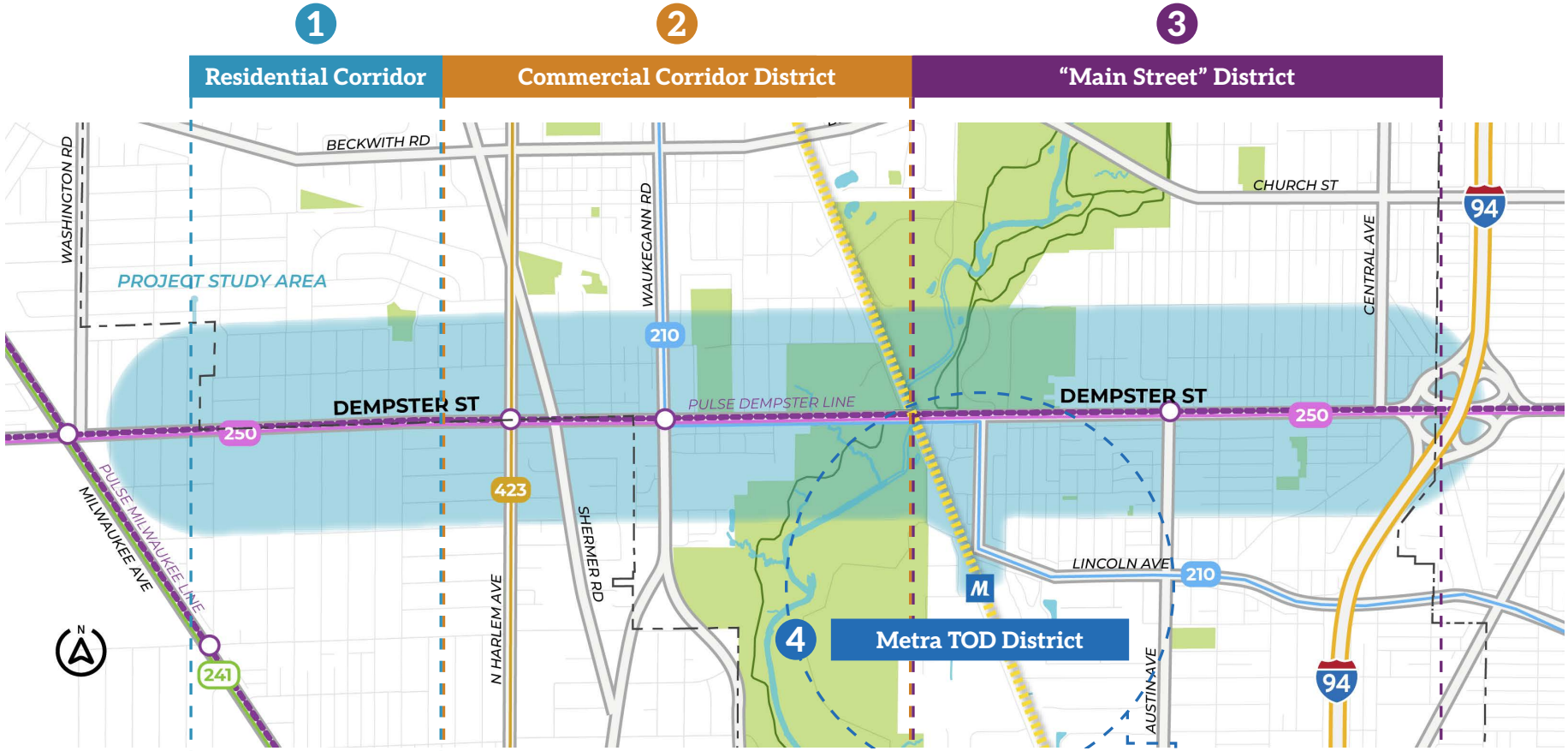
PART 2

Corridor Sub-District Plans

Corridor Sub-Districts

The study area is composed of four sub-districts that each have a distinct character defined by the roadway profile, land use mix, and notable assets from local businesses to parks and open space. The sub-districts are described in more detail in the following pages.



Ozark Ave to Oketo Ave	Oketo Ave to Railroad	Railroad to I-94	1/2 Mile Metra Station Radius
• Six-lane road profile • Morton Grove on north side of Dempster, Niles on south • Mostly single-family but also includes condos across from Notre Dame High School and small commercial center	• Six-lane road profile • Sawmill Station is a prominent mixed use development with high-quality shopping, dining, and residential • Segment inlcudes multiple national chains and major draws, including newly expanded Honda dealership, Amazon Fresh, and Gunzo's Hockey Headquarters	• Four-lane road profile with narrow right-of-way • Difficult to cross, even at crosswalks and signalized intersections • Mostly single-story local businesses including an array of international restaurants	• New Metra station and two Pace bus routes, including Pulse • Features civic facilities, businesses, and mix of housing types including single-family, townhomes, condo-miniums, and senior housing • Small-town feel with quiet streets and adjacent forest preserve

Design Toolbox

Recommendations for improvements to the Dempster Street Corridor are organized within a design toolbox, which categorizes different interventions into: Public Spaces, Private Spaces, and Transportation. These design interventions are described on the pages that follow and marked on the corridor maps, with call-out boxes to highlight key ideas.

Public Spaces

The design of public spaces involves creating opportunities for social interaction, community events, connectivity to sidewalks and trails, and direct retail or food service for customers to engage with businesses. These improvements aim to improve the experience of shoppers, diners, and recreational visitors to the Dempster corridor, leading to more support for local businesses and a more pleasing experience for residents.

- Public Plaza or Parklet
- Potential Side-Street Closure
- Municipal Parking Lot Design
- Activated Alleyway
- Gateway Signage
- Pedestrian & Streetscape Enhancements
- Public Art
- Pedestrian-Oriented Lighting

Private Spaces

Private spaces of high quality design foster an attractive, vibrant appearance that beautifies the corridor, catches the attention of passersby, and invites people to engage with and spend time on Dempster. Improvements to private spaces requires coordination with business and property owners to meet local zoning requirements and make enhancements in context with the public realm. Through new and improved outdoor spaces, plazas and al fresco dining, activated private spaces can make the corridor more of an engaging destination.

- Improved Business Signage
- Façade Enhancements
- Opportunity Site
- Outdoor Seating/Dining/Plaza
- Private Parking Lot Enhancement
- Potential Mural

Transportation

Many public comments about the Dempster Street corridor relate to safe access and mobility for pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit riders. The toolbox of suggested transportation improvements and interventions below is intended to make the corridor safer, more accessible, and more inviting for all users by focusing on improved pedestrian and bike crossings, new and improved bike facilities, better visibility of municipal parking lots, and improved connections to the North Branch Trail.

- New Pedestrian Crossing
- Improved Pedestrian Crossing
- Landscaped Median
- Curb Extensions/Bump-outs
- New Bike Lanes
- New Bike Boulevards
- New or Improved Trails
- Existing Pace Bus Stop
- Existing Pace Pulse Station

Public Plaza or Parklet

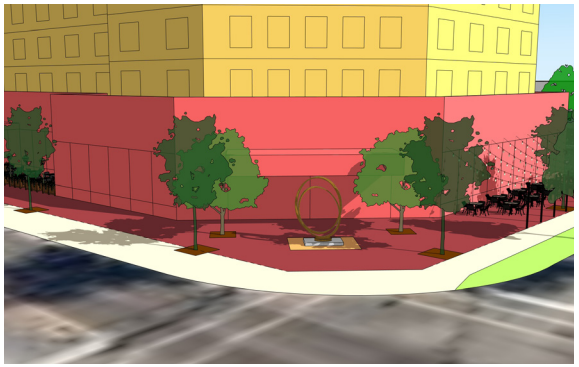
Public plazas provide space for community events and social interaction. Along Dempster, these can create people-friendly spaces as relief from the vehicular traffic. The corridor maps and opportunity site concepts explore potential areas for public plazas.

Policy Objectives:

- Encourage people to stay awhile
- Host community events
- Make safe and inviting people spaces
- Provide sidewalk connection points

Design Considerations:

- Mindfulness of ADA accessibility
- Connection to sidewalk network
- Access and views from Dempster
- Multi-seasonal, resilient amenities
- Seating and landscaping elements



Potential Side-Street Closure

The potential to close a side street that intersects with Dempster provides an opportunity to create more functional space within the right-of-way. As shown in the Main Street District corridor maps, Meade, Mason, or Mango are possible pilot locations to test this.

Policy Objectives:

- Create more pedestrian space
- Enhance pedestrian safety
- Increase usable space for businesses
- Reduce paved areas with landscaping

Design Considerations:

- Adherence to municipal standards
- Right-of-way jurisdiction standards
- Impacts on on-street parking
- Impacts on neighborhood traffic

Municipal Parking Lot Design

The Village has three municipally owned parking lots on Dempster. Site design, landscaping, and signage improvements may help increase the visibility and use of these lots, which could support economic development and free up parking elsewhere. The rendering at right illustrates potential improvements to the lot at 5825 Dempster.

Policy Objectives:

- Boost awareness and use of lots
- Support businesses near the lots
- Include as part of wayfinding program
- Improve relation of lots to streetscape

Design Considerations:

- Adherence to municipal standards
- Optimal visibility to passing cars
- Sustainable design practices
- Safe pedestrian access and mobility

Activated Alleyway

Alleyways offer unique opportunities for safe pedestrian movement along the rear of blocks. Depending on size and access points, alleyways can create outdoor rooms for walk-up cafe windows, retail displays, plazas, and public art. Pilot projects could be tested in alleys between Meade and Marmora.

Policy Objectives:

- Activate typically unused areas
- Create a safe pedestrian zone
- Extend retail and restaurant spaces
- Advance public art
- Add stormwater and landscape features

Design Considerations:

- Adherence to municipal standards
- Connection to sidewalk network
- Multi-season and weather amenities
- Coordination with property owners

Gateway Signage

A gateway sign serves as an identity marker indicating that one is entering a distinct or special place. Potential locations for gateway signage are marked on the sub-district maps at the western and eastern gateways to Morton Grove, Ozark Avenue and Central Avenue.

Policy Objectives:

- Mark entry points into the corridor
- Incorporate Morton Grove branding
- Include in a suite of wayfinding signs
- Create a cohesive corridor identity

Design Considerations:

- Adherence to sign code standards
- Village branding standards
- Right-of-way jurisdiction standards
- Potential for sponsors

Pedestrian & Streetscape Enhancements

Enhancements to the streetscape come in many forms: wayfinding signage, landscaping, lighting, banners, benches and other street furniture, pavers, and treatments at intersections. All elements are within the public right-of-way. Recommended streetscape enhancements are shown on the sub-district maps.

Policy Objectives:

- Create pedestrian-friendly spaces
- Encourage visitors to the corridor
- Help encourage transit ridership
- Promote local businesses

Design Considerations:

- Adherence to municipal standards
- Mindfulness of ADA accessibility
- Right-of-way jurisdiction standards

Public Art

Public art is one way the local community can put its unique stamp on the corridor and foster a sense of place. Artists, school classrooms, and local businesses can all play a role in adding public art to the sidewalk, parks, plazas, and other shared spaces.

Policy Objectives:

- Support local artists
- Allow for community ownership
- Enliven the streetscape
- Create special spaces through art

Design Considerations:

- Adherence to municipal standards
- Consideration of local history
- Temporary or permanent installations
- Safe placement in public right-of-way

Pedestrian-Oriented Lighting

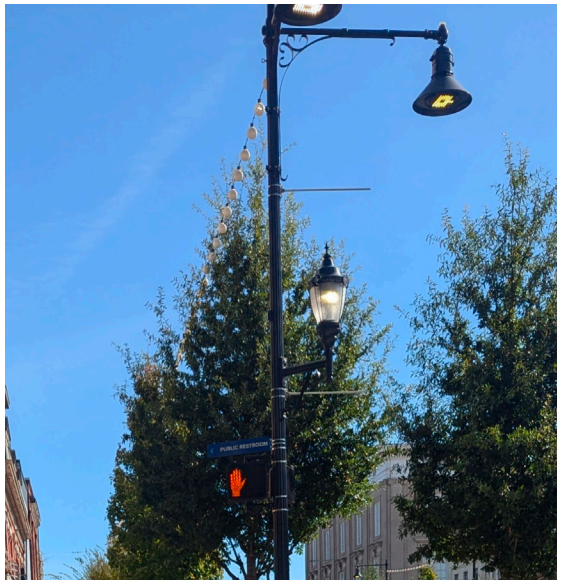
Most of the Dempster corridor has tall street lights designed to illuminate the roadway. Retrofits may be made to have combination roadway and pedestrian light poles to provide human-scaled illumination that contributes to the streetscape.

Policy Objectives:

- Foster pedestrian-friendly sidewalks
- Improve visibility at a human scale
- Add decorative, unique light fixtures
- Enhance public safety

Design Considerations:

- Existing light pole specifications
- Adherence to municipal standards
- Control of light spillover and glare
- Public and private space placement



Improved Business Signage

Improved business signage can come in the form of a refurbished or new sign on a building's exterior, including wall or monument signs on the property. These can improve curb appeal and attract new customers. Signage should respect surrounding context and contribute to a welcoming corridor.

Policy Objectives:

- Add color or flair to a building or site
- Modernize signs on older properties
- Foster creativity and visibility
- Attract people to the corridor

Design Considerations:

- Adherence to sign code standards
- Clarity of sign information
- Clearance from view obstructions
- Attractive but not distracting design

Façade Enhancements

Façade enhancements may include elements like landscaping, site lighting, and improved circulation and access for pedestrians and bicyclists. Such improvements involve the rehab of a building's street-facing wall(s) to improve their appeal along the streetscape.

