



**Steering Committee Meeting #3 Summary**  
January 22, 2026 | Morton Grove Village Hall  
[Meeting Presentation](#)

The third Steering Committee meeting for the Dempster Corridor Plan took place on January 22, 2026, at 6:30pm at Village Hall. Participants included members of the project Steering Committee, Village staff, representatives from Pace and RTA, and the project consulting team, led by Teska Associates with TYLin and Egret & Ox Planning.

*Attending:*

Steering Committee members:

- Janine Witko, Mayor
- Connie Travis, Village Trustee
- Rita Minx, Village Trustee
- John Pietron, Appearance Commission Chair
- Paul Minx, Appearance Commission Member
- Lindsey Dahlberg, Appearance Commission Member
- Therese Polyak, Community Relations Commission
- Chris Kintner, Plan Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals Chair
- Matthew Ingram, Plan Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals Member
- Michael Stein, Plan Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals Member
- Marc Fernandez, Economic Development Commission Chair
- Georgianne Brunner, Environmental & Natural Resources Chair
- Ninous Chalabi, Traffic Safety Commission Chair Pro Tem
- Robert Campanella, Traffic Safety Commission Member
- John Carlisle, Pace Bus
- Kyle Sussman, Pace Bus
- Megan Miller, Metra

Village and RTA Staff:

- Brandon Nolin, Community Development Administrator, Village of Morton Grove
- Zoe Heidorn, Assistant Village Administrator, Village of Morton Grove
- Anne Kirchner, Planner/ Zoning Administrator, Village of Morton Grove
- Chuck Meyer, Village Administrator, Village of Morton Grove
- Terry Liston, Corporation Counsel, 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.
- Mark Bennett, Senior Planner/Urban Designer, TYLin
- Todd Vanadilok, Principal Planner, Egret & Ox Planning



Francie Lawrence from Teska Associates introduced the meeting objectives, explaining that the planning team would be presenting draft recommendations and collecting preliminary Committee input before advancing the draft ideas to the public at Community Workshop #2 on March 19<sup>th</sup>.

Following public input, a draft corridor plan will be prepared and brought back to the Committee for a fourth and final meeting, followed by the third and final Community Open House in summer 2026. Highlights from each topic presented at the meeting are below.

### **Goals & Objectives**

Ms. Lawrence presented the Vision for the Dempster Corridor that has been developed through discussions with the Steering Committee and broad community input. This is meant to be an overarching vision statement that guides all other goals and objectives in the plan.

Land use goals focus on: new development to create a more vibrant corridor, modernized retail, excellence in design for new development, redevelopment that is transit-supportive, providing a range of spaces for entrepreneurs and small businesses, and expanding residential options to meet different needs, incomes, and life stages.

Mark Bennett with TYLin presented the transportation goals, which include: improving safety so that people of all ages feel comfortable crossing Dempster; making Dempster a pleasant place to stroll and linger so that people will walk to and between businesses; increasing awareness of where people can park near the corridor; making people of people of all ages feel comfortable biking, making transit fast, safe and comfortable, and ensuring that driving remains safe and efficient.

Scott Goldstein with Teska presented economic development goals, which include: supporting local businesses; fostering new commercial and mixed-use development; building on the corridor's assets such as open space; forest preserve, and parks; and promoting regular events and marketing efforts for the corridor.

More specific objectives designed to advance each of the goals are detailed in [this document](#).

### **Corridor Recommendations**

Todd Vanadilok with Egret & Ox presented results from community input that provided guidance to the planning team as they developed place-based ideas for improving the Dempster Corridor, across four distinct sub-districts:

- The Residential Corridor district is envisioned as the western gateway to Morton Grove, welcoming visitors and residents
- The Commercial Corridor District is envisioned as the economic center of the Dempster Corridor attracting additional high-quality commercial, mixed-use and multi-family housing
- The Main Street District is the eastern entry to Morton Grove with a charming, inviting main street feel, with an inviting and attractive streetscape.
- The Metra TOD District has a walkable small-town feel with improved pedestrian and bike connections between the trail, Metra, and Pace Pulse.

Mr. Vanadilok continued to present a design toolbox developed to apply different recommendations to the corridor, with interventions including:

- Public spaces: public plazas and parklets, potential side-street closures, municipal parking lot design, activated alleyways, gateway signage, streetscape enhancements, public art and pedestrian-oriented lighting.
- Private spaces: improved business signage, property and façade enhancements, development opportunities, outdoor seating/plazas, private parking lot enhancements, and wall murals.
- Transportation: new pedestrian crossings, improved existing pedestrian crossings, landscaped medians, restricted left turn lanes, cur extension/bump-outs, bike lanes, bike boulevards and multi-use paths.

