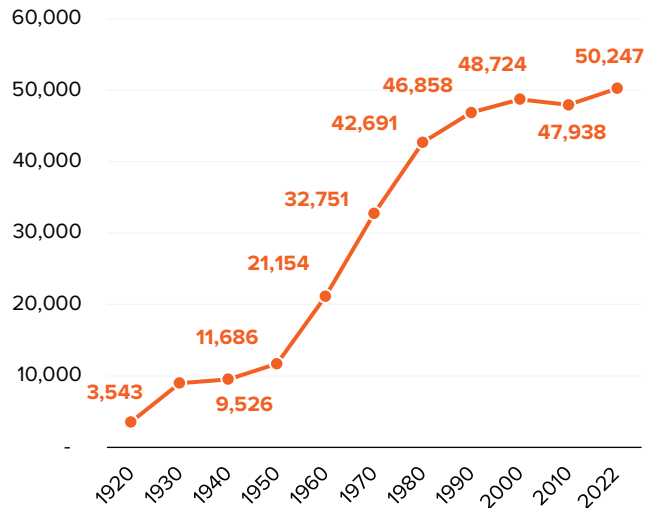
To understand these trends better, comparative data from DuPage County was used to get a regional perspective on how Downers Grove aligns with or differs from neighboring areas.

## POPULATION

The demographic snapshot begins by analyzing Downers Grove's current population and the historical trends that have shaped its present state. According to the U.S. Decennial Census, the population of Downers Grove has more than quadrupled from over 11,000 in 1950 to 50,247 in 2022. The population has changed significantly over time, with the largest increases happening in the periods from 1920 to 1930 and 1950 to 1960. However, population growth has decelerated in the last two decades, with a decrease of -1.6% from 2000 to 2010 and only marginal growth thereafter. DuPage County has seen similar population trends to Downers Grove, having grown steadily since 1960 but slowed growth in recent years.

### Population Over Time

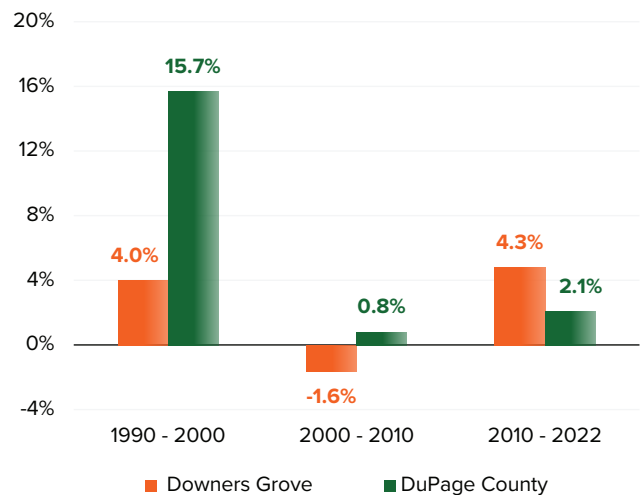
(1920 - 2022)



Source: U.S. Decennial Census

### Population Growth Rates

(1990 - 2022)



Source: U.S. Decennial Census and 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

## AGE

As of 2022, Downers Grove's median age was 42.6 years old, slightly older than DuPage County. Compared to 2010 the average age is rising for both Downers Grove and the County.

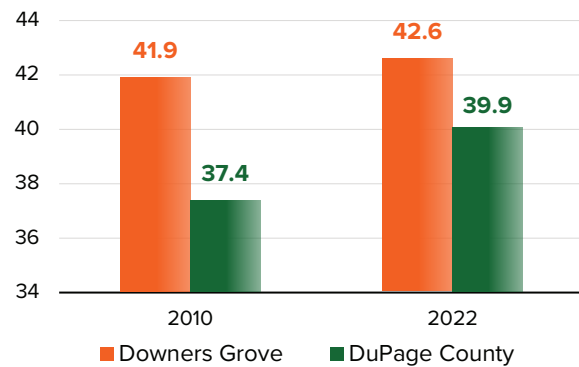
Between 2010 and 2022, the Downers Grove population grew by 4.3%. The age groups that grew the most were those aged 65+, followed by those under five and those aged 55-64. The growing 65+ population has contributed to the community's rising median age. DuPage County experienced more growth in its older population between 2010 and 2022. The population of all groups younger than 55 years old either shrank or stayed the same. The 35- to 54-year old age group experienced the largest decrease. These trends mirror conditions seen nationally as the Baby Boomer generation ages.

## RACE AND ETHNICITY

The population of Downers Grove is predominantly white. The next most predominant groups are Asian and Pacific Islander and Black or African American. Only 5.5% of the population identifies as Hispanic or Latino, an ethnicity that includes individuals of all races as defined by the U.S. Census. Downers Grove is less diverse than DuPage County. While the County's population is still majority white, it has a larger Asian and Pacific Islander population and a larger Black or African American population. Those identifying as Some Other Race or Two or More Races represent over 11% of the population. Almost 15% of the DuPage population identifies as Hispanic or Latino.

### Median Age Over Time

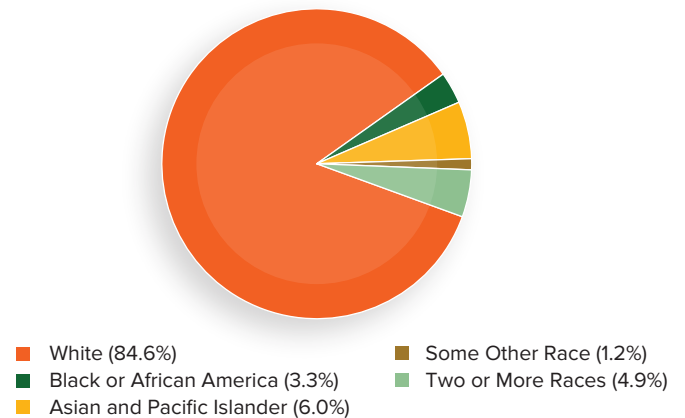
(2010 - 2022)



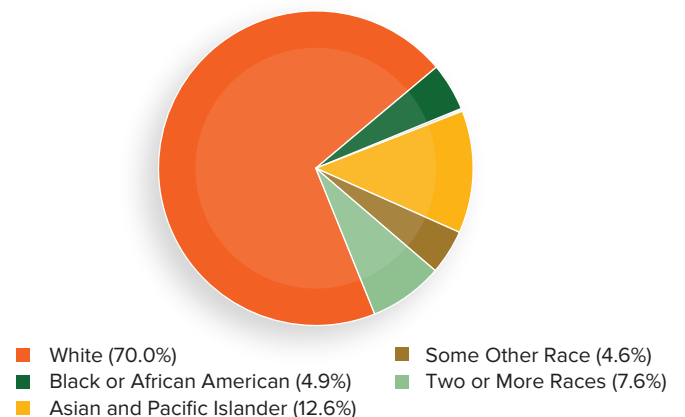
Source: 2010 and 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

### Racial and Ethnic Composition

Downers Grove (2022)



DuPage County (2022)



Source: 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

## INCOME

In 2022, Downers Grove's median household income was around \$115,000. This has dramatically increased in recent years, compared to \$78,523 in 2010. This is largely due in part to the 117% increase in the number of residents making \$150,000 or more in the past 12 years. The group of residents making \$150,000 or more is by far the largest income group in the community, at 37.6% of the income-generating population. The only other household income groups that grew in share of the population were those making less than \$25,000, indicating a shrinking middle class and growing economic polarization. While the household incomes of Downers Grove residents and DuPage County residents have been historically similar, in 2022 Downers Grove's household income was more than \$8,000 greater than that of DuPage County.

## EMPLOYMENT

The top industry for Downers Grove residents (either working in the community or elsewhere) is the Health Care and Social Assistance sector, which holds a share of 12.9% of the job market.

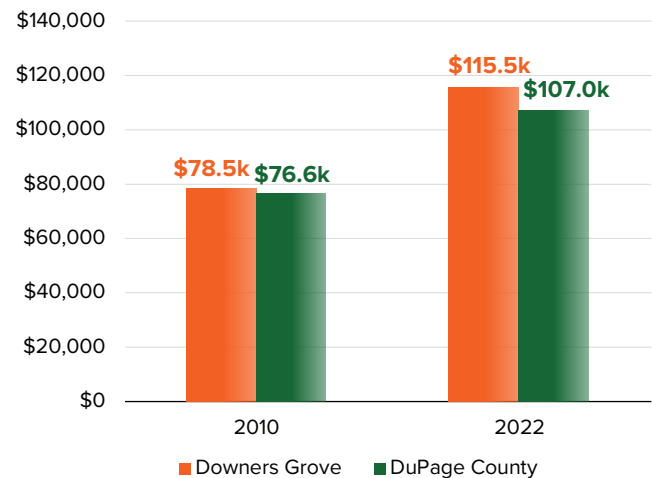
The other industry sectors that employ the most Downers Grove residents include the Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services, Educational Services, Retail Trade, and Finance and Insurance sectors.

Between 2010 and 2021, the total number of working residents dropped from 24,197 to 23,687, which coincides with an aging population. Most of the sectors experienced a loss in employed residents, with the Retail Trade, Educational Services, and Manufacturing sectors experiencing the largest number of job losses.

The industry sectors that experienced the greatest growth in employed residents were Transportation and Warehousing; Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services; and Health Care and Social Assistance. These three industry sectors gained 935 employees in total.

### Median Household Incomes

(2010 - 2022)



Source: 2010 and 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

### Top 10 Employers for Downers Grove Residents (2021)

Employment Sector	Total Jobs in 2021	Share of Job Market in 2021	Change in Jobs since 2010
Health Care and Social Assistance	3,058	12.9%	6.6%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	2,701	11.4%	16.7%
Educational Services	2,503	10.6%	-11.4%
Retail Trade	2,236	9.4%	-14.9%
Finance and Insurance	1,732	7.3%	5.7%
Manufacturing	1,624	6.9%	-12.8%
Transportation and Warehousing	1,122	4.7%	47.2%
Accommodation and Food Services	1,376	5.8%	-16%
Wholesale Trade	1,332	5.6%	-2.3%
Administration and Support, Waste Management and Remediation	1,566	6.6%	5.7%

Source: 2021 US Census On the Map

# TOP INDUSTRIES

According to the employment data available from the U.S. Census Bureau Center for Economic Studies, in 2021, Health Care and Social Assistance was the largest employment sector within the community, with 8,371 employees, followed by the Administration and Support, Waste Management and Remediation sector, which employed 6,143 people.

Downers Grove serves as the corporate headquarters for Advocate Aurora Health and includes Advocate Good Samaritan Hospital, the community’s top employer with 2,500 employees. Other large Health Care and Social Assistance employers in Downers Grove include Coventry Health Care with 800 employees and Blue Cross Blue Shield of Illinois at 420.

Between 2010 and 2021, Construction sector jobs in Downers Grove increased by 95.8%. Other sectors that experienced high growth in jobs within the community were the Finance and Insurance, and the Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services sectors. The majority of jobs lost were in the Administration and Support, Waste Management and Remediation sector.

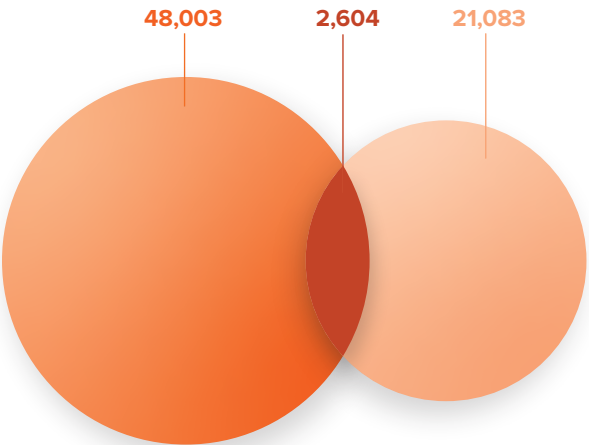
Top 10 Job Sectors in Downers Grove (2021)

Employment Sector	Total Jobs in 2021	Share of Job Market in 2021	Change in Jobs since 2010
Health Care and Social Assistance	8,371	16.5%	55.8%
Administration and Support, Waste Management and Remediation	6,143	12.1%	-19.4%
Finance and Insurance	4,637	9.2%	59.8%
Retail Trade	4,461	8.8%	-0.6%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	4,102	8.1%	30.5%
Manufacturing	3,903	7.7%	1.6%
Educational Services	3,524	7.0%	-4.1%
Accommodation and Food Services	3,465	6.8%	11.6%
Wholesale Trade	2,598	5.1%	-8.0%
Construction	2,356	4.7%	95.8%

Source: 2021 US Census On the Map

## Inflow/Outflow Job Counts

Downers Grove (2021)



Source: 2021 US Census On the Map

- People live outside of Downers Grove and are employed in Downers Grove
- People live in Downers Grove and are employed in Downers Grove
- People live in Downers Grove and are employed outside Downers Grove

## HOUSING

Downers Grove has over 20,000 housing units which are nearly all occupied. Of the occupied housing units, 75.2% are owner-occupied and 24.8% are renter-occupied. This is mostly consistent with DuPage County, where 73.1% and 26.9% of housing is owner-occupied and renter-occupied, respectively. Most of Downers Grove's and the County's housing stock is made up of single-family detached homes. The second most popular housing type within both Downers Grove and DuPage County is multi-family, with most multi-family buildings comprised of 10 dwelling units or more. The bulk of Downers Grove's housing stock was built in the 20th century or earlier. The most common construction decade for Downers Grove homes is the 1970s. This is largely on par with housing ages in DuPage County overall. However, more of Downers Grove's housing stock has been built in the years since 2010 than that of DuPage County, indicating that the home construction industry has been more active in Downers Grove in recent years than the County average.

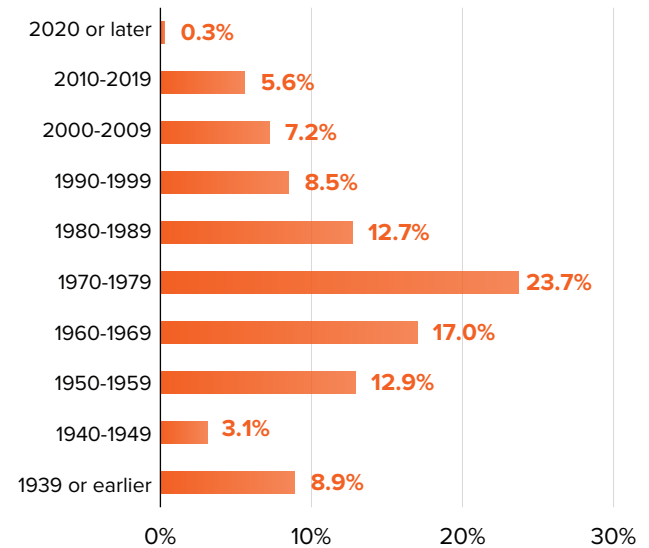
### Housing Affordability

Housing cost burden is defined as a household paying more than 30% of its income towards housing. Greater than 35% indicates a severe burden. In Downers Grove, only 8.9% of homeowners are considered cost burdened—lower than the DuPage County average of 11.4%. However, renters in Downers Grove face greater financial strain, with 24.2% spending more than 30% of their income on housing, compared to 22.1% of renters in the County.

Gaps in the community's housing stock likely contribute to the high renter cost-burden of Downers Grove. There is a mismatch between population trends that indicate a growing number of older individuals living alone or as couples without children and a historic housing stock that is geared largely to families. This mismatch is likely to grow in the coming years, putting greater pressure on the community's housing stock.

### Housing by Year Built

(2022)



Source: 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates



# VISION AND GOALS

03





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# VISION

The Vision paints a picture of what the Village can achieve following the adoption of the *Guiding DG Comprehensive Plan*. The Vision is the foundation for the Plan's goals, recommendations, and actions.





*Downers Grove will become a model community with a population of over 50,000 people of all ages, races, backgrounds and incomes. Over the coming decades, it will be renowned for its strong sense of place, cultural diversity and the human connection among its residents. It will continue to celebrate its tradition of excellence, safe, distinctive and well-maintained neighborhoods, premier regional and local commercial choices, a lively, vibrant Downtown, commitment to sustainability, accessible and attractive open spaces, safe connectivity for all road users, and an array of quality local government services and amenities.*

*Downers Grove will be a vibrant and inclusive place with high quality, diverse housing options that support residents throughout their lives and foster a sense of belonging. The rich housing history will be preserved and a variety of residential architectural styles, housing types and multipurpose development will be embraced. Residential areas will be walkable, welcoming, and reflective of their unique neighborhood character.*

*The business-friendly environment will continue to attract businesses and investment. Commercial areas will continue to improve, thrive, and grow as regionally recognized destinations and notable activity centers. The Village will support new entrepreneurs and existing businesses of all sizes, both in the Downtown and throughout Downers Grove. Major employers that create a variety of employment opportunities will be drawn to the local economy.*

*Downtown Downers Grove will continue to be the heart of the community – a place where neighbors and visitors gather, and businesses thrive. The success of Downtown will be expanded via strategic connectivity with the Fairview focus area. These two areas will have innovative and sustainable streetscapes, art displays and public spaces resulting in an inviting, visually appealing, and culturally rich destination that attracts residents, visitors, and commuters alike. The Belmont focus area will similarly be transformed into a third commuter rail-anchored node as a place for innovation, commerce, and residential amenities. Strategically positioned, the area will see sustainable and context-sensitive development. Other key locations in Downers Grove will also be transformed to create distinctive gateway and destination nodes, unique in character and purpose, but aligned with the community's vision to provide diverse residential, commercial, cultural, resource, recreational, and natural amenities.*

*Downers Grove will consist of permanently preserved open spaces, native landscaping and a green stormwater management system. Natural resources will be respected by a more sustainable and livable community. There will be an abundance of natural recreation areas, walking paths, trails and trees. The community will be resilient in the face of intensifying climatological events and sustainability efforts will be embraced.*

*There will be a high quality, aesthetically pleasing, safe and accessible transportation system for all users with priority given to pedestrians, bicycles, and micro-mobility devices. Neighborhoods, commercial corridors, and local amenities will be connected through an extensive mobility network, providing the opportunity to comfortably walk, bike, drive, or take public transportation.*

*Residents, workers, students and visitors will continue to be welcomed in Downers Grove. The community will be a hub for inclusiveness, acceptance, mutual respect and cultural excellence, fostering a strong relationship among local institutions to promote an excellent quality of life and sense of pride.*

## GOALS

The goals outlined in each chapter reflect key priorities for future development and serve as a framework for guiding decisions. The goals are designed to ensure that every aspect of the Plan works cohesively to support the community's long-term vision.

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### LAND USE, GROWTH, AND DEVELOPMENT

Under the guidance of the Future Land Use Map, approach land use decisions in a way that fosters strategic and context-sensitive growth and promotes attractive development.

### HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOODS

Encourage and facilitate high-quality housing and neighborhoods for residents in all stages of life and all incomes, maintaining and expanding the Downers Grove reputation as an attractive place to live.

### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

In partnership with the Downers Grove Economic Development Corporation (DGEDC), support local businesses, commercial centers, major employers, and industries to strengthen the Village's diverse tax base.

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## **TRANSPORTATION AND MOBILITY**

Provide a seamless, efficient transportation system that offers good connectivity, improves safety and mobility for people using all modes (walking, biking, transit, and driving), reduces traffic and emissions, and enhances the character of the community.

## **COMMUNITY SERVICES, FACILITIES, AND INFRASTRUCTURE**

Continue to provide high quality Village services, maintain and invest in Village facilities and critical infrastructure, and support the delivery of community services to ensure a resilient, sustainable, and high quality of life for the whole community.

## **SUSTAINABILITY, PARKS, RECREATION, AND OPEN SPACE**

Promote sustainability to ensure community resilience and to protect natural spaces. Meet the recreational and environmental needs of the community by fostering partnerships to maintain a complete system of parks and open spaces within walking and biking distances of existing neighborhoods.



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# LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT

04

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*The Land Use and Development chapter is the core component of the Comprehensive Plan, representing the primary building blocks upon which other plan components are structured. The chapter identifies future land uses for all areas of Downers Grove.*

*This chapter provides a basis for planning decisions that build upon the desired characteristics of Downers Grove's residential neighborhoods, commercial districts, and employment areas. It is also mindful of growth pressures and lays the groundwork for responsible development that accommodates demand, while retaining the community's well-established character.*

*Building on the community's existing land use and development pattern, the future land use plan helps ensure the Village can accommodate growth responsibly and sustainably. This approach to land use retains and bolsters established neighborhoods, identifies opportunities for growth through infill development, targets certain areas for development intensification and plans for responsible expansion.*

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

## **Goal and Key Recommendations**

### **UNDER THE GUIDANCE OF THE FUTURE LAND USE MAP, APPROACH LAND USE DECISIONS IN A WAY THAT FOSTERS STRATEGIC AND CONTEXT-SENSITIVE GROWTH AND PROMOTES ATTRACTIVE DEVELOPMENT.**

- Promote safe and efficient connections between neighborhoods and destinations.
- Encourage multiple transportation options including walking, bicycling, vehicles, and public transit (trains, buses, on-demand, and similar).
- Facilitate redevelopment opportunities to meet housing and economic development needs.
- Protect the environment through the development of open space, the inclusion of green infrastructure, and native plantings.
- Facilitate the creation and enhancement of mixed-use areas that include housing, offices, commercial and retail space, and other community amenities.
- Encourage infill development to efficiently use vacant or underutilized land for both residential and commercial uses.
- Facilitate the preservation of historic buildings and neighborhoods and the adaptive reuse of existing structures.



## LAND USE INFLUENCES AND CONSTRAINTS

Land use and development are influenced and constrained by factors including existing land use patterns, limited available land for new development, and Downers Grove's significant regional access via commuter rail stations. This section examines these factors to provide context for future growth and development.

### EXISTING LAND USE

In the existing conditions phase of the process, all parcels within Downers Grove and its planning area were categorized into 13 existing land uses, identifying development patterns and analyzing the existing land use composition. Established land use patterns include built-out residential neighborhoods, commercial districts, and industrial areas, which can limit the flexibility to introduce new types of development or higher densities. As such, the current distribution of land is the primary influence on future development.

### LIMITED AVAILABLE LAND FOR NEW DEVELOPMENT

Downers Grove is a landlocked community, meaning there is very little opportunity to expand the Village via annexation, with little greenfield land available, placing greater emphasis on ensuring that redevelopment is carefully planned and aligns with the long-term vision. Given the landlocked status and built out existing land use patterns, Downers Grove must focus on strategic redevelopment, infill development, and adaptive reuse to maximize limited land. Prioritizing mixed-use projects, revitalizing underutilized properties, and encouraging sustainable, walkable development will align growth with the community's long-term vision.

## REGIONAL RAIL – METRA BNSF RAILWAY STATIONS

Downers Grove is serviced by three Metra rail stations: Fairview Avenue, Downers Grove Main Street, and Belmont. The BNSF Railway service runs from Chicago Union Station to Downtown Aurora, connecting Downers Grove to Naperville, Lisle, Westmont, and other communities along Ogden Avenue. This accessibility not only supports the daily commute of residents but also positions Downtown as an attractive destination within the region, underscoring the need for targeted growth to attract more people to Downtown businesses and enhance economic vitality. The map depicts 5- and 10-minute walksheds around each Metra station based on existing streets. These areas are reachable on foot for the average person and are logical for the promotion of compact, walkable, pedestrian-oriented, and transit-oriented development. However, preserving the character of established residential neighborhoods is key, such as the single-family homes near Downtown, which are highly valued by the community. Any new development or infill in these areas must carefully balance growth with respect for the existing neighborhood character.

While Downtown continues to thrive as a regional hub, there is an opportunity to enhance the areas around the Fairview and Belmont area, transforming them into attractive hubs for future development. Strategic redevelopment near these stations can leverage transit infrastructure, reduce reliance on cars, and contribute to a more sustainable urban environment.







## LAND USE PLAN

The Future Land Use Plan is intended to guide the future growth and development of Downers Grove and its Planning Area. The Future Land Use Plan aims to improve the character and quality of the community's residential neighborhoods, enhance its commercial and employment areas, and support a balanced approach to development. The following section outlines the land use classifications that will guide the growth and development of the community over the next 20 years.

### SINGLE-FAMILY DETACHED RESIDENTIAL

Single-family detached residential areas should consist of a detached single household per lot, organized into neighborhoods or subdivisions based on a unifying development pattern. Downers Grove has developed as a residential community, approximately 80% of homes in the Village are single-family and owner-occupied. It is anticipated that over the coming decades, single-family residential will continue to be a predominant land use within Downers Grove.

### SINGLE-FAMILY ATTACHED RESIDENTIAL

Single-family attached residential uses are single-family dwellings that share a sidewall with an adjacent single-family dwelling. Examples include townhouses, row houses and duplexes which are present throughout Downers Grove. Single-family attached residential developments are commonly found along arterial streets.

### MULTI-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL

Multi-family residential development consists of more than one unit or household per lot. This may take the form of standalone buildings of condominiums or apartments, as part of a mixed-use development or as specialized senior housing. Multi-family residential developments are currently present throughout Downers Grove. The Comprehensive Plan identifies the redevelopment of some existing multi-family areas that are compatible with adjacent uses.



## MIXED-USE

Mixed-use combines distinct functions, such as offices, shops, and homes, within a single development or within a geographic area. Mixed-use buildings often have retail stores, restaurants, and entertainment uses on the ground floor to create an active and engaging pedestrian environment, with residential or other service-based activities above. Mixed-use developments are located in Downtown, Fairview, and 75th Street. Mixed-use are typically part of transit-oriented development located near all train stations.

## DOWNTOWN

Downtown Downers Grove is characterized by a mix of commercial service, commercial retail, office, entertainment, civic, multi-family residential, institutional and related public facilities in a pedestrian-oriented atmosphere.

The type and location of land uses within Downtown and in mixed-use areas maintain a pedestrian-orientation.





## NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL

Neighborhood commercial areas function to provide residents with convenient, day-to-day goods and services within a short walk or drive from their homes. These areas may be anchored by a grocery store accompanied by a variety of other smaller retailers such as gas stations, dry cleaners, convenience stores, banks, and restaurants. Providing these daily goods and services close to home is an amenity to nearby residents and serves to reduce automobile trips.

## CORRIDOR COMMERCIAL

Corridor commercial land uses are typically organized in a linear fashion and include a blend of neighborhood-oriented commercial retail, offices, auto dealerships, smaller regional commercial retail, service uses, and multi-family uses.

Corridor Commercial with a regional draw are typically located in areas of a corridor where they will benefit from access and visibility without significantly contributing to traffic or impact on nearby residential areas. In other areas, commercial uses of a neighborhood scale are typically oriented towards nearby residential areas.

## REGIONAL COMMERCIAL

Regional commercial comprises commercial uses that provide goods and services that draw patrons from within, and beyond Downers Grove. Commercial uses with a regional draw are appropriate in areas of a corridor where they will benefit from access and visibility without significantly contributing to traffic along the corridor or impact on nearby residential areas. In other areas of the corridor, commercial uses are of a neighborhood scale and are oriented towards nearby residential areas. Appropriate regional commercial uses include large shopping centers, “big box” retail, auto dealerships, restaurants, hotels, and entertainment uses.



## OFFICE

Office uses include large-scale office buildings and complexes, office parks, and small individual offices. Office uses can be compatible with adjacent residential uses given appropriate buffering and screening. Multi-family development may also occur in and around these areas to promote workforce housing, live-work housing and/or hotel and lodging buildings. Additional small-scale commercial uses are also allowed to support the predominant office uses.

## LIGHT INDUSTRIAL AND BUSINESS PARK

Light industrial and business park uses include those dedicated to the design, assembly, processing, packaging, storage and transportation of products, and light industrial which may or may not have an accessory retail component. These uses are located in areas where they can capitalize on proximity to regional transportation networks while minimizing negative impacts on residential neighborhoods. This includes areas near interstates, existing business and industrial parks, and along the BNSF railroad.

## PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

Downers Grove is well served by the parks and open space located throughout the community and beyond. These parks and open spaces range in terms of size and use to include small, neighborhood “pocket” parks to large tracts of forest preserve and other natural areas, most owned and managed by the Downers Grove Park District or the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County. The largest open spaces in Downers Grove include Lyman Woods, the Maple Grove Forest Preserve, Belmont Prairie, Hidden Lake Forest Preserve, and neighboring Morton Arboretum.



## INSTITUTIONAL/ PUBLIC

Institutional/Public land uses include public and semi-public areas occupied by government facilities, community service providers, schools, and other institutional users. This land use also contains areas used by both private and public utility providers. The distribution of institutional/public land uses require adequate and comprehensive service delivery to residents and businesses in Downers Grove, which requires their location.

## TRANSPORTATION/ UTILITIES

Utilities and transportation uses support local infrastructure and provide rights-of-way or easements for the transmission of gas, electric, water, and sewer.



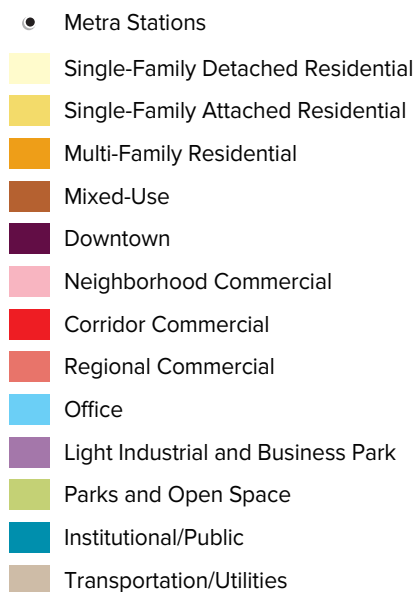
## RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are provided for this chapter's section.

- Single-family detached residential areas should allow for Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs, or “granny flats,”) which are typically less than 800 square feet and allow for context-sensitive infill on smaller lots, such as by placing an accessory structure behind the primary residence or through a home expansion.
- Single-family attached residential should be used as a transitional land use between single-family detached and multi-family development.
- Multi-family residential land uses should be located based on proximity to the transportation network and to maximize their function as a transitional land use between single-family residential and commercial land uses.
- Downtown should continue to contain a mix of land uses that reinforce its unique character.
- Neighborhood commercial areas should be comprised of a mix of retail, service, and office uses that cater to a local population.
- Office uses should be strategically located near transit and along commercial corridors to support economic growth, with opportunities for mixed-use integration, including multifamily housing and small-scale commercial services.
- Mixed-use developments should be targeted in Downtown and 75th Street. Mixed-use could also be appropriate within the Esplanade.
- Commercial uses should be located in areas with a regional draw of a corridor where they will benefit from access and visibility without significantly contributing to traffic or impact on nearby residential areas. In other areas, commercial uses should be of a neighborhood scale and oriented towards nearby residential areas.
- Small nodes of neighborhood commercial development should be throughout Downers Grove at the intersection of primary roadways (arterials and collectors) to serve nearby residential areas.







# VILLAGE-WIDE DESIGN TOOLKIT

The Village-Wide Design Toolkit provides a set of key improvements and recommendations that can be applied throughout Downers Grove including all Focus Areas. Aligning with community input, the toolkit aims to improve the commercial vitality, preserve character, and enhance the appeal of Downers Grove. For more details on how this toolkit is applied in the Focus Areas, please refer to Chapter 07.

