



**PARK FOREST
DOWNTOWN**
MASTER PLAN

Adopted June 12, 2023

ORDINANCE NO. 2204

AN ORDINANCE ADOPTING THE DOWNTOWN MASTER PLAN OF THE OFFICIAL COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AND AMENDING CHAPTER 78 ("PLANNING"), ARTICLE III ("OFFICIAL PLAN"), SECTION 78-62 ("CREATED AND ADOPTED") OF THE CODE OF ORDINANCES OF THE VILLAGE OF PARK FOREST, COOK AND WILL COUNTIES, ILLINOIS

WHEREAS, the Village Staff of the Village of Park Forest ("Commission") and Mayor/Village President and Board of Trustees recognized the need to prepare a new plan to update the DownTown Master Plan; and

WHEREAS, the DownTown Planning Advisory Committee (DPAC), together with additional Park Forest residents, served as the DownTown Master Plan Steering Committee (the "Steering Committee"); and

WHEREAS, the Steering Committee sought the input from business owners, multifamily property owners/ managers, the arts community, Main Street Market coordinator, Youth Commissioners, Village Staff, and the public; and

WHEREAS, the Mayor/Village President and Board of Trustees have reviewed the DownTown Master Plan and determined that it is in the best interests of the Village to adopt the Plan.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED, by the Mayor/Village President and Board of Trustees of the Village of Park Forest, Cook and Will Counties, Illinois, in the exercise of the Village's home rule powers, as follows:

Section 1. Recitals Incorporated. The recitals set forth above constitute a material part of this Ordinance as if set forth in their entirety in this Section 1.

Section 2. Plan Adopted. The DownTown Master Plan is hereby adopted as a new key area of the land use and economic development element of the comprehensive plan for the Village of Park Forest.

Section 3. Village Code Amended. Chapter 78 ("Planning"), Article III ("Official Plan"), Section 78-62 ("Created and Adopted") of the Code of Ordinances of the Village of Park Forest, Cook and Will Counties, Illinois, is amended by adding the underlined as follows:

Sec. 78-62. - Created and adopted.

There is adopted the official comprehensive plan of the village; such official comprehensive plan having been adopted by the village on March 28, 1983, entitled the "Park Forest Policies Plan." The land use and economic development elements of the official comprehensive plan have been updated by the village pursuant to the adoption of the "Strategic Plan for Land Use and Economic Development," on November 24, 2008. A sustainability element of the official comprehensive plan has been added by the village on May 14, 2012, pursuant to the adoption of the "Growing

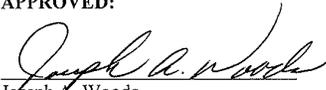
Green: Park Forest Sustainability Plan." A new key area of the land use and economic development element of the official comprehensive plan has been added by the village on November 28, 2016, pursuant to the adoption of the "Hidden Meadows Conceptual Redevelopment Plan." The housing element of the official comprehensive plan has been updated by the village on February 26, 2018, pursuant to the adoption of the "Comprehensive Housing Plan." The climate action and resilience element of the official comprehensive plan has been added by the village on February 18, 2019, pursuant to the adoption of the "Climate Action and Resilience Plan". The new key area of land use and economic development element of the official comprehensive plan has been added by the village on June 5, 2023, pursuant to the adoption of the "DownTown Master Plan."

Section 4. Severability and Repeal of Inconsistent Ordinances. If any provision of this Ordinance, or the application of any provision of this Ordinance, is held unconstitutional or otherwise invalid, such occurrence shall not affect other provisions of this Ordinance, or their application, that can be given effect without the unconstitutional or invalid provision or its application. Each unconstitutional or invalid provision, or application of such provision, is severable, unless otherwise provided by this Ordinance. All ordinances, resolutions or orders, or parts thereof, in conflict with the provisions of this Ordinance are to the extent of such conflict hereby repealed.

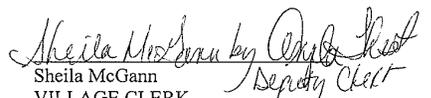
Section 5. Effective Date. This Ordinance shall be in full force and effect from and after its passage and approval and publication as required by law.

PASSED this 12th day of June, 2023.

APPROVED:


Joseph A. Woods
MAYOR/VILLAGE PRESIDENT

ATTEST:


Sheila McGann
VILLAGE CLERK

AYES: 6
NAYES: 1
ABSENT: 0

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Special Tribute

We would like to pay a special tribute to Pat Moore. Pat owned and operated Salon Artist Gallery in DownTown Park Forest. She was a large part of the art community in Park Forest and the south suburbs. She will be greatly missed.

Consultant Team



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INTRODUCTION

The *Park Forest DownTown Master Plan* is an update to the previously adopted 2002 DownTown Plan. This update used multiple forms of community outreach to gather the community's vision for the Master Plan, such as community meetings, virtual workshops, and online participation, and paired this with further data to compile a document which explores the ways to make the community's vision for DownTown a reality.



Purpose of the Master Plan

The *Park Forest DownTown Master Plan* is the Village's guide for the future of its DownTown. It sets a community vision for DownTown in the coming years, establishes definitive goals, and identifies recommendations to achieve them. The Plan will serve as a guide for continued maintenance and development of DownTown Park Forest over the next 12 to 15 years.

The *DownTown Master Plan* also establishes a Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) based on the recommendations found within the Plan. The CIP is a comprehensive, long-term plan for capital improvements. See *Chapter 8 Implementation* for more information.

Overall, the Plan aims to organize development within DownTown into a unified, comprehensive endeavor, founded in community input, field reconnaissance, and extensive research. This document should be utilized as a "guidebook" for Village staff, officials, and stakeholders in the decision-making process for future development and capital improvements within DownTown.

