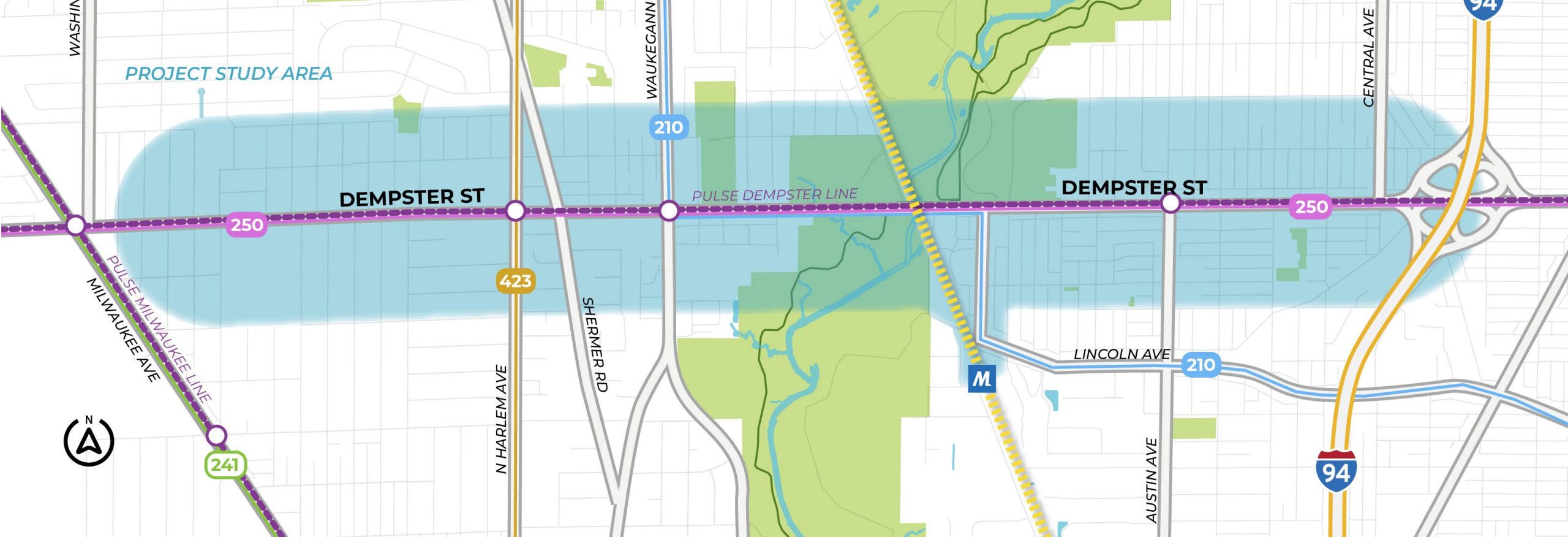




DEMPSTER CORRIDOR PLAN

WHERE COMMUNITY MEETS COMMERCE

Steering Committee # 4 Draft Plan Review
June 18, 2026



Agenda

- Welcome & Introductions (5 minutes)
- Goals & Objectives (15 minutes)
- Corridor Recommendations (15 minutes)
- Opportunity Site Concept Plans (10 minutes)
- Transportation Recommendations (10 minutes)
- Discussion and Recommendation (30 minutes)

Project Timeline



Community Engagement

Key Themes & Findings



More points of interest that invite people to stop and stay on Dempster

Increase variety of shopping, dining, and entertainment destinations, particularly those that are family-friendly and cater to all ages. Overall, respondents want attractive and community-oriented spaces with convenient parking.



Safe, walkable, and attractive streets that are pedestrian-oriented

Create a sidewalk environment that encourages people to walk along Dempster and feel safe doing it. Consider how accessible infrastructure, streetscape improvements, and signage/wayfinding can enhance street and sidewalk activity.



Fill in the gaps to create a bustling, vibrant corridor

Underutilized or vacant space/storefronts on Dempster have the potential to be mixed-use development that targets housing for people who work in Morton Grove and young professionals.



Better connections and less traffic congestion for all modes of transportation

Whether traveling by car, bike, bus, or walking, respondents want to see reduced and slower traffic on Dempster. Other ideas for improving the mobility experience included bike lanes, traffic calming, speed reduction, signage, and more convenient public transit.



Community Survey

348

Survey responses

2 of 5

Respondents have lived in MG for 20+ years

1 of 5

Respondents have lived in MG for less than 5 years

Q2 What are three words you would use to describe the Dempster Corridor you desire to see in the future?

Fun Family Green
Welcoming
Community Friendly **Vibrant**
Walkable Attractive Pedestrian
Safe Restaurants Modern Inviting
Bustling

Community Engagement

Community Workshops

WORKSHOP #1 6/25/25

Attendees shared and discussed their ideas for improving Dempster as a safer and more vibrant destination and community hub.



WORKSHOP #2 3/19/26

With a gallery of exhibits, attendees shared their input on transportation, corridor design, and opportunity site concepts for Dempster.



Ideas Wall

What are your big ideas for Dempster Street? Describe what you think the corridor should look like in 10-20 years. Attach a photo to your comment to share a current condition or outside inspiration!

Add Idea

Search



Sort by

Tree-lined center medians!

Posted by Anonymous | 1 month ago

The center medians on Dempster, Golf, and Waukegan should be tree-lined. Adding trees would significantly enhance the village's curb appeal, creating a more welcoming and vibrant streetscape. Beyond aesthetics, research shows that tree-lined roads naturally encourage drivers to slow down, as greenery within the driver's peripheral vision acts as a subtle traffic-calming measure.

4 Likes

Install roundabouts

Posted by Anonymous | 3 months ago

Adding roundabouts to Dempster. Had a similar road where I grew up that got converted to roundabouts. I will say that people did not like the idea at first, but now, many years later, they seem much more positive about them. It would aid slowing down traffic, making it safer for pedestrians, but also may aid the frustration of waiting to make left turns or the fear some people may have of braking to pull into parking lots when you are being tailgated at 40 mph.

1 Likes

Signage change

Posted by Anonymous | 7 months ago

Store Fronts

Posted by Anonymous | 2 months ago

If there are any new small strip developments, they should have parking in front like the one on the south side of Dempster, west of Austin. Storefronts that go up to the sidewalk should be avoided.

0 Likes

Dempster Needs More Parking!

Posted by Anonymous | 2 months ago

No wonder businesses keep closing on Dempster: there are very few places to park near the majority of stores. If you have to park way down a side street and walk back to a store, there's a small chance you're going to frequent that store. Negotiate with the companies that DO have parking (there's a huge lot on the NE corner of Dempster and Menard that is always empty) to make them open to everyone and you might help solve the problem. And ADVERTISE to get new tenants in. The fact that the old...

0 Likes

Water fountain

Posted by Anonymous | 6 months ago

A tri-level water fountain for dogs, shorter people/children, and taller people. The one at the park doesn't work well; the one at the fire

Community Engagement

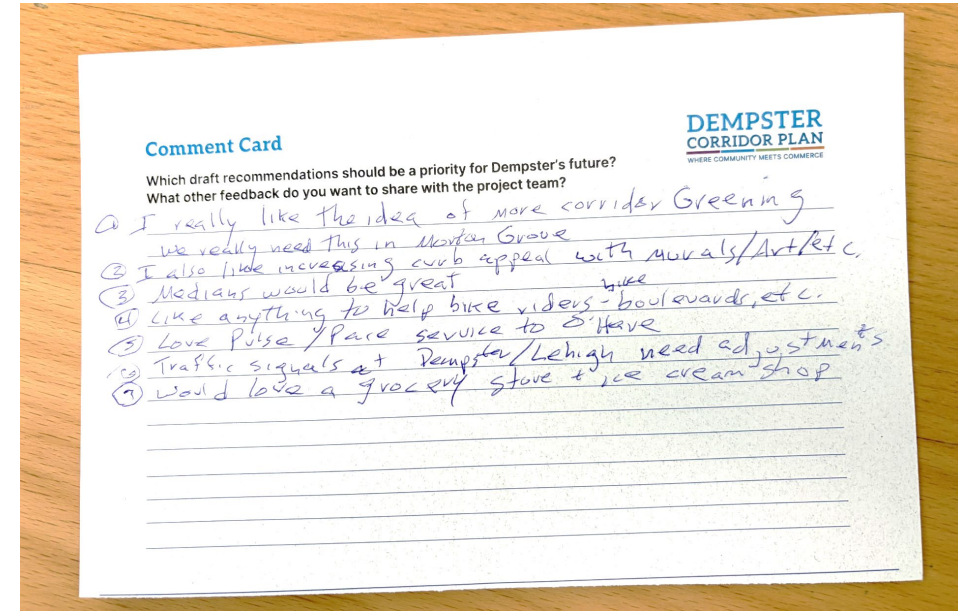
Draft Recommendation Feedback (Open house sticky notes + online responses)

Accessibility & Mobility

- Need to improve pedestrian and bicycle safety
- Redesign of Lehigh Avenue / Dempster Street received widespread support
- Need for safer crossing near School Street and Lincoln Avenue
- Feedback on landscaped medians was mixed; support for improved pedestrian safety but concerned about access to businesses
- Would like to explore grade separated crossing over or under Dempster Street.