## GATEWAY SIGNAGE

Gateway signage acts as a welcoming landmark for a community, district, or a 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.

## 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 fences, and small berms are landscaping techniques that are promoted and utilized to screen parking areas.

## 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.

## 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 of parking stalls where possible and explore outlot development opportunities. The Village should review its parking requirements and consider reducing the minimum and re-examining its maximums.

## 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 nearby public sidewalk and trails.

## 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 elements include street yards, interior yards, parking lot islands, divider medians, and trees. Incorporating native plant species into future landscape improvement projects supports local pollinators and wildlife and creates a more sustainable, low-maintenance environment. 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.

## ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENTS

The major corridors within Downers Grove are largely designed for car travel, with few on- and off-street bicycle facilities and trails. Active transportation improvements would expand the enjoyment of Downers Grove to those beyond solely auto users. 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 as guided by the *Guiding DG Active Transportation Plan*.

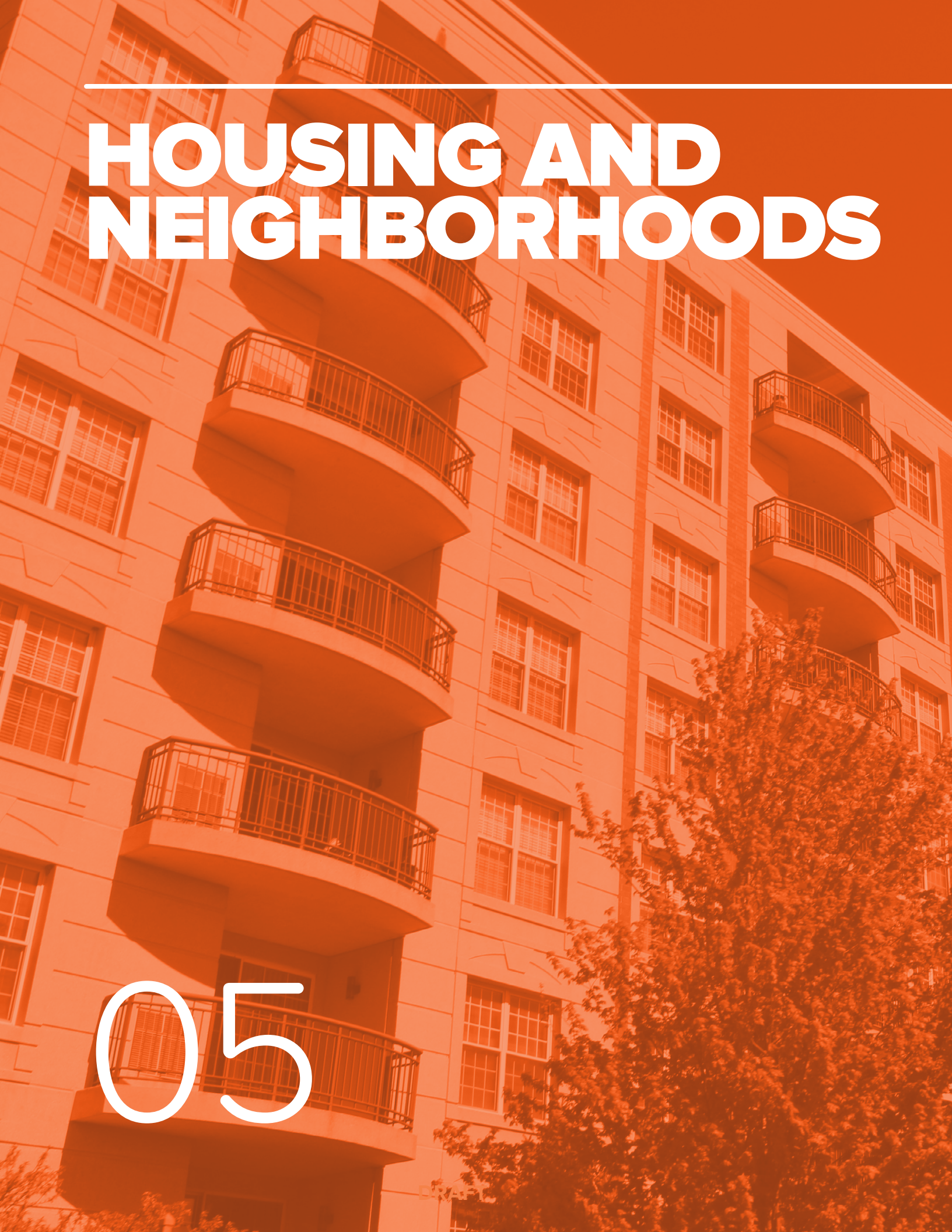
## PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENTS

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 AREAS

Downers Grove is home to diverse natural areas and uses. The Village should adopt tailored strategies to manage these spaces and their roles. Preserving natural areas 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.





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# HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOODS

05



*As Downers Grove's population grows, its neighborhoods will evolve to meet the rising demand for diverse housing options, accommodating smaller households, young professionals, families, and aging residents who wish to stay in their communities, all while maintaining a high standard of living.*

*The Housing and Neighborhoods chapter addresses these trends and offers strategies to ensure a range of residential options for future residents. It guides key decisions impacting local housing, promoting increased density and affordable, unique housing choices. The chapter outlines incremental steps to support well-planned, attractive neighborhoods that support residents in all stages of life and all incomes and adapt to the changing needs of the community.*

### *Goal and Key Recommendations*

## **ENCOURAGE AND FACILITATE HIGH-QUALITY HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOODS FOR RESIDENTS IN ALL STAGES OF LIFE AND ALL INCOMES, MAINTAINING AND EXPANDING THE DOWNERS GROVE REPUTATION AS AN ATTRACTIVE PLACE TO LIVE.**

- Promote residential development and redevelopment of a variety of housing and dwelling unit types and densities in accordance with the Future Land Use Plan.
- Encourage residential new construction, additions, and renovations complement the established character and scale of the Village's established neighborhoods.
- Maintain the integrity of sound existing housing through continued regular, active code enforcement and preventative maintenance programs, supporting the preservation of historical features and the distinct character of the community's neighborhoods.
- Consider establishing or expanding regulations, policies and programs that directly address housing attainability for all incomes, ages, and abilities.
- Continue to promote green building practices, including the use of sustainable materials, energy-efficient appliances, and renewable energy sources in residential construction.
- Consider regulatory requirements or incentives for housing developments that incorporate green and sustainable materials or design.
- Explore opportunities to increase tree preservation efforts and maintain the urban tree canopy.
- Encourage developments to implement environmental friendly best practices, such as the International Dark Sky Initiative and bird-friendly glass.



## QUALITY NEIGHBORHOODS

Downers Grove is known for its high-quality residential neighborhoods and diverse housing stock. Preserving and strengthening Downers Grove's existing neighborhoods is key to maintaining the unique identity of the community. Emphasizing the importance of high-quality design, preservation, and maintenance ensures that neighborhoods will remain attractive, functional, and livable for future generations.

## INFILL DEVELOPMENT

Downers Grove's quality neighborhoods and older homes contribute to its charm but also make it susceptible to redevelopment. Residents have expressed concerns about teardowns and the construction of large, expensive homes that alter the character of established neighborhoods and reduce the attainability of homeownership. With limited space for development, it is important to protect existing residential areas from out-of-scale projects. On the other hand, some have indicated an appreciation for diversity in the housing stock. As infill occurs over time, residential development or redevelopment should align with the scale, setbacks, height, bulk, and orientation of surrounding homes to ensure compatibility.

To help educate homeowners and builders to foster development that can preserve and enhance neighborhoods, the Village should continue to administer, regularly review, and update its Zoning, Subdivision, and Historic Preservation ordinances, as well as Fire and Building Codes and the Downtown Design Guidelines.

## MAINTENANCE

Proper maintenance of residential properties is essential to preserving property values and maintaining the character and appeal of neighborhoods. To uphold community standards, the Village enforces minimum upkeep and appearance standards through its adoption of the 2021 International Property Maintenance Code (Village Code Section 7.1401).





## HOUSING ATTAINABILITY AND VARIABILITY

Downers Grove faces challenges in aligning its housing supply with the needs of its residents. A significant mismatch exists between available housing types and household demographics, a gap that is expected to widen as the median family size continues to decline. While only 35% of the population consists of families, nearly two-thirds (63%) of dwelling units have three or more bedrooms, limiting options for the growing number of one- and two-person households. Additionally, housing affordability is a growing concern. Over the past decade, the median home sale price has risen by roughly 29%, making homeownership increasingly difficult. As a result, many residents turn to renting, yet 24% of renters are cost-burdened, meaning they spend a disproportionate share of their income on housing. To address these issues, Downers Grove must expand its range of housing options. A variety of housing types—such as single-family homes, townhomes, apartments, and in certain locations, accessory dwelling units—can help ensure that residents of all ages, incomes, and household sizes can find suitable places to live.

## MISSING MIDDLE HOUSING

One strategy to achieve a more balanced housing mix is to embrace the concept of “missing middle” housing. This approach focuses on bridging the gap between large single-family homes and larger apartment complexes by introducing a wider variety of housing options. Missing middle housing includes smaller and moderately sized single-family homes, duplexes, triplexes, townhomes, and small-scale apartment buildings. Currently, single-family attached homes account for just 6.2% of the housing stock in Downers Grove, with only 2.5% of these developments consisting of two to four units.

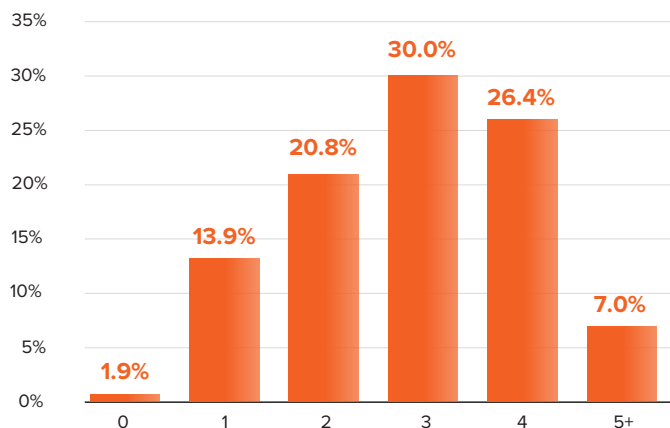
Demographic trends further underscore the need for missing middle housing. In 2022, the most common household type in Downers Grove was couples without children (43.3%), followed by individuals living alone (29.0%), with nearly 15% of these individuals being seniors aged 65 and older. By promoting the development of smaller housing types, the Village can better meet the diverse needs of its residents, promote inclusivity, and create a more resilient housing market.

# 24%

**Renters are Cost-burdened**

### Housing by Number of Bedrooms

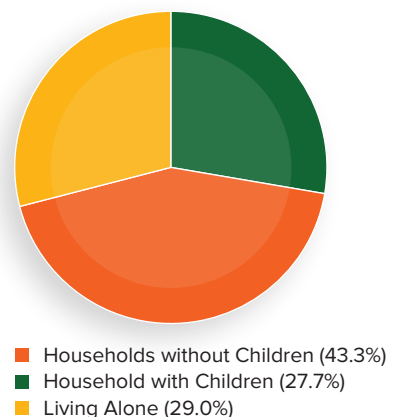
(2022)



Source: 2010 and 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

### Household Makeup

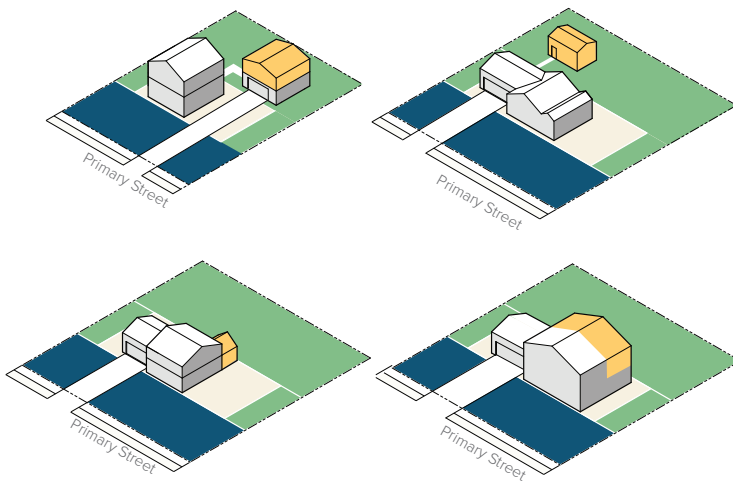
(2022)



Source: 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

## ACCESSORY DWELLING UNITS

Accessory dwelling units (ADUs) present an opportunity for more flexible and affordable housing options while having a minimal impact on established neighborhood character. With limited developable land, supporting ADUs is a practical way to diversify housing options in a cost-effective and sustainable manner. Currently, ADUs are only allowed on properties with the zoning classification of Fairview Transition, otherwise they are not permitted by right in single-family zoning districts. To encourage their development, the Village should update its municipal code to allow ADUs in single-family districts while adopting design and dimensional standards to ensure they complement the character and scale of existing neighborhoods.



## ENCOURAGE SENIOR-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT

Addressing the housing needs of Downers Grove's aging population requires the development of diverse, accessible, and well-located housing options. Building on the concept of complete neighborhoods, senior-oriented housing should be situated near public transit and within convenient reach of retail centers, healthcare providers, and essential services. Providing housing options connected to public gathering spaces, shops, and healthcare facilities via safe, accessible walking and biking routes supports meaningful social engagement and active community participation. The Village should collaborate with local developers and organizations to ensure a variety of housing choices that reflect the diverse needs and preferences of older adults. By prioritizing these efforts, the Village can help aging residents maintain their independence, well-being, and connection to the community as they grow older.





## EMBRACE MIXED-USE AND MULTI-FAMILY WHERE APPROPRIATE

In the areas identified in the Future Land Use Plan, mixed-use and multi-family developments can provide diverse housing options for young professionals, empty-nesters, and others seeking a walkable, amenity-rich neighborhood. These developments help expand the housing supply by offering smaller, more affordable units compared to traditional single-family homes. Supporting mixed-use development that fosters street-level activity is also key to creating vibrant, pedestrian-friendly spaces. By encouraging projects that integrate residential, retail, and dining options, the Village can cultivate dynamic, connected neighborhoods where residents can live, work, and socialize with ease.

## Median Household Income vs. Median Housing Price

Housing is not considered a burden if related costs are 30% or less of household income. In Downers Grove, the median household income is \$115,000 annually (\$9,583 monthly), meaning housing costs should not exceed \$2,875 per month. With a median single-family home price of \$464,500, a 20% down payment (\$92,900), and a 30-year fixed mortgage at 7.45%, monthly payments would be about \$3,341 – \$466 over the affordable limit. The 30% guideline is not universal, as other factors like transportation also impact household costs.

*Source: Real mortgage data available through the 2020 United States Census Bureau Demographic and Housing Characteristics tables*



Over the past decade, the median home sale prices increased by

# 29%





## HOUSING SUSTAINABILITY

As the most common type of development in Downers Grove, housing presents a significant opportunity to advance the Village's sustainability efforts. By integrating practices such as adaptive reuse, sustainable land use planning, and energy-efficient design, the Village can promote long-term resilience while meeting the evolving needs of residents.

### SUPPORT ADAPTIVE REUSE

Adaptive reuse offers a practical and sustainable way to meet housing needs while preserving community character and reducing environmental impact. This approach not only conserves resources and reduces construction waste but also helps revitalize older properties and maintain the architectural charm of established neighborhoods. Within Downers Grove there may be some potential to convert office buildings with vacancies into multi-family structures, a trend which is occurring nationally. According to Key Performance Indicator (KPI) reports prepared by the Downers Grove Economic Development Corporation (DGEDC), office vacancy rates reached 17.9% in the first quarter of 2024, highlighting the potential for such conversions.

### HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Preserving historic homes helps maintain Downers Grove's unique identity and honor its heritage. The Village made progress in 2015 by updating its Historic Preservation Ordinance to encourage voluntary preservation. To build on this, the Village should continue to offer incentives, education, and resources to support property owners in protecting and restoring historic properties. Preservation not only celebrates the community's history but also promotes sustainability by conserving resources, minimizing demolition waste, and fostering a sense of place.

## Preserving Historic Homes

The Village actively promotes and preserves its historic homes through several key initiatives:

- ❑ **Historic Landmark Designation** – Homeowners can apply to have their properties recognized as historic landmarks, acknowledging their architectural, historical, or cultural significance. This designation not only honors the property's heritage but also offers potential tax benefits through the State of Illinois.
- ❑ **Historic Preservation and Design Review Board (HPDRB)** – This board administers the historic preservation provisions of the Downers Grove Municipal Code.
- ❑ **Historic Resources Map** – Residents can utilize this interactive tool to discover if their homes have been identified in various historic surveys, aiding in the recognition and preservation of properties with historical significance.

Source: Village of Downers Grove



The H.M. Patton House, Source: dghistory.org

## PROMOTE TOD AND WALKABILITY

Downers Grove is served by three Metra stations along Warren Avenue and Burlington Avenue, creating a demand for walkable, mixed-use development nearby. By strategically focusing multi-family and mixed-use development near Metra stations, the Village can maximize its well-established transportation network. While development has largely centered around the Main Street Station due to its downtown location, Belmont and Fairview stations present opportunities for higher-density, transit-oriented development. Enhancing these areas with pedestrian-friendly streetscapes, a mix of housing options, and community amenities will promote transit use and support a more walkable environment.

## ENCOURAGE ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Encouraging energy-efficient retrofits and upgrades is a step toward building a more sustainable and resilient community. Providing resources and incentives for homeowners to retrofit older homes with energy-saving features, such as upgraded insulation, energy-efficient windows, and modern heating and cooling systems, can significantly reduce energy consumption and lower utility costs. In addition, the Village can support the adoption of building codes and other policies that influence energy efficiency and align with the community goals.

## URBAN TREE CANOPY AND NEIGHBORHOOD GREENING

The urban tree canopy encompasses trees in parks, greenways, wetlands, parks and public lands, and those on private property. Street trees, located in the public right-of-way, are a vital component of the Village's green infrastructure, offering environmental, social, and economic benefits. The tree canopy can significantly improve air quality, reduce stormwater runoff, cool neighborhoods in the summer, reduce noise pollution, and elevate aesthetic appeal.

In residential areas, trees contribute to pedestrian safety by creating a protective buffer between sidewalks and vehicle lanes. The Environmental Protection Agency has studied trees positive mitigation of the urban heat island effect, a phenomenon where urban areas experience higher temperatures due to the abundance of impervious surfaces, by providing shade and reducing surface and air temperatures. Additionally, trees play a role in managing stormwater runoff by intercepting rainfall, slowing its descent to the ground, and absorbing water through their roots, ultimately reducing the burden on stormwater infrastructure.





## RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are provided for this chapter's sections.

### QUALITY NEIGHBORHOODS

- Consider providing incentives, such as density bonuses, for homeowners and developers pursuing attainable housing.
- Continue to promote home renovation and enforcement of property maintenance regulations to preserve neighborhood character, support housing quality, and maintain the appeal of established neighborhoods.
- Continue to support the DuPage County Senior Citizen Council Home Maintenance Program to provide older adults with affordable home repair services.
- Continue to require properties to be maintained in a manner that is compliant with the Village's adopted property maintenance standards.
- Continue to provide residents, particularly seniors, with referrals to programs that offer affordable property maintenance programs for lawn care, snow removal, and minor exterior repairs.
- Ensure higher density developments are thoughtfully integrated with the surrounding area.
- Encourage a variety of housing types in mixed-use areas to promote a dynamic urban experience.

### HOUSING ATTAINABILITY AND VARIETY

- Promote the development of compact, higher-density housing, providing convenient access to shopping, services, and amenities, in alignment with the Future Land Use Plan and Focus Areas Plans.
- Support incremental increases in "missing middle" housing such as duplexes and small-scale multi-family development to address the need for diverse housing options.
- Maintain housing diversity by supporting the construction of housing options for various income levels, ranging from entry-level apartments to large single-family residences.
- Encourage developers to build a variety of housing types close to transportation and employment centers.
- Consider providing information about organizations that provide programs and incentives to assist first-time homebuyers with down payment assistance, low-interest loans and other financial assistance.
- Encourage infill development that aligns with the desired character of the area to maintain a cohesive built environment.
- Consider permitting ADUs by right in single-family zoning districts to allow for flexibility.
- Continue to allow a variety of housing types in multi-family residential areas.
- Encourage multi-family developments in corridor commercial areas to support economic vitality and create a pedestrian-friendly environment.





## HOUSING SUSTAINABILITY

- Promote adaptive reuse of historic structures to encourage revitalization and preserve architectural significance.
- Continue to maintain and update the inventory of historic sites and structures.
- Consider partnering with local organizations to offer incentives for homeowners to restore and maintain historic homes, including grants like the Illinois Historic Preservation Tax Credit Program (IL-HTC) or low-interest loans for preservation-focused renovations.
- Promote/Support walkable transit-oriented developments with a mix of higher density housing, mixed use, and neighborhood commercial around Metra stations.
- Promote existing resources and consider supplemental assistance programs for homeowners to retrofit older homes with energy-efficient features like improved insulation, energy-efficient windows, and modern heating systems.
- Consider amending the existing outdoor lighting ordinance to a dark sky outdoor lighting ordinance.
- Encourage the use of bird-friendly glass and architectural features in multi-family buildings to reduce bird collisions.
- Consider incentives for developers who incorporate sustainable design elements such as electrification, renewables, battery storage, EV readiness, and impervious driveways.
- Encourage developers and builders to seek a green building rating through one of the many rating systems.
- Prioritize planting native and climate-resilient species in residential areas, along streets, and in public spaces.
- Continue regular tree maintenance programs, including pruning, pest control, and soil health monitoring.
- Consider offering incentives to property owners to plant and maintain native vegetation.
- Partner with schools and community groups to incorporate tree-related environmental education into local programs.
- Continue to complete regular assessments of the tree canopy to track growth, health, and species diversity.
- Stay current with building code cycles which provides an avenue to support new sustainability systems within the community.
- Maintain a healthy urban forest and enhance the biodiversity and resilience of the Village's parkway trees.





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# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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*Downers Grove has a thriving economy paired with exceptional quality of life that lures investment, innovation, and a skilled workforce. A historically healthy real estate market, connection to major transportation infrastructure and proximity to Chicago have laid the foundation for the strong local economy and prosperity to continue.*

*Downers Grove's potential for growth and prosperity is not just a vision, but a tangible reality that can be achieved. The Village's commitment to maintaining a welcoming and supportive business climate, while adapting to take advantage of changes in the corporate office real estate market, will continue to enhance its appeal as a place to start or grow businesses, innovate and make a career. By ensuring a workforce that can meet the labor demands of the regional, national and global corporations that are attracted to Downers Grove, sustainable economic development will continue in the years ahead.*

*The Economic Development chapter builds on the proven record of Downers Grove's entrepreneurial ecosystem and recommends strategies to align future growth and policies best with repositioning the existing business districts and fostering a business-friendly environment.*

### *Goal and Key Recommendations*

## **IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE DOWNERS GROVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION (DGEDC), SUPPORT LOCAL BUSINESSES, COMMERCIAL CENTERS, MAJOR EMPLOYERS, AND INDUSTRIES TO STRENGTHEN THE VILLAGE'S DIVERSE TAX BASE.**

- Continue to promote available commercial and industrial development, programs and incentives, events, and tourism.
- Continue to promote available residential, mixed-use, or redevelopment sites in addition to commercial, industrial, and area-specific sites.
- Continue to support businesses by directing business owners to state or federal resources and establish connections to the larger business community (mentor programs, networking sessions, partnership opportunities).
- Encourage the diversity of the economy by attracting and retaining minority owned businesses.
- Promote and encourage the improvement and rehabilitation of older buildings and areas which are, or are becoming, functionally obsolete or undesirable.
- Continue to build upon the community's reputation for special events and tourism by expanding cultural, arts, recreation, and regional draw activities.



## CONTINUE THE BUSINESS-FRIENDLY ENVIRONMENT

Supporting local business growth and development is key for enhancing Downers Grove's economic vitality. Additionally, repurposing vacant spaces along key corridors into active businesses, restaurants, and other commercial uses can invigorate the community, attract investment, and create new opportunities for residents. By promoting a dynamic and supportive business climate, the Village can strengthen its local economy and improve overall quality of life.

## SUPPORT FOR SMALL BUSINESSES

Locally owned businesses are important to advancing economic growth and opportunity in Downers Grove. In addition to providing essential services to the surrounding communities, small businesses are key to a robust local economy, job creation, and stronger social community ties. Partnering with the DGEDC, Downtown Management and Chamber 630 to support small and local business is essential. In addition to encouraging residents to buy and shop locally, the Village should engage the local business community and remediate barriers to ensure they have the space to grow and thrive in the future.

### Economic Development Partners

#### Downers Grove Economic Development Corporation – Business Attraction and Retention

The Downers Grove Economic Development Corporation is the official agency for economic development and tourism for the Village of Downers Grove. The DGEDC is a public/private partnership that promotes Downers Grove as a location for commercial, industrial and office projects.

The mission of the DGEDC is to enhance the economic vitality of Downers Grove through the retention, expansion and attraction of business that is conducive to improving the quality of life.

Source: [dgedc.com](http://dgedc.com)

#### Downers Grove Management Corporation – Supporting Downtown

Downers Grove Downtown Management Corporation is an independent not-for-profit organization formed in 1997 for the purpose of promoting the development and expansion of business and to increase valuation of property within this Special Service Area (SSA). The organization is financially supported by the SSA property owners.

The redevelopment and infrastructure improvements in Downtown Downers Grove, began in 1998 and were strategically thought-out projects to support a strong future for our downtown business district. Infrastructure redevelopment included the addition of new streetscaping, landscaping and a 791-space parking deck and mixed-use development.

The Downtown Management Corporation works on creating a diverse retail, service and residential environment. The focuses include tenant recruitment and the production and marketing of events.

Source: [downtowndg.org](http://downtowndg.org)

#### Chamber630 – Supporting Local Businesses

Chamber630 is one of the largest business organizations in DuPage County, serving businesses across the region with a focus on the Woodridge and Downers Grove area. The Chamber offers resources to help businesses grow, advocates for economic opportunities, and provides networking events to connect local businesses. Chamber630 also supports workforce development and promotes its members to help strengthen the local economy.

Source: [chamber630.com](http://chamber630.com)

## INCUBATOR AND ACCELERATOR PROGRAMS

To help spur innovation and create opportunities for residents, the Village can support business start-up incubators and accelerators. Incubators and accelerators can offer physical space, collaborative work environments, and networking, mentorship and educational opportunities for residents with business ideas seeking to grow into viable ventures or existing businesses working to gain traction. Within the region, Innovation DuPage serves as the premiere business incubator and accelerator, generating resources, creating opportunities, and manifesting a vibrant entrepreneurial ecosystem. By partnering and mirroring Innovation DuPage, the Village can spur economic development by connecting startups and small businesses with the knowledge, experts, and resources that are vital for success.

Business incubator and accelerator programs can attract venture capital investment from partners and help cultivate an innovative ecosystem that can benefit established targeted industries and start-ups by attracting skilled workers and providing training and education to workers to meet employers' needs. Incubators and accelerators can help diversify the Village's economy and make it more dynamic.

### Coworking Spaces and Live Work



## Coworking Spaces and Live Work

Coworking is a term used to describe an arrangement where workers from different companies share an office space, saving on costs and increasing convenience through the use of common infrastructure and equipment. This work model is typically utilized by entrepreneurs, small teams, remote workers, and other independent professionals. The shift to remote work because of the COVID-19 pandemic has had a lasting impact on traditional office areas, as these spaces are grounded in large office buildings that rely on employees working on campus each day. The shift to remote work has altered how and where employees work, causing a decrease in the demand for companies and their need for office space. While more workers are returning to the office given the decreased spread of COVID-19, there may never be a return to pre-pandemic levels of those in office.

Live-work developments combine residential and non-residential uses and can include anything from a small home office to a large commercial space that is also used as a residence. Encouraging live-work spaces in key commercial areas, particularly the Belmont Metra station, can support entrepreneurial endeavors, reduce vehicle miles traveled, and encourage small-business investment.



*Live-work Example: Elgin Artspace Lofts, Elgin, IL*

## CONTINUE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS

Workforce development is a key driver of resilient and sustainable economic growth in Downers Grove. By continuing to collaborate and support education, training, and career pathways, the Village and its partners can cultivate a diverse and dynamic economy that continues to attract businesses, strengthens the local talent pool, and fosters long-term prosperity.

The Village is uniquely positioned to leverage its local assets, such as Northwestern University, to build strong partnerships between businesses and educational institutions. These connections help create a pipeline of skilled talent that supports both new and existing businesses. Encouraging an entrepreneurial ecosystem requires collaboration among decision-makers, economic development partners, and stakeholders from businesses large and small.

By championing workforce development, the Village can continue to grow as an innovative, inclusive, and economically diverse community, ensuring a bright future for residents and businesses alike.

## Adaptive Reuse

Targeted reinvestment in existing commercial areas can enhance their appeal, accessibility, and economic vitality. Adaptive reuse plays a key role in this transformation by repurposing vacant or underutilized buildings and spaces into dynamic commercial, residential, or mixed-use spaces. This approach preserves the architectural character of the community, reduces demolition waste, and offers cost-effective redevelopment opportunities. Encouraging adaptive reuse through flexible zoning policies and financial incentives can further support economic growth while enhancing Downers Grove's commercial districts.

DGEDC reports office vacancy in  
Q1 2024 reached

17.9%





## REVITALIZE COMMERCIAL CENTERS

Downers Grove commercial centers cater to various lifestyles, experiences, and functional uses, with each having a unique character and identity. The Village should continue to support the growth of major commercial areas and local jobs, working to provide high-quality experiences and employment opportunities that foster environments where employees can easily access essential amenities and services.

There are corridors within Downers Grove, including sections of 75th Street and Ogden Avenue, that are characterized by unused surface parking lots fronting buildings, extensive curb cuts, lack of greenery, and poor pedestrian access. The Village should collaborate with property owners and IDOT to improve the aesthetic and economic function of these underdeveloped areas. Encouraging a mix of shops, restaurants, and entertainment uses, repurposing surface parking lots, and considering other mixed-use developments will support the goal of creating vibrant, exciting places for residents. To further support these corridors, the Village will need to communicate the vision of the Comprehensive Plan to developers, strategically allocate TIF funding, allow for adaptive reuse and redevelopment that accommodates market trends, and explore the potential for Business Development Districts (BDDs), where appropriate. The Village may also consider regularly evaluating community needs and desires to prioritize potential projects that fill in gaps for demand.

## Experiential Retail

Experience-based retail, or experiential retail, refers to consumer expectations for retailers to devote more floor space to the immersive experience only a brick-and-mortar store can provide. Memorable customer service and interactions are emphasized over simply selling products, differentiating stores from online shopping.

## LOCAL COMMERCIAL NODES

Local commercial nodes consist of small, neighborhood-scale businesses that include dining, retail, and other essential service needs. They are located primarily within residential areas, typically at the corners of intersections, and can foster pedestrian-friendly environments or accommodate more car-centric uses. The Village should continue to encourage reinvestment into existing nodes that integrate into the surrounding neighborhood, allowing residents to easily access businesses via a short walk or bike ride.



