



## **Steering Committee Meeting #1 Summary**

June 18, 2025 | Morton Grove Village Hall

The first Steering Committee meeting for the Dempster Corridor Plan convened on June 18, 2025, at 7pm at Village Hall. The meeting brought together Village staff, members of the project Steering Committee, representatives from Pace and RTA, and the project consulting team, led by Teska Associates with TYLin and Egret & Ox Planning. The Steering Committee is a group of representatives from the Village Board, Village Committees and Commissions, and Pace and Metra. The Committee will oversee the planning process, providing critical feedback and guidance. Committee members are also asked to serve as ambassadors for the project to the Morton Grove community, letting their networks know about project meetings and other ways to engage with the planning process.

### **Steering Committee members:**

- Janine Witko, Mayor
- Connie Travis, Village Trustee
- Eileen Harford, Advisory Commission on Aging
- Lindsey Dahlberg, Economic Development Commission (EDC)
- Ninous Chalabi, Traffic Safety Commission (TSC)
- Theresa Polyak, Community Relations Commission (CRC) Chair
- Robert Campanella, Traffic Safety Commission Chair
- Matthew Ingram, Appearance Commission Chair
- Mike Stein, Plan Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals Chair
- Keith White, Traffic Safety Committee Commissioner
- Chris Kintner, Plan Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals Chair
- Marc Fernandez, Economic Development Commission Chair
- John Pietron, Appearance Commission Chair
- George Burnner, Environmental & Natural Resources Chair
- Ashur Shiba, Village Trustee (not present)
- John Carlisle, Supervisor Rapid Transit Program, Pace
- Megan Miller, Planning Analyst, Metra

### **Village and RTA Staff:**

- Brandon Nolin, Community Development Administrator, Village of Morton Grove
- Anne Kirchner, Planning and Zoning Administrator, Village of Morton Grove
- Alex Waltz, Principal Planner, RTA

### **Consultant team members:**

- Scott Goldstein, President, Teska Associates, Inc.
- Francie Lawrence, Associate Principal, Teska Associates, Inc.
- Yuchen Ding, Senior Associate, Teska Associates, Inc.
- Mark Bennett, Senior Planner/Urban Designer, TYLin
- Todd Vanadilok, Principal Planner, Egret & Ox Planning (not present)

# DEMPSTER CORRIDOR PLAN

WHERE COMMUNITY MEETS COMMERCE

The meeting was guided by a [presentation](#) from Teska Associates, beginning with an introduction to the project and the planning team, description of the Steering Committee's role, and overview of the project goals, timeline, and public engagement strategy. The team reviewed various outreach tools with the Steering Committee including both in-person events and online tools that are being provided via a project website ([PlanDempster.org](#)) and promoted via Village communication channels (website, emails, printed flyers and postcards, etc.). Upcoming public events were also discussed including a Community Workshop on June 25 and a pop-up on July 3 at Morton Grove Days. Committee members were encouraged to share these events among their networks.

The planning team shared findings from early outreach (stakeholder interviews/focus groups) and the preliminary existing conditions analysis. Key findings regarding land use and corridor sub-districts, transportation cross-sections and traffic analysis, and market conditions were discussed in order to spark discussion and solicit feedback from the Committee.

A key focus of the meeting was collecting input from the Steering Committee about their experiences with Dempster and their vision for its future, guided by discussion questions at key points throughout the presentation. Observations focused on improving the look and feel of the corridor, reinvesting in existing businesses and attracting new, high-quality development, providing destinations/things for people to do, enhancing pedestrian and bicycle safety, and strengthening a sense of place.

## Discussion Notes:

- Dempster is a critical commercial corridor with strong sales tax revenue potential
- Strong interest in mixed-use development with local retail dining, and entertainment options
- Desire to see a more walkable downtown experience on Dempster
- More entertainment options (e.g., movie theater, breweries, mini-golf) may encourage residents to spend money locally and attract visitors from outside Morton Grove
- Morton Grove's income levels may suggest a market for higher-end retail and services
- Some buildings are dated and quality of tenants has declined; high turnover and vacancies
- Fast-moving traffic, narrow sidewalks, and busy intersections make the corridor unfriendly for pedestrians and cyclists
- Increase use of Village-owned parking lots with additional signage and communications
- Improved streetscaping (landscaping, hardscape, signage) may foster a more cohesive identity
- Build on transit assets -- Pace has seen increased ridership with new Pulse service, carrying over 2,000 passengers on Dempster routes each weekday; Pulse and Metra assets can help spur new development along the corridor
- Rail crossings can cause congestion and lead to frustrated drivers wanting to speed
- Left turns at many key destinations along the corridor are challenging (e.g. into/out of Harrer Park)

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 pm. The next Steering Committee meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, August 28 at 7 pm at Village Hall. In the meantime, the team encouraged members to help promote the Community Workshop on June 25, from 6 to 7:30 pm at the Morton Grove Civic Center, and to invite family, friends, and neighbors to participate in the planning process at [PlanDempster.org](#).