Development & Economic Viability

- Support for opportunity sites as key to revitalizing the corridor
- Need to more actively attract and retain businesses
- Interest in adding destination-oriented and family-friendly uses such as casual restaurants
- Would like additional green spaces in new development
- Concern over maintenance of certain properties



Goals & Objectives



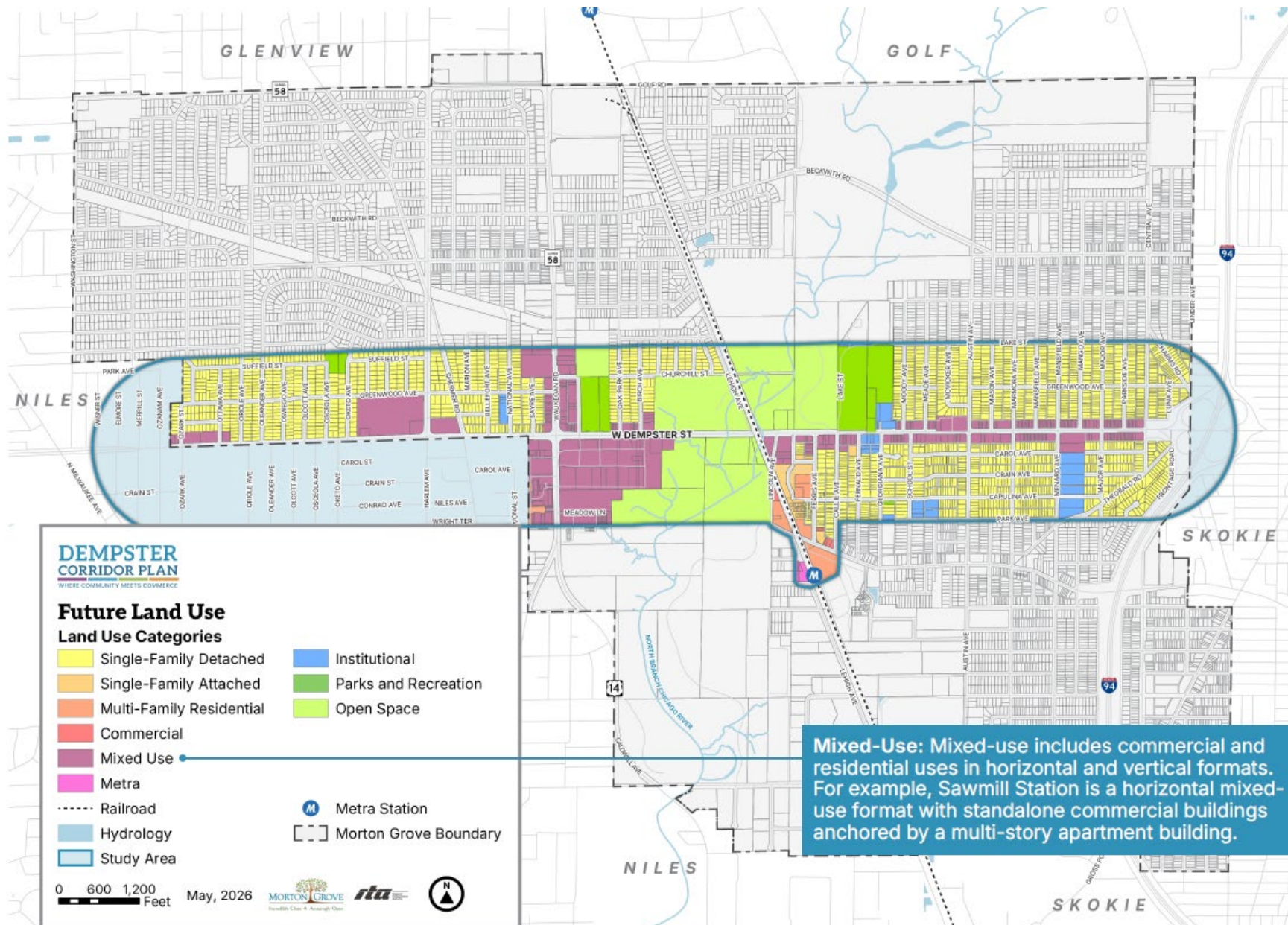
Vision for the Dempster Corridor

The Dempster Corridor is a **safe, walkable, and inviting destination** with **attractive streetscapes, vibrant local businesses, and welcoming public spaces**.

Modernized buildings, new residential and commercial development, and dedicated people places create a lively and comfortable environment that **encourages visitors to linger**.

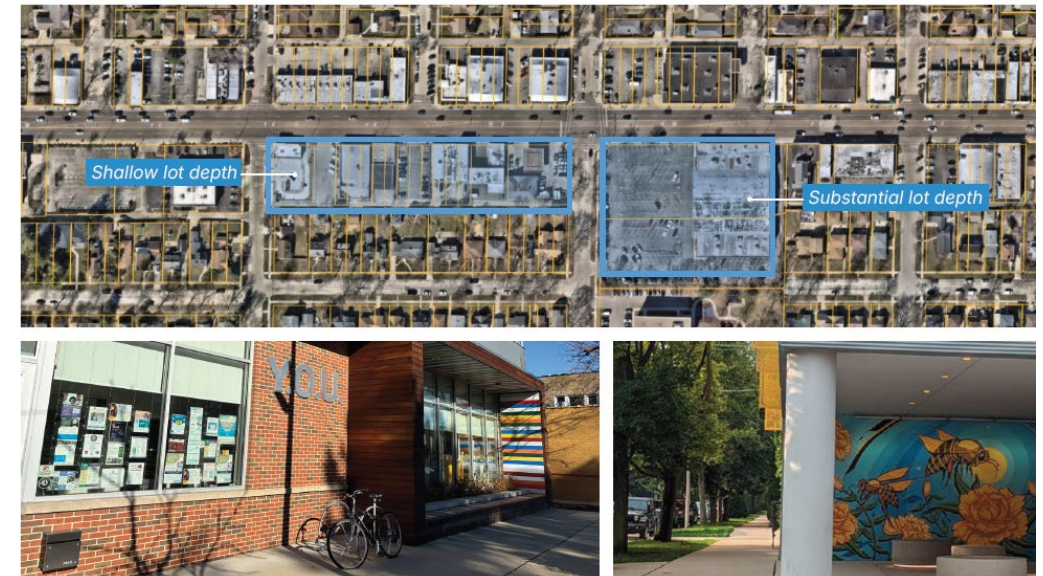
Convenient **Pace** bus service, a new **Metra** station, **safe pedestrian crossings, and streamlined trail crossings** make the corridor **easy to navigate for all**. Dempster Street serves as both a community hub and a **regional gateway** for residents, visitors, and trail users.

FUTURE LAND USE MAP



LAND USE GOAL 1: New commercial, residential, and mixed-use developments along Dempster and near Metra will contribute to an active and vibrant corridor with residents who can walk, bike, or take transit.

- Pursue well-designed **redevelopment** that provides **tax-generating** uses
- Foster development designs that **address site constraints** such as shallow lot size, limited curb cuts
- Pursue **rezoning and planned developments** that advance plan goals
- Support new development that provides **modern spaces** for businesses
- Develop policies for **public incentives** that meet the Village's objectives



Example of shallow-lot development that includes public space and wall mural

LAND USE GOAL 2: Existing retail spaces will be modernized and filled with attractive businesses and restaurants that draw residents and visitors to Dempster.

- **Lease vacant spaces** with new or expanding businesses
- Expand existing **façade improvement program**
- Evaluate new grants or incentives for **modernizing spaces**
- Encourage **adaptive reuse** for underutilized spaces
- Identify space for **food truck events and pop-ups**



*Example of façade enhancements
(Credit: Vancouver Downtown Association)*



LAND USE GOAL 3: Dempster Street will be the heart of Morton Grove as a central hub for community and civic uses, public spaces and activity.

- Build upon the relocation of Village Hall and Police Department to further define this area as a **unified civic campus**
- Dedicate space for **plazas, patios and green spaces**
- Provide support for restaurants and cafes to **add outdoor areas**
- Seek opportunities for **public art**

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK | ONLINE ENGAGEMENT QUOTES

- “ Morton Grove needs a place where people can walk, others can come with the train. Thinking of Ice cream, restaurants, cafes, crepe shop, bookstore, bars...a blend of essential stores and unique local businesses. ”
- “ Morton Grove needs a walking area with restaurants , bars, coffee cafe, cute shops. Events should be held with wine walks, holiday themed events coordinated with all of the businesses. Make Morton Grove a place to meet and hang out with friends and neighbors. ”



LAND USE GOAL 4: Dempster will provide a range of spaces for entrepreneurs and small businesses to get established and branch out as they grow.

- Develop short-term solutions for smaller vacant spaces, such as **pop-up businesses** and restaurants and art installations
- Match businesses to **affordable retail** rental spaces
- Encourage **co-working** and shared office spaces on second stories or renovated properties
- Establish **business incubator** with small shop spaces for rent for entrepreneurs, startups, and small businesses

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK | ONLINE ENGAGEMENT QUOTES

“ Convert single-story strip-zoned buildings into ground-floor retail with upper-floor offices or housing, breathing life into otherwise stale blocks. ”

“ Desire to redevelop vacant properties and add new mixed-use or retail development. ”

LAND USE GOAL 5: Residential options along the corridor will contribute to Morton Grove's overall housing stock to meet different needs, incomes, and life stages and support Dempster businesses.

- Add new **multi-family and mixed-use** projects
- Consider needs of **older adults** as part of new housing development
- Attract **missing middle housing** types—townhomes and small-scale, multi-family—to areas near Metra
- Establish some maintenance and housing rehabilitation **support for seniors**
- Consider allowing **accessory dwelling units (ADUs)** in residential neighborhoods near the corridor and Metra

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK | SURVEY FINDINGS

Which groups do you think might be interested in future housing opportunities along Dempster?