Policy Objectives:

- Modernize older properties
- Enhance site presence on corridor
- Improve accessibility of sites
- Soften hardscapes with greenery

Design Considerations:

- Adherence to zoning standards
- Mindfulness of surrounding context
- Use of modern building materials
- Attractive and engaging features

Opportunity Site

Development opportunity sites come in different forms: redevelopment of an underutilized site; development of a vacant parcel; or adaptive reuse of an existing building.

Policy Objectives:

- Bring sites into productive use
- Diversify offerings along corridor
- Encourage creative site design
- Engage the streetscape

Design Considerations:

- Adherence to zoning standards
- Mindfulness of neighbors
- Sustainable design practices
- Carve out public spaces as part of building design

Private Spaces

Outdoor Seating/Dining/Plaza

Outdoor seating is limited along the corridor today, but can be found at Moretti's, Sawmill Station (Starbucks and Chipotle), and K-COOP. Design concepts for opportunity sites at Waukegan, Austin, and Menard and adjacent to potential side street closures explore potential for new plazas and outdoor seating areas.

Policy Objectives:

- Encourage gathering
- Extend dining experience outside
- Create outdoor enjoyment
- Provide sidewalk connection points

Design Considerations:

- Mindfulness of ADA accessibility
- Connection to sidewalk network
- Multi-seasonal, resilient amenities
- Access and views from Dempster

Private Parking Lot Enhancement

Dempster has a collection of privately-owned parking lots serving businesses and other uses. Elements like landscaping, trees, lights, and interior sidewalks and crosswalks can improve the user experience and attractiveness from the corridor.

Policy Objectives:

- Improve connection to streetscape
- Make safer spaces for pedestrians
- Soften hardscapes of paved areas
- Help with stormwater management

Design Considerations:

- Adherence to parking standards
- Safe pedestrian access and mobility
- Spaces for bicycle parking
- Clear sightlines from the street

Potential Mural

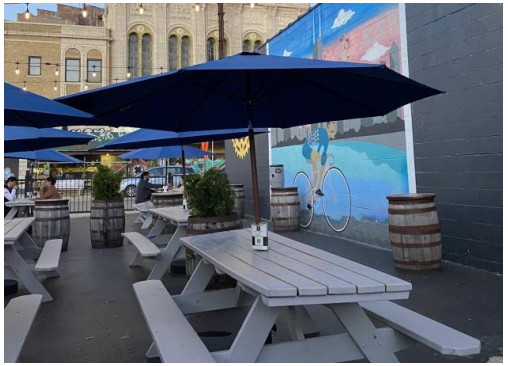
Whether on an older building or new construction, blank walls offer opportunities to bring public art to the corridor with murals. Coordination is required between property owners and artists. Potential mural locations are identified on the sub-district maps.

Policy Objectives:

- Incorporate public art
- Support local artists
- Enliven blank walls with color
- Create special spaces through art

Design Considerations:

- Adherence to municipal standards
- Consideration of local history
- Temporary or permanent installations
- Views from the street and sidewalk



New Pedestrian Crossing

Enhanced pedestrian safety is a central goal of this corridor plan. The addition of new pedestrian crossings is one way to achieve this, including the use of rectangular rapid flashing beacons (RRFBs), refuge islands, painted crosswalks, and similar interventions.

Policy Objectives:

- Mark clear pedestrian spaces
- Offer visual cues with light (RRFBs)
- Build pedestrian confidence
- Enable creative crosswalk designs

Design Considerations:

- Coordination with IDOT
- Strategic placement along corridor
- Integration with medians

Improved Existing Pedestrian Crossing

Interventions for new pedestrian crossings may also be applied to existing pedestrian crossings that have limited safety or design features. Pedestrian crossings on side streets may also feature decorative pavement art to add color and visibility.

Policy Objectives:

- Mark clear pedestrian spaces
- Offer visual cues with light (RRFBs)
- Build pedestrian confidence
- Enable creative crosswalk designs

Design Considerations:

- Coordination with IDOT
- Strategic placement along corridor
- Integration with medians

Landscaped Median

A landscaped median breaks up a multi-lane roadway into two parts that are more manageable to cross for pedestrians. In addition, a median creates space for landscaping within the roadway to reduce impervious surfaces and add greenery and beautification.

Policy Objectives:

- Divide the roadway into two parts
- Create central pedestrian refuge
- Contribute to corridor beautification
- Help with stormwater management

Design Considerations:

- Coordination with IDOT
- Impacts on turning lanes
- Alignment with key curb cuts
- Integration with pedestrian crossings

Restricted Left Turn Lanes

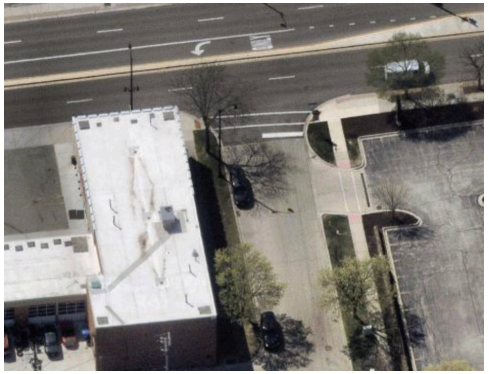
Turning movements onto a corridor are important for access. However, they also add to traffic congestion, particularly when dedicated turn lanes are not provided. Medians and/or "no left turn" signs can help restrict turning movements at strategic locations.

Policy Objectives:

- Limit turning movements
- Encourage alternative routes
- Reduce conflict points
- Improve traffic safety
- Reduce roadway congestion

Design Considerations:

- Coordination with IDOT
- Strategic placement along corridor
- Alignment with medians
- Proper signage for enforcement



Curb Extensions/Bump-outs

Curb extensions or bump-outs can encourage slower vehicle speeds, safer pedestrian crossings, and additional space for greenery and landscaping. These can be considered on side streets so as not to impede traffic flow on Dempster.

Policy Objectives:

- Encourage slower driving speeds
- Shorten pedestrian crossing distance
- Increase pedestrian visibility
- Provide areas for landscaping

Design Considerations:

- Right-of-way jurisdiction standards
- Strategic placement along corridor
- Impacts on on-street parking
- Impacts on property access

Bike Lanes

A bike lane is dedicated on-street space for bicyclists to ride alongside cars. Some are striped (for roads with <3,000 vehicles per day), while some have physical protection such as concrete curbs, planters, or bollards (roads with over 6,000 vehicles per day).

Policy Objectives:

- Create dedicated space for bikes
- Boost bike-friendliness of area
- Reduce roadway congestion
- Promote public health
- Support economic development

Design Considerations:

- Right-of-way jurisdiction standards
- Strategic placement in network
- Impacts on on-street parking

Bike Boulevards

A bike boulevard is appropriate on low-volume (<2,000 vehicles per day), low-speed (25mph or less) streets where cyclists can safely share the street with cars. These may typically feature physical traffic calming elements and street markings and signage.

Policy Objectives:

- Create bike-friendly routes
- Calm traffic and reduce speeding
- Reduce conflicts on busy roadways
- Promote public health

Design Considerations:

- Strategic placement in network
- Integration of wayfinding signage
- Intersection treatments and signage

Trails or Multi-Use Paths

Trails or multi-use paths are off-street bikeway facilities entirely separated from vehicular roadways that provide a paved space for both people cycling and walking. Trails or paths typically provide the highest levels of safety and comfort.

Policy Objectives:

- Create dedicated space for bikes
- Boost bike-friendliness of area
- Reduce roadway congestion
- Promote public health

Design Considerations:

- Coordination with property owners
- Integration of wayfinding signage
- Safety assets, e.g., lights, call boxes

Sub-District 1: Residential Corridor District

Introduction

The Residential Corridor District is located on the study area's far western end between Ozark Avenue and Oketo Avenue. Covering only the north side of Dempster Street, this sub-district is residential in nature with primarily single-family detached homes and a pair of three-story mult-family buildings. Although the south side of this segment of the corridor is located in Niles, it maintains a similar land use profile with Notre Dame College Prep serving as a core anchor for the western end of the Dempster Street Corridor. This sub-district has a six-lane road profile, which allows for mobility of high daily traffic counts but also hinders safe access for pedestrians and bicyclists. Key recommendations include adding a gateway feature welcoming visitors to Morton Grove and installing new pedestrian crossings.

VISION | RESIDENTIAL CORRIDOR DISTRICT

As the western gateway to Morton Grove, this corridor will welcome visitors and residents to the community while providing safe travel for all modes and a pleasant environment for the residential neighborhoods that flank Dempster Street.

FUTURE LAND USE

The Residential Corridor will continue to be primarily residential in character. Property owners may consolidate properties to build duplexes or small multi-family developments along Dempster Street to provide a buffer between the road and single-family detached neighbors to the north.

Residential Corridor District · Ozark Avenue → Oketo Avenue

Figure 2.1

The western gateway into Morton Grove is primarily residential, with Notre Dame College Prep located on the south side of Dempster in Niles. The focus here is about welcoming passersby into the community and enhancing pedestrian safety for the residents and students crossing Dempster each day.

DESIGN TOOLBOX

PUBLIC SPACE

- Gateway Signage
- Pedestrian & Streetscape Enhancements

TRANSPORTATION

- New Pedestrian Crossing
- Improved Pedestrian Crossing
- New Bike Boulevards
- Landscaped Median
- Existing Pace Bus Stop

Residential Corridor District Recommendations

Pedestrian Crossings

Currently, there are no pedestrian crossings between Harlem Avenue and Ozark Street, a gap of more than 3,500 feet. A pedestrian desiring to cross Dempster Street at the mid-point of that gap would need to travel an additional 13 minutes to make the crossing via existing crosswalks. This gap makes it difficult and potentially dangerous for pedestrians to access Notre Dame College Prep and Pace stops along the corridor. Village staff have reported Notre Dame students frequently crossing Dempster Street outside crosswalks to reach commercial destinations on the north side of the corridor. Two options for a new pedestrian crossing are provided in the Appendix.

Medians

Installing medians between Ottawa Avenue and Oketo Avenue could have dual potential positive traffic calming and beautification impacts. Median options are provided in the Appendix.

- **Option A: Medians Light:** Approximately 600 feet of medians could be installed without restricting any left-turning movements onto or off of streets intersecting Dempster Street.
- **Option B: Medians Heavy:** Approximately 1,200 feet of medians could be installed while preserving half of the existing left-turning movements onto or off of streets intersecting Dempster Street between Ottawa Avenue and Oketo Avenue.

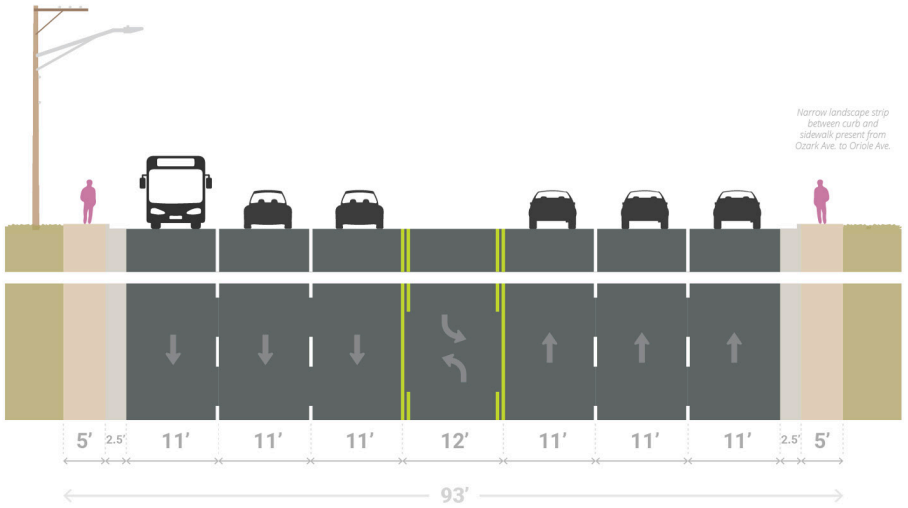


Figure 2.2: A median in portions of the turn lane could help reduce the crossing distance for pedestrians

Residential Corridor District Recommendations

Lighting

Existing street lighting is less densely spaced between Harlem Avenue and Ozark Avenue compared to the rest of the corridor study area. Additional analysis is needed to determine whether existing lighting is contributing to any roadway safety deficiencies. In the event additional pedestrian crossings are installed, lighting should be improved at those locations.

Figure 2.2: Streetscaping improvements can be planned in concert with new development that provides space at the corners of side streets

Streetscaping

Streetscaping opportunities west of Harlem Avenue are relatively limited due to the narrow existing sidewalk widths. The most promising opportunity may exist between Harlem Avenue and Oketo Avenue, where a 6-foot band of landscaping currently sits between the sidewalk and parking lots. A small handful of trees that appear to be in okay or poor condition occupy this area as well as some short shrubs. Opportunities for improvement may include:

- Improve the quality of the existing plantings.
- Add pedestrian-scale lighting oriented to sidewalk users.
- Expand the depth of the planting area, within space currently occupied by parking spaces that are among the furthest from commercial entrances. A similar planting strip on the south side of Dempster Street between Waukegan Road and Birch Avenue measures 12-feet deep.
- Flip the positions of the planted area and sidewalk.

Each improvement option would require coordination with commercial property owners and may require negotiating easements. The Village may consider financial support to complete improvements and may also consider coordinating improvements with any major future alterations to or redevelopment of the commercial site.

Sub-District 2: Commercial Corridor District

Introduction

The Commercial Corridor District, stretching from Oketo Avenue to the railroad, has a mix of uses, including commercial, residential, public/institutional, parks, and the Cook County Forest Preserve. This sub-district includes multiple national restaurant and retail chains and the study area's three largest commercial sites: Sawmill Station, Village Plaza, and the Napleton Honda dealership. Sawmill Station also includes the six-story Residences at Sawmill Station apartment complex. The Commercial Corridor District has a six-lane road profile, which accommodates high daily traffic counts but also contributes to safety issues for pedestrians and bicyclists. The Village can pursue new development for vacant sites, including the northwest corner of Waukegan and Dempster, the site at 8700 N. Waukegan Road, and a vacant parcel within Sawmill Station.