Planning Process

The process for creating the *Park Forest DownTown Master Plan* comprised a five-step, twelve-month program that prioritized the development of the Master Plan as the guiding vision for the Village's central business district, which was then used to inform the development of a Capital Improvement Plan tailored to the priorities identified in the plan. The steps were as follows:

Project Initiation

This introduced the consultants to the clients and allowed the consultants to begin developing a relationship with community stakeholders.

Public Engagement

The most important stakeholders are the residents of the Village, and this step was intended to ensure that the consultants gather as much of their input as possible prior to the completion of the plan.

DownTown Profile and Vision

The consultants reviewed all the data collected through their initial efforts and provided a basis for analyzation of the Village's priorities and the best recommendations for change.

DownTown Frameworks

These frameworks detailed trends that the community should consider in planning for the future and address issues identified by the community.

Final DownTown Master Plan and Adoption

The draft plan will be presented for review to the community for feedback and revisions, which will then be resubmitted for final review and adoption.

Capital Improvement Plan

A Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) is a multi-year program for expenditures by the Village of Park Forest. Projects considered through the CIP process involve proposed investments in the Village's infrastructure and facilities, such as transportation improvements or Village-owned building renovations.

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PLANNING CONTEXT

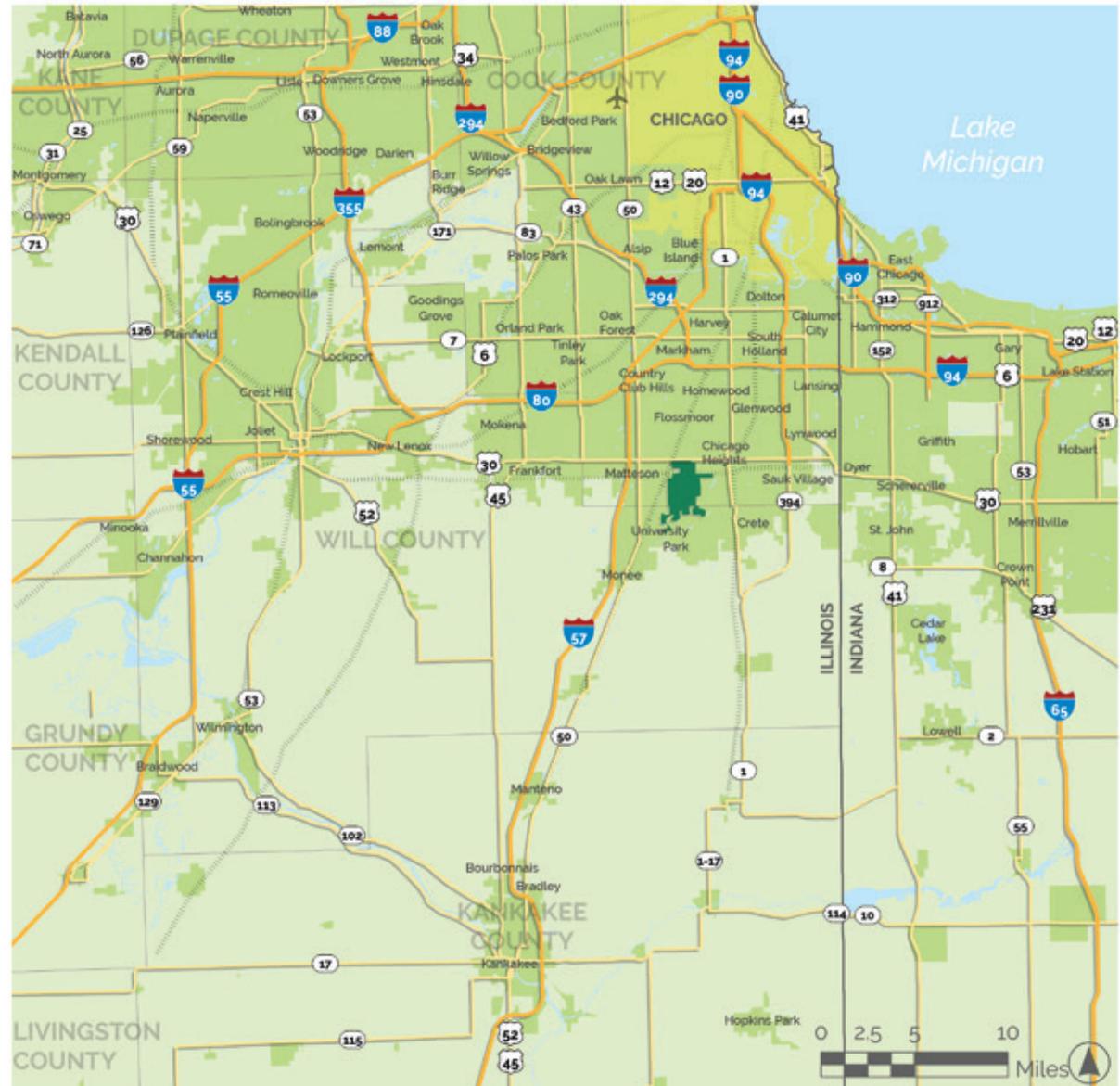
Where is DownTown Park Forest today? It is important to establish a clear understanding of DownTown Park Forest's current conditions as it plans for the next 15 years. This chapter provides a snapshot of current conditions related to its geographic location, land use, and zoning. It also provides an overview of the community's expressed desires for the future of DownTown. Collectively, this understanding of the Village's needs and existing opportunities, along with community input, created a foundation for DownTown's vision for the future. More information on DownTown Park Forest's current context can be found in the *Existing Conditions Presentation* document.