LAND USE GOAL 6: Promote excellence in design for new development and redevelopment that is transit-supportive

- Update the Unified Development Code to incorporate best practices for bike facilities, public areas, gateways and signage
- Create a **mixed-use overlay zoning district** for the Main Street portion of Dempster Street between the railroad tracks and I-94
- Encourage **active ground-floor uses with residential above**
- Encourage **storefronts and entrances oriented toward sidewalks and parking to the rear or side of buildings**



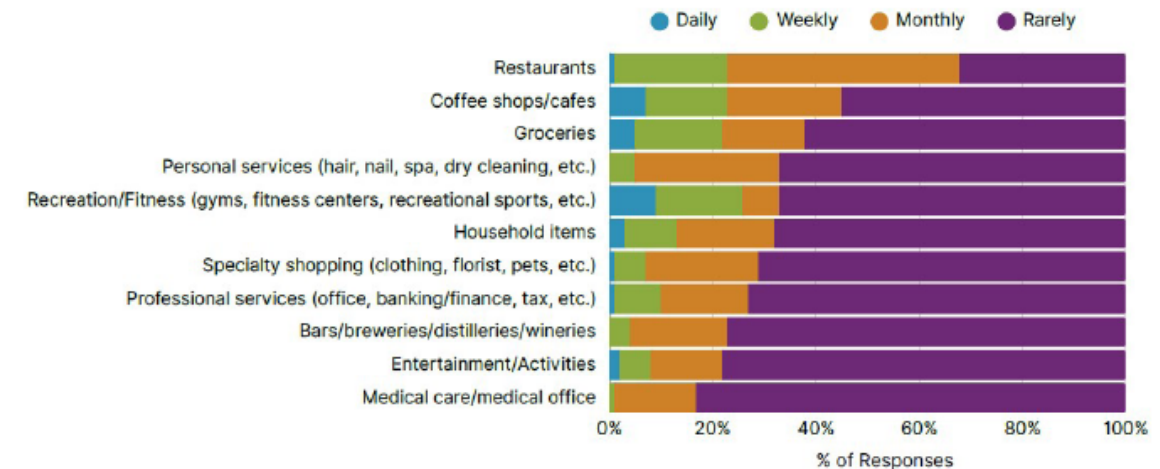
Example of a mixed-use transit-oriented development – Midtown Square in Glenview; Fitzgerald Architecture Planning Design

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOAL 1: A vibrant mix of businesses will populate the Dempster Corridor.

- **Support small businesses** through marketing, technical assistance, and networking
- Create **incentive program** for small business expansion and attraction
- **Market the international flavor** of the Dempster Corridor
- Encourage **creative industries**—such as art galleries, bookstores, theaters—and entertainment/recreational uses

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK | SURVEY FINDINGS

How often do you currently shop for these items along the Dempster Corridor?





ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOAL 2: New commercial and mixed-use development will attract investment and new tenants in the study area.

- Create guidelines for providing **financial incentives**
- Provide a **predictable zoning** and approval process
- Encourage **new residential** uses to support a mix of restaurants and retailers

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOAL 3: The Corridor's assets—including open space, recreation, transportation options and cultural diversity—will attract visitors and economic investment.

- **Identify businesses** that can complement the Forest Preserve, North Shore Trail, and park facilities
- **Attract entertainment** related uses that become destinations

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOAL 4: Events and marketing efforts will attract visitors and customers to the Corridor.

- Establish schedule of **events that celebrate local businesses** and recreation and cultural opportunities
- Evaluate potential advantages and disadvantages of creating a **Special Service Area or business district** to provide targeted programming and improvements
- Target social media and **marketing campaigns to the trade area**



TRANSPORTATION GOAL 1: People of all ages will feel safe and comfortable crossing Dempster Street on foot.

- Improve **safe access** to, from, and across Dempster near **schools** and **parks**
- Investigate opportunities for **additional pedestrian crossings** on Dempster west of Harlem Avenue and in the Main Street District, along with new crossings on Waukegan Road and Austin Avenue



Example of enhanced crossing with median

TRANSPORTATION GOAL 2: Dempster Street will be a pleasant place to stroll and linger, and people will regularly walk to/between businesses.

- Construct **streetscape** upgrades in the existing right-of-way
- Create **wayfinding** system with directional signage
- Resolve **sidewalk accessibility** deficiencies
- Utilize parking lot space to **improve streetscaping behind sidewalks**
- Study potential for **closing select side streets** that connect with Dempster to improve safety and create more public space



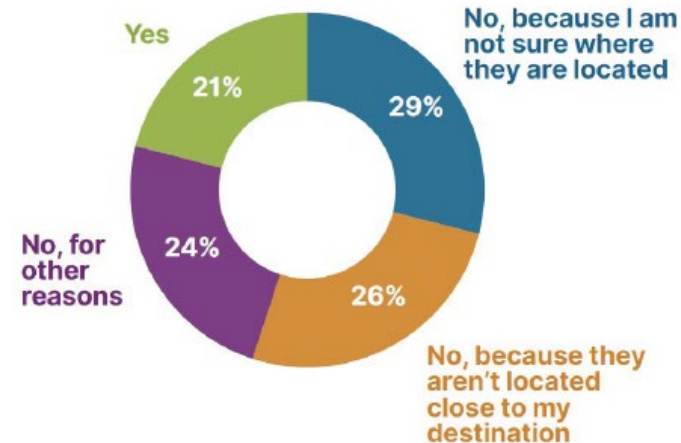
TRANSPORTATION GOAL 3: Residents and visitors alike will find it easy to understand where they can park near Dempster Street.

- Install **striping at on-street parking areas** within the Main Street District to more efficiently mark vehicle spacing
- **Upgrade parking signage** in the Main Street District
- Identify **opportunities for additional public parking**

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK | SURVEY FINDINGS

Do you use the municipal parking lots along Dempster?

Q16 Do you use the municipal parking lots along Dempster?

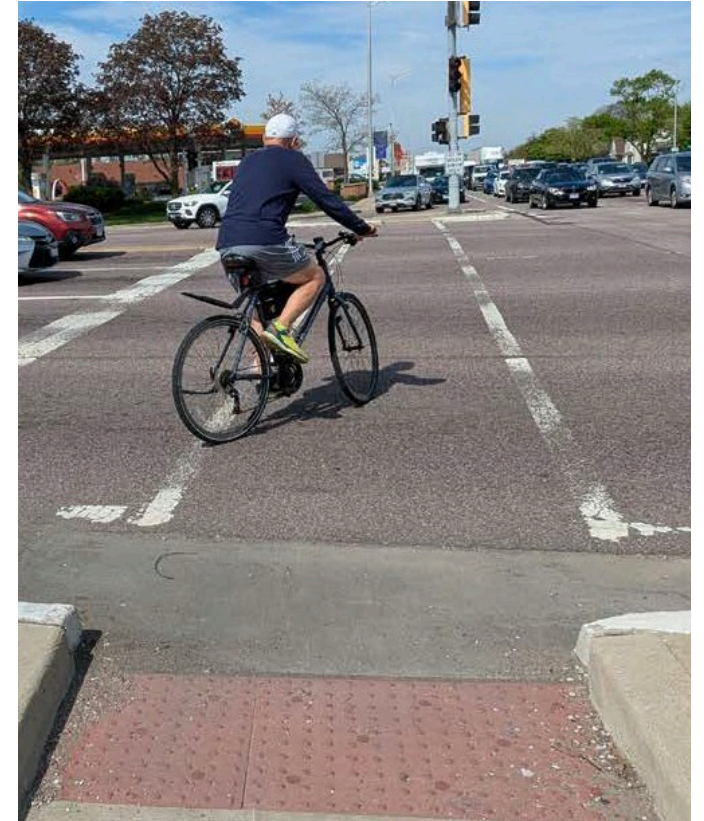


79% of survey respondents do not use the existing municipal parking lots



TRANSPORTATION GOAL 4: People of all ages and abilities will feel safe and comfortable cycling to the Dempster Street corridor and crossing Dempster Street on bicycle.

- Evaluate a series of **parallel street bike routes** and associated crossing improvements
- Pursue funding for phase one engineering to study a potential **reconstruction of Lehigh Avenue** and upgrades to North Branch Trail
- Evaluate opportunities for a **shared-use path adjacent to Metra tracks** and along Lehigh Avenue to Morton Grove Metra



Bicyclist crossing Waukegan at Dempster

TRANSPORTATION GOAL 5: Using transit to get to and along the Dempster Street corridor will be fast, safe, and comfortable.

- Install **Pace bus queue-jump** near Sawmill Station
- Pursue other **transit operational improvements**
- Pursue funding for pedestrian infrastructure and signage to improve **pedestrian connection between Metra and Dempster**
- **Evaluate closing Lincoln Avenue** at railroad tracks to improve safety by limiting vehicle and train conflict points



Pace Pulse station on Dempster

TRANSPORTATION GOAL 6: Driving on Dempster Street will be a safe and efficient way to travel across the village.

- Evaluate **traffic signal improvement opportunities** at Lehigh Avenue and Dempster Street
- Install **lighting improvements** in the Residential Sub-district
- Reduce vehicular **speeds and ensure enforcement** of speed and traffic violations



