



Steering Committee Meeting #4 Summary

June 17, 2026 | Morton Grove Civic Center

Click here for meeting presentation:

[Dempster Corridor Plan SC Meeting 4 Presentation 20260615.pdf](#)

The fourth Steering Committee meeting for the Dempster Corridor took place on June 17, 2026, at 7:00pm at the Morton Grove Civic Center. Meeting participants included members of the project Steering Committee, Village staff, representatives from Pace, Metra, 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
- Keith White, Village Trustee
- Eileen Scanlon Harford, Village Clerk
- Chris Kintner, Plan Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals Chair
- Mathew Ingram, Plan Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals Member
- Georgianne Brunner, Environmental and Natural Resources Chair
- Megan Miller, Metra
- Kyle Sussman, Pace

Village and RTA staff:

- Zoe Heidorn, Director of Community and Economic Development
- Anne Kirchner, Planner/Zoning Administrator
- Chuck Meyer, Village Administrator
- Terry Liston, Corporation Counsel
- Alex Waltz, Principal Planner, RTA

Consultant team member:

- Scott Goldstein, President, Teska Associates, Inc.
- Stuart Maclean, Planner, TYLin
- Todd Vanadilok, Principal Planner, Egret & Ox Planning



Open House Recap (Pre-Meeting)

- The Steering Committee meeting was preceded by a public open house that occurred on the same day from 5:30pm to 6:30pm at the Morton Grove Civic Center.
- Strong recurring themes from community input:
 - Affordable housing along the corridor
 - Bike/multimodal integration
 - Safe, walkable streets — residents currently avoid Dempster on foot, drive 1–2 blocks instead
 - More restaurants, filled vacancies, green space in new development
- Landscape medians received mixed feedback — concern about left-turn access, but data shows most accidents are left-turn related; public education needed
- Grade-separated crossing at Lehigh explored but flagged as prohibitively expensive and land-intensive (would require entering forest preserve)

Goals and Objectives

The Consultant Team reviewed the goals of the plan including:

- Land Use:
 - Mixed-use redevelopment
 - Business attraction
 - Civic hub at Dempster/village hall area
 - Entrepreneurship and small businesses
 - Housing diversity
 - Transit-supportive development
- Economic Development:
 - Vibrant business mix with small businesses, international offerings, and creative industries
 - Mixed-use development
 - Corridor assets attracting visitors and investment
 - Events and marketing
- Transportation:
 - Safe pedestrian environment
 - Dempster as a place to stroll and linger
 - Corridor parking
 - Safe bicycle environment
 - Access to and use of transit
 - Safe and efficient driving route

Opportunity Site Concept Plans

Scott Goldstein shared concept plans for three sites. These were presented at the previous meeting with edits made including greater emphasis on plazas and open space

- Opportunity Site 1: Dempster/Waukegan – multi-family residential and commercial
- Opportunity Site 2: Dempster/Austin – mixed-use development

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WHERE COMMUNITY MEETS COMMERCE

- Opportunity Site 3: Dempster/Menard – Option A: mixed-use development; Option B: adaptive reuse of existing building
- Residential component is what makes mixed-use development financially viable right now — commercial floor alone won't cover construction costs
- Shallow lots on much of Dempster require creative site design; Menard site is deeper and more workable
- Incubator/food hall concept discussed for existing large vacant building
- Rustic Fox (North Aurora) cited as working incubator model — reused big-box retail for small business spaces
- Antique mall model also floated as interim use while larger redevelopment is considered
- CVS site: building in good shape, may attract a tenant without redevelopment; El Sol corner (north side, deeper lots) prioritized as opportunity site instead — avoids need for underground parking

Land Use Recommendations

Todd Vanadilok presented highlights of land use recommendations including:

- An overlay zoning district is proposed for the Main Street District (railroad to I-94):
 - Permits ground-floor commercial + residential above by right (no special use process)
 - Raises max height from 45ft to 50ft
 - Requires consistent street wall; parking to rear/side
 - Enables design guidelines to enforce quality
- Parking lot enhancements include: branded parking lot signage, landscaping, pavement enhancements, and mural/public art opportunities
- Property and façade enhancements include: pedestrian-oriented lighting, Morton Grove banner branding, awnings and lighting, planter boxes to frame outdoor dining areas, wayfinding and informational signage, and activated alleyways

Transportation Recommendations

Stuart Maclean reviewed specific transportation recommendations for each of the corridor areas including:

- Pedestrian safety west of Harlem flagged as an important area to add a crossing — ~3,500ft gap between Harlem and Ozark with no signalized crossing; residents crossing unsafely mid-block
- Pedestrian refuge islands proposed near Notre Dame College Prep area using existing center turn lane
- Lehigh/Dempster intersection: four options explored (A: geometry adjustment; B: realign to 90°; C: B + trail realignment; D: shift crossing to east side)
- Many of these options can be piloted with paint and posts before capital investment
- PACE bus queue-jump lanes proposed — gives signal priority to Pulse buses at intersections; ridership up 11% since Pulse introduced
- Bike boulevard proposed on Greenwood (longest unimpeded residential street, speeding concerns) connecting to Lehigh and North Branch Trail

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- Metra railroad right-of-way north of station: potential shared-use path or community/sculpture space — Metra engaged as partner
- Parking: 29% of survey respondents don't use municipal lots because they don't know where they are — wayfinding seen as low-cost fix before any capital changes
- New NITA legislation eliminates parking minimums within certain distances of transit — entire Dempster corridor qualifies

Committee Feedback

- Implementation framed in four tiers:
 - 1: Village-controlled, quick wins (wayfinding, façade improvements)
 - 2: Village-controlled but longer-term (zoning changes)
 - 3: Partner-dependent (Metra, forest preserve, IDOT)
 - 4: Private development – village sets the stage, can't control timing
- Plan Commission will need to have time to review and have staff present and provide information to Commissioners
- Precedent cited: past zoning changes walked through with commissioners in advance
- General consensus: strong support for the plan's direction; no significant objections raised
- Village already moving toward zoning overlay for Dempster; plan accelerates process

Next Steps

- Consulting team to prepare a memorandum summarizing committee comments and consensus on recommendations
- Plan to be posted publicly as PDF; hard copies distributed
- Summary of community input (from first meeting) to be included as intro/context document — links resident voice to final recommendations
- Plan Commission presentation: provide plan well in advance; consider a dedicated walkthrough session before the formal vote
- Sequence: Steering Committee consensus → Plan Commission → Village Board adoption
- Village staff to identify quick-win items (e.g., wayfinding signage) for near-term budget inclusion
- Staff to initiate conversation with Cook County/Forest Preserve re: trail realignment at Lehigh if Board directs