## BALANCE LAND USES

Continuing to develop a balanced mix of land uses is important for the Village's long-term fiscal health and economic viability. Dispersing land uses in appropriate locations allows for efficient provision of services, conservation of natural resources, and equitable distribution of amenities. It also allows the Village to identify where gaps exist, further informing planning and investment efforts to support the local and regional economy. The Village should continue to encourage development of diverse uses allocated across commercial centers, in targeted nodes and corridors, to support and enhance vibrant, economically sustainable neighborhoods. Targeted incentives, flexible zoning tailored to specific areas and public-private partnerships may be utilized to ensure that desired, necessary developments occur in the correct locations.

In other areas where certain uses are declining, such as aging industrial lots along Belmont Road, the Village must consider various redevelopment and revitalization opportunities that could benefit the community. These sites may benefit from the exploration of mixed-use developments, the creation of new public spaces, or attracting new industries that align with the Comprehensive Plan's economic development goals. Potential impacts to traffic patterns, future employment opportunities, and surrounding character should be evaluated to thoughtfully approach redevelopment and enhance the Village's long-term economic viability.

## COLLABORATION WITH DEVELOPERS

To create livable neighborhoods with easy access to jobs, connected transportation options, and protected natural resources within the community, the Village will need to engage with the development community to align future redevelopment with the Comprehensive Plan's vision. The Village should evaluate the redevelopment process to identify potential efficiencies that can eliminate barriers to revitalizing aging properties, such as shortening the approval process or offering density bonuses. Further collaboration with developers can help identify opportunities to streamline the development process and incorporate design requirements where appropriate.

## TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT

Transit-oriented development (TOD) focuses on creating vibrant, walkable, communities centered around public transit access. This development approach focuses on concentrating dense clusters of residential, commercial, and recreational uses within walking distance of major transit stops. Pace and Metra provide transit services to the residents of Downers Grove. Multi-family buildings and mixed-use developments near transit stations can leverage these services to foster more convenient living options, boost local businesses, ease traffic, and promote sustainability.





## ENHANCE INDUSTRIAL AND OFFICE USES

Downers Grove's industrial areas, primarily located along the BNSF Railway, play a significant role in the local economy. These sites are strategically positioned near regional transportation networks; however, some industrial uses border residential areas. Continued buffering of industrial uses can provide several benefits for both the environment and the surrounding uses. Incorporating physical or natural barriers, such as landscaping, green spaces, or setbacks, ensures that industrial activities are separated from residential, commercial, or recreational areas. Additionally, buffering can enhance the aesthetics of industrial zones, making them more compatible with neighboring areas while maintaining necessary space for industrial operations.

Downers Grove is one of the region's largest employment hubs, driven by its Class A offices. Office uses in Downers Grove, including large-scale buildings and office parks, play an important role in the local economy bringing in a significant daytime population that supports local commercial options. As people return to the office, the Village should continue to support office development along the I-88, I-355, and Butterfield Road corridors to maximize visibility and minimize potentially negative impacts on residential areas. As prominent features along major regional roadways, office developments should be of high quality. Within existing office space, the Village should work with the DGEDC to attract tenants to established office and commercial spaces. If existing office spaces were redeveloped into mixed-use developments, land uses such as multi-family residential and commercial

could complement and be compatible with ongoing office uses. Experiential retail elements could be also be compatible within office or light manufacturing in a business park setting.

## REDEVELOPMENT OF INDUSTRIAL AREAS

Older, unused industrial areas may be redeveloped as the Village develops into more efficient, community-oriented land uses. Addressing the adaptive reuse of these of underutilized sites could facilitate their transformation into productive spaces, such as maker spaces, creative art hubs, or industrial-style retail areas. By clarifying categories for artisan manufacturing and reducing barriers to small-scale production, the Village can diversify its industrial base while aligning with community goals for sustainability and creativity. Industrial sites, particularly along Belmont Road, near the Metra Station, could be transformed into vibrant, community-focused spaces that could benefit the Village economically and culturally. See the Focus Areas Plans Chapter for more information.

While community outreach highlighted concerns about the proximity of new industrial developments to residential areas, it also revealed strong support for focusing on greener, cleaner industrial practices. As industrial businesses expand, the Village should encourage sustainable design elements such as energy-efficient buildings, green roofs, native landscaping, and renewable energy technologies. Moreover, industrial uses near residential areas may need to be carefully considered, with measures such as appropriate setbacks, screening, and buffering to minimize disruptions and ensure compatibility with nearby uses.



## RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are provided for this chapter's sections.

### CONTINUE THE BUSINESS-FRIENDLY ENVIRONMENT

- ☐ Actively promote local dining and entertainment options along corridors and in the downtown area to address community needs and fill market gaps.
- ☐ Collaborate with DGEDC to provide resources and workshops for small business owners, including assistance with digital marketing and storefront improvements.
- ☐ Partner with the DGEDC and Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity to connect local businesses with grants, incentives, and resources to facilitate economic growth.
- ☐ Consider policies that encourage and support the creation of start-up businesses, co-working spaces, business incubators and accelerators.
- ☐ Encourage and promote the use of community facilities to support training and certification programs.
- ☐ Foster partnerships between schools, colleges, and universities such as Northwestern University, College of DuPage, and employers to increase access to and awareness of internships, vocational training, and education in skilled trades in alignment with economic opportunities.
- ☐ Promote economic development incentives and resources to small businesses, like what Illinois Department of Commerce offers with its Small Business Capital & Infrastructure Grant.
- ☐ Support and promote DGEDC's SPARK small business initiatives to retain and grow existing Downers Grove small businesses.
- ☐ Continue to encourage high-density, transit-oriented development near the three Metra Stations.
- ☐ Continue to maintain and invest in existing stable commercial and employment centers.
- ☐ Encourage new developments and redevelopments to incorporate sustainable practices, including green infrastructure and EV charging stations.

### REVITALIZE COMMERCIAL CENTERS

- ☐ Encourage a balanced mix of uses to adequately provide services, conserve natural resources, and disperse amenities.
- ☐ Continue to work with local developers to revitalize outdated structures when community preferences change.
- ☐ Continue to work with local businesses to improve the physical appearance and market viability of existing commercial corridors.
- ☐ Continue to identify and work with property owners of underutilized properties to reinvest and revitalize their properties.
- ☐ Promote innovative retail concepts that will add vibrancy to the commercial landscape and attract consumers and entrepreneurs.
- ☐ Continue to examine development regulations to ensure commercial nodes and corridors are adaptable for future market conditions, ensuring their long-term relevance and viability within Downers Grove.
- ☐ As redevelopment opportunities arise, collaborate with developers to consolidate and share parking areas where it is feasible to discourage excessive surface parking lots.
- ☐ Encourage public art, streetscape improvements, and placemaking elements within economic nodes and corridors to increase visual interest and create distinctive, attractive environments.
- ☐ Continue to partner with private developers to promote and reposition existing commercial centers, even in areas with challenging site conditions, to adapt to evolving retail habits and consumer preferences and enhance economic vitality.
- ☐ Continue to invest in established neighborhoods and employment areas, carefully planning new corridors and nodes that provide attractive public amenities and protect the natural environment.
- ☐ Support current and future transit offerings that align with major employment areas.
- ☐ Continue to implement the CMAP Butterfield Road Corridor Plan.
- ☐ Encourage repurposing of unused surface parking lots along corridor and regional commercial and mixed use areas.
- ☐ Consider incorporating a mixture of shops, restaurants, entertainment and high-density residential uses. Mixed-use developments may also include a variety of residential housing types.



## ENHANCE INDUSTRIAL AND OFFICE USES

- ❑ Continue to enforce regulations that provide buffers between industrial and residential areas to minimize noise, visual, and traffic impacts.
- ❑ Support the creation of incubator spaces and flexible-use buildings to attract startups and small businesses, encouraging innovation and local job growth.
- ❑ Encourage sustainable practices among industrial users, including waste reduction, energy efficiency, on-site renewable energy development, and responsible landscaping to reduce environmental impact.
- ❑ Work with the DGEDC to identify businesses interested in relocating to Downers Grove, particularly those that produce or incorporate energy-efficient, sustainable materials and designs.
- ❑ Continue to work with private developers to ensure future redevelopment or renovations reflect high-quality design.
- ❑ As prominent features along major regional roadways, office developments should be of a high quality and reflect the character of the Village.
- ❑ The Village should continue to support office development along the I-88, I-355, and Butterfield Road corridors.
- ❑ Maintain existing Class A office buildings to support long-term economic vitality.





# FOCUS AREA PLANS

07

**CADENCE**  
KITCHEN & CO

DRAFT





*The Guiding DG Comprehensive Plan provides specific recommendations for West Ogden Avenue, Belmont Road, 75th Street, Downtown, Fairview, and Butterfield, six 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.*



## 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, multi-family 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. Many 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 multi-family residential along 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.

















## IMPROVEMENT FRAMEWORK

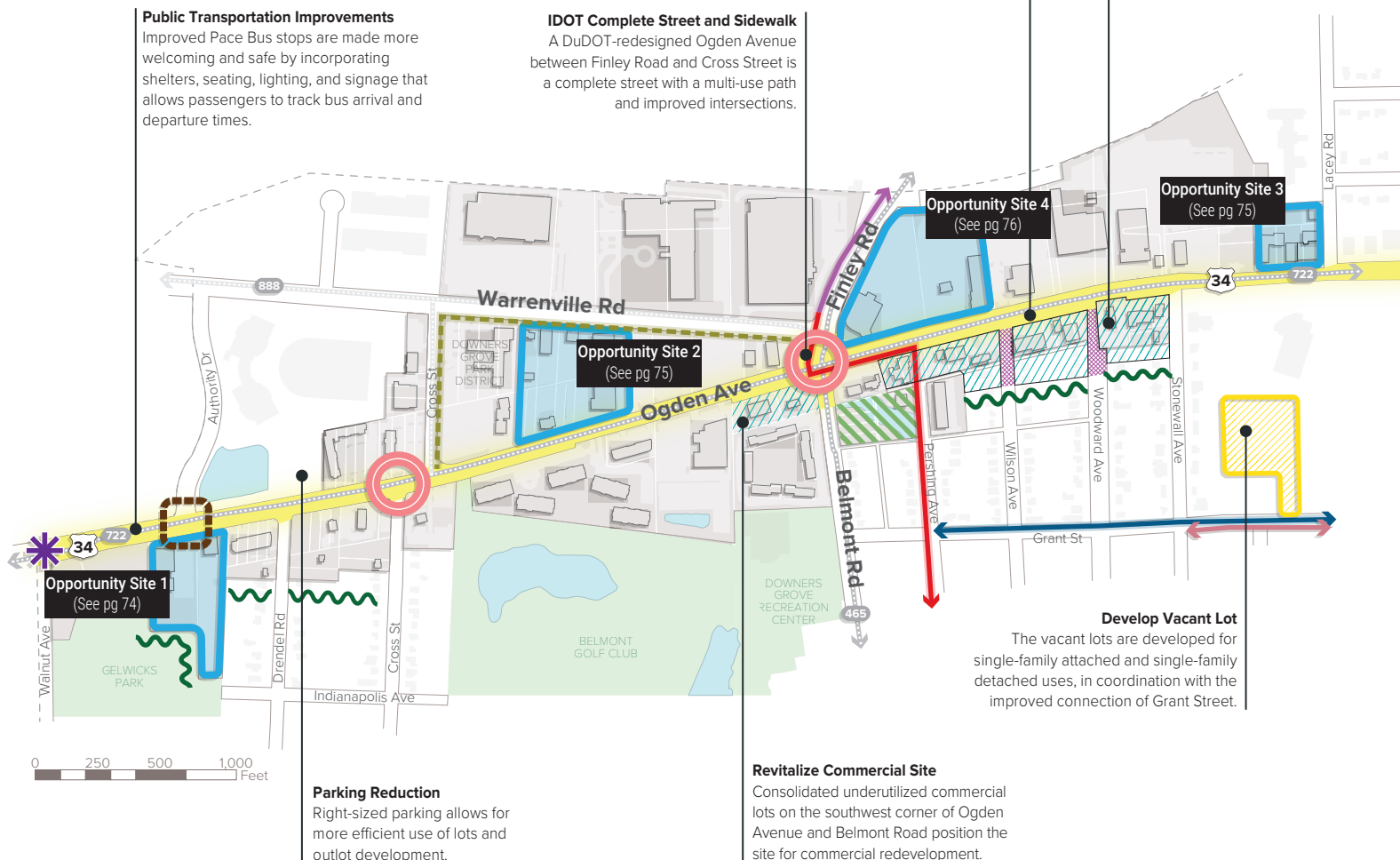
West Ogden Avenue should be a gateway to the community and a regional commercial destination, attracting more auto dealerships and hotels and fostering a cohesive, active space. Modernizing the corridor via lot consolidation and reconfiguration will enable modern commercial uses and the introduction of mixed residential uses. Active transportation infrastructure and streetscaping improvements will 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 Sharrow Route
-  Proposed Undetermined ATP Facility Type



## Commercial Lot Expansion

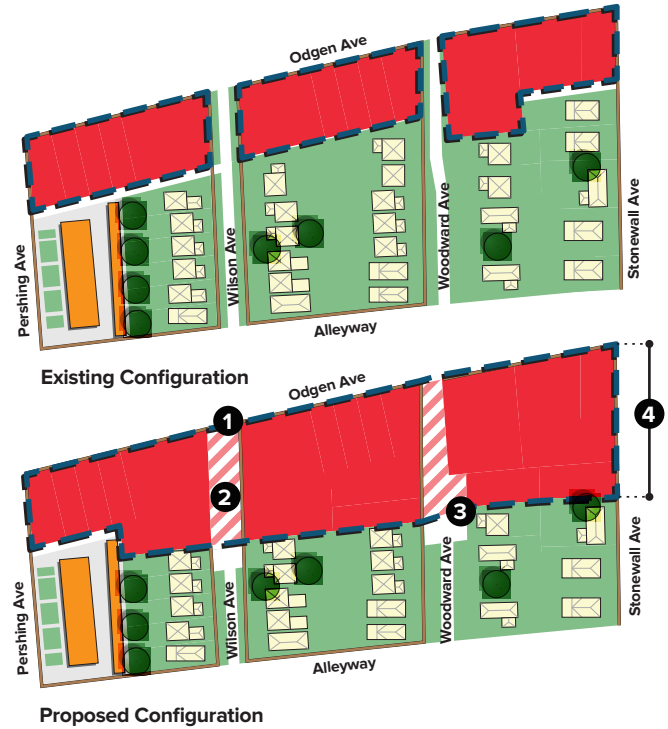
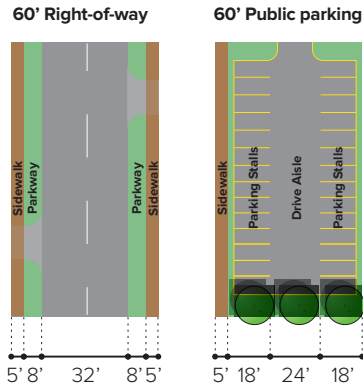
### LEGEND

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

### CALLOUTS

- 1 Limit vehicular access but maintain pedestrian connectivity
- 2 Develop additional public parking
- 3 Hammerhead cul-de-sac
- 4 300 feet lot depth

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



## IMPROVEMENTS

### 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.

- ☐ Evaluate the potential to vacate right-of-ways on a case-by-case basis to support desirable developments.
- ☐ Incorporate hammerheads at select side streets to use Village-owned right-of-way for commercial development and parking while maintaining pedestrian connections to neighborhoods.
- ☐ Encourage the consolidation of lots to create parcels at least 300 feet deep, expanding opportunities for commercial development.
- ☐ Consider rezoning 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.

- ☐ Promote shared parking arrangements through cross-access between consolidated lots, reducing curb cuts and enhancing pedestrian safety by minimizing vehicular conflicts.
- ☐ Permit residential properties to be combined with adjacent commercial lots on a case-by-case basis.
- ☐ Ensure that greenspace is added throughout the potential expansion, where appropriate.

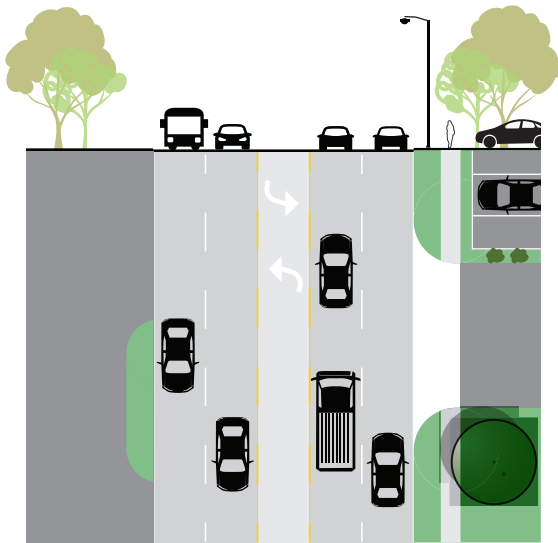
### Belmont Road to Stonewall Avenue

The commercial area south on Ogden Avenue between Belmont Road and Stonewall Avenue could benefit from 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.

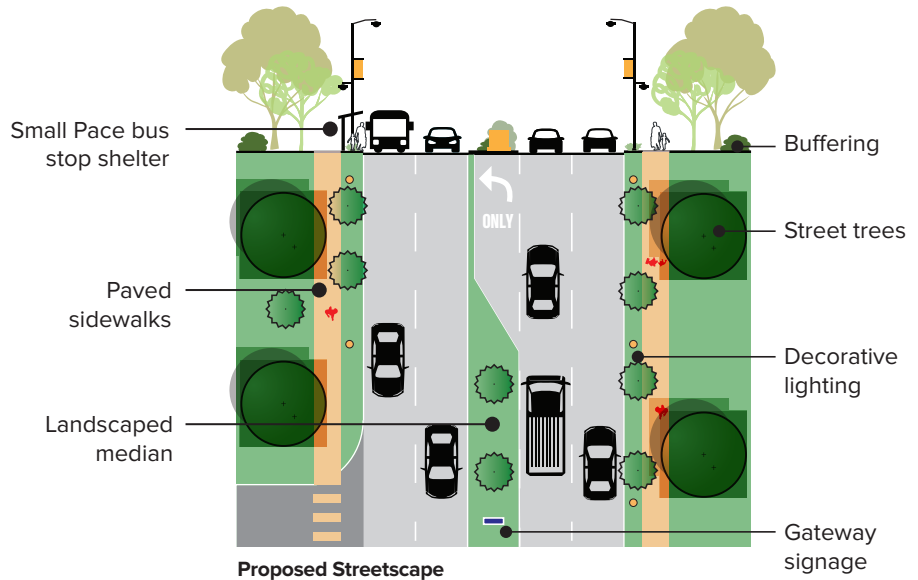
- ☐ Implement hammerheads at Wilson Avenue and Woodward Avenue, where they meet the rear of the commercial lots.
- ☐ Introduce buffering and screening for residential areas to minimize the impact of noise, traffic, and visual intrusion from parking lots and storage areas resulting from new commercial developments.



## Ogden Avenue Streetscape Improvements



Existing Streetscape



Proposed Streetscape

### Streetscape Improvements

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

- Work with IDOT to widen sidewalks to a standard width while maintaining street yards to separate pedestrians from Ogden Avenue.

### Work with Downers Grove Economic Development Corporation

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

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

### Other Improvements

- Work with property owners to incorporate landscaping improvements to enhance the area's visual appeal.
- Work with IDOT to prioritize pedestrian improvements along Ogden Avenue to improve users' safety.
- Work with IDOT, and other relevant entities to monitor the need for additional signalized intersections to cross West Ogden Avenue.
- Promote shared parking arrangements between neighboring commercial developments to maximize space and efficiency.
- Explore a potential roadway connection along Grant Street, just east of Stonewall Avenue.
- Collaborate with the Illinois Tollway to maintain and improve road connections and active transportation links over the I-88/I-355 corridor.
- Work with Pace to upgrade bus stops along Routes 722 and 465 for improved passenger experience.
- Improve sidewalk links, particularly along Woodward Avenue and Pershing Avenue, to ensure continuous pedestrian access and integration with the commercial corridor.
- Preserve the wetland adjacent to commercial developments near Lee Avenue, Pershing Avenue, and Walnut Avenue.

## REDEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Opportunity sites are areas within the Focus Area that have high redevelopment potential. Redevelopment of the identified sites 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 multi-family 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 into multi-family residential uses, aligning with the scale and style of the adjacent assisted living facility to the north. Additionally, it has the potential to be attainable housing or young professional and student housing. Its size and proximity to both multi-family 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 multi-family 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 goal of creating activated commercial hubs. The redevelopment enhances accessibility, connectivity, and aesthetics of the site while creating a vibrant, mixed-use destination on Ogden Avenue that meets the needs of community residents, visitors, and businesses. Improvements to both the Finley Road and Ogden Avenue rights-of-way should be considered with the development.





WEST OGDEN

# OPPORTUNITY SITE

**Office**

The northern end of Finley Road should be developed as a corporate square, integrating retail, office spaces, salons, and flexible-use areas

**Architecture**

Office buildings should feature transparent ground-floor façades, high-quality materials, and prominent entrances to enhance the pedestrian experience.

**Parking**

Parking should be positioned to the rear to reduce visual impact, while internal access roads should minimize traffic disruptions along Ogden Avenue and Finley Road.

**Site Access**

Multiple entry points should improve traffic flow and connectivity along Ogden Avenue, away from Finley Road.

**Commercial**

Retail sites along Ogden Avenue should attract both local and regional visitors, complement adjacent offices, and promote an active pedestrian environment.

**BUILDING USE**

- Commercial (Multi Tenant)
- Office



## BELMONT ROAD

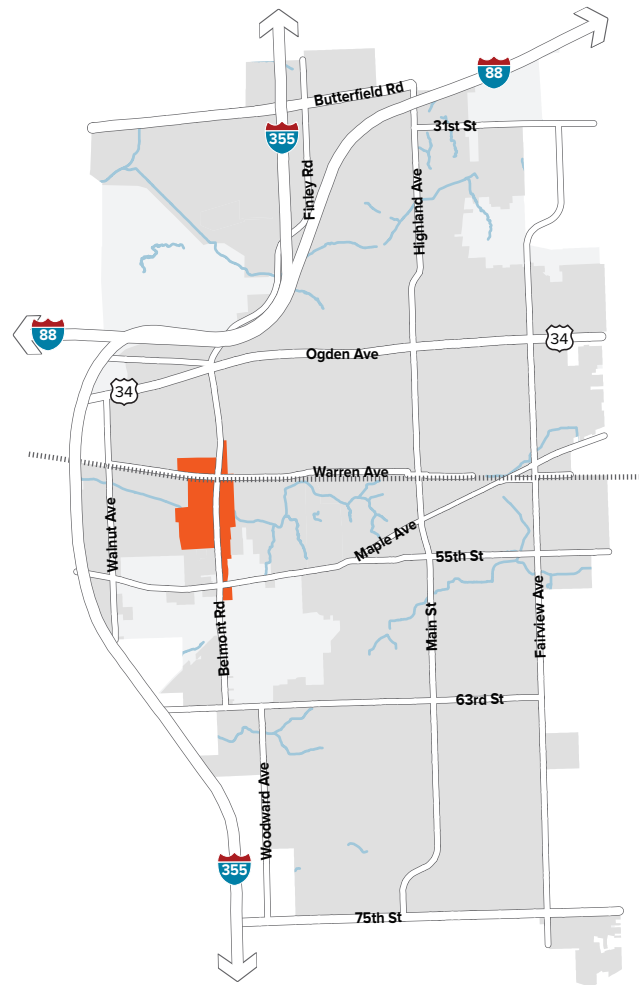
The Belmont Road corridor stretches from Prairie Avenue to Maple Avenue, encompassing the Belmont Metra station and the eastern edge of Ellsworth Business Park, a 351-acre business park. The corridor features a mix of multi-family and single-family residential. There is little commercial development 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.

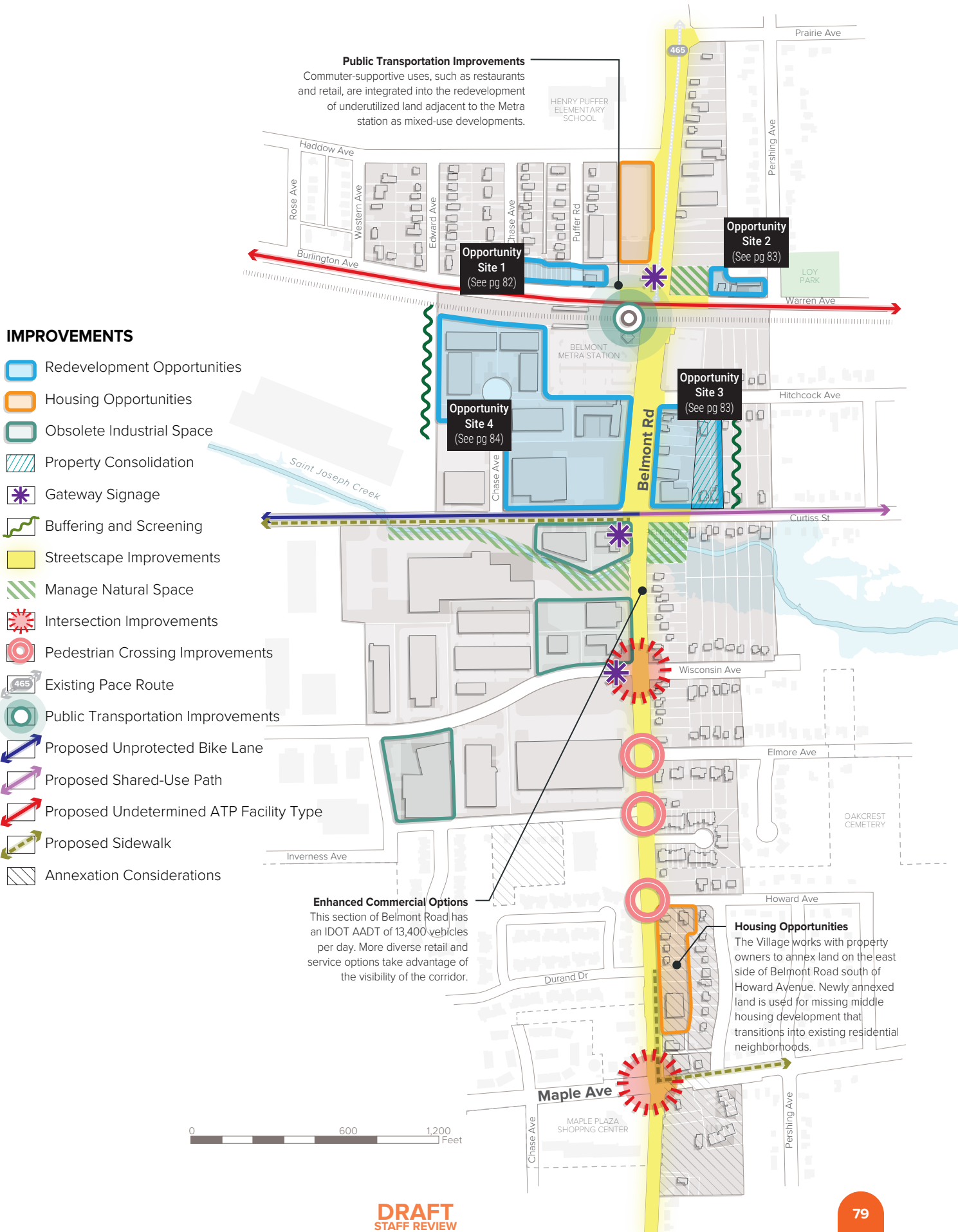
The Belmont Road Focus Area repositions the area's industrial uses while fostering mixed-use transit-oriented development (TOD) around the Belmont Metra station. It creates various sizes and types of industrial spaces and consolidates lots along the Metra tracks for TOD that incorporates transit-supportive retail, townhome, multi-family, 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.

## IMPROVEMENT FRAMEWORK

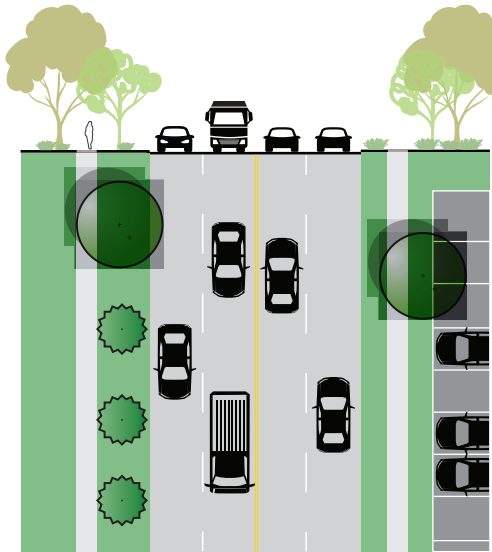
The Belmont Road Focus Area should focus on transit-oriented development, creating opportunities for a mix of residential and commuter-supporting commercial uses directly south of the Belmont Metra station. Small and mid-size industrial and office development should be integrated into the business park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



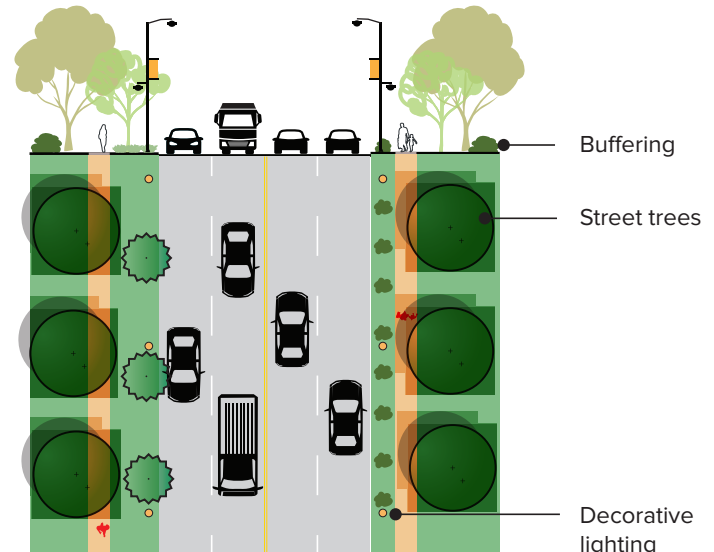




## Belmont Road Streetscape Improvements



Existing Streetscape



Proposed Streetscape

## IMPROVEMENTS

### Streetscape Improvements

Belmont Road is an arterial road that sees over 24,000 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.

