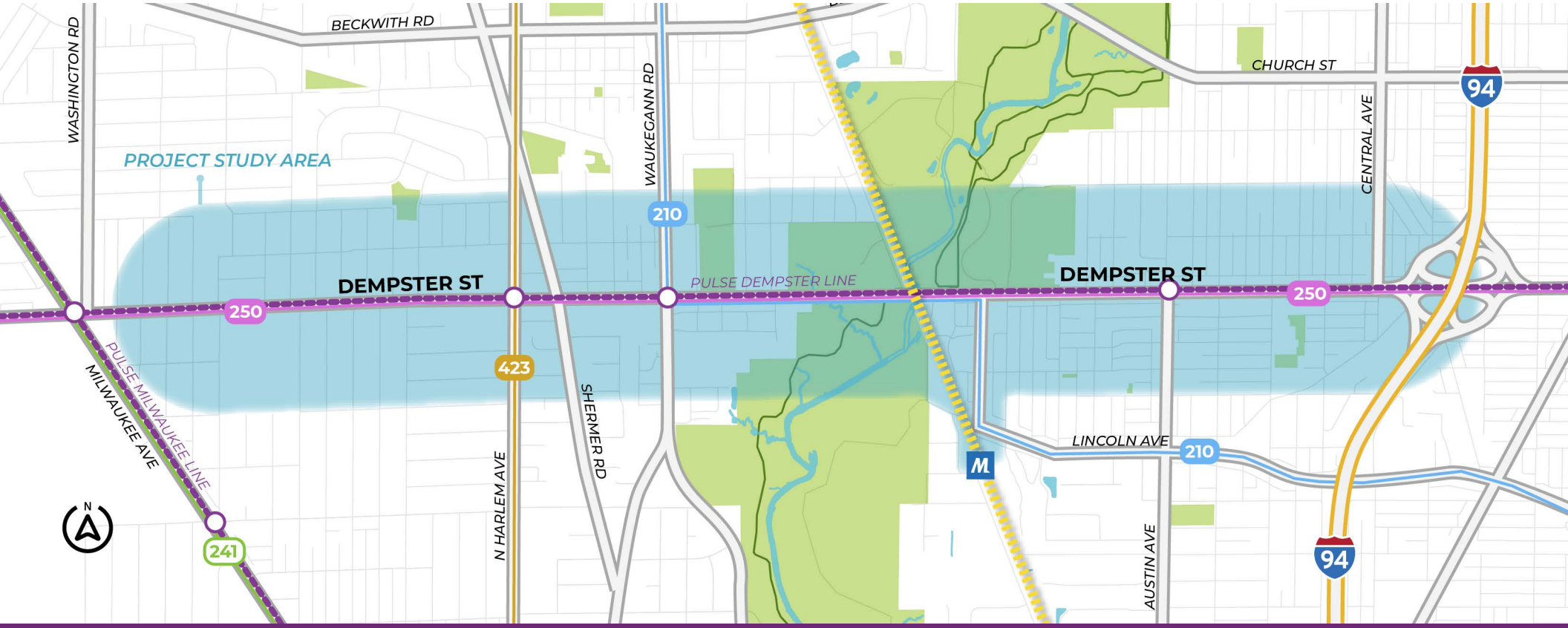
DEMPSTER
CORRIDOR PLAN

WHERE COMMUNITY MEETS COMMERCE



MORTON GROVE
Incredibly Close ✦ Amazingly Open

NITA
NORTHERN ILLINOIS TRANSIT AUTHORITY

ADOPTED BY THE VILLAGE BOARD NOVEMBER 10, 2026
AS AN AMENDMENT TO THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
ORDINANCE 26-21

Message from the Mayor

The Village of Morton Grove and our partners with the Northern Illinois Transit Authority (NITA) are proud to present the Dempster Corridor Plan (Plan). This Plan was spearheaded by our consultant team of Teska Associates, Inc. with TYLin and Egret & Ox Planning. The Plan represents the culmination of countless meetings between consultants and community partners. I also want to thank our residents who attended our community meetings and provided hundreds of comments that guided the development of this work. Through this community engagement we have created the strategies and goals contained in this document that will guide development through one of our Village's most important corridors for years to come. This Plan will become the first step in a renewal effort for the Dempster Street corridor.



My hope is that this becomes a living document that is used by our Boards and Commissions and staff to renovate this corridor while maintaining its unique Morton Grove character with an emphasis on safety and walkability while also reinvigorating the retail and business opportunities for the community.



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Acknowledgments

Thank you to the Morton Grove community for their enthusiasm and participation in the development of the Dempster Corridor Plan.

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The Northern Illinois Transit Authority (NITA) is a new transformation of the former Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) responsible for service planning, budgeting, and capital planning at a regional level. This study was funded by a grant from the agency's Community Planning program.

Consultant Team

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TYLin
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PART 1

Corridor-Wide Vision

Introduction

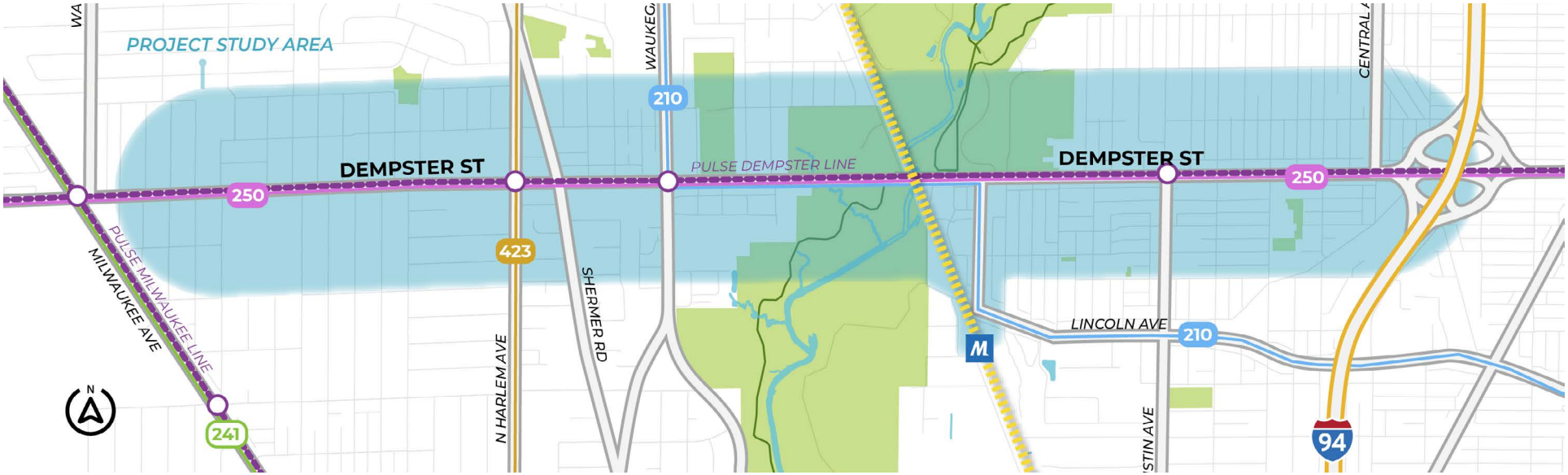
About the Project

The Dempster Corridor Plan establishes a vision for Morton Grove's primary commercial corridor and the backbone of the community. A project of the Village of Morton Grove and the Northern Illinois Transit Authority (NITA), this plan offers recommendations to improve access to transit and existing corridor destinations, reinvest in existing and attract new transit-supportive development, and enhance safety and connectivity for all corridor users, especially transit riders, pedestrians, and bicyclists.

This study covers Dempster Street from Central Avenue in Morton Grove to Milwaukee Avenue in Niles, providing connections to housing, shops and restaurants, doctors' and dentists' offices, schools, and community destinations like Harrer Park and the Civic Center. With four Pace Bus routes and the Morton Grove Metra station, the area is transit-rich and ripe with opportunity.

Launched in 2023, the Pulse Dempster Line now complements the existing Route 250 with faster, more frequent service every 15 to 20 minutes to popular destinations along the corridor between Evanston and O'Hare Airport.

While the majority of the study area is located within the Village of Morton Grove, portions of the study area are located in the Village of Niles or are owned by other entities such as the Forest Preserves of Cook County, Morton Grove Park District, or Metra. The Dempster Corridor Plan will focus on areas within the jurisdiction of the Village of Morton Grove.



Planning Process

A community planning process takes time because it is iterative, guided by public input from start to finish. This project's foundation was built from initial activities including a Steering Committee kick-off meeting, stakeholder focus groups, a community survey, a community-wide visioning Workshop #1, pop-up events, and an existing conditions assessment.

After early steps shaped a vision for the corridor, the project team used input from the community combined with findings from current conditions to develop draft goals and recommendations. These were refined by the project Steering Committee, Village staff, and the NITAbefore review from the public at Community Workshop #2.

The draft Dempster Corridor Plan pulls all of the planning pieces together into a single document, reviewed by the Steering Committee and the public at Community Open House #3.

This plan is the culmination of an intentional process that incorporates extensive community engagement. Recommendations that will shape the future of Dempster Street include many of the big ideas and small details gathered from public input. The Morton Grove community will be the champions and leaders of plan implementation, and this document is the product of their dedication to this planning process and Dempster's future.

Project & Steering Committee Kick-Off (April - June 2025)
Staff Kick-off Meeting
Project Website & Marketing
Stakeholder Interviews & Focus Groups
Project Steering Committee Kick-Off
Community Survey

↓

Existing Conditions & Goals (June - August 2025)
Research and analyze existing conditions
Community Workshop #1
Pop-Up #1: Morton Grove Days
Pop-Up #2: National Night Out
Steering Committee #2: Existing Conditions & Goals

↓

Develop Recommendations (Sep 2025 - March 2026)
Pop-Up #3: Sustainability Expo
Recommendations Memo
Steering Committee #3: Draft Recommendations
Community Workshop #2: Draft Recommendations

↓

Draft Plan (April - June 2026)
Draft Plan
Implementation Strategy
Steering Committee #4: Draft Plan
Community Open House

↓

Final Corridor Plan (July-Early Fall 2026)
Plan Review and Adoption

Community Engagement

Key Community Input

The corridor planning process included multiple points of outreach to engage the Morton Grove community to provide their thoughts and ideas for Dempster Street Corridor. From three community workshops and multiple pop-up events to a community survey and online feedback, these various points of engagement provide a range of information and ideas to consider for the corridor plan.

The list to the right distills the multitude of community input into common threads, which played an important role in developing the vision for each of the four sub-districts that define the Dempster Street Corridor planning area.



COMMON THEMES

- Safe, walkable, inviting, and aesthetically pleasing streets
- Improve and modernize deteriorated or vacant properties
- More points of interest that invite people to stop and stay on Dempster
- Support for local and unique businesses and destinations such as grocery stores, restaurants, cafes, shops, and events
- New mixed-use and 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 safety near railroad and trail crossings near Lehigh Avenue
- Destinations for North Branch Trail users



Project Website

The project website served as an online portal for the community to learn about the project, share ideas, view project materials, and stay up-to-date with project news.

plandempster.org

10,500+ Page views

5,500+ Visitors

280 Ideas Shared

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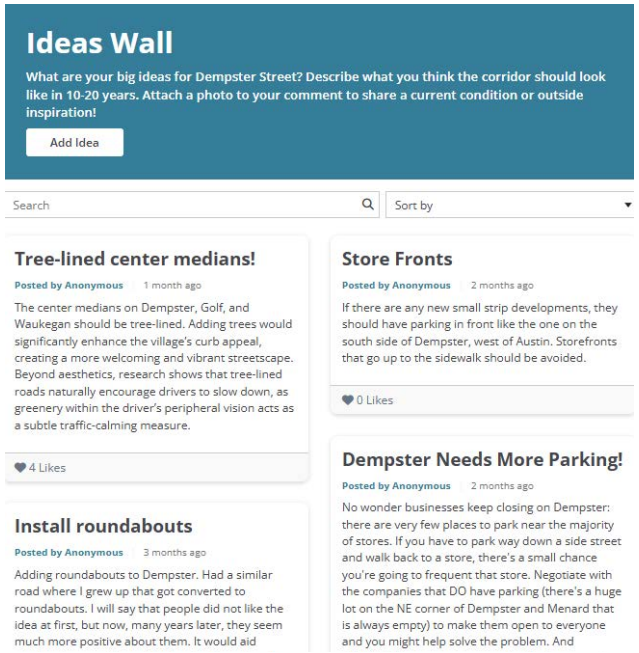
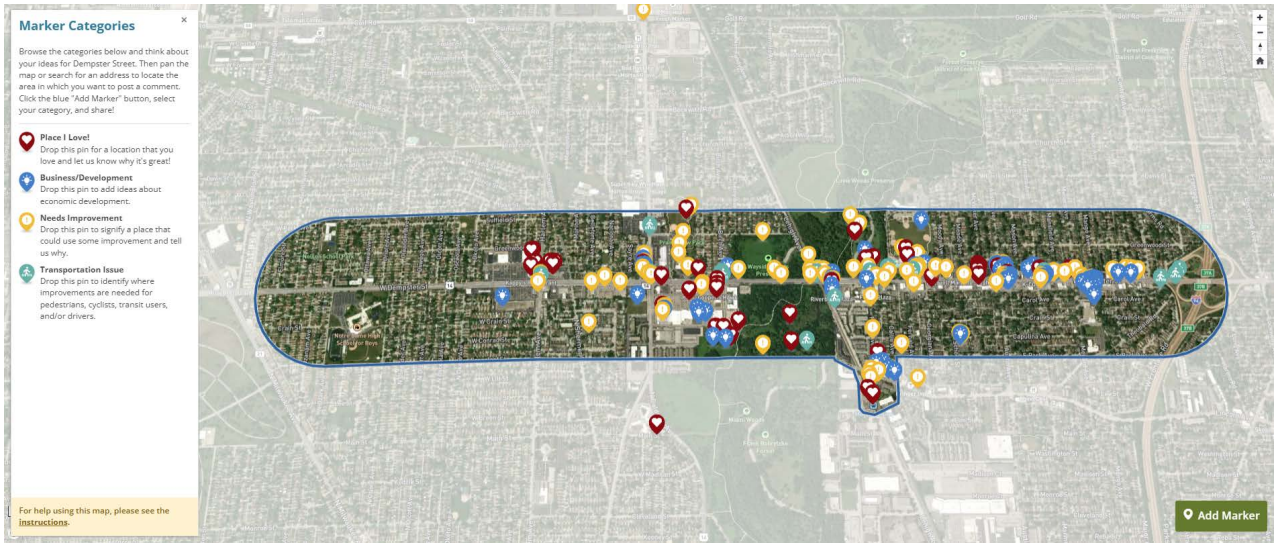




What community members shared:

Select quotes from Comment Map and Ideas Wall (via the project website)

"Utilize shared-parking strategies across retail, transit, and civic uses to reduce overall lots."

"The general building styles, accessibility, and density is out of date. Not inviting for the thousands of Dempster drivers each day."

"Make Morton Grove a place to meet and hang out with friends and neighbors."

"Morton Grove needs a downtown. Place where people can walk, others can come with the train."

"What about a mini-mall of sorts with different vendors/ booths-- could be a pop-up type thing where the rotate, or some constants like a coffee shop, small thrift store, book store, etc."

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

"Improve pedestrian access from/to MG Park District facilities and Sawmill Station."

"As a pedestrian living on Birch Ave, I do not feel safe crossing Dempster Street with the volume of traffic during the day."

"Make MG the jewel at the center of the trail that is used March through November."

"Utilize shared-parking strategies across retail, transit, and civic uses to reduce overall lots."

"Requiring greenery between the busy traffic lanes and the sidewalk would encourage pedestrian traffic."

Community Survey

A survey was developed as one of several outreach and engagement activities. Open for approximately six weeks — from June 25 to August 3, 2025 — the survey was widely promoted at the first community workshop, via the Village website, at Morton Grove Days, and on various community Facebook groups. Survey results helped to inform corridor recommendations provided in this plan.

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

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.



Q1 What are three words you would use to describe the Dempster Corridor today?

Note: Only the top 15 most frequent words are listed below.



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



Steering Committee

The project was guided by a Steering Committee that included representatives from the Village Board, Village Committees and Commissions, NITA, Pace, and Metra. In addition to overseeing the planning process to provide feedback and guidance, Steering Committee members served as ambassadors for the project to the Morton Grove community, letting their networks know about meetings and other ways to engage with the planning process.

MEETING #1
6/18/25

Presented preliminary existing conditions analysis; discussed preliminary corridor issues

MEETING #2
8/28/25

Presented findings from survey and other outreach; discussed preliminary goals

MEETING #3
1/22/26

Presented draft goals and objectives; shared drafts of the design toolbox and opportunity site concepts

MEETING #4
6/17/26

Presented draft Dempster Corridor Plan following an open house with the community

Focus Groups

Community input was informed by various methods, including a series of focus groups and one-on-one interviews with stakeholders who know the Dempster Street Corridor well and represent various segments of the community who engage the corridor in different ways. The four stakeholder groups offered varying insights, including potential opportunities to explore for Dempster Street as highlighted below.

BUSINESSES

- Main Street character for Dempster
- Support for property owners
- More event spaces

SCHOOL DISTRICTS

- Spaces and businesses catering to youth
- Safe road crossings
- "Downtown feel"

PARKS AND ENVIRONMENT

- Amenities for trail users
- More trail connections
- Potential nature center

HOUSES OF WORSHIP

- Major focal point at Dempster and Menard
- Elevation of local diversity
- More housing options



Coordination with Metra and Pace

As a transit-oriented corridor with access to Metra commuter rail and Pace bus routes, the study area includes land that is devoted to Metra use, including the new train station and commuter parking lots. This area has wide-reaching impact as a local anchor, drawing residents from throughout Morton Grove and neighboring areas like Skokie and Niles that do not have their own Metra stations.

Community Workshops

Community members had the opportunity to engage with the project and share their feedback on preliminary corridor plan elements at three community workshops. All three workshops were well attended, which accentuated the interest and excitement the Morton Grove community had to engage with and contribute to the creation of the Dempster Corridor Plan.

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.





WORKSHOP #3
6/17/26

The third community workshop provided opportunities for the public to review and comment on the draft Dempster Corridor Plan.





Pop-Up Events

The project team expanded its outreach beyond focus groups, community workshops, and online engagement by setting up a pop-up booth at local events to engage community members in spaces where they are already out and about. Pop-up events served as unique opportunities to hear from people who may not engage in traditional ways but still offer valuable thoughts.

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK | POP-UP EVENT QUOTE

> **"I would like to see an ice cream shop, bookstore and a higher-end grocery store. We need to ensure people stop at stop signs and the area is safe for pedestrians."**

MORTON GROVE DAYS
7/3/25





NATIONAL NIGHT OUT
8/5/25





SUSTAINABILITY EXPO
9/15/25





Policy Framework for the Dempster Corridor

A policy framework for the Dempster Corridor Plan includes a vision statement (right), and goals and objectives for the corridor's three primary issue areas: land use, economic development, and transportation (see following pages). Based on the existing conditions analysis and community engagement, the goals and objectives set the stage for more detailed recommendations and exhibits found in Part 2 of this document, the Sub-District Plans, which cover land use and development, corridor improvements, opportunity site concepts, and transportation access, safety, and mobility.

Goals are aspirational statements that broadly describe what the plan seeks to achieve in the future. **Objectives** are the actionable steps recommended to advance each goal.

Vision Statement

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.



Banner ads were installed on Pace buses that ran throughout the Northwest region which advertised how to connect to the Dempster Corridor Plan

Land Use

Corridor Context

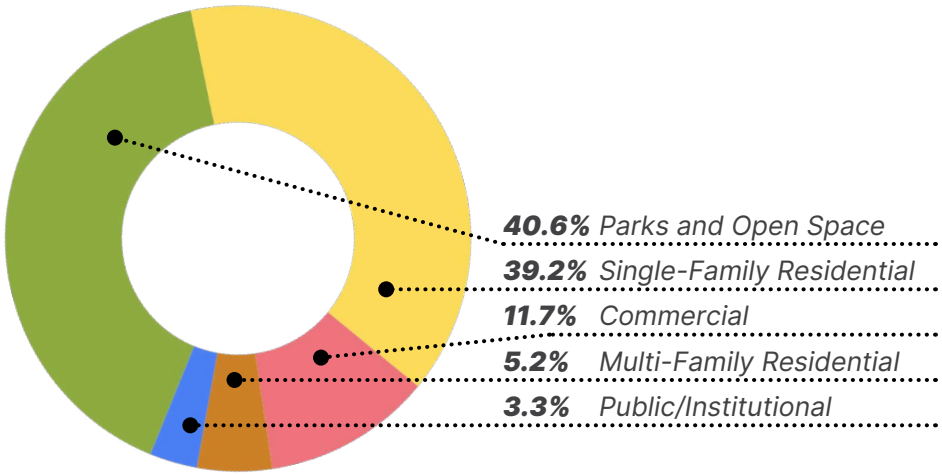
Major roadway corridors like Dempster Street are typically viewed as being commercial corridors given their high traffic counts, visibility, and access to other arterials and interstates connecting to the regional roadway network. The segment of Dempster Street in Morton Grove fits this description with its significant commercial base, including connectivity to other arterials like Milwaukee Avenue and Waukegan Road and the I-94 interchange.

Dempster Street stands out from other commercial corridors by also having a very diverse land use composition. The future land use along the Dempster Street Corridor is expected to maintain a generally similar combination of commercial, residential, mixed-use, public/institutional uses, parks and open space. However, the intent of the Dempster Corridor Plan is to convert vacant and underutilized properties into more productive uses that complement existing uses, expand retail and housing offerings, and enhance the vitality of the corridor:

- Larger opportunity sites such as those at the Dempster/Menard and Dempster/Austin intersections (see Opportunity Site Concept Plans 1 and 2 on pages 58 and 71) offer the potential for mixed-use development that provide residential units above ground-floor retail.
- Another large opportunity site south of Dempster Street and west of Waukegan Road (see Opportunity Site Concept Plan 3 on page 72) has potential to add multi-family residential development to further expand the diverse housing options in this section of Morton Grove.
- Smaller opportunity sites provide potential space to incorporate new commercial, residential, or mixed-use through infill development, site redevelopment, or adaptive reuse.
- Plans are underway to move Village Hall and the Police Department to Dempster Street between Fernald Avenue and Georgiana Avenue, which will expand the civic campus along the corridor that already includes the Civic Center, Historical Museum, American Legion, Harrier Park, and Linne Woods Forest Preserve.

Each land use type is described in the following pages along with the Existing and Future Land Use Maps. The Future Land Use Map includes proposed changes in land use based on the Sub-District Plans, an analysis of vacant or underutilized properties, results of the community engagement process and the market analysis that was undertaken as part of the plan.

Figure 1.1: Future Land Use Composition



Commercial

- Businesses, restaurants, and services will continue to be the predominant use directly fronting Dempster Street, particularly to take advantage of access, visibility, and Dempster's appeal as a commercial corridor.
- Most commercial uses are located on single blocks fronting Dempster as either standalone buildings or within multi-tenant buildings.
- Larger sites like Village Plaza, Sawmill Station, Moretti's, and the newly expanded Napleton Honda continue to be major commercial destinations.
- The 6% commercial vacancy rate is an indicator that the corridor is generally attractive to businesses, although several prominent sites are vacant. Strategies to modernize spaces, improve pedestrian safety, and encourage visitors to stay on the corridor will add to Dempster's appeal.

Residential

- While single-family homes comprise a majority of the housing stock on interior blocks, multi-family residential options are in demand for Dempster Street and the Metra Station area. The Residences at Sawmill Station serves as a catalyst for additional multi-family offerings, either as standalone residential buildings or as part of mixed-use developments.
- New housing development will continue to expand the diverse housing mix in the corridor area. Adjacent neighborhoods include single-family homes on small lots. A mix of townhome and multi-family properties characterizes the areas near the Metra station and Sawmill Station.
- The prominence of residential uses in the study area provides a nearby customer base for businesses, ridership base for Pace and Metra, and support for schools, houses of worship, and other civic services.

Mixed-Use

- Mixed-use development typically includes residential uses and commercial spaces, particularly in a compact, walkable area served by transit.
- A few vertical mixed-use buildings (see definition below) are interspersed along Dempster Street. Concepts for opportunity sites at the Dempster/Menard and Dempster/Austin intersections (see Opportunity Site Concept Plans 1 and 2 on pages 58 and 71) would expand mixed-use development along the corridor.
- Sawmill Station is a modern mixed-use development in a horizontal format. A few opportunity sites in and around Sawmill Station offer potential to further enhance this mixed-use district.
- Appropriateness of mixed-use depends on site characteristics and village review on a case-by-case basis.



What is mixed-use? According to the NITA's Transit-Friendly Communities Guide, mixed-use is defined as a mix of land uses within a building, block, or neighborhood that reduces car dependency and creates dynamic spaces. Mixed-use development typically takes two forms: (1) vertical mixed-use with commercial on the ground-floor and residential units above; and (2) horizontal mixed-use with separate residential and commercial uses that is often developed through a master planned approach.

Public/Institutional

- Public/institutional uses accentuate the importance of providing safe access and mobility for people of all ages, abilities, and modes of transport. Pedestrian safety improvements recommended in this plan will help:
  - Students and families who travel in the corridor at peak times for morning dropoff and afternoon pickup. Safe access is also important for older students who seek places along the corridor to gather and participate in activities after school.
  - Congregants of local houses of worship who live in the neighborhoods and walk to services. Members of the Muslim Community Center (MCC) also walk to several Halal businesses on Dempster.
- The future Village Hall site will add to the corridor's public/institutional mix, particularly expanding the civic campus with the Civic Center, Historical Museum, American Legion, Harrier Park, and Linne Woods Forest Preserve.

Parks and Open Space

- Parks and open space comprise a significant portion of the land use mix in the corridor area, which is a unique aspect of Dempster Street.
- Pedestrian and bike infrastructure improvements recommended in this plan are intended to improve safe access to these parks and open spaces, which would help boost the vitality of Dempster by enabling parks and open space users to safely access nearby businesses.
- Proposed bike lanes and bike boulevards will enhance the bike infrastructure network anchored by the North Branch Trail, which is one of the most used trails in the Forest Preserve's system.
- While the existing parks and open space network will primarily stay the same, new spaces like plazas, patios, and green spaces will further enhance the system of shared spaces that people can use for recreation and social engagement.

Metra Station

As a transit-oriented corridor with access to Metra commuter rail and Pace bus routes, the study area includes some land that is devoted to Metra use, including the new train station and commuter parking lots. This area has wide-reaching impact as a local anchor, drawing residents from throughout Morton Grove and neighboring areas like Skokie and Niles that do not have their own Metra stations.