VISION | COMMERCIAL CORRIDOR DISTRICT

This economic center of the Dempster corridor will build on recent success by attracting additional high-quality commercial, mixed-use, and multi-family housing development. Residents, shoppers, diners, and trail users will be welcomed to the area through improved pedestrian crossings, landscaping, and gathering spaces, creating a vibrant center for everyone.

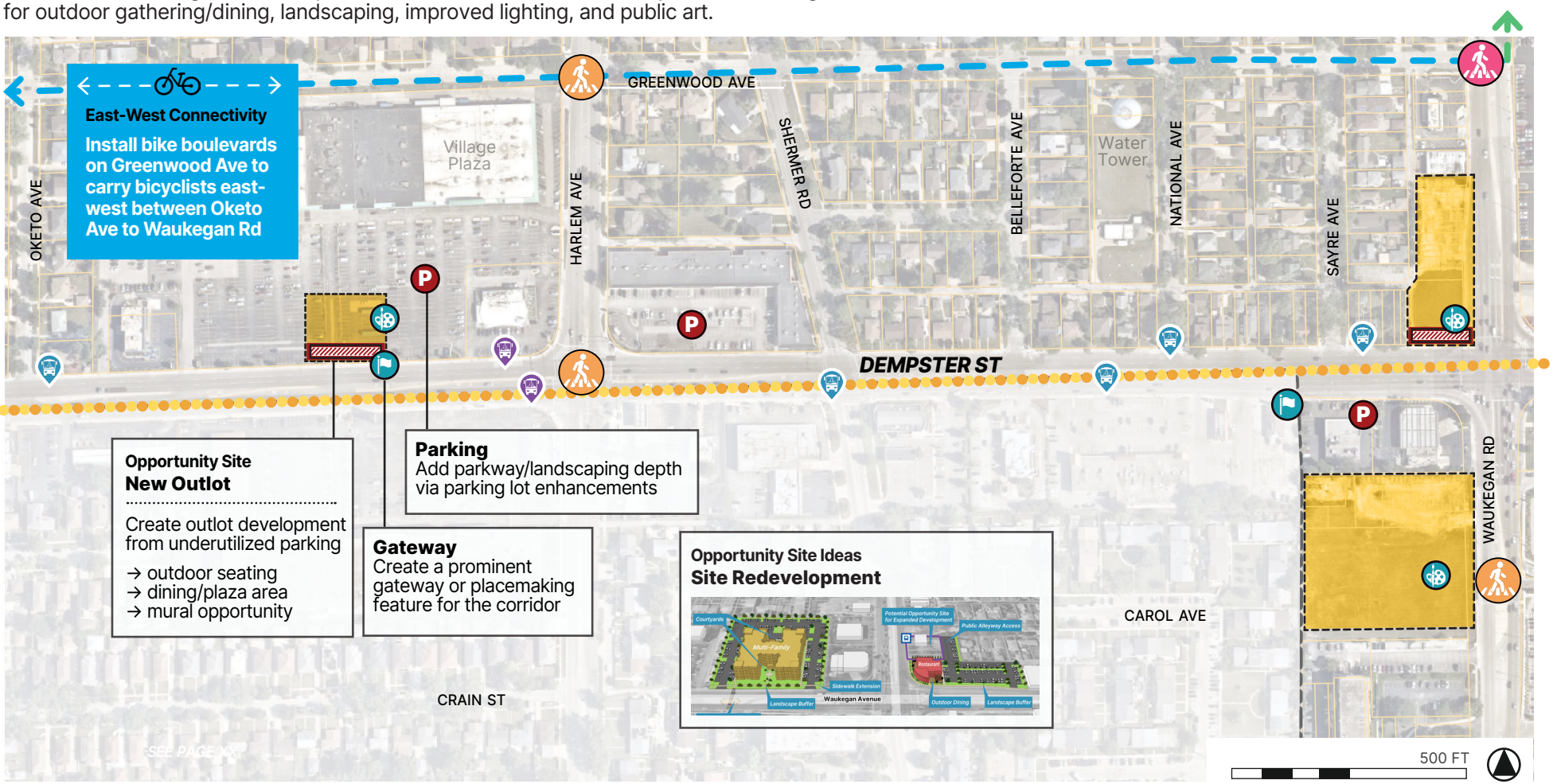
FUTURE LAND USE

The Commercial Corridor will continue to be primarily commercial uses with additional mixed-use and residential development. Vacant land will be developed along Waukegan Road. The Corridor will continue to attract a range of commercial tenants that serve residents and the broader community.

Commercial Corridor District · Odell Avenue → Waukegan Road

Figure 2.3

The focus for this segment is making an auto-centric corridor more hospitable for pedestrians, expanding the east-west parallel bike network, adding new development to attract visitors and vibrancy, and enhancing the look and feel of the corridor with areas for outdoor gathering/dining, landscaping, improved lighting, and public art.



DESIGN TOOLBOX

PUBLIC SPACE
- Gateway Signage
- Public Art
- Pedestrian & Streetscape Enhancements

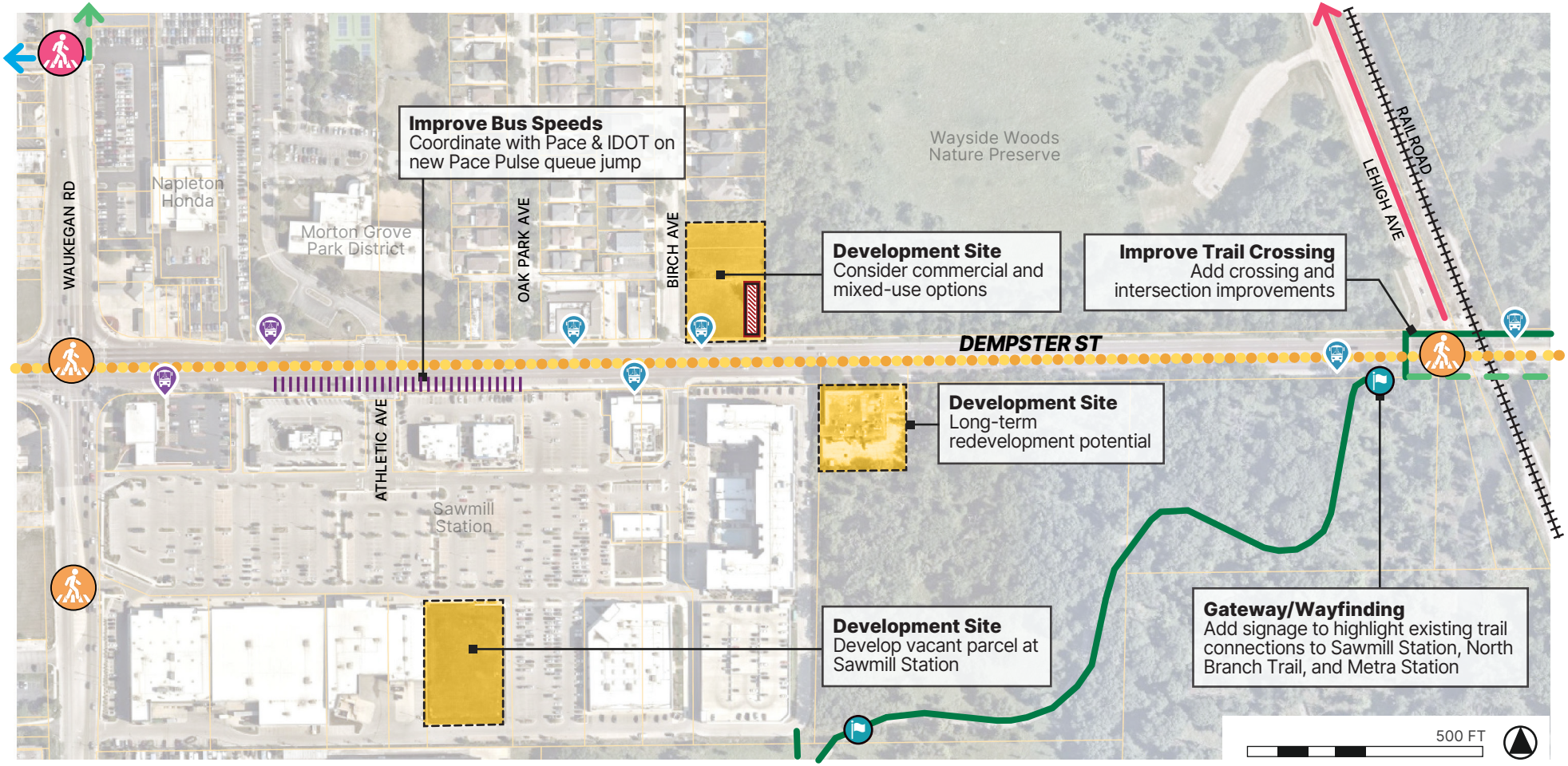
PRIVATE SPACE
- Opportunity Site
- Outdoor Seating/Dining/Plaza
- Private Parking Lot Enhancement

TRANSPORTATION
- New Pedestrian Crossing
- Improved Pedestrian Crossing
- Existing Pace Bus Stop
- Existing Pace Pulse Station
- New Bike Boulevards
- New or Improved Trails

Commercial Corridor District · Waukegan Road → Railroad

Figure 2.4

Key recommendations for this segment include development on vacant land, a Pace Bus queue jump to improve bus speeds and operations near Sawmill Station, new bicycle connections, and several improvements to the Dempster and Lehigh intersection to enhance safety at the trail crossing.



PUBLIC SPACE

- Gateway Signage
- Pedestrian & Streetscape Enhancements

PRIVATE SPACE

- Opportunity Site
- Outdoor Seating/Dining/Plaza
- Private Parking Lot Enhancement

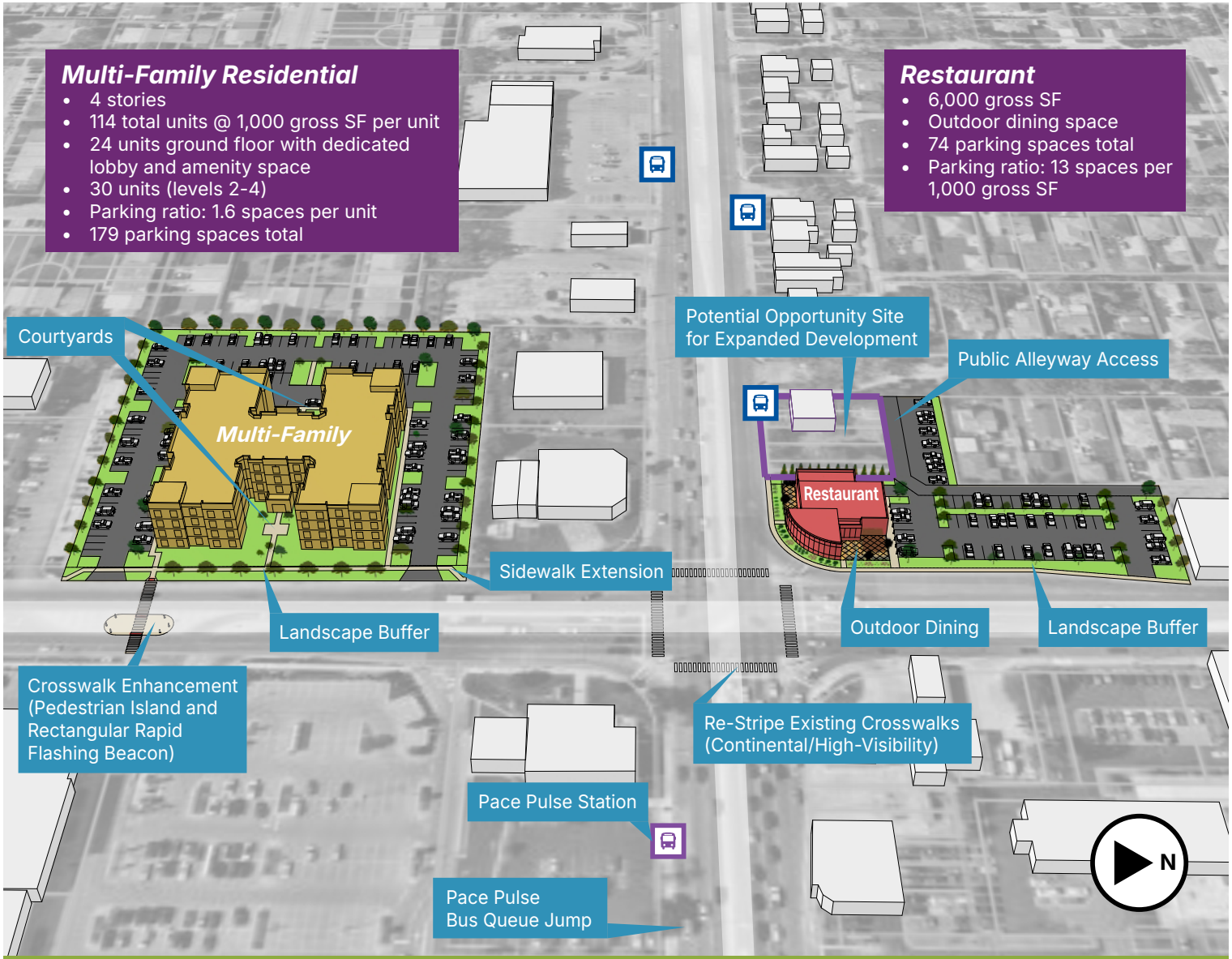
TRANSPORTATION

- New Pedestrian Crossing
- Improved Pedestrian Crossing
- Existing Pace Bus Stop
- Existing Pace Pulse Station
- New Bike Boulevards
- New or Improved Trails
- Existing Bike Lane
- Existing Bike Trail

DESIGN TOOLBOX

Opportunity Site 1

Dempster/Waukegan Developments



Open Space Amenities: The multi-family building incorporates courtyards, while the restaurant site provides outdoor dining space at the rear of the building. The design toolbox on pages 43-48 outlines a variety of design approaches that can be implemented to enhance public and private open spaces.