Regional Context

The Village of Park Forest is located approximately thirty miles south of Chicago, in Cook and Will Counties. Residents can take US Route 30 just 10 miles east to reach the Indiana border and can take I-57 north, 20 miles to reach Midway Airport, the closest commercial airport. The Village is about five square miles in area, and home to approximately 21,575 people. It is home to 2000 acres of parks and open spaces and is less than 20 miles from the shores of Lake Michigan.

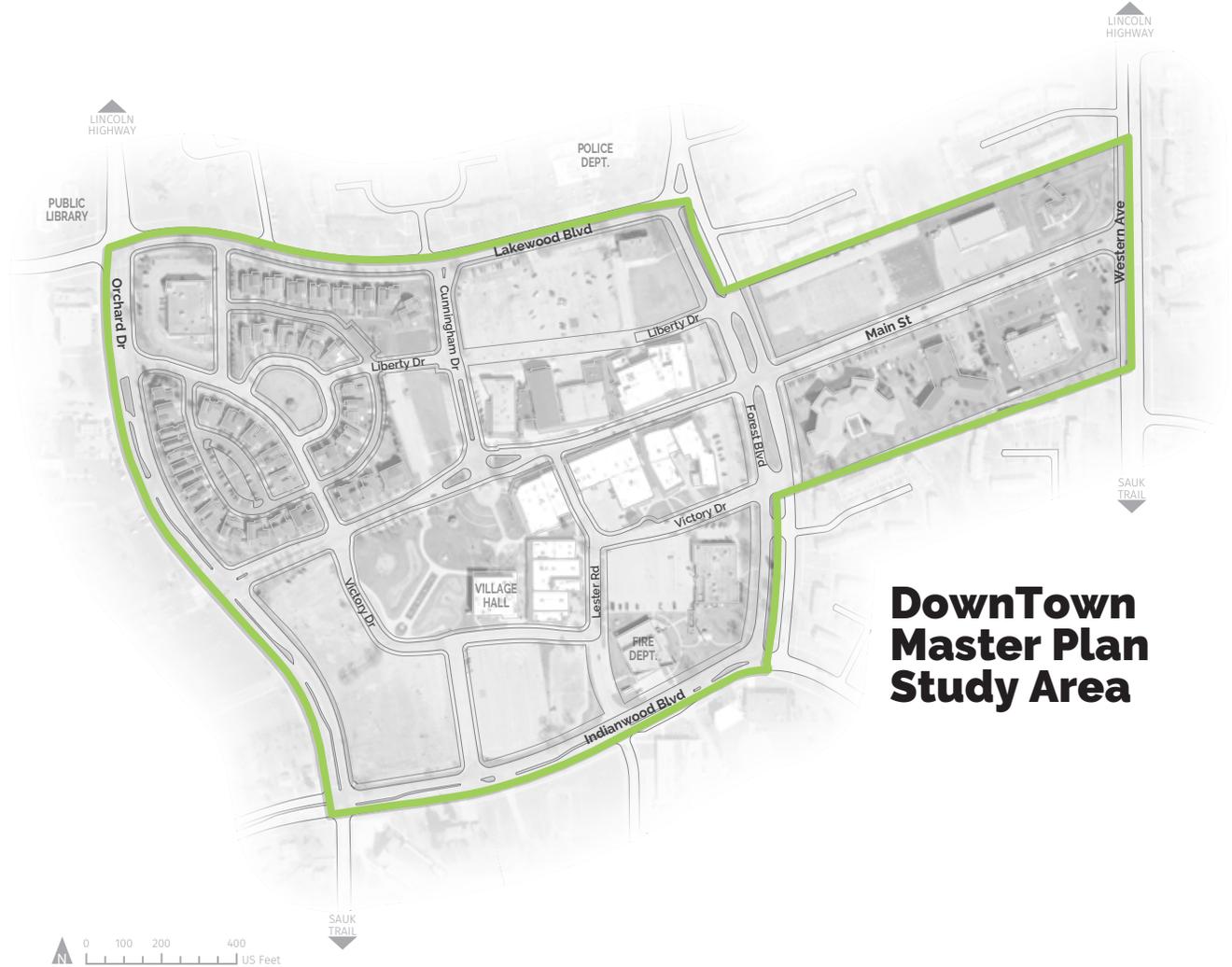
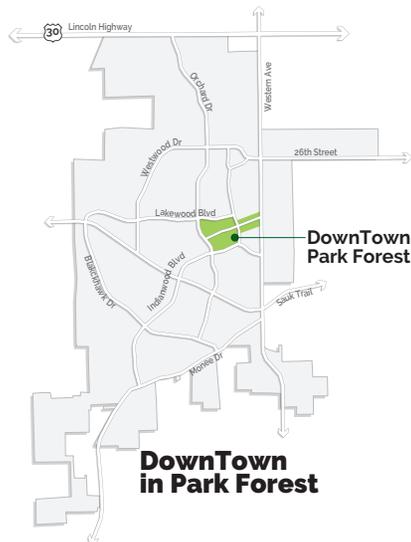
Regional Context

 Village of Park Forest	 Open Water
 Municipalities	 Airports
 Unincorporated Areas	 Interstates
 State Boundaries	 Major Roads
 Counties	 Metra Rail Lines



DownTown Master Plan Study Area

DownTown Park Forest is the cultural and social center of the Village. The DownTown study area consists of the area bounded by Lakewood Boulevard to the north, Indianwood Boulevard to the south, Forest Boulevard to the east, and Orchard Drive to the west. The study area boundary extends along Main Street to Western Avenue. The Main Street corridor forms the core of the study area, anchoring a mix of one and two-story buildings, and a pedestrian-oriented town center including retail, restaurants, parks, open space, and multi-family homes. The surrounding area consists of single-family homes, public resources such as libraries and schools, various parks and open space areas, and commercial properties along Orchard Drive.