Figure 1.2: Existing Land Use Map

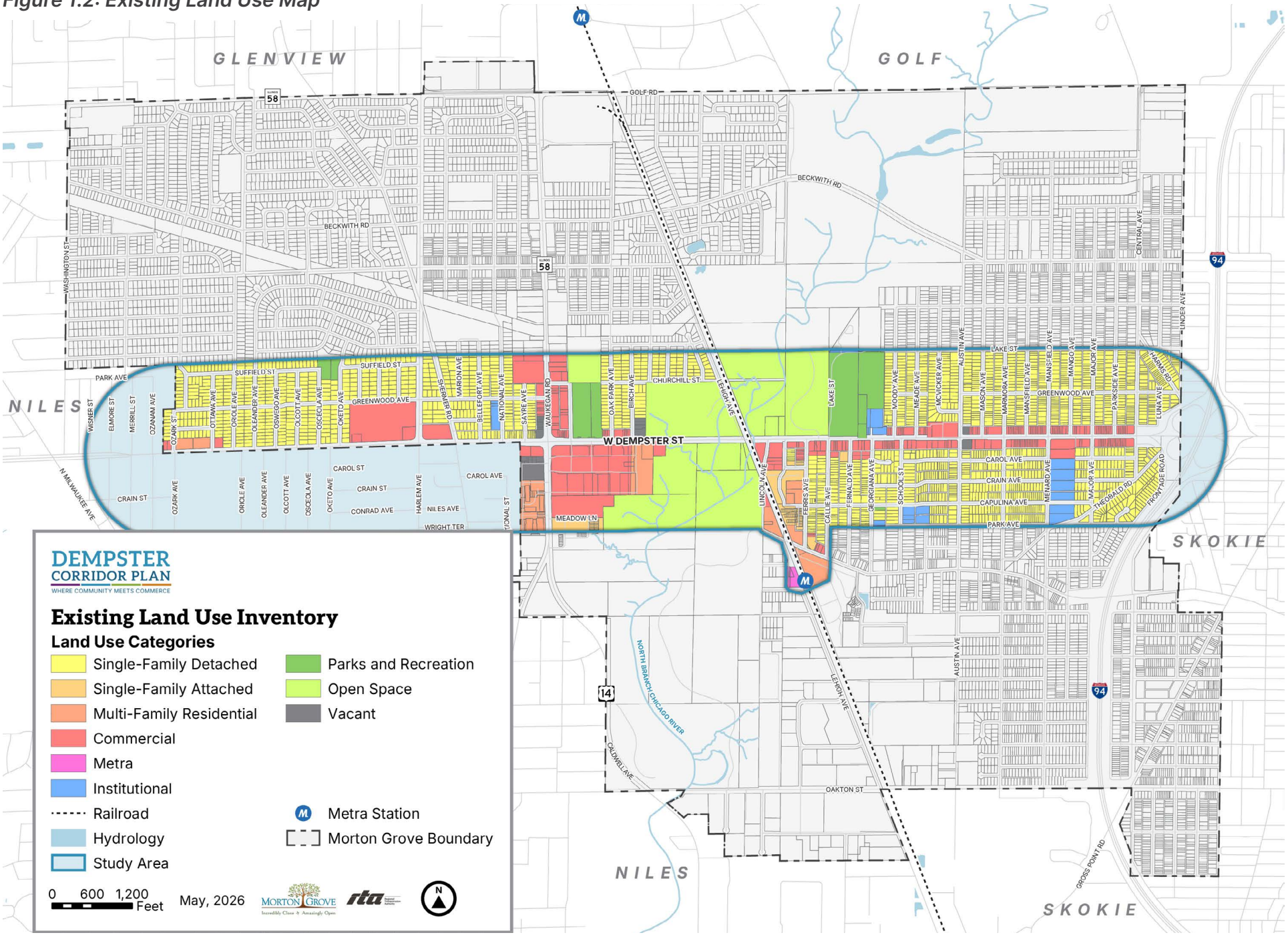
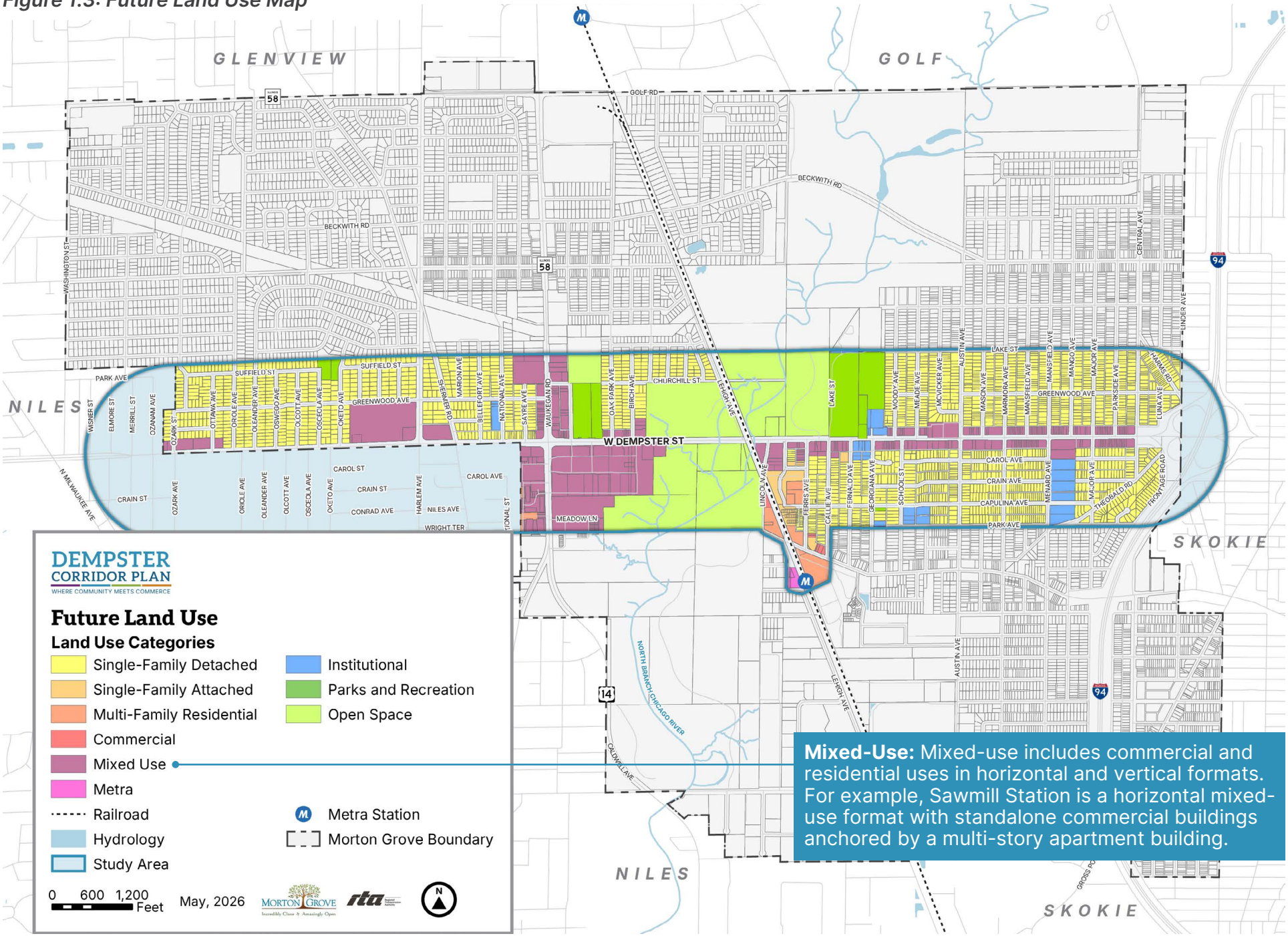


Figure 1.3: Future Land Use Map



LAND USE GOAL 1:

New commercial, residential, and mixed-use developments along Dempster Street and near the Metra station will contribute to an active and vibrant corridor with residents who can walk, bike, or take transit.

1. Work with property owners and developers to pursue well-designed, walkable redevelopment projects that provide tax-generating uses that draw customers and visitors to the study area
2. Foster development designs that address constraints such as shallow lot size, limited curb cuts and adjacency to single-family neighborhoods
3. Pursue appropriate rezoning and planned developments that meet the goals of the corridor and provide public benefits such as open space, plazas, wider sidewalks and enhanced landscaping
4. Support new development that provides modern spaces for uses such as grocery, coffee shops, convenience stores, and restaurants near the Metra station and Pace Pulse stations
5. Develop policies for the use of public incentives for land acquisition and development assistance for projects that meet the Village's objectives for the study area



Conceptual example of potential mixed-use redevelopment on Dempster Street that could provide tax-generating, ground-floor commercial with residential uses above. Mixed-use buildings can help to support the corridor's population with daytime and evening foot traffic. This concept also depicts gathering spaces tucked away from Dempster's vehicular traffic, with a central courtyard in between the retail storefronts plus additional sidewalk seating facing the side street. These design elements can help foster a more pedestrian-oriented, walkable feel along the corridor. See more details of the Opportunity Site 2 Concept on page 71.







Shallow lot development is a unique challenge along Dempster Street, particularly in the Main Street District. Commercial uses along the Main Street District are primarily single-story structures on shallow lots often with parking in front yielding little room for pedestrians or open space. Many of these shallow lots are adjacent to single-family neighborhoods that present challenges for redevelopment. Creative architecture can be an effective means to address shallow lot depths, particularly by placing the building near the sidewalk with added landscaping and pocket open spaces. For example, a building with a recessed façade includes a cut out for bench seating (bottom left). A building on a shallow lot can carve out a corner for public space, seating, and public art (bottom right).

LAND USE GOAL 2:

Existing retail spaces will be modernized and filled with attractive businesses and restaurants that draw residents and visitors to Dempster Street.

1. Promote the leasing and purchase of vacant spaces with new or expanding businesses
2. Expand the existing façade improvement program
3. Evaluate new grants or incentives to support property owners with renovations to modernize their spaces to be “occupant ready” and attract new sales-tax generating users to fill vacancies
4. Encourage adaptive reuse to convert underutilized spaces into reimagined formats that attract new tenants seeking modernized spaces and amenities
5. Identify and allocate space for periodic food truck events and pop-ups





Above: Example demonstrates the impact that façade enhancements can have on a building and streetscape environment.

Left: Illustrative enhancements to a currently vacant building and alleyway at Dempster Street and Austin Avenue. Simple improvements like adding window awnings, planter boxes, and sidewalk bistro tables with planted containers can turn the building into a place that people want to visit. The public space and alleyway can be activated as a pleasant passageway with decorative pavement, a wall mural, signage, and lighting.

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.

1. Build upon the relocation of Village Hall and Police Department to the 6200 block of Dempster Street to further expand this area as a unified civic campus and recreation area along Dempster Street with the Civic Center, Historical Museum, Harrer Park, and Linne Woods Forest Preserve across the street
2. Dedicate space for plazas, patios, and green spaces in the Study Area, including the potential to repurpose certain parts of the public right-of-way
3. Provide support for restaurants and cafés to add outdoor seating areas and exterior pedestrian service windows
4. Seek opportunities for public art along the corridor, which could include murals, sculptures, bus stop activations, light pole decorations, etc.



With the future Village Hall and Police Department set to relocate to Dempster Street between Fernald Avenue and Georgiana Avenue along the south side of Dempster Street, this addition of municipal government and public safety will further enhance the civic campus directly across Dempster Street. As shown above, the civic campus already includes the Civic Center and Historical Museum, which are adjacent to recreational areas including Harrer Park, Harrer Pool, and Linne Woods Forest Preserve. A strong civic presence is often a hallmark of main streets. Visitors to civic venues help increase the customer base for businesses, restaurants, and services along Dempster. They can also boost transit ridership, particularly for the Pace routes along Dempster Street.

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.

1. Develop a strategic approach to provide short-term solutions for smaller vacant spaces, such as pop-up businesses, restaurants, and art installations, while fostering long-term occupancy by permanent businesses
2. Match local businesses to available retail rental spaces
3. Seek to locate co-working and shared office spaces on second stories, where available, or renovated properties via adaptive reuse
4. Consider supporting use of one of the corridor's vacant or underutilized sites to establish a business incubator with small shop spaces for rent for entrepreneurs, startups, and small businesses to get grounded in the community before branching out into larger spaces



Vacant and underutilized sites along the corridor create spaces to explore the type of short- and long-term solutions to support local businesses. This can include expanding the Village's existing façade grant program, adding landscaping, improving storefronts and assistance with marketing the properties.



AMLI Evanston is a mixed-use development with ground-floor commercial and apartments above. The businesses have enhanced façades that emphasize business signage areas, canopies, and large windows for greater transparency and ambient lighting that reflects outward to the sidewalk area. Similar enhanced façades can be adapted to single-story buildings, whether they are new construction or improvements to existing properties.

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."**

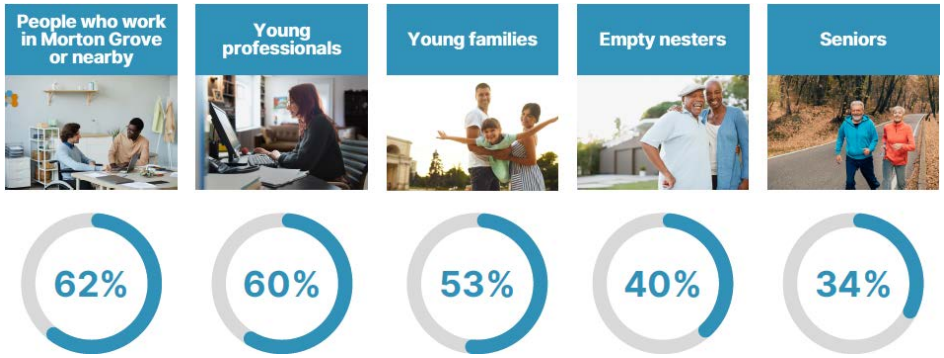
LAND USE GOAL 5:

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 Street businesses.

1. Seek opportunities to add new multi-family and mixed-use developments that provide high quality housing and commercial space
2. Consider the needs of older adults as part of new housing development, such as options that provide elevator buildings, first-floor units, and independent and assisted living options
3. Attract missing middle housing types, such as townhomes and small-scale multi-family, to the areas near the Metra station
4. Establish programs to support home maintenance and housing rehabilitation support for seniors in existing homes
5. Consider establishing Village policies and regulations, including zoning code amendments, to allow accessory dwelling units (ADUs) in the residential neighborhoods around the corridor and near the Metra station

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK | SURVEY FINDINGS

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





Conceptual development for multi-family residential on a vacant site on the west side of Waukegan Road across from Sawmill Station and south of Dempster Street. This potential multi-family residential development would provide high quality multi-family units. Sidewalk extensions and an enhanced crosswalk would enhance connectivity to Sawmill Station and pedestrian access to cross Waukegan Road safely. Other sites along Dempster could provide a range of new housing types including senior housing, apartments, and, depending on market conditions, condominiums.

LAND USE GOAL 6:

Promote excellence in design for new development and redevelopment that is transit-supportive and enables easy use of transit to access shops, services, and other amenities.

1. Update the Village of Morton Grove Unified Development Code to incorporate best practices for bike facilities, road right-of-way, public areas, gateways and signage, and landscaping
2. Create a mixed-use overlay zoning district for the Main Street portion of Dempster Street between the railroad tracks and I-94. (See Main Street Sub-District section in Part 2)
3. For multi-story development, encourage active ground-floor uses with residential above, human-scale density facing the street with taller stories stepped back, parking to the rear or side of buildings, and points of entry and public spaces that connect directly to the sidewalk and bus stops/stations
4. Encourage storefronts and entrances oriented toward sidewalks, parking to the rear or side of buildings, pedestrian-scaled signage and lighting, and the integration of streetscape and public space amenities
5. Concentrate higher-density housing near Pace Pulse stations and the Metra station with direct pedestrian access, street-facing entrances, revised parking standards, and integrated open space and transit-friendly amenities, such as shaded seating, secure bike parking, landscaping, and public art



Example of design principles in a mixed-use development that includes pedestrian amenities, seating areas, landscaping, human-scaled development, signage for parking and improved crosswalks.

Corridor-Wide Zoning Recommendations

These corridor-wide recommendations for the Village of Morton Grove Unified Development Code (UDC) are intended to facilitate implementation of the goals and objectives of the plan, as summarized below. In addition, an Overlay District is recommended for the portion of the Main Street Sub-District which is described in Part 2 of this plan.

Bike Lanes, Bike Boulevards, and Multi-Use Paths

- Add standards for bike lanes, bike boulevards, and multi-use paths in Chapter 5-2: Traffic Control and Chapter 5-11: Bicycles

Road Right-of-Way

- Add standards for restricted left turn lanes in Chapter 5-2: Traffic Control and Section 12-9-2: Street Design Standards
- Add standards for curb extensions/bump-outs in Chapter 5-2: Traffic Control and Section 12-9-2: Street Design Standards
- Add standards for use of potential side street closures for functional, non-vehicular use in Section 12-9-5: Vacation of Public Right of Way

Public Areas

- Add standards for signage and landscaping within public parking lots in Section 12-7-4: Off Street Parking Design Standards
- Add standards for activated alleyways in Section 12-9-3: Alleys, Sidewalks, Pedestrian ways, and Driveways
- Maintain existing pedestrian-oriented lighting standards in Section 12-12-3: Lighting
- Maintain existing standards for streetscape elements in Section 12-12-4: Miscellaneous Structures and Street Furniture

Landscaping

- Add standards for landscaped medians in Section 12-9-2: Street Design Standards and Chapter 12-11: Landscaping and Trees
- Ensure tree and plant species are salt tolerant (Section 12-11-3)

Gateways, Wayfinding, and Other Signage

- Add standards for gateway and wayfinding signage in Chapter 10-10: Sign Regulations, particularly Section 10-10-7:G (Ground Monument Signs and Pylon Signs)
- Add additional standards to properly regulate and provide guidance on acceptable sign types, colors, and materials in Section 10-10-6: General Sign Regulations and Section 10-10-7: Regulations by Type of Sign, including specific signs like illuminated signs (Section 10-10-7:B), projecting signs (Section 10-10-7:E), wall signs (Section 10-10-7:F), and ground monument signs (Section 10-10-7:G)
- Provide clarifying language for murals and public art as “signs that are painted directly on any part of a building or fence” in Section 10-10-5: Prohibited Signs, including whether or not murals or other public art are exempted if not directly painted on any part of a building or fence
- Consider prohibiting or further restricting electronic messaging signage within the “Main Street” Overlay District to better preserve a cohesive, pedestrian-oriented character. Such signage can introduce visual clutter, distraction, and a more auto-oriented aesthetic that may be inconsistent with the desired traditional streetscape. Limiting or eliminating these signs can help maintain a more timeless, human-scaled environment that supports walkability and reinforces the corridor’s identity

Economic Development

Corridor Context

As one of the region's primary commercial corridors, Dempster Street serves as a key east-west arterial between I-94, the communities of Niles and Park Ridge, and I-294, providing convenient access to O'Hare International Airport. As such, the corridor is a magnet for a variety of types of businesses. In addition, Dempster Street serves a myriad ethnic cultures that have diversified the restaurant and business offerings along the corridor. The statistics highlighted to the right were generated from a market assessment that was compiled to inform this plan and shared with the community to inform land use and economic development decisions. Key market assessment findings are provided in the following pages.

The commercial character of the corridor has evolved over time with a mix of small retail strip centers and standalone businesses representing locally owned enterprises and national brands. Some businesses like Moretti's and Napleton Honda have invested in improving their properties and boosted the vitality of the corridor as a regional destination. Sawmill Station expanded the business mix along Dempster in a mixed-use format that not only elevated Morton Grove's economic positioning by modernizing a commercial center but also included luxury apartments at the Residences at Sawmill Station that is highly successful and fully leased.

The economic development goals and objectives in this section are intended to further boost the business mix, attract investment through new commercial and mixed-use spaces, capitalize on the non-commercial assets that attract people to the area, and market the corridor to encourage people to stay longer when they visit the Dempster Street Corridor.

$200M
Retail capture in the corridor's primary trade area (5-10 minute drive time) indicating customers visit Dempster from a larger area

$69.5M
Projected maximum amount of projected retail sales growth (25% capture rate) that Dempster can capture from the primary trade area

28,000 sq ft
Projected new restaurant space that Dempster can capture from primary trade area growth

198,000 sq ft
Projected new retail space that Dempster can capture from primary trade area growth

$100,800
Median household income in the corridor study area exceeds neighboring communities, Cook County, and Illinois

63.5%
Percentage of Morton Grove households with income above $75,000

50.9%
Percentage of Morton Grove households that speak a language other than English at home

Sources: Esri Business Analyst; Placer.ai; OnTheMap Application and LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics

Top Industry Sectors in Morton Grove



Health Care	Manufacturing	Admin. & Support, Waste Services	Retail Trade	Accommodation & Food Services
22.4%	19.6%	12.5%	11.1%	6.3%

Demographics

- The population increased by 10% in Morton Grove from 1990 to 2023. There are approximately 8,800 residents and 4,300 employees in the study area and approximately 25,000 residents and 12,400 employees in the Village of Morton Grove.
- The population of both the Village and study area is very international – both in terms of race/ethnicity and language spoken at home. This leads to a diverse consumer base and wide range of businesses and restaurants.

Employment

- There is a large influx and outflow of commuters each day. Approximately 10,500 employees live elsewhere and work in Morton Grove, approximately 760 residents both live and work in the Village, and 12,600 live in the Village but work elsewhere. The transportation network and location of the Dempster Corridor allows for this economic mix.
- The top employment industries are health care, manufacturing, administrative and support, retail trade and food services, while the top employment sectors for residents working elsewhere are health care, retail trade, education, professional, sciences and technical, and manufacturing.

Housing

- The study area has a more diverse housing stock than the Village as a whole, with about 20% of the housing stock consisting of multifamily units.
- The median value of housing in the study area is $361,568 (compared with the regional median of $288,400) and median rent is $1,785 (compared the regional median of $1,300).
- There has been strong and steady rent growth across the Morton Grove/ Glenview/Evanston submarket, with rent up 92% since 2010, averaging 4.6% annual growth.
- The submarket continues to demonstrate positive momentum supported by strong underlying market conditions. A limited amount of vacant or entitled land in the submarket has driven the cost for multi-family housing up. Recently completed projects such as the Residences at Sawmill Station (a multifamily rental building) and Metro on Main (for-sale townhomes) have both been very strong in the marketplace.



Single-Family (detached)	Single-Family (attached)	2 to 4 Units	5 to 9 Units	10 Units or More
76.2%	**4.8%**	**1.2%**	**1.0%**	**16.7%**
7,276	**461**	**119**	**96**	**1,594**

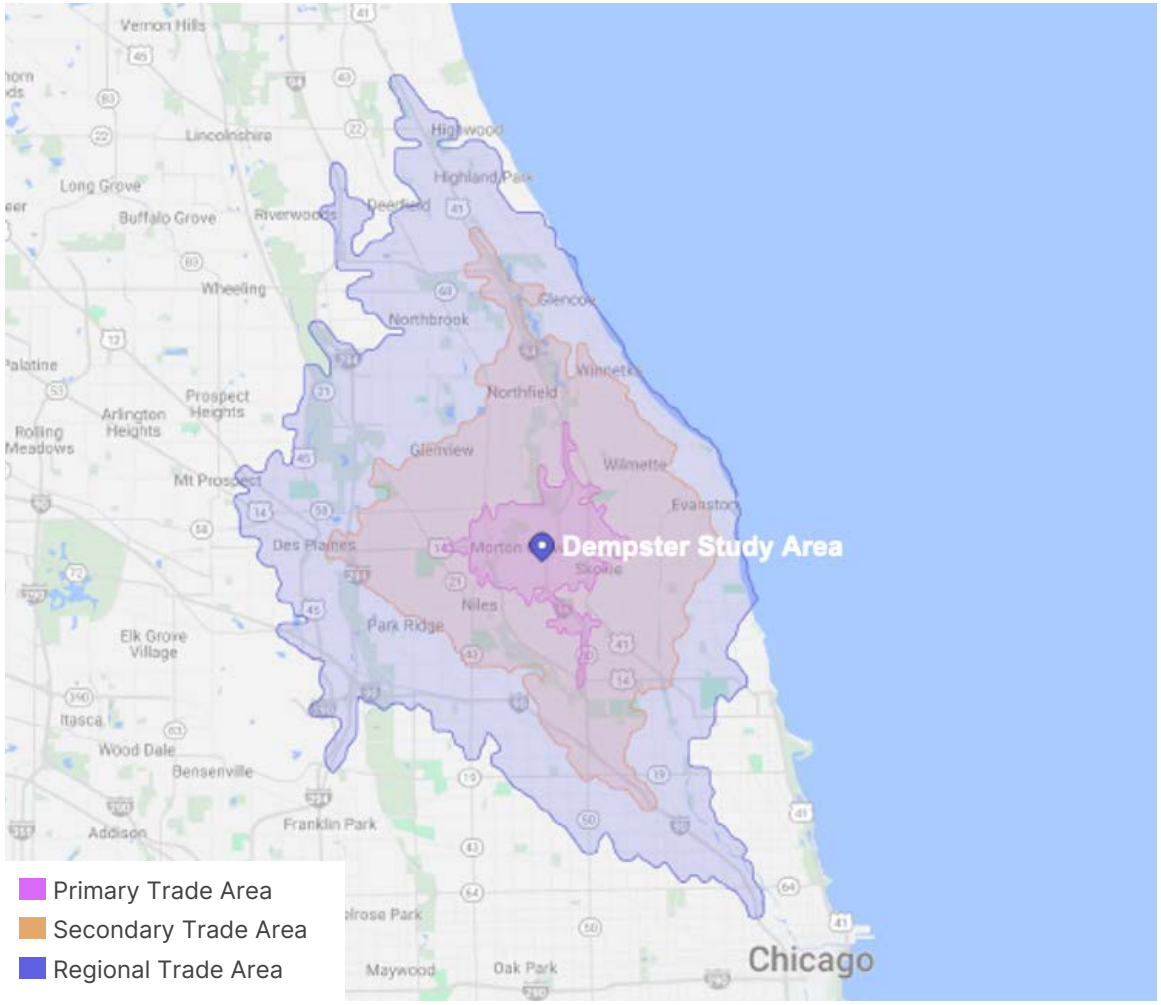
Figure 1.4: Housing Stock by Type

Source: 2023 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Retail

- The primary trade area has spending power of $1.6 billion and a retail surplus of $200 million, meaning customers are coming into the area to shop and eat. This is due to the high volume of traffic along Dempster, the ease to get to the corridor, and the current retailers and restaurants ability to attract customers from a Regional Trade Area shown to the right.
- Retail growth over the next five years in the primary trade area is projected to be $278 million. With a capture rate of 20% to 25% of projected growth, the demand that can be captured in the study area is between $55.6 and $69.5 million. Total retail growth is projected to be between 159,000 and 198,000 square feet if the Village is able to capture this share of growth.
- Groceries, dining out, entertainment and recreation, apparel and household furnishings are the top retail growth sectors. The first three sectors hold the most promise as part of a retail attraction strategy.
- Specific retailers identified through a void analysis include coffee, veterinary, recreation, grocery, international grocery and restaurants.

Figure 1.5 Trade Areas Map
Source: Placer.ai (2025)



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOAL 1:

A vibrant mix of businesses will populate the Dempster Corridor.

1. Work with the Chamber of Commerce and other organizations to support existing small businesses through marketing, technical assistance, and networking
2. Create an incentive program for small business expansion and attraction
3. Market the international flavor of restaurants, groceries and other retail stores to draw in customers to the Dempster Corridor
4. Encourage creative industries like art galleries, bookstores, theaters and entertainment/recreational uses to occupy spaces along the Corridor to add interest and vibrancy





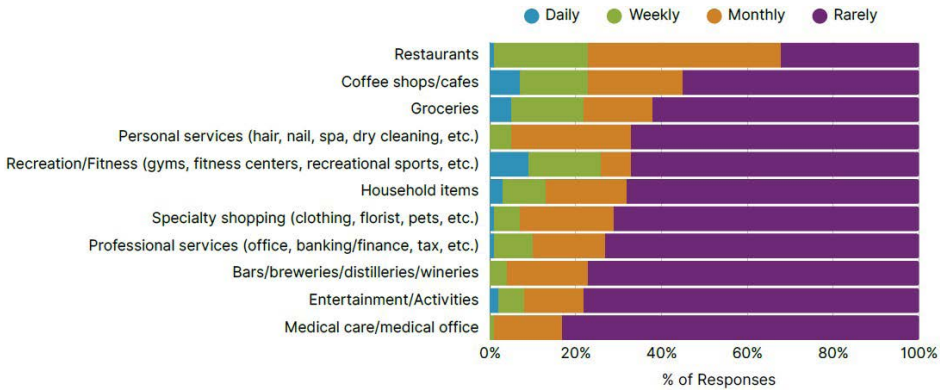




Dempster Street is home to a range of businesses, restaurants, and services, including those that are locally owned and others that have national name brand recognitions. Growing and nurturing this commercial mix is critical to the vitality of Dempster Street, which can include steps like providing support to small businesses, offering incentives, elevating Morton Grove's diversity, meeting market demand, and expanding uses in the creative and innovation industries.

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.

1. Create guidelines for providing financial incentives to support expansion and attraction based on criteria of return on investment, public–private ratio of project funding, job creation, and sales tax and other revenue generation
2. Provide a predictable zoning and approval process for new development
3. Create a mixed-use overlay zoning district for the Main Street portion of Dempster Street between the railroad tracks and I-94. The overlay district would allow mixed-uses including residential and commercial uses. It can also include design guidelines to ensure high-quality development, materials, and an attractive environment
4. Encourage new residential in the study area to attract additional households such as young professionals and empty-nesters who can support a mix of restaurants and retailers





Top: Midtown Square is a transit-oriented, mixed-use development in downtown Glenview. Three stories of residential were built above ground-floor commercial and parking. A new streetscape provided an improved pedestrian experience with parking provided along the streets as well as in an interior courtyard. Photo credit: Fitzgerald Architecture Planning Design

Bottom: Foxford Station in Western Springs also provides three stories of residential over retail. It is a TOD development next to a Metra station. The building "steps back" the fourth story along the sides of the building to reduce the impact of the height of the building. This technique could be used along Dempster Street, along side streets and at the rear of the buildings to reduce impact on neighboring residential homes.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOAL 3:

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

1. Identify businesses that can complement the Forest Preserve, North Branch Trail, and park facilities such as casual restaurants, cafes, and recreation-oriented businesses, including bike shops and athletic gear stores

2. Attract entertainment related uses that become destinations for visitors inside and outside of Morton Grove, taking advantage of the central location and easy access





A commercial area's customer base is not strictly reliant upon people visiting businesses, restaurants, and services. Dempster Street benefits from expanding the customer base with families going to Harrer Park, people biking along the North Branch Trail in the Forest Preserve, groups hosting meetings at the Civic Center, and eventually citizens going to the new Village Hall building. Pop Up events, like the one shown to the right, can be held in the Civic Campus area to draw people from the North Branch Trail and Harrer Park to the Corridor. (Photo from Ainslie Plaza in Lincoln Square, Chicago)

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOAL 4:

Events and marketing efforts will attract visitors and customers to the Corridor.