This graphic shows two conceptual developments on presently vacant land along Dempster Street on the west side of Waukegan Avenue. Located across from Sawmill Station, the southwest corner would be suitable for multi-family residential development as the neighborhood currently features a mix of apartments, condominiums, and townhomes. The northwest corner adds to the evolving commercial mix at the Dempster/ Waukegan intersection with potential for a restaurant with outdoor dining and parking in the rear off of Dempster.

Commercial Corridor District Recommendations

Pace Bus Queue Jump

A signal queue jump for eastbound buses at Athletic Drive, in front of Sawmill Station is proposed to allow for buses to improve service and efficiency. Bus operators currently have difficulty merging lanes east of the Athletic Drive intersection due to constant eastbound traffic. Operators often must wait for a window of clear traffic, which can delay transit operations to increase overall transit user travel times.

The proposed queue jump lane would operate as follows:

- As an eastbound Pace bus approaches the Athletic Drive intersection, the bus enters a new shared right turn/bus lane (roadway markings will be applied to indicate shared right-turn and bus lanes).
- Eastbound vehicle traffic receives a red light.
- The eastbound right-turn arrow turns green, allowing any vehicles waiting to turn right to clear the lane.
- The bus receives an exclusive signal (new equipment) to proceed through the intersection (the transit signal is differentiated as a vertical white line). Exact timing of this signal depends on further analysis.
- After the Pace bus moves through the intersection, the bus will continue in the curbside lane and then will merge into the center through lane within the next 350 feet before the curb lane transitions to a dedicated right-turn lane.
- Once the bus has cleared the intersection, standard intersection signal operations will resume.

Commercial Corridor District Recommendations

Pace Bus Queue Jump (continued)

Key Considerations

- Considering proximity to the Waukegan Road intersection, further analysis is required to understand impacts on broader corridor signal timing coordination.
- The transit signal may be accommodated within the existing intersection signal timing cycle, or signals may be programmed so that an oncoming Pace bus preempts the typical cycle timing. Preemption is likely to facilitate faster bus travel, while incorporating the transit signal within existing timing is more likely to minimize impacts to broader corridor signal timing coordination.
- For northbound vehicles turning from the shopping center onto eastbound Dempster Street, a right-turn arrow signal may be necessary to sufficiently prevent right-turning movements while transit vehicles are making eastbound through movements. Alternatively, clear “No Turn on Red” signage may be installed.

Figure 2.5: Athletic Drive Existing Conditions

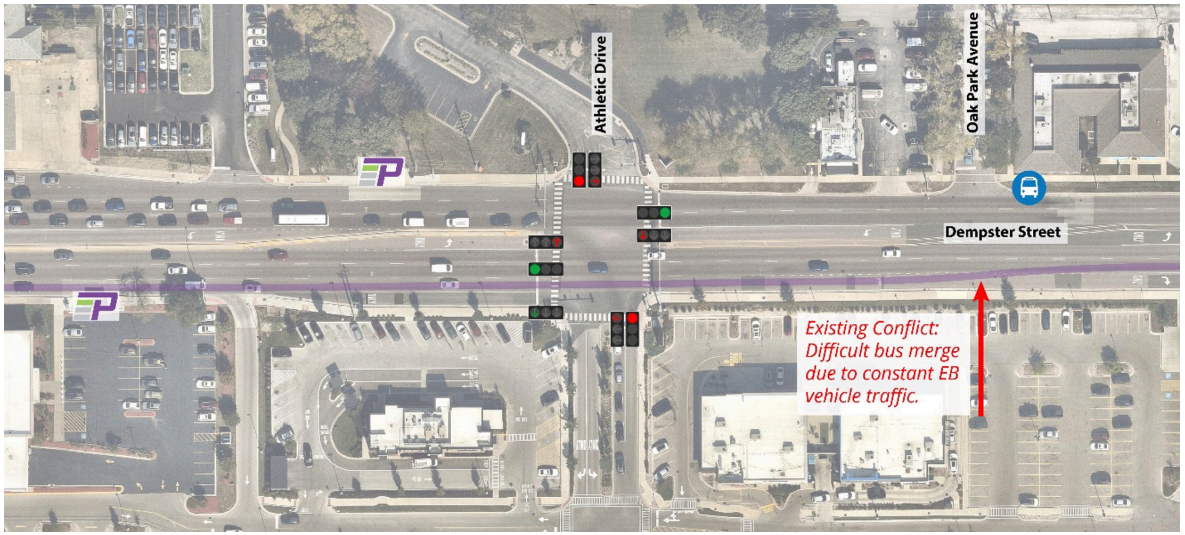
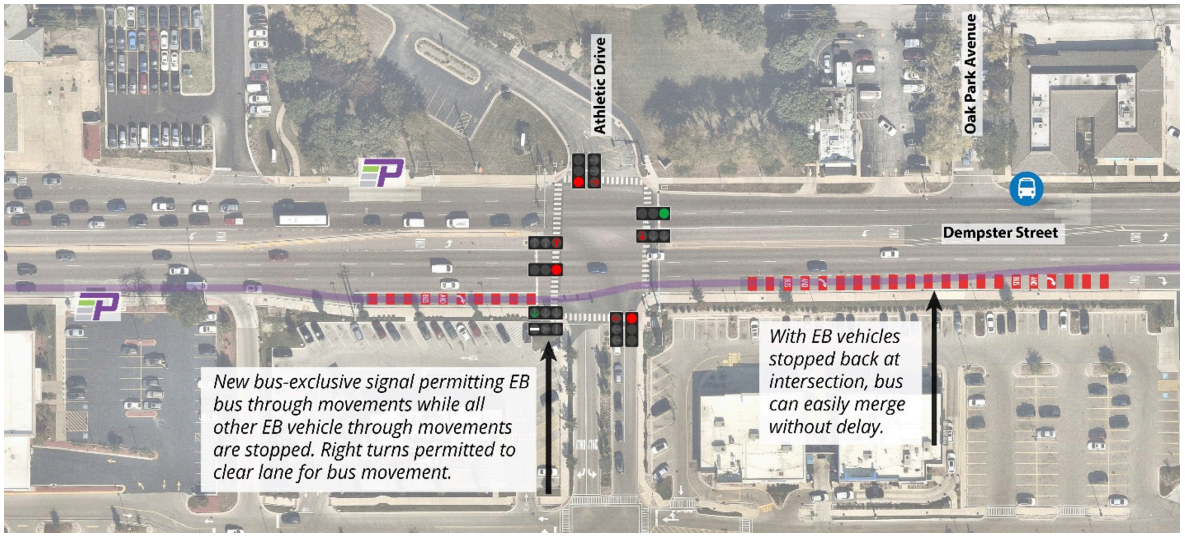


Figure 2.6: Athletic Drive Pace Queue Jump Concept



Commercial Corridor District Recommendations

Dempster & Lehigh Intersection

The intersection of Dempster Street and Lehigh Avenue is the confluence of several key regional mobility assets, including more than two dozen daily rail crossings and a heavily-utilized North Branch Trail crossing.

Traffic Signal Improvements

The current signal cycle length at the intersection of Dempster Street and Lehigh Avenue is between 115 and 120 seconds during daytime hours on both weekdays and weekends, which can result in trail users waiting long periods to receive the signal to cross depending on where in the cycle they request the cross signal via push button. According to user feedback, this frequently leads people to cross on foot or bike against the signal. Improvements may include:

- Extend the Lehigh Avenue crossing pedestrian phase to match the duration of the WB Dempster Street vehicle green light (currently, this pedestrian phase expires with additional time left in the WB vehicle green phase).
- Provide an automatic pedestrian phase to cross Lehigh Avenue when WB Dempster Street vehicles have a green light. The current default signal cycle for this movement is more than enough time for a pedestrian or cyclist to complete the crossing, which means an automatic pedestrian signal would have no impact on existing vehicle signal timing.
- Alternatively, program the Lehigh Avenue pedestrian crossing signal so that the signal activates when called as long as there is sufficient time to accommodate a pedestrian clearance interval in the WB Dempster Street vehicle green phase. Currently, when the signal is called mid-cycle, it does not activate until the next signal cycle, no matter how much time is remaining in the cycle. Implementing this functionality will depend on the type of controller technology present at the intersection and may require an upgrade.
- Provide an automatic pedestrian phase to cross Dempster Street when SB Lehigh Avenue vehicles have a green light. The current southbound phase provides nearly enough time for a full pedestrian clearance interval. Therefore, an automatic pedestrian phase would be expected to have an overall minor impact on existing vehicle timing and operations.
- Program a Leading Pedestrian Interval (LPI) at both intersection crossings to provide people walking and cycling a head start on crossing before vehicles are given a green light. The goal of this intervention is to improve visibility of non-vehicle users before vehicle turning movements begin.
- Install bicycle-specific signals that match the pedestrian signals to more clearly indicate when bicycle traffic is and is not allowed to cross.
- Better position existing “No Turn on Red” signage for westbound Dempster Street drivers for improved visibility and awareness at Lehigh Avenue.
- Add right-turn-arrow signal heads for westbound Dempster Street and southbound Lehigh Avenue. Program a flashing yellow arrow when the pedestrian signal is activated.

Commercial Corridor District Recommendations

Crossing Visibility Improvements

Improved advance warning markings and signage of the trail crossing may help provide drivers more reaction time to spot and stop for crossing pedestrians and cyclists. For westbound drivers, there is currently a single yellow sign warning of a bicycle crossing ahead posted 600 feet in advance of the intersection. For eastbound drivers, a similar sign is posted 130 feet in advance of the crossing. Southbound Lehigh Avenue drivers are provided with no advance warning signage of the trail crossing.

Improvements may include installing advance warning signage on westbound Dempster Street and southbound Lehigh Avenue approximately 200 feet in advance of the intersection. This signage could include an RRFB that is triggered when pedestrians and cyclists have an active walk signal across the intersecting roadway. The goal of this improvement is to provide greater awareness of crossing pedestrians and cyclists.

Trail User Signage Improvements

Improving trail wayfinding signage can help direct North Branch Trail users to the proper path to continue on the trail. Signage for additional destinations, such as the Dempster Street commercial core or Metra Station, may also be considered to help orient trail users to local destinations and transportation connections.

Intersection Geometry Improvements

In addition to signage and signal upgrades, roadway geometry improvements may include:

<u>Option A: Adjust Existing Geometry</u>

- Rebuild curbs to minimize turning radii (including removing the southbound channelized right-turn lane) to calm right-turning vehicle speeds and shorten pedestrian/cyclist crossing distances.
- Expand areas for trail users to wait at crossings. The goal of this intervention is to reduce the likelihood that trail users will feel cramped and uncomfortable, which can result in users feeling an urgency to move through the area quickly, even if they do not have the appropriate crossing signal.

Commercial Corridor District Recommendations

Option B: Realign Intersection Geometry

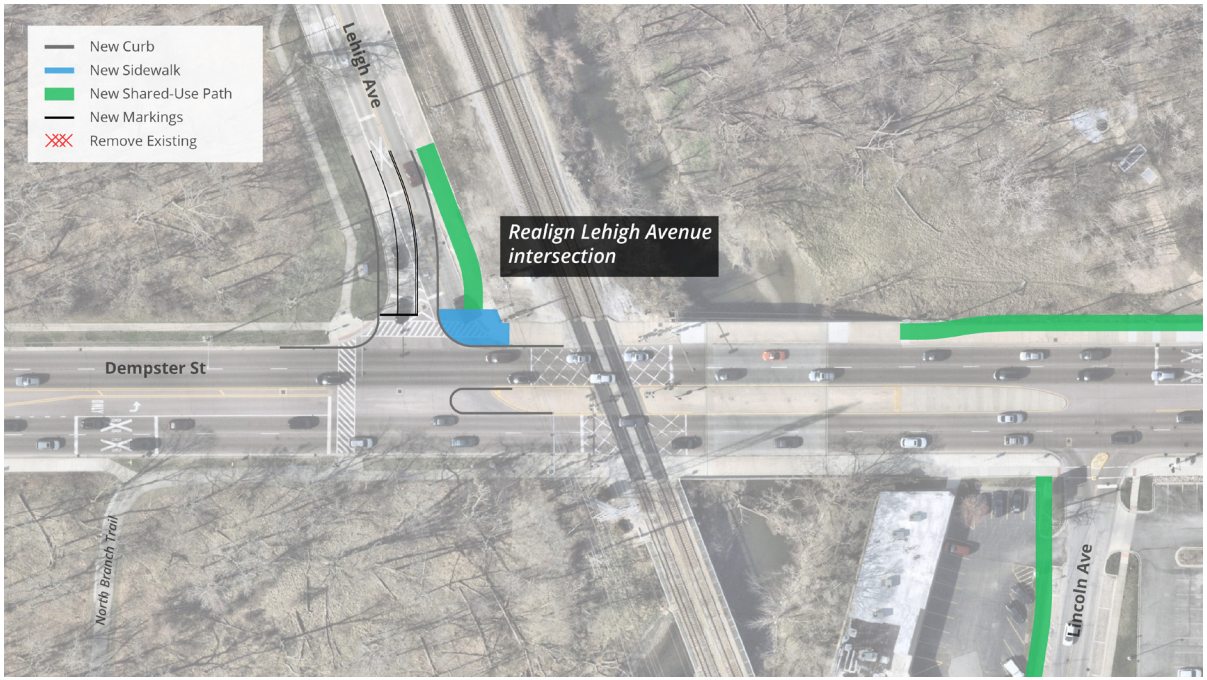
In addition to or in lieu of signal timing and signage improvements, Option B realigns Lehigh Avenue so that it meets Dempster Street at a 90-degree angle. Benefits include:

- Reduced curb radii to slow vehicle turning movements, reducing conflict risk with crossing pedestrians and cyclists.
- Reduced Lehigh Avenue pedestrian and cyclist crossing distance.
- Improved sight lines.
- Expanded space in northeast and northwest intersection corners for waiting cyclists and cyclist maneuvers.