DownTown Master Plan Study Area

History of Downtown Park Forest

The Village of Park Forest was first proposed in 1948 as a haven for American soldiers returning from World War II. It is described by Studs Terkel in his oral history of World War II, *The Good War*, as one of the first towns in America that blended the lines between upper and middle classes, providing a new style of living for much of America. Its development and philosophy have been honored many times, with two “All-America City” awards, a recognition as one of America’s most livable suburbs, and third in affordable housing in 2014.

The center of the Village, Downtown Park Forest is located at the site of Park Forest Plaza. Opened in 1949, Park Forest Plaza was one of the first regional malls with a focus on the automobile constructed in the US, with its clocktower becoming a symbol of the surrounding Village. The mall continued operation until 1995, when competition from malls built near the I-57 interchange increased. Benefiting from the easier access, these new shopping centers eventually forced Park Forest Plaza to close its doors. The Village of Park Forest took action and transformed the centrally located mall into a traditional Downtown by purchasing the land and repositioning the property. Initially, the Village demolished 300,000 square feet of vacant commercial space to free up the land. Then, the land was divided into parcels, which were sold off to be developed into the central business district we see now.

Today, Downtown Park Forest serves as the social and economic center for the Village. Its businesses and restaurants are concentrated along its central street, Main Street. It is easily accessible, with parking lots and helpful signage. The Village Green serves as a central gathering space, hosting regular events. The central neighborhoods of the Village are organized around this area with several residential areas located within walking distance of Downtown.



Previous Planning Efforts

As DownTown has evolved, the Village of Park Forest has engaged in several planning efforts over the last two decades. The plans below were reviewed to better understand the context of DownTown Park Forest and to gather research for the 2022 *Park Forest DownTown Master Plan*.

- DownTown Master Plan Update (2002)
- Creating a New DownTown (2003)
- Strategic Plan for Land Use & Economic Development (2008)
- Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan (2014)
- Rental Market Analysis & Development Planning Study (2019)

Some of the above plans were noted as significant to the 2022 *Park Forest DownTown Master Plan*. A brief description of those plans is provided here.

DownTown Park Forest Plan (1997) and Update (2002)

In 1997, the Village of Park Forest adopted the Master Plan that would define the character of the land previously occupied by the Park Forest Plaza shopping mall. The 1997 plan established the vision for transitioning the defunct shopping center into an active, mixed use, main street development that would serve the people of Park Forest.

Five years after the initial document was adopted, the Village updated the plan including a reevaluation of DownTown land uses, as well as specific recommendations for each of the four zones of DownTown.

Creating a New DownTown (2003)

In 2003, the Urban Land Institute of Chicago provided technical assistance which was intended to evaluate the long-term viability of the DownTown. Its recommendations helped establish policy that would ensure the smooth governance of DownTown decision making, change to zoning and land use regulations to create a more distinct character for the DownTown area and provided a more direct vision for the future of DownTown.

Land Use and Economic Development Plan (2008)

The Land Use and Economic Development Plan was adopted by the Village of Park Forest in 2008 to address their growing population and how business and retail could benefit from the increase in residents. Its goal was to organize the financial and physical characteristics of the Village to establish a stronger tax base and more sustainable community. The recommendations and conclusions from this plan emphasized the importance of DownTown as a center for commercial development. It encouraged development in and around DownTown to support the expanding population with local businesses and mixed-residential opportunities.

Comprehensive Housing Plan (2018)

The *Comprehensive Housing Plan* serves as an update to the 2009 *Homes for a Changing Region* and provides policy guidance related to housing in Park Forest. The Plan identifies specific policy recommendations and areas for redevelopment. Within areas within DownTown, areas that were identified for potential housing development includes the property at the northeast corner of Main Street and Forest Boulevard. This property was suggested to develop as mixed use, commercial, and multifamily. It also highlights the vacant parking area at the northeast corner of Indianwood Boulevard and Orchard Drive to be developed as a mix of multifamily and townhomes. The Plan also touches on senior needs. The *Comprehensive Housing Plan* notes that a variety of rental options in the Village should be promoted and these should include housing geared to a senior population.



Excerpt from 2002
DownTown Master Plan Update



Existing Land Use

DownTown Park Forest has a unique land use pattern, given the area's history. Uses are specifically and purposefully divided, with most of the single-family attached and detached housing in the area surrounding DownTown. Additionally, the primary community facilities, such as libraries, schools, and larger parks, are located outside of DownTown.

Within the study area of DownTown, there is a high concentration of commercial uses, including pharmacies, a bank, and daily needs retail. DownTown's core, between Cunningham Drive and Forest Boulevard, primarily consists of retail, office, dining, service, and cultural uses. The northwest quarter of DownTown hosts mixed-residential uses, most commonly single-family attached and detached homes. Main Street, between Cunningham Drive and Forest Boulevard, has a mix of uses. Prominently, it features a multi-family senior living development on Liberty Drive. The southern half of DownTown is primarily municipal government buildings, such as Village Hall and the fire station. Finally, DownTown's periphery contains most of the parking and some commercial uses.





Existing Land Use

The DownTown Park Forest currently comprises the following land uses:

- Single-Family
- Multi-Family
- Mixed-Use
- Commercial
- Community Facility
- Office
- Parking
- Vacant
- Park, Open Space, and Recreation
- Private Open Space



Zoning

The Village of Park Forest regulates land use and development through its Unified Development Ordinance (UDO). The UDO governs the use of land, allowable size and scale of development, allowable signage on properties, and required parking and landscaping on private properties, among other topics. The UDO divides the Village into eight zoning districts which promote distinct types of development. Four of these zoning districts control land use and development in DownTown. Brief descriptions can be found in the *Zoning Regulations Summary* table. For more information, see the Village of Park Forest's Unified Development Ordinance.