1. Plan for a continuous, year-long schedule of events that celebrate local businesses—such as a "Taste of Dempster" food festival—and recreation and cultural opportunities unique to Dempster Street—like a trail walk/run event in partnership with the Forest Preserve
2. Evaluate potential advantages and disadvantages of creating a Special Service Area or business district that can provide targeted programming and improvements for the study area
3. Target social media and marketing campaigns to the trade area including Skokie, Niles, Glenview and the Northwest Side of Chicago, as well as east-west traffic between O'Hare and Evanston



Families participated in the Dempster Corridor Pop Ups, which were held at Harrer Park in association with events such as Morton Grove Days, the Sustainability Expo, and National Night Out.

Transportation

Corridor Context

Dempster Street is a key regional arterial that is owned and managed by the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT). The route is designed to efficiently move large volumes of trips within the broader regional network. Dempster Street is also a key commercial and community corridor for the Village of Morton Grove, with dozens of local retailers and national chains as well as several key recreational assets.

As highlighted on the right, Dempster is defined by a range of transportation characteristics that bring people to, from, and through the corridor area for commerce, dining, recreation, and civic engagement. Concerns and constraints also limit usage of the corridor in a safe and accessible manner for pedestrians and bicyclists who are visiting businesses, accessing services, using nearby trails, or riding transit.

The volume and speed of traffic on Dempster Street and long pedestrian crossing distances can make the pedestrian experience uncomfortable, limiting the street's current viability as a pedestrian-oriented "main street" commercial corridor. Wide vehicle turning radii at certain intersections also lead to fast turning speeds.

In addition to pedestrian safety concerns, there's a current perception by both residents and retailers of a lack of parking for the commercial area along Dempster Street.

While the Dempster Street study area features a nearly complete sidewalk network, Dempster Street itself acts as a barrier for pedestrians, with uncomfortable crossings and long distances between marked crosswalks. While the North Branch Trail is a top-quality bicycle facility in the region, there are limited bicycle facilities in the area that would encourage bicycle travel.

These issues collectively create conditions that discourage pedestrian and bicycle travel within the corridor.

Transportation Characteristics Along Dempster

340,000
Average daily trips pass through the corridor on an average weekday

40,000
Average daily vehicles

81.9%
Percentage of typical weekday trips that occur by private vehicle (car)

14.8%
Percentage of typical weekday trips that occur by walking, biking, or taking transit

41.7%
Percentage of typical weekday trips relate to shopping, dining, or running errands

1,674
Average daily weekday riders on Pace Pulse Dempster Line

764
Average daily weekday riders on Pace Route 250

9,197
Average daily weekday riders on Metra MD-N

Roadway Configuration Context
Dempster Street carries traffic volumes above the level where FHWA guidance typically supports road diets, which are generally most appropriate on streets with fewer than 25,000 vehicles per day. For this reason, the plan does not recommend removing travel lanes or adding on-street bicycle facilities through a major change to Dempster's typical section. Instead, recommendations focus on improving safety, comfort, and multimodal access within the existing roadway configuration.

TRANSPORTATION GOAL 1:

The Corridor will be safe for all users and people of all ages will feel safe and comfortable crossing Dempster Street on foot.

1. Improve safe access to, from, and across Dempster, especially near schools and parks located in the Study Area
2. 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 to create neighborhood biking and walking routes parallel to Dempster





Top Right: Example of a highly visible crosswalk with a pedestrian safety landing and median

Bottom Right: Improved crosswalk markings, lighting, pedestrian facilities, and streetscape greening enhanced safety at the crossing of Wilmette Avenue and Central Avenue in Wilmette and provided support for outdoor seating for local restaurants.

TRANSPORTATION GOAL 2:

Dempster Street will be a pleasant place to stroll and linger, and people will regularly walk to and between businesses.

1. Install streetscape upgrades that can be accommodated within the existing sidewalk right-of-way in the Main Street District
2. Implement a branded wayfinding system with directional signage and walking distance markers to key destinations
3. Resolve sidewalk accessibility deficiencies within the study area
4. Evaluate opportunities to utilize parking lot space to improve streetscaping behind sidewalks between Waukegan Road and Oketo Avenue
5. Study potential for closing portions of side streets such as Mason Avenue and Mango Avenue that connect with Dempster to create more functional public and pedestrian space along the corridor



Opportunities for outdoor seating and trees could be provided on side streets off of Dempster Street This image from Lake Bluff shows opportunities for seating in right-of-way that could be provided on side streets that intersect Dempster Street in Morton Grove.

TRANSPORTATION GOAL 3:

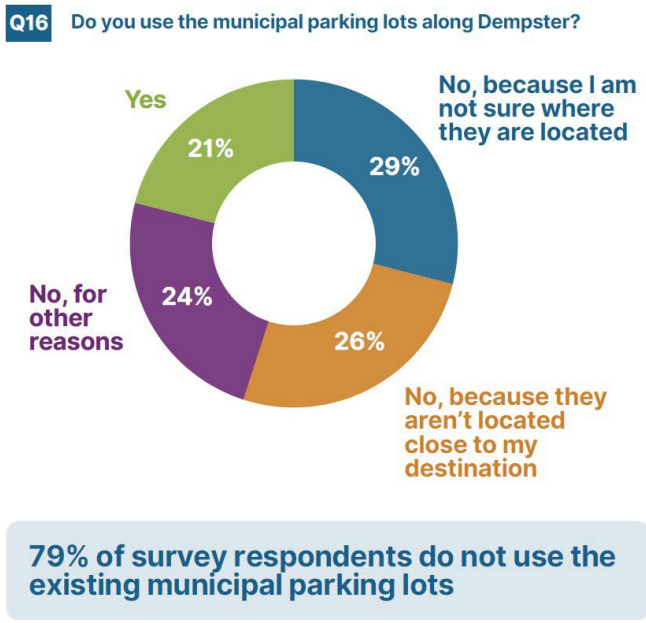
Residents and visitors alike will find it easy to understand where they can park near Dempster Street.

1. Install striping at on-street parking areas within the Main Street District on Austin Avenue, Lincoln Avenue, Fernald Avenue, School Street, Meade Avenue, Marmora Avenue, Mansfield Avenue, Menard Avenue, Major Avenue, and Parkside Avenue, to more efficiently mark vehicle spacing and maximize capacity
2. Upgrade existing parking signage in the Main Street District to improve legibility and bring greater awareness to parking opportunities
3. Consider opportunities to expand the availability of public parking close to the corridor

Parking lot design can improve how people find and utilize parking, particularly along a busy roadway like Dempster Street. The concept on the right illustrates how design elements like more visible signage, enhanced lot pavement, and landscaping can make parking lots stand out more along the streetscape. Gateway features like a community branded arch further catch the attention of motorists seeking parking.

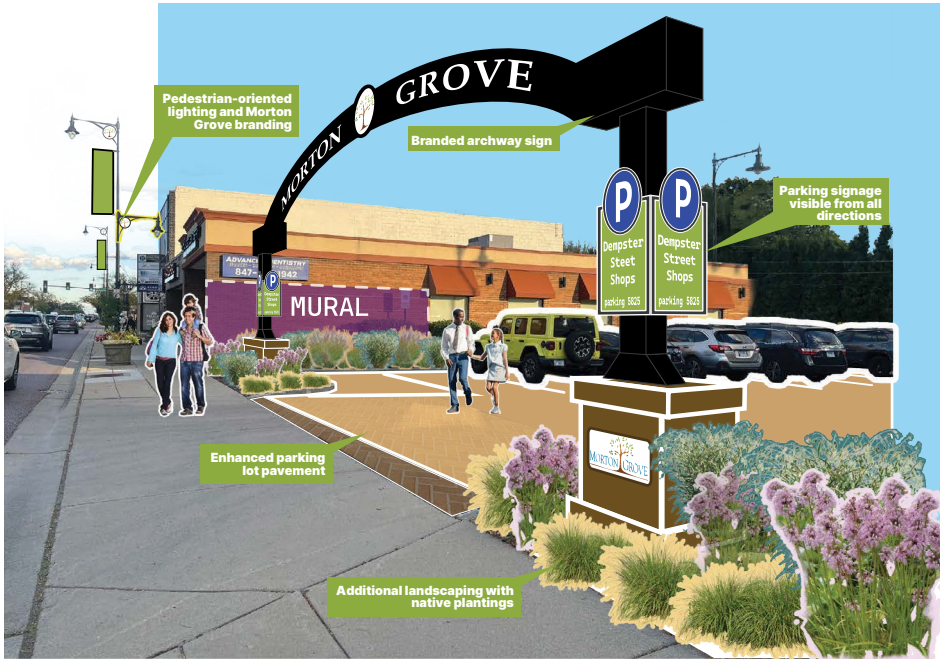
COMMUNITY FEEDBACK | SURVEY FINDINGS

Do you use the municipal parking lots along Dempster?





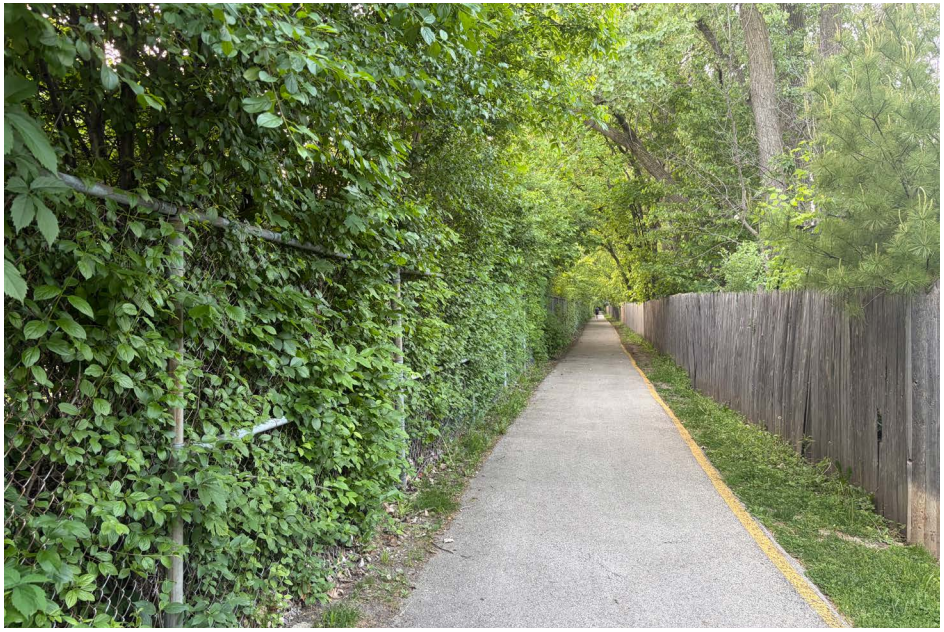
79% of survey respondents do not use the existing municipal parking lots



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.

1. Evaluate a series of corridor-wide parallel street bike routes and associated crossing improvements as shown on Figure 1.6 Proposed Bikeway Network
2. Pursue funding for phase one engineering to study a potential reconstruction of Lehigh Avenue and provide upgrades to the connection to the North Branch Trail both north and south of Dempster Street
3. Evaluate opportunities for a shared-use path adjacent to Metra tracks, and along Lincoln Avenue between Dempster Street and the Metra Station
4. Recommend new bike parking equipment standards for the Village and evaluate future bike parking locations, focusing on signalized intersections and any future bike routes



The Green Bay Trail is situated along the UP North Metra line providing a continuous 8.9 mile trail between Wilmette and Highland Park

TRANSPORTATION GOAL 5:

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

1. Coordinate with IDOT and Pace to review and advance proposed bus queue-jump and signal timing improvements for eastbound Pace buses near Sawmill Station at Athletic Avenue
2. Work with Pace to review and implement transit operational improvements such as stop consolidations, pedestrian access and amenities, and signage as detailed in the Appendix
3. Pursue funding for pedestrian infrastructure and signage to improve connection between Metra Station and Dempster Street
4. Evaluate impacts and benefits of closing Lincoln Avenue at track crossing closest to Dempster Street to improve safety by limiting vehicle and train conflict points



TRANSPORTATION GOAL 6:

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

1. Evaluate traffic signal improvement opportunities at Lehigh Avenue and Dempster Street
2. Improve lighting in the Residential Sub-district
3. Identify opportunities to reduce vehicular speeds along Dempster Street and ensure enforcement of speed and traffic violations

Bicycle Facilities

Building a bicycle network that provides comfortable and safe access for users of all ages and abilities requires identifying the right type of facility. Bicycle facilities with lower infrastructure effort often cost less but are typically only appropriate on low-traffic, low-speed streets. Bicycle facilities with higher infrastructure effort typically have higher costs but are often necessary to facilitate safe and comfortable travel on higher-traffic, higher-speed streets or particularly complex segments of a network. Guidance below is based on the National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO) All Ages & Abilities design standards. See more information in the Design Toolbox, page 42.

Bicycle boulevards are low-volume (less than 2,000 vehicles per day), low-speed (25mph or less) streets where cyclists can safely share the street with vehicle traffic. Bicycle boulevards typically feature physical traffic calming elements to further slow and reduce motor vehicle traffic.

Striped bike lanes feature a painted lane on the street surface designating space for cyclists. Striped bike lanes may be appropriate on streets with volumes less than 3,000 average daily vehicles and speed limits of 30mph or less.

Protected bike lanes are on-street facilities that provide physical protection between people cycling and driving by utilizing barriers such as concrete curbs, planters, or bollards. Protected bike lanes are recommended on streets with daily motor vehicle volumes over 6,000 and/or speed limits over 30mph or in areas with turning conflicts.

Multi-use or Shared-use paths are off-street trails entirely separated from vehicular roadways and provide a paved space for both people cycling and walking. Shared-use paths typically provide the highest levels of safety and comfort.

Bicycle Racks

For future bicycle parking installations, utilize guidance from the Association of Pedestrian and Bicycle Professional's (APBP) "Essentials of Bike Parking." The Inverted-U rack is typically the highest-quality bike rack from a durability and security perspective, and they tend to keep bicycles upright and organized better than alternative designs. Decorative bike racks that provide inferior security, durability, and organization should be avoided.

Long-Term Bicycle Parking

Long-term bicycle parking comes in multiple forms, including covered parking shelters, indoor parking rooms, and secure storage structures. Long-term bicycle parking can provide specific benefits at transit stations and employment centers and can be free-standing or incorporated into larger structures. Any bike rack type that meets APBP guidance can be utilized for a long-term parking facility, but high-capacity racks can help meet expected higher long-term parking demands. Key features of long-term and secure storage will include some or all of the following:

- Weather protection
- Effective signage explaining usage
- Controlled access via keycard or app for facility users
- Enhanced lighting
- Visible security cameras

Bicycle Network

Given existing geometric constraints, there are very limited opportunities for safe and comfortable bicycle facilities on Dempster Street itself. Therefore, east-west bicycle travel within the corridor study area should rely on a network of adjacent parallel routes. The following roadways should be considered for inclusion in a connected bicycle network, depicted in the map in Figure 1.6.

- Between Ozark Avenue and Waukegan Road, Greenwood Street could accommodate a bicycle boulevard. Crossing improvements would be needed at Harlem Avenue, Shermer Road, and Waukegan Road to accommodate safe and comfortable travel. Options include cyclist/pedestrian-activated RRFB or HAWK signals and pedestrian refuge islands. Coordination with IDOT would be needed.
- Existing trails though Prairie View Park and a bicycle boulevard on Churchill Street could provide cyclists with access to the existing Lehigh Avenue protected bike lanes, which would then connect riders to Dempster Street.
- At Dempster Street and Lehigh Avenue, new or improved shared-use paths south of Dempster Street could take cyclists south to the Metra station area. New or improved shared-use paths on the north side of Dempster Street could take cyclists to existing paths in Harrer Park, which then connect to Greenwood Street.
- Greenwood Street could serve as a bicycle boulevard on the north side of Dempster Street between Moody Avenue and Linder Avenue, with a jog between Meade Avenue and Austin Avenue.
- On the south side of Dempster Street, a bicycle boulevard on Carol Avenue could carry cyclists east-west between School Street and Central Avenue. A new shared-use pathway connection would be needed between Menard Avenue and Mango Avenue, potentially facilitated by the redevelopment of the adjacent site.
- At School Street, a bicycle boulevard south to Capulina Avenue and then west to Ferris Avenue could provide a route to/from the Metra Station. Additionally, a route north via School Street would be used to cross Dempster Street at the proposed new crossing, making a connection to Harrer Park and new shared-use pathways with further connections to the west.
- Bicycle boulevards on Marmora Avenue and Major Avenue could provide north-south connections through the eastern part of the village. Recommended pedestrian crossing improvements where these streets intersect Dempster Street would also facilitate safer and more comfortable bicycle travel.
- Additional trails into and south of Sawmill Station could provide improved bicycle connectivity to the Dempster Street corridor, via the North Branch Trail.
- The Village is seeking future funding for phase one engineering to study the potential for an on-street bike facility along Lincoln Avenue from the eastern municipal boundary to the Forest Preserves or Dempster Street.

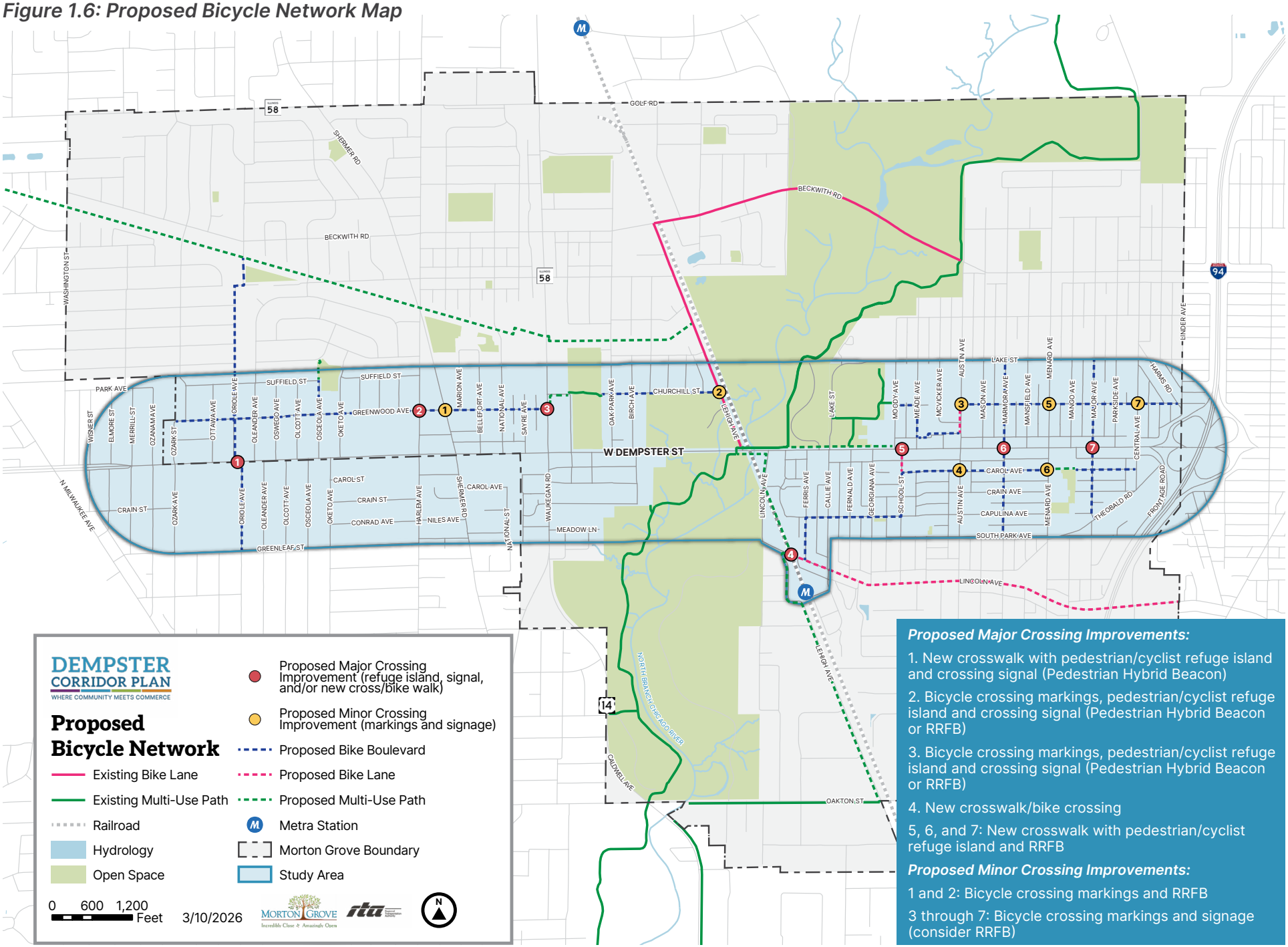
Proposed major crossing improvements include:

- Bicycle crossing markings, pedestrian/cyclist refuge island and crossing signal (Pedestrian Hybrid Beacon or RRFB)
- New crosswalk/bike crossingwalk
- New crosswalk with pedestrian/cyclist refuge island and RRFB

Proposed minor crossing improvements include:

- Bicycle crossing markings and RRFB
- Bicycle crossing markings and signage (consider RRFB)

Figure 1.6: Proposed Bicycle Network Map

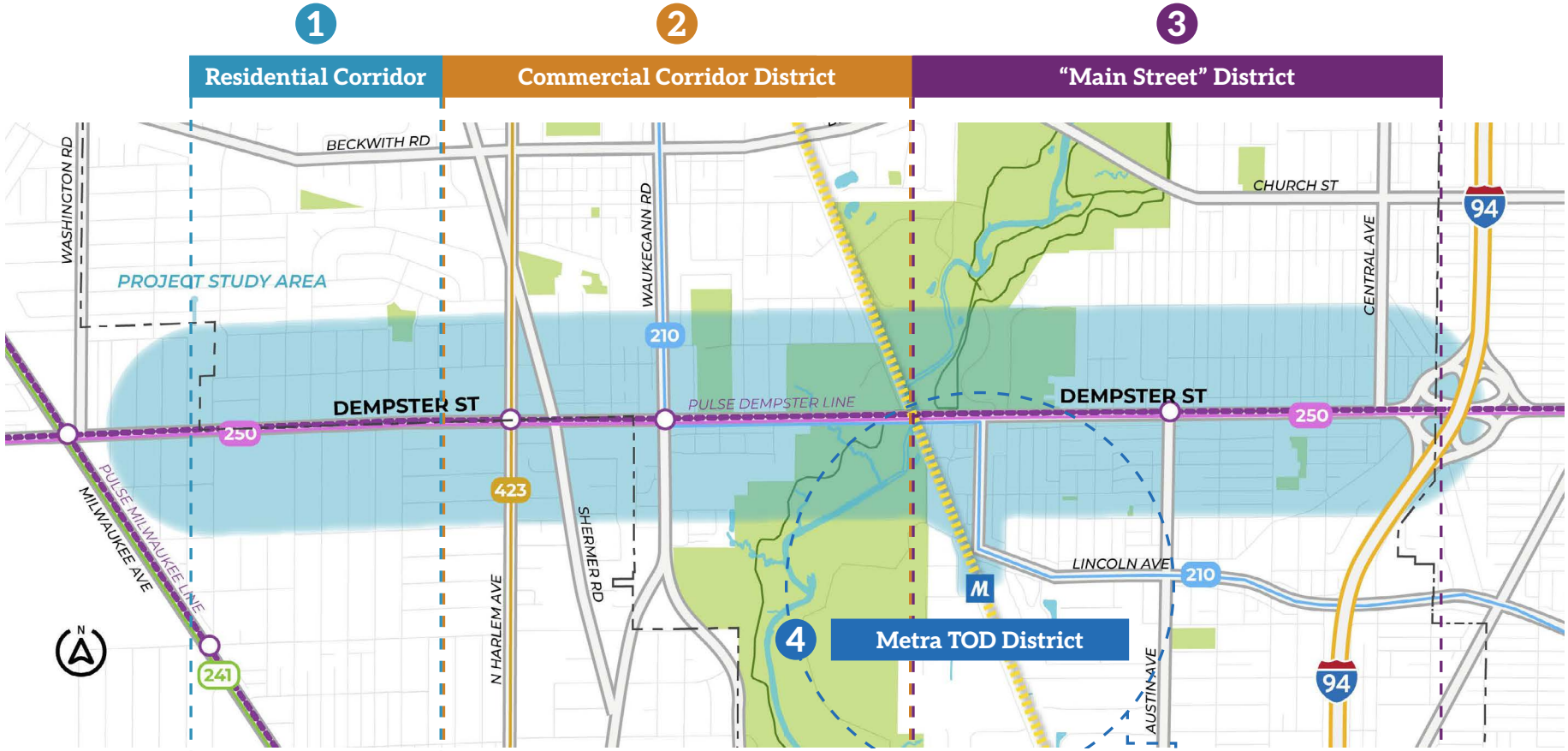


PART 2

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

- 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

Oketo Ave to Railroad

- 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

Railroad to I-94

- 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

1/2 Mile Metra Station Radius

- 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 Spaces

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.

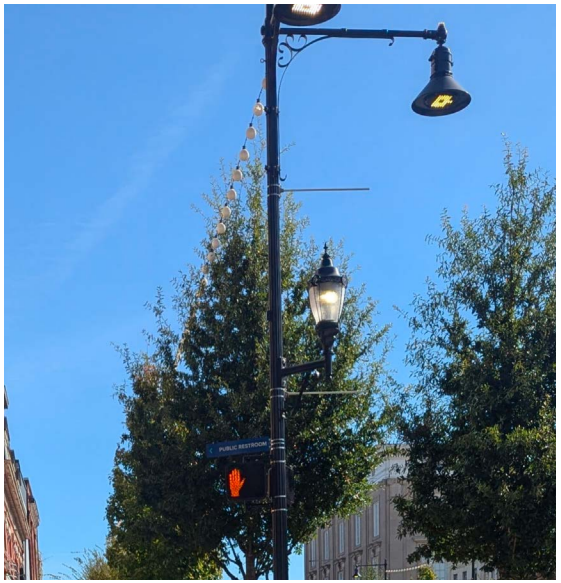
Policy Objectives:

- 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

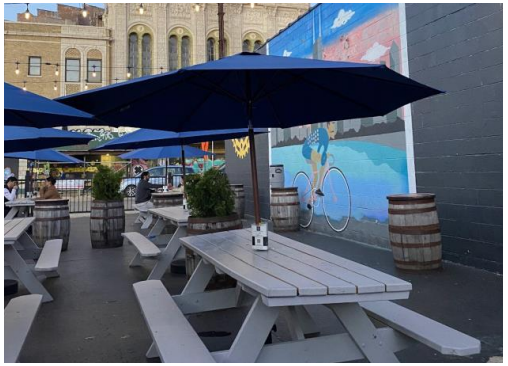
Whether on an older building or new construction, blank walls offer opportunities to bring public art to the corridor with murals. Coordination is required between property owners and artists. Potential mural locations are identified on the sub-district maps.

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.