Figure 2.7 also details additional trail/pathway improvements east of the intersection which can be implemented along with or separately from any intersection improvements. These improvements may include:

- A trail connection south, via Lincoln Avenue.
- A physical barrier between the bridge sidewalks and vehicle travel lanes.
- Increased trail setback from the north side of Dempster Street. Grade changes may present complexities to implement.

Figure 2.7: Lehigh Avenue Intersection Geometry Improvements Option B



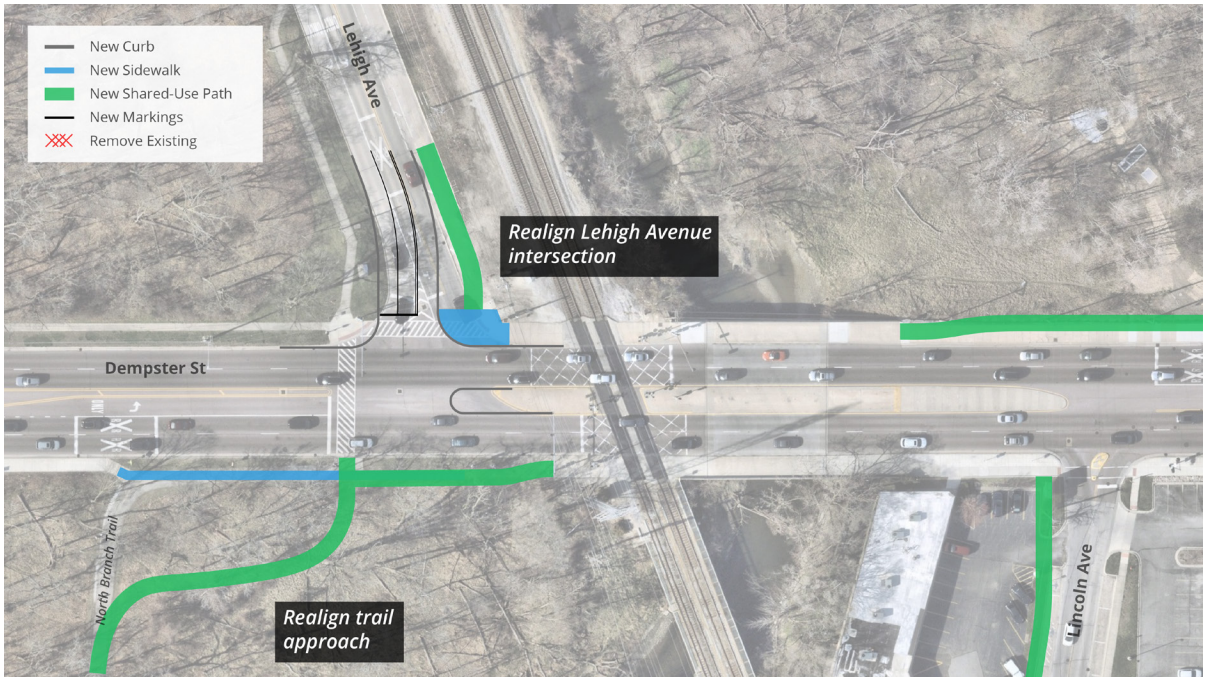
Option C: Realign Trail

Option C includes all improvements in Option B with the added improvement of a realigned North Branch Trail to reduce tight turning movements at Dempster Street. Benefits include:

- Improved user comfort.
- Improved sight lines for trail users.

Option C also proposes a wider trail facility on the south side of Dempster Street to better accommodate cyclist movement to the east, connecting to a proposed pathway on Lincoln Avenue.

Figure 2.8: Lehigh Avenue Intersection Geometry Improvements Option C



Commercial Corridor District Recommendations

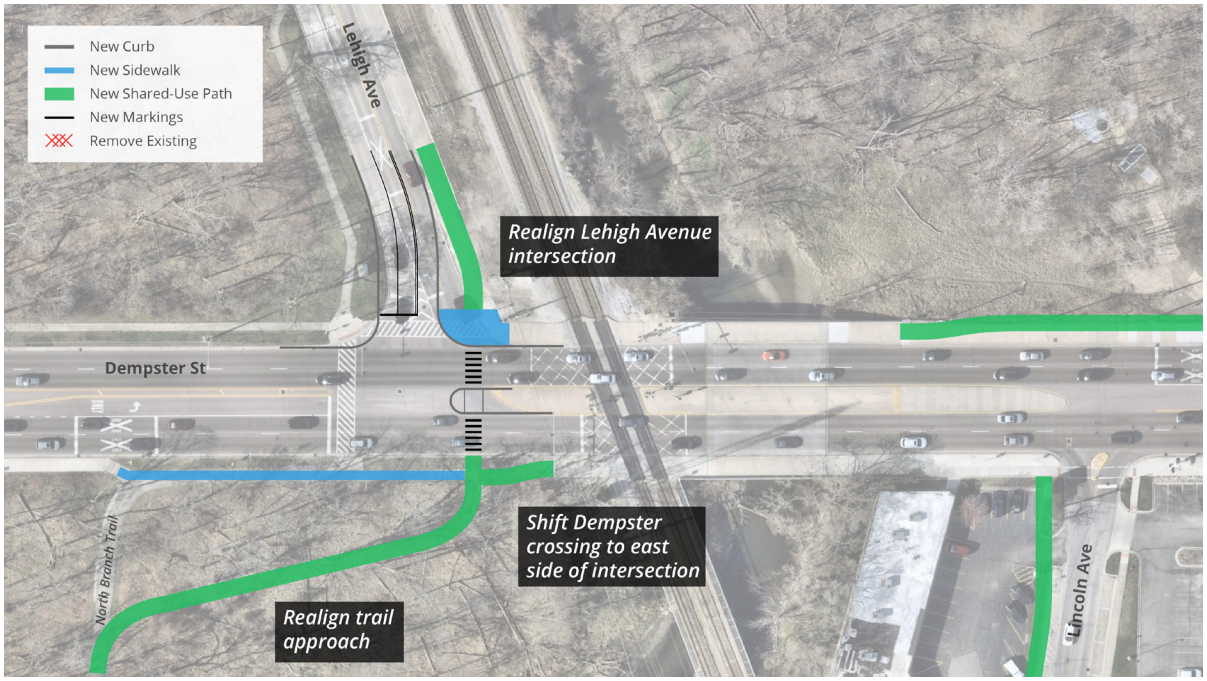
Option D: Shift Trail Crossing

Option D includes all improvements in Option C while also shifting the Dempster Street trail crossing to the east side of Lehigh Avenue. Benefits include:

- One less roadway crossing for trail users.
- Fewer potential vehicle movement conflicts.

Figure 2.9 shows the removal of the existing Dempster Street crossing to simplify operations, although this crossing could be retained. Further study is required to determine whether the proximity of the proposed new crosswalk to the Metra tracks is an acceptable distance. Moving the crossing to the east side of Lehigh Avenue may be possible without realigning the intersection geometry, although the realignment creates an increased buffer distance between the crosswalk and railway operations. This option would require changes to existing signalization for Lehigh Avenue southbound left turns from protected-only to permitted.

Figure 2.9: Lehigh Avenue Intersection Geometry Improvements Option D



Sub-District 3: Main Street District

Introduction

The Main Street District covers the mix of uses in the eastern end of the study area, from the railroad to I-94. Commercial uses are generally single-story structures on shallow lots with parking to the side or rear. Most businesses are locally-owned with a few franchises, and many represent international cultures. The four-lane road profile and smaller right-of-way width contributes to a "main street" identity, with single-family neighborhoods north and south of Dempster Street. Major destinations include Harrer Park, the Forest Preserve, Moretti's, and the future Village Hall and Police Department. Mixed-use development can be attracted to revitalize strip centers that have vacancies, bringing new businesses and residents to the corridor. Other blocks can be reinvigorated with improved landscaping, façade treatments, and parking lot enhancements.

VISION | MAIN STREET DISTRICT

The eastern entry into Morton Grove has a charming and vibrant main street feel, with an inviting and attractive streetscape that encourages pedestrians to walk and spend time at a variety of shops, restaurants, civic uses, and places for public gathering. Crossing Dempster Street is safe and accessible, with defined spaces for pedestrians, vehicles, and bikes on parallel roadways. Transit users hop on and off Pace Pulse and local buses to visit Morton Grove's many destinations.

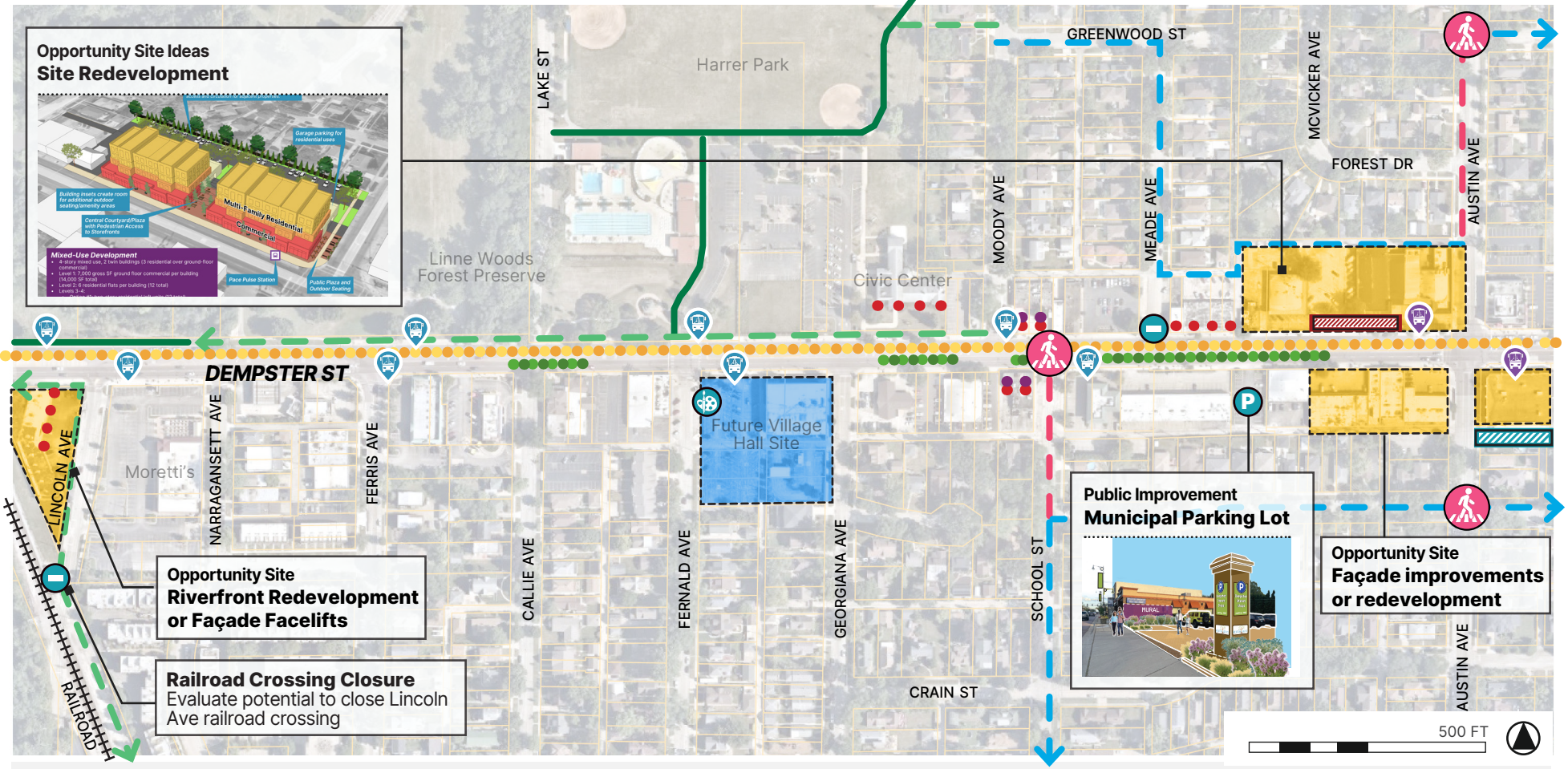
FUTURE LAND USE

The Main Street District offers opportunities for modernization of existing retail and redevelopment into mixed-use opportunities. The international range of restaurants can anchor redevelopment opportunities, drawing in customers from throughout the region.

Corridor Activity Hub "Main Street" District · Railroad → Austin Avenue

Figure 2.10

This segment serves as a key activity hub for the corridor, with the future Village Hall, Harrer Park, Linne Woods, and Metra station just south of Dempster. Recommendations focus on improving walkability with pedestrian and bike connections and transforming the corner at Austin with two new developments, outdoor spaces, public art, and an activated alleyway.