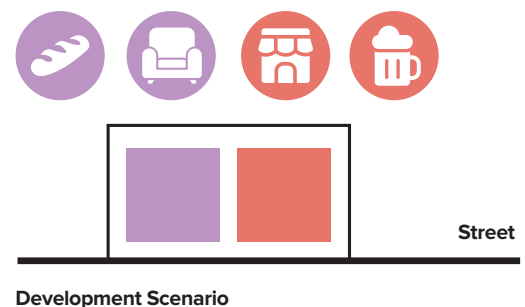
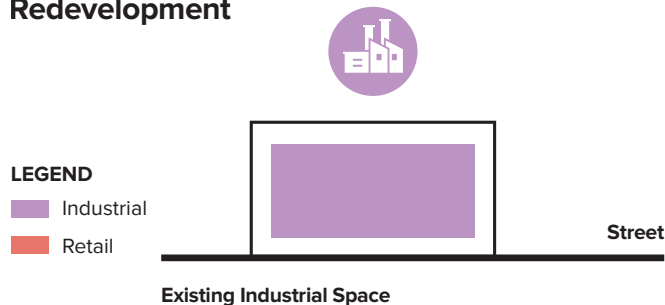
- Work with DuDOT to integrate streetscaping along the road to enhance the appearance of the corridor with street trees, decorative lighting, and upgraded sidewalks.

### Retrofit Industrial Structures

Many of the Focus Area's industrial structures have become obsolete due to changes in 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.

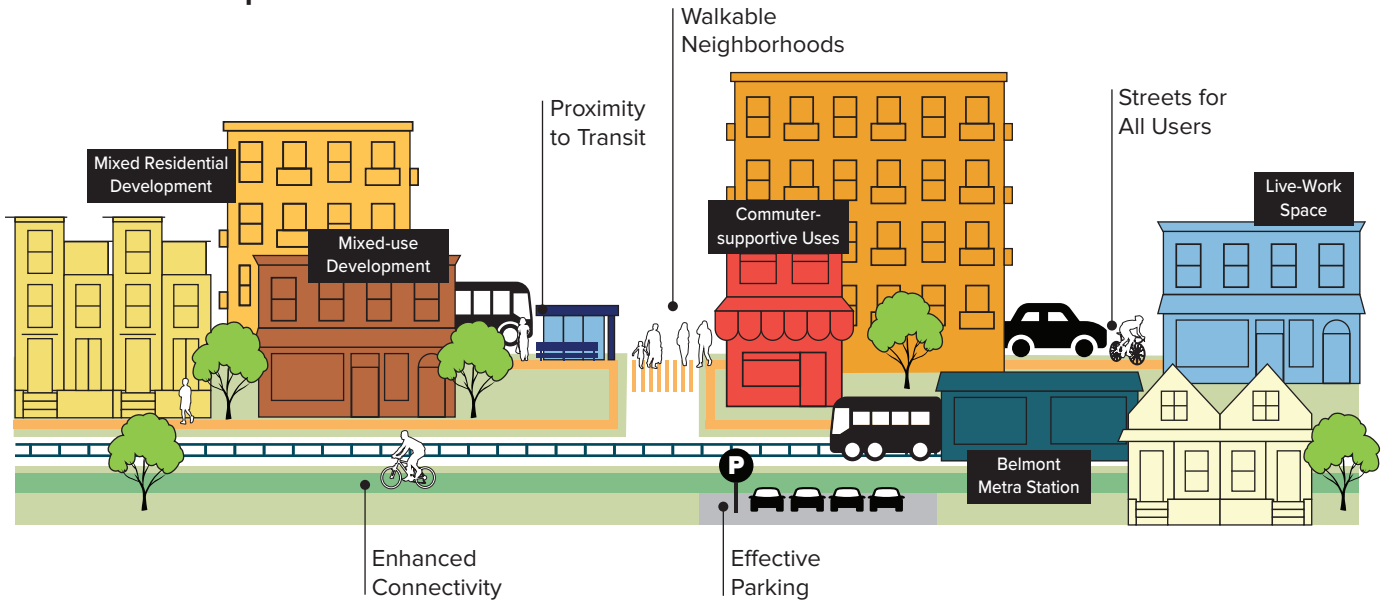
- Collaborate with the Downers Grove Economic Development Corporation (DGEDC) to retrofit obsolete single-tenant industrial spaces as multi-tenant buildings to accommodate smaller users.

## Industrial Structure Redevelopment





## Elements of Transit Oriented Development



### Public Transportation Improvements

The Belmont Metra station lacks surrounding amenities.

- ☐ Redevelop underutilized land adjacent to the Belmont Metra station to incorporate higher-density, mixed-use transit-oriented development including pedestrian friendly streetscapes and a variety of amenities including restaurants and retail.

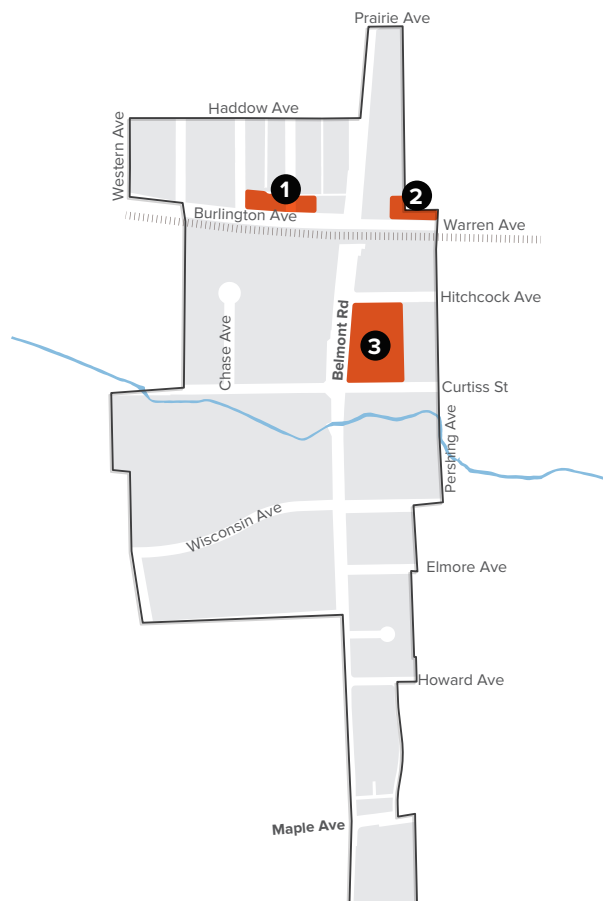
### Other Improvements

- ☐ Incorporate gateway features to create a cohesive identity with consistent design and landscaping.
- ☐ Buffer and screen industrial and commercial uses from Belmont Road and Curtiss Street with landscaping and fencing.
- ☐ Incorporate landscaping solutions to improve the appearance of industrial park areas.
- ☐ Work with property owners to naturalize concrete-lined areas adjacent to Saint Joseph Creek to improve connectivity and enhance stormwater management.

- ☐ Work with DuDOT to incorporate a traffic signal and examine the possibility of a signalized crossing at the intersection of Belmont Road and Wisconsin Avenue.
- ☐ Improve the intersection of Belmont Road and Maple Avenue with greenery and enhanced pedestrian crossings as annexation occurs.
- ☐ Install a shared use path along Curtiss Street east of Belmont Road and bike lanes along Curtiss Street on the west side of Belmont Road as recommended in the *Guiding DG Active Transportation Plan*.
- ☐ Reinforce Warren Avenue as a critical bike throughfare by installing the bicycle facilities as recommended in the *Guiding DG Active Transportation Plan*.
- ☐ Incorporate pedestrian amenities for those working and living in the area as the Belmont Road Focus Area redevelops.
- ☐ Prioritize sidewalk improvements along Belmont Road and Curtiss Street to close existing gaps.

## 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 well-positioned 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 multi-family 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**

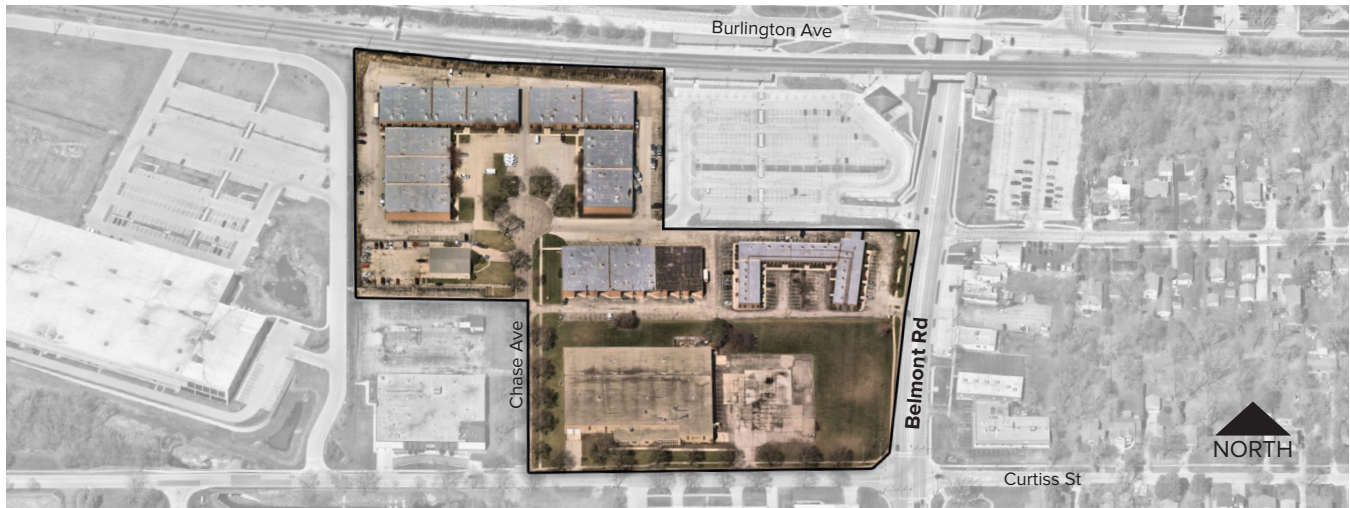
### **OPPORTUNITY SITE #2**

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 multi-family 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 multi-family 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 and Curtiss Street 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 multi-family 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.

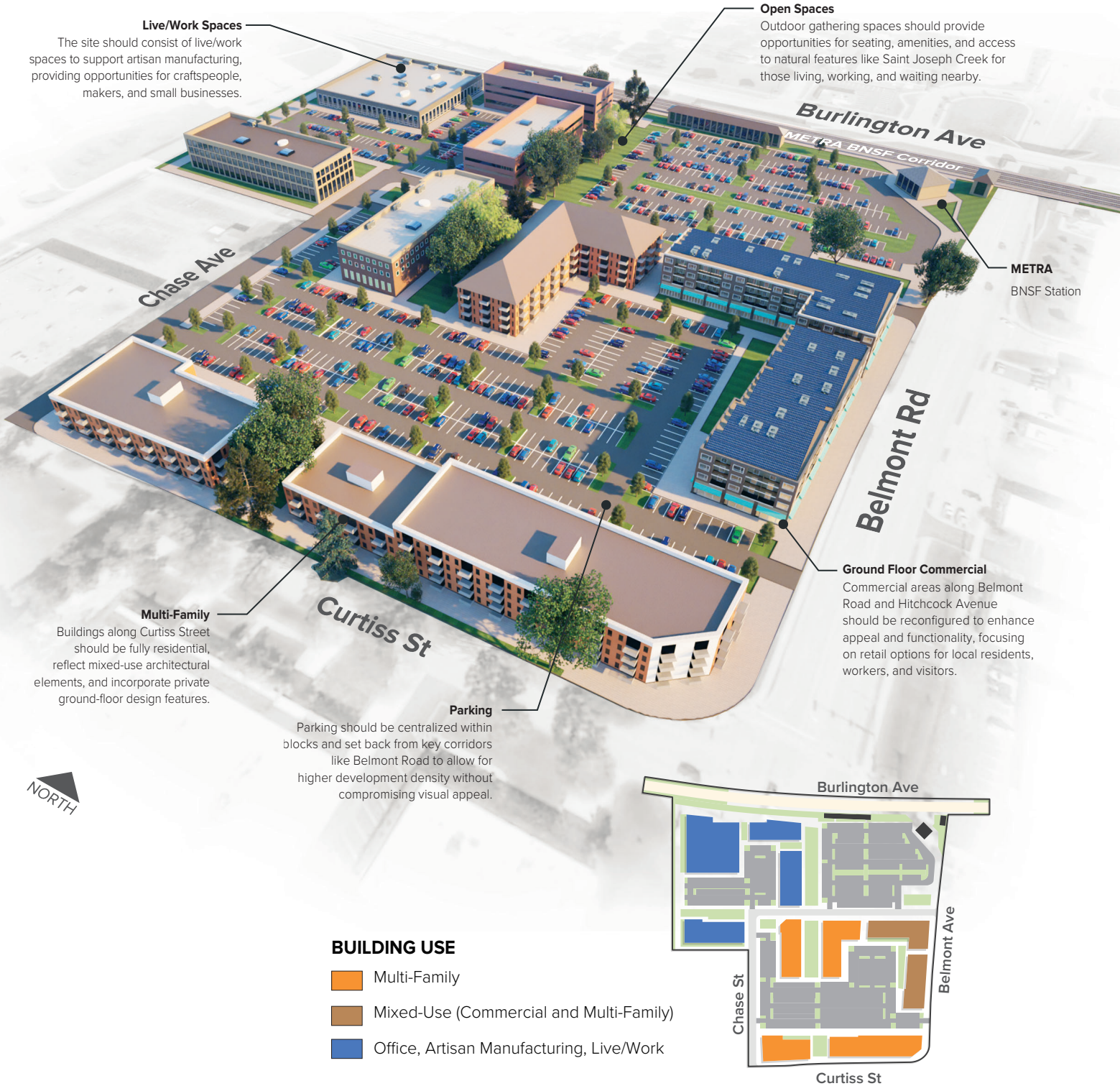
West of the station, live/work spaces support artisan manufacturing, providing opportunities for craftspeople, makers, and small businesses. This innovative approach reimagines underutilized industrial land while creating a buffer to existing industrial uses. Parking is located at the rear and interior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



## BELMONT ROAD

# OPPORTUNITY SITE





## 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 and several outlots. 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 multi-family, mixed-use, entertainment, and hotel development to create a regional destination as a monumental gateway to the community.

## 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

### Temporary Activation

Vacant tenant spaces and underutilized areas host temporary programming, such as car shows and Fourth of July gatherings, to foster community engagement and generate interest prior to redevelopment.

## Sidewalk Improvements

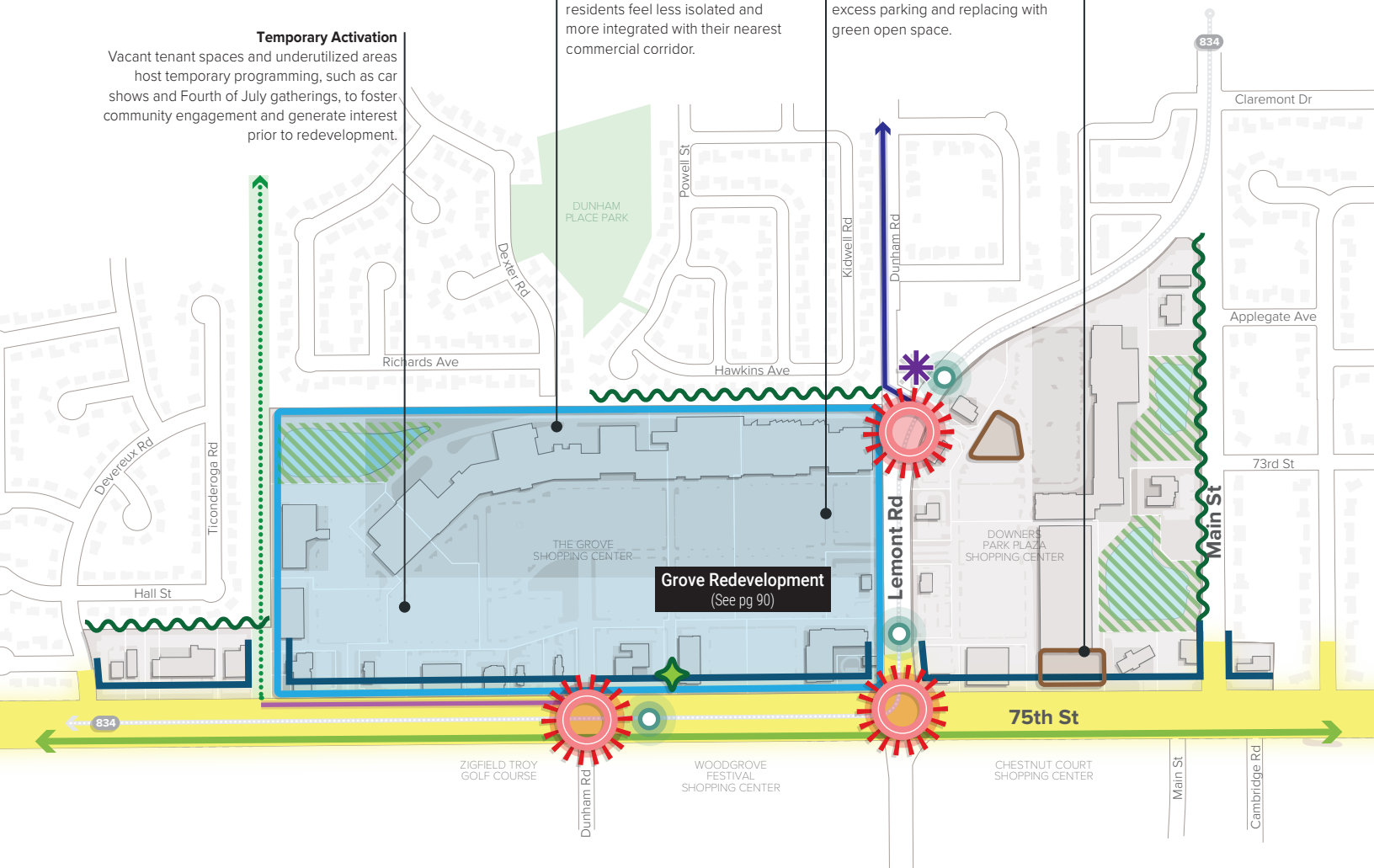
Enhanced ADA-compliant sidewalk connections to storefronts help residents feel less isolated and more integrated with their nearest commercial corridor.

## Parking Reduction

Prior to a redevelopment of this shopping center, consider removing excess parking and replacing with green open space.

## | Outlot Development

Outlots at The Grove and Downers Park Plaza shopping centers capitalize on the high visibility of their locations on 75th Street and Lemont Road.



## 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 91 for a model showcasing redevelopment potential for the Grove.

### LEGEND

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

## IMPROVEMENTS

### Parking Reduction

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

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

Over **70%**  
of surface parking is replaced with new development, green spaces, plazas, and pedestrian-friendly areas.

Over **650+**  
new housing units could be accommodated onsite, creating diverse residential opportunities.





## Façade Improvements

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.

- Promote and incentivize façade enhancements along 75th Street.

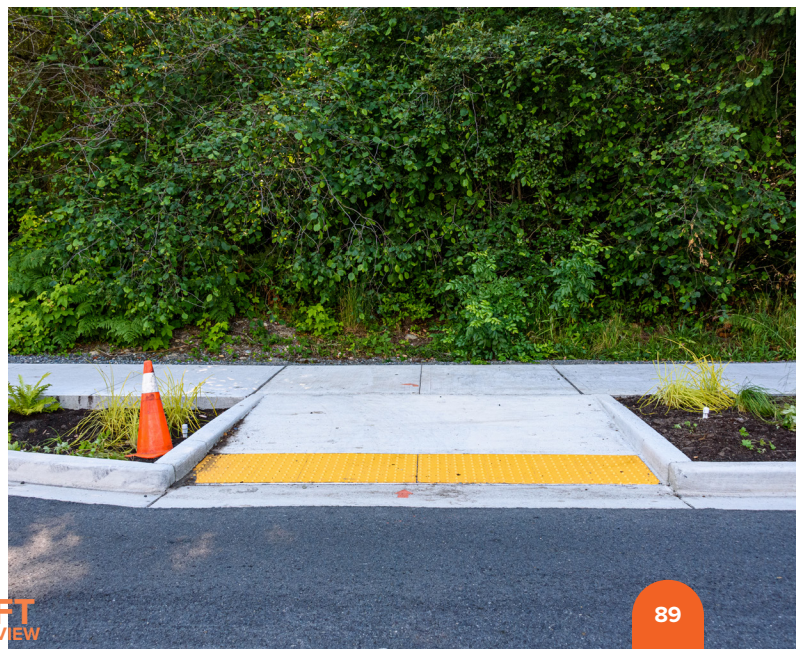
## Reduce Curb Cuts

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

## Other Improvements

- Prioritize integrating and enhancing gateway signage on Lemont Road.
- Collaborate with property owners to implement buffering features between residential and commercial areas.
- Screen all surface parking lots from primary roadways.
- Ensure rooftop utilities, loading docks, dumpsters, and utility boxes are screened from public view.
- Work with DuDOT to integrate landscaping and streetscape elements along 75th Street.

- Collaborate with property owners and DuDOT to implement landscaping improvements for commercial properties and right-of-way areas.
- Prioritize protecting the existing wetland near the shopping centers.
- Incorporate pollinator gardens and native planting into new development sites.
- Collaborate with DuDOT to upgrade signalized intersections at 75th Street and Lemont Road, 75th Street and Dunham Road, and Lemont Road and Dunham Road.
- Collaborate with Pace to enhance bus stops along Pace Bus Route 834, which travels south on Lemont Road and west along 75th Street.
- Implement a shared use path through the Grove to connect to proposed ATP facilities on Dunham Road, 75th Street and the NICOR easement.
- Provide adequate bicycle parking near the main entrances to buildings.
- Continue to prioritize the installation of pedestrian connections from the public sidewalk to storefronts.
- Ensure all sidewalks comply with ADA standards to improve accessibility.
- Collaborate with DuDOT to identify additional locations for proposed pedestrian crossings within the Focus Area to improve safety and accessibility.





## THE GROVE OPPORTUNITY SITE

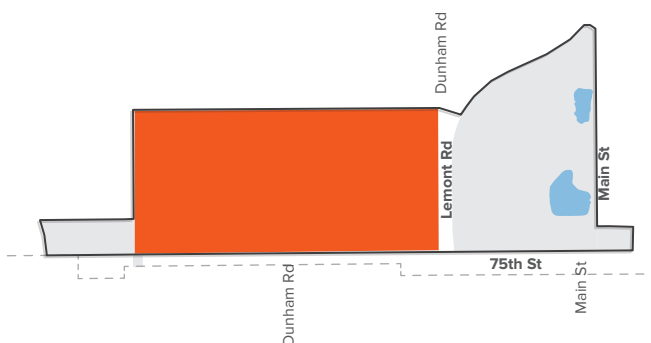
Despite its location in the community, The Grove has not kept pace with modern developments and regional needs. Its multiple ownership structure, underutilized parking lot, and lack of connectivity make the area difficult for redevelopment. The success of outlot development in the area indicates a need 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.

## THE GROVE REDEVELOPMENT

The opportunity site transforms the shopping center by introducing attached homes, multi-family residential and mixed-use development while enhancing connectivity and creating a vibrant community hub. Currently, the area lacks sufficient multi-family housing and entertainment options, particularly within The Grove. Redevelopment balances residential uses, commercial development, institutional uses, public spaces, and natural areas such as native gardens and pollinator gardens 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 multi-family residential buildings located interior to the site. These multi-family sites could provide a portion to attainable housing or young professional and student housing. 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 shared-use trail connects pedestrians and cyclists to the site and nearby neighborhoods. Private amenity spaces within multi-family 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.





75TH STREET

# OPPORTUNITY SITE

**Mixed Use**

Sites within The Grove are ideal for mixed-use developments with residential units above commercial. The residential presence will help sustain the commercial spaces.

**Transition**

Landscaping should provide a buffer between the higher-density development in The Grove and the adjacent single-family homes to the north and west.

**Open Space**

Multi-family sites should incorporate communal spaces that offer a refuge for pedestrians within the development.

**Site Access**

Multiple entry points should improve traffic flow and connectivity along 75th Street and Lemont Road.

**Landscaping**

A well-maintained landscape should enhance appeal, create a welcoming atmosphere, attract customers, and positively impact surrounding areas.



**BUILDING USE**

- Single-Family Attached
- Multi-Family
- Commercial (Multi-Tenant)
- Commercial (Single Tenant)
- Mixed-Use (Commercial and Multi-Family)



75th St

Lemont Rd



## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CONSIDERATIONS FOR GROVE REDEVELOPMENT

Redeveloping The Grove presents an opportunity to transform an aging shopping center 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 multi-family, 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, the Village 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 Development District.** Under the Illinois Business District Development and Redevelopment Act, the Village may designate The Grove as a Business Development District to encourage commercial redevelopment and reinvestment. Within the designated Business District, the Village can impose an additional tax on goods and services. These revenues can be used to fund public and private improvements that align with an adopted Business Development District Plan. This may include roadway and utility upgrades, site preparation, building rehabilitation, and other eligible redevelopment activities for improvements within the district. The Village may also choose to rebate a portion of the generated revenues to businesses or developers to support qualifying investments within The Grove, enhancing its attractiveness to new commercial tenants, retailers, or entertainment venues.

## Other Incentives and Related Practices

- ☐ Discounted Land Sales
- ☐ Façade Improvement Grants (applicable to those buildings that would remain onsite)
- ☐ Revolving Loan Programs
- ☐ Business Development 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

## CONTINUE INVESTMENT IN DOWNTOWN

Downtown Downers Grove is the symbolic heart of the community as the most vibrant and diverse part of the Village, combining well-preserved historic buildings, local shops, restaurants, art studios, and public spaces. While it has become a popular destination for both visitors and residents, hosting numerous events throughout the year, it retains the small-town charm valued by the community. Building on this reputation could involve expanding public gatherings, attracting diverse commercial businesses, investing in redevelopment opportunities, and enhancing the Downtown's appeal.

## ENRICHING THE DOWNTOWN EXPERIENCE

Expanding Downtown's commercial base requires a multifaceted approach that includes attracting more customers through unique experiences, pedestrian-friendly developments, and expanding residential options. Residents have expressed a desire for more diverse dining options and unique local businesses. Revitalizing underused buildings and lots for new shops and restaurants, and incorporating downtown anchors like an auditorium to draw visitors and support businesses, along with enhancing the pedestrian environment through improved sidewalks, trails, parking, and landscaping, can contribute to a more vibrant downtown. Promoting activities that attract people day and night, such as festivals, dining spaces, and regular events, can help maintain Downtown's vibrancy. Integrating "third places" like cafes, parks, and community centers will further strengthen social connections and foster community. Investing in these strategies will boost Downtown's economic vitality, serve surrounding neighborhoods, and increase tourism.





## PROMOTING DOWNTOWN'S IMAGE AND SAFETY

Welcoming gateways are fundamental to creating a strong first impression of Downtown. By implementing the *Guiding DG Streetscapes Plan*, the Village, can foster a sense of arrival and distinguish the downtown area from surrounding areas. Maintaining an environment where visitors feel safe to walk and linger will further add to the Downtown's reputation as secure and welcoming. Integrating placemaking elements, such as well-designed public spaces and pedestrian-oriented streets with connected sidewalks, street furniture, trees, plazas, and pedestrian-scale lighting, will enhance Downtown's appeal, encourage more foot traffic, and stimulate economic growth by benefiting local businesses. By addressing these aspects, the Downtown can continue to be a thriving center for commerce and community, attracting more visitors and residents while boosting economic activity.

## Downtown Zoning

Per the recommendations in the 2017 Comprehensive Plan Update, the Village in 2018 updated the zoning ordinance to create three distinct zoning districts for the downtown. Each zoning district has district features and attributes that warrant specific recommendations moving forward. The three districts are characterized as follows:

- **Downtown Core:** The Downtown Core is intended to maintain and promote a vibrant and compact core within the downtown area for shopping, dining and entertainment with residential uses above. The Downtown Core district is designed for the types of development appropriate in the downtown area.
- **Downtown Business:** The Downtown Business is intended to maintain and promote a vibrant and compact downtown area for living, shopping, dining and entertainment. The district regulations are further intended to encourage a broad range of uses and high-quality development at a greater density and height than the Downtown Core.
- **Downtown Transition:** The Downtown Transition is intended to accommodate and promote transitional land uses and development patterns between the Downtown Core or Downtown Business zoning districts and nearby low-density residential areas. The district is intended to help prevent intensive downtown development from encroaching into stable residential areas and to prevent low-density residential development from encroaching into the downtown area.



## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Continue efforts to attract local businesses to Downtown to expand and diversify retail, entertainment, and dining options.
- Implement the *Guiding DG Streetscapes Plan* to further enhance the downtown experience, boost visitor engagement and drive spending at nearby restaurants and businesses.
- Encourage the redevelopment of underutilized buildings and lots into mixed-use developments, which can expand the user base and foster a strong sense of place in Downtown.
- Future multi-family development should be located near significant activity centers and along major roadways as well as a component of mixed-use development within Downtown.
- Downtown's urban environment contains a lot of concrete and asphalt, which contributes to stormwater runoff. Implement the *Guiding DG Streetscapes and Sustainability Plans* to improve stormwater management. The Village should seek and create additional opportunities to provide open space areas.
- Infill development and redevelopment should be pedestrian-oriented in order to complement the historic building pattern of the Downtown.
- Promote business initiated/focused special events, such as sidewalk sales, to increase energy and activity in Downtown.
- Promote historic preservation as a means to preserve the existing building stock and historic architectural character of the core areas of the downtown.
- With bus and train service, the Downtown is, and should remain, a multi-modal environment that fosters a sense of energy and vitality. As a complement to public transportation, active transportation should be supported and encouraged as recommended in the *Guiding DG Active Transportation Plan*.
- Encourage residential density in the Downtown Business District to help facilitate a vibrant and energetic downtown.
- The success of downtown can be attributed to the coordination and combination of these key features: architectural detailing, a mix of land uses, pedestrian-oriented design, appropriate building heights, streetwalls and storefronts, a compact street grid, and public spaces and gathering areas. Future development or redevelopment should take into consideration these elements.
- Continue to apply and implement the Downtown Design Guidelines.
- Adjacent parking lots should be connected wherever possible.
- Real-time parking count displays and improved signage could help motorists better find and utilize public parking.

### **Downtown Core Recommendations**

- ☐ Residential uses should not be encouraged in the Downtown Core, however, residential uses should be restricted to upper stories of mixed-use buildings.
- ☐ Promote retail and restaurant uses within all areas of the Downtown Core.
- ☐ Entertainment uses, including restaurants, theatres and any other should be promoted within all areas of the Downtown Core. Opportunities for outdoor dining, including sidewalk seating, should be promoted throughout.
- ☐ Public uses that generate visitors and activity should be considered appropriate within the Downtown Core. Public uses consisting of primarily office functions should be treated like office land uses.

### **Downtown Business Recommendations**

- ☐ Residential development, generally of greater density than elsewhere in the Village, should be the predominant desired land use within the Downtown Business District. Within a particular development, a variety of mixed uses should be allowed if appropriate to facilitate the economic viability of such developments.
- ☐ Retail uses in the Downtown Business District should be focused near the Downtown Core. While retail, entertainment and restaurant uses should be most strongly encouraged in the Core, within particular Downtown Business District developments, a variety of mixed uses should be allowed if appropriate to facilitate the economic viability of such developments.
- ☐ Office uses should be encouraged as a component of mixed-use buildings within the Downtown Business District.
- ☐ Public uses should be considered appropriate within the Downtown Business District.