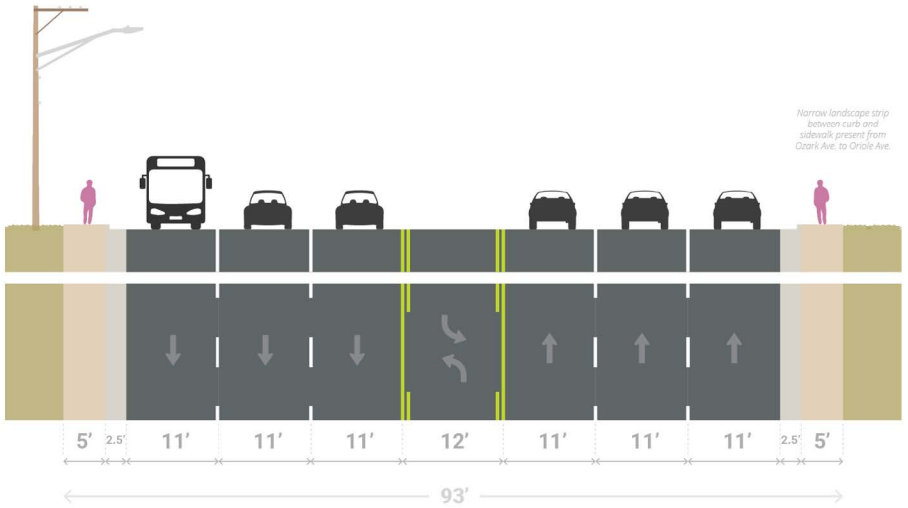


Figure 2.2: A median in portions of the turn lane could help reduce the crossing distance for pedestrians

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.



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.



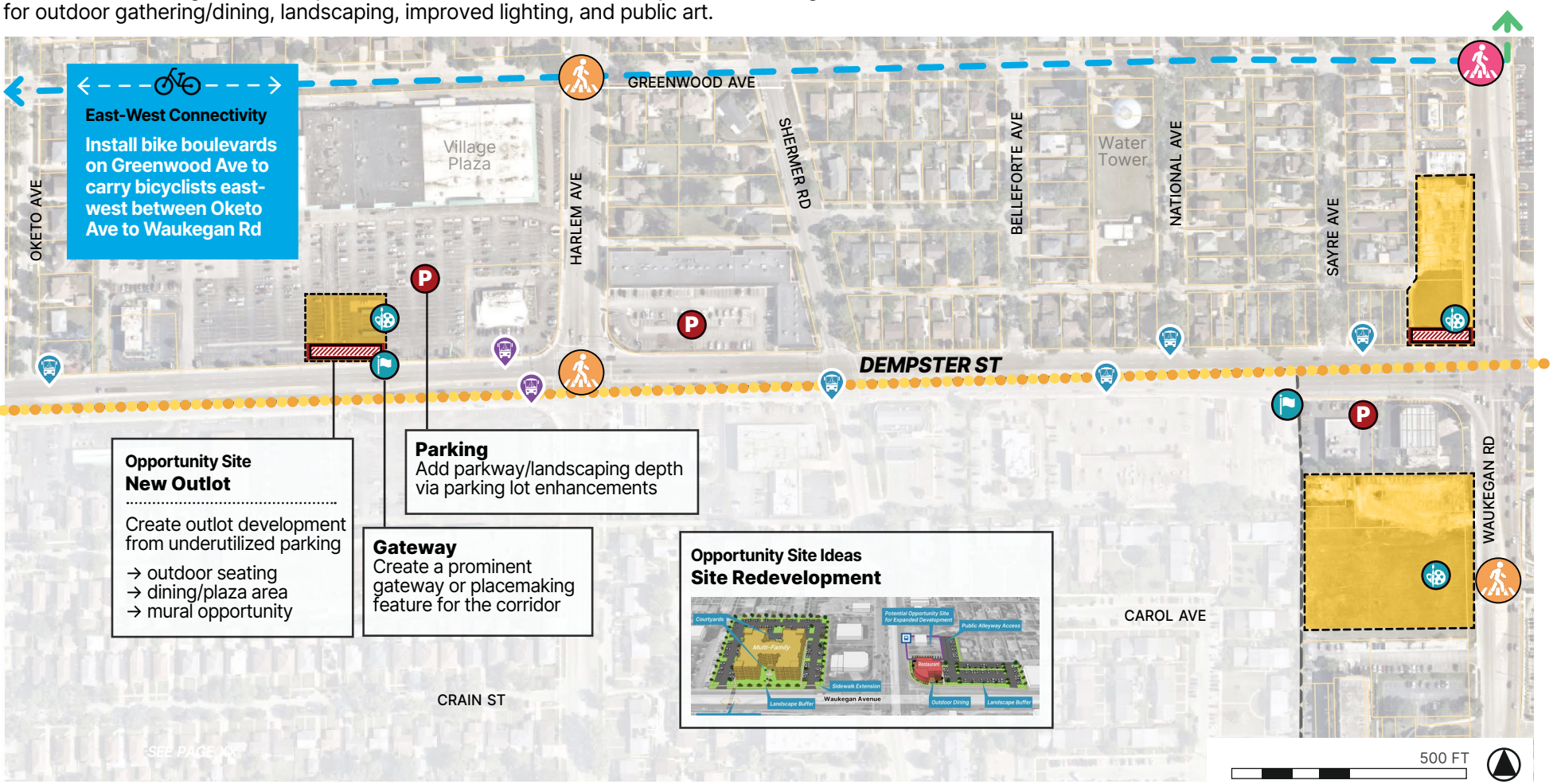




Commercial Corridor District · Odell Avenue → Waukegan Road

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

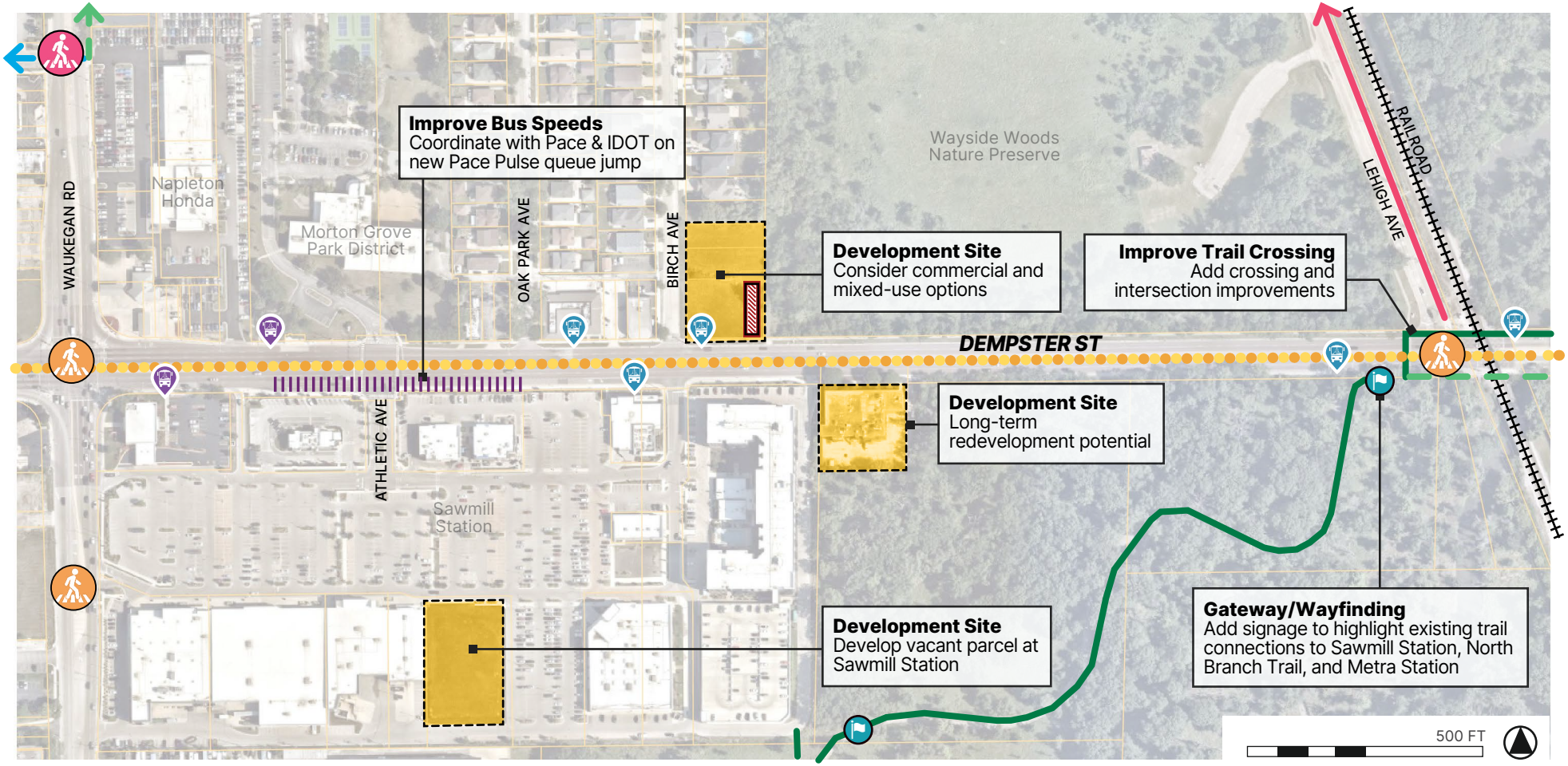
PRIVATE SPACE
- Opportunity Site
- Outdoor Seating/Dining/Plaza
- Private Parking Lot Enhancement

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

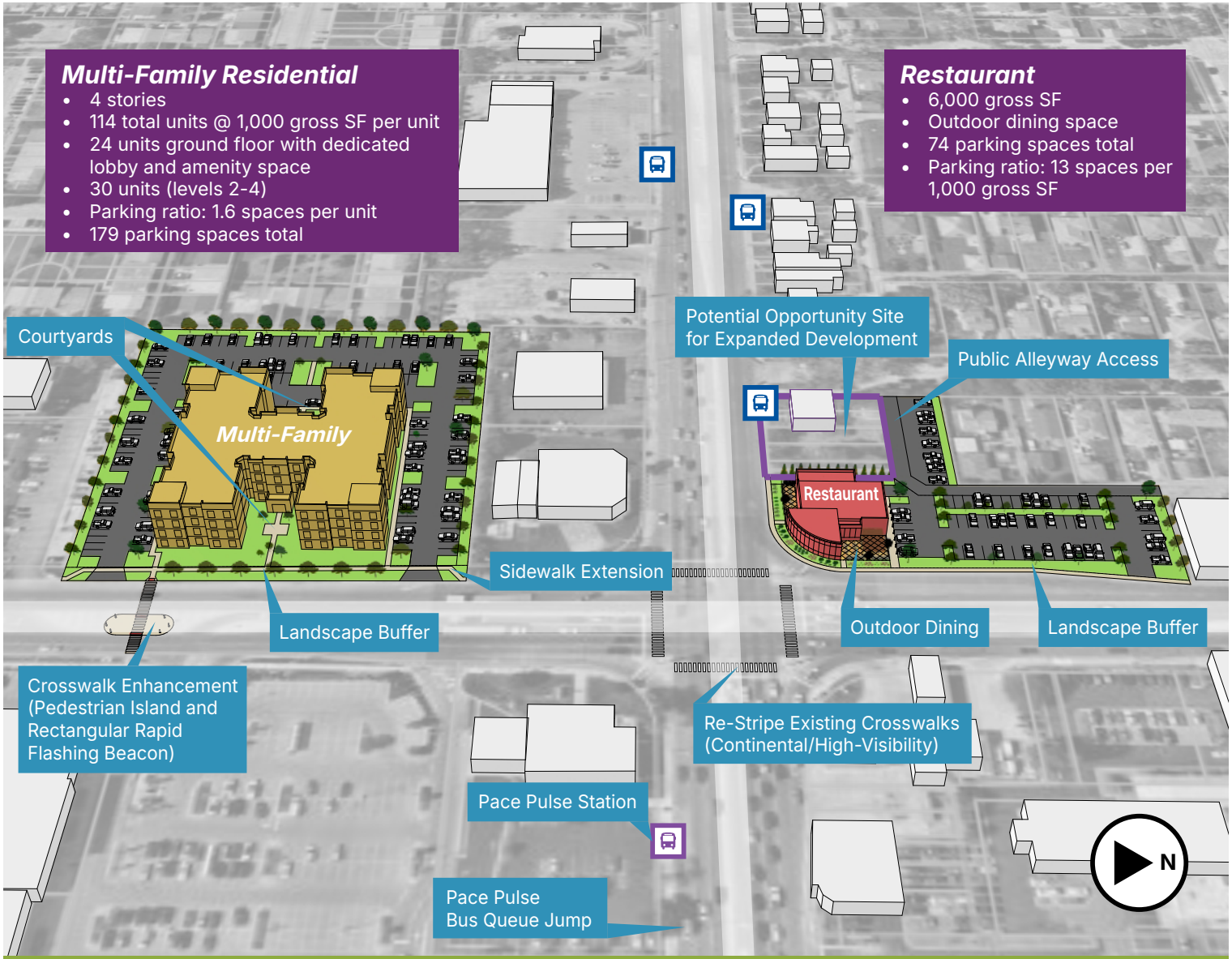
TRANSPORTATION

- 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

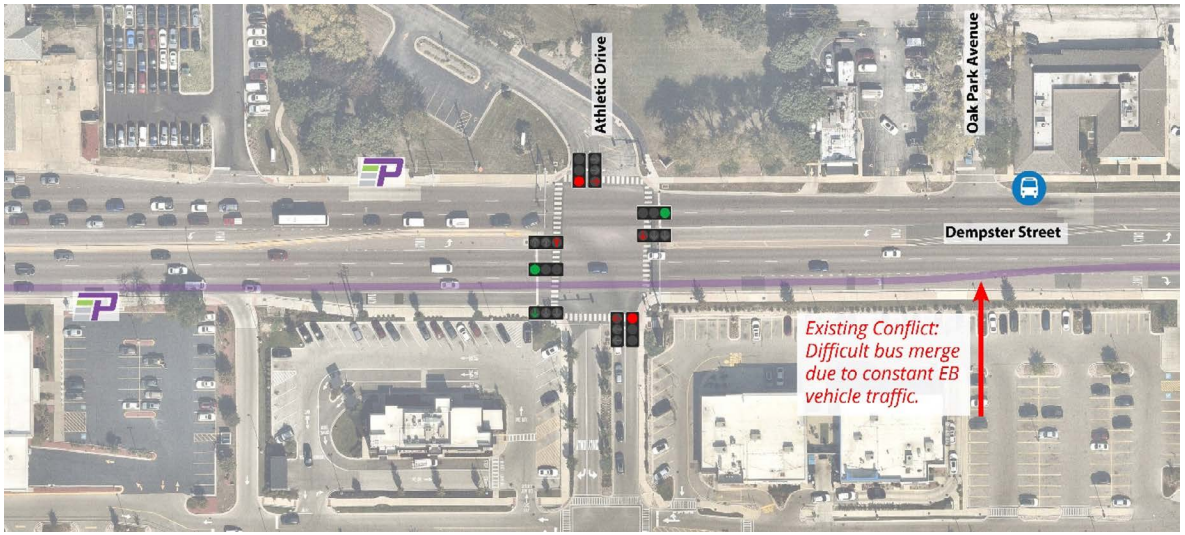
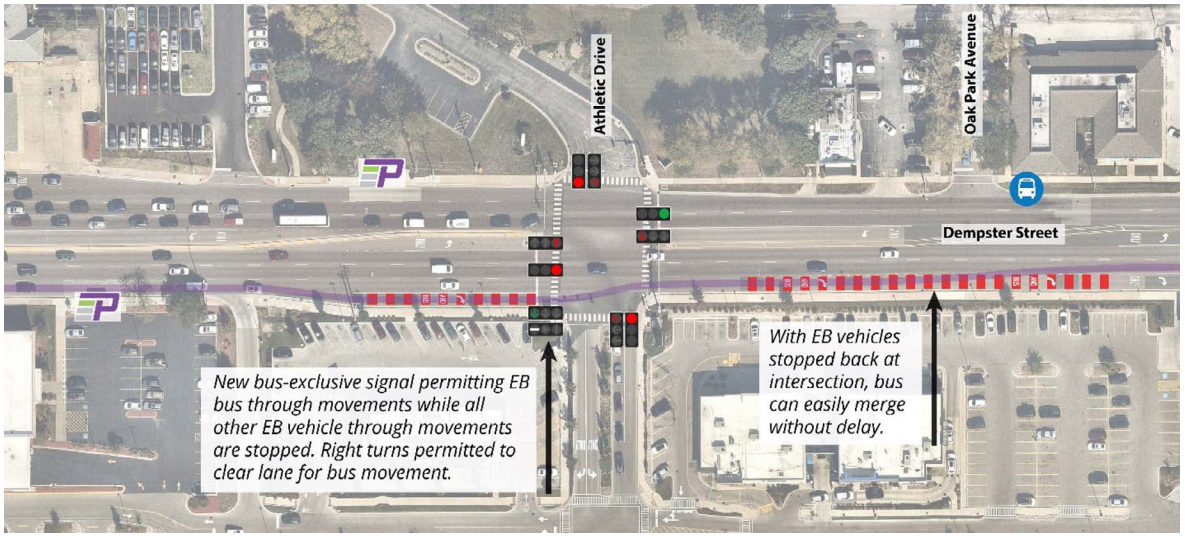


Figure 2.6: Athletic Drive Pace Queue Jump Concept



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.

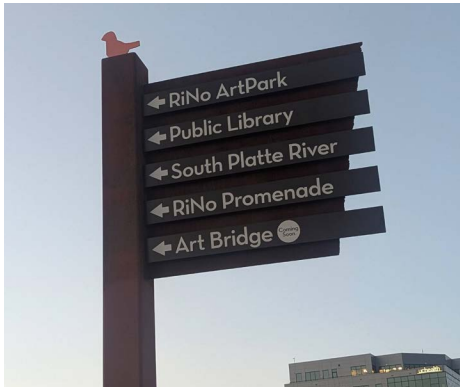
Commercial Corridor District Recommendations

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

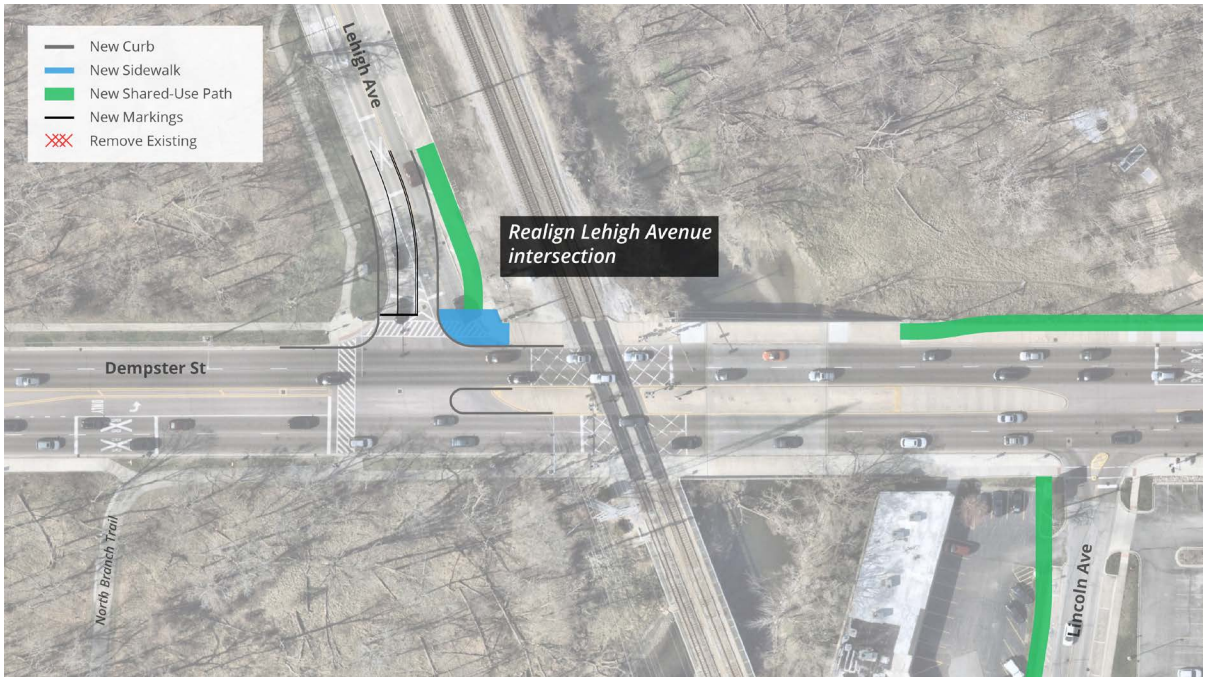
In addition to or in lieu of signal timing and signage improvements, Option B realigns Lehigh Avenue so that it meets Dempster Street at a 90-degree angle. Benefits include:

- 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



Commercial Corridor District Recommendations

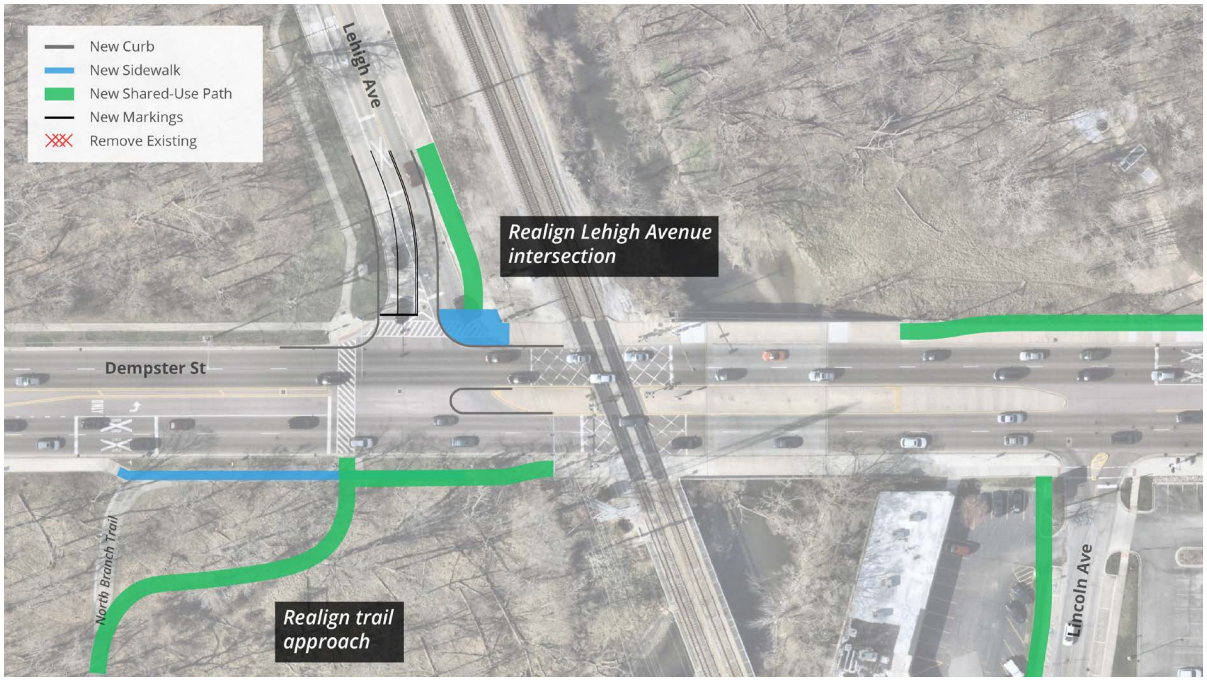
Option C: Realign Trail

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

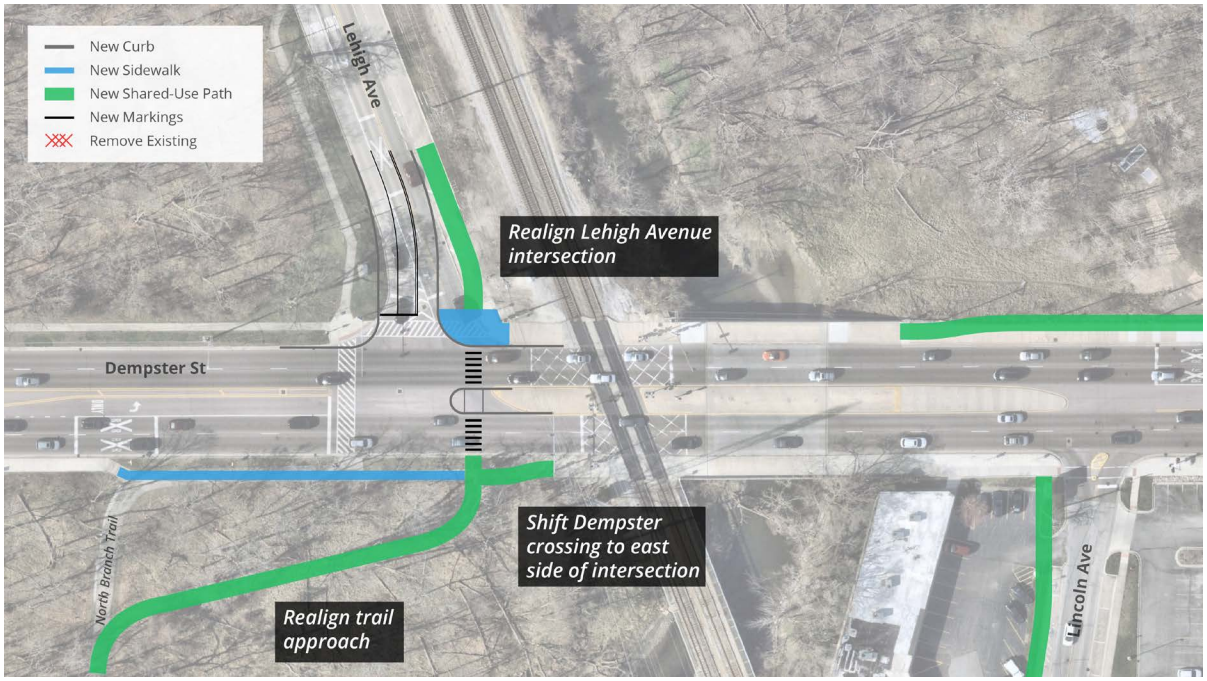
Option D: Shift Trail Crossing

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.