Example of improved traffic signals, lighting and traffic calming measures

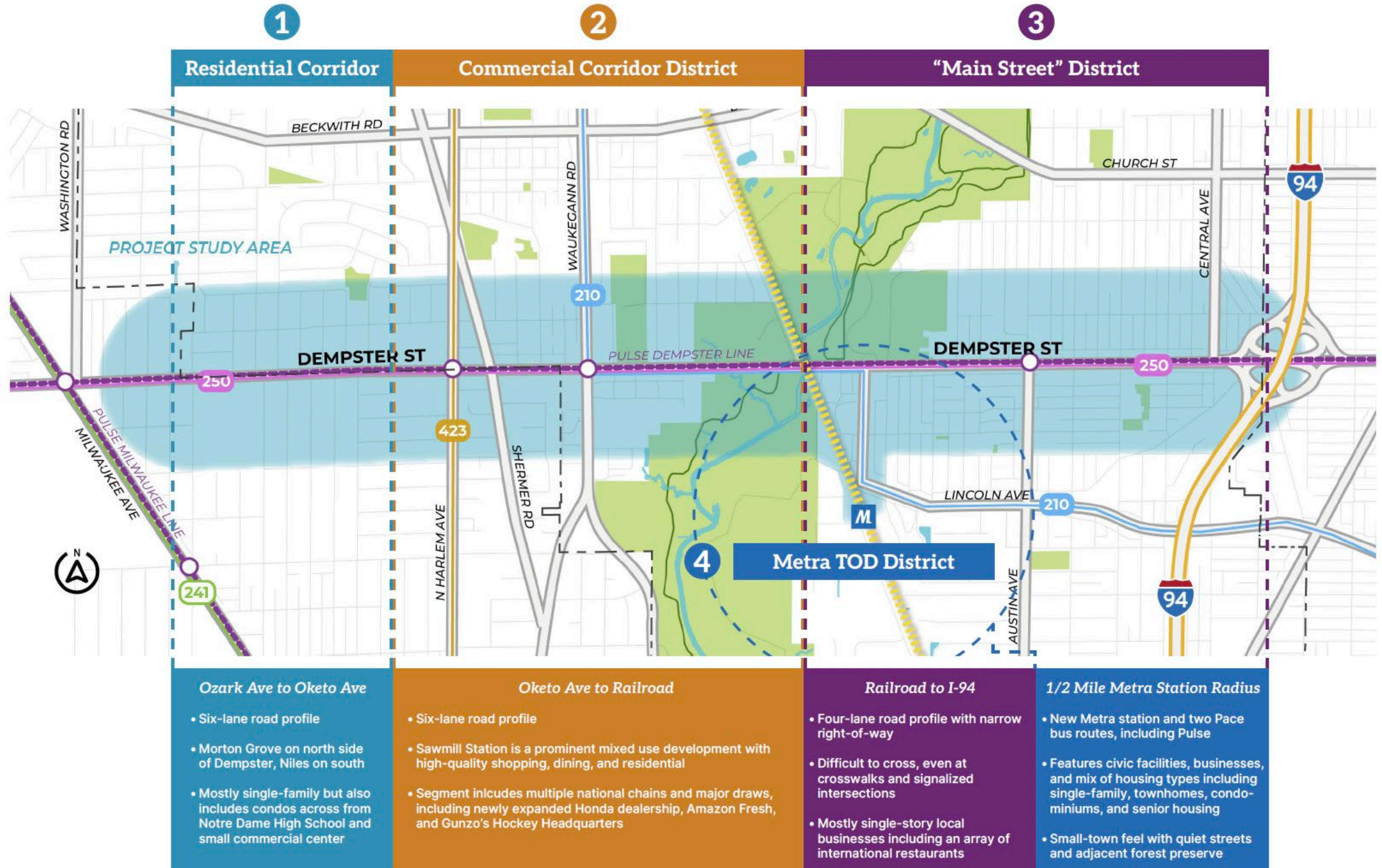
Corridor Recommendations



Key Community Input

Collected from: online comments, community survey, community workshops, three pop-up events

- Safe, walkable, inviting, and aesthetically pleasing streets
- Increased curb appeal; improve and modernize deteriorated or vacant properties
- More points of interest that invite people to stop and stay on Dempster
- More local and unique businesses and destinations, such as grocery stores, restaurants, bars, cafes, shops, and events
- New mixed-use or retail development
- More trees for noise reduction, shade, and visual appeal
- Outdoor seating/public gathering/green space
- Better connections for all modes and less traffic congestion
- Reduced vehicle speeding and neighborhood cut through traffic
- Improved Metra and trail crossings near Lehigh
- Destinations for North Branch Trail users, building on that asset



Vision for the 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.



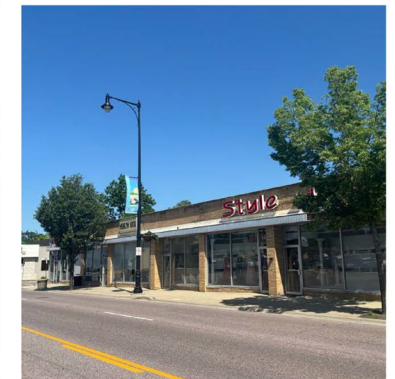
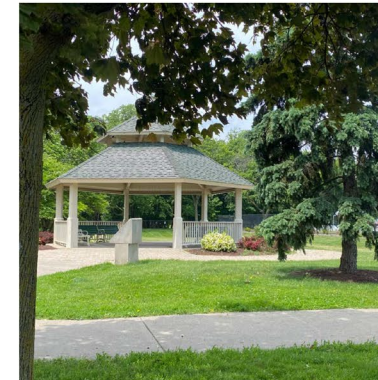
Vision for the Commercial Corridor District

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.



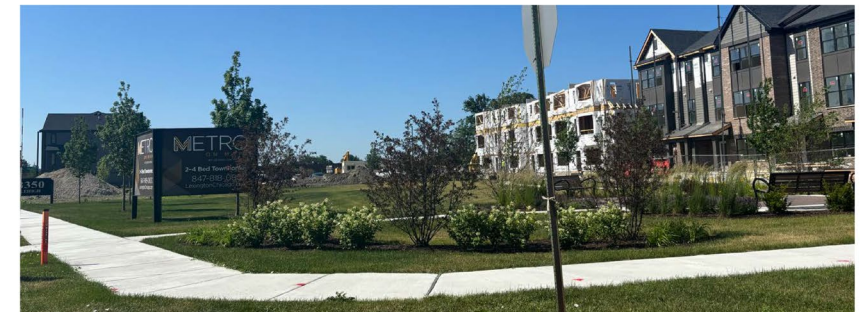
Vision for the Main Street District

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.