PUBLIC SPACE

- Municipal Parking Lot
- Potential Side-Street Closure
- Public Art
- Activate Alleyway
- Pedestrian & Streetscape Enhancements

PRIVATE SPACE

- Opportunity Site
- Outdoor Seating/Dining/Plaza
- Private Parking Lot Enhancement
- Façade Enhancements
- Potential Mural

TRANSPORTATION

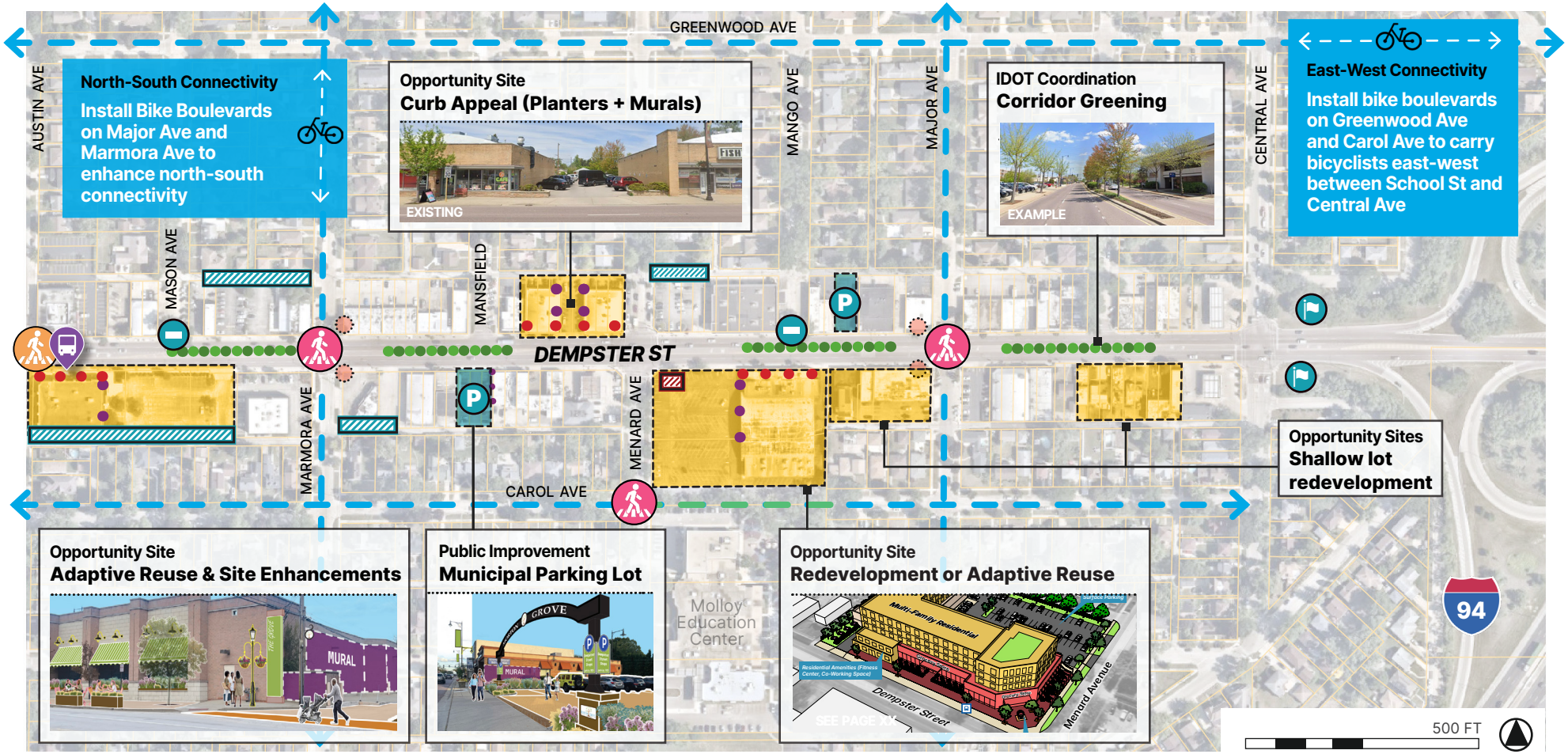
- New Pedestrian Crossing
- Improved Pedestrian Crossing
- Existing Pace Bus Stop
- Existing Pace Pulse Station
- Landscaped Median
- New Bike Lanes
- New Bike Boulevards
- New or Improved Trails
- Existing Bike Trail

DESIGN TOOLBOX

East Gateway "Main Street" District · Austin Avenue → Interstate 94

Figure 2.11

The Eastern Gateway will serve as an energetic, welcoming front door to Morton Grove. Improvements to pedestrian crossings and public parking will make it easy to park once and explore multiple Dempster destinations on foot, creating a more connected, Main Street style experience.



DESIGN TOOLBOX

PUBLIC SPACE
- Municipal Parking Lot
- Gateway Signage
- Potential Side-Street Closure
- Activate Alleyway

PRIVATE SPACE
- Opportunity Site
- Outdoor Seating/Plaza
- Façade Enhancements
- Potential Mural

TRANSPORTATION
- New Pedestrian Crossing
- Improved Pedestrian Crossing
- Curb Extensions/Bump Outs
- Existing Pace Bus Stop
- Existing Pace Pulse Station
- Landscaped Median
- New Bike Lanes
- New Bike Boulevards
- New or Improved Trails

Main Street District Recommendations

Zoning: Main Street Overlay District

Zoning is one important tool the Village can use to encourage private investment that aligns with Village priorities. Clear and consistent regulations that allow by-right development within existing zoning can set the stage for a more predictable and streamlined process for developers, facilitating the Village's desired development outcomes.

A review of permitted and special uses, bulk regulations, design guidelines, and parking standards was conducted for the full Study Area. The primary recommendation of this review is to establish a new overlay zoning district that translates the plan's goals and recommendations for the Main Street District into the Village of Morton Grove's Unified Development Code (UDC).

Through public input community members have expressed that there is great potential to improve this area with new mixed-use development that includes quality retail space and expanded housing opportunities, new retail development, and new multi-family development. Input has also focused on the need for high quality materials and design and public realm amenities such as plazas and open space. An overlay district would enable project design and use standard to be addressed administratively and without having to go through a sometimes lengthy and costly special use or PUD approval process.

An overlay district also tailors regulations to a target area with specific guidelines. The Main Street District is almost entirely zoned C-1 General Commercial, but making changes to C-1 District regulations would also impact areas west on Dempster Street and along Waukegan Road, two areas that are distinct and have a more commercial and auto-oriented character that match the intent of current C-1 District regulations.

A new Main Street Overlay District could include the following provisions:

- Allow mixed-use development with commercial uses required on the ground-floor and residential above as a Permitted Use (currently is a Special Use requiring significant review processes). The Village may consider permitting only select commercial uses by right on the ground-floor of these mixed-use developments to encourage more desirable commercial uses, such as retail and food service.

Figure 2.12: An overlay district can include design standards for proposed development including materials, fenestration, streetscape environment and landscape buffers

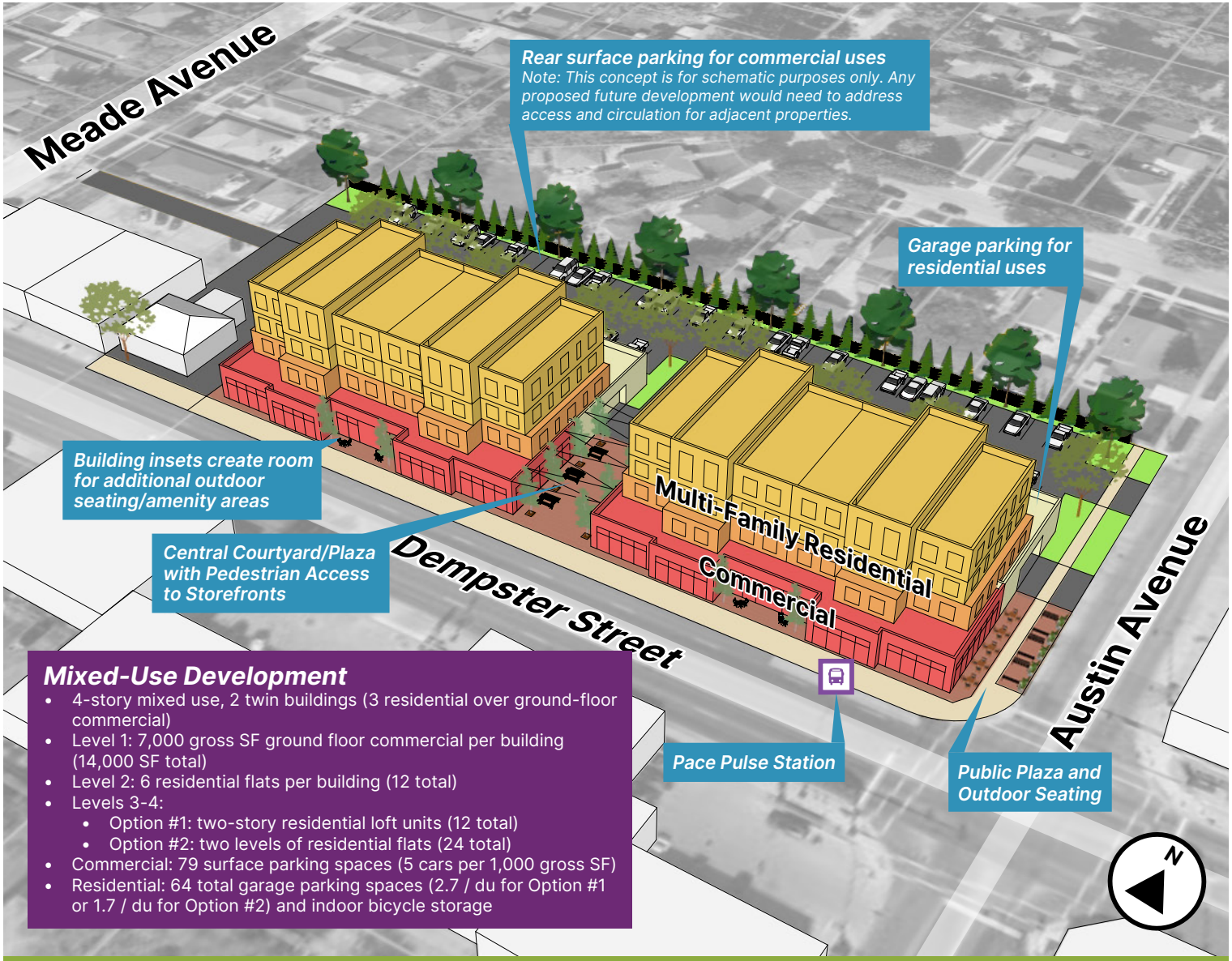
Main Street District Recommendations

- Increase the permitted maximum height from 45 to 50 feet to support quality mixed-use development that is aligned with market demand.
  - Current building practices typically have ground-floor heights of 15 to 18 feet with 10 to 11-foot residential upper stories, resulting in a four-story building between 45 and 50 feet.
- Establish a consistent street wall along Dempster Street with a new front yard build-to line.
  - With slightly deeper lots on the north side of Dempster Street, the overlay could specify a build-to line of five (5) feet on the north side, with required landscaping or hardscaping in the front yard, and zero (0) feet on the south side of Dempster where lots are shallower and more challenging to develop. The Village should consider standards that address sightline requirements for developments with no or minimal setbacks to help ensure pedestrian safety along Dempster Street.
  - A consistent street wall helps to foster a comfortable pedestrian environment. When buildings can incorporate landscaping or hardscaping on their properties, where space allows, this helps contribute greenery and buffering along a streetscape with limited available area.
- Encourage building stepbacks in which upper stories are recessed from lower levels. Stepbacks help to maintain a human scale, provide adequate sunlight, and respect adjacent properties, particularly the single-family residential homes to the north and south of the commercial frontages along Dempster Street.
- Consider additional design criteria that build upon existing Chapter 12 Design Standards and can be reviewed and approved administratively (and appealed to the Appearance Commission or Plan Commission, if needed), including:
  - 360-degree architecture with consistent quality, materials, and appearance on all sides of a building
  - Points of entry and public spaces that connect directly to the sidewalk and bus stops/stations
  - Mid-block pedestrian passageways through developments to increase safety and convenience for pedestrians and improve access to parking
  - Parking, if provided, must be located to the side or rear, not between the building and the street
  - Screening and transitions to adjacent single-family homes
  - Integrated streetscape and public space amenities on-site
  - Transit-friendly amenities, such as shaded seating, secure bike parking, landscaping, and public art

Figure 2.13: Midtown Square, Glenview (Credit: Fitzgerald Architecture Planning Design)