### **Downtown Transition Recommendations**

- ☐ All types of residential uses are appropriate in the Downtown Transition Area.
- ☐ Low intensity and professional office uses, including lawyers, accountants, doctors, should be considered appropriate in the Downtown Transition area.
- ☐ Public uses should be considered appropriate within the Downtown Transition area.



## CONTINUE INVESTMENT IN THE FAIRVIEW FOCUS AREA

The Fairview Focus Area is bounded by Rogers Street and Maple Avenue on the north, 2nd Street on the south, Prospect Avenue on the west and Williams Street on the east. This area is comprised of a mix of uses, which includes: industrial, commercial retail, commercial service, multi-family residential, and single-family residential. The area is anchored by the Fairview Metra Station and a Pepperidge Farm facility. Development has occurred in a piecemeal fashion with little coordination between developments. Many buildings are dated and underperforming in terms of height, density, and site configuration, and fail to maximize their potential, particularly given their proximity to a commuter rail station.

In 2025, the area was rezoned to allow for the improvement in form, function and appearance of this area consistent with the principles of transit-oriented development (TOD) to be more representative of the character and image of Downers Grove. The intended result is a distinct identity for the neighborhood and improved circulation. Mixed-use development that provides goods and services targeted towards commuters and nearby residents is intended to complement, not compete with, Downtown Downers Grove. Recommendations in this plan intend to create a distinct identity for the neighborhood, improve all modes of transportation, and foster mixed-use developments that provide goods and services for nearby residents and visitors.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Infill development and redevelopment should be pedestrian-oriented in order to complement the historic building pattern along Fairview Avenue.
- Promote commercial uses along Fairview Avenue to provide goods and services to commuters and nearby residents.
- Explore incentives and financing opportunities to fund necessary property and infrastructure improvements, and to facilitate parcel assembly to foster comprehensive redevelopment of key properties.
- Identify opportunities for shared parking facilities to reduce the amount of land area dedicated to surface parking lots.
- Signage and improvements should enhance this important and highly visible gateway to Downers Grove, as recommended by *Guiding DG Streetscapes Plan*.
- Use the Downtown Design Guidelines in the Fairview Core Area.
- Maintain and enhance the Fairview Metra Station as an important community asset and a gateway to Downers Grove, while continuing to evaluate potential redevelopment opportunities of the Fairview Metra station parking lot.



- The industrial uses along Rogers Avenue present an opportunity to redevelop with more compatible uses and facilitate a better connection between Downtown and the Fairview area. To avoid closing viable Village businesses, the Village should work with existing industrial owners to relocate to more appropriate areas in the Village such as the Ellsworth Business Park.
- The potential exists to realign Maple Avenue creating a development parcel appropriately sized for mixed-use, multi-family housing, single-family attached housing, or office development to achieve transit-oriented development near the Fairview Metra Station. Any proposed realignment should be accompanied by a traffic study that examines potential impacts to the existing road network, neighborhoods, and local and regional traffic patterns.
- The intersection of Maple and Fairview is currently improved with auto-oriented uses characterized by surface parking lots in front with little or no landscaping and screening. A transit-oriented development in this area would hinge on the successful redevelopment of these parcels stretching south to the railroad tracks. New development should promote a mixed-use, compact form that is oriented towards Fairview Avenue, with parking for residents and customers in the rear.
- The area southwest of Burlington and Fairview was developed in a piecemeal fashion with little to no coordination. Multi-family transit-oriented developments would vastly improve the form, function, and appearance of this area.
- The northeast corner of the 2nd and Fairview intersection is currently improved with the Fairview Metra Station, metra parking lot, convenience retail and a recently constructed apartment building. Future redevelopment could include multi-family, transit-oriented development. Mixed-use developments with convenience retail and services, and professional services such as doctor and dental offices could also be considered. Implementation of the *Guiding DG Streetscapes Plan* would also enhance this area.
- In the event the Pepperidge Farm facility desires to relocate, every effort should be made to retain this important asset in the Village. Relocation of the facility to the Ellsworth Business Park (or similar business park area) would allow the facility to modernize and grow and would alleviate land use conflicts in its current location. Single-family attached housing on this site would provide a buffer between the railroad and single-family detached housing areas to the south. The eastern portion of this site tapers slightly and should be reserved for open space, stormwater facilities and/or utilities needed to support new development in the area.





## CONTINUE INVESTMENT IN THE BUTTERFIELD AND FINLEY ROAD AREA

The Butterfield Road / Finley Road area is comprised of shopping centers, stand-alone restaurants and office developments. The proximity to I-88 and I-355 provides unparalleled access and visibility and is a key gateway into Downers Grove. This area must be aggressive in maintaining its competitiveness in the regional office and retail markets.

From 2021 through 2023, the Village collaborated with CMAP, the Villages of Lombard and Oak Brook and DuDOT to create the Butterfield Road Corridor Plan. The project area stretched from I-355 on the west to IL-83 (Kingery Highway) on the east. The Butterfield Road Corridor Plan identified four overarching goals for the corridor:

1. Support multi-modal transportation options to accommodate safe regional vehicular, public transit, pedestrian, and bicycle movement.
2. Ensure that the Butterfield Road corridor is resilient to changing commercial and office market conditions.
3. Ensure that residents and employees of the corridor have access to parks and open space.
4. Maintain quality of life for the corridor's residents and ensure access to businesses and jobs.

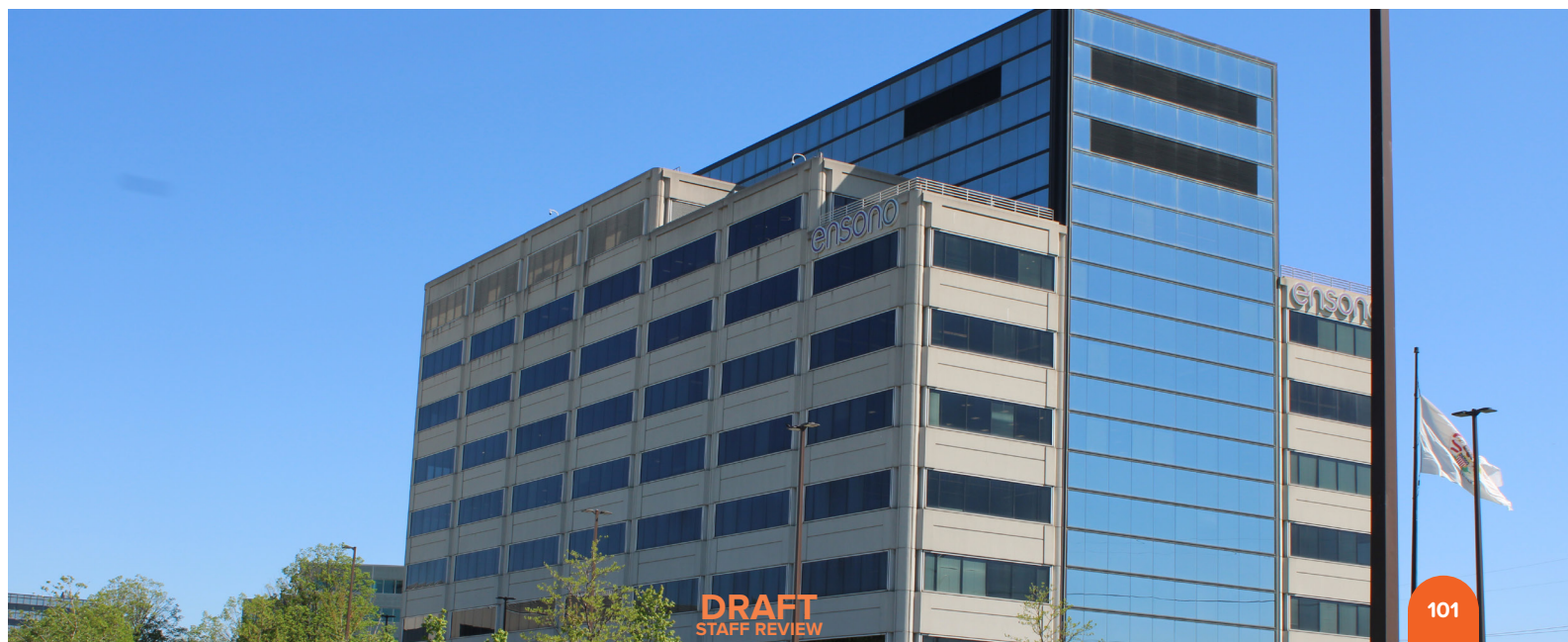
## RECOMMENDATIONS

- ☐ Collaborate and support pedestrian and roadway improvements that improve safety throughout the corridor.
- ☐ Collaborate with IDOT and DuDOT to fill sidewalk gaps to provide connections to bus stops, pedestrian crosswalks, residential areas and commercial properties.
- ☐ Implement *Guiding DG Active Transportation Plan* sidewalk and bicycle improvement facilities within the corridor.
- ☐ Continue to require pedestrian connections throughout developments and redevelopments that connect to the public right-of-way.
- ☐ Enhance pedestrian experiences in large surface parking lots with well-defined walkways.
- ☐ Collaborate with DuDOT and IDOT to implement landscaping improvements, including native landscaped medians, within right-of-ways to enhance the corridor's visual appeal.
- ☐ Coordinate and partner with Pace's Bus Shelter Program to provide shelters within the corridor.
- ☐ Coordinate with the DGEDC to attract neighborhood servicing business for nearby residential properties.





- Support and encourage the redevelopment or modernization of the area's Class C office buildings that are functionally obsolete, cannot compete with nearby office developments and detract from the Village's overall character.
- Promote in-line or outlot developments along the Butterfield Road Corridor.
- Promote shared parking arrangements between neighboring commercial developments to maximize space and efficiency.
- Incorporate gateway features to create a cohesive identity with consistent design and landscaping.
- Incorporate green infrastructure, pollinator gardens and native plantings into new developments and redevelopment sites.
- Re-evaluate parking needs and regulations for commercial and office properties to allow for creative placemaking and reuse of underutilized surface parking lots.
- Provide adequate bicycle parking near the main entrances to buildings.
- Coordinate with DGEDC, Pace and private employers to explore first and last mile connections between employment centers and nearby transit.
- Repurpose parts of parking lots for outlot development to better leverage land for sales tax-generating uses.
- Continue to partner with private developers to promote and reposition existing commercial centers to adapt to evolving retail habits and consumer preferences and enhance economic vitality.
- Support the redevelopment of University Plaza, a multi-tenant shopping center with a high vacancy rate. Due to the condition of the building and site, and the mix of incompatible uses, this center is quickly outliving its useful life as currently developed. Presented with the right opportunity, this site could be combined with adjacent parcels to create a larger redevelopment site.
- Encourage the completion of Esplanade, which still has vacant lots. With excellent visibility and access, these parcels could accommodate additional office, restaurants, retail and multi-family developments.
- Encourage multi-family developments in corridor commercial areas to support economic vitality and create a pedestrian-friendly environment.
- Collaborate with adjacent municipalities and pursue joint marketing efforts for the "Butterfield Road Corridor" across municipal boundaries to market the corridor to potential developers and consumers.
- Leverage the unique location of this corridor adjacent to two highways to attract new retail and office tenants.



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# TRANSPORTATION AND MOBILITY

08

DRAFT



*Well-planned transportation and mobility are essential aspects of every community and determine the ease and comfort with which citizens can access homes, businesses, jobs, schools, recreation, and essential services. In addition to an enviable geographic location within DuPage County with access to major highways and extensive roadway infrastructure, Downers Grove features a network of regionally connected rail and has experienced business, industry, and residential growth over the past two decades due in part to its transportation access. Several other major arterial thoroughfares serve as the backbone for the community, connecting residents to work, school, shopping, and recreational opportunities, such as Finley Road, Highland Avenue, Fairview Avenue, 75th Street, 63rd Street, and Maple Avenue.*

*The purpose of the Transportation and Mobility section is to identify locations, regulations, and infrastructure which may not fully meet the community's mobility needs, may cause safety concerns, may require visual and infrastructure improvements, or may warrant further traffic enforcement.*

#### *Goal and Key Recommendations*

**PROVIDE A SEAMLESS, EFFICIENT TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM THAT OFFERS GOOD CONNECTIVITY, IMPROVES SAFETY AND MOBILITY FOR PEOPLE USING ALL MODES (WALKING, BIKING, TRANSIT, AND DRIVING), REDUCES TRAFFIC AND EMISSIONS, AND ENHANCES THE CHARACTER OF THE COMMUNITY.**

- Prioritize pedestrians, bicycles, and micro-mobility devices through the provision of a network of accessible, connected, safe, and equitable active transportation (bicycle, pedestrian, and transit) facilities.
- Consider traffic calming and other measures to slow traffic in conjunction with surface reconstruction projects.
- Continue to require new development/ redevelopment to include connections and amenities for pedestrians, bicyclists, and commuters.
- Expand the Village's network of sidewalks to provide better connections between residential neighborhoods, parks, schools, Downtown, and commercial destinations.
- Continue to work with public transit providers to ensure that levels of public transit service support the ridership needs of the community, including the continued operation of the schedules of all three of the Metra train stations.
- Continue to participate in the Safe Routes to School program.



## Guiding Principles

The following are abbreviated guiding principles from the *Guiding DG Active Transportation Plan*. The principles informed the development of this chapter, as well as the *Guiding DG Active Transportation Plan* strategic perspectives and action-oriented recommendations.

- **Accessibility.** The ease and ability for a potential user to reach their desired facility from their point of origin.
- **Connectivity.** The compatibility between different modes of transportation, including the overall geographic coverage of facilities, and how well each facility or route connects with others.
- **Safety.** Transportation safety performance measures include, core measures, behavioral measures, and activity measures.
- **Aesthetics.** Transportation facilities should be visually pleasing to view and enjoyable to use.
- **Intentionality.** The quality of doing something with purpose or intent.
- **Implementability.** Proposed transportation improvement plans and related projects must be realistic in scope and realizable.
- **Longevity.** Longevity refers to the enduring qualities of the Village's active transportation infrastructure.
- **Performance.** The implementation of proposed active transportation facilities improvements achieves community-driven outcomes and expectations.

## ROADWAYS

### ROADWAY CLASSIFICATION

Functional classifications are a means of standardizing thoroughfare designs and facility types by categorizing thoroughfares based on their capacity, pavement width, and intended use, or function. The Village has five classifications and standards outlined in the Village Municipal Code. The following section is a summary of each thoroughfare classification as prescribed by the Village, DuDOT, and IDOT.

#### Interstates and Freeways

The interstates and freeways within Downers Grove are operated by Illinois Tollway. I-88 and I-355 are "controlled access thoroughfares" which means there are no intersections and access is only granted by the use of access ramps. Downers Grove is served by seven principal interstate interchanges, which are typically bounded by retail, commercial, and office/business land uses.

#### Arterial Streets

The Village Municipal Code states that for an arterial street, the minimum right-of-way width is one hundred feet and the minimum edge-to-edge pavement width is 60 feet. Arterial streets are operated by the State, County, and Village. Arterial streets located within or adjacent to Downtown are typically operated by the Village. Due to the higher capacity and connectivity provided by arterial streets, they serve as the main corridors connecting Downers Grove. Highland Avenue, 75th Street, and Fairview Avenue are all classified as arterial streets.

#### Collector Streets

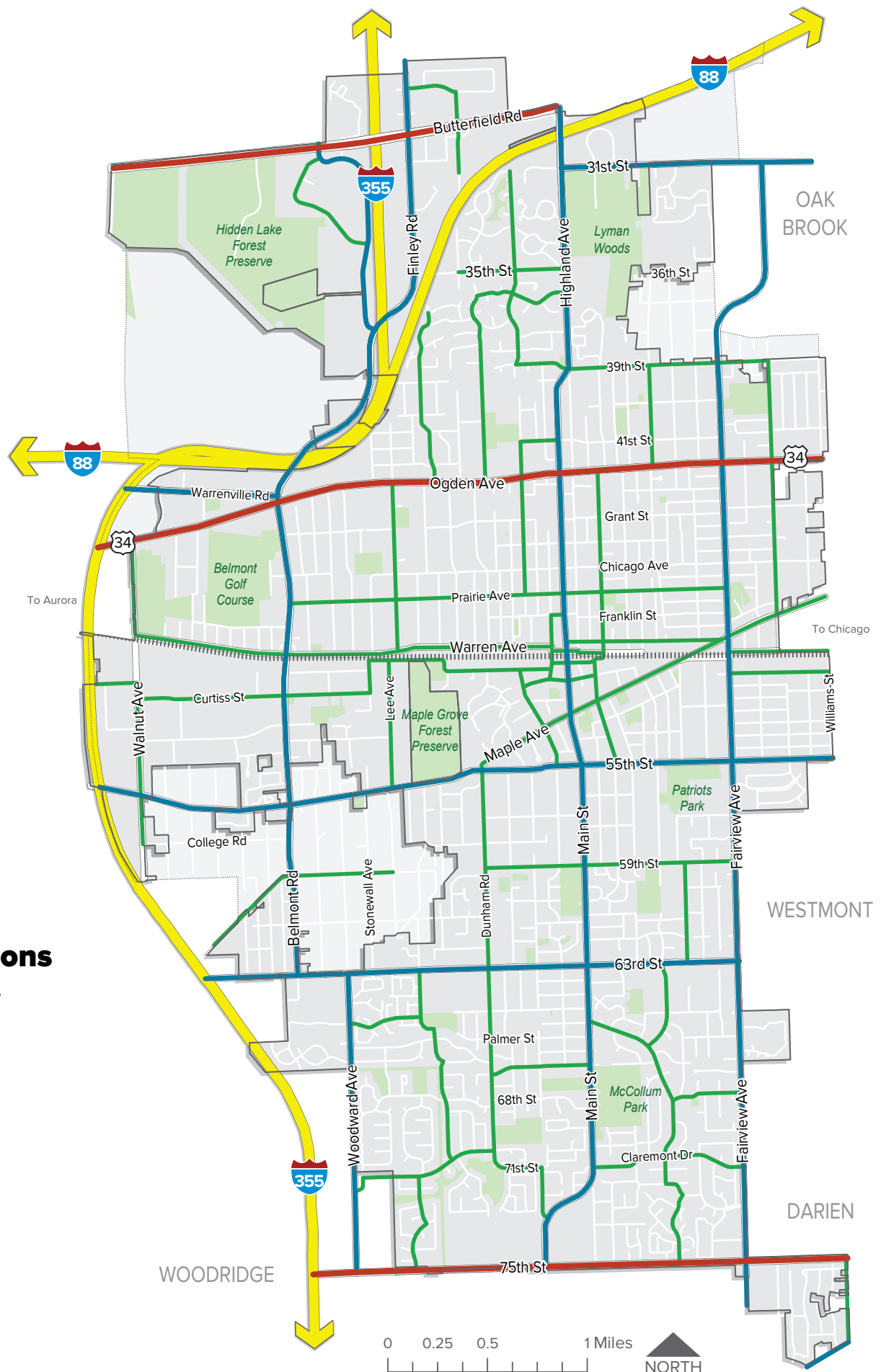
The Village Municipal Code states that a collector street's minimum right-of-way width is 80 feet and the minimum edge-to-edge pavement width is 36 feet. Collector streets in Downers Grove are typically streets bounded by residential land uses which connect local residents to commercial land uses and the wider thoroughfare grid network. Warren Avenue, Saratoga Avenue, and Dunham Road are classified as collector streets.

#### Local Streets

The Village Municipal Code states a local street's minimum right-of-way width is 66 feet and the minimum edge-to-edge pavement width is 28 feet. Local streets are low-capacity, low-speed thoroughfares which connect mostly residential and public land uses. These streets are not intended to provide ease of travel over long distances, but intended to serve as access drives for local traffic. Grant Street, Brookbank Road, and Bolson Drive are classified as local streets.

## Roadway Functional Classifications

- Freeway/Tollway
- Major Arterial
- Minor Arterial
- Collector





## PLANNED IMPROVEMENTS

Major transportation projects, either planned, funded, or under consideration within Downers Grove are summarized below. Note that because many of the listed public projects provide minimal information, with regard to descriptions or timelines, there is warrant for further conversation with state- and county-level planning entities.

### The Butterfield Road Corridor Plan (Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, 2025)

- Add wayfinding signage at Downers Drive and at Highland Avenue.
- Add pedestrian signalization and high visibility crosswalks at the Brook Drive and Finley Road intersection.
- Coordinate and partner with Pace's Bus Shelter Program to establish shelter locations for high ridership bus stops, and ensure that shelters have amenities such as benches, trash cans, adequate lighting, and real-time route and schedule information.
- Support the development of the future Pace Pulse Cermak Road Line (54th/Cermak Station to Yorktown Center).

### IDOT Improvements

- Add a multi-use path to 31st Street from Highland Avenue to Meyers Road.
- Construction Engineering beginning in 2025 from York Road/Highland Avenue to IL-59 along Butterfield Road – unknown facility or improvement type.
- Construction Engineering beginning from Arboretum Road to Lacey Road and IL-53 from Hidden Lake entry to Pinegrove Court – unknown facility or improvement type (assumed trail and ped-bike connectivity).

### DuDOT Improvements

- Warrenville Road Bridge, across I-88 will be fully reconstructed with lane reductions (two-lanes), utilities adjustments, and new sidewalks and a shared-use path; to begin in 2025-2026
- Signal replacement and turning lane additions at Ogden and Cross, Cross and Warrenville, Ogden and Belmont, to begin in 2026-2027
- Planned Intersection or Spot Project – 55th Street at Belmont Road (2026-2030)

- Planned Intersection or Spot Project – Ogden Avenue at Belmont Road (2026-2030)
- Maple Avenue, Walnut to Dunham, Reconstruct and align (2031-2040)
- East Branch DuPage River Trail, IL 38 to IL 56, New Path (2031-2040)
- Meyers Road (Central DuPage Trail), 31st Street to IL 56, Widen Bridge, Bike Path (2031-2040)







## THOROUGHFARES

Downers Grove is a well-connected community, with gridded streets providing walkable connections to nearby areas and destinations. To ensure that existing infrastructure continues to provide safe and accessible connections, the Village should continue to collaborate with regional and state transportation agencies to ensure that necessary funding for future projects is in place. As development occurs in Downers Grove, it is important that thoroughfare infrastructure supports the needs of all users, including pedestrians, motorists, cyclists, and transit riders. To achieve this, the Village should maintain and update its five-year thoroughfare reconstruction plans, incorporating improvements from the *Guiding DG Active Transportation Plan*, such as shared lane markings, signage, curb ramps, and upgraded intersections. Additionally, opportunities for lane reductions at problematic intersections should be considered.

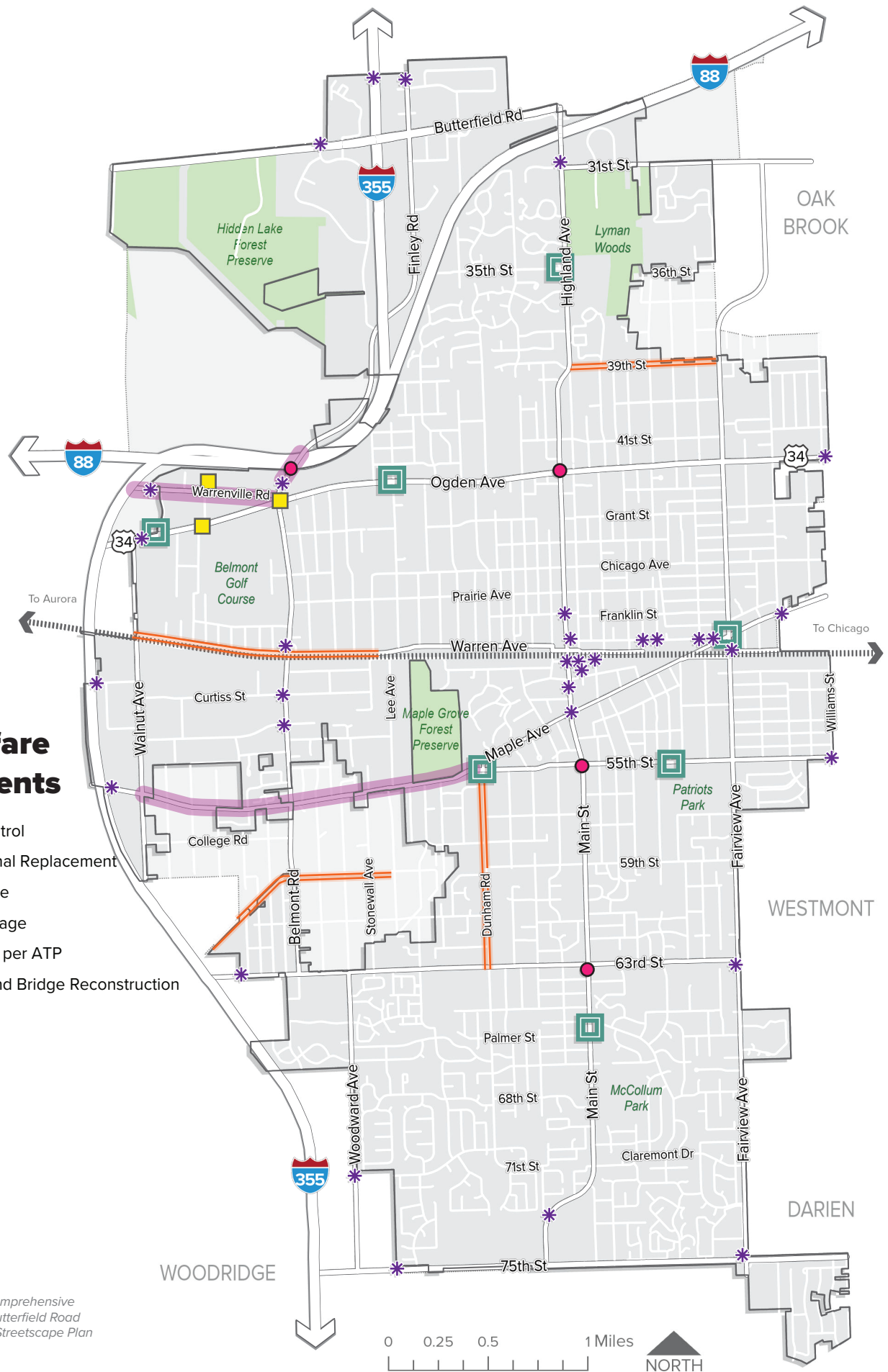
Improvements described below are depicted on the Thoroughfare Improvements Map and further explained in subsequent recommendations:

- Thoroughfare and/or bridge reconstruction includes DuDOT projects set to begin in 2025.
- Implement curb and gutter improvements as identified in the *Guiding DG Active Transportation Plan*.
- Additional intersection controls should be considered, including traffic signals, pedestrian flashing beacons, four-way stops, or other methods, to improve safety, efficiency, and traffic flow, address high traffic-volume areas, and improve intersection noted by residents as unsafe.
- Wayfinding signage and gateway monumentation should provide guidance to destinations, augment community character, and define the boundaries of the Village. Signage should be included at Interstate/Tollway access points, major entry points along major thoroughfares, and at strategic junctions mentioned within the *Guiding DG Active Transportation Plan*.

## Thoroughfare Improvements

-  Intersection Control
-  Intersection Signal Replacement
-  Gateway Signage
-  Wayfinding Signage
-  Curb and Gutter per ATP
-  Thoroughfare and Bridge Reconstruction

Source: DuPage County Comprehensive Road Improvement Plan; Butterfield Road Corridor Plan; Guiding DG Streetscape Plan



## PARKING

Parking in the Village is regulated based on road type and surrounding land uses, with restrictions varying between residential areas, Downtown, and major thoroughfares. While residential streets typically allow on-street parallel parking, overnight parking is restricted. In contrast, Downtown has high parking demand but limits most on-street parking to short durations, supplemented by a parking garage and permitted parking adjacent to the railroad. As Downers Grove continues to evolve, it is important that the Village continues to support parking surveys to assess demand and ensure adequate parking supply. Additionally, the incorporation of electric vehicle (EV) charging stations and micro-mobility (E-bike, E-Scooter) parking areas in existing Metra and Downtown lots should be prioritized to accommodate emerging transportation needs and promote sustainable mobility options.

## SAFETY

Downers Grove's extensive roadway network plays a role in overall safety. Between 2017 and 2022, crash data from the Village, DuDOT, and IDOT recorded 6,161 incidents—98 percent involving vehicles, with cyclist and pedestrian crashes each accounting for roughly 1 percent. The majority of crashes occurred at intersections along high-traffic corridors such as Ogden Avenue, Butterfield Road, and Highland Avenue. Pedestrian-related crashes were most frequent along Butterfield Road, near Saratoga Avenue on Ogden Avenue, and near Grant Street and Prairie Avenue on Main Street. These patterns highlight the need for targeted safety enhancements at intersections and crossings—such as improved signage, signal timing, and curb ramp upgrades—as well as traffic calming solutions to reduce speeds and conflict points.

19

Signalized intersections are operated by Downers Grove

48

Signalized intersections are managed by DuDOT and IDOT

## INTERSECTIONS AND CROSSINGS











Downers Grove features a range of intersections, rail crossings, and overpasses that significantly impact travel and safety. The Village operates 19 signalized intersections, with DuDOT and IDOT managing another 48—most located at wide, multi-lane roads and equipped with pedestrian signals and marked crosswalks. However, major barriers like I-88, I-355, and the BNSF rail line restrict crossing opportunities, particularly to the north and west, and create bottlenecks at on/off-ramps where high traffic volumes and fast-moving vehicles limit safe pedestrian and cyclist access. With six rail crossings—five at-grade—north-south travel is often congested, especially in the Downtown area. As Downers Grove continues to evolve, improving intersections and crossings through enhanced signalization, safer designs, and expanded access will be essential to supporting a safer and more connected transportation network.