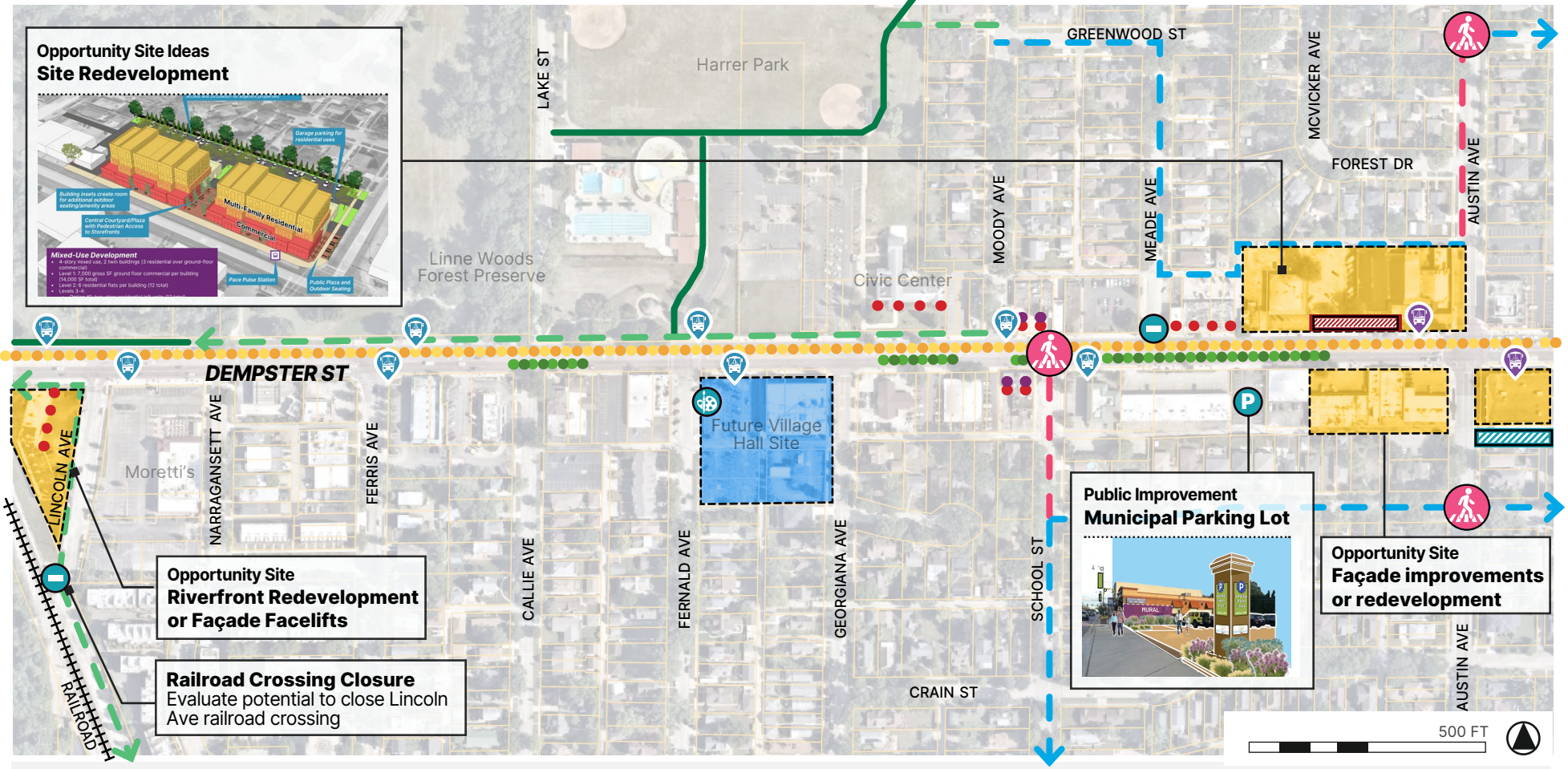




Corridor Activity Hub "Main Street" District · Railroad → Austin Avenue

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

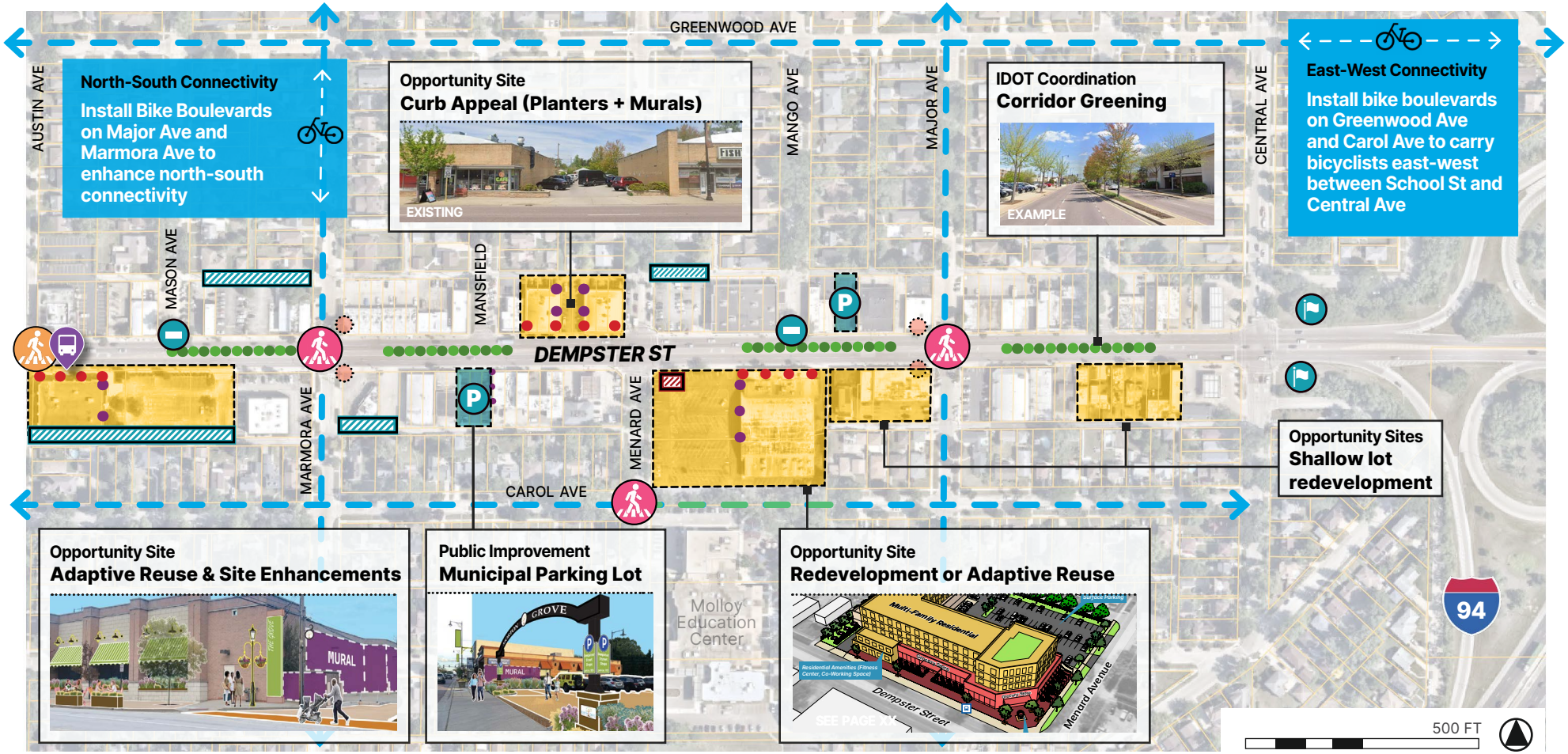
- New Pedestrian Crossing
- Improved Pedestrian Crossing
- Existing Pace Bus Stop
- Existing Pace Pulse Station
- Landscaped Median
- New Bike Lanes
- New Bike Boulevards
- New or Improved Trails
- Existing Bike Trail

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

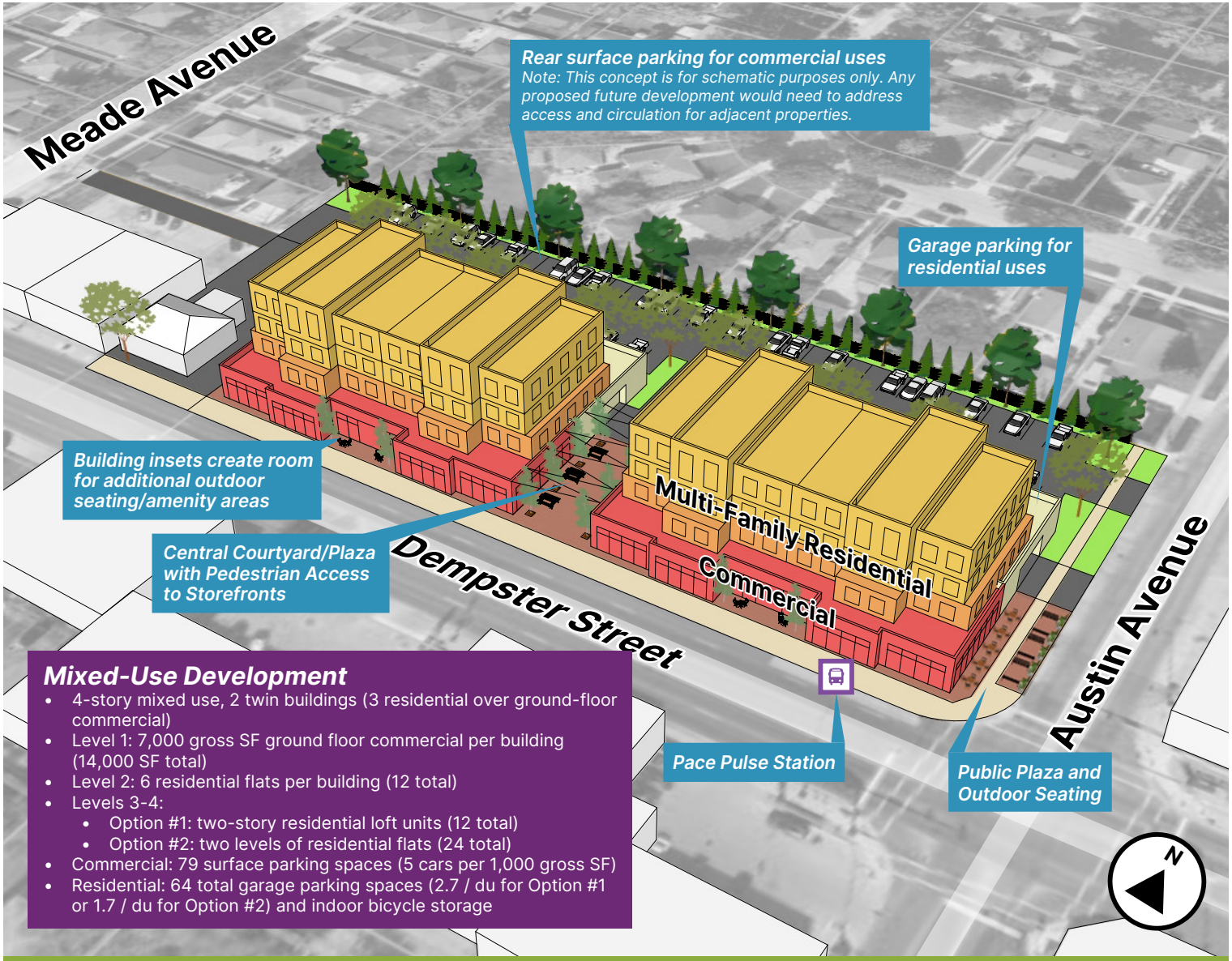
- Increase the permitted maximum height from 45 to 50 feet to support quality mixed-use development that is aligned with market demand.
  - Current building practices typically have ground-floor heights of 15 to 18 feet with 10 to 11-foot residential upper stories, resulting in a four-story building 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

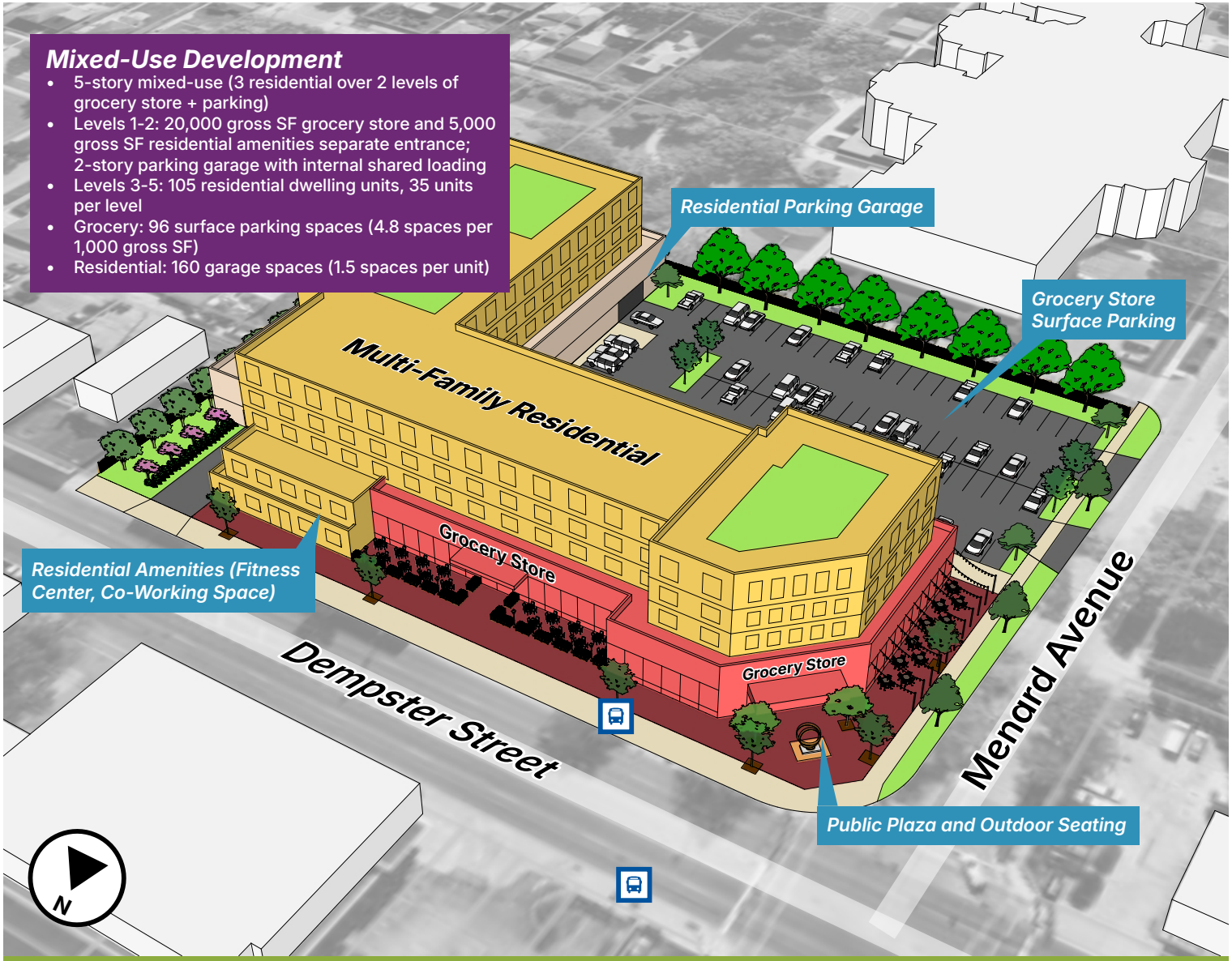


Open Space Amenities: One open space is located between the two buildings and another space on the outer side of the eastern building. The design toolbox on pages 43-48 outlines a variety of design approaches that can be implemented to enhance public and private open spaces.

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

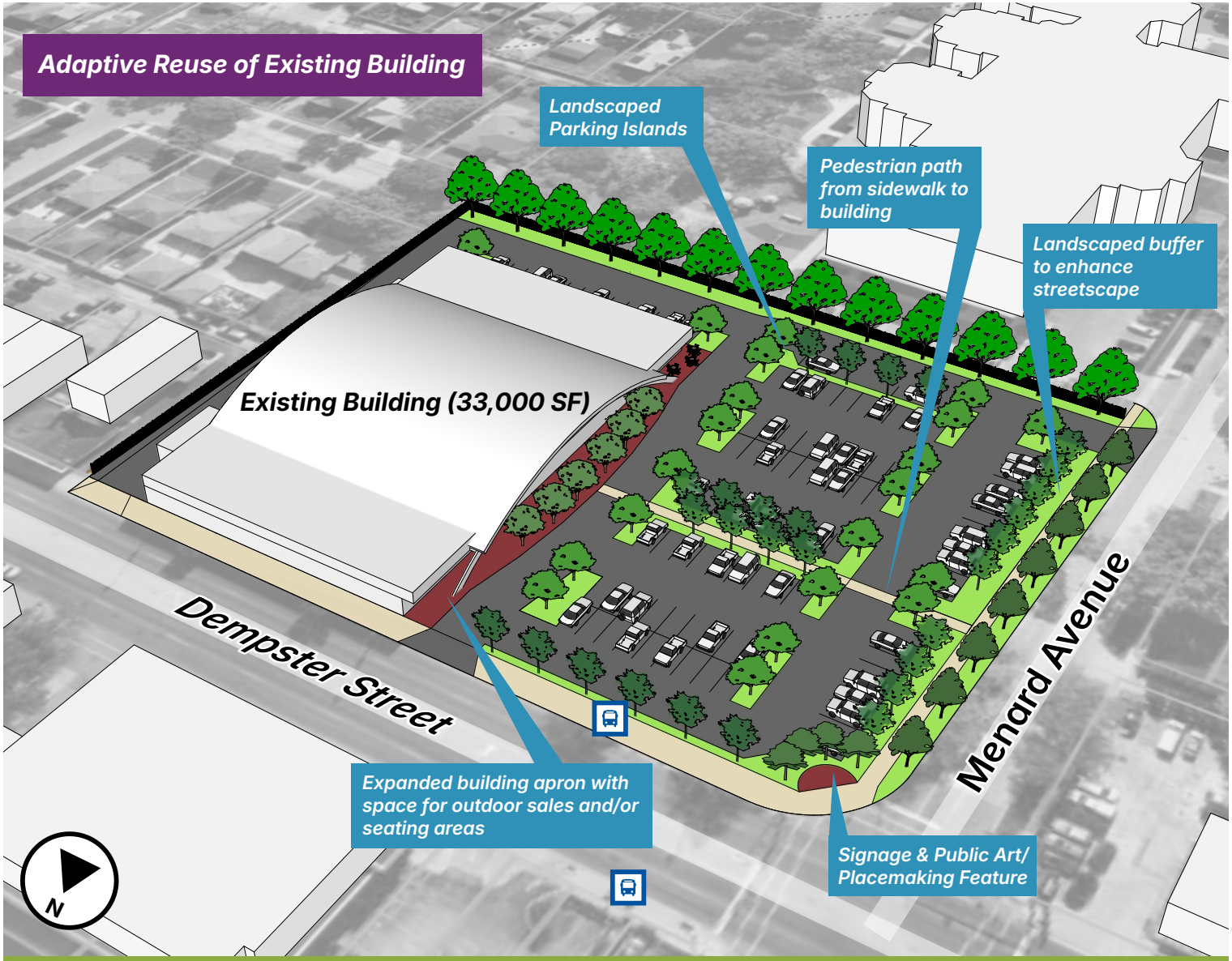


Open Space Amenities: The multi-family building incorporates a public plaza and outdoor seating at the corner. The design toolbox on pages 43-48 outlines a variety of design approaches that can be implemented to enhance public and private open spaces.

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:

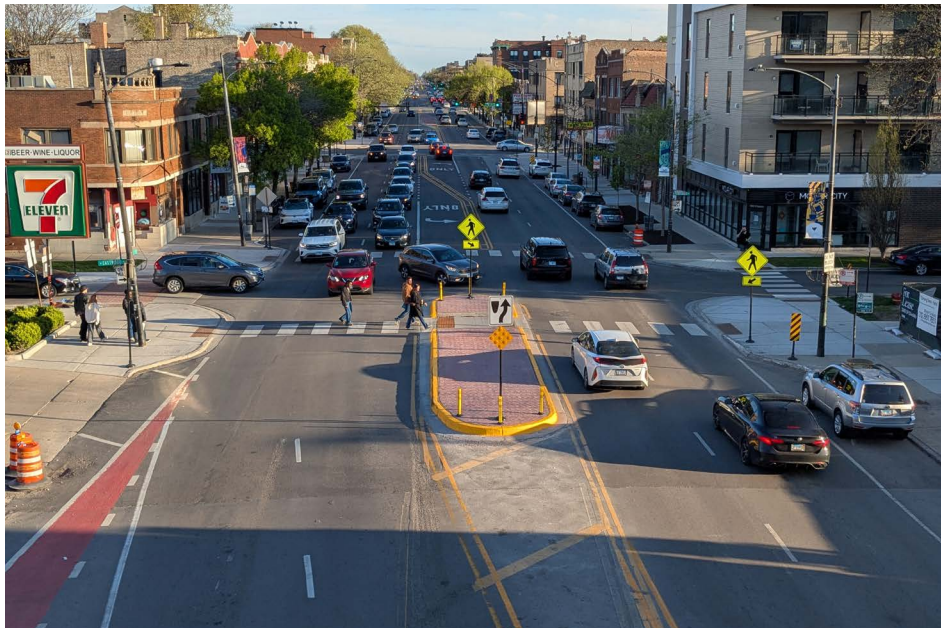
- Lincoln Avenue to Georgiana Avenue
- Georgiana Avenue to Austin Avenue
- Austin Avenue to Menard Avenue
- Menard Avenue to Central Avenue

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.

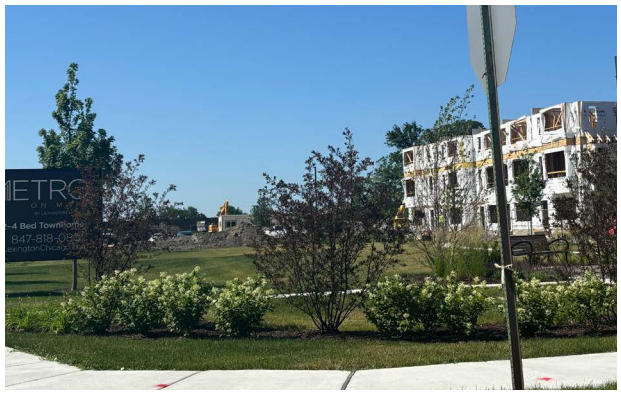
VISION | METRA TOD DISTRICT

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.



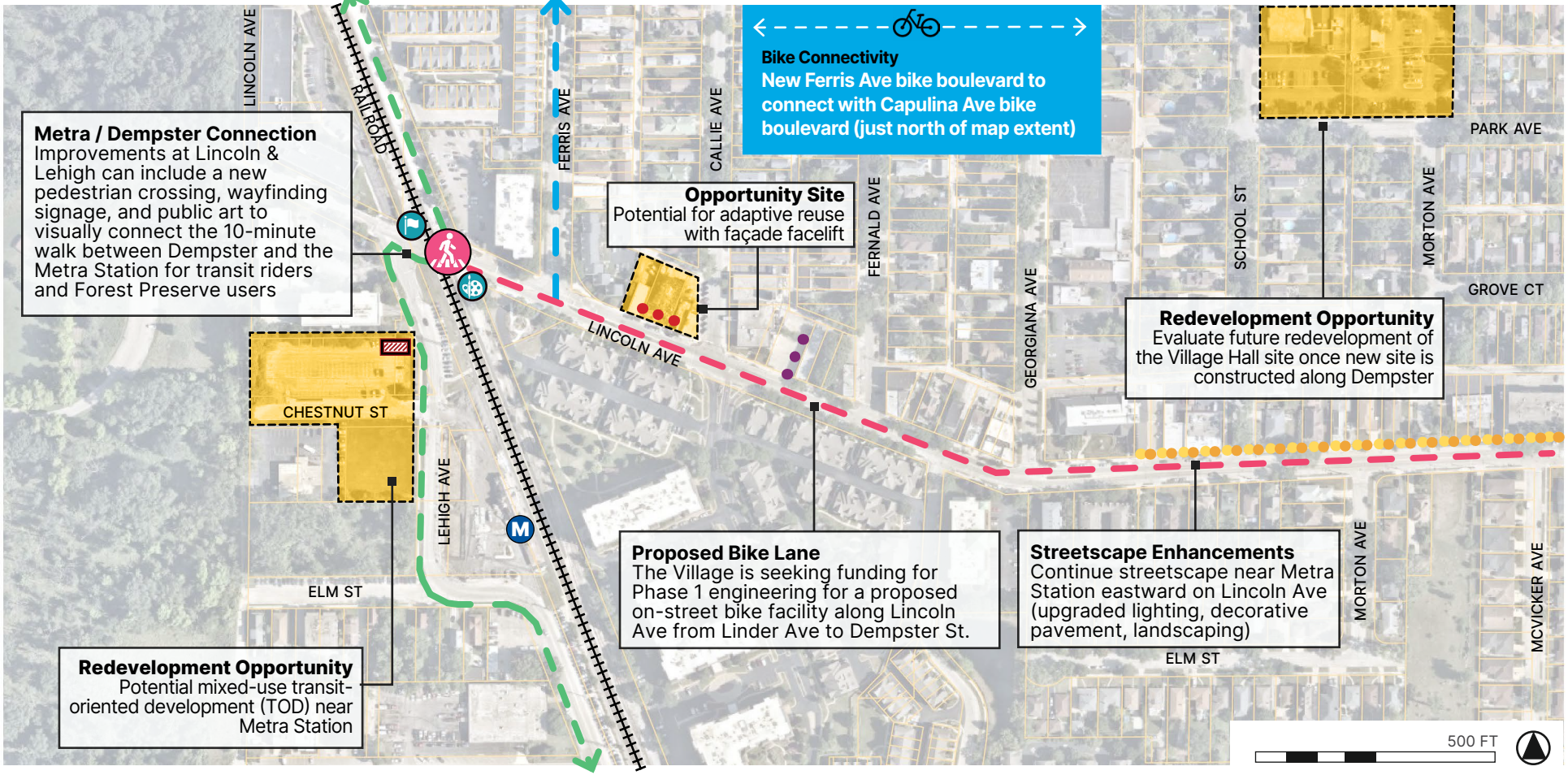




Metra TOD District · Capulina Avenue → Main Street

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.

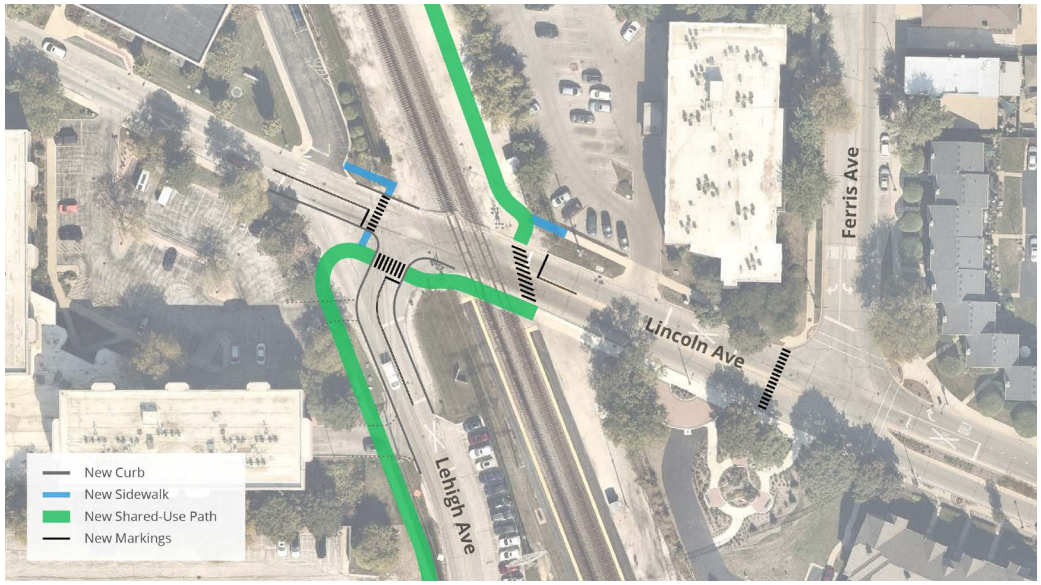
A northbound Lehigh Avenue left-turn lane may also be considered to provide left-turning access while right-turning vehicles are stopped due to train movements.

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



PART 3

Implementation

Implementation Action Plan

Timeframe:
Short: 1-3 years
Medium: 4-6 years
Long: 7+ years

Cost:
Low: Staff time, no capital expenses
Medium: under ~$250K
High: Over $250k

LAND USE GOAL 1:

New commercial, residential, and mixed-use developments along Dempster Street and near the Metra station will contribute to an active and vibrant corridor with residents who can walk, bike, or take transit.

Objective 1.1: Work with property owners and developers to pursue well-designed, walkable redevelopment projects that provide tax-generating uses that draw customers and visitors to the study area

Strategy	Lead	Partners	Timeframe	Cost
Provide outreach to property owners and developers to identify ways to improve existing properties through existing programs such as façade improvement grants	CED	Administration	Ongoing	M
Consider use of new incentives such as TIF to provide funding for public improvements such as streetscapes	CED	Administration	Medium	M
Consider use of new incentives such as TIF to provide eligible expenses for redevelopment	CED	Administration	Medium	M
Partner with regional and state agencies for capital improvements	Public Works	IDOT, NITA, Pace, CCFPD	Long	H

Objective 1.2: Foster development designs that address constraints such as shallow lot size, limited curb cuts and adjacency to single-family neighborhoods

Strategy	Lead	Partners	Timeframe	Cost
Create design guidelines as part of the Main Street Overlay District	CED	Administration	Short	L
Review projects proposed in the Commercial Sub-District to improve walkability	CED		Ongoing	L
Consider benefits and trade-offs of height, bulk and parking to guide redevelopment efforts particularly on shallow lots	CED	Administration	Ongoing	L

Objective 1.3: Pursue appropriate rezoning and planned developments that meet the goals of the corridor and provide public benefits such as open space, plazas, wider sidewalks and enhanced landscaping

Strategy	Lead	Partners	Timeframe	Cost
Review zoning and planned development applications to determine public benefits such as public and private open space and streetscape improvements.	CED	Administration, NITA	Ongoing	L
Update UDC to incorporate best practices identified in Goal 3	CED	Administration, NITA	Medium	L
Create Main Street Overlay District	CED	Administration, NITA	Short	L

Timeframe:
Short: 1-3 years
Medium: 4-6 years
Long: 7+ years

Cost:
Low: Staff time, no capital expenses
Medium: under ~$250K
High: Over $250k

LAND USE GOAL 1:

Objective 1.4: Support new development that provides modern spaces for uses such as grocery, coffee shops, convenience stores, and restaurants near the Metra station and Pace Pulse stations

Strategy	Lead	Partners	Timeframe	Cost
Reach out to developers and prospective tenants to attract them to the Corridor	CED	Chamber	Ongoing	L
Consider incentives such as façade improvement grants	CED	Administration	Ongoing	M
Consider use of TIF or other financial incentives	Administration	CED	Medium	M
Create a streamlined outdoor seating permit process	CED	Public Works	Short	L

Objective 1.5: Develop policies for the use of public incentives for land acquisition and development assistance for projects that meet the Village's objectives for the study area

Strategy	Lead	Partners	Timeframe	Cost
Review and update policies for existing incentive programs, such as financial requirements, application procedures and ability for the programs to work with small property owners and developers	CED	Administration	Short	M
Create policies for the use of new incentives such as TIF that consider amount of private investment, increment analysis, and evaluation of returns.	CED	Administration	Medium	L
Consider use of public funds for infrastructure, site acquisition and environmental remediation for projects that meet the Village's goals	Administration	CED	Ongoing	M

Timeframe:
Short: 1-3 years
Medium: 4-6 years
Long: 7+ years

Cost:
Low: Staff time, no capital expenses
Medium: under ~$250K
High: Over $250k

LAND USE GOAL 2:

Existing retail spaces will be modernized and filled with attractive businesses and restaurants that draw residents and visitors to Dempster Street.