Opportunity Site 2

Dempster/Austin Redevelopment

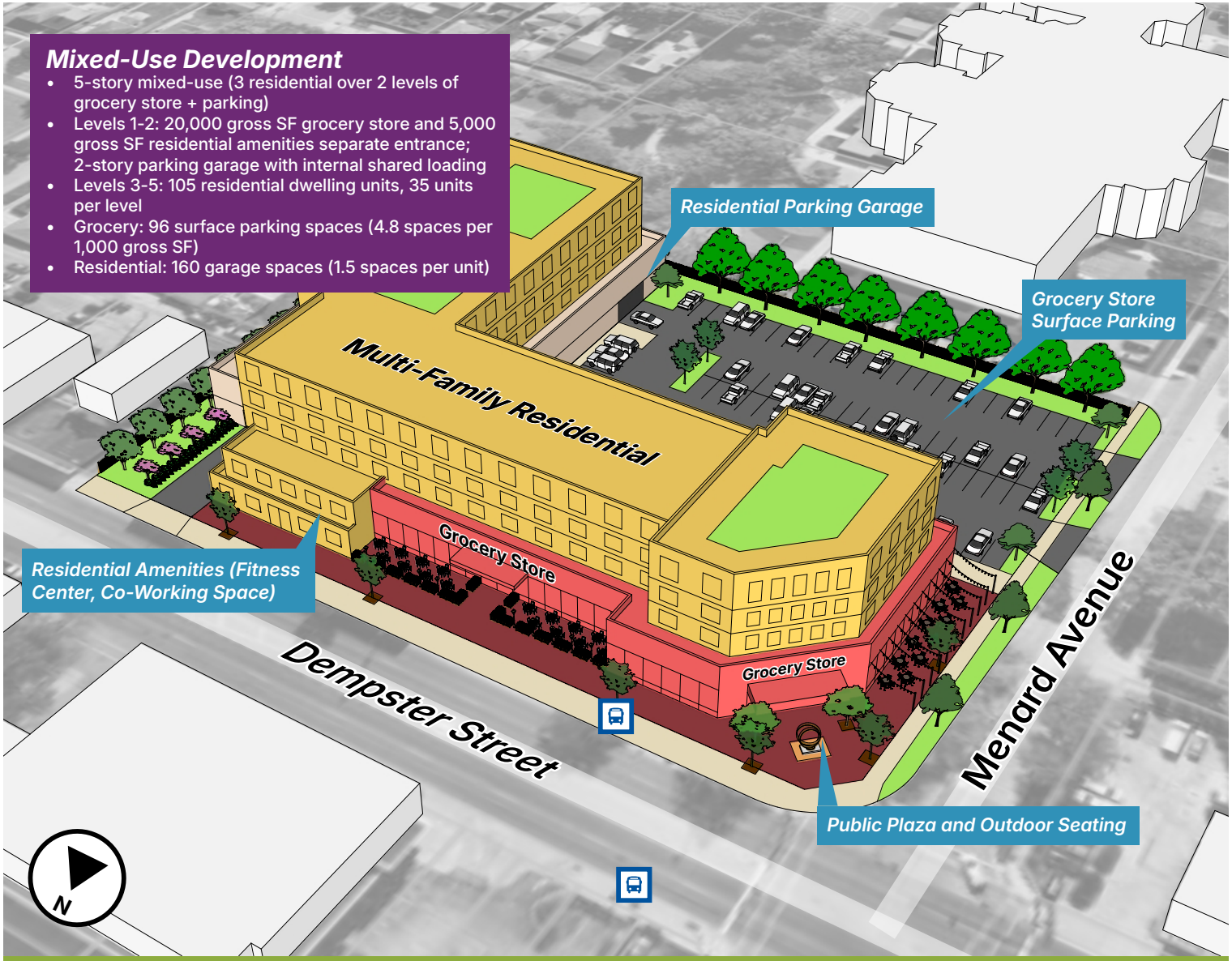


Open Space Amenities: One open space is located between the two buildings and another space on the outer side of the eastern building. The design toolbox on pages 43-48 outlines a variety of design approaches that can be implemented to enhance public and private open spaces.

This graphic shows a concept for a potential mixed-use redevelopment at the northwest corner of Dempster Street and Austin Avenue. Uses would include ground-floor commercial with residential uses above. Mixed-use buildings can help generate daytime and evening foot traffic to support businesses, restaurants, and services along the corridor. This concept also depicts a central courtyard in between the retail storefronts with additional sidewalk seating facing Austin Avenue. These design elements can help foster a more pedestrian-friendly corridor.

Opportunity Site 3, Option A

Dempster/Menard Redevelopment

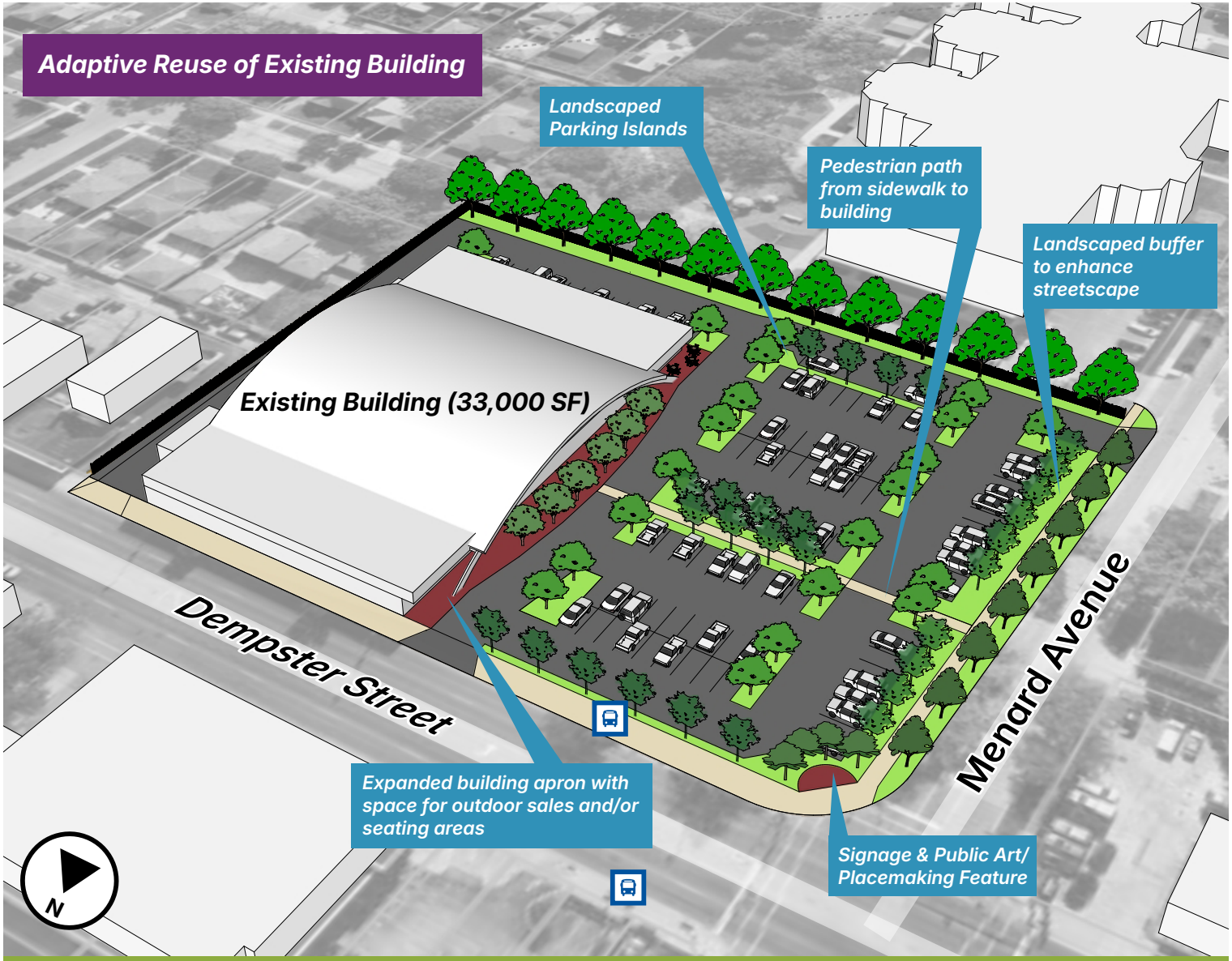


Open Space Amenities: The multi-family building incorporates a public plaza and outdoor seating at the corner. The design toolbox on pages 43-48 outlines a variety of design approaches that can be implemented to enhance public and private open spaces.

Two alternatives are conceptualized for this site. Option A illustrates a conceptual redevelopment of the existing site for mixed-use development with ground-floor commercial and multi-family residential units above. Parking would be placed at the rear of the building and on part of the first floor of the building to maintain a pedestrian-friendly streetscape by keeping vehicular traffic off of Dempster. There is also potential to add elements like outdoor dining and small patio areas along both Dempster and Menard. An enhanced Pace bus stop could also be incorporated along the streetscape to improve access to transit.

Opportunity Site 3, Option B

Dempster/Menard Adaptive Reuse



Instead of redeveloping the site as shown in Option A, an alternative concept depicts adaptive reuse of the currently vacant building at the same site. Additional enhancements on the site can include a landscaped parking lot, landscaped buffer to enhance the streetscape and pedestrian environment, and a corner placemaking feature that could include signage and public art.

Open Space Amenities: Since this is an adaptive reuse concept, there is limited opportunity for open space. However, the design toolbox on pages 43-48 outlines a variety of design approaches that can be implemented to enhance public and private open spaces.

Main Street District Recommendations

Pedestrian Crossings

Safe pedestrian crossings were consistently identified as a priority through community engagement efforts throughout the planning process. Safe pedestrian and bicycle crossings were consistently identified as one of the top concerns raised through open houses, surveys, and public comment. With schools, parks, Cook County Forest Preserve, the future Village Hall, and other destinations along the corridor, the following recommendations can be pursued to improve safe crossings.

Pedestrian crossing concepts are provided on the following pages for the:

- Major Avenue Crossing
- Marmora Avenue Crossing
- School Street Crossing

New Major Avenue Crossing

- Install new pedestrian crossing at Major Avenue, including pedestrian refuge island and rectangular rapid flashing beacons (RRFBs).
- Crossing could be installed on either west or east side of intersection.
- Pedestrian refuge island would require restricting left turns off of Dempster Street and onto Major Avenue in at least one direction.
- May consider converting portion of Major Avenue to one-way traffic (could be converted either way) near the intersection to further enforce no left turns.

Figure 2.14: Major Avenue New Crossing

Option A: Placement on east side of intersection could have added benefit of restricting left turns into and out of daycare parking lot driveway, which is currently less than 50 feet from the intersection, creating potentially dangerous conflicts.

Figure 2.15: Major Avenue New Crossing

Option B: Placement on west side of intersection would have no driveway left-turn impacts.

Main Street District Recommendations

New Marmora Avenue Crossing

- Install new pedestrian crossing at Marmora Avenue, including pedestrian refuge island and RRFBs.
- Crossing could be installed on either west or east side of intersection.
- Pedestrian refuge island would require restricting left turns off of Dempster Street and onto Marmora Avenue in at least one direction.
- May consider converting portion of Marmora Avenue to one-way traffic (could be converted either way) near the intersection to further enforce no left turns.

Figure 2.16: Marmora Avenue New Crossing

Option A: Placement on east side of intersection would have no driveway left-turn impacts.

Figure 2.17: Marmora Avenue New Crossing

Option B: Placement on west side of intersection would have no driveway left-turn impacts.

Main Street District Recommendations

New School Street Crossing

- Install new pedestrian crossing at School Street, including pedestrian refuge island and RRFBs.
- One driveway on the north side of Dempster Street, 80 feet east of Moody Avenue, would have restricted left-turn access off of Dempster Street – alternate driveway access is available via Moody Avenue.

Figure 2.18: School Street New Crossing

Option A: Pedestrian refuge island located west of School Street would have no impact on left-turn movements onto or off of Dempster Street.

Medians

Installing medians along Dempster Street can provide opportunities for enhanced landscaping while also having traffic calming benefits. Adding medians would most likely require at least some left-turn restrictions, although these restrictions may also offer safety and operational benefits. Beautification and safety benefits will need to be considered against potential access limitations.

Medians may be installed either with new crossings and pedestrian refuge islands or on their own. Concepts may range from light, medium, and heavy treatments and can be applied at different locations depending on circumstances.

Medians are recommended along Dempster Street at the following four segments:

- Lincoln Avenue to Georgiana Avenue
- Georgiana Avenue to Austin Avenue
- Austin Avenue to Menard Avenue
- Menard Avenue to Central Avenue

Main Street District Recommendations

Conceptual renderings of three different intensity levels (light, medium, and heavy) of medians are provided in the Appendix for each of the four segments listed on the previous page.

- **Option A: Medians Light:** Option A maintains all existing left-turn movements to and from Dempster Street and intersecting streets. Some driveway left turns are restricted.
- **Option B: Medians Medium:** Option B further restricts left-turn movements to and from Dempster Street and five intersecting streets on the north side of the roadway.
- **Option C: Medians Heavy:** Option C further restricts left-turn movements to and from Dempster Street and four additional intersecting streets. In this scenario, most left-turning movements would occur at signalized intersections, as well as at School Street and Lincoln Avenue.

These conceptual medians further restrict left-turn movements to and from Dempster Street and five intersecting streets on the north side of the roadway.

Medians provide opportunities for enhanced landscaping and can have traffic calming benefits. Medians would most likely require at least some left-turn restrictions, although these restrictions may also offer safety and operational benefits. Medians may be installed either along with new crossings and pedestrian refuge islands or on their own.

Main Street District Recommendations

Parking Lot Enhancements

There are three municipal parking lots in the Main Street District that are often underutilized—29% of respondents in the community survey conducted for this planning effort said they did not know where these lots are located. The Village can enhance the appearance and visibility of the parking lots through the site improvements illustrated in the graphics on the right, helping to increase utilization and support nearby local businesses.

- **Branded parking lot signage:** Whether through option A (pillar sign) or B (archway sign), Village-branded signage can serve as a prominent and visible signal of available parking to drivers passing by. Custom signage unique to Morton Grove can also strengthen a sense of place and welcome visitors to the community.
- **Plantings:** Native plantings installed at the perimeter of the parking lot, along Dempster, serve two purposes – adding greenery and beautification along the streetscape and providing stormwater management benefits by slowing and filtering runoff.
- **Pavement enhancements:** Permeable pavers in parking lots also serve dual purposes of presenting a more attractive appearance than typical concrete or asphalt while helping to manage stormwater.
- **Mural:** Large, blank walls present ideal mural opportunities to be done in coordination with private property owners and the local arts community.

Main Street District Recommendations

Side Street Plazas

While IDOT retains control of Dempster Street, the Village has roadway jurisdiction on local side streets that intersect with Dempster. Some of these streets—such as Meade, Mason, or Mango Avenues—may be candidates for partial closure, from Dempster to the nearest alleyway north or south, to convert roadway space into pedestrianized public plazas with room for outdoor seating, landscaping, public art, and lighting. The rendering above depicts such a space on a corridor that is similar to Dempster Street, specifically showing a pop-up plaza that accommodates temporary roadway closures for community fests and events, in partnership with local businesses.