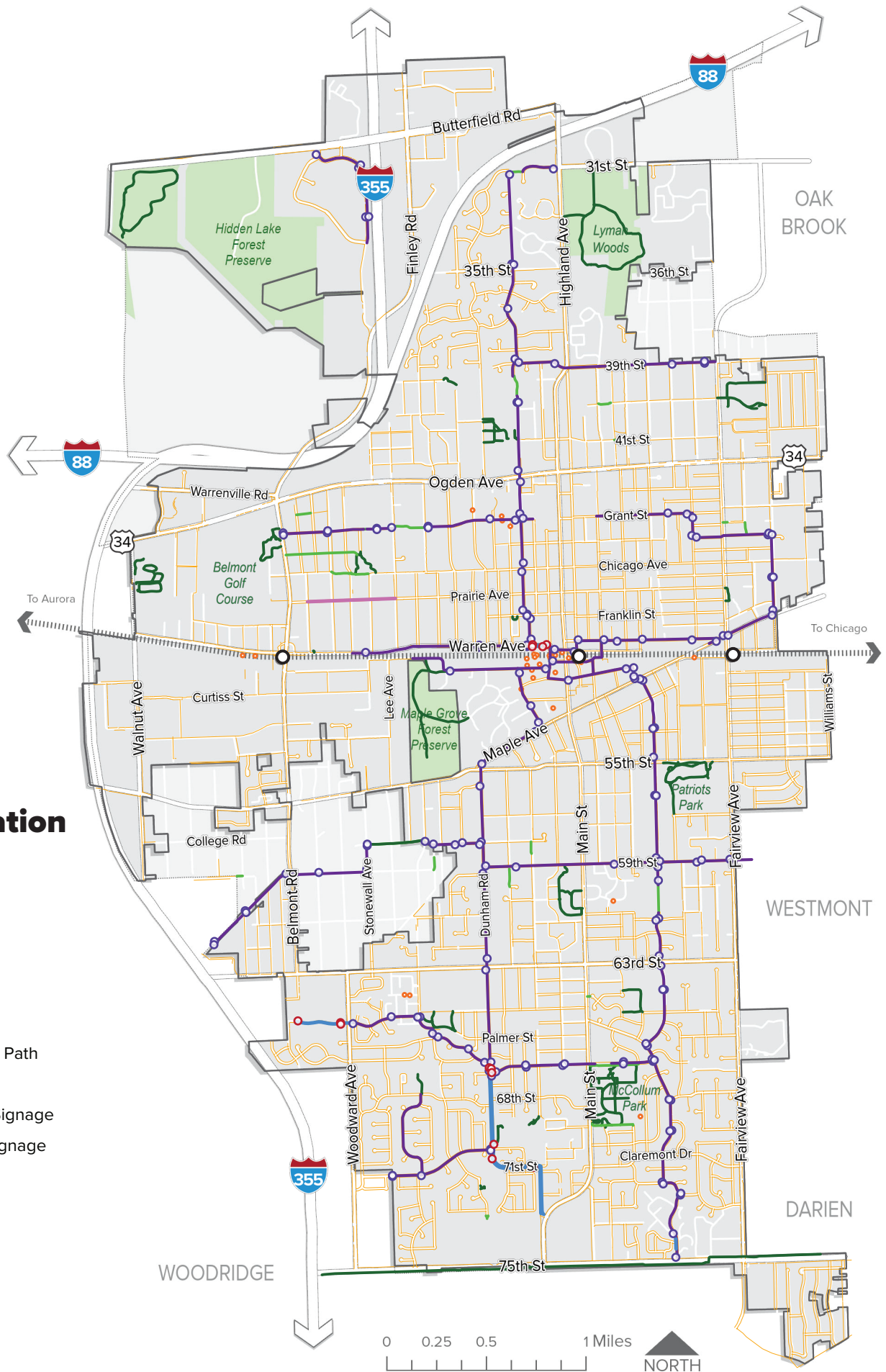
## TRAFFIC CONGESTION

Traffic congestion in Downers Grove is concentrated along major east-west corridors like Ogden Avenue, Butterfield Road, 63rd Street, and 75th Street, where higher travel volumes and limited crossing opportunities create safety and mobility challenges—especially for those traveling north-south. Central areas like Main Street and Fairview Avenue also experience significant traffic, despite their narrow widths and proximity to historic homes and local businesses, making them especially sensitive to congestion and safety risks for pedestrians and cyclists. Additionally, many schools, parks, and public facilities are located along or near busy roads, increasing the potential for traffic conflicts during peak hours. The Village should consider targeted efforts to reduce congestion—particularly near key destinations and in areas with narrow rights-of-way—to improve overall safety and mobility.



## Existing Active Transportation Facilities

-  Metra Station
-  Bicycle Route
-  Bicycle Lane
-  Sharrows
-  Trail
-  Grid Connector Path
-  Sidewalks
-  Bicycle Route Signage
-  Bicycle Lane Signage
-  Bicycle Rack



## ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION

Downers Grove's current network of sidewalk, bicycle, and trail facilities offers intermittent connectivity across much of the Village, with sidewalks on both sides of most thoroughfares and bike routes linking various neighborhoods. However, these facilities do not provide seamless connections to regional parks and trails, such as the Illinois Prairie Path, The Morton Arboretum, and Hidden Lake Forest Preserve. Improving active transportation infrastructure to bridge these gaps would enhance connectivity, providing better access to key regional destinations and promoting safer, more efficient travel options for residents and visitors alike.

### SIDEWALK GAPS

The sidewalk network in Downers Grove covers most thoroughfares on at least one side of the street, but there are notable gaps, particularly along major corridors like Ogden Avenue and Maple Avenue. These gaps hinder continuous pedestrian access and reduce walkability in key areas. Local and regional destinations, including Belmont Prairie, Hidden Lake Forest Preserve, and numerous commercial businesses along Maple Avenue and Ogden Avenue, are also not fully connected by sidewalks. Expanding the sidewalk network in alignment with the *Guiding DG Active Transportation Plan* would address these gaps, enhance connectivity, and improve pedestrian access to important community destinations, ensuring a more walkable and accessible community.

## TRAILS

The existing off-street recreational trails in Downers Grove, though limited, offer valuable connections to various parts of the Village. A segment of the Southern DuPage County Regional Trail runs along Jefferson Avenue and 75th Street, providing a link to Woodridge. This portion of the trail functions as a shared-use path, running parallel to the thoroughfare, offering both recreational and commuting opportunities. However, the majority of trails in Downers Grove consist of short segments that primarily connect residential areas to parks or facilitate internal circulation within park boundaries. Expanding the trail network, as outlined in the *Guiding DG Active Transportation Plan*, would create a more cohesive and extensive system, enhancing connectivity between neighborhoods, parks, and regional destinations. By increasing the trail network's reach, Downers Grove can improve active transportation and recreational opportunities, providing safer, more convenient routes for pedestrians and cyclists.

## BICYCLE NETWORK

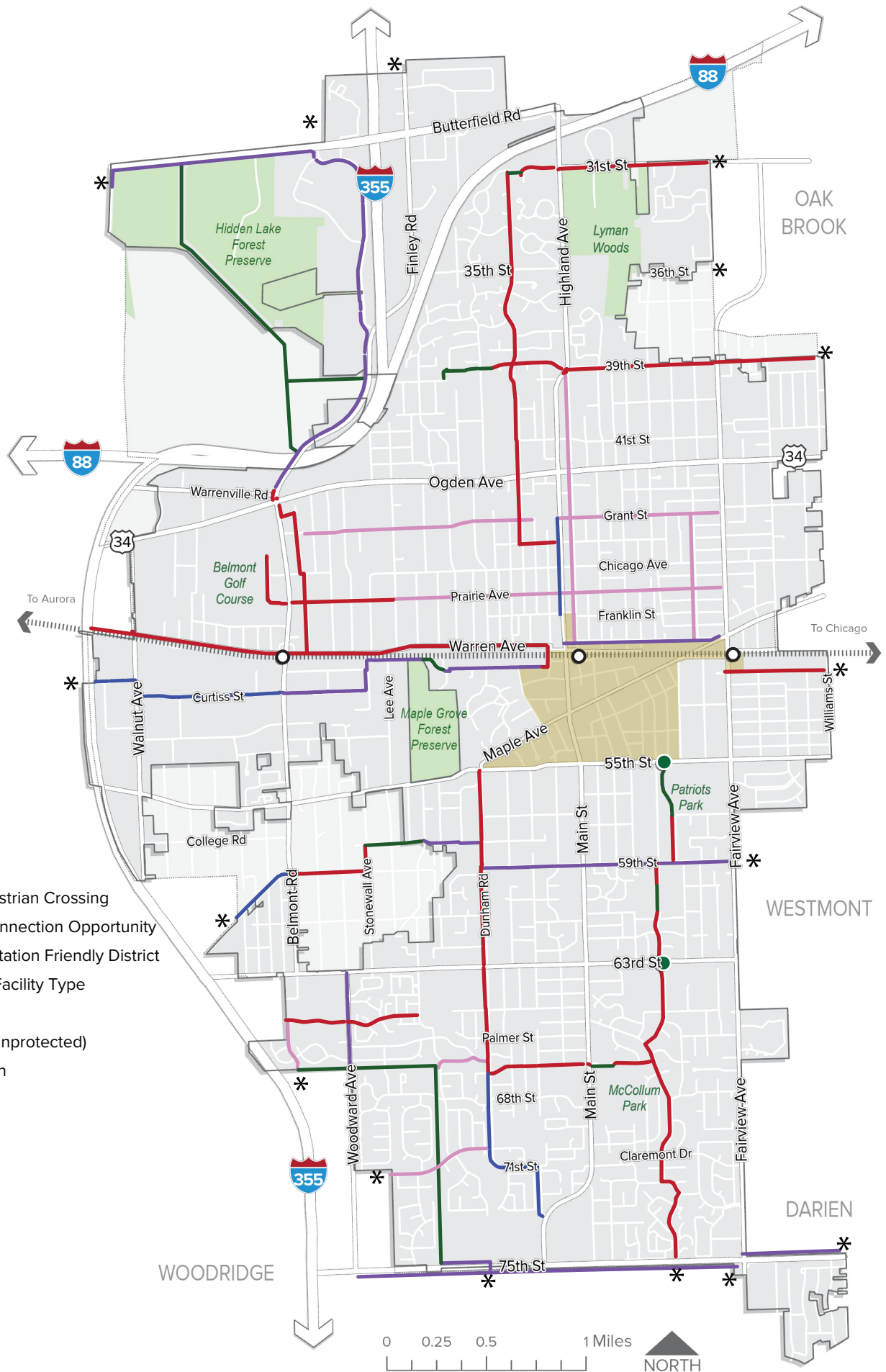
The current bicycle network is limited and loosely defined, consisting mainly of designated bicycle routes with a few dedicated on-street bicycle lanes. Downers Grove lacks protected bike lanes, such as those with bollards or curbs, and does not offer designated off-street shared-use paths. Bicycle routes primarily run along collector thoroughfares, avoiding busier arterial roads, creating a fragmented network that does not align with the main grid of sidewalks and roadways. Additionally, designated bike routes are marked only by signs, without any separation or protective measures, posing safety risks for cyclists. Expanding and enhancing the bicycle network in line with the *Guiding DG Active Transportation Plan* would improve connectivity, safety, and overall functionality, providing cyclists with more protected and continuous routes throughout Downers Grove and connections to regional bike networks.

### On-street Bicycle Network Definitions

- **Conventional Bike Lane:** Exclusive space on the side of the road for bicyclists designated by pavement markings and signage.
- **Shared Lane Markings (Sharrows):** Pavement markings used to indicate a shared travel lane for bicycles and motor vehicles, alerting drivers to the presence of cyclists. Typically used where dedicated bike lanes are not feasible.

## Proposed Bicycle Facilities

- Metra Stations
- Enhanced Pedestrian Crossing
- \* Neighboring Connection Opportunity
- Active Transportation Friendly District
- Undetermined Facility Type
- Sharrow Route
- Bicycle Lanes (unprotected)
- Shared-Use Path
- Trail





# PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Downers Grove is well-served by Metra and Pace, providing essential public transportation options that connect residents and visitors to the broader area and region. As the Village continues to grow, it is important to encourage the ongoing use of these services while enhancing access to transit opportunities. By improving accessibility, connectivity, and convenience, the Village can ensure residents have reliable, sustainable transportation choices. Strengthening Metra and Pace services will foster a more connected and mobile community, improving the overall quality of life and meeting the evolving transportation needs of the population.

Metra Daily Ridership Statistics			
Station	Fairview	Main Street	Belmont
Weekday Boardings (2018)	415	2,492	1,408
Average Midweek Riders (May 2024)	115	1,478	721
Recovery (2018-2024)	28%	59%	51%
Projected 2050 Ridership	300-400	2,000-2,100	1,000-1,100

Source: Regional Transportation Authority Mapping and Statistics; Metra Ridership and Projections

## METRA







Downers Grove is served by three Metra Stations - Belmont, Main Street and Fairview - along Metra's busiest line, the BNSF line. The BNSF line provides regional connectivity between Aurora and Chicago for residents and visitors. The Main Street station is the busiest station in Downers Grove. In 2018, the Main Street Station had an average weekday boarding of 2,492 riders. Notably, around half of the Main Street and Fairview station users rely on micromobility devices to access the stations. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, Metra ridership has slowly recovered with Belmont and Main Street seeing the highest recovery rates at over 50%. Metra projections show continued ridership recovery but does not anticipate ridership to regain pre-pandemic levels. As Downers Grove continues to develop, encouraging transit-oriented development around these stations will improve accessibility and maximize the use of existing transit infrastructure, helping to meet the needs of the community and support regional connectivity. Additionally, improvements such as benches, lighting, real-time signage, wayfinding, and maps can significantly enhance the overall commuter experience.

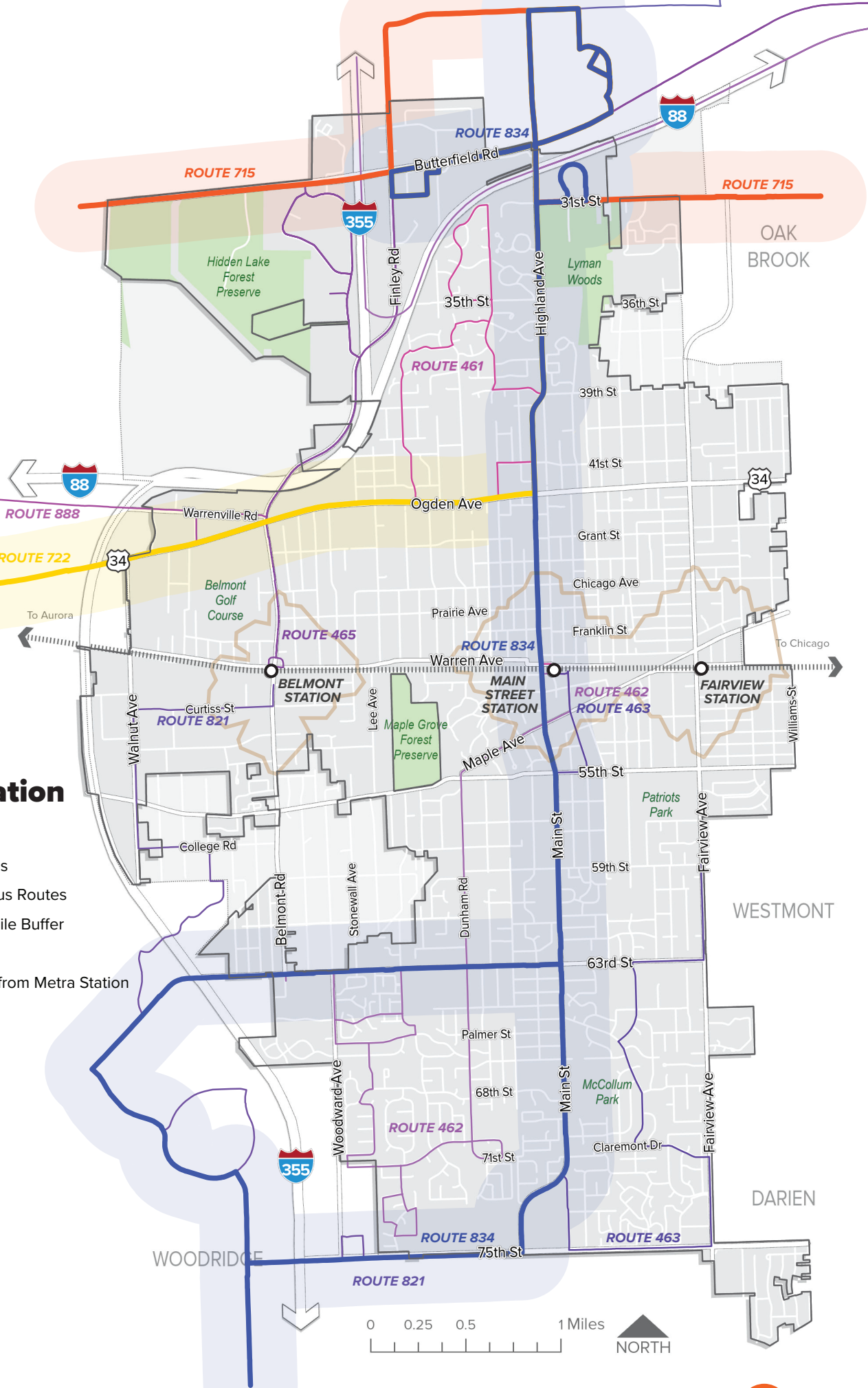
## Pace

Downers Grove is served by three Pace bus routes that primarily connect the northern parts of the Village to neighboring municipalities like Lisle, Lombard, and Westmont. Route 834, the only north-south route, travels along Main Street and serves Metra's Main Street Station, while the other two routes run east to west along Ogden Avenue and Butterfield Road. To improve the accessibility and convenience of these bus routes, the Village should partner with Pace to install shelters at high-ridership bus stops. This would enhance the overall transit experience, particularly during inclement weather, and encourage greater use of the bus system, further supporting mobility options for residents.



## Public Transportation

-  Metra BNSF
-  Pace Bus Routes
-  Discontinued Bus Routes
-  Pace Quarter-mile Buffer
-  Metra Stations
-  10 minute walk from Metra Station



## RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are provided for this chapter's sections.

### THOROUGHFARES

- Maintain and update the Village's five-year thoroughfare reconstruction and resurfacing plans.
- Ensure projects are included in the Community Investment Program (CIP) with dedicated funding and incorporate improvements from the *Guiding DG Active Transportation Plan*—such as shared lane markings, signage, curb ramps, and intersection upgrades.
- Collaborate with agencies like DuDOT, IDOT, the Illinois Tollway, and CMAP to plan and implement current and future road improvements.
- Implement safety measures to reduce crash risks and improve visibility where topography creates conflict points or blind spots.
- Work with DuDOT and other agencies as necessary to improve access management along major thoroughfares.
- Operate and maintain thoroughfares with all users in mind, including pedestrians users of micromobility devices, and public transportation vehicles.

### PARKING

- Continue to conduct parking surveys for Metra parking lots, Downtown parking lots, the Downtown parking garage, and on-street parking to ensure future demand is met.
- Explore adding EV and micromobility parking/charging stations in Metra and Downtown parking lots.
- Explore partnerships with private businesses to install EV and micromobility stations in commercial areas and near interstates.

### SAFETY

- Install gateway monuments and wayfinding signage at key entry points, such as Ogden Avenue, Main Street, Maple Avenue, and 75th Street.
- Per the recommendations of the *Guiding DG Active Transportation Plan*, implement longitudinal bar as the uniform standard for crosswalk striping at all signalized intersections, trail crossings, school and park crossings.
- Ensure that crosswalk striping conventions include signage and other prominent vertical notification elements to ensure that crosswalks are readily visible to motorists.
- Enhance safety at rail crossings by reducing nearby curb cuts, adding pedestrian stop arms, and adjusting vehicle stop bars—building on improvements like those at the Washington Street BNSF crossing.
- Pursue Safe Routes to School (SRTS) funding to support safer, more connected pedestrian routes to schools.

### SUSTAINABILITY

- Implement the objectives identified within the *Guiding DG Environmental Sustainability Plan* regarding Mobility, Parkways, and Parking.
- Incorporate green infrastructure into stormwater and drainage projects along transportation corridors where space allows.
- Promote sustainable practices in parking areas, detention areas, and thoroughfare rights-of-way.
- Identify corridors and public rights-of-way with a low density of street trees and establish new trees in these areas.
- Continue to ensure trees are protected or removed and replaced during sidewalk and street construction projects.



## ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION

- Implement proposed bike facilities from the *Guiding DG Active Transportation Plan* to improve connectivity, safety, and access for all users.
- Advance sidewalk improvements from the *Guiding DG Active Transportation Plan* to enhance connections between neighborhoods and key destinations, and upgrade crossings and curb ramps.
- Prioritize access to schools and parks when planning road reconstruction or resurfacing projects for pedestrians, vehicles, and cyclists.
- Ensure safe access for senior living and rehabilitation centers to nearby sidewalks, crossings, parks, schools, and neighborhoods.

## PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

- Support TOD around existing Metra stations in alignment with the Future Land Use Plan to enhance accessibility and community connectivity.
- Collaborate with Metra to enhance the Metra stations with additional amenities, including benches, lighting, real-time signage, wayfinding, and updated maps for better navigation.
- Upgrade intersections near Metra stations to include high-visibility crosswalks, improved lighting, pedestrian push-button signals (where applicable), and updated curb ramps and pavement.
- Partner with Pace to install shelters at high-ridership bus stops, incorporating amenities like benches, trash cans, adequate lighting, and real-time route and schedule displays.



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# COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE



09

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*As Downers Grove continues to grow with new residents and businesses, the demand for high-quality community services and facilities will increase. Essential municipal services ensure a stable environment for both residents and businesses, while public infrastructure, such as art, community gateways, gathering spaces, and street design, shapes how residents experience their community. As needs and expectations evolve, the Village must plan for rising service demands and the provision of new amenities.*

*The Community Facilities and Infrastructure chapter highlights the importance of these services and amenities. It outlines recommendations for actions the Village can take to ensure all areas of Downers Grove have access to quality facilities that support a high standard of living and future growth. As the community changes, it is essential that services and facilities adapt to meet the needs of all residents.*

### *Goal and Key Recommendations*

**CONTINUE TO PROVIDE HIGH QUALITY VILLAGE SERVICES, MAINTAIN AND INVEST IN VILLAGE FACILITIES AND CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE, AND SUPPORT THE DELIVERY OF COMMUNITY SERVICES TO ENSURE A RESILIENT, SUSTAINABLE, AND HIGH QUALITY OF LIFE FOR THE WHOLE COMMUNITY.**

- Continue to provide exceptional public safety services.
- Develop and maintain functional yet innovative streetscapes and public spaces that provide public access and encourage community interaction.
- Partner with other governmental agencies to continue to identify areas for community gathering spaces like plazas and seating areas.
- Facilitate collaborations with governmental agencies and not-for-profits to provide services for senior citizens, youth, and disadvantaged populations.
- Encourage and facilitate expanded year-round cultural and community events and activities, including pop-ups and seasonal installations, temporary art installations or shops in vacant storefronts, and heritage celebrations.
- Explore opportunities to incorporate public art.
- Continue to coordinate with community partners on facility needs and siting to ensure provision of community services and infrastructure.





## PUBLIC SERVICES

Public services contribute to a high-quality of life, supporting both residents and businesses in the community. These include Village-managed services like water, stormwater, police and fire. Many services are provided by outside agencies, including education, healthcare and sanitary sewer. Maintaining and enhancing these services supports community well-being and reflects the Village's commitment to progress. For Downers Grove's overall success, the Village should continue to partner with service providers and local organizations to ensure these facilities and services meet the growing needs of the community.

## CONTINUED PUBLIC SAFETY EXCELLENCE

Public safety services ensure quick response during crises and provide vital support in emergencies. In Downers Grove, the public safety infrastructure includes law enforcement and fire protection services, supported by one police station and four fire stations. The Police Department works to maintain public order, enforce laws, and investigate criminal activity, while the Fire Department is responsible for fire suppression, rescue operations, and emergency medical services. As Downers Grove evolves, it is essential that these departments continue to receive the resources and support necessary to maintain a high level of service. This includes investing in modern equipment, enhancing training programs, and ensuring that public safety services are distributed equitably across all areas of the community. By continuing close collaboration with public safety departments, the Village can ensure that its emergency services remain responsive, effective, and able to meet the needs of an expanding and diverse population.

## A Case Study in Collaboration: The New Civic Center

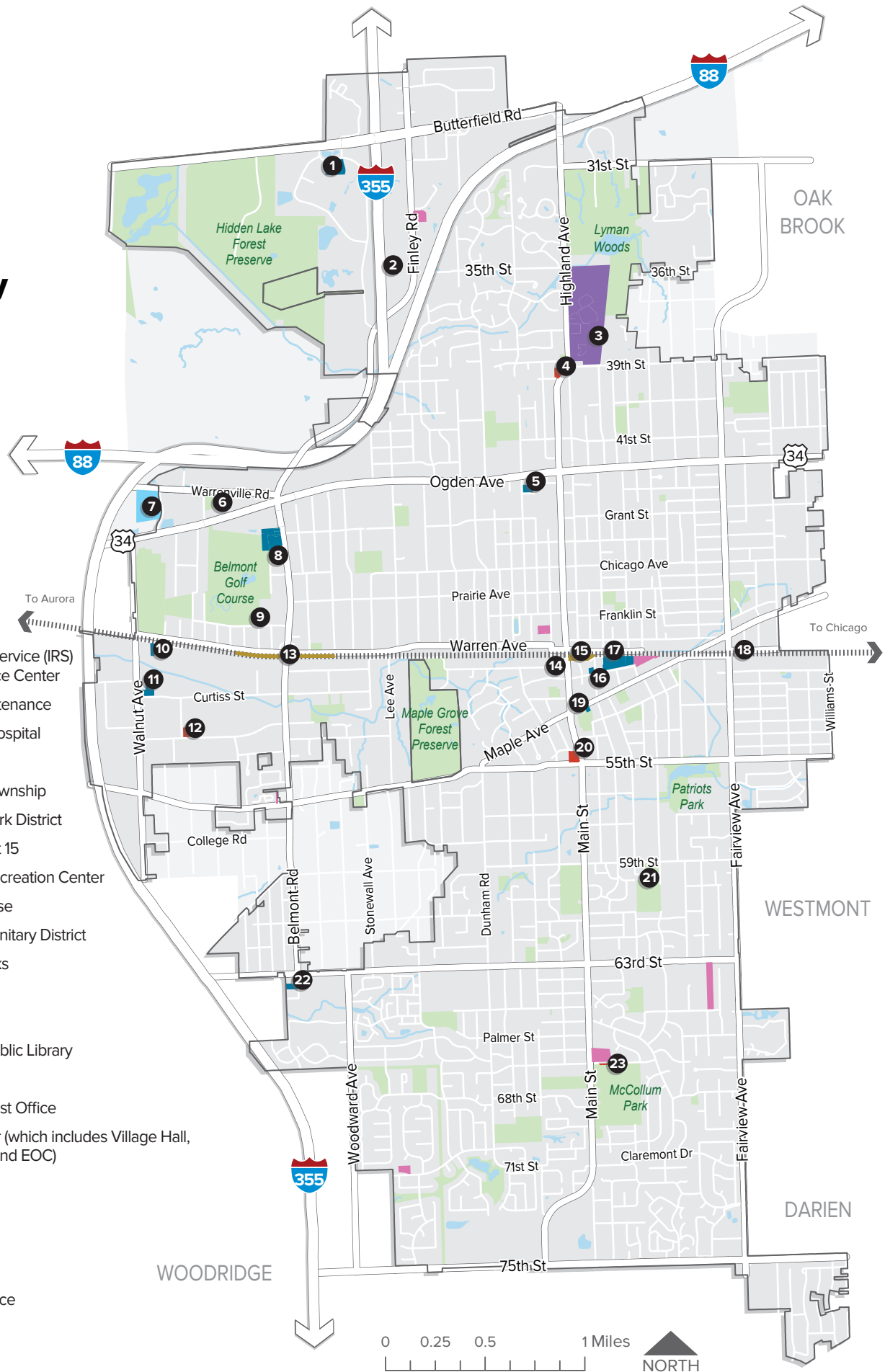
In 2025, the Village completed a transformative project to create a combined Civic Center that houses Village Hall, the Police Department, and the administrative offices of School District 58. This modern facility will enhance collaboration, improve operational efficiency, and provide shared spaces for public meetings and community events. With a strong focus on sustainability, the project incorporates green roofs, permeable pavers, and renewable energy solutions. The Civic Center is a prime example of effective community collaboration and innovation, tying together Village leadership, public safety, education, and community participation in one location.



## Community Facilities

- Government
- Fire Station
- Police Station
- Healthcare
- Utilities
- Transportation

- 1 Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Taxpayer Assistance Center
- 2 State Tollway Maintenance
- 3 Good Samaritan Hospital
- 4 Fire Station #103
- 5 Downers Grove Township
- 6 Downers Grove Park District
- 7 State Police District 15
- 8 Downers Grove Recreation Center
- 9 Belmont Golf Course
- 10 Downers Grove Sanitary District
- 11 Village Public Works
- 12 Fire Station #101
- 13 Belmont Station
- 14 Downers Grove Public Library
- 15 Main St. Station
- 16 Downers Grove Post Office
- 17 Village Civic Center (which includes Village Hall, Police, District 58 and EOC)
- 18 Fairview Station
- 19 Lincoln Center
- 20 Fire Station #102
- 21 YMCA
- 22 Social Security Office
- 23 Fire Station #105



## HEALTH AND MEDICAL FACILITIES

Healthcare services enhance Downers Grove's well-being and are highly valued by the community. Downers Grove is home to Advocate Good Samaritan Hospital, a Level 1 trauma center, and Northwestern University, which offers specialized healthcare education and clinical services. Additional providers, including Edward-Elmhurst Healthcare Center, Duly Health and Care, and Endeavor Health, further enhance local access to medical care. To support evolving healthcare needs, the Village should collaborate with providers, assess community priorities, and explore partnerships with Northwestern University to expand services. Increasing awareness of available programs through coordinated outreach will also help ensure equitable access for all residents.

## EDUCATION

Downers Grove offers a strong educational system with top-rated public schools, private institutions, and Northwestern University. The community is primarily served by District 58 and District 99, with additional support from District 44, District 61, District 66, District 68, and District 89, as well as various private schools and early childhood centers. While these schools are highly regarded, ongoing facility maintenance is encouraged to ensure continued excellence in education.