Objective 2.1: Promote the leasing and purchase of vacant spaces with new or expanding businesses				
Strategy	**Lead**	**Partners**	**Timeframe**	**Cost**
Identify prospective businesses based on retail demand analysis	CED	Chamber, businesses	Ongoing	L
Develop brochures focused on types of retail identified in the market analysis	CED	Chamber, businesses	Short	L
Attend retail events such as ICSC Chicago and Las Vegas	CED	Chamber, businesses	Medium	L

Objective 2.2: Expand the existing façade improvement program				
Strategy	**Lead**	**Partners**	**Timeframe**	**Cost**
Interview past and prospective recipients to determine ease of use	CED	Chamber, businesses	Short	L
Consider changes in the program to address any challenges for small property owners	CED	Chamber, businesses	Medium	L
Launch marketing program after any improvements or simplications are made to the process	CED	Chamber	Medium	L

Objective 2.3: Evaluate new grants or incentives to support property owners with renovations to modernize their spaces to be “occupant ready” and attract new sales-tax generating users to fill vacancies				
Strategy	**Lead**	**Partners**	**Timeframe**	**Cost**
Develop guidelines for the use of Village incentives to support renovation of existing spaces	CED	Administration	Medium	L
Create policy around use of Cook County property tax incentives	CED	Cook County	Ongoing	M

Objective 2.4: Encourage adaptive reuse to convert underutilized spaces into reimagined formats that attract new tenants seeking modernized spaces and amenities				
Strategy	**Lead**	**Partners**	**Timeframe**	**Cost**
Review building codes and permit process	CED	Public Works	Medium	L
Identify grants and programs that can support renovation of buildings	CED	Administration	Medium	M
Consider use of historic tax credits to support renovation of historic buildings, considering mid century modern architecture as part of the character of the corridor as well as older historic buildings	CED	Property owners	Ongoing	M

Objective 2.5: Identify and allocate space for periodic food truck events and pop-ups				
Strategy	**Lead**	**Partners**	**Timeframe**	**Cost**
Develop a year-round schedule of events at locations such as at the parking lot at the Civic Center and indoors	CED	Chamber	Ongoing	M
Consider the use of portions of the parking lot at the new Village Hall during evenings and weekends for pop ups and food trucks	Public Works	CED	Medium	M
Consider the creation of a permanent pop up space on a vacant parcel along Dempster Street or as part of a new development	CED	Administration, Public Works	Long	M

Timeframe:
Short: 1-3 years
Medium: 4-6 years
Long: 7+ years

Cost:
Low: Staff time, no capital expenses
Medium: under ~$250K
High: Over $250k

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.

Objective 3.1: Build upon the relocation of Village Hall and Police Department to the 6200 block of Dempster Street to further expand this area as a unified civic campus and recreation area along Dempster Street with the Civic Center, Historical Museum, Harrer Park, and Linne Woods Forest Preserve across the street

Strategy	Lead	Partners	Timeframe	Cost
Complete the design and construction of Village Hall and Police Department	Public Works	Administration	Medium	H
Design pedestrian improvements across Dempster Street	Public Works	IDOT	Medium	H
Continue to design improvements as part of the civic campus on both sides of Dempster	Public Works	Park District	Ongoing	M

Objective 3.2: Dedicate space for plazas, patios, and green spaces in the Study Area, including the potential to repurpose certain parts of the public right-of-way

Strategy	Lead	Partners	Timeframe	Cost
Work with private developers to encourage open space amenities as a public benefit as part of planned developments	CED	Administration	Ongoing	M
Identify opportunities for public open spaces on underutilized or vacant property	CED	Park District	Long	H
Identify opportunities for improved streetscaping such as adding “bulb outs” along side streets	Public Works	CED	Medium - Long	M

Objective 3.3: Provide support for restaurants and cafés to add outdoor seating areas and exterior pedestrian service windows

Strategy	Lead	Partners	Timeframe	Cost
Explore ways to streamline permits	CED	Public Works	Ongoing	L
Incorporate the design for outdoor seating in proposed development	CED	Public Works	Ongoing	M
Consider strategically redesigning private parking lots to allow for landscaping, greening and seating areas	Property owners	CED	Medium	M

Objective 3.4: Seek opportunities for public art along the corridor, which could include murals, sculptures, bus stop activations, light pole decorations, etc.

Strategy	Lead	Partners	Timeframe	Cost
Identify opportunities for murals and art in concert with property owners	Property Owners	Local artists	Medium	M
Identify locations for public art as potential public benefits as a part of planned developments	CED	Property owners and developers	Medium - Long	M
Seek grants to fund local artists for public art	Arts organizations	Local artists	M	M

Timeframe:
Short: 1-3 years
Medium: 4-6 years
Long: 7+ years

Cost:
Low: Staff time, no capital expenses
Medium: under ~$250K
High: Over $250k

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.

Objective 4.1: Develop a strategic approach to provide short-term solutions for smaller vacant spaces, such as pop-up businesses, restaurants, and art installations, while fostering long-term occupancy by permanent businesses				
Strategy	**Lead**	**Partners**	**Timeframe**	**Cost**
Consider launching an indoor pop up program in conjunction with property owners with vacant storefronts	CED	Property owners	Long	M
Market temporary pop ups	Chamber	Property owners	Long	L
Seek opportunities for temporary and permanent public art in conjunction with private property owners	CED	Property owners	Medium - Long	M

Objective 4.2: Match local businesses to available retail rental spaces				
Strategy	**Lead**	**Partners**	**Timeframe**	**Cost**
Provide outreach to possible tenants through ICSC and direct outreach	CED	ICSC, ULI, retailers	Medium	L
Maintain an inventory of property owners and vacant spaces	CED	Property owners	Medium	L

Objective 4.3: Seek to locate co-working and shared office spaces on second stories, where available, or renovated properties via adaptive reuse				
Strategy	**Lead**	**Partners**	**Timeframe**	**Cost**
Identify any barriers or constraints to permits	CED	Public Works	Medium	L
Update permit process as necessary	CED	Public Works	Medium	M
Work with property owners to identify locations for co-working or flexible office spaces	CED	Property owners	Medium	L

Objective 4.4: Consider supporting use of one of the corridor's vacant or underutilized sites to establish a business incubator with small shop spaces for rent for entrepreneurs, startups, and small businesses to get grounded in the community before branching out into larger spaces				
Strategy	**Lead**	**Partners**	**Timeframe**	**Cost**
Research best practices and successful models of business incubators	CED	ULI	Long	L
Identify property owners and developers who may be interested in establishing a business incubator	CED	Property owners	Long	L
Identify grants to support business incubators	CED	Cook County, DCEO	Long	M

Timeframe:
Short: 1-3 years
Medium: 4-6 years
Long: 7+ years

Cost:
Low: Staff time, no capital expenses
Medium: under ~$250K
High: Over $250k

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 Street businesses.

Objective 5.1: Seek opportunities to add new multi-family and mixed-use developments that provide high quality housing and commercial space

Strategy	Lead	Partners	Timeframe	Cost
Work with property owners and developers seeking to build multi-family and mixed-use developments	CED	Administration	Ongoing	L
Work with Plan Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals and Village Board to develop consensus on height, bulk, parking trade-offs	CED	Plan Commission, ZBA, Village Board	Medium	L
Review planned developments with consideration of the goals and recommendations of this plan including public amenities, streetscape improvements, limited curbcuts, pedestrian spaces	CED	Plan Commission, Village Board	Ongoing	L

Objective 5.2: Consider the needs of older adults as part of new housing development, such as options that provide elevator buildings, first-floor units, and independent and assisted living options

Strategy	Lead	Partners	Timeframe	Cost
Review codes and policies to remove any accessibility barriers	CED	Public Works	Medium	M
Identify opportunities for a range of housing types suitable for seniors from accessible units to assisted living to skilled nursing, continuum of care and other housing types	CED	Prospective developers	Medium - Long	M

Objective 5.3: Attract missing middle housing types, such as townhomes and small-scale multi-family, to the areas near the Metra station

Strategy	Lead	Partners	Timeframe	Cost
Continue to consider applications for missing middle housing types near the Metra station	CED	Plan Commission	Ongoing	L
Identify additional locations for appropriate scaled development in the Metra station vicinity	CED	Plan Commission	Ongoing	L

Objective 5.4: Establish programs to support home maintenance and housing rehabilitation support for seniors in existing homes

Strategy	Lead	Partners	Timeframe	Cost
Research best practices to support home maintenance and housing rehabilitation for seniors	CED	IHDA, Cook County	Medium	L
Identify grant opportunities	Cook County, IHDA	Housing organizations	Medium - Long	M

Objective 5.5: Consider establishing Village policies and regulations, including zoning code amendments, to allow accessory dwelling units (ADUs) in the residential neighborhoods around the corridor and near the Metra station

Strategy	Lead	Partners	Timeframe	Cost
Research best practices locally and nationally	CED	ULI, housing organizations	Medium	L
Conduct public outreach and education on possible approaches to ADUs	CED	Housing organizations	Long	M
Consider changes to the UDC to allow for ADUs in specific circumstances based on best practices and public input	CED	Plan Commission	Long	M

Timeframe:
Short: 1-3 years
Medium: 4-6 years
Long: 7+ years

Cost:
Low: Staff time, no capital expenses
Medium: under ~$250K
High: Over $250k

LAND USE GOAL 6:

Promote excellence in design for new development and redevelopment that is transit-supportive and enables easy use of transit to access shops, services, and other amenities.

Objective 6.1: Update the Village of Morton Grove Unified Development Code (UDC) to incorporate best practices for bicycle facilities, road right-of-way use, public areas, gateways and signage, and landscaping.

Strategy	Lead	Partners	Timeframe	Cost
Review proposed UDC changes detailed in Appendix: Zoning Recommendations	CED	Plan Commission	Short	L
Draft text amendments to UDC	CED	Plan Commission	Short	L
Hold a public hearing and consider adoption of proposed changes.	CED	Plan Commission	Short	L

Objective 6.2: Create a mixed-use overlay district for the Main Street portion of Dempster Street between the railroad tracks and I-94.

Strategy	Lead	Partners	Timeframe	Cost
Draft text amendment to UDC to create an overlay district and provide outreach to property owners	CED	Staff or consultant	Short	L
Hold a public hearing and consider adoption of new district	CED	Plan Commission	Short	L

Objective 6.3: For multi-story development, encourage active ground-floor uses with residential above, human-scaled density facing the street with taller stories that are stepped back from neighboring residential homes, parking to the rear or side of buildings, and points of entry and public spaces that connect directly to the sidewalk and bus stops/stations.

Strategy	Lead	Partners	Timeframe	Cost
Review the UDC and zoning map for opportunities to appropriately plan for new development and redevelopment at strategic locations	CED	Administration, Public Works	Medium	L
Seek grants for improvements to the streetscape for pedestrian amenities	CED	Cook County, IDOT, CCFPD, Park District	Long	H
Work with private developers to incorporate amenities into private development	CED	Property owners and developers	Medium	M

Timeframe:
Short: 1-3 years
Medium: 4-6 years
Long: 7+ years

Cost:
Low: Staff time, no capital expenses
Medium: under ~$250K
High: Over $250k

LAND USE GOAL 6:

Promote excellence in design for new development and redevelopment that is transit-supportive and enables easy use of transit to access shops, services, and other amenities.

Objective 6.4: Encourage storefronts and entrances oriented toward sidewalks, parking to the rear or side of buildings, pedestrian-scaled signage and lighting, and the integration of streetscape and public space amenities.

Strategy	Lead	Partners	Timeframe	Cost
Create the Main Street Overlay Zoning District to incorporate these design elements	CED	Administration	Short - Medium	L
Work with developers and applicants to incorporate these elements into the building design by either modernizing existing buildings or pursuing new development	CED	Administration	Ongoing	L
Seek infrastructure improvements to the streetscapes, crosswalks, and pedestrian areas that will facilitate new development and redevelopment that pursues these design elements	CED	Administration	Medium - Long	L

Objective 6.5: Concentrate high-density housing near Pace Pulse stations and the Metra station with direct pedestrian access, street-facing entrances, revised parking standards, and integrated open space and transit-friendly amenities.

Strategy	Lead	Partners	Timeframe	Cost
Review the UDC and zoning map for opportunities to appropriately plan for new development and redevelopment at strategic locations	CED	Administration, Public Works	Medium	L
Seek grants for improvements to the streetscape for pedestrian amenities	CED	Cook County, IDOT, CCFPD, Park District	Long	H
Work with private developers to incorporate amenities into private development	CED	Property owners and developers	Medium	M

Timeframe:
Short: 1-3 years
Medium: 4-6 years
Long: 7+ years

Cost:
Low: Staff time, no capital expenses
Medium: under ~$250K
High: Over $250k

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOAL 1:

A vibrant mix of businesses will populate the Dempster Corridor.

Objective 1.1: Work with the Chamber of Commerce and other organizations to support existing small businesses through marketing, technical assistance, and networking

Strategy	Lead	Partners	Timeframe	Cost
Communicate current programs	Communications Manager	Administration	Ongoing	L
Conduct outreach to local businesses to determine needs	Communications Manager	Chamber	Short	L
Refine existing programs geared toward local businesses	CED	Administration	Medium	L - M

Objective 1.2: Create an incentive program for small business expansion and attraction

Strategy	Lead	Partners	Timeframe	Cost
Develop a program to support small businesses with grants or loans such as interior build-outs, marketing assistance, business planning, access to capital	CED	Cook County	Medium	M
Seek grants or other resources to fund program	CED	Cook County	Medium	M
Evaluate program implementation	CED	Administration	Long	L

Objective 1.3: Market the international flavor of restaurants, groceries and other retail stores to draw in customers to the Dempster Corridor

Strategy	Lead	Partners	Timeframe	Cost
Develop a strategy to market Main Street Dempster focusing on international variety of restaurants and ethnic groceries and cafes (See Objective 4.3)	Communications Manager	NSCTB	Short - Medium	M
Inventory the variety of restaurants, cafes and groceries and conduct outreach	CED		Short	L
Identify need for full-service grocery in Morton Grove and conduct outreach to possible tenants	Administration	CED	Short	L
Consider possible incentives that scale to the need and performance of restaurants and grocers	Administration	CED	Ongoing	M

Objective 1.4: Encourage creative industries like art galleries, bookstores, theaters and entertainment/recreational uses to occupy spaces along the Corridor to add interest and vibrancy

Strategy	Lead	Partners	Timeframe	Cost
Create an inventory of local cultural resources and businesses	CED	Communications Manager	Short	L
Determine space needs for targeted creative industries	CED	Non-profit partners	Short	L
Inventory vacant space that could be available to creative industries	CED	Property owners	Short - Medium	L
Determine any zoning barriers that hamper growth of creative industries	CED	Plan Commission	Short - Medium	L

Timeframe:
Short: 1-3 years
Medium: 4-6 years
Long: 7+ years

Cost:
Low: Staff time, no capital expenses
Medium: under ~$250K
High: Over $250k

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOAL 2:

New commercial and mixed-use development will attract investment and new tenants in the study area.

Objective 2.1: Create guidelines for providing financial incentives to support expansion and attraction based on criteria of return on investment, public–private ratio of project funding, job creation, and sales tax and other revenue generation

Strategy	Lead	Partners	Timeframe	Cost
Identify best practices and models for guidelines for financial incentives	CED	Administration	Short	L
Develop alternative models and test assumptions	CED	Administration	Short	L
Conduct outreach to elected and appointed officials	CED	Administration	Short	L
Adopt policies and refine over time based on experience using the policies	CED	Administration	Ongoing	L

Objective 2.2: Provide a predictable zoning and approval process for new development

Strategy	Lead	Partners	Timeframe	Cost
Review required application materials	CED		Short	L
Track approval time, determine points of delays	CED	Administration	Short - Medium	L
Conduct a zoning audit to determine ways to improve the ordinance to meet the Villages' goals and make the code easier to use for all parties	CED	Plan Commission / ZBA	Short	L
Based on the zoning audit, prioritize areas of the code that should be updated	CED	Plan Commission / ZBA	Medium	M

Objective 2.3: Create a mixed-use overlay zoning district for the Main Street portion of Dempster Street between the railroad tracks and I-94. The overlay district would allow mixed-uses including residential and commercial uses. It can also include design guidelines to ensure high-quality development, materials, and an attractive environment.

Strategy	Lead	Partners	Timeframe	Cost
Research best practices for overlay districts in mixed-use corridors	CED		Short	L
Define boundaries for overlay district	CED		Short	L
Draft overlay district including allowable and permitted uses, height, bulk, setbacks, design guidelines	CED	Staff or consultant	Short	L
Hold public hearing to seek comment and take action to adopt ordinance	CED	Plan Commission, Village Board	Short	L

Objective 2.4: Encourage new residential in the study area to attract additional households such as young professionals and empty-nesters who can support a mix of restaurants and retailers

Strategy	Lead	Partners	Timeframe	Cost
Update UDC through the Main Street Overlay District to allow for additional multi-family housing "as of right" following standards and design guidelines of the overlay district	CED	Plan Commission	Short	L
Pursue multifamily housing on specific sites for planned development such as the site on the west side of Waukegan Road south of Dempster	CED	Plan Commission	Ongoing	L
Identify additional sites available for townhomes and modest density residential in the Metra TOD Sub-district	CED	Property owners	Ongoing	L
Consider applications for multi-family and mixed-use housing as proposed by applicants through planned developments	CED	Plan Commission	Ongoing	L

Timeframe:
Short: 1-3 years
Medium: 4-6 years
Long: 7+ years

Cost:
Low: Staff time, no capital expenses
Medium: under ~$250K
High: Over $250k

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOAL 3:

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

Objective 3.1: Identify businesses that can complement the Forest Preserve, North Branch Trail, and park facilities such as casual restaurants, cafes, and recreation-oriented businesses, including bike shops and athletic gear stores

Strategy	Lead	Partners	Timeframe	Cost
Identify possible developers for new spaces and vacant storefronts that are available	CED	Administration	Ongoing	L
Identify possible retail tenants	CED	Property owners	Ongoing	L
Update retail demand analysis annually	CED		Ongoing	L
Consider support for targeted programs and projects based on incentive guidelines	Administration	CED	Ongoing	L

Objective 3.2: Attract entertainment related uses that become destinations for visitors inside and outside of Morton Grove, taking advantage of the central location and easy access

Strategy	Lead	Partners	Timeframe	Cost
Identify sites such as vacant parcel in Sawmill Station or redevelopment of underutilized single-story retail in the Commercial or Main Street Sub-districts	CED	Administration	Medium	L
Identify possible entertainment-related tenants	CED	Administration	Medium	L
Consider support for targeted programs and projects based on incentive guidelines	CED	Administration	Medium	M
Collaborate marketing efforts	Communications Manager	NSCTB	Medium	L

Timeframe:
Short: 1-3 years
Medium: 4-6 years
Long: 7+ years

Cost:
Low: Staff time, no capital expenses
Medium: under ~$250K
High: Over $250k

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOAL 4:

Events and marketing efforts will attract visitors and customers to the Corridor.

Objective 4.1: Plan for a continuous, year-long schedule of events that celebrate local businesses—such as a "Taste of Dempster" food festival—and recreation and cultural opportunities unique to Dempster Street—like a trail walk/run event in partnership with the Forest Preserve

Strategy	Lead	Partners	Timeframe	Cost
Plan a year-round calendar of events between the Village and local partners, focused on key nodes including Harrer Park / Civic Center and new Village Hall	Communications Manager	Park District, School Districts, Chamber, non-profit organizations, NSCTB	Ongoing	M
Connect events to local businesses such as a "Taste of Dempster"	Chamber	Local restaurants	Short - Medium	M
Explore arts and cultural programming	Communications Manager	Chamber, non-profit organizations, NSCTB	Medium	M

Objective 4.2: Evaluate potential advantages and disadvantages of creating a Special Service Area (SSA) or Business Development District (BDD) that can provide targeted programming and improvements for the study area

Strategy	Lead	Partners	Timeframe	Cost
Conduct outreach to businesses and property owners to determine additional services that may be needed such as sidewalk snow plowing, joint marketing efforts, additional landscaping, parking amenities	CED, Communications Manager	Chamber, property owners	Short	L
Model out cost of services and revenue models	Finance	CED	Short	L
Provide education and outreach to test interest in creating a SSA or BDD	Communications Manager	CED	Medium	M
Based on input from businesses and property owners, pursue any preferred option with Village Board	Administration	Village Board	Medium	M

Objective 4.3: Target social media and marketing campaigns to the trade area including Skokie, Niles, Glenview and the Northwest Side of Chicago, as well as east-west traffic between O'Hare and Evanston

Strategy	Lead	Partners	Timeframe	Cost
Consider retaining a marketing firm to develop a strategy to market Main Street Dempster focusing on international variety of restaurants and ethnic groceries and cafes	Communications Manager	NSCTB	Short - Medium	M
Develop messaging and branding for the corridor	Communications Manager	Marketing Firm	Short - Medium	M
Determine a marketing budget for the corridor	Communications Manager	Administration	Short	M
Develop social media strategy	Communications Manager	Marketing Firm	Short - Medium	M

Timeframe:
Short: 1-3 years
Medium: 4-6 years
Long: 7+ years

Cost:
Low: Staff time, no capital expenses
Medium: under ~$250K
High: Over $250k

TRANSPORTATION GOAL 1:

The Corridor will be safe for all users and people of all ages will feel safe and comfortable crossing Dempster Street on foot.

Objective 1.1: Improve safe access to, from, and across Dempster, especially near schools and parks located in the Study Area				
Strategy	**Lead**	**Partners**	**Timeframe**	**Cost**
Identify traffic calming techniques such as medians and bulb-outs on residential cross streets	Public Works	IDOT	Medium	M
Investigate intersection improvements at Harlem Avenue and Waukegan Avenue	Public Works	IDOT	Long	H
Explore median options for Dempster Street in each Sub-district	Public Works	IDOT	Long	H
Improve crossing and intersection at Fernald Avenue to reinforce the Civic Campus	Public Works	IDOT	Medium	M

Objective 1.2: Investigate opportunities for additional pedestrian crossings west of Waukegan Road, between Harlem Avenue and Waukegan Road, and in the Main Street Sub-District				
Strategy	**Lead**	**Partners**	**Timeframe**	**Cost**
Explore feasibility of HAWK pedestrian crossings at Oriole Avenue and Oketo Avenue	Public Works	IDOT	Medium	M
Investigate a new pedestrian crossing between Waukegan Road and Harlem Avenue	Public Works	IDOT	Medium	M
Coordinate with IDOT to install pedestrian refuge and crossings in the Main Street Sub-district at Maramora Avenue and Major Avenue	Public Works	IDOT	Medium	M

Timeframe:
Short: 1-3 years
Medium: 4-6 years
Long: 7+ years

Cost:
Low: Staff time, no capital expenses
Medium: under ~$250K
High: Over $250k

TRANSPORTATION GOAL 2:

Dempster Street will be a pleasant place to stroll and linger, and people will regularly walk to and between businesses.

Objective 2.1: Install streetscape upgrades that can be accommodated within the existing sidewalk right-of-way in the Main Street District				
Strategy	**Lead**	**Partners**	**Timeframe**	**Cost**
Review streetscape improvements identified in the plan	Public Works	CED	Medium	L
Coordinate with IDOT for right-of-way improvements	Public Works	IDOT, CED	Long	M
Seek grants to support streetscape improvements	Public Works	CMAP, NITA, IDOT, Cook County Highway	Long	M - H

Objective 2.2: Implement a branded wayfinding system with directional signage and walking distance markers to key destinations				
Strategy	**Lead**	**Partners**	**Timeframe**	**Cost**
Develop a branding and wayfinding strategy with templates	Public Works	CED	Medium	L
Identify locations	CED	Public Works	Medium	L
Secure funding through grants, NITA, Cook County and local funds	Public Works	NITA, Cook County	Medium	M

Objective 2.3: Resolve sidewalk accessibility deficiencies within the study area				
Strategy	**Lead**	**Partners**	**Timeframe**	**Cost**
Inventory sidewalk deficiencies	Public Works		Ongoing	L
Include sidewalk repair in capital budget	Public Works	Administration	Medium	L

Objective 2.4: Evaluate opportunities to utilize parking lot space to improve streetscaping behind sidewalks between Waukegan Road and Oketo Avenue				
Strategy	**Lead**	**Partners**	**Timeframe**	**Cost**
Develop criteria for parking lot and alley improvements	Public Works	CED	Medium	L
Develop strategies for public right-of-way improvements	Public Works		Medium	M
Develop a partnership program with private property owners	CED		Medium	M
Seek funding to implement program for public right-of-way	Public Works	Administration	Medium	M
Develop funding partnerships with private property owners	CED	Administration	Medium	M

Objective 2.5: Study potential for closing certain side streets such as Mason Avenue and Mango Avenue that connect with Dempster to create more functional public and pedestrian space along the corridor				
Strategy	**Lead**	**Partners**	**Timeframe**	**Cost**
Provide outreach to residents and property owners to determine public support	CED	Public Works	Medium	L
Undertake a traffic study to evaluate options and impact	Public Works		Medium	M
Identify grants or resources	Public Works	CED	Medium	M

Timeframe:
Short: 1-3 years
Medium: 4-6 years
Long: 7+ years

Cost:
Low: Staff time, no capital expenses
Medium: under ~$250K
High: Over $250k

TRANSPORTATION GOAL 3:

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

Objective 3.1: Coordinate with IDOT and Pace to review and advance proposed bus queue-jump and signal timing improvements for eastbound Pace buses near Sawmill Station at Athletic Avenue

Strategy	Lead	Partners	Timeframe	Cost
Identify preferred signal timing and transit signal solutions and undertake additional analysis as needed	Public Works	IDOT, Pace	Short	M
Pursue funding and advance engineering for queue-jump lanes, signal, signage, and pavement marking improvements	Public Works	IDOT, Pace	Medium	M
Implement preferred queue-jump and related signal timing improvements	IDOT	Pace, Public Works	Medium	H

Objective 3.2: Work with Pace to review and implement transit operational improvements such as stop consolidations, pedestrian access and amenities, and signage

Strategy	Lead	Partners	Timeframe	Cost
Evaluate pedestrian access improvements at bus stops, including crossings, curb cuts, and sidewalk connections	Public Works	IDOT, Pace	Short	L
Improve transit signage, wayfinding, particularly at the Metra Station, and GTFS stop location accuracy	Pace	Public Works	Short	M
Incorporate benches, bicycle racks, and other amenities into priority bus stop/streetscape improvements	Public Works	Pace, CED	Medium	M
Coordinate with Pace to explore stop consolidation along Route 250	Public Works	Pace	Short	M

Objective 3.3: Pursue funding for pedestrian infrastructure and signage to improve connection between Metra Station and Dempster Street

Strategy	Lead	Partners	Timeframe	Cost
Identify preferred pedestrian infrastructure and wayfinding improvements between the Metra Station and Dempster Street	Public Works	Metra	Short	L
Coordinate with Metra and IDOT on right-of-way, crossing, and access improvements	Public Works	Metra, IDOT	Short	L
Pursue grant funding for pedestrian improvements and signage	Public Works	Administration, Metra	Short	L
Design and implement preferred pedestrian infrastructure and wayfinding improvements	Public Works	Metra, IDOT	Medium	H

Objective 3.4: Evaluate impacts and benefits of closing Lincoln Avenue at track crossing closest to Dempster Street to improve safety by limiting vehicle and train conflict points

Strategy	Lead	Partners	Timeframe	Cost
Conduct outreach to affected property owners and stakeholders regarding a potential Lincoln Avenue railroad crossing closure	Public Works	CED, Metra, Property Owners	Short	L
Undertake a traffic, access, and geometric feasibility study for cul-de-sac and shared-use path concepts	Public Works	Metra	Medium	M
Pilot temporary closures and monitor the impacts	Public Works	Metra	Short	M-H
Pursue funding and implement the preferred crossing closure alternative	Public Works	Metra, Administration	Long	H

Timeframe:
Short: 1-3 years
Medium: 4-6 years
Long: 7+ years

Cost:
Low: Staff time, no capital expenses
Medium: under ~$250K
High: Over $250k

TRANSPORTATION GOAL 4:

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

Objective 4.1: Install striping at on-street parking areas within the Main Street District to more efficiently mark vehicle spacing and maximize capacity				
Strategy	**Lead**	**Partners**	**Timeframe**	**Cost**
Develop guidelines for on-street parking on residential streets	Public Works		Short	L
Provide outreach to adjacent properties	Public Works	Property owners	Short	M
Test and implement changes	Public Works		Medium	M

Objective 4.2: Upgrade existing parking signage in the Main Street District to improve legibility and bring greater awareness to parking opportunities				
Strategy	**Lead**	**Partners**	**Timeframe**	**Cost**
Develop guidelines and templates	Public Works	CED	Short	L
Coordinate with sign designer	Public Works		Short	L
Identify resources for installation	Public Works	Administration	Short - Medium	M

Objective 4.3: Consider opportunities to expand the availability of public parking close to the corridor				
Strategy	**Lead**	**Partners**	**Timeframe**	**Cost**
Identify possible locations for additional parking in the public way on cross-streets	Public Works	CED	Medium	L
Evaluate demand and optimum location to add parking	Public Works	CED	Medium	M
Identify locations for off-site additional parking	Public Works	CED	Medium	M
Develop designs and seek funding for preferred option(s)	Public Works	CED, Administration	Medium - Long	M - H

Timeframe:
Short: 1-3 years
Medium: 4-6 years
Long: 7+ years

Cost:
Low: Staff time, no capital expenses
Medium: under ~$250K
High: Over $250k

TRANSPORTATION GOAL 5:

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

Objective 5.1: Evaluate a series of corridor-wide parallel street bike routes and associated crossing improvements				
Strategy	**Lead**	**Partners**	**Timeframe**	**Cost**
Identify preferred corridor-wide bicycle network and phasing strategy for parallel east-west and north-south routes	Public Works	IDOT, CED	Medium	L
Coordinate with IDOT on crossing improvements at Harlem Avenue, Shermer Road, Waukegan Road, and Dempster Street	Public Works	IDOT	Medium	M-H
Install bicycle boulevard signage, pavement markings, and traffic calming improvements on priority routes (such as on School Street, to/from the Metra Station, Marmora Avenue, Major Avenue, Greenwood Street, and Carol Avenue)	Public Works	IDOT	Short-Medium	M-H
Evaluate shared-use path connections at Waukegan Road, Lehigh Avenue, and redevelopment opportunity sites to close network gaps	Public Works	IDOT, CED	Medium	L

Objective 5.2: Pursue funding for phase one engineering to study a potential reconstruction of Lehigh Avenue for an intersection redesign and provide upgrades to the connection to the North Branch Trail both north and south of Dempster Street				
Strategy	**Lead**	**Partners**	**Timeframe**	**Cost**
Coordinate with IDOT, Metra, the Cook County Forest Preserve, other partners to define the scope for phase one engineering of intersection improvements at Lehigh Avenue and Dempster Street	Public Works	IDOT, Metra, CCFPD	Medium	L
Undertake phase one engineering to evaluate signal timing, intersection geometry, and trail connection improvements	IDOT	Metra, CCFPD, Public Works	Short	M
Develop a preferred concept and advance design and implementation phases for the Lehigh Avenue reconstruction	IDOT	Metra, CCFPD, Public Works	Medium	H

Timeframe:
Short: 1-3 years
Medium: 4-6 years
Long: 7+ years

Cost:
Low: Staff time, no capital expenses
Medium: under ~$250K
High: Over $250k

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.