R-3 – Traditional Multi-Family District

This district is intended to consist of rowhouses, two-family dwellings, and other types of multi-family housing.

R-4 – Urban Multi-Family District

This district accommodates a mix of housing types, such as moderate-intensity multi-family units, rowhouses, live/work units, and small-lot single-family and two-family dwellings.

C-2 – Mixed Use District

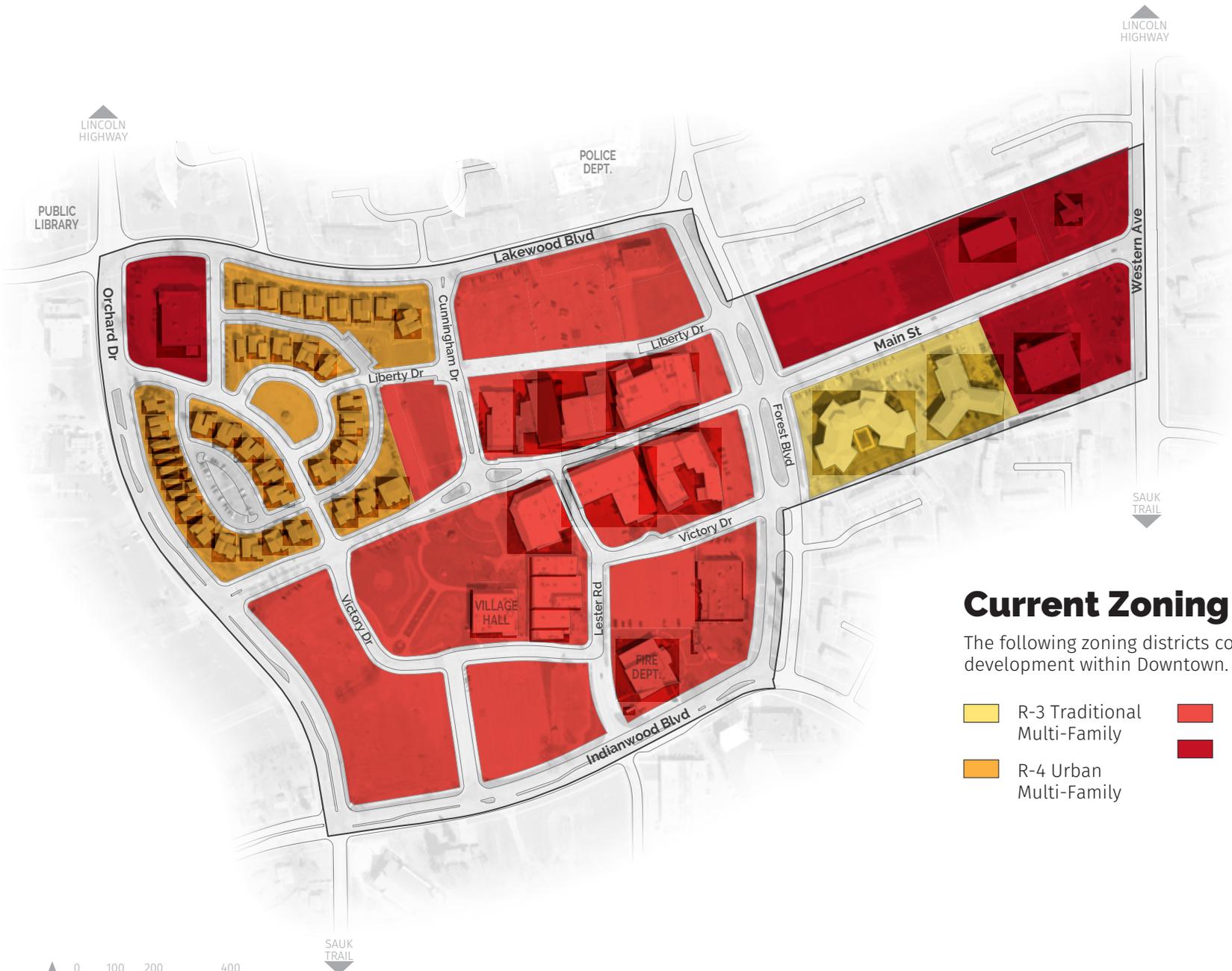
This district accommodates moderate-intensity mixed use and pedestrian-oriented development in the Village's DownTown and transit-oriented development areas, as well as within other limited commercial nodes. This is also the primary zoning district in DownTown Park Forest.

C-3 – Corridor Commercial District

This district establishes auto-oriented commercial development, primarily along Western Avenue, that serves the Village and surrounding communities.

Zoning Regulation Summary

Zone Code	Zone Title	Maximum Building Height	Maximum Lot Coverage	Front Setback	Side Setback	Rear Setback
R-3	Traditional Multi-Family District	45 feet	35%	15 feet	15 feet	30 feet
R-4	Urban Multi-Family District	75 feet	75%	5 feet	5 feet	10 feet
C-2	Mixed-Use District	75 feet	90%	0 feet	0 feet	0 feet
C-3	Corridor Commercial District	45 feet	75%	0 feet	0 feet	0 feet



Current Zoning

The following zoning districts control land use and development within Downtown.

- R-3 Traditional Multi-Family
- R-4 Urban Multi-Family
- C-2 Mixed-Use
- C-3 Corridor Commercial



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COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Community outreach for the *Park Forest DownTown Master Plan* continued throughout the entire planning process. Overall, the community outreach had 157 points of contact with the community, comprising a plethora of styles of communication. The intended purpose of this outreach is to interview the most important stakeholders for this plan: the community it will serve. Collecting this data provided insights into the community's vision for DownTown and was used to create the strategies and recommendations found in this plan.