Alleyway Enhancements

During community engagement, several residents noted that they often use alleyways parallel to Dempster Street as a more comfortable pedestrian route. This behavior speaks to the desire for pedestrians to seek out quieter, less-traveled passageways and the opportunity that alleyways can present for public space activations like public art, walk-up cafe windows, and outdoor seating. The Village can test out this idea by coordinating with private property owners for temporary pilot projects at key locations, such as between Meade and Marmora Avenues, depicted in the graphic above showing the alleyway just south of Dempster and east of Austin Avenue.

Main Street District Recommendations

Street Trees

A mature street tree canopy can substantially improve pedestrian experience while also providing traffic calming benefits. Although establishing a mature canopy relies heavily on simply waiting for growth, there are several opportunities to speed that growth and establish a better long-term environment for healthy, vibrant trees:

- Larger and deeper tree pits provide more space for healthy roots to grow. Using structured soil can further help.
- Installing structured soil cells can provide additional support for healthy root growth and speed up the rate of growth. Soil cells can provide a particular benefit in a confined area where maximizing paving space for pedestrian travel is important. Utilizing a soil cell can cost several times the price of a typical tree pit but can provide high positive returns.
- Using permeable pavement materials around trees can allow for more flexible root growth and improved water infiltration while providing a safe and accessible pedestrian pathway.
- Investing in high-quality maintenance, particularly in the first few years following installation can improve tree health. This includes pruning, watering, and road salt cleaning/mitigation.

Planters

Investing in additional and/or larger raised planters can increase space for plantings and provide additional separation between pedestrians and vehicles. Planters may include movable urns similar to what currently exists on the corridor or more substantial, linear planters built between the curb and the pedestrian travel way. Consider plantings that bring color to the corridor, including plantings that maintain color into the colder months.

Corner and Side Streets

While Dempster Street, itself, provides limited space for streetscaping, corners and side streets offer opportunities for additional and more expansive landscaping. These opportunities include space for street trees, larger planters, and bioswales.

Main Street District Recommendations

Lighting
Creative and decorative lighting can provide positive streetscape benefits even in a constrained environment. Options to consider include public art installations that incorporate lighting, tree up-lighting, and decorative lights that hang over the sidewalk or side streets. Lighting on building façades also provides streetscape benefits.

Lighting fixtures on the sidewalk side of existing light poles, closer to sidewalk level can generate positive results. These "pedestrian-scale" lights better illuminate the sidewalk and can create a safer and more comfortable pedestrian experience.

Light poles can also support installation of vertical enhancements, like banners, metal signs, flags, and hanging baskets.

Public Art
Public art on Dempster Street can add color and character and create a more interesting pedestrian experience. This may include sculptures, murals, or creative sidewalk surface treatments. Side streets may provide expanded opportunities for public art.

Building Setbacks
Future redevelopments or major renovations should include consideration for setting back buildings an additional 5 to 6 feet from lot lines. Buildings set too far back can be detrimental to the streetscape experience, but providing even just a few additional feet can allow for a more comfortable pedestrian experience, including additional space for landscaping, seating, and outdoor dining.

Wayfinding and Identity Signage
Branded wayfinding signage provides an opportunity to establish corridor character, improve the visitor experience, and highlight community assets.

Seating
Where space permits, providing additional seating invites pedestrians to stay along the corridor instead of only passing through. Seating can be incorporated into planters or public art and can also double as separation between the sidewalk and vehicle travel lanes. Where possible, include seating adjacent to bus stops.

Sub-District 4: Metra TOD District

Introduction

The Metra TOD District is south of Dempster Street, generally encompassing a ½-mile radius around the Morton Grove Metra Station. This sub-district includes a mix of uses, including older commercial buildings interspersed with single-family homes and newer housing types like townhouses, condos, apartments, and senior living facilities. It also serves as a civic area for Morton Grove, including the current site of Village Hall and Police Department, Library, and multiple schools and houses of worship. The Metra TOD District is characterized by low traffic counts and a small town, historic feel, including being home to long-standing local restaurants and service businesses. Ferris Avenue is the principal roadway that connects this area to Dempster Street.

VISION | METRA TOD DISTRICT

With a brand-new train station, the area surrounding the Morton Grove Metra feels like a walkable small-town with a mix of housing, local businesses, schools, and institutions. The Forest Preserve and North Branch Trail are regional assets in this neighborhood's backyard. Improved pedestrian and bike connections between the trail, Metra, and Pace Pulse paired with new development bring a healthy dose of foot traffic and customers to Lincoln Avenue and Dempster Street.

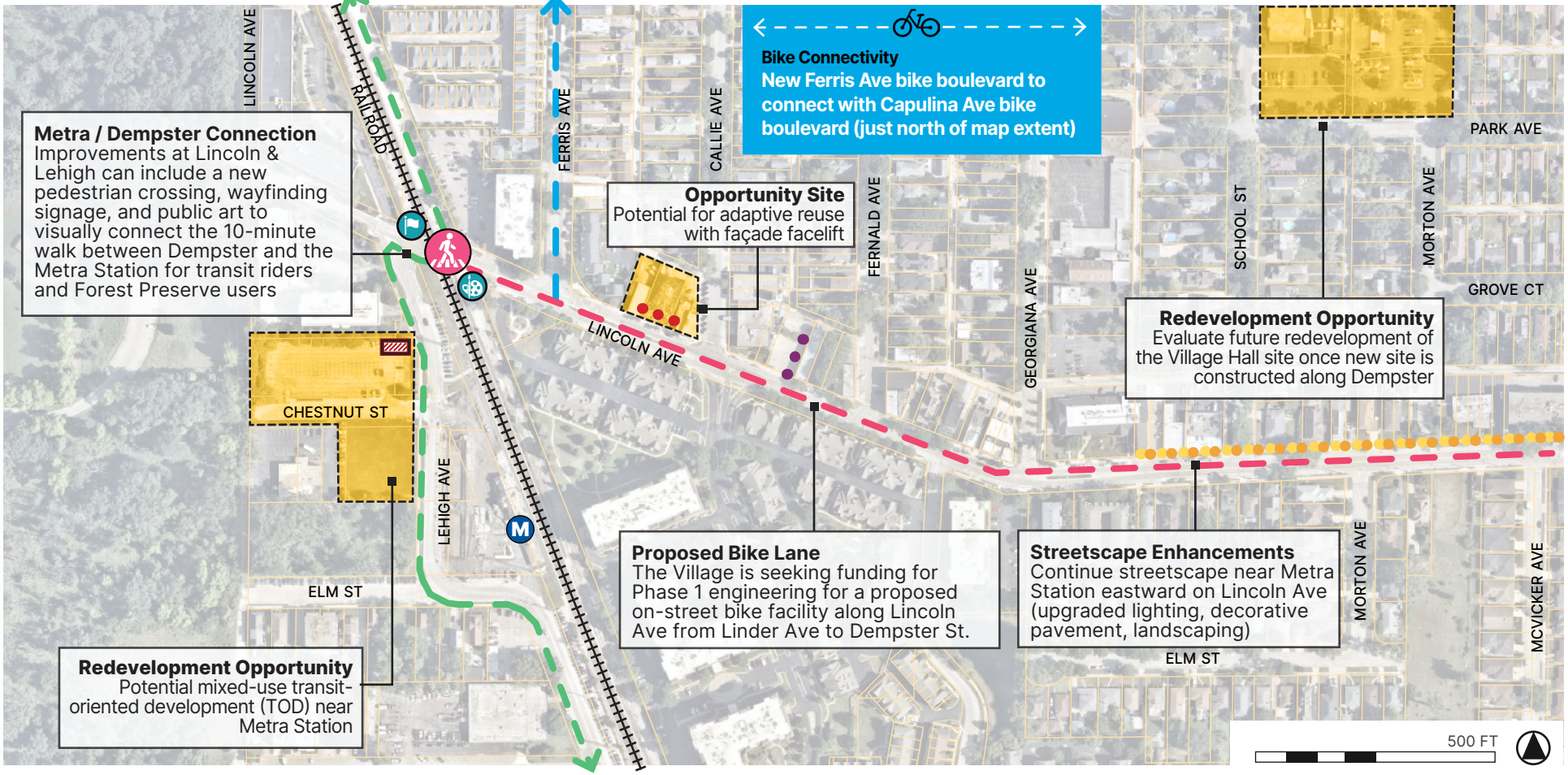
FUTURE LAND USE

With a new Metra station, successful low-rise townhomes and multi-family development, this area will continue to serve as a neighborhood with diverse housing types, stores, and restaurants.

Metra TOD District · Capulina Avenue → Main Street

Figure 2.19

As the historic core of Morton Grove, this area is ripe for improved pedestrian and bike connections for easier access between Metra and Dempster's Pace bus routes. Development opportunities near Metra and at the former Village Hall site will bring new foot traffic and customers for businesses on Lincoln Ave and Dempster.



DESIGN TOOLBOX

PUBLIC SPACE
- Gateway Signage
- Public Art
- Pedestrian & Streetscape Enhancements

PRIVATE SPACE
- Opportunity Site
- Outdoor Seating/Plaza
- Façade Enhancements
- Potential Mural

TRANSPORTATION
- New Pedestrian Crossing
- New Bike Boulevards
- New or Improved Trails
- New Bike Lane
- Existing Metra Station

Metra TOD District Recommendations

Metra Right-of-Way (ROW) Sidepath

North of the Metra station platform, the Metra rail right-of-way (ROW) includes a gravel area east of the tracks approximately 40 feet wide. This area could be used for a multi-use pathway.

Facility Type

The exact nature of this pathway could range from a relatively simple 10-foot asphalt shared-use path to a more expansive public gathering space with enhanced surface treatments, lighting, plantings, and/or furniture. At a minimum, any facility should accommodate pedestrian and cyclist mobility. The area could be used to partially accommodate a Lehigh Avenue bikeway proposed in the 2023 Cook County Bike Plan and connect to any future bicycle facilities along Lincoln Avenue.

Process and Site Considerations

The project team met with Metra staff in May 2025 to discuss the potential of utilizing this gravel area along the right-of-way, which is owned by Metra, for a pathway. . Similar projects in the region have been driven by the local community. Should the Village pursue this, Metra would grant a license for the occupation of the ROW and the licensee would own the improvements. Future analysis would need to be done on the feasibility of the path with safety, Metra vehicle access, and other railroad usages in mind.

Figure 2.20: Proposed Metra ROW Sidepath

Metra TOD District Recommendations

Metra Station Area Access

Current gaps in the pedestrian and bicycle network near the Metra station negatively impact multimodal safety and access. Crosswalks can be changed to reduce the distance for pedestrians to cross Lincoln Avenue and Lehigh Avenue intersection by aligning the roadways at right angles in order to improve safety and sightlines, reduce excessive roadway surface, and establish space for pedestrian and bicycle improvements.

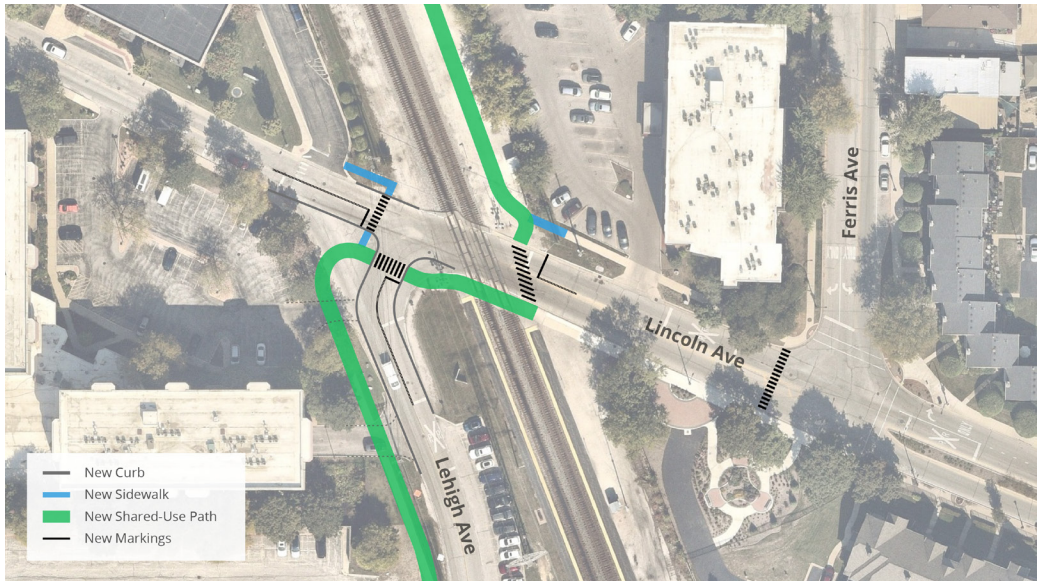
A northbound Lehigh Avenue left-turn lane may also be considered to provide left-turning access while right-turning vehicles are stopped due to train movements.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Improvements

The new crosswalk which is proposed at Ferris Avenue and Lincoln Avenue would support more direct pedestrian access to and from the station.

The sketch concept illustrates a north/south shared-use path running through the area. North of Lincoln Avenue, the path would utilize existing railroad ROW (see separate concept discussing this space). South of Lincoln Avenue, the path would utilize existing public ROW and would replace the existing sidewalk. This shared-use pathway is one option to fulfill a Lehigh Avenue bikeway proposed in the most recent Cook County Bicycle Plan.

Figure 2.21: Metra Station Area Access Improvements



Metra TOD District Recommendations

Lincoln Avenue Railroad Crossing Closure

The Village and Metra have previously discussed closing the Lincoln Avenue vehicle railroad crossing closest to Dempster Street. This closure would eliminate a vehicle conflict point with Metra, Amtrak, and freight trains. Traffic volumes are not immediately available for this segment of Lincoln Avenue. However, given the relatively short total length of the segment and low number of destinations it serves, vehicle traffic should be expected to be low. Therefore, diversions of traffic onto adjacent streets would be expected to be minimal.

Figure 2.22: Lincoln Avenue Railroad Crossing Closure