Objective 4.3: Evaluate opportunities for a shared-use path adjacent to Metra tracks, and along Lincoln Avenue between Dempster Street and the Metra Station

Strategy	Lead	Partners	Timeframe	Cost
Coordinate with Metra to evaluate use of railroad right-of-way and determine licensing, access, and safety requirements	Public Works	Metra	Short	L
Study alignment options for a shared-use path adjacent to the tracks and along Lincoln Avenue to the Metra Station	Public Works	Metra, CED	Short	M
Evaluate crossing, driveway, and intersection improvements needed to connect the pathway to surrounding sidewalks and bikeways	Public Works	Metra	Short	M
Pursue funding and partnerships for engineering and implementation of the preferred shared-use path concept	Public Works	Metra, NITA	Medium	M

Objective 4.4: Recommend new bike parking equipment standards for the Village and evaluate future bike parking locations, focusing on signalized intersections and any future bike routes

Strategy	Lead	Partners	Timeframe	Cost
Develop Village bicycle parking standards for future public and private installations based on Association of Bicycle and Pedestrian Officials guidance	CED	Public Works	Medium	L
Inventory and prioritize future bicycle parking locations at signalized intersections, transit stops, and along future bike routes	Public Works	CED	Short	L
Replace nonconforming bicycle racks and install inverted-U racks at priority locations	Public Works	CED	Short	L
Evaluate opportunities for long-term and secure bicycle parking at the Metra Station and major destinations	Public Works	Metra, CED	Short	M

Timeframe:
Short: 1-3 years
Medium: 4-6 years
Long: 7+ years

Cost:
Low: Staff time, no capital expenses
Medium: under ~$250K
High: Over $250k

TRANSPORTATION GOAL 6:

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

Objective 6.1: Evaluate railroad and traffic signal improvement opportunities at Lehigh Avenue and Dempster Street				
Strategy	**Lead**	**Partners**	**Timeframe**	**Cost**
Undertake a traffic signal study	IDOT	Metra, ICC, Public Works	Medium	L
Develop recommendations for signal improvement	IDOT	Metra, ICC, Public Works	Long	M
Test and implement signal improvements	IDOT	Metra, ICC, Public Works	Medium	M

Objective 6.2: Improve lighting in the Residential Sub-district				
Strategy	**Lead**	**Partners**	**Timeframe**	**Cost**
Undertake a lighting assessment to identify deficiencies	Public Works	IDOT	Short	M
Prioritize lighting improvements at crossings, sidewalks, and roadway segments with documented safety concerns	Public Works	IDOT	Short	L
Coordinate with partner agencies and utilities on fixture placement, design standards, and maintenance	Public Works	IDOT, Utilities	Medium	L
Include lighting upgrades in the capital program and pursue implementation funding	Public Works	Administration	Medium	M

Objective 6.3: Identify opportunities to reduce vehicular speeds and ensure enforcement of speed and traffic violations				
Strategy	**Lead**	**Partners**	**Timeframe**	**Cost**
Review corridor segments for speed management strategies such as medians, curb extensions, and other traffic calming measures	Public Works	IDOT	Short	L
Evaluate feasibility of additional crossings, medians, and related improvements west of Harlem Avenue	Public Works	IDOT	Short	M
Coordinate with the Police Department to increase education and enforcement	Police Dept.	Public Works	Short	L
Pursue funding and implement priority speed reduction techniques and improvements	Public Works	IDOT, Public Administration	Long	H

IMPLEMENTATION ACTION PLAN

Key: Lead and Partner Organizations

Administration	Village of Morton Grove Village Administrator's Office
CCFPD	Cook County Forest Preserve District
CED	Village of Morton Grove Community and Economic Development Department
Chamber	Morton Grove Chamber of Commerce
CMAP	Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning
Cook County	Cook County Government
DCEO	Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity
ICC	Illinois Commerce Commission
ICSC	International Council of Shopping Centers
IDOT	Illinois Department of Transportation
IHDA	Illinois Housing Development Authority
Metra	Metra Commuter Rail
NITA	Northern Illinois Transit Authority
NSCTB	North Shore Convention and Tourism Bureau
Pace	Pace Suburban Bus
Park District	Morton Grove Park District
Plan Commission	Village of Morton Grove Plan Commission
Public Works	Village of Morton Grove Public Works Department
School Districts	School Districts #63, #67, #69, #70, #207, #219, and #807
ULI	Urban Land Institute
Village Board	Village of Morton Grove Village President and Board of Trustees
ZBA	Village of Morton Grove Zoning Board of Appeals

Appendix

1. Additional Transportation Recommendations
2. Zoning Recommendations

Additional Transportation Recommendations

As part of the corridor planning process, the Consultant Team identified additional transportation recommendations that have been reviewed by transportation agencies. These recommendations provide options for meeting the goals of the Corridor Plan by subdistrict covering topics such as pedestrian crossings, intersection safety, and parking.

Residential Corridor District Additional Recommendations

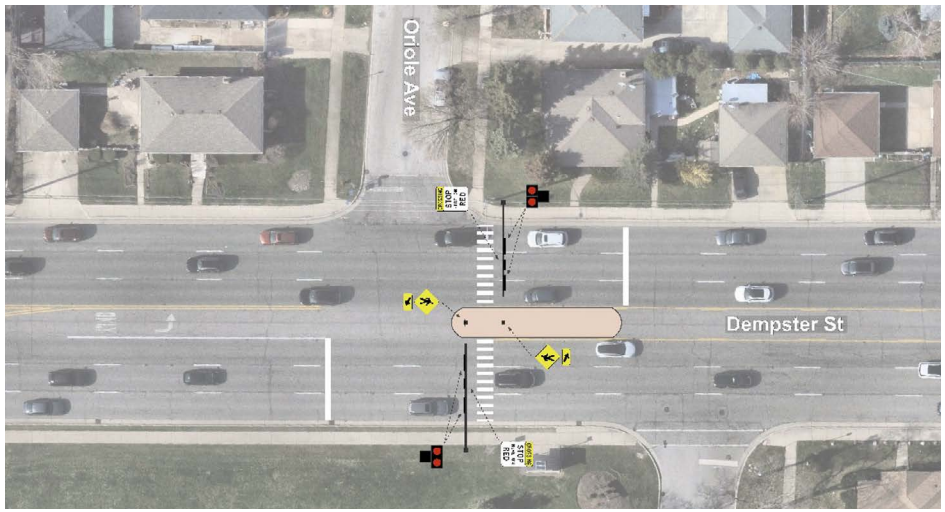
Pedestrian Crossings

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 bus 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 providing pedestrian crossings include:

- Install an additional full traffic signal on Dempster Street between Harlem Avenue and Ozark Street. Per IDOT guidance, this new signal would ideally be located at least 750 feet from any existing signal. This option could be difficult to implement due to the offset intersections in this segment. Further, the traffic volumes of intersecting streets on this segment likely do not meet the threshold for a typical signal warrant.
- Install a pedestrian refuge island and pedestrian-activated Pedestrian Hybrid Beacon at one or more locations. There is precedent for installing this type of traffic control device on a six-lane cross section, and pedestrian refuge islands can be installed at several locations along the segment without impeding left turns.

Figure A.1: Oriole Avenue New Pedestrian Crossing Example Concept (with Pedestrian Hybrid Beacon)



Commercial Corridor District Additional Recommendations

Dempster & Harlem Intersection Safety

The intersections of Dempster Street with Harlem Avenue and Waukegan Road are the two highest-crash locations in the corridor study area according to 2019-2023 data. Geometric, signal, and signage improvements can benefit all users, including potentially substantial positive impacts for pedestrian safety.

Dempster Street & Harlem Avenue Intersection Near-Term:

Near-term pedestrian safety improvement opportunities include:

- Review signal timing plans to investigate potential for pedestrian timing improvements (including potential for automatic pedestrian phases)
- Install high-visibility continental-style crosswalk markings. According to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), high-visibility crosswalks can reduce pedestrian injury crashes up to 40%
- Implement leading pedestrian intervals (LPIs) for pedestrian signals, providing pedestrians a 2-3-second head start to begin crossing before vehicle traffic receive a green light. FHWA advises utilizing LPIs at intersections with large volumes of turning movements. According to the FHWA, LPIs can reduce pedestrian-vehicle crashes at intersections by up to 13%
- Improve lighting with additional fixtures at the intersection. According to the FHWA, intersection lighting can reduce pedestrian crashes up to 42%
- Remediate existing sidewalk accessibility deficiencies in intersection area, as documented in existing conditions report

Harlem Avenue Intersection Mid-Term:

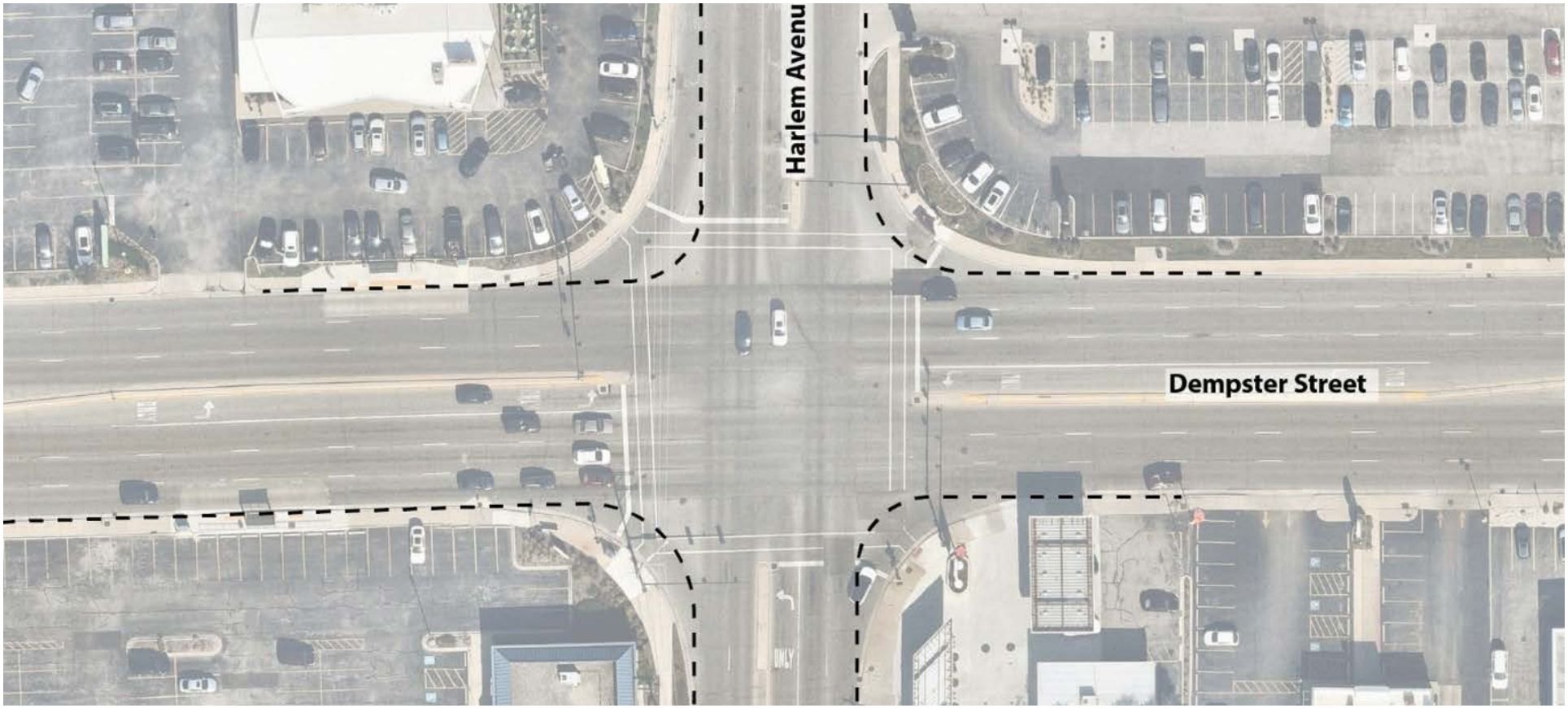
In the mid-term, intersection geometry can be redesigned and rebuilt to reduce existing substantial corner turning radii, with the goal of achieving safer vehicle turning speeds and reducing pedestrian crossing distances while still accommodating large vehicle movements. Overall, a more compact intersection would be expected to reduce dangerously fast vehicle movements, which would be expected to result in positive safety impacts for all users.

- Right turns for large vehicles should be accommodated, where possible, by assuming steering into a far lane of traffic, which is acceptable per the Illinois Department of Transportation's (IDOT) Bureau of Design and Environment (BDE) Manual as long as the vehicle does not over-steer into oncoming traffic lanes and if the turning movement is protected from cross-traffic and left-turning conflicts
- In all instances, corner radii should be designed to the tightest standard allowed per design vehicle guidance. Per the IDOT BDE (36-1.36), turns from an arterial onto an arterial should utilize a WB-65 design vehicle, and turns from an arterial onto a collector or a collector onto an arterial should utilize a WB-55
- Review turning movement counts to determine feasibility of removing the SB Harlem Avenue right-turn lane in order to reduce pedestrian crossing distances

Commercial Corridor District Recommendations

Figure A.2 details a high-level concept of approximate possible corner turning radii given existing dimensions and BDE guidance as well as a right-turn lane removal. Potential approximate future curb locations are shown in dashed lines. These improvements could reduce pedestrian crossing distances by approximately 21-30%, which could also have positive impacts on vehicle signal timing efficiencies through reduced clearance interval requirements. The improvements would also establish additional and more comfortable areas for pedestrians to wait to cross and additional space for pedestrians utilizing mobility devices to navigate around equipment such as fire hydrants. Further engineering analysis is required.

Figure A.2: Harlem Avenue Intersection Approximate Potential Revised Radii



Commercial Corridor District Recommendations

Dempster & Waukegan Intersection Safety

Waukegan Road Intersection Near-Term

Near-term pedestrian safety improvement opportunities include:

- Review signal timing plans to investigate potential for pedestrian timing improvements (including potential for automatic pedestrian phases)
- Install high-visibility continental-style crosswalk markings. According to the FHWA, high-visibility crosswalks can reduce pedestrian injury crashes up to 40%
- Install No Turn on Red signage at all right turns and implement red light arrow signals when pedestrians have a conflicting walk signal
- Implement leading pedestrian intervals (LPIs) for pedestrian signals, providing pedestrians a 2-3-second head start to begin crossing before vehicle traffic received a green light. FHWA advises utilizing LPIs at intersections with large volumes of turning movements. According to the FHWA, LPIs can reduce pedestrian-vehicle crashes at intersections by up to 13%
- Remediate existing sidewalk accessibility deficiencies in intersection area, as documented in existing conditions report.

Waukegan Road Intersection Mid-Term

In the mid-term, intersection geometry can be redesigned and rebuilt to reduce existing substantial corner turning radii, with the goal of achieving safer vehicle turning speeds and reducing pedestrian crossing distances while still accommodating large vehicle movements. Additionally, removing channelized right-turn lanes can reduce overall pedestrian crossing distance, time, and complexity. Overall, a more compact intersection would be expected to reduce dangerously fast vehicle movements, which would be expected to result in positive safety impacts for all users.

- Right turns for large vehicles should be accommodated, where possible, by assuming steering into a far lane of traffic, which is acceptable per the Illinois Department of Transportation's (IDOT) Bureau of Design and Environment (BDE) Manual as long as the vehicle does not over-steer into oncoming traffic lanes and if the turning movement is protected from cross-traffic and left-turning conflicts
- In all instances, corner radii should be designed to the tightest standard allowed per design vehicle guidance. Per the IDOT BDE (36-1.36), turns from an arterial onto an arterial should utilize a WB-65 design vehicle, and turns from an arterial onto a collector or a collector onto an arterial should utilize a WB-55
- Review turning movement counts to determine feasibility of removing right-turn lanes in order to reduce pedestrian crossing distances. Removing the additional third southbound Waukegan Road through lane should also be evaluated

Commercial Corridor District Recommendations

Dempster & Waukegan Intersection Safety

Figure A.3 details a high-level concept of approximate possible corner turning radii given existing dimensions and BDE guidance. Potential approximate future curb locations are shown in dashed lines. At the Waukegan Road intersection, right-sizing curb radii (including channelized turn lane removal) could reduce pedestrian crossing distances by up to 14 to 20%. The improvements would also establish additional and more comfortable areas for pedestrians to wait to cross and additional space for pedestrians utilizing mobility devices to navigate around equipment such as fire hydrants. Further engineering analysis is required.

Figure A.4 details a high-level concept of approximate possible corner turning radii given existing dimensions and BDE guidance as well as a right-turn lane removal, which could reduce pedestrian crossing distances by up to 30 to 39%.

Figure A.3: Waukegan Road Intersection Potential Revised Radii

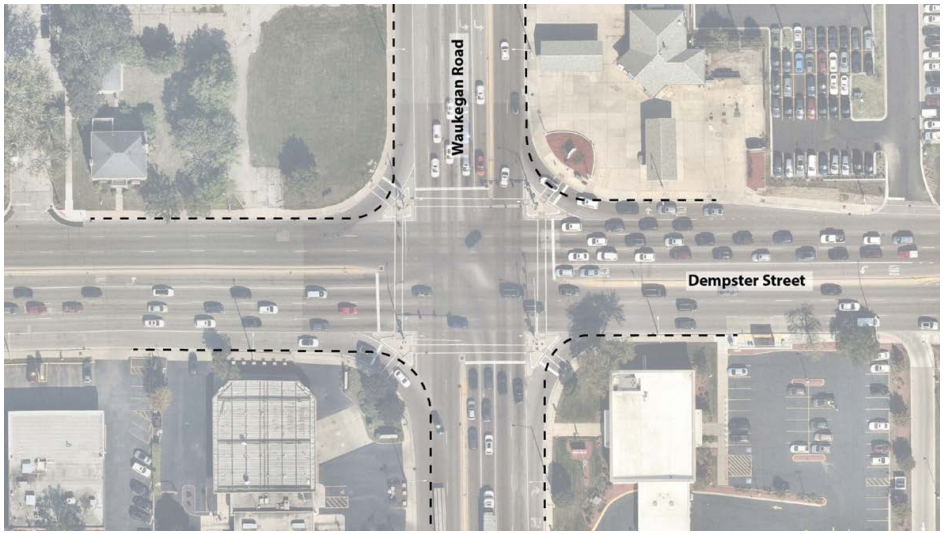
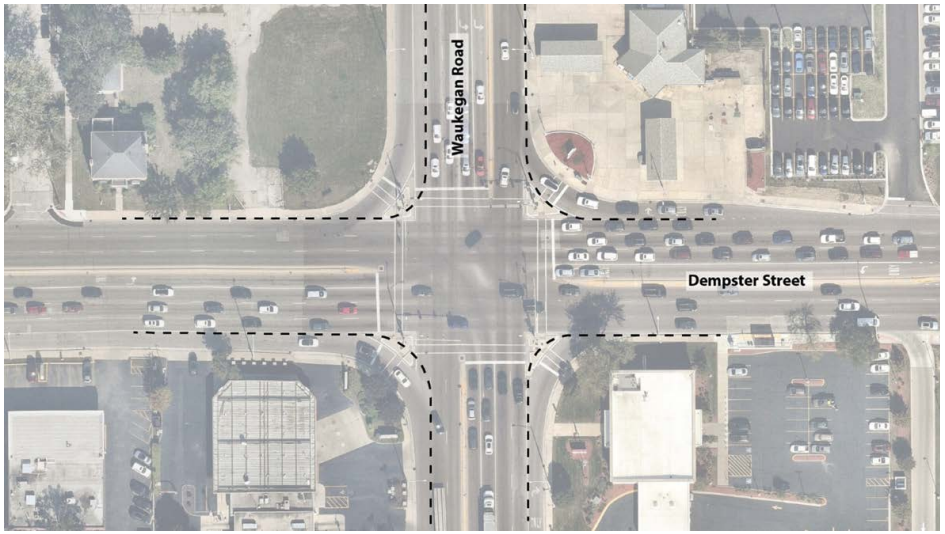


Figure A.4: Waukegan Road Intersection Revised Right Turn Lane



Commercial Corridor District Additional Recommendations

Grade-Separated Crossings

Considering existing complexities including the river, intersection geometry, railway operations, electrical transmission lines, trail user volumes, rail volumes, and traffic volumes, the Dempster Street/Lehigh Avenue area may benefit from grade-separation strategies. However, the scale and number of these complexities also makes this location potentially more challenging than the typical grade-separated crossing site. Given the presence of the river, all underpass opportunities should be considered prohibitively complex and costly.

Vehicle Overpass

A Dempster Street roadway overpass crossing the river and railroad tracks would likely be a prohibitively complex and costly option considering:

- Access from Dempster Street to Lincoln Avenue, Narragansett Avenue, and Ferris Avenue would likely need to be severed in order to accommodate the ramped bridge approach from the east.
- The need to span both the river and railroad would likely require a more expensive bridge design to support a longer span. This longer span may also require taller girders, which would require a taller overall bridge to maintain required railroad clearances. This would further elongate bridge approaches and their impact on surrounding property and roadway connections.
- Access from Dempster Street to Lehigh Avenue would either need to be severed, re-routed through the adjacent wooded area, or be accommodated by an additionally complex and expensive connection at bridge level.
- Electrical transmission lines would potentially need to be buried or rerouted.

Railroad Overpass

A railroad overpass across Dempster Street would likely be a prohibitively complex and costly option considering:

- The distance of 1,400 feet from the river south to the east-west portion of Lincoln Avenue is not sufficient distance to ramp trains up to a bridge, which would require Lincoln Avenue to be re-routed and the Metra Station to be relocated.
- The need to span both the river and Dempster Street would likely require a more expensive bridge design to support a longer span. This longer span may also require taller girders, which would require a taller overall bridge to maintain required railroad clearances. This would further elongate bridge approaches and their impact on surrounding property and roadway connections.
- To maintain rail operations during construction would likely require either a costly and complex temporary relocation of tracks or constructing the new bridge and approaches to the east or west of the existing alignment. Both options would be significantly constrained and/or costly particularly north of Dempster Street given adjacency to the river, electrical transmission lines, and Lehigh Avenue.

Commercial Corridor District Additional Recommendations

Pedestrian and Bicycle Trail Overpass

Installing a grade-separated crossing (bridge) for trail users to cross Dempster Street and/or the railroad and/or the river 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.

Per state standards, a bridge would need to clear the roadway by at least 17 feet, 3 inches and would need to clear the railroad tracks by at least 23 feet. Ramps up to the bridge could run at a maximum grade of 1:12 and require a flat landing area for every 30 inches of rise. These standards would likely require ramps at least 300 feet long, depending on whether the bridge crosses just the roadway or the railway as well. These ramps would likely require the removal of existing mature trees in the Forest Preserve. Further analysis is needed to determine potential impacts on existing electrical transmission lines.

Figure A.5: Recent Pedestrian and Bicycle Bridge Precedents

Location	Des Plaines River Trail Lawrence Avenue Bridge	Elk Grove Village Arlington Heights Road Bridge
Project Lead	Forest Preserves of Cook County	Elk Grove Village
Bridge Span	138'	120'
Ramp Lengths	330-345'	450'
Bridge Width	14'	14'
Timeline	Conceptual discussions begin: 2011; Preliminary IDOT approval: 2021; Construction begins: 2022;	Conceptual discussions: 2022;
	Bridge completed: 2024	Construction begins: 2025;
		Bridge completed: 2026
Costs	$7.3 million for bridge construction	$8.3 million for bridge construction
	$15.3 million for broader trail upgrades	$1 million for engineering
Funding	Forest Preserves invested $600k in local motor fuel tax dollars; Project was awarded $7.9M in Congestion Mitigation Air Quality (CMAQ) and Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) funds; Additional funding from West Central Municipal Conference, Invest in Cook, and local municipalities.	Village TIF funding; Village has also applied for federal, state, and county grants.
Notes	Required removal of approximately 1.15 acres of existing mature trees	Project provides connection to Busse Woods and was formally approved by Forest Preserves of Cook County

Main Street District Additional Recommendations

Figure A.6: Conceptual Medians along Dempster Street - Lincoln Avenue to Georgiana Avenue



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.

Main Street District Additional Recommendations

Figure A.7: Conceptual Medians along Dempster Street - Georgiana Avenue to Austin Avenue



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.

Main Street District Additional Recommendations

Figure A.8: Conceptual Medians along Dempster Street - Austin Avenue to Menard Avenue



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.

Main Street District Recommendations

Figure A.9: Conceptual Medians along Dempster Street - Menard Avenue to Central Avenue



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.

Commercial Corridor District Additional Recommendations

Figure A.10 details a high-level concept of approximate possible corner turning radii given existing dimensions and BDE guidance. Potential approximate future curb locations are shown in dashed lines. At the Waukegan Road intersection, right-sizing curb radii (including channelized turn lane removal) could reduce pedestrian crossing distances by up to 14-20%. The improvements would also establish additional and more comfortable areas for pedestrians to wait to cross and additional space for pedestrians utilizing mobility devices to navigate around equipment such as fire hydrants. Further engineering analysis is required.