Vision for the 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 businesses

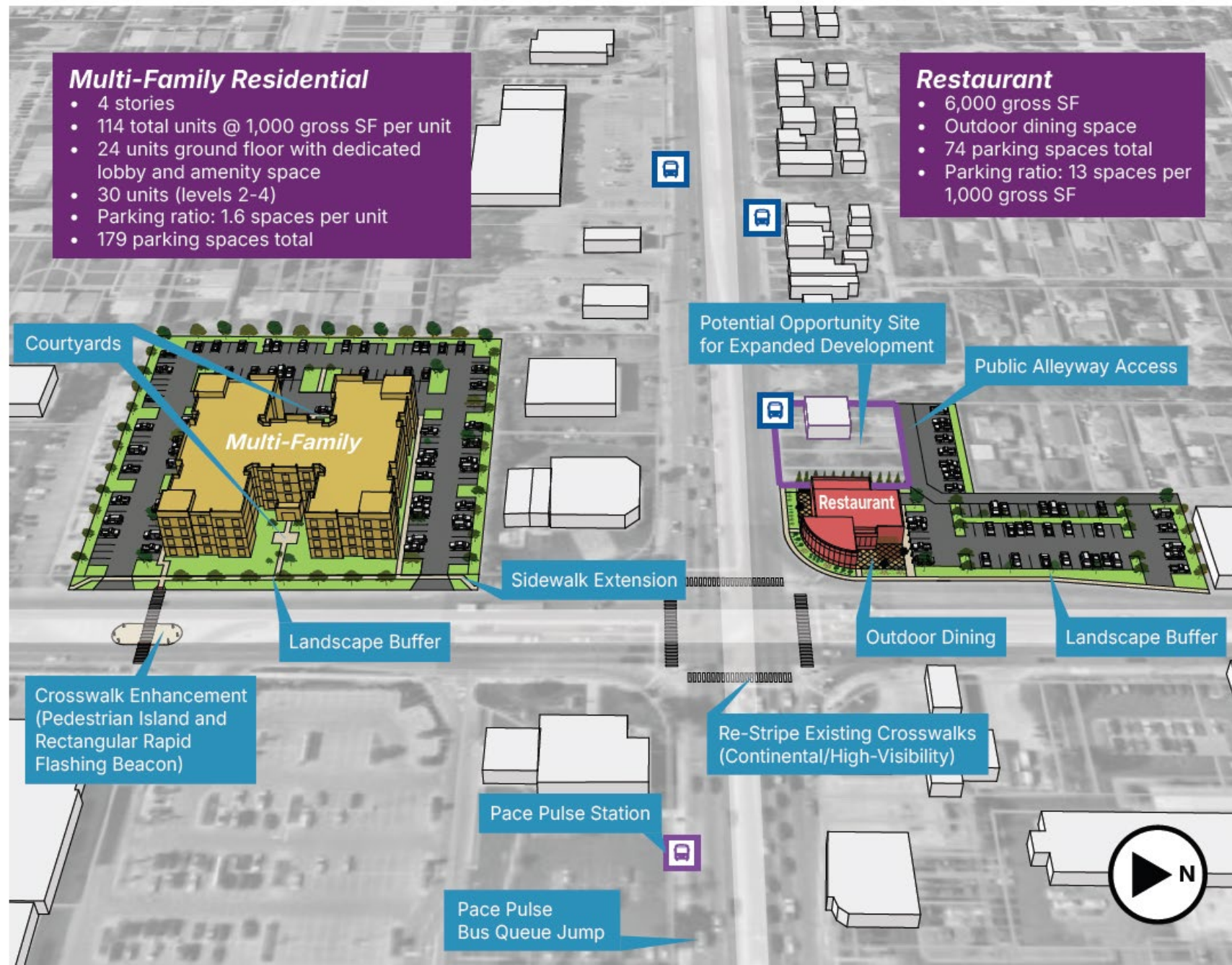


Opportunity Site Concept Plans

ILLUSTRATIVE DRAFTS FOR
PLANNING LEVEL DISCUSSION

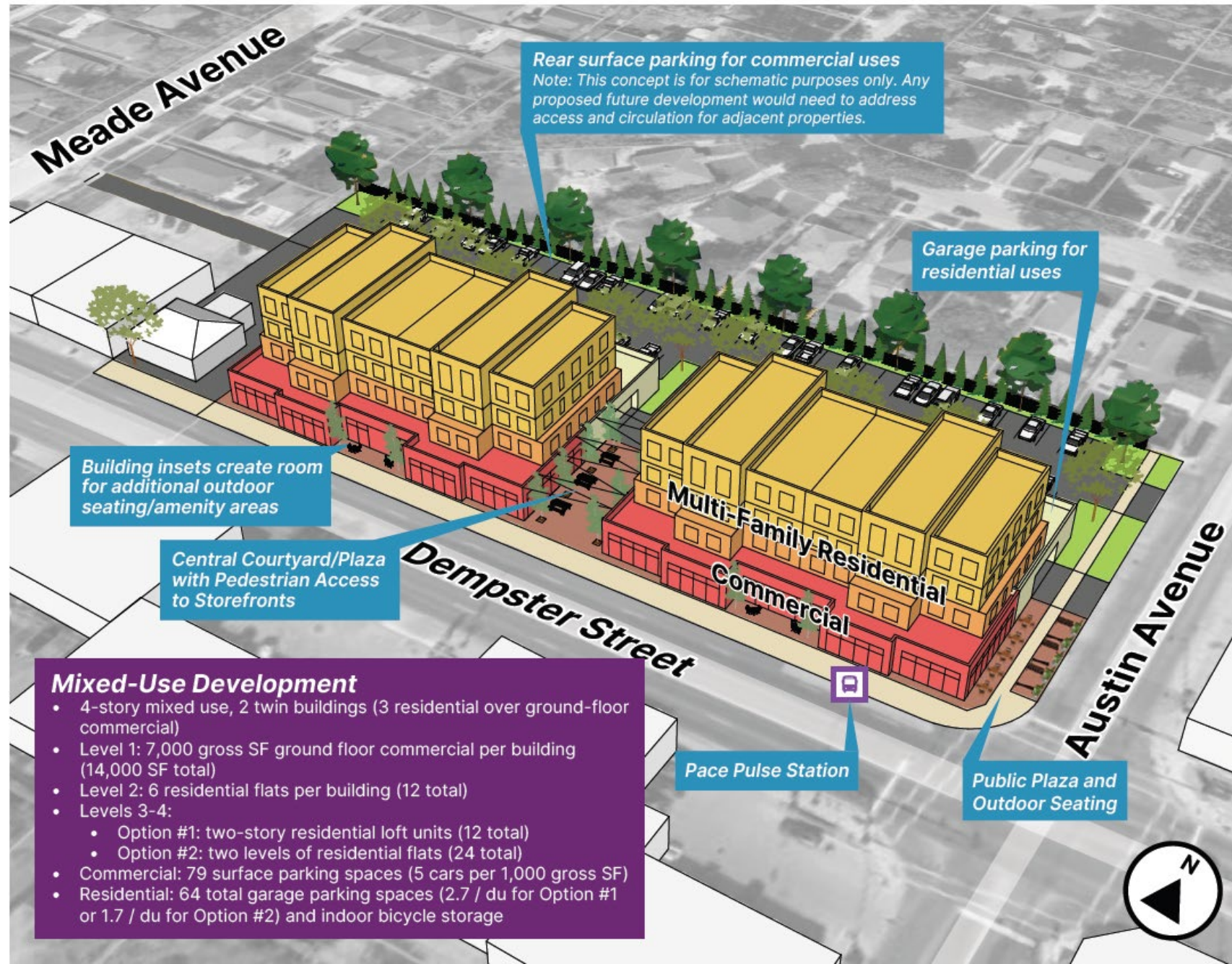
Opportunity Site 1

Dempster/Waukegan Developments



Opportunity Site 2

Dempster/Austin Redevelopment



Mixed-Use Development

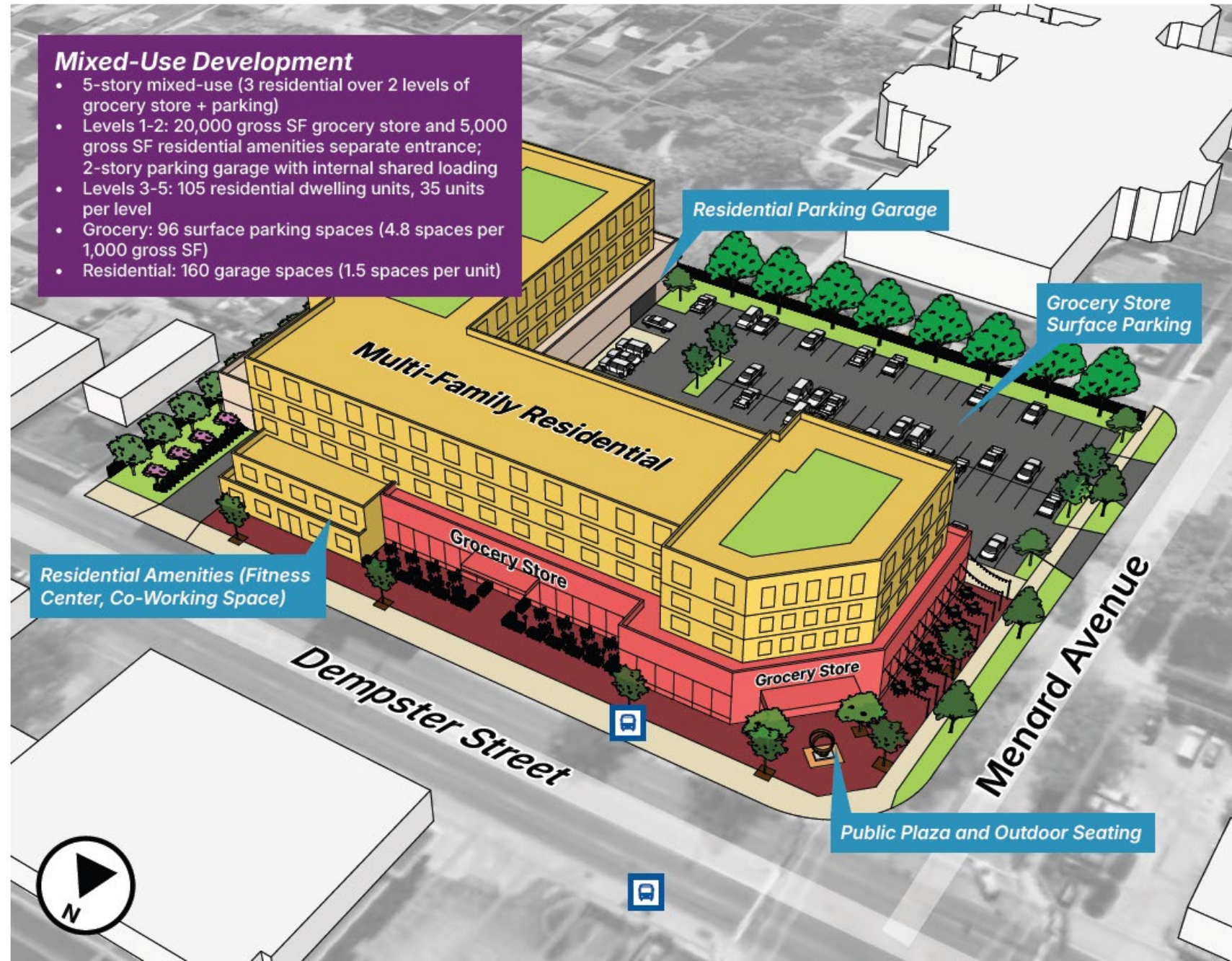
- 4-story mixed use, 2 twin buildings (3 residential over ground-floor commercial)
- Level 1: 7,000 gross SF ground floor commercial per building (14,000 SF total)
- Level 2: 6 residential flats per building (12 total)
- Levels 3-4:
 - Option #1: two-story residential loft units (12 total)
 - Option #2: two levels of residential flats (24 total)
- Commercial: 79 surface parking spaces (5 cars per 1,000 gross SF)
- Residential: 64 total garage parking spaces (2.7 / du for Option #1 or 1.7 / du for Option #2) and indoor bicycle storage

Opportunity Site 3, Option A

Dempster/Menard Redevelopment

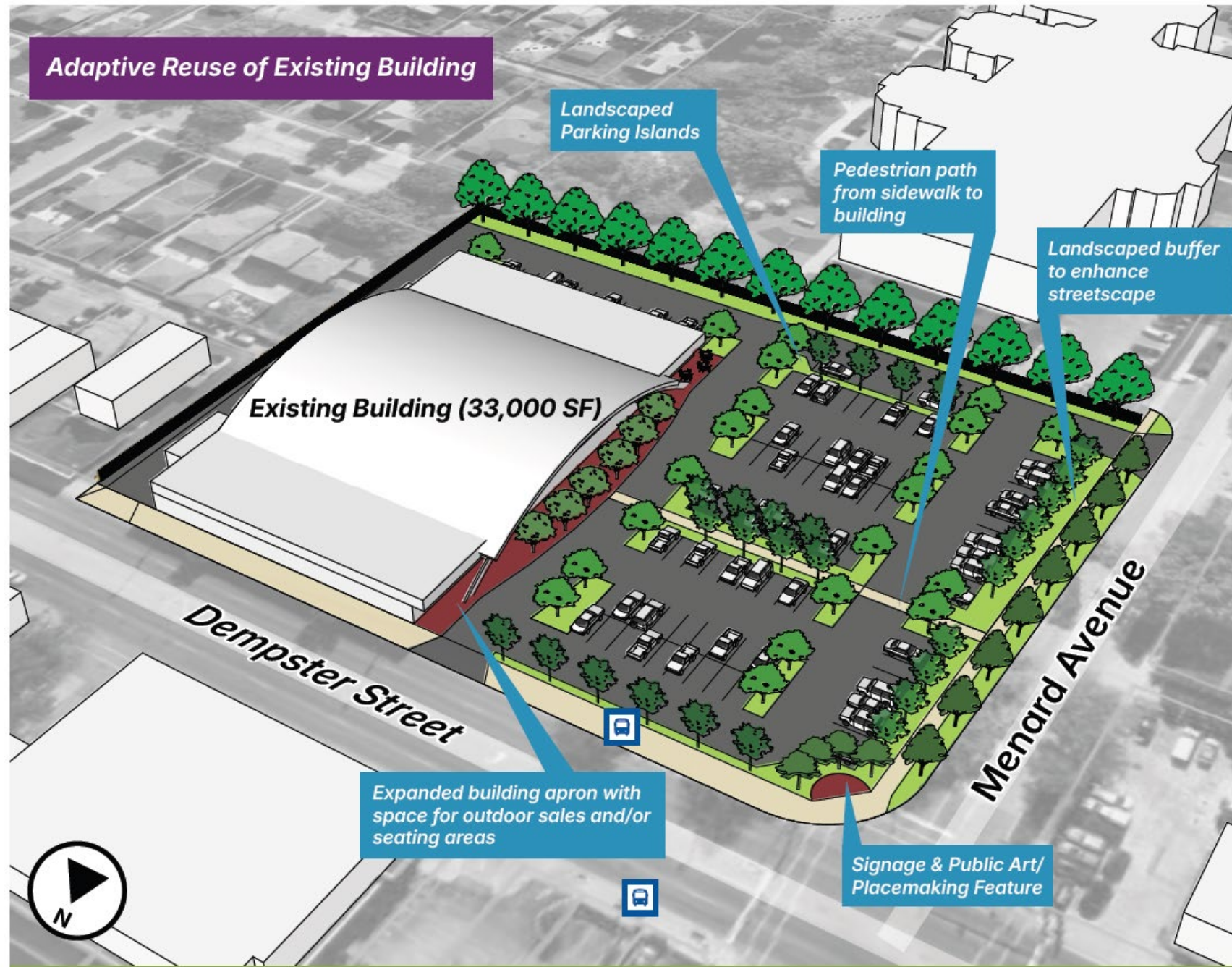
Mixed-Use Development

- 5-story mixed-use (3 residential over 2 levels of grocery store + parking)
- Levels 1-2: 20,000 gross SF grocery store and 5,000 gross SF residential amenities separate entrance; 2-story parking garage with internal shared loading
- Levels 3-5: 105 residential dwelling units, 35 units per level
- Grocery: 96 surface parking spaces (4.8 spaces per 1,000 gross SF)
- Residential: 160 garage spaces (1.5 spaces per unit)