Formation of the DownTown Plan Advisory Committee

The DownTown Plan Advisory Committee (DPAC) was established to provide a public face to the planning process and provide meaningful input. The DPAC served as the community sounding board, meeting at key points along the process to discuss issues and overall planning direction. The DPAC is made up of members of the community, business owners and managers, appointed officials, and key stakeholders.

Summary of Outreach Events

The Master Planning process included ten different forms of outreach intended to draw out the community's opinions on the current state of the DownTown and desires for its future. Outreach included 157 different points of contact, through a mix of in-person and virtual events, and online tools. The following methods were used to gather community input.

Department Heads Workshop

This meeting brought together the eleven heads of key Village departments. This meeting also introduced the department heads to the consultant team and established an important relationship in the formation of the DownTown Master Plan.

DownTown Plan Advisory Committee Initiation Workshop

The first DPAC meeting introduced the DPAC to the consultant team and a discussion of the committee's role in the formation of the Plan and a review of project objectives and the preliminary project schedule. The meeting concluded with a workshop to identify issues and opportunities present in DownTown. Nineteen members of the DPAC and Village staff were present at the meeting.

Key Stakeholder Interviews and Focus Groups

A total of 16 participants attended stakeholder interviews and focus groups conducted by the consultant team. These conversations were used to obtain key data points and gather input from multiple perspectives and insights into DownTown.



DownTown Business Workshop

The DownTown Business Workshop targeted property owners, business owners, developers, and corporate citizens. This meeting obtained feedback from nine members of the business community and established dialogue between DownTown businesses and the consultant team.

DPAC Existing Conditions Presentation

This meeting provided an overview of Existing Conditions to eight members of the DPAC. The presentation summarized the collection of existing condition research that provided the basis for Master Plan recommendations in conjunction with community input. All DPAC members were also provided a copy of the presentation for review and comment following the meeting.

DownTown Visioning Workshop

This workshop brought together over 60 stakeholders including a mix of residents, business and property owners, and Village officials, to share their visions for the future of Park Forest's DownTown. Participants gathered their thoughts on the current state of DownTown and provided feedback on the changes they would make in the future.

DPAC Framework Plan Presentation

This presentation to eight members of the DPAC provided the framework of analysis for the Master Plan. Sections included Land Use, Placemaking, and Built Form. All DPAC members were also provided a copy of the presentation for review and comment following the meeting.

Online Survey

The online survey, which received 39 responses, was designed to gather input regarding community preferences for future development and placemaking initiatives.

map.social

map.social, an online interactive mapping tool, provided stakeholders with the opportunity to map out their priority issues and areas of opportunity within the DownTown. map.social maps included sixteen points of interest.



Key Outreach Themes

Several key themes emerged throughout the outreach process. Although a wide range of community-identified issues, opportunities, concerns, and priority projects create the foundation of the Plan, these themes are immediately recognizable and frequently noted across outreach events. The following is a summary of the major themes that emerged through outreach.

Need for a Variety of Businesses

Through outreach, participants noted that DownTown lacks a variety of businesses. They expressed a desire for more businesses that people would frequent more regularly in lieu of office or services uses that they frequent every six months or longer. Desired uses include restaurants, entertainment, grocery stores, community centers, and residential. Participants also expressed that they would like to avoid any new gambling or liquor store establishments in DownTown.

Desire of Events During the Colder Months

The Village of Park Forest is well known for its arts festival and many community events throughout the summer. However, many participants expressed a desire for the continuation of these types of events through the fall and winter. Participants suggested holiday themed events as well as colder month outdoor recreation opportunities such as an ice skating rink.

Redevelopment of the Theater

The currently vacant theater building was often discussed during outreach. There was consistent agreement that the building should be rehabilitated and used. However, there were a variety of suggestions for potential uses. Some suggestions included the continued use as a theater, turning the space into a community center, and using the space for additional retail and restaurant uses.



Promotion of DownTown Businesses

Outreach participants expressed that the promotion of DownTown businesses and events could be improved. This includes getting the word out about a new business opening or an event happening DownTown. This also includes the promotion of existing businesses, as many participants noted that they were not aware of some of the businesses DownTown has to offer. Some suggestions included providing a single source of information such as a social media page. Other suggestions included more long term improvements such as improvements to wayfinding and informational signage in DownTown and throughout the community. Increasing signage for second floor businesses and providing signage that lists DownTown businesses were also suggested by participants.

Lack of Foot and Vehicular Traffic through DownTown

The participants noted that while DownTown is the center of Park Forest, it seems to have little foot and vehicular traffic. Participants point out that Main Street is not an arterial or collector road that naturally has frequent travelers. Some suggested actions for increasing foot traffic to DownTown included offering a wider variety of businesses, improved wayfinding signage, and additional community/family-friendly spaces in DownTown.

Desire for Community and Family-Oriented Spaces

While increased commercial opportunities are a positive change, many residents of Park Forest noted that DownTown could use more family friendly spaces. Some examples of community spaces noted by participants include parks and playgrounds, sport courts, and community or recreational centers. Some participants also expressed the desire to have additional family friendly programs and events hosted in the DownTown area.



4 VISION AND GOALS

The vision, goals, and objectives set the framework for the *Park Forest DownTown Master Plan's* recommendations. Together, they provide a guide for decision making and establish direction for new projects and policies.



Vision

The **vision statement** is an aspirational narrative that paints a picture of what DownTown Park Forest can achieve following the adoption of the Master Plan. The Vision Statement depicts the community's collective desires and serves as the foundation for the Plan's goals and recommendations.