Figure A.11 details a high-level concept of approximate possible corner turning radii given existing dimensions and BDE guidance as well as a right-turn lane removal, which could reduce pedestrian crossing distances by up to 30-39%.

Potential Redevelopment Opportunity Impact

Removing the turn lane and third through lane on SB Waukegan Road, north of Dempster Street, could have additional positive impact on the viability of redeveloping the vacant NW corner site. Shifting intersection turning movements further east would provide additional distance from the existing driveway on the south end of the site, potentially providing enhanced site circulation opportunities.

Additionally, driveway consolidation and/or width reduction should be studied further for the SW and NE corners of the Waukegan Road intersection. The goal would be to shift driveways as far as possible from the intersection, reduce the overall number of potential unique vehicle turning movements, and reduce pedestrian conflicts.

Figure A.10: Waukegan Road Intersection Approximate Potential Revised Radii

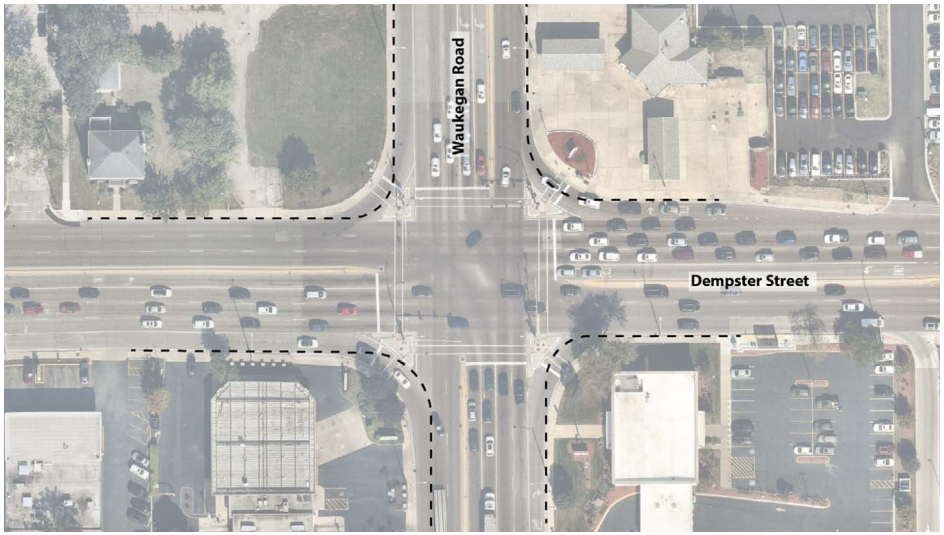
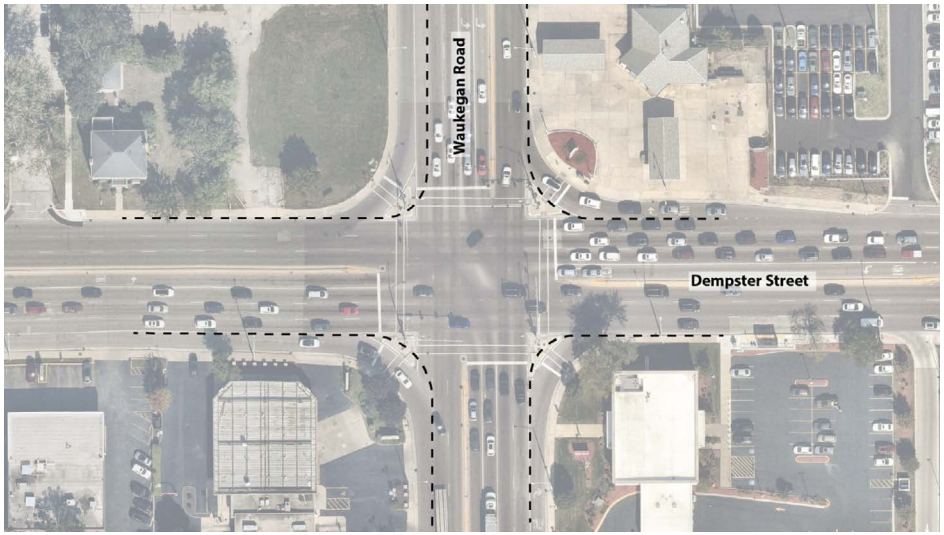


Figure A.11: Waukegan Road Intersection Approximate Potential Revised Radii and Right-Turn Lanes



Parking Standards Research

Draft Land Use Goal 3, Objective 3 describes recommendations for transit-oriented development: "Concentrate higher-density housing near Pace Pulse stations and Metra with direct pedestrian access, street-facing entrances, revised parking standards, and integrated open space and transit-friendly amenities, such as shaded seating, secure bike parking, landscaping, and public art."

One zoning tool that communities can use to meet goals of attracting new development and improving walkability is to examine parking ratios. Parking can be a dominating feature, and future development can likely be successful with parking ratios lower than current Village standards (listed in the table below). Furthermore, private developers have strong incentives to get the parking ratio right for any individual project. Potential impacts can be mitigated through other regulations, such as overnight parking permits on adjacent streets.

Below is a sampling of research on parking standards and ratios in peer communities to provide context for Morton Grove's future parking considerations.

Residential Use	Current Village Parking Requirement
Attached dwellings (townhomes)	2.0 spaces per dwelling unit
Housing for senior citizens	0.5 spaces per dwelling unit
Multi-family dwellings	1.75 spaces per dwelling unit
Single-family dwellings	2.0 spaces per dwelling unit
Two-family dwellings	2.0 spaces per dwelling unit

Peer Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Projects

FitzGerald Architects published a report highlighting their recently completed Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) projects in the Chicago region. Below is a list of parking ratios for suburban developments located in TOD areas, generally within ¼ to ½ mile of a Metra station or Pace bus stop.

Draft opportunity site concepts for this plan assume a parking ratio of around 1.5 spaces per dwelling unit.

Project Name	Community	# of Units	Parking Spaces	Parking Ratio
Midtown Square	Glenview	138	98	0.71
229 Park Avenue	Clarendon Hills	42	42	1.0
Ravinia Crossing	Highland Park	30	30	1.0
Garden Station	Villa Park	234	252	1.08
Wheaton21	Wheaton	306	415	1.12
Apex 400	Glen Ellyn	107	139	1.30
Foxford Station	Western Springs	28	46	1.65

Parking Standards Research

"Stalled Out" Report

The Center for Neighborhood Technology's (CNT) 2016 report "Stalled Out" found that:

- Parking minimums add time and cost to Chicago-area transit-oriented developments. In particular, this discourages developing affordable housing near transit, where the cost of land comes at a premium.
- In apartment buildings studied, average provided parking was approximately 0.61 spaces per unit, while actual usage was approximately 0.34 spaces per unit, indicating a large over supply of parking in many cases.
- The report found that developments located within a 10 minute walk of a transit station offered approximately 0.50 spaces per unit with actual overnight utilization at about 0.33 spaces per unit.

Evanston, IL

A 2017 report found a need for only 1.0 parking space per unit in Evanston's downtown TOD area, while past regulations had typically required 1.25 to 2.0 spaces per unit.

- The goal of Evanston's TOD Parking Regulations Update was to increase the use of transit, balance the supply of parking needs in TOD areas, and refine policy that will "lead to the elimination of unnecessary parking being constructed in the City."
- The study highlights that many new residential and mixed use developments near transit have provided less parking than previous zoning required.

Champaign, IL

In 2016, Champaign removed minimum parking requirements in its downtown and university districts. A 2023 study tracked the results of this reform and found that:

- Onsite parking construction in the deregulated zones decreased from 108 percent of the earlier requirement to 46 percent.
- Among 43 new major developments, 84 percent built less parking than would have been required under the prior minimums, including eight developments that built zero parking. 16 percent of developments still built at least the amount of parking previously required, voluntarily.
- Collectively, developers avoided constructing approximately 2,142 parking spaces, translating into up to $49 million in avoided construction cost.

West Allis, WI

In May 2022, the City of West Allis, WI, a community of 60,000 residents adjacent to Milwaukee, removed all parking minimums from their zoning code. The table below represents a sampling of six multifamily developments proposed in West Allis since parking minimums were lifted. One development proposed exceeding the previous parking minimum ratio of 2.0, while the other five

Project	Units	Parking Spaces	Ratio
SoNa Lofts	66	75	1.14
F Street 92	136	201	1.48
Hidden Lofts	60	136	2.27
Allis Yards	248	383	1.54
The Revv	247	319	1.29
Urban Pioneer	43	47	1.09

Parking Standards Research

Shared Parking

Shared parking allows multiple land uses to draw from a common pool of parking spaces, typically because those uses have different peak periods (e.g., office uses peak during the day, retail uses in the evening). Shared parking may be particularly appropriate in mixed use, transit served, or walkable corridors. In mixed-use developments, where several adjacent businesses may own redundant parking stock, shared parking works in tandem to achieve minimum parking requirements. The Village of Morton Grove's existing code provides specific requirements for shared parking including direction on compatible uses and a matrix for calculating total parking required.

Northern Illinois Transportation Authority (NITA): NITA cites shared parking as a strategy to support transit-oriented development. NITA recommends parking arrangements such as those that are open only to commuter parking during peak commuting times (generally early morning to early evening on weekdays) and available for local restaurants and shops in the evening and on weekends This strategy, which applies to both off-street and on-street parking facilities, must be well managed by the municipality and well communicated to users through posted parking regulations (such as types of users and time restrictions) and signage.

The Grove Avenue Parking Deck: This facility in Berwyn, IL offers shared-used parking supporting Metra commuters and local businesses. Opened in 2009, it replaced 86 surface spaces with a 396-space, five-level parking deck. Of these parking spaces, 296 are reserved for commuters at $3 per day, while 100 spaces on the top floor are available for retail and hospital users at $0.25 per hour.

Evanston, IL: Evanston's 2017 Transit-Oriented Parking Regulations Update outlines that shared parking is allowed for certain non-residential uses and a general 20 percent parking reduction for non-residential uses is allowed in the Downtown districts. The Report encourages shared parking approaches to further reduce residential requirements in mixed-use developments if parking will in fact be shared.

Schaumburg, IL: A 2023 shared parking study for a redevelopment (Walker Consultants) showed that by modeling staggered peak demand, the site could reduce total required parking supply significantly compared to summing standalone requirements. The analysis found that by accounting for overlapping demand among uses (restaurant/entertainment vs. hotel guests vs. retail customers) and non peak hour usage, the required parking supply could be significantly lower than if each use was treated independently. This allowed for more compact site planning and better use of land near key destinations like the Woodfield Mall. The Village accepted these findings to support a more flexible, coordinated parking strategy in suburban redevelopment.

Parking Standards Research

Illinois Senate Bill 2111 Impacts:

Illinois SB 2111, passed in October 2025, outlaws municipal minimum parking requirements for any future development within 1/8 mile of a corridor featuring transit service with at least 15-minute frequency and within ½ mile of a transit station. The law does not prohibit developers from building parking, but municipalities cannot enforce minimum parking requirements as part of development approval and permitting.

In Morton Grove, parking is likely to remain an important component of any successful residential or commercial development. Developers have a strong financial incentive to right-size parking—building too much is a waste of money and building too little could harm the financial viability of the project.

In lieu of building on-site parking, developers may seek to:

- Utilize nearby private parking facilities (including shared parking arrangements).
- Utilize nearby off-street public parking facilities.
- Utilize on-street parking.

To prevent unwanted on-street residential parking, a municipality has two primary options:

- Restrict all overnight on-street parking in a particular area.
- Restrict all overnight on-street parking in a particular area to permit-holders only and restrict residents of a new development from obtaining permits.

Additional Transit Operations Improvements

Coordinate Stop Locations:

The Pace Pulse Stations in the corridor study area should also serve as stops for local routes, where services overlap that Pace was implementing at the time of preparing the plan. Local stops within close proximity of a Pulse Station should be consolidated as follows:

- Relocate the westbound Route 250 stop at Harlem Avenue from its existing position on the east side of the intersection to co-locate with the Pulse Station on the west side of the intersection
- Eliminate existing Pulse and Route 250 signage at the southwest corner Harlem Avenue and Dempster Street. The Pace Pulse Station located 100 feet west should serve as the location for all boardings and alightings for eastbound service at this intersection

Access Infrastructure Improvements:

Pedestrian access at transit stops should be as complete as feasible, ideally including crosswalks to facilitate the most direct pedestrian access from both sides of the street and to discourage pedestrians crossing outside marked crosswalks. Because nearly every transit trip starts and ends as a pedestrian trip, all sidewalk, trail, and crossing improvements will lead to improved safety and access to transit services. To further improve existing conditions on the corridor:

- Add pedestrian crosswalks at School Street, Marmora Avenue, and Oriole Avenue to better serve existing bus stops (see detailed analysis in other sections)
- Rebuild the existing 95-foot curb cut on the north side of Dempster Street at Central Avenue (currently a gas station) to reduce the width of the driveway curb cut and to allow the westbound Route 250 bus stop to relocate closer to intersection
- Add wayfinding signage at the Metra Station directing passengers to nearby transit routes and stops
- Add wayfinding signage at Ferris Avenue Route 250 stops directing passengers to the Metra Station
- Incorporate benches and bicycle racks into streetscape upgrades near bus stops whenever possible

Consolidate Stops:

Consolidating stops should be considered to combine closely-spaced stops and to better position stops near crosswalks. Consolidations may include removing closely-spaced stops served by Route 210 that appear in the GTFS feed and online Pace maps but have no physical signage at: Westbound Dempster at Birch Avenue, Eastbound Dempster at Lincoln Avenue, Eastbound Dempster at Narragansett Avenue and Northbound/Southbound Ferris at Hennings Court.

Consolidations and relocations should also be considered between Harlem Avenue and Waukegan Road to better locate stops near crosswalks and balance spacing:

- Relocate westbound National Avenue stop to near-side Shermer Road
- Remove eastbound National Avenue Stop and move eastbound Shermer Road stop to far-side

Zoning Recommendations

An analysis of current zoning through the Unified Development Code (UDC) and a comparison with the land use and economic goals of the plan led to recommendations for a new Main Street Overlay District as well as more general updates to the UDC. These recommendations can be taken into account through further due diligence and public engagement. Implementation of the design toolbox and opportunity site development concepts developed for the plan requires adherence to the Village's zoning regulations and other standards in the Unified Development Code (UDC). In many cases, existing zoning regulations and UDC standards are supportive of plan recommendations. However, in certain cases there are potential barriers to implementation, which may warrant the need to amend certain parts of the Village's zoning regulations and UDC standards.

The following text and tables summarize an analysis of the zoning code and recommended amendments to the Village's zoning regulations and UDC standards that can remove these barriers, support corridor improvements, and unlock the Dempster Corridor's development potential while ensuring a high-quality of design standards.

General Recommendations by Subdistrict

A review of permitted and special uses, bulk regulations, design guidelines, and parking standards was conducted for the Study Area. Below are recommendations organized for the four subdistricts that make up the Corridor.

"Main Street" Overlay District

The primary recommendation is to establish a new overlay zoning district that translates the plan's goals and recommendations for the sub-district defined as the "Main Street District" into the UDC. The Main Street District encompasses the railroad tracks east to I-94, which is a stretch of Dempster Street that has been of particular focus for the Steering Committee and community throughout this planning process. 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. The future vision, driven by community feedback, calls for a vibrant, fresh, and walkable Main Street feel with an inviting streetscape and a variety of shops, restaurants, civic uses, and public spaces.

The Dempster Corridor Plan includes recommendations for public-led interventions, but fully achieving this vision will require significant private investments in new commercial, residential, or mixed-use development. 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. The recommended overlay district would formalize this approach by enabling project design and use standards 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.

For more detail on this recommendation, see Part 2: Main Street District Recommendations on pages 66-81.

Residential Corridor District

Recommendations in the Residential Corridor District primarily focus on improving safe access at pedestrian crossings. Improvements and opportunities proposed for the Residential Corridor District include a landscaped median along Dempster Street, bike boulevard connections along neighborhood streets, pedestrian-oriented lighting, and gateway signage at the far western end of Dempster Street around Ozark Avenue. Since these improvements and additions would take place within the road right-of-way, they do not require any Village-led zoning changes. However, individual property owners may want to consolidate lots and propose planned developments or rezoning for multifamily residential uses along the north side of Dempster Street.

Commercial Corridor District

Improvements and opportunities proposed for the Commercial Corridor District include shared community spaces (public and private), parking lot enhancements, and development opportunity sites that do not require rezoning the district as a whole. These development opportunities would likely be in the form of Planned Unit Developments, as described further in the section below.

Metra TOD District

Most of the recommendations in the Metra Transit Oriented Development (TOD) District are focused on creating community spaces, enhancing the streetscape, promoting public art, and improving interconnected bike access. This area is largely zoned C/R Commercial/Residential or R-3 General Residence and already has a denser, mixed-use environment with close access to the Metra station and other Pace bus routes off of the Dempster Corridor. There are a few opportunity sites in the Metra TOD District, including the current Village Hall and Police Department site that will eventually become available for redevelopment once the municipal facility moves to its new location on Dempster Street.

Planned Unit Developments (PUDs)

Planned Unit Developments (PUDs) are an important zoning tool best used in specific circumstances, including when dealing with a difficult site, granting specific zoning relief, and securing additional community benefits.

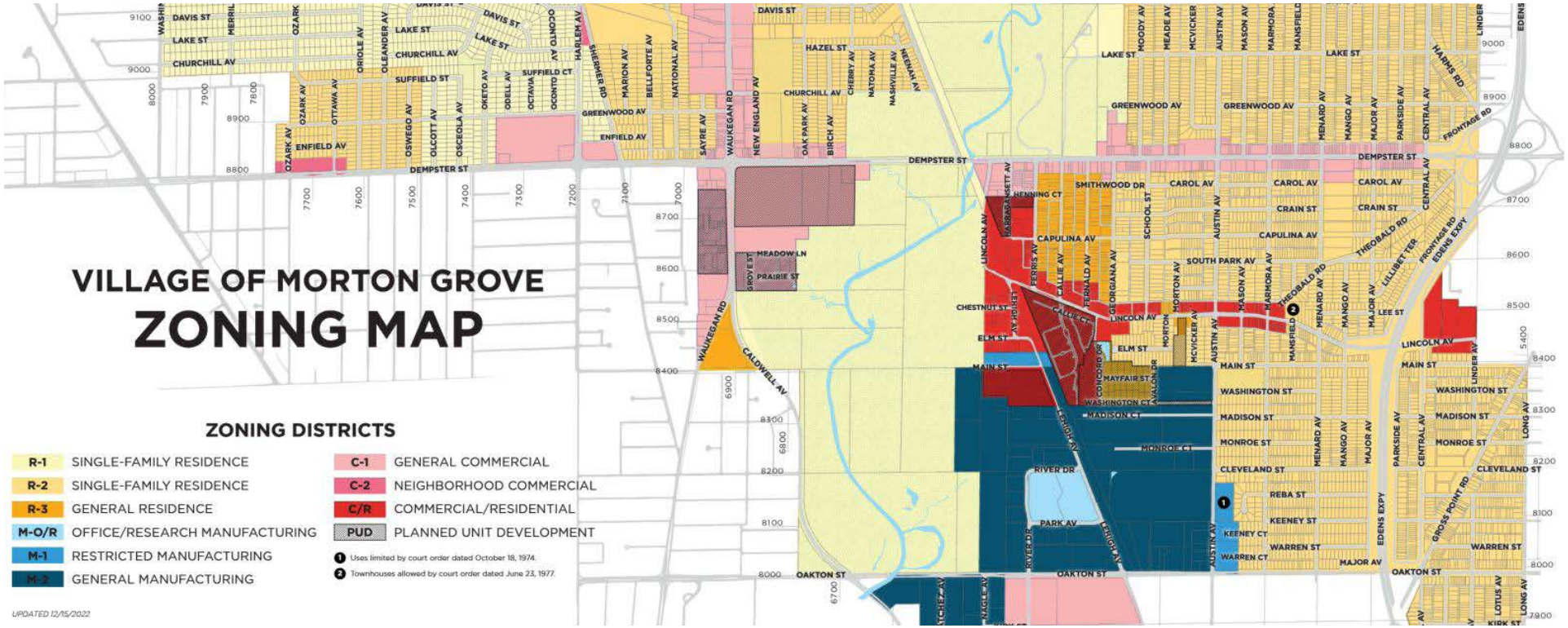
Existing PUDs in Morton Grove serve as models for potential opportunity sites in the corridor study area, particularly those outside of the Main Street Overlay District, could also be developed as PUDs to enable higher density, mixed-use developments. Chapter 12-6: Planned Unit Developments outlines how the PUD standards are beneficial to allowing creative design that incorporates community benefits, including:

- More efficient arrangement of buildings, transportation systems, land use, and utilities
- More usable and suitably located common open space and/or recreation areas
- Aesthetic amenities that enhance the character of the site and corridor
- Preservation of site characteristics
- Higher standard of site and building design
- Variety of housing types, including quality affordable housing units
- Energy efficiency and use of green building and site design techniques
- The Village may consider expanding the list of PUD objectives (Section 12-6-2) to include some of the design standards discussed in the Main Street Overlay District, such as transit-friendly amenities and context-sensitive design transitions to surrounding streets and uses (e.g. screening, building setbacks)

Existing Zoning Review

The table below summarizes how the four corridor subdistricts touch upon each of the six zoning districts that are represented in the corridor study area.

	R-1	R-2	R-3	C-1	C-2	C/R
Residential Corridor District	✔	✔			✔	
Commercial Corridor District	✔	✔		✔		
Main Street District	✔	✔	✔	✔		
Metra TOD District	✔	✔	✔	✔		✔



Permitted and Special Uses

The UDC provides zoning district regulations in Chapter 12-4: Zoning Districts, with the residential districts (Section 12-4-2) and commercial districts (Section 12-4-3) being the most applicable to the Dempster Corridor. Permitted and special use tables are provided to identify whether each potential use type is a permitted use (P), special use (S), or not permitted (X).

This review finds that current zoning generally supports current and future desired development in the Dempster Corridor Study Area.

Zoning District	Recommendations
R-1 Single-Family Residence	• **Single-family detached dwellings (P):** Existing zoning should be preserved to protect established neighborhoods on the north side of Dempster Street between Oswego Avenue and Shermer Road. • **Parks (P), recreation centers (S), and recreational facilities (S):** Harrer Park, Forest Preserve land, and the Civic Center should be maintained to protect existing green space and recreational facilities at the center of the corridor.
R-2 Single-Family Residence	• **Single-family detached dwellings (P):** Existing zoning should be preserved to protect established neighborhoods on both sides of Dempster Street at various points along the corridor. • **Parks (P), recreation centers (S), recreational facilities (S), and schools (S):** Morton Grove Prairie Nature Preserve, Park District facilities, and multiple schools east of the Forest Preserve should be maintained to protect existing green space, recreational facilities, and schools throughout the corridor. • **Municipal buildings (S):** The current Village Hall and Police Department site will eventually become a redevelopment opportunity once municipal facilities move to the new planned location on Dempster Street. The Village may consider existing uses permitted within the underlying R-2 District, rezoning, or a PUD to allow more flexibility in development design.
R-3 General Residence	• **Single-family detached dwellings (P) and attached dwellings (P,S):** Existing zoning should be preserved to protect established neighborhoods south of Dempster Street near the Metra station. • **Parks (P), schools (S), and houses of worship (S)**: Parks, schools, and houses of worship should be maintained to protect existing green space, schools, and religious institutions in the neighborhood near the Metra station.

Zoning District	Recommendations
C-1 General Commercial	• **Various automobile, office, retail, service, and restaurant uses (P,S):** It is appropriate to continue to allow for these uses to maintain existing commercial uses and support future commercial uses. • **Multiple-family dwellings (S):** The Residences at Sawmill Station apartment complex is the most prominent multiple-family residential use in the C-1 District. It is appropriate to maintain multi-family housing as a special use in the C-1 District to accommodate such development in the future. • **Mixed use development (S):** There are a few mixed-use developments that currently exist on properties zoned C-1 along the corridor, with Sawmill Station being the most prominent. Several identified opportunity site concepts are located in a C-1 District, so it is appropriate to maintain mixed-use development as a special use.
C-2 Neighborhood Commercial	• **Various automobile, office, retail, service, and restaurant uses (P,S):** It is appropriate to continue to allow for these uses to maintain existing commercial uses and support future commercial uses. • **Multiple-family dwellings (S):** Existing apartment buildings should be preserved to protect the few multi-story, high density residential uses along Dempster Street. • **Mixed use development (S)**: While there are presently no mixed-use developments on properties zoned C-2, it is appropriate to maintain mixed-use development as a special use in the C-2 district for any redevelopment scenarios that may materialize in the future.
C/R Commercial/Residential	• **Various automobile, office, retail, service, and restaurant uses (P,S):** It is appropriate to continue to allow for these uses to maintain existing commercial uses and support future commercial uses. • **Multiple-family dwellings (S):** Multi-family uses should be encouraged to protect and expand the concentration of medium and high-density residential uses in the Metra TOD area. • **Mixed-use development (S):** Mixed-use development should be encouraged to foster and build upon the historic and walkable small town feel surrounding the Metra station area.

Parking

The UDC provides parking regulations in Chapter 12-7: Off Street Parking and Loading. The Village's parking regulations for the Dempster corridor will be impacted by the recently signed Northern Illinois Transit Authority Act (NITA Act or SB2111), which mandates 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). NITA, CMAP, and MPC are currently preparing guidance on how municipalities should address the impact of SB2111 on their parking regulations. *(See Appendix: Additional Transportation Recommendations, Parking Standards Research for more detail)*.

Other UDC Recommendations

Certain recommendations relate to standards in other parts of the UDC that apply to most or all of the Dempster Corridor. These corridor-wide recommendations are intended to facilitate implementation of some of the design toolbox elements, as summarized below.

Bike Lanes, Bike Boulevards, and Multi-Use Paths

- Add standards for bike lanes, bike boulevards, and multi-use paths in Chapter 5-2: Traffic Control and Chapter 5-11: Bicycles.

Road Right-of-Way

- Add standards for the handling of restricted left turn lanes in Chapter 5-2: Traffic Control and Section 12-9-2: Street Design Standards.
- Add standards for curb extensions/bump-outs in Chapter 5-2: Traffic Control and Section 12-9-2: Street Design Standards.
- Add standards for use of potential side street closures for functional, non-vehicular use in Section 12-9-5: Vacation of Public Right of Way.

Public Areas

- Add standards for signage and landscaping within public parking lots in Section 12-7-4: Off Street Parking Design Standards.
- Add standards for activated alleyways in Section 12-9-3: Alleys,

Sidewalks, Pedestrian ways, and Driveways.

- Maintain existing pedestrian-oriented lighting standards in Section 12-12-3: Lighting.
- Maintain existing standards for streetscape elements in Section 12-12-4: Miscellaneous Structures and Street Furniture.

Landscaping

- Add standards for landscaped medians in Section 12-9-2: Street Design Standards and Chapter 12-11: Landscaping and Trees.
- Ensure tree and plant species are salt tolerant (Section 12-11-3).

Gateways, Wayfinding, and Other Signage

- Add standards for gateway and wayfinding signage in Chapter 10-10: Sign Regulations, particularly Section 10-10-7:G (Ground Monument Signs and Pylon Signs).
- Add additional standards to properly regulate and provide guidance on acceptable sign types, colors, and materials in Section 10-10-6: General Sign Regulations and Section 10-10-7: Regulations by Type of Sign, including specific signs like illuminated signs (Section 10-10-7:B), projecting signs (Section 10-10-7:E), wall signs (Section 10-10-7:F), and ground monument signs (Section 10-10-7:G).
- Provide clarifying language for murals and public art as "signs that are painted directly on any part of a building or fence" in Section 10-10-5: Prohibited Signs, including whether or not murals or other public art are exempted if not directly painted on any part of a building or fence.

Consider prohibiting or further restricting electronic messaging signage within the "Main Street" Overlay District to better preserve a cohesive, pedestrian-oriented character. Such signage can introduce visual clutter, distraction, and a more auto-oriented aesthetic that may be inconsistent with the desired traditional

DEMPSTER CORRIDOR PLAN

WHERE COMMUNITY MEETS COMMERCE

MORTON GROVE

Incredibly Close ✦ Amazingly Open

NITA

NORTHERN ILLINOIS TRANSIT AUTHORITY