Opportunity Site 3, Option B

Dempster/Menard Adaptive Reuse



Land Use Recommendations

SELECT HIGHLIGHTS

Main Street Overlay Zoning District

- 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).
- Increase the **permitted maximum height from 45 to 50 feet**
- Establish a **consistent street wall with a “build to” line** to create a clear distinction between public and private realms
- Encourage **building “stepbacks”** to respect adjacent properties, particularly single-family residential homes on interior blocks



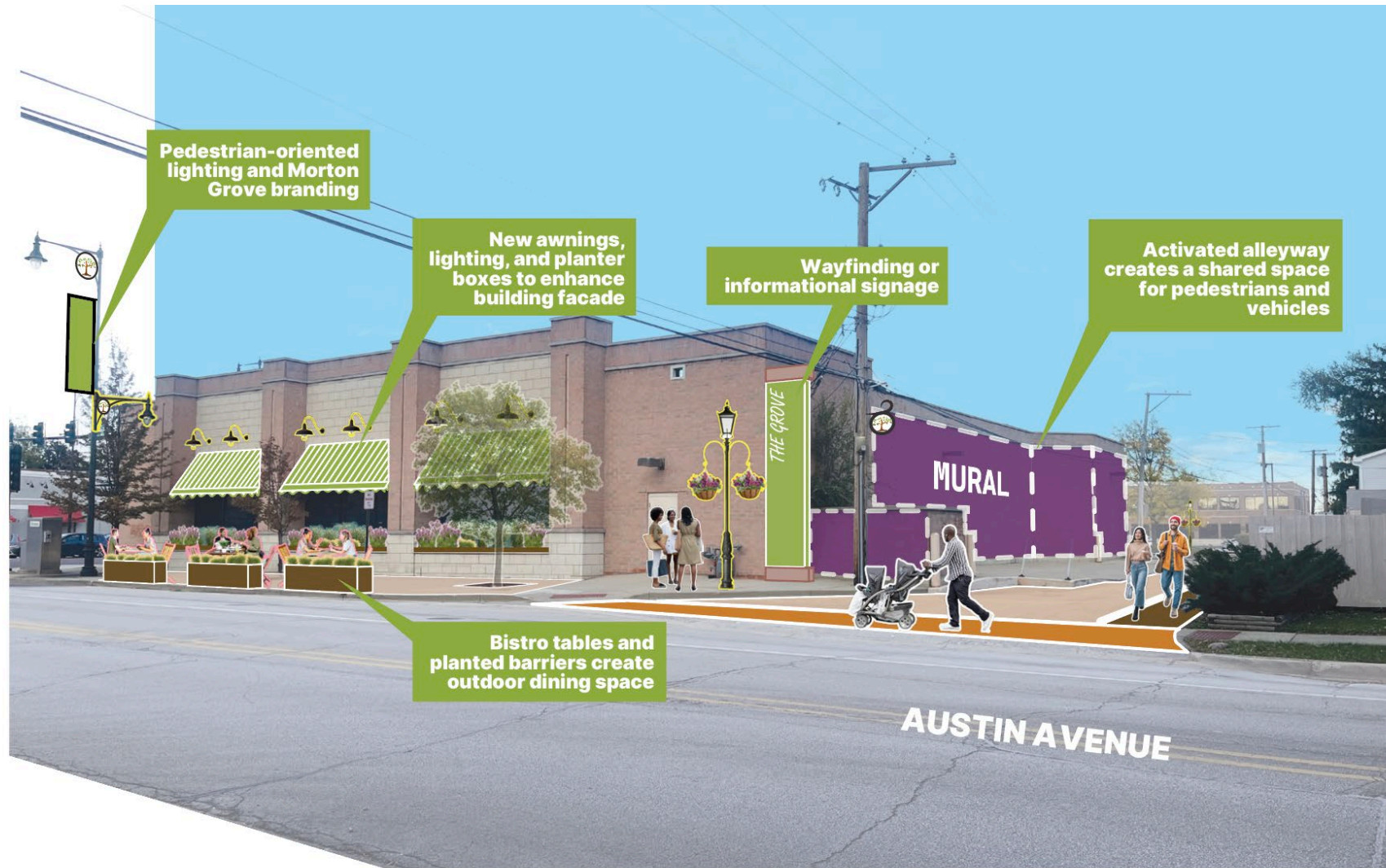
Consider a mixed-use zoning overlay district along Dempster Street between the railroad tracks and Central Avenue

Parking Lot Enhancements

- Branded parking lot signage
- Landscaping
- Pavement enhancements
- Mural/public art possibilities



Property & Façade Enhancements



Transportation Recommendations

SELECT HIGHLIGHTS

Bicycle Facilities

■ 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

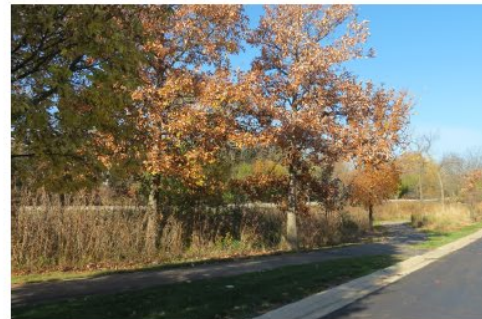
Trails or multi-use paths are off-street bikeway facilities entirely separated from vehicular roadways that provide a paved space for both people cycling and walking. Trails or paths typically provide the highest levels of safety and comfort.

Policy Objectives:

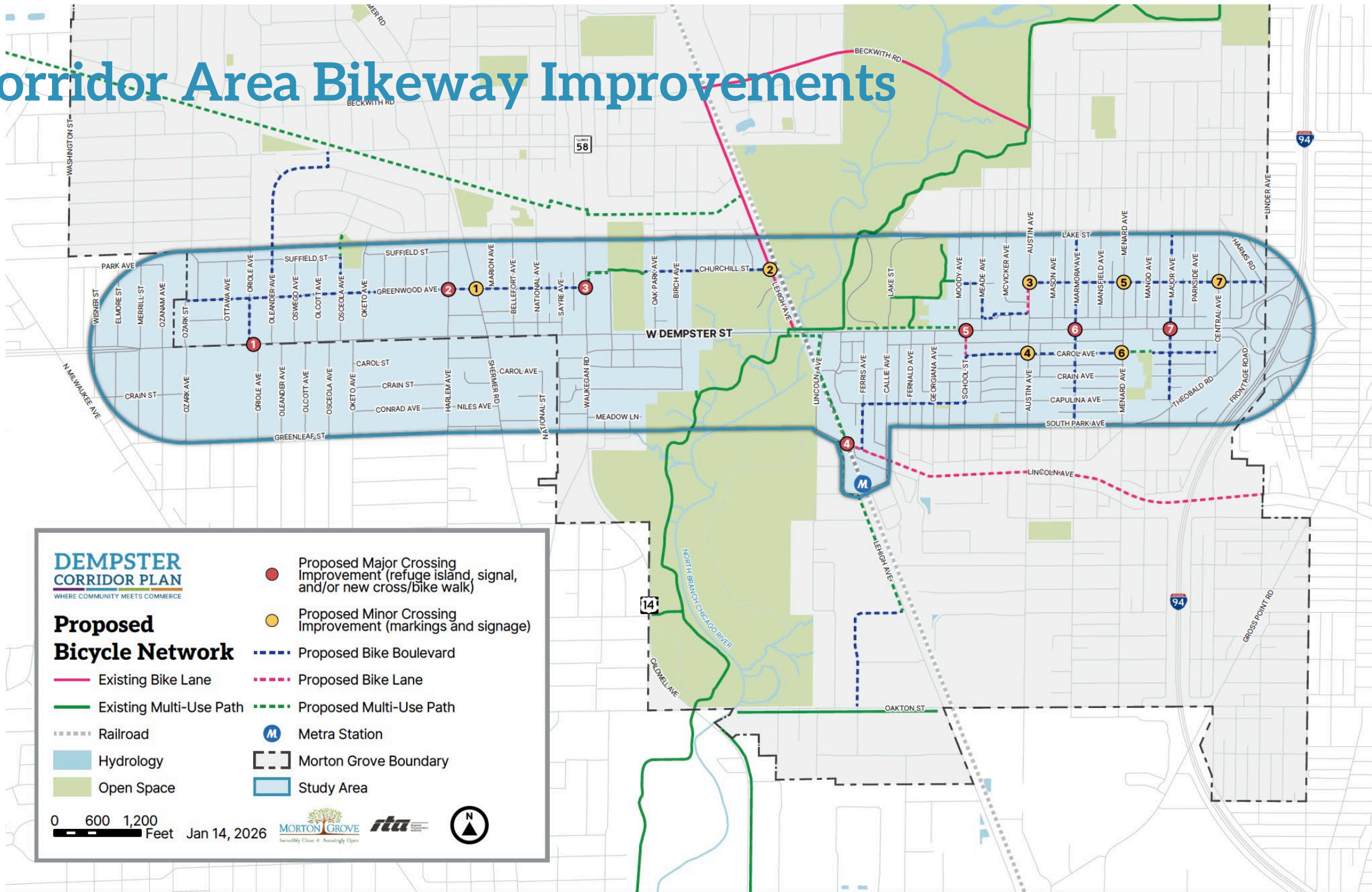
- Create dedicated space for bikes
- Boost bike-friendliness of area
- Reduce roadway congestion
- Promote public health