Vision Statement

DownTown Park Forest will thrive as the heart of the community. A diverse mix of retail, restaurants, and entertainment will help DownTown Park Forest grow in prominence as a regional destination. Staying true to Park Forest's history of adapting to ever-changing retail environments, DownTown will become a premier place to shop and dine for residents and visitors alike. Over time, consistent, thoughtful improvements to building facades and canopies will beautify DownTown and contribute to a "sense of place," making visitors want to stop and stay rather than pass by. Streetscape enhancements will transform the sidewalks into a lively pedestrian environment, connecting people to places to dine, relax, and gather. The old theater building will be rehabilitated, regaining its status as a beloved community asset. Building on the positive reputation established by Main Street Nights, DownTown Park Forest will continue to grow as a safe and fun place for local family-friendly activities, and a destination for community events that draw visitors from throughout the southland region.

Goals

The **goals** are broad and long-range desired outcomes. The community's planning efforts should work to support these goals. They are ambitious and will require the culmination of many actions to be fully achieved.

Establish DownTown as an Activity Hub with a Mix of Uses

Successful downtowns are activity hubs consisting of a mixture of retail, office, residential, restaurants, entertainment, outdoor space, and civic uses. This creates activity on the street with people walking, biking, dining, spending time in public spaces, and attending events.

Establish a Sense of Place

Successful downtowns provide a unique sense of place which set them apart from other areas of the community and make them inviting and comfortable. These types of amenities help to create a unique sense of place and promote a greater sense of community pride.

Continue to Improve DownTown's Built Form

Built form refers to the function, design, and configuration of development, as well as their relationship to the public realm. The built form is integral to the fabric of DownTown Park Forest. The appearance of buildings and quality of infrastructure directly creates and shapes the DownTown's character, ambiance, accessibility, and walkability.

5

LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT

The Land Use and Development chapter is the core component of the *Park Forest DownTown Master Plan*. Providing a roadmap for DownTown Park Forest's growth and development, this chapter outlines the type and location of appropriate uses in the planning area.

Located in central Park Forest, DownTown is surrounded by attached and detached single family and multi-family residential neighborhoods. Key nearby uses include the Park Forest Public Library, the Freedom Hall performing Arts theater, and multiple high-quality parks. Situated within a diverse mix of south suburban communities, including Olympia Fields, Matteson, Richton Park, University Park, South Chicago Heights, Crete, and Chicago Heights, DownTown Park Forest has the potential to become a thriving and attractive regional destination with a diverse mix of retail, restaurants, and entertainment users, along with a multitude of special events and festivals.

LAND USE

Land use planning allows communities to consider the impacts of land use decisions on future growth and development. Local government create land use plans to respond to these potential impacts and guide desired development.

Utilized the Land Use Plan

The Land Use Plan provides a roadmap for DownTown Park Forest's growth and development and outlines the type and location of appropriate uses within the project area (*See Land Use Plan Map, page 29*). The Plan is an important tool for both policy makers and the development community as it lays out a vision for each parcel in DownTown.

Residents in and around DownTown support the businesses that make the area a destination. They contribute to the foot traffic necessary for a vibrant, pedestrian-oriented downtown. DownTown should support a wider range of housing types, either as standalone products, such as single-family or multi-family developments, along Orchard Drive or as part of mixed-use development along Main Street.

Single-Family

Single-family uses include both attached and detached dwelling units. Single-family detached homes occupy individual lots. Single-family attached homes share an exterior wall with at least one adjacent unit while still maintaining a separate dedicated entrance. Examples of this include townhomes and duplexes. Single-family uses should be incorporated into larger residential developments to provide a mix of housing types.





Multi-Family

Multi-family uses include buildings containing multiple dwelling units that are vertically stacked with shared common areas and entrances. Multi-family development can be either renter- or owner-occupied and plays a critical role in increasing housing options and addressing demand for residents with a variety of needs and from a variety of income brackets. Multi-family development also serves to strengthen the DownTown retail environment, increasing the number of residents within walking distance of DownTown businesses. Several locations in DownTown are targeted for multi-family development.



Mixed-Use

Mixed-use buildings typically have retail, restaurant, service, or office space on the ground floor and office or residential uses on the upper floors. New mixed-use development should be supported in the future because they contribute to the active environment that defines a thriving downtown. Mixed-use housing along Main Street should be emphasized at the 152 Main Street site, and along the frontages on Main Street between Forest Boulevard and Cunningham Drive.

Commercial

Commercial uses include retail and service businesses, such as shops, restaurants, salons, and theaters. Commercial uses often define the character of a district, drawing foot traffic and visitors from in and around the community. Sense of place is heavily defined by these uses and they will be critical to DownTown's future as an entertainment district and regional attraction.



Office

Offices within DownTown Park Forest are incorporated into mixed-use developments. They include professional services, such as banks, medical offices and clinics, and law offices. Future office uses in DownTown will likely come in tandem with mixed-use development where they can be attractive to individuals that would like to work downstairs and live upstairs.



Community Facility

Community facility uses include municipal facilities, community service providers, and religious institutions. Examples include Park Forest Village Hall and the Fire Department. The former bank at Lakewood Boulevard and Forest Boulevard was recently purchased by a church and is a community facility. These uses provide critical services to communities and add to the sense of place in DownTown.

Private Open Space

Private open spaces are owned and maintained by a private entity such as a homeowner's association or business. The open space is intended to be utilized by the tenant or property owners. The only instance of private open space within the study area is the open space and gazebo within the Legacy Square residential development.