Ms. Lawrence then reviewed the [corridor maps](#) that depict how and where specific recommendations apply across the study area. She also showed two conceptual illustrations: one depicting reuse and enhancements of the former CVS site at Austin & Dempster with new outdoor seating, awnings, and formalizing the alley for pedestrian use, and a second showing potential improvements of one of the municipal parking lots on Dempster with new signage, enhanced pavement, new landscaping and banners.

### **Opportunity Site Concept Plans**

To visualize potential development that would align with plan goals and recommendations, the planning team prepared [three opportunity site concepts](#). These concepts can be used in discussion with future developers to show the vision and potential for new development on Dempster. Ms. Lawrence presented the opportunity site concepts below:

*Site 1: Mixed-Use (residential over grocery store)*

- Appearance Commission Chair John Pietron commented that he liked the design with upper stories stepped back from the street.
- Traffic Safety Commission member Robert Campanella asked how the building would relate to neighbors; Ms. Lawrence explained the drawing shows a landscaped buffer with trees on both sides that are adjacent to neighboring properties.

*Site 2: Mixed-Use with central courtyard*

- Committee members generally found this concept to be inspirational and innovative.
- Plan Commission Chair, Chris Kintner asked whether the concepts being presented align with real estate opportunities and market viability. Mr. Goldstein noted that typical market demand would be for a corridor-style apartment, and the concept introduces an alternative to show a mix of unit types with flat units as well as two-floor loft units. He noted that the concept shows flexibility in approach to development and allows the market to respond to the plan recommendations. Alex Waltz with RTA added that the market analysis completed for this project identified demand for new residential.

*Site 3: Multi-Family housing (building 1) and restaurant with outdoor seating (building 2)*

- Traffic Safety Commission member Ninous Chalabi asked about how new multi-family housing would affect enrollment and space needs for the school district. Mr. Nolin from the Village explained that multi-family housing does not attract many students, especially compared with single-family or townhomes. He noted this has proven true with the apartments at Sawmill Station based on enrollment reports from the school district.

**Transportation Recommendations**

Mr. Bennett then presented highlights from select transportation recommendations, noting that more detail is provided in the [memorandum here](#). Topics included:

- Main Street District pedestrian crossings and medians
  - Chairman Kintner asked about standards for the distance between pedestrian crossings and why spacing varied in the western end compared to the eastern end. Mr. Bennett explained that IDOT guidance prefers crossings to be 750 ft. apart, and that the plan also considered total roadway width and pedestrian destinations such as near schools and Village Hall.

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- Economic Development Commission Chair Marc Fernandez asked if adding landscaped medians to Dempster would reduce the depth of the sidewalks. Mr. Bennett clarified that the curb locations and sidewalk widths would not change, only that some center turn lanes would be converted to medians.
- Environmental & Natural Resources Commission Chair Georgianne Brunner, asked whether the proposed potential closing of side streets would occur on both sides of Dempster Street or would they form T-intersections. Mr. Bennett clarified that both options would need to be evaluated as part of implementation. Chairwoman Brunner then asked how such street closures would affect police and fire public safety response. Mr. Bennett noted that an increased density of streets on the north side of Dempster would provide opportunities for emergency response if some streets were closed, but that emergency response would be a key consideration when evaluating potential closures.
- Metra Right-of-Way (ROW) side path
  - A wide right-of-way is available, presenting an opportunity for a bicycle path, perhaps with art and lighting
- Metra Station area access improvements
  - Metra station area improvements could improve pedestrian gaps with a shared use path crossing Lincoln Ave. west of Lehigh
- Lincoln Avenue railroad crossing closure
- Dempster & Lehigh intersection improvements
  - This location is a high priority for improving safety – concept depicts shifting the trail crossing, reducing crossing distance, and reducing the need to cross Lehigh and Dempster
  - Appearance Commission member Lindsey Dahlberg asked about how intersection improvements would prioritize pedestrians. Mr. Bennett indicated that options need to be considered to lengthen signal times to increase turn signal times and better accommodate pedestrian crossings. Alex Waltz with the RTA noted one option may be to introduce a leading crossing interval to improve safety, giving pedestrians additional time to cross before vehicles enter the intersection.
- Bikeway improvements
  - Across the study area, bike network improvements include bike boulevards, an off-street trail near Harrer Park, path along Lehigh, and improving crossings for both bikes and pedestrians.
- Parking standards research

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- Mr. Bennett explained that one tool communities have to attract new development can be reducing parking minimums to allow developers to determine the right amount of parking needed for a specific project.
- The Northern Illinois Transit Authority (NITA) Act, signed into law in December 2025, eliminates parking requirements for new development within 1/8 mile of the Dempster Street Corridor and ½ mile from the Metra station.

## **Conclusion & Next Steps**

Committee members were asked to review and provide feedback on the draft recommendations by January 30th and to save the date for Community Workshop #2 on March 19<sup>th</sup> at the Civic Center. Following the workshop, the draft plan document will be prepared and anticipated to be shared with the Committee in May before a final meeting in June (dates TBD).

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 pm.