Design Considerations:

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



Corridor Area Bikeway Improvements



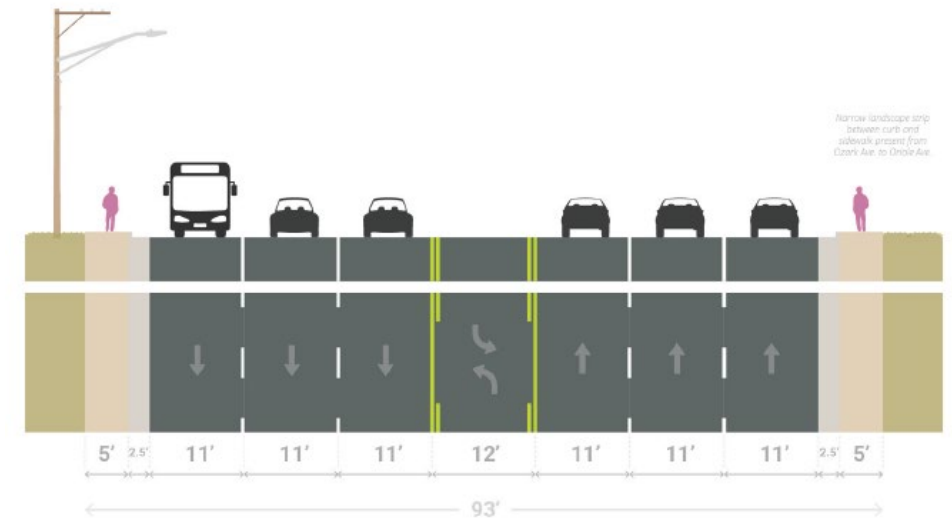
Residential Corridor Transportation Recommendations

Pedestrian Crossings

- Currently, there are no pedestrian crossings between Harlem Avenue and Ozark Street, a gap of more than 3,500 feet.
- Two options are provided in the Appendix to consider for new pedestrian crossings:
 - Install an additional full traffic signal between Harlem Avenue and Ozark Street
 - Install a pedestrian refuge island and Pedestrian Hybrid Beacon such as at Oriole Avenue

Medians

- Installing medians between Ottawa Avenue and Oketo Avenue could provide traffic calming and beautification

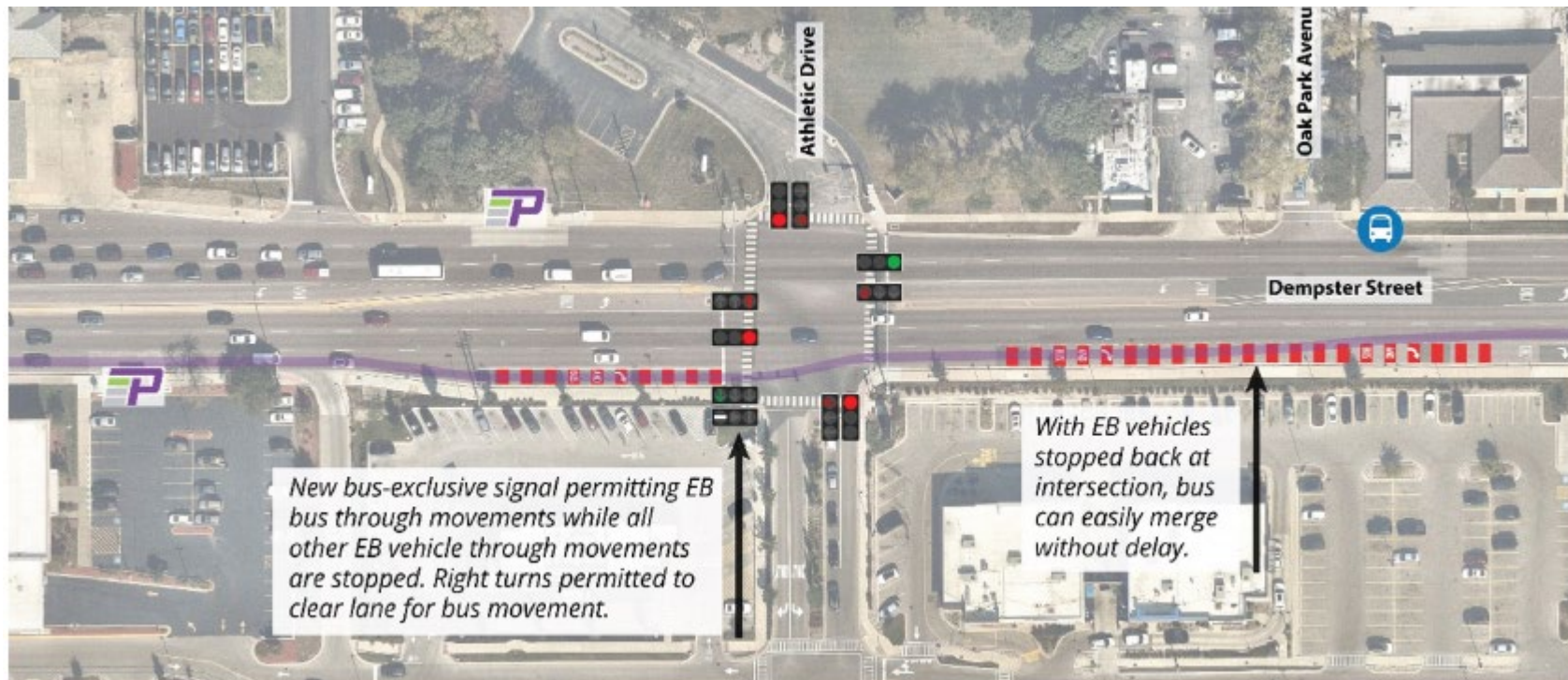


A median in portions of the turn lane could help reduce the crossing distance for pedestrians and students attending Notre Dame College Prep Pace riders

Commercial Corridor Transportation 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.



Dempster & Lehigh Intersection Improvements

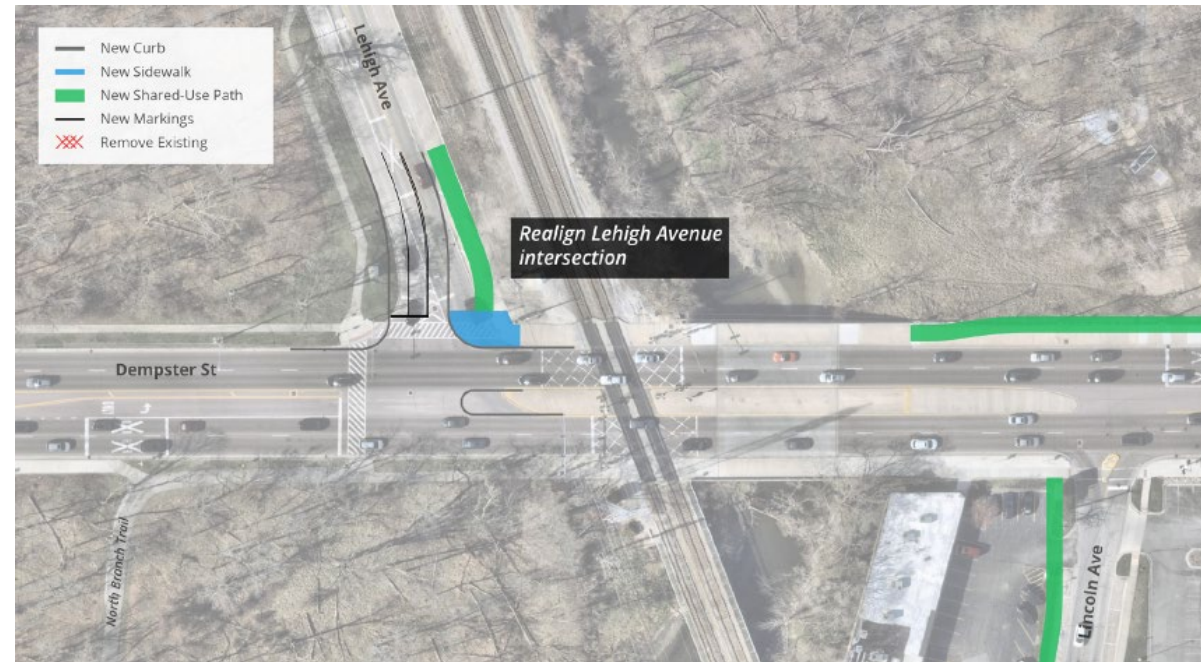
In order to improve safety at the trail crossing, four options for intersection geometry improvements were evaluated.

Option A: Adjust Existing Geometry

- Rebuild curbs to minimize turning radii to calm right-turning vehicle speeds and shorten pedestrian/cyclist crossing distances.
- Expand areas for trail users to wait at crossings.