# 25

**Educational Institutions in  
Downers Grove**

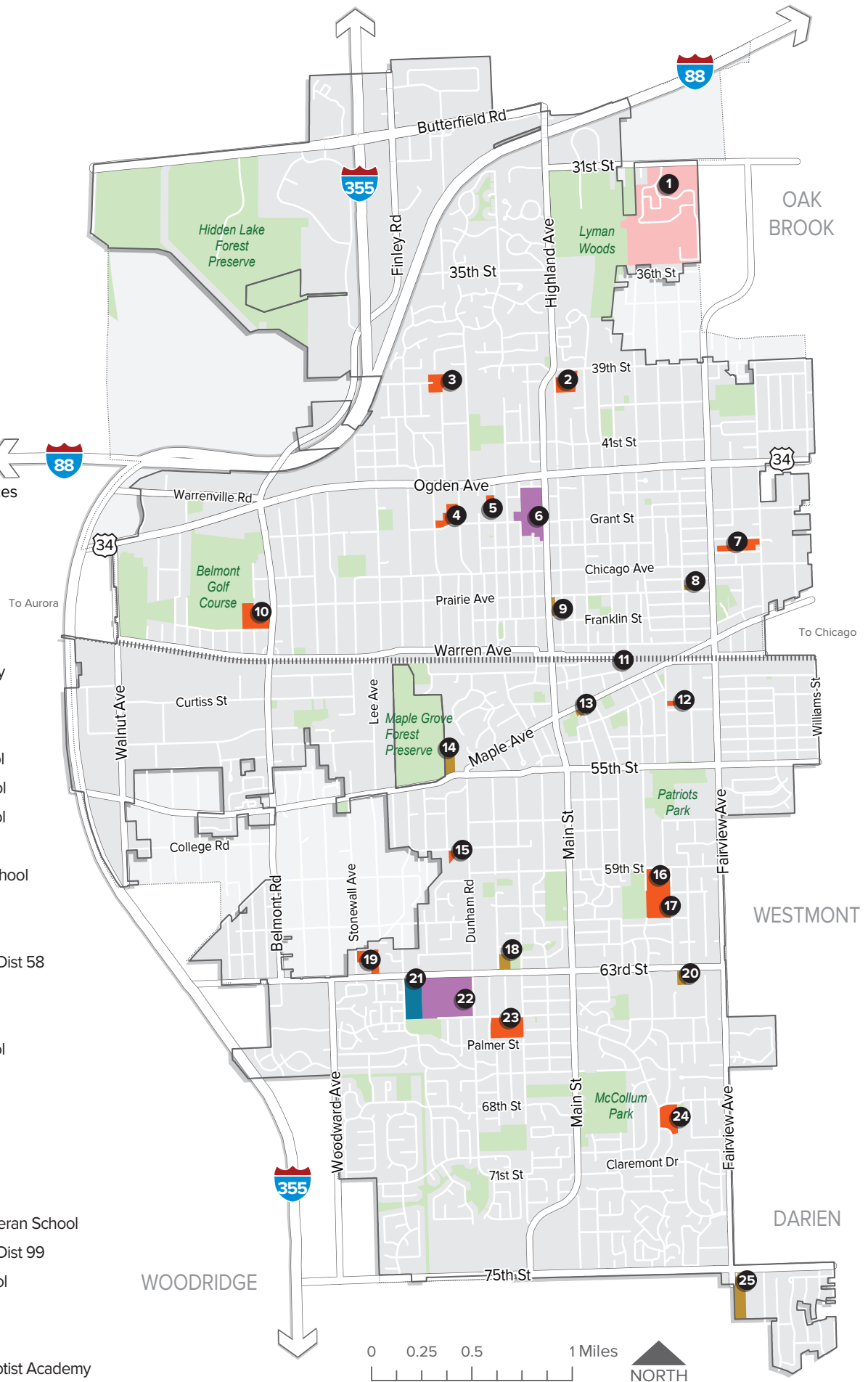




## Educational Facilities

- Elementary School
- High School
- Private School
- College/University
- Administrative Offices

- 1 Midwestern University
- 2 Highland School
- 3 Belle Aire School
- 4 Herrick Middle School
- 5 Pierce Downer School
- 6 DG North High School
- 7 Lester School
- 8 St. Mary of Gostyn School
- 9 St. Joseph School
- 10 Puffer School
- 11 Board of Education - Dist 58
- 12 Whittier School
- 13 First Baptist School
- 14 Avery Coonley School
- 15 Hillcrest School
- 16 O'Neill Middle School
- 17 Fairmount School
- 18 Grace Baptist School
- 19 Indian Trail School
- 20 Good Shepherd Lutheran School
- 21 Board of Education - Dist 99
- 22 DG South High School
- 23 Kingsley School
- 24 El Sierra School
- 25 Marquette Manor Baptist Academy



## UTILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

The Village oversees the maintenance of essential infrastructure, ensuring the efficient operation of utilities and transportation systems. Responsibilities include managing and maintaining water and stormwater systems, parkway trees, traffic signals, streetlights, roads, and parking facilities. As Downers Grove continues to evolve, it is important that the Village continues to prioritize infrastructure upgrades and expansions to meet the needs of the community and support long-term sustainability.

## STORMWATER

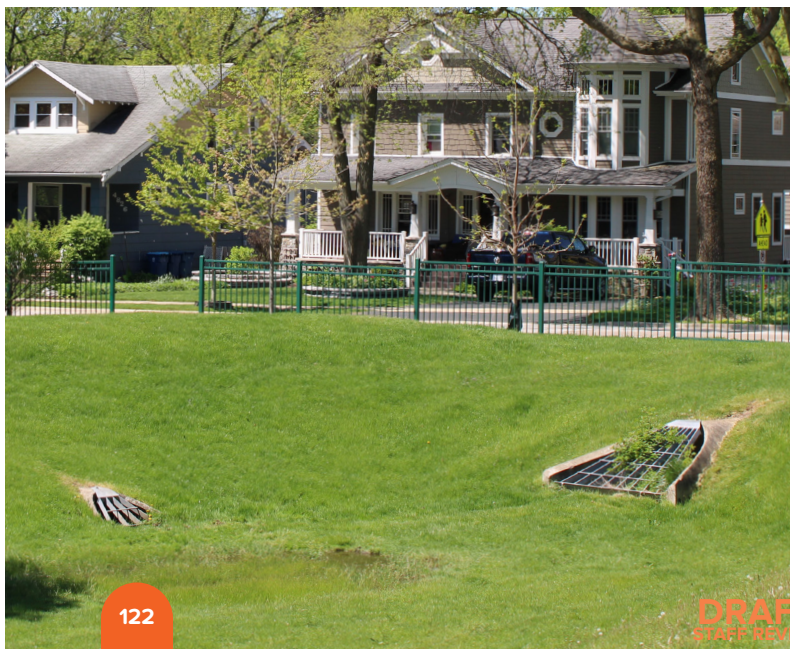
The Village's stormwater management system includes drainage structures, detention facilities, ditches, storm sewers, streams, and culverts. The Village actively enhances stormwater management through green infrastructure, such as rain gardens and bioswales, and enforces regulations under the Stormwater and Flood Plain Ordinance. To strengthen resilience and sustainability, the Village should continue modernizing its stormwater system while integrating green infrastructure solutions into future projects. By prioritizing best practices, the Village can further its progress toward a more resilient and sustainable community.

# 250+

Miles of sewer mains are operated by the Sanitary District

# 60,000+

Residents and neighboring community members are served by Downers Grove Sanitary District



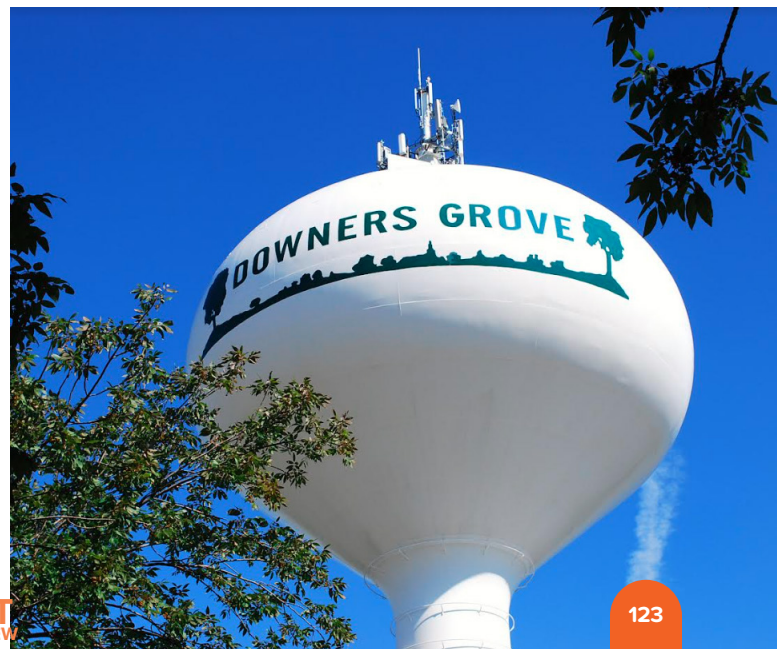
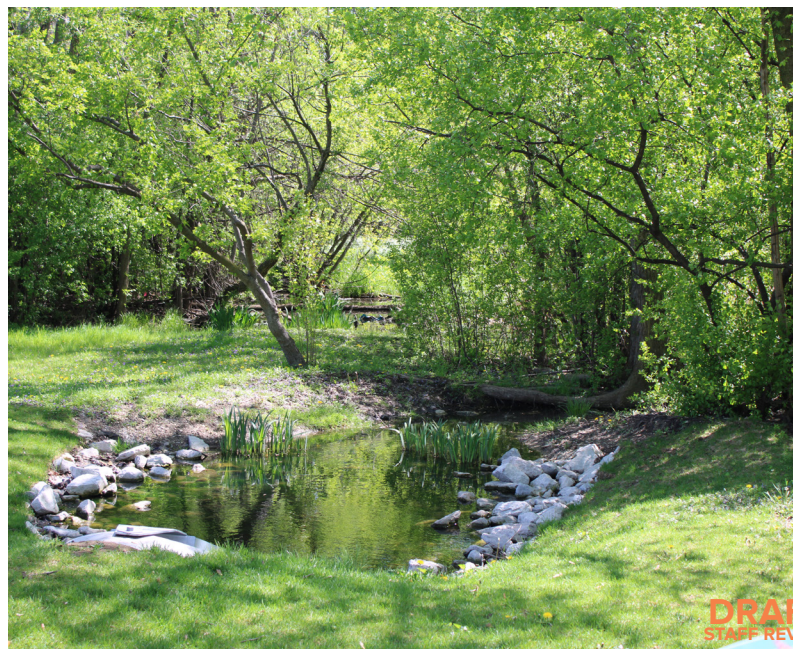


## WATER SERVICE

The Village provides a clean and reliable water supply through the DuPage Water Commission (DWC), which sources Lake Michigan water from the City of Chicago. To maintain high-quality standards, the Village conducts annual water quality reports, ensuring compliance with state and federal regulations while monitoring for potential contaminants. In alignment with the Illinois Lead Service Line Replacement and Notification Act (LSLRNA), the Village is committed to replacing all lead service lines, with the replacement program set to begin in 2027. In the meantime, efforts are underway to secure funding to assist residents with private-side replacements. Looking ahead, the Village should continue investing in system upgrades, leak detection, and water conservation to enhance efficiency, reduce waste, and support long-term sustainability. Strengthening regional partnerships and adopting innovative technologies will further ensure a resilient and high-quality water supply for future generations.

## WASTEWATER

The Downers Grove Sanitary District provides wastewater treatment for Downers Grove and neighboring communities, serving over 60,000 residents daily. With 250 miles of sewer mains and a treatment facility capable of processing 11 million gallons per day, the system is essential to public health. To ensure infrastructure keeps pace with development, the Village should actively collaborate with the Downers Grove Sanitary District's Board of Local Improvements and encourage its participation in capital planning discussions. Proactive investments in wastewater management will support long-term community needs while maintaining environmental and public health standards.





## COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Community engagement in Downers Grove can be strengthened by investing in spaces that bring people together. Well-maintained community facilities and thoughtfully designed gathering spaces serve as hubs for social interaction, cultural activities, and civic engagement. Supporting the development of new spaces while maintaining and enhancing existing facilities will create more opportunities for residents of all ages to connect, collaborate, and participate in local events.

### INCREASE THIRD SPACES

Downers Grove has a limited number of public gathering spaces, including the Public Library, the Lincoln Center, the Recreation Center, and the newly constructed Civic Center, all of which provide opportunities for education, recreation, and civic engagement. To expand social gathering opportunities, the Village should actively support the development of third spaces—informal, community-oriented places where residents can connect, interact, and engage outside of home and work.

## COMMUNITY AND CULTURE

Downers Grove is a community that thrives on its strong sense of connection and culture. Residents celebrate the community's unique heritage through seasonal events, local artwork, and distinctive landmarks that showcase its history. By focusing on preserving and enhancing community culture, deep relationships between residents and businesses are fostered, creating a place where people feel connected and engaged. As the Village continues to enhance its identity, Downers Grove will remain a welcoming community known for its character, charm, and appeal.

### SUPPORT LOCAL EVENTS

The community hosts a variety of events throughout the year, including Rotary GroveFest, the Fine Arts Festival, and the Ice Sculpture Festival. These festivals celebrate the arts, culture, and heritage of the community, while strengthening local pride and identity. While the Village does not host these events, the Village does service to these events upon request.



## ENCOURAGE PUBLIC ART

Art has the power to transform public spaces, creating dynamic environments that foster a strong sense of community and cultural exchange. In Downers Grove, public art not only beautifies the area but also drives economic growth by attracting visitors, supporting local businesses, and providing a platform for artists to display their work. The Downers Grove Fine Arts Festival showcases diverse artworks in the downtown area, uniting residents and visitors in celebration of creativity. Additionally, MAKEart Studios offers art classes that encourage community involvement, while the Downers Grove Artists' Guild regularly organizes exhibitions to highlight the work of artists. To remain a lively community, the Village should continue to support the contributions of local artists through organized installations and events.

## PRESERVE LOCAL LANDMARKS

Preserving historic landmarks is essential to maintaining Downers Grove's unique identity and heritage. The Village has made significant efforts to protect and celebrate its historic resources. Additionally, local organizations like Friends of the Edwards House and the Downers Grove Historical Society help raise awareness about the importance of preservation. To maintain the historic character of the community, the Village should continue to preserve local landmarks and support ongoing educational initiatives.

DRAFT  
STAFF REVIEW



## RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are provided for this chapter's sections.

### PUBLIC SERVICES

- ☐ Conduct regular assessments of public service levels to ensure they meet the Village's growing needs.
- ☐ Implement sustainability measures within public facilities to enhance efficiency and reduce environmental impact.
- ☐ Continue to invest in modern equipment and technology to improve emergency response times and service effectiveness.
- ☐ Conduct regular training and professional development for law enforcement and fire personnel to ensure best practices.
- ☐ Evaluate station locations and service distribution to ensure equitable emergency response across all neighborhoods.

### HEALTH AND MEDICAL FACILITIES

- ☐ Continue partnerships with local healthcare providers to assess the community's healthcare needs and identify gaps in services.
- ☐ Work with Northwestern University to explore opportunities for expanding specialized healthcare services and providing additional clinical training opportunities for students.
- ☐ Continue to provide social service referrals to the community.

### EDUCATION

- ☐ Continue to engage with District 58, District 99, and other local educational institutions.
- ☐ Encourage partnerships between schools, local businesses, and community organizations to support educational programs.
- ☐ Continue to promote the continued operation and improvement of both public and private school facilities, ensure they do not impact residential neighborhoods, and cooperate with the various organizations to maintain high quality school sites and facilities.



## UTILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

- ☐ Continue to conduct regular assessments of existing Village utility infrastructure to ensure operation and prioritize maintenance, urgent upgrades, and replacements of aging infrastructure.
- ☐ Continue to ensure compliance with the Stormwater and Flood Plain Ordinance in all new development projects.
- ☐ Continue to review and update the Stormwater and Flood Plain Ordinance to ensure it reflects changing environmental conditions and best practices.
- ☐ Continue to require developers to integrate sustainable stormwater management practices in new developments.
- ☐ Continue to evaluate existing storm sewers, ditches, and drainage infrastructure to identify areas in need of improvement.
- ☐ Continue to conduct annual water quality reports to ensure compliance with state and federal regulations.
- ☐ Continue to educate and inform residents about the Lead Service Line Replacement plan, ensuring the timeline, requirements, and available assistance is communicated before the program begins in 2027.

## COMMUNITY FACILITIES

- ☐ Implement the *Guiding DG Active Transportation Plan* to increase accessibility to public gathering spaces.
- ☐ Implement the *Guiding DG Streetscapes Plan* to provide flexible-use areas in the Downtown and activate underutilized public space at Fairview.

## COMMUNITY AND CULTURE

- ☐ Continue to provide a structured review process to assess event success, identify challenges, and improve future planning.
- ☐ Consider partnering with local artists and organizations to create rotating exhibits and interactive art displays.
- ☐ Implement the *Guiding DG Streetscapes Plan* to incorporate art into the downtown.
- ☐ Continue updating and enforcing the Historic Preservation Ordinance to protect local landmarks.
- ☐ Consider incentives, such as grants or increased density to encourage restoration and adaptive reuse of historic buildings.
- ☐ Support on-going efforts, such as the “Downers Grove History Walk,” to highlight the significance of local historical sites.
- ☐ Consider developing a public art policy.

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# SUSTAINABILITY, PARKS, RECREATION, AND OPEN SPACE

10



*As Downers Grove continues to evolve, prioritizing sustainability is essential to building a resilient and thriving community. Advancements in technology and sustainable solutions provide opportunities for the Village to enhance environmental stewardship. Equally important is continuing to ensure that all residents have access to high-quality parks and open spaces by maintaining a well-connected system within walking and biking distance of neighborhoods.*

*The Sustainability, Parks, Recreation, and Open Space chapter highlights the importance of green infrastructure, sustainable practices, and accessible recreational amenities. It outlines recommendations to strengthen the Village's commitment to environmental resilience while ensuring that parks and open spaces remain an integral part of the community's identity. As Downers Grove continues to change, these efforts will help sustain a high quality of life for all residents.*

#### *Goal and Key Recommendations*

### **PROMOTE SUSTAINABILITY TO ENSURE COMMUNITY RESILIENCE AND TO PROTECT NATURAL SPACES. MEET THE RECREATIONAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL NEEDS OF THE COMMUNITY BY FOSTERING PARTNERSHIPS TO MAINTAIN A COMPLETE SYSTEM OF PARKS AND OPEN SPACES WITHIN WALKING AND BIKING DISTANCES OF EXISTING NEIGHBORHOODS.**

- Evaluate and promote incentive programs for private landowners to participate in sustainability efforts, including the preservation and adaptive reuse of existing structures.
- Work with the Park District to implement their Comprehensive Master Plan.
- Expand public electric vehicle (EV) charging stations and encourage or require new developments/redevelopments to incorporate EV infrastructure.
- Partner with private property owners, Park District, School Districts and businesses to preserve and expand the Village's urban canopy.
- Steward existing natural areas and new green spaces to increase biodiversity.
- Promote climate resilience strategies to prioritize environmental protection.
- Consider expanding recycling and composting options for residents and businesses.
- Continue to participate and maintain a high rating in the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Community Rating System.



## SUSTAINABLE INFRASTRUCTURE AND PRACTICES

As Downers Grove continues to grow, the Village is committed to building a sustainable future through clean energy, green infrastructure, electric vehicle (EV) support, and enhanced recycling initiatives. Strong energy partnerships, expanding green infrastructure, the development of EV infrastructure, and continued recycling programs will support sustainable living and transportation and ensure that Downers Grove continues to be a sustainable place for future generations.

# 400%

Surge in Downers Grove's EV registrations over the past five years

## CLEAN ENERGY AND RESILIENT GRID

ComEd, the primary electricity provider for Downers Grove, serves approximately 70% of Illinois' population. While some residents have already adopted clean energy solutions like solar panels, broader efforts are needed to strengthen sustainability and grid resilience. The Village can support these initiatives by reviewing and updating permitting processes to facilitate the integration of systems such as geothermal, small-scale wind, and passive solar. Additionally, collaborating with energy suppliers to reduce fossil fuel dependence and promoting local energy storage solutions, such as battery systems, will help create a more sustainable and resilient energy future for the community.

## GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

The Village has made significant investments in both hard and green infrastructure to manage stormwater, increasing biodiversity and benefiting from natural stormwater management capabilities. This approach includes a combination of direct and contracted services, along with stormwater regulations that guide development patterns. To further align with sustainability goals, the Village should continue to encourage green infrastructure solutions, such as naturalized detention facilities, bioswales, rain gardens, and tree preservation, to enhance stormwater management and promote a more resilient community.





## ELECTRIC VEHICLES INFRASTRUCTURE

Investing in electric vehicle infrastructure supports sustainable transportation and reduces carbon emissions. Electric vehicles are becoming increasingly common, with the number of electric vehicles registered in Downers Grove increasing more than 400% in the past five years. The Village needs to plan for the expansion of its electric vehicle infrastructure as new vehicle technology presents an opportunity for sustainable mobility and transportation in Downers Grove. Currently, Downers Grove has over 30 electric vehicle charging stations dispersed throughout the area. Community outreach indicates that 20% of participants advocate for further expansion of EV facilities, highlighting a growing demand. To meet this need, the Village should continue enhancing its electric vehicle infrastructure by exploring new strategic locations for installing charging stations.

## RECYCLING

Recycling initiatives help reduce waste in landfills, conserve energy usage, and minimize environmental pollution, contributing to a more sustainable use of materials. The Village contracts with Republic Services for solid waste management, including collection and recycling, relying on infrastructure outside of Downers Grove for services. To strengthen local sustainability efforts, the Village should promote strategies that improve recycling and composting within the community. This could include enhancing recycling in public areas such as downtown and in parks, as well as encouraging yard composting or the development of a community composting facility.

**30+**

Electric Vehicle charging stations  
in Downers Grove





## PARKS AND RECREATION

Parks and recreational amenities enhance Downers Grove's community identity and overall quality of life. These spaces provide residents and visitors opportunities for leisure, social gatherings, and outdoor activities, fostering a sense of connection and well-being. With more than 1,000 acres of public open space, Downers Grove offers a range of possibilities for outdoor recreation, from peaceful nature walks to active sports and family-friendly events. Access to parks, trails, and natural areas not only contributes to physical and mental health but also strengthens community ties. By ensuring that all residents, regardless of location or background, have equitable access to these recreational opportunities, Downers Grove can continue to exceed local and national benchmarks.

# 1,000+

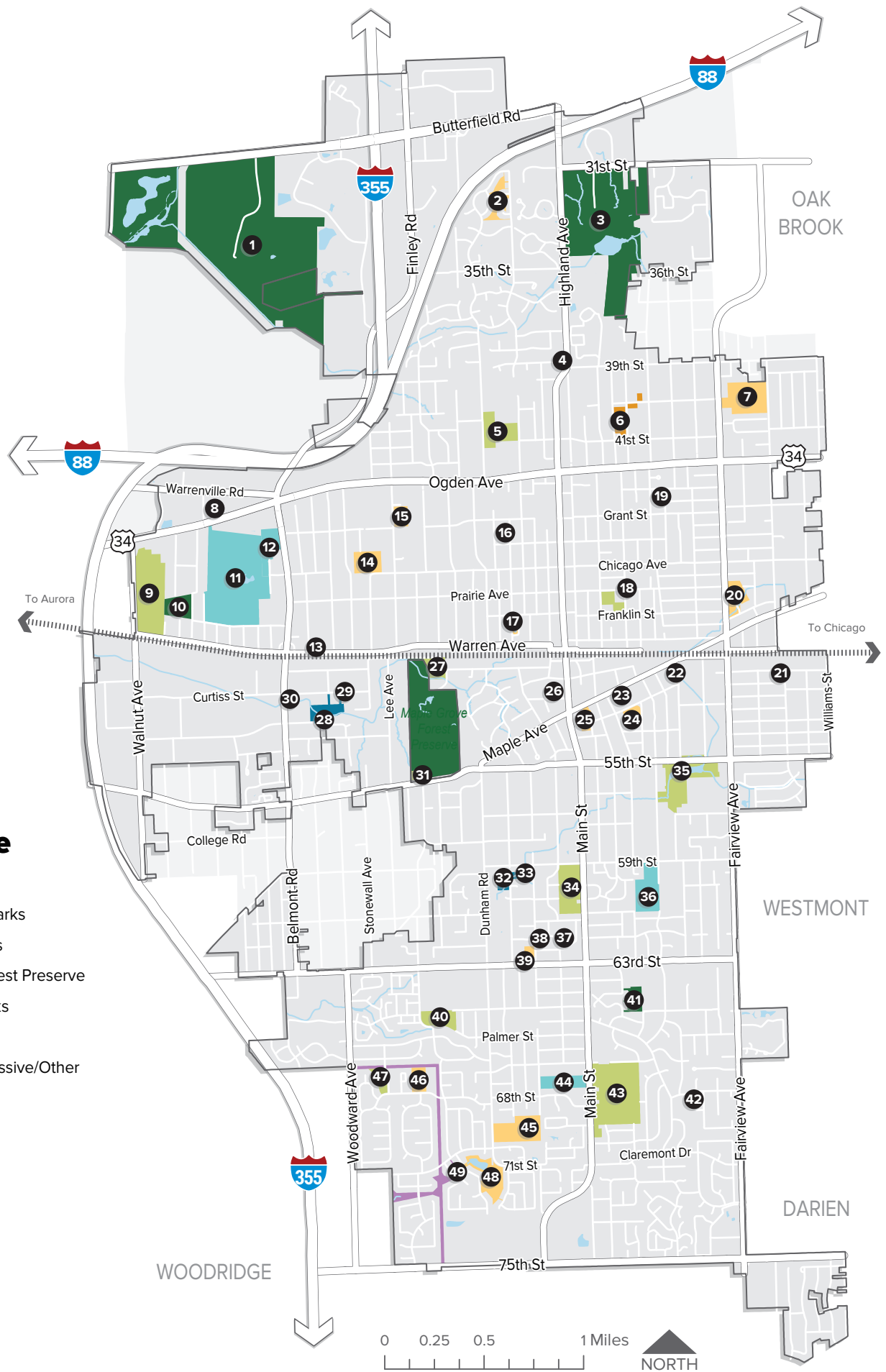
Acres of public open space

- |                               |                                   |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1 Hidden Lake Forest Preserve | 26 Fishel Park                    |
| 2 Northside Park              | 27 Gilbert Park                   |
| 3 Lyman Woods                 | 28 Bending Oaks                   |
| 4 Highland and 39th           | 29 Sterling North Park            |
| 5 Doerhoefer Park             | 30 Belmont and Curtiss            |
| 6 Wallingford Park            | 31 Memorial Park                  |
| 7 Whitlock Park               | 32 Walter B. Carrol               |
| 8 Administrative Office       | 33 Frankowiak Park                |
| 9 Gelwicks Park               | 34 Ebersold Park                  |
| 10 Belmont Prairie            | 35 Patriot Park (Barth Pond)      |
| 11 Belmont Golf Course        | 36 YMCA                           |
| 12 Recreation Center          | 37 62nd and Carpenter             |
| 13 Loy Park                   | 38 62nd and Brookbank             |
| 14 Hoopers Hollow Park        | 39 Ned Bell Park                  |
| 15 Lee and Grant Park         | 40 Ruth K. Powers Park            |
| 16 Downer Burial Place        | 41 Spring Park                    |
| 17 Prince Park (Prince Pond)  | 42 68th and Blackburn             |
| 18 Washington Park            | 43 McCollum Park                  |
| 19 Sterling and Davis Park    | 44 Mar-Duke Farm                  |
| 20 Hummer Park                | 45 O'Brien Park                   |
| 21 2nd and Cumnor             | 46 Concord Square                 |
| 22 Blodgett and Elmwood       | 47 Stonewall and Concord          |
| 23 Wandschneider Musuem       | 48 Dunham Place                   |
| 24 Randall Park               | 49 Northern Illinois Gas Easement |
| 25 Lincoln Community Center   |                                   |



## Parks and Open Space

- Mini Parks
- Neighborhood Parks
- Community Parks
- Natural Area/Forest Preserve
- Trails/Linear Parks
- Special Use
- Undeveloped/Passive/Other





## INCREASE PARK ACCESS

Accessible parks provide essential social, health, and environmental benefits to residents. To ensure all Downers Grove residents have convenient access to green spaces, the Village should implement the *Guiding DG Active Transportation Plan* which identifies strategies to improve overall accessibility. Expanding and improving equitable access to parks will not only increase recreational opportunities for all residents but also contribute to a healthier, more connected community.

## EXPAND TRAIL CONNECTIONS

Expanding Downers Grove's trail network will enhance connectivity, promote outdoor recreation, and strengthen links between neighborhoods, parks, and natural areas. Existing trails, such as Belmont Prairie Path, Ebersold Park Trail, McCollum Park Trail, and Lyman Woods Trail, provide valuable connections but remain limited in reach. To improve accessibility, the Village should implement the *Guiding DG Active Transportation Plan* which identifies neighborhood connections to parks and natural areas. A well-connected trail system not only benefits residents but can also serve as a tourism asset, attracting visitors and supporting local businesses.

## PRESERVE NATURAL RESOURCES

The Village prioritizes both growth and conservation by preserving its natural resources, including watersheds, wooded areas, and floodplains. The Village, Downers Grove Park District, and the DuPage Forest Preserve District manage over 200 acres of natural areas, featuring critical ecosystems such as Lacey Creek, St. Joseph Creek, and Prentiss Creek, along with 15 miles of streams essential for stormwater management. To safeguard these assets, the Village should maintain and strengthen regulations that prevent development from negatively impacting these environmentally sensitive areas, ensuring the long-term health and resilience of its natural landscapes.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are provided for this chapter's sections.

### SUSTAINABLE INFRASTRUCTURE AND PRACTICES

- ☐ Continue to encourage the development of renewable energy projects on residential and commercial properties.
- ☐ Continue to expand and implement environmentally friendly and sustainable practices and solutions like rain gardens, bioswales, and green roofs in redevelopment and new projects.
- ☐ Promote existing incentive programs offered by ComEd and the State of Illinois.
- ☐ Develop policies and incentives to support EV infrastructure and identify strategic locations for new EV stations.
- ☐ Engage with community members through an education campaign to spread awareness and education regarding proper disposal and recycling of electronics, household hazardous waste, and cooking oil.

### PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

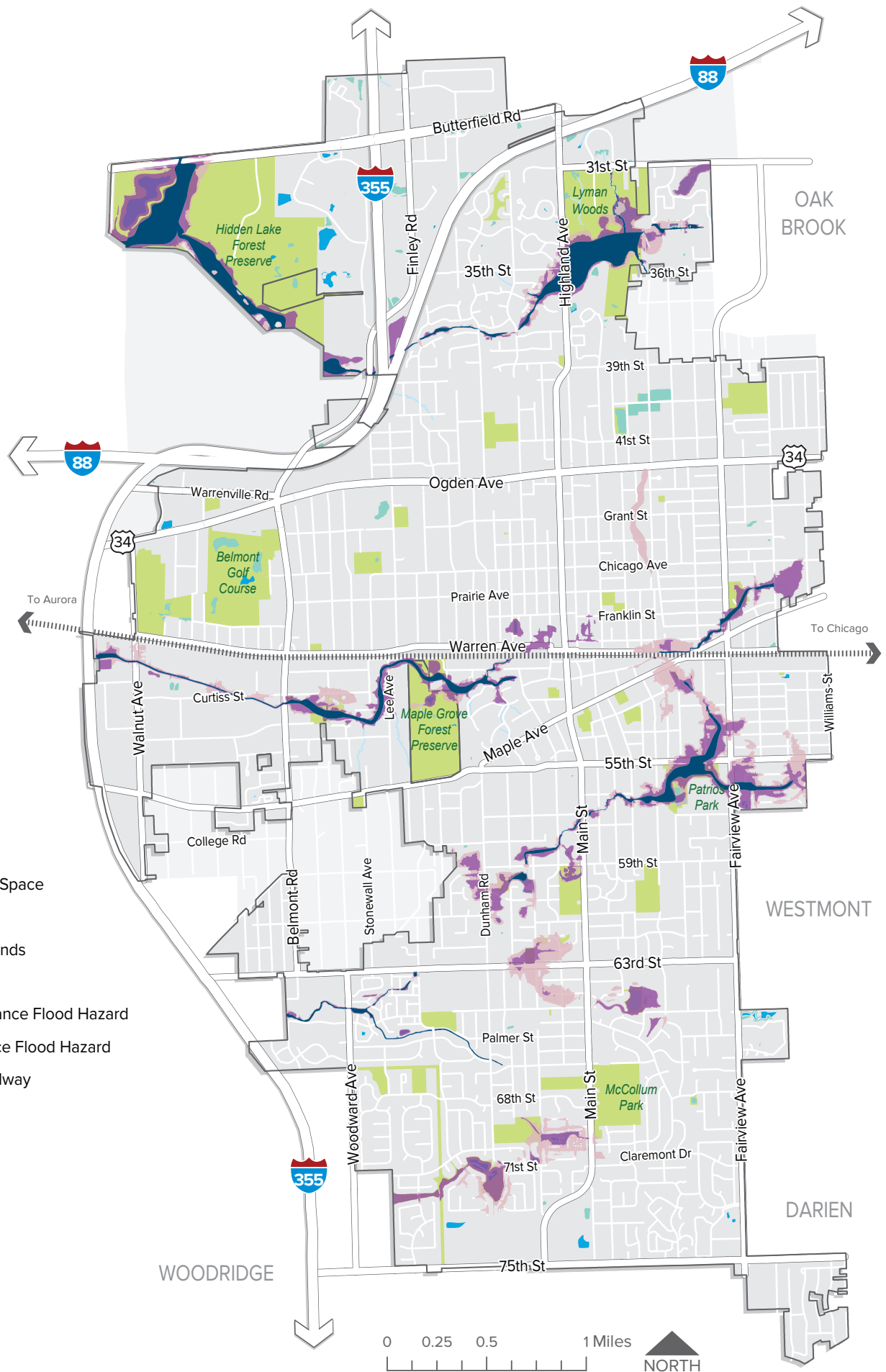
- ☐ Implement the *Guiding DG Active Transportation Plan* to expand the pedestrian and bicycle networks.
- ☐ Continue to work with the Downers Grove Park District and DuPage County Forest Preserve to maintain, manage and preserve trees, natural landscapes and critical habitats.
- ☐ Continue to restrict development in environmentally sensitive areas to protect natural habitats and stormwater management systems.
- ☐ Work with the Downers Grove Park District to implement key recommendations from their 2024-2033 Comprehensive Master Plan.
- ☐ Increase community awareness through educational programs on the importance of conservation and sustainable land use practices.

## Natural Resources

- Parks and Open Space
- Waterbody
- Marsh and Wetlands

### Flood Hazard

- 0.2% Annual Chance Flood Hazard
- 1% Annual Chance Flood Hazard
- Regulatory Floodway





# IMPLEMENTATION

11

DRAFT



The Implementation Strategy will describe the specific actions required to carry out the new Comprehensive Plan, including recommendations regarding zoning updates and other regulations, priority improvement projects, potential funding sources, and implementation techniques, as well as general administration and follow-up to the Plan. Actions tied to the other related projects will be emphasized to ensure actions supporting these critical cross-cutting topics and plan documents are easily identified.





## USE OF THE PLAN

Effective implementation of the Plan will require cooperation of various stakeholders and organizations, including Village staff, elected and appointed officials, public agencies, the local business community, property owners, developers, and residents. Together, these groups will play a key role in realizing the Village's vision for future.

To promote regular use of the Plan, the Village should:

- ☐ Post the Comprehensive Plan document on the Village website and make it available as a hardcopy at the Civic Center and the Downers Grove Public Library.
- ☐ Educate the community on how the Plan connects to development projects and other proposals occurring in the Village.
- ☐ Guide the Village Council, Village staff, the Planning and Zoning Commission, and other Village Boards and Commissions in the administration, interpretation, and continuous application of the Plan.
- ☐ Meet with key department heads and officials to explain the purpose, importance, and benefits of the Plan.
- ☐ Maintain a list of possible amendments, issues, or needs that may be the subject of change, addition, or deletion from the Plan.
- ☐ Coordinate with and assist the Village Boards and Commission in the Plan amendment process, as necessary.

## REVIEWING AND UPDATING THE PLAN

The Comprehensive Plan is not a static document and is intended to evolve with shifts in trends, issues, and opportunities. Regularly reviewing and updating the Plan is important. For instance, if the community's goal changes or new issues arise that are not covered by the current Plan, it should be updated to reflect these changes. While amendments to the Plan can be proposed at any time through a petition, the Village should conduct a systematic review of the Plan annually and consider updating it every five to seven years.

To align planning efforts with financial strategies, the annual review of the Plan's actions should be coordinated with the Village's budget and Community Investment Program (CIP) preparation. This integration allows for capital improvements and other programmatic changes to be incorporated into the fiscal commitments for the upcoming year. Regular reviews ensure the Plan stays relevant and responsive to the community's needs and goals.

## REVIEW ZONING AND DEVELOPMENT CONTROLS

While the Comprehensive Plan provides a vision for the community, the Village's development regulations are one of the primary tools that can be used to implement the Plan recommendations. Following adoption of the Comprehensive Plan, the Village should consider updating the current zoning ordinance and related ordinances to ensure that regulations reflect Village policy and the community's desires. Amendments to development regulations and design standards should consider complementary programs and incentives that can be used to achieve the community's vision for economic development, neighborhood character, connectivity, and other aspects of the Plan.

## DEVELOPMENT DECISION-MAKING

Village officials should encourage carefully planned growth by utilizing the future land use plan and associated policies as part of the community's land use decision-making process. This should include requests to Village Council and the Village's boards and commissions. As part of the Comprehensive Plan implementation, Village staff will regularly monitor the use of the Plan and identify opportunities to implement the Plan in regular decision-making processes for the Village.

## PARTNERS

Given Downers Grove's position within the region, it is essential that the Village develop and maintain partnerships with various groups and organizations. Facilitating regular communication and cooperation with partners will support the implementation of the recommendations and identify opportunities to work collaboratively toward mutual interests. Further, it will facilitate a greater regional perspective on how issues are addressed in the area.

Partner list:

- ☐ Village Boards and Commission
- ☐ Chamber630
- ☐ Downers Grove Economic Development Corporation (DGEDC)
- ☐ School District 58
- ☐ Community High School District 99
- ☐ Downers Grove Park District
- ☐ Downers Grove Sanitary District
- ☐ Downers Grove Public Library
- ☐ Downtown Downers Grove Management Corporation
- ☐ Illinois Small Business Development Center (SBDC)
- ☐ Federal Highways Administration (FHWA)
- ☐ Developers
- ☐ Property Owners
- ☐ DuPage County
- ☐ DuPage Water Commission
- ☐ Chicago Metropolitan Agency of Planning
- ☐ Metra
- ☐ Illinois Office of Tourism
- ☐ Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT)
- ☐ Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity



## POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCE

The following section outlines potential funding sources that the Village can pursue to support the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan. It's important to recognize that funding opportunities are subject to change over time. Therefore, the Village should consistently research and monitor various grants, funding agencies, and programs to stay updated on application deadlines, funding specifications, and new opportunities. These funding programs are categorized below:

- ☐ General Economic Development
- ☐ Transportation and Infrastructure
- ☐ Community Facilities and Infrastructure
- ☐ Parks, Trails, and Open Spaces

## GENERAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

### Tax Increment Financing

One of the primary purposes of Tax Increment Finance (TIF) funding is to incentivize and attract desired development within key commercial areas. TIF utilizes future increases in property tax revenues generated within a designated area or district to pay for improvements and further incentivize continued reinvestment. As the Equalized Assessed Value (EAV) of properties within a TIF District increases, the TIF fund captures incremental growth in property tax over the base year that the TIF was established and reinvests those funds within the district. The maximum life of a TIF district in the State of Illinois is 23 years, although the State Legislature can authorize up to a 12-year extension.

TIF dollars can be used for projects like infrastructure, streetscaping, public improvements, land assemblage, and offsetting the cost of development. Land assemblage is a strategy employed in land acquisition where two or more adjacent parcels are acquired and consolidated into single parcel.

### **Business Assistance Program**

A business assistance grant program can help attract specific retail businesses and support existing ones within a designated area. These grants are usually provided as matching funds, covering a set percentage of eligible expenditures. The expenditures are typically limited to build-out costs, signage, moving expenses, and physical improvements to the property necessary to accommodate a new business or the expansion of an existing business. The size of the grant available can also be tied to the potential impact the proposed project could have on the area. For example, the grant could vary based on the anticipated sales tax to be generated by the project.

### **Special Service Area**

Special Service Areas (SSAs) can be used to fund improvements and programs within a designated boundary. They function by adding a tax to properties within the designated area, with the collected revenue reinvested into projects that benefit those properties. However, an SSA can be rejected if 51% of property owners and electors in the area oppose it. SSA funds may be used for streetscape enhancements, additional trash collection, district marketing, and special events.

### **SPARK Program by Downers Grove Economic Development Corporation (DGEDC)**

SPARK is a Community Navigator Program designed to support the retention and growth of small businesses in our community. Sponsored by the State of Illinois, the program targets underserved minority, rural, veteran, and women-owned businesses, helping them access local, state, and federal resources. SPARK aims to ignite business activity through events, technical assistance, and media outreach, fostering collaboration, informing the business community about available economic support, and sharing success stories to inspire growth and innovation.

### **Business Development Districts**

As authorized by Division 74.3 of the Municipal Code of the State of Illinois, a municipality may designate, after public hearings, an area as a Business Development District (BDD). A BDD would allow the Village to levy up to an additional one percent retailer's occupation tax, one percent hotel tax, and one percent sales tax within a designated district. Similar to a TIF district, a BDD has a maximum life of 23 years. BDD legislation allows municipalities to use tax revenue growth from BDD properties to fund district improvements. These funds can support infrastructure upgrades, public improvements, site acquisition, and land assemblage, making them useful for identified subareas or emerging business and industrial parks. However, since a BDD generates less revenue than a TIF district, it is best suited for funding small-scale improvements and property maintenance programs.

### **Tax Abatement**

Property tax abatements serve as an incentive to attract businesses and stimulate the local economy while addressing various community issues. In Illinois, municipalities and other taxing districts can abate any portion of the taxes they levy on a property. The abatement period cannot exceed 10 years, and the total combined abated taxes across all taxing districts must not surpass \$4 million during that time. A taxing district can administer the abatement by one of two methods: 1) lowering the tax rate; or 2) initiating a property tax freeze where the property is taxed based on a pre-development assessed value. In some circumstances, municipalities can also petition the County to lower a property's assessment. For example, a commercial property could be assessed at a percentage equivalent to that of a residential property. This is an effective means of lowering a property tax bill; however, it should be noted that this method impacts all taxing districts and not just the district making the request.

### **Sales tax rebates**

Municipalities in Illinois offer sales tax rebate programs as economic incentives to attract and retain businesses. These programs typically involve the community sharing or rebating a percentage of the sales tax revenue generated by the business. The Village uses sales tax rebate incentives to attract and retain its auto-dealership cluster along Ogden Avenue, with each agreement reviewed by the DGEDC and approved by the Village Council.



### **Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT)**

Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) functions similarly to tax abatements, allowing the Village to reduce a business's property tax burden for a set period. Under this arrangement, the Village and property owners agree on an annual fixed payment in place of property taxes, which may also be calculated as a percentage of the property's income. PILOT can also be a means of reducing the fiscal impact on the Village of a nonprofit, institutional use, or other non-taxpaying entity located on a key site. While such uses can be desirable as activity generators, they do not contribute financially to the general maintenance and upkeep of municipal infrastructure and services in the same way that taxed properties do. Provisions can be made to offset that negative impact by allowing the Village to be compensated for at least a portion of the revenue that would otherwise be collected in the form of property tax.

### **Incubators**

Business incubators provide low-cost space and specialized support to small and startup companies. Such services might include administrative consulting, access to office equipment and training, and assistance in accessing credit. Incubators are typically owned by public entities like municipalities or economic development agencies, incubators subsidize rents and services using grants. Beyond job creation and economic activity, their primary goal is to foster the growth and expansion of startups within the community.

### **On-Site and Façade Improvement Programs**

An On-Site Improvement Program assists property owners with upgrading their existing parking lots and installing on-site landscaping. The program would apply to improvements to surface parking areas, privately owned open space, and other areas not directly related to façade features. This could function separately or in conjunction with a Façade Improvement Program.

A Façade Improvement Program encourages projects that contribute to the economic revitalization and character of an area by providing financial and technical assistance for façade improvements. Building façades, both individually and collectively, contribute significantly to first impressions of an area. By implementing a Façade Improvement Program, current property owners are provided an opportunity to improve their outdated or failing structures without having to relocate.

### **Enterprise Zones**

The Illinois Enterprise Zone Program is designed to stimulate economic growth and revitalization through state and local tax incentives, regulatory relief, and improved governmental services. The Zone became effective January 1, 2015, and is focused on industrial and commercial development. It has become a catalyst to economic vitality through occupancy of vacant facilities, growth of existing industries, employment of residents, and overall economic growth.

## TRANSPORTATION

### The Illinois Motor Fuel Tax (MFT) Fund

The Village receives revenue from the Illinois Motor Fuel Tax (MFT) Fund that can be applied to fund critical transportation infrastructure road projects. According to the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), these funds come from a tax on operating motor vehicles on public highways and recreational watercraft on Illinois waters, based on fuel consumption. Each month, a warrant is issued to the municipal treasurer for the Village's share of the MFT funds collected in the previous month. Monthly distribution details are available on IDOT's website.

### Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP)

The Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) aims to achieve a significant reduction in traffic fatalities and serious injuries on all public roads. Administered by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), HSIP funding requires states to develop, implement, and update a State Highway Safety Program (SHSP), create a project or strategy plan to address safety concerns, and regularly evaluate the SHSP. Eligible local projects include pedestrian hybrid beacons and roadway enhancements that separate pedestrians from vehicles, such as medians and pedestrian crossing islands.

### Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program (ITEP)

With federal reimbursement, IDOT administers Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program (ITEP) funds. ITEP funds have historically been available for up to 50 percent of the costs of right-of-way and easement acquisition, and up to 80 percent of the costs for preliminary engineering, utility relocations, construction engineering, and construction costs. ITEP eligible projects include:

- ☐ Pedestrian/bicycle facility projects that create an alternative transportation option for access to workplaces, businesses, schools, shopping centers, and communities. Pedestrian/bicycle facility projects can be new construction or improvements to existing facilities.
- ☐ Landscape/streetscape projects.
- ☐ Scenic beautification projects.

- ☐ Conversion of abandoned railroad corridors to trails.
- ☐ Historic preservation and rehabilitation of historic transportation facilities.
- ☐ Vegetation management in transportation rights-of-way.
- ☐ Archaeological activities relating to impacts from implementation of a transportation project.
- ☐ Stormwater management control and water pollution prevention or abatement related to highway construction or due to highway runoff.
- ☐ Reduce vehicle-caused wildlife mortality or restore and maintain connectivity among terrestrial or aquatic habitats.
- ☐ Construction of turnouts, overlooks, and viewing areas.

### Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STBGP)

Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STBGP) funds are administered by IDOT and allocated to coordinating regional councils to be used for roadway and roadway-related items. STBGP funds may be used for a variety of projects, including roadway rehabilitation, reconstruction, and restoration; widening and adding lanes; intersection improvements; traffic signage improvements; and green infrastructure funding. Projects must be identified in the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program and be consistent with the Long-Range Statewide Transportation Plan and the Metropolitan Transportation Plan.

Urban STBGP is awarded by the region's Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and requires a 20 percent match, covered by the state and/or local funding. Generally, these funds cannot be used for local roads or rural minor collector projects, except for bridge and tunnel projects, safety improvements, fringe and corridor parking, recreational trails, pedestrian and bicycle projects, Safe Routes to School initiatives, boulevard and roadway projects within divided highway rights-of-way, and the inspection or evaluation of highway assets.

### Surface Transportation Program (STP)

Surface Transportation Program (STP) supports highways and bridges, transit capital improvements and projects, as well as bike and pedestrian projects. Municipalities, transit agencies, and other public sponsors may request federal funds for major roadway reconstructions, bridge replacements, Complete Streets, freight or transit improvements, and grade separations. Projects are scored on transportation impact, planning factors, regional benefit, safety, asset condition, inclusive growth, and readiness.



## ComEd EV Rebates

In February 2025, ComEd announced a \$100 million rebate program to help more customers take steps toward electric vehicles (EVs) in 2025. To reduce cost barriers to EVs, the rebate covers three programs: residential EV charger and installation costs, all-electric fleet vehicles and business and public sector make ready charging infrastructure. Specifically, the program offers \$53 million in rebates for business and public EV fleet purchases, \$38 million for non-residential charging station upgrades, and nearly \$9 million to help residential customers install at-home chargers with rebates up to \$3,750 per charger. This program aims to boost electric vehicle adoption and expand charging infrastructure across northern Illinois by offering rebates to offset installation costs, encouraging both residential and commercial customers to switch to cleaner transportation while supporting broader sustainability goals.

## COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

### Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) Grants

The Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) offers financial support for projects to safeguard land, air, and water. This includes funding to enhance drinking water safety and improve water quality across the state's water bodies.

### Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant (EECBG)

**Program:** This program supports long-term sustainability efforts for Illinois municipalities and counties by funding energy planning and efforts to reduce energy use. The second round of funding offers grants between \$25,000 and \$150,000, with no matching funds required. The US Department of Energy (DOE) has allocated Downers Grove a sum of \$117,090.

**Energy Efficiency Assessment Program:** This program provides grants ranging from \$5,000 to \$25,000 to public housing authorities, local governments, or nonprofits to conduct energy efficiency assessments for eligible properties, such as single-family homes in environmental justice areas. Applications are open until the funds are exhausted.

**Energy Efficiency Trust Fund Grant Program:** Designed to fund energy efficiency improvements, this grant targets properties in environmental justice areas. Eligible projects range from \$25,000 to \$500,000, and a match is required. Grants are awarded on a first-come, first-served basis, and properties must have undergone an energy audit within the past five years.

### Public Water Supply Energy Efficiency Grant Program:

This program offers grants between \$20,000 and \$500,000 to upgrade energy efficiency at public water supply facilities. Projects must be based on an energy assessment conducted in the last five years, with a required match from the applicant.

### **Green Infrastructure Grant Opportunities (GIGO) Program**

The Green Infrastructure Grant Opportunities (GIGO) program provides funding for green infrastructure projects and best management practices to address water quality issues by reducing stormwater runoff. The state-financed program offers \$75,000 to \$2.5 million grants. The program matches 75 percent of costs, with 25 percent to be provided by the applicant.

### **Arts DuPage Grant Program**

The 2025 Arts DuPage Grant Program, funded by the DuPage Foundation, offers grants ranging from \$25,000 to \$2.5 million for arts and cultural enhancement projects within local governments. This state-financed initiative focuses on broadening access to arts and enhancing cultural experiences across DuPage County. It supports construction projects and land acquisitions that promote recreational and cultural community benefits. The program aims to encourage diverse and widespread participation in the arts through innovative outreach. Grant applications open in May and end in September.

### **Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy (C-PACE)**

C-PACE is an innovative financing tool that lets commercial property owners obtain 100 % long-term fixed rate financing for energy-efficiency, renewable-energy, water-conservation and electric vehicle charging building improvements. Eligible borrowers include owners of commercial, industrial, nonprofit and multi-family (5+ units) properties; single-family homes do not qualify. Typical projects range from HVAC, lighting and building-envelope retrofits to rooftop solar, EV-charging infrastructure and efficient new-build designs, allowing owners to start cash-flow-positive savings immediately because no upfront equity is required. C-PACE programs accept applications year-round.

### **The Grove Foundation Grant Program**

The Grove Foundation provides annual grants to support educational, recreational, and social programs benefiting Downers Grove residents. Since 1991, the foundation has distributed over \$300,000 to local organizations. These grants typically range from \$1,000 to \$10,000 and are awarded to nonprofits that enhance community's quality of life. Recent recipients include programs like Helping Children Grow, SEASPAR activities, and Blessings in a Backpack.

## PARKS AND RECREATION

### Park and Recreational Facilities Construction (PARC) Program

The Park and Recreational Facilities Construction (PARC) program is a state-financed program with grant funds offered to eligible local governments for park and recreation unit construction projects and land acquisition. Funded project amounts range from \$25,000 to \$2.5 million.

### Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR)

The Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) administers several grant-in-aid programs to help municipalities and other local agencies provide public outdoor recreational areas and facilities. The programs operate on a cost-reimbursement basis to a government or not-for-profit organization. Local governments can receive one grant per program each year, with no limit on the number of local governments that can be funded for a specific location. IDNR grants fall into three main categories: Open Space Land Acquisition and Development, Boat Access Area Development, and the Illinois Trails Grant Program.

#### *Open Space Land Acquisition and Development (OSLAD) Program*

The Open Space Land Acquisition and Development (OSLAD) program awards up to 50 percent of project costs up to a maximum of \$750,000 for acquisition and \$400,000 for development or renovation of recreational facilities. Eligible projects include playgrounds, outdoor nature areas, campgrounds, fishing piers, park roads and paths, and beaches. In 2024, the Downers Grove Park District received \$600,000 in OSLAD funding from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources for the McCollum Park Playground Improvement Project.

### *Illinois Trails Grant Programs*

The Illinois Trails Grant Programs provide five financial assistance grants for acquiring, developing, and occasionally maintaining trails for public recreation. These programs include the Bike Path Program, the Local Government Snowmobile Program, the Snowmobile Trail Establishment Fund, the Off-Highway Vehicle Program, and the Federal Recreational Trails Program.

IDNR administers these reimbursable grants under a 50 percent state, 50 percent local cost share. There is a \$200,000 maximum per project with \$1 million in grant funds available each year. Only off-road paths and trails with a hard paved or aggregate surface qualify. Funding may also be used for land acquisition to secure a linear corridor or right-of-way for bicycle path development.

### **Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)**

The Illinois Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) program, similar to the Open Space Land Acquisition and Development (OSLAD) program, provides grants to municipalities, counties, and school districts to be used for outdoor recreation projects. Projects require a 50 percent match.



# IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX

The *Guiding DG Comprehensive Plan* includes over 200 recommendations throughout the plan document, including strategies, policies and actions. These recommendations cover a broad range of topics and can be categorized into the four groups listed below. While each recommendation is important to the implementation of the *Guiding DG Comprehensive Plan*, recommendations falling into the last two groups (three and four) are not identified in the following implementation matrix.

The implementation matrix that is shown below consists of actions that the Village can start prior to the next formal review of the Comprehensive Plan in the next five to seven years. The table provides the Village Council the opportunity to identify High Priority Action Items as part of their Long Range Planning process which occurs every two years.

## RECOMMENDATION GROUPS

*(Included in the Implementation Table)*

1. **Village recommended actions.** These are recommendations that the Village can undertake as the principal party responsible for their review and implementation. Generally, these actions consist of changing regulations, developing programs and constructing capital projects. Examples of these recommendations include:
  - a. Allow ADUs in single-family detached districts as context-sensitive infill.
  - b. Consider amending the outdoor-lighting code to a dark-sky outdoor lighting code.
  - c. Prioritize native plantings in the right-of-way.
2. **Recommendations for partner organizations.** These recommendations call for the Village to support the on-going efforts by the Downers Grove Park District, local school districts, and other community service providers. Examples of these recommendations include:
  - a. Continue to promote the continued operation and improvement of both public and private school facilities.
  - b. Work with Midwestern University and other health partners to explore opportunities for expanding specialized healthcare services.

*(Not included in the Implementation Table)*

3. **A continuation of existing Village practices.** Many of the recommendations are to continue current Village practices that will assist in meeting the goals and objectives of the Guiding DG Comprehensive Plan. Examples of these recommendations include:
  - a. Continue to have a mix of land use in the downtown that reinforce its unique character.
  - b. Continue to buffer commercial and industrial land uses from adjacent residential areas.
4. **Recommendations used by developers, staff, Boards and Commissions and the Village Council.** Many recommendations can be used by Village staff when discussing and evaluating development proposals. They are also used in Planning and Zoning Commission staff reports and Village Council Manager Memos to identify how a proposed project comports with the Comprehensive Plan. Examples of these recommendations include:
  - a. Maintain housing diversity by supporting the construction of housing options.
  - b. Encourage residential density in the Downtown Business district to help facilitate a vibrant and energetic downtown.
  - c. As prominent features along major regional roadways, office developments should be of a high quality and reflect the character of the Village.

## IMPLEMENTATION TABLE

As noted above, the Implementation Table identifies Village recommended actions and recommendations for partner organizations. The table is organized by priority level and anticipated timeframe to complete the project from initiation to Village Council review and approval.

**Item 1: Update Zoning, Building and Subdivision Ordinances (Not Including Sign Ordinance)**

#	Action	Chapter	Priority	Duration
01	Consider allowing ADUs in single-family detached districts as context-sensitive infill.	4, 5	1	12-15 months
02	Consider diversifying housing options by incrementally introduce duplexes, small-scale multi-family to existing single family districts.	5, 7	1	12-15 months
03	Consider offering density bonuses for attainable-housing projects.	5	1	12-15 months
04	Consider offering grants or density bonuses that encourage restoration and adaptive reuse of heritage structures.	9	1	12-15 months
05	Update ordinances to encourage a mix of retail, service, office, and multi-family uses in neighborhood commercial areas.	4, 7	1	12-15 months
06	Review the Zoning Ordinance to ensure shops, restaurants, entertainment, and high-density housing are allowed in mixed-use projects.	5, 6, 7	1	12-15 months
07	Ensure Zoning Ordinance prioritizes mixed-use development in Downtown, Fairview, 75th Street, Belmont Train Station, West Ogden Avenue and, where appropriate, the Esplanade and the Butterfield Road Corridor	4, 7	1	12-15 months
08	Consider amending the outdoor-lighting code to a dark-sky outdoor lighting code.	5	1	12-15 months
09	Consider updating ordinance to encourage the use of bird-friendly glass in multi-family buildings.	5	1	12-15 months
10	Examine sustainability infrastructure requirements (e.g. EV charging, native plantings).	7, 8, 9, 10	1	12-15 months
11	Re-examine shared parking agreement regulations.	6, 7	1	12-15 months
12	Examine parking requirements to encourage outlot redevelopment and green space.	6, 7	1	12-15 months

**Item 2: Implement the Fairview Focus Area Plan**

#	Action	Chapter	Priority	Duration
Project A	Explore incentives and financing tools to assemble parcels and fund property and infrastructure upgrades.	7	1	12-15 months
Project B	Preserve and enhance the Fairview Metra Station while evaluating redevelopment options for its parking lot.	7	1	3-5 years
Project C	Implement streetscapes improvements per Guiding DG Streetscapes Plan.	7	1	up to 20 years

**Item 3: Consider Developing a Public Art Program**

#	Action	Chapter	Priority	Duration
01	Add art, streetscape upgrades, and placemaking to create distinctive nodes.	6, 9	1	12-15 months
02	Partner with local artists for rotating exhibits and interactive displays.	6, 9	1	12-15 months

**Item 4: Collaborate and Support Community Partners**

#	Action	Chapter	Priority	Duration
Project A	Work with the DGEDC to complete an Ogden Avenue gap analysis to assist in attracting new businesses.	7	1	6-9 months
Project B	Work with the DGEDC to complete a 75th Street gap analysis to assist in attracting new businesses and redeveloping the Grove.	7	1	6-9 months
Project C	Work with the DGEDC on the following:	5, 6, 7, 10	on-going	
C-01	Retrofit obsolete commercial, office, and industrial spaces.	6, 7	on-going	
C-02	Investigate incentivizing redevelopment throughout the Village.	5, 6, 10	on-going	
C-03	Promote adaptive reuse of historic structures.	5, 7	on-going	
C-04	Maintain and invest in stable commercial and employment centers.	6	on-going	
C-05	Work with owners of underused sites to spur reinvestment.	6, 7	on-going	
C-06	Reposition aging commercial centers through public-private partnerships.	6, 7	on-going	
C-07	Encourage new in-line and outlot buildings throughout the commercial areas.	7	on-going	
C-08	Continue supporting office growth on the I-88, I-355, and Butterfield corridors.	6	on-going	
C-09	Preserve Class A office buildings to sustain long-term economic vitality.	6	on-going	
C-10	Promote incentive programs offered by ComEd and the State of Illinois.	10	on-going	
C-11	Support business-led public events, like sidewalk sales.	7	on-going	
C-12	Launch joint municipal marketing for the Butterfield Road Corridor.	7	on-going	
C-13	Collaborate to offer small-business workshops and storefront-improvement help.	6	on-going	
C-14	Work with partners to connect local businesses to grants and incentives.	6	on-going	
C-15	Support business development and adopt policies that foster start-ups, co-working, incubators, and accelerators.	6	on-going	
C-16	Promote the use of community facilities for workforce training and certification.	6	on-going	
C-17	Work with partners to expand internships and skilled-trade training.	6	on-going	
C-18	Promote state-offered economic development incentives and resources to small businesses.	6	on-going	
C-19	Support the SPARK program to retain and grow local small businesses.	6	on-going	
Project D	Work with Downtown Management Corporation on the following:	7	on-going	
D-01	Continue efforts to attract local businesses to Downtown to expand and diversify retail, entertainment, and dining options.	7	on-going	
D-02	Promote entertainment uses, including restaurants, theatres, outdoor dining and any other similar uses within all areas of the Downtown core.	7	on-going	
D-03	Support business-led public events, like sidewalk sales.	7	on-going	
Project E	Support social service providers and programs that serve the community.	9	on-going	
Project F	Work with DuDOT, IDOT and Illinois Tollway to implement safety, ATP and right-of-way improvements throughout the Village, including adding sustainability features to rights-of-way.	7, 8	on-going	
Project G	Work with RTA to improve transit facilities.	7, 8	on-going	
Project H	Support other governmental partners.	9	on-going	



**Item 5: Examine a Tree Protection Ordinance**

#	Action	Chapter	Priority	Duration
01	Examine private tree protection and planting requirements.	5, 8, 10	2	12-15 months

**Item 6: Conduct Further Analysis and Studies**

#	Action	Chapter	Priority	Duration
Project A	Conduct an Attainable Housing Study.	5	2	18-24 months
Project B	Conduct parking surveys for Metra lots, downtown lots, the downtown parking garage, and on-street spaces to track and understand demand.	7, 8	on-going	

**Item 7: Community Investment Projects**

#	Action	Chapter	Priority	Duration
Project A	Consider real-time parking count displays and improved signage could help motorists better find and utilize public parking.	8	2	12-15 months
Project B	Add EV and micromobility charging/parking in Metra lots, downtown, in commercial areas and along interstates.	8	3	12 months
Project C	Prioritize native plantings in the right-of-way.	5, 7	on-going	
Project D	Preserve existing natural areas and convert hardscape areas to natural areas.	7, 10	on-going	
Project E	Incorporate gateway features throughout the community.	7, 8	on-going up to 3 years	
Project F	Incorporate wayfinding features throughout the community.	7, 8	3	up to 5 years

**Item 8: Consider Programs to Assist Property Owners**

#	Action	Chapter	Priority	Duration
Project A	Develop a facade grant program for obsolete commercial nodes.	6, 7	3	12-15 months
Project B	Expand programs to retrofit older homes with energy-efficient upgrades.	5	3	up to 10 years
Project C	Partner to offer incentives like IL-HTC grants and low-interest loans for historic home restoration.	5	3	up to 10 years

**Item 9: Raise Awareness of Sustainable Practices Throughout Downers Grove**

#	Action	Chapter	Priority	Duration
Project A	Provide for an education program for the proper disposal and recycling of electronics, household hazardous waste, and cooking oil.	10		on-going
Project B	Raise awareness for conservation and sustainable land use practices.	10		on-going
Project C	Promote sustainable commercial and industrial practices, such as waste reduction, energy efficiency, on-site renewables and green landscaping.	6		on-going

**Item 10: Update Stormwater and Building Code Ordinances on a Regular Basis**

#	Action	Chapter	Priority	Duration
Project A	Update Stormwater and Building Code Ordinance on a regular basis to reflect evolving standards.	5, 9		on-going