Option B: Realign Intersection Geometry

- Realign Lehigh Avenue so that it meets Dempster Street at a 90-degree angle to slow vehicle turning movements and improve sight lines

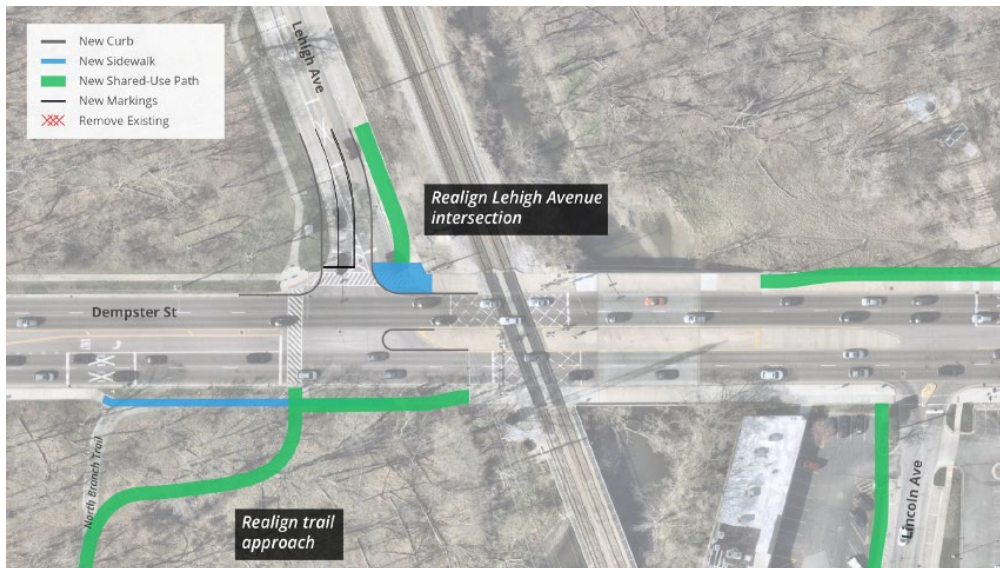


Option B: Realign intersection geometry

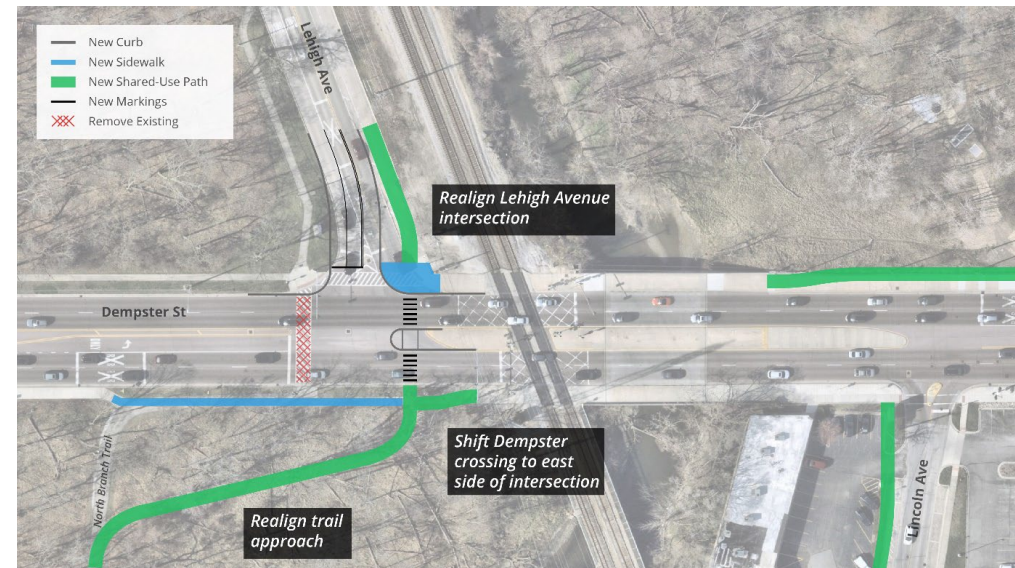
Dempster & Lehigh Intersection Improvements

Option C: Realign Trail

Includes all improvements in Option B along with realigning North Branch Trail to reduce tight turning movements onto Dempster



Option D: Shift Trail Crossing proposes realigning the trail approach to Dempster and removing the existing crossing in order to shift it to the east side of Lehigh Avenue. This presents fewer potential conflicts between trail users and vehicles.



Main Street District Transportation Recommendations

New Marmora Avenue Crossing

- Install new pedestrian crossing at Marmora Avenue, including pedestrian refuge island and RRFBs

New School Street Crossing

- Install new pedestrian crossing at Marmora Avenue, including pedestrian refuge island and RRFBs

Medians

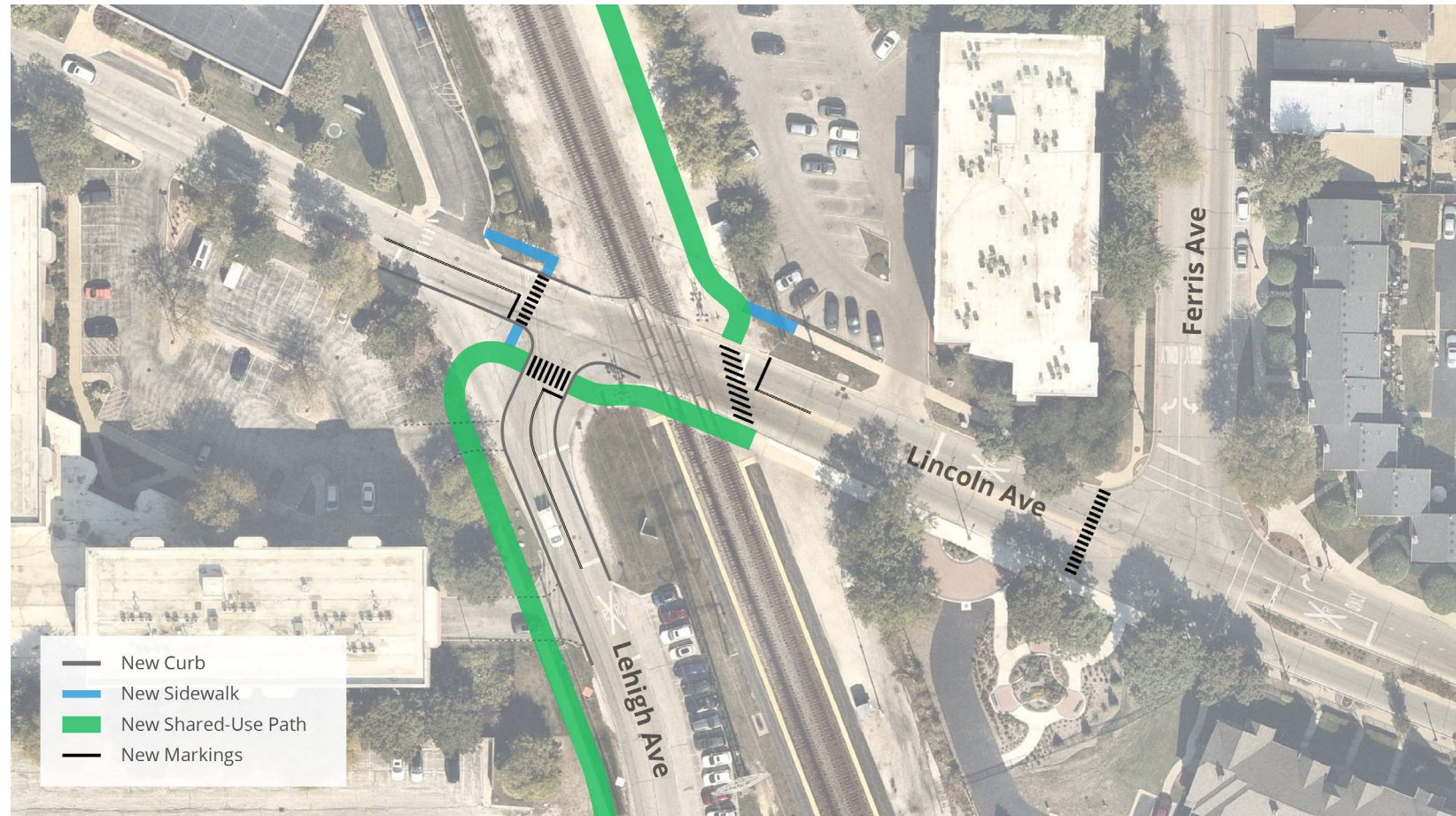
- Consider medians along Dempster Street at the following four segments:
 - Lincoln Avenue to Georgiana Avenue
 - Georgiana Avenue to Austin Avenue
 - Austin Avenue to Menard Avenue
 - Menard Avenue to Central Avenue



Landscaped median on Dempster Street in Skokie

Metra Station Area Access Improvements

Shared-use path would cross Metra tracks south of Lincoln Avenue, which utilizes existing crossing infrastructure but requires wheeled users to cross at a non-90-degree angle (tighter turning movements for cyclists).



Metra ROW Side Path

- 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. Village staff have previously discussed the possibility of utilizing a portion of the gravel area for a pathway
- Could range from a 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 latest Cook County Bike Plan.





Dempster & Lehigh Intersection Improvements

Grade-Separated Crossing

- Installing a grade-separated crossing (bridge) for trail users at Dempster & Lehigh could have the benefits of:
 - Reducing potential pedestrian and bicycle conflicts with vehicles and trains
 - Faster and lower-stress travel for trail users
 - Reducing vehicle delays
- This intersection presents a series of complexities that make this location potentially more challenging than the typical trail bridge crossing:
 - Adjacent rail corridor
 - Adjacent active electrical transmission and distribution lines
 - Adjacent river and watershed
- Included as a recommendation for further study in the Appendix, but would be complicated and expensive



Parking Standards

- One development incentive that communities can use to meet goals of attracting new development and improving walkability is to examine parking ratios
- Future development can likely be successful with parking ratios **lower** than current Village standards (0.5 spaces per senior housing unit, 1.75 per multi-family unit, 2 spaces per single-family or townhomes) based on current practices in other successful suburban developments
- Private developers have strong incentives to get the parking ratio right
- Potential impacts can be mitigated with other regulations such as overnight parking permits on adjacent streets
- Northern Illinois Transit Authority Act (NITA Act or SB2111) requires the elimination of parking minimums near transit facilities, defined as within one-half mile of a public transportation hub (like the Morton Grove Metra Station) or one-eighth mile of a public transportation corridor (like the Pace Pulse Dempster Line). The RTA, CMAP, and MPC are currently preparing guidance on how municipalities can address the impact of SB2111 on their parking regulations.

Discussion and Recommendation