Park, Open Space, and Recreation

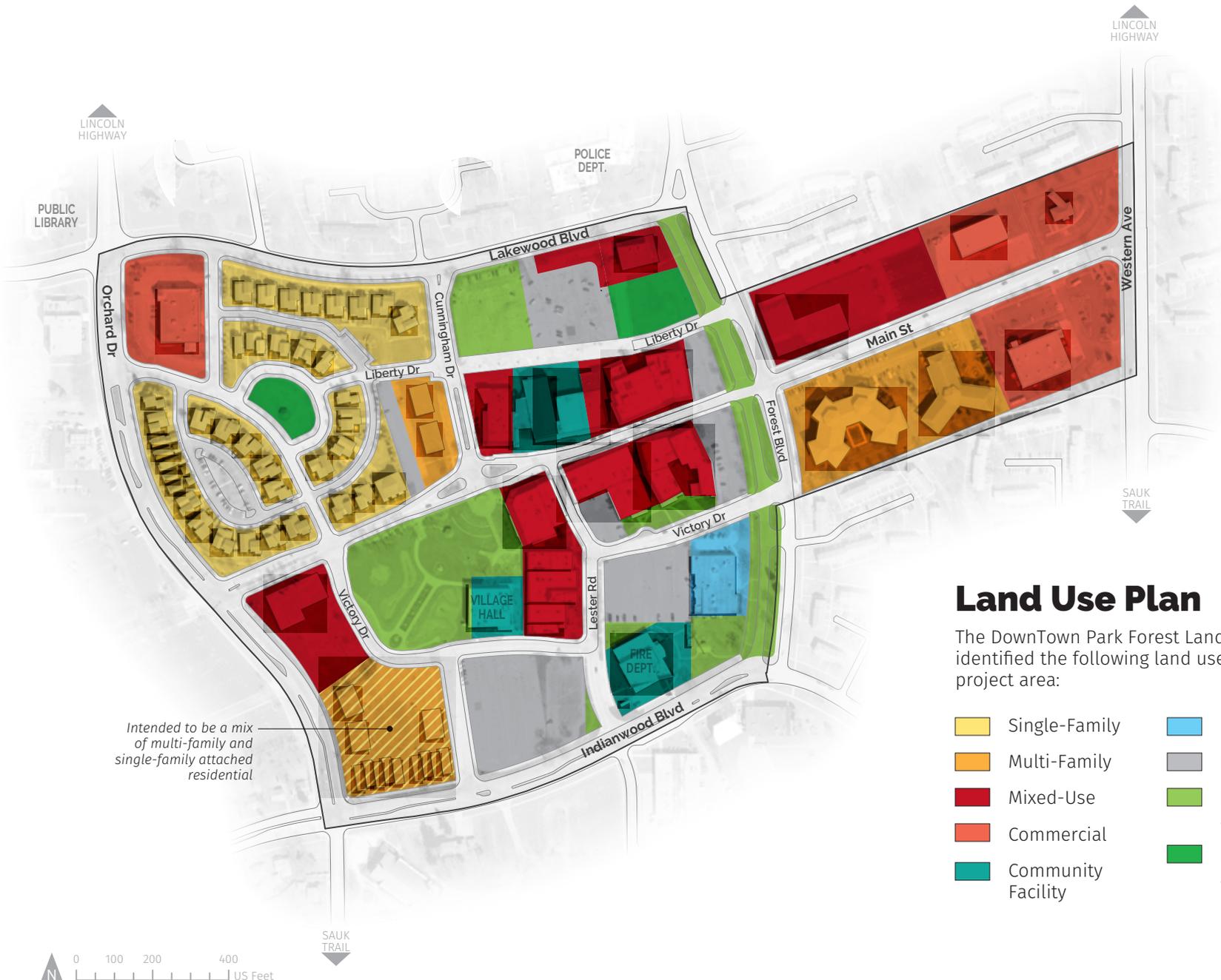
Parks and open space are essential public gathering and recreational spaces that bring people together and provide respite from the urban environment. Village Green in the middle of DownTown is a key gathering space in Park Forest that helps define the community. Future development should complement and take advantage of Village Green, as it will continue to be an important part of DownTown's future brand as a place of gathering and regional attraction.

After the church updates the bank building at the corner of Lakewood Boulevard and Forest Boulevard to fit its needs, it will positively contribute to DownTown's built realm, bringing together people from in and around the community. The Village could potentially coordinate with the church to utilize the grass-covered open space directly adjacent to the future linear park along Forest Boulevard and potential community and recreation center in the old theater building.



Parking

Parking lots currently cover 35% of the total land area in DownTown. This surplus of lots is both an inefficient use of land and an unattractive element of the built environment. Many of the existing parking lots have been targeted for new development, including the large parcel of land at the corner of Orchard Drive and Indianwood Boulevard. Still, some parking should be maintained to accommodate the needs of residents, visitors, and workers. The retained parking lots should include the lot at the northwest corner of Indianwood Boulevard and Lester Road as well as a quadrant of the parking lot southeast of the intersection of Lakewood Boulevard and Cunningham Drive.



Intended to be a mix of multi-family and single-family attached residential

Land Use Plan

The DownTown Park Forest Land Use Plan has identified the following land uses within the project area:

- | | |
|--|--|
|  Single-Family |  Office |
|  Multi-Family |  Parking |
|  Mixed-Use |  Park, Open Space, and Recreation |
|  Commercial |  Private Open Space |
|  Community Facility | |

DEVELOPMENT

DownTown has become home to a unique mix of retailers, service providers, restaurants, and businesses with an emphasis on the arts. While Village-owned commercial space is well tenanted, there is a surplus of surface parking areas representing untapped potential. During the outreach process, the community noted a desire for additional dining options and opportunities for family-friendly activities. The community expressed a desire to see unique retail shops, mixed-use buildings, and additional uses that will generate activity. Diversifying the types of development within DownTown will help to foster a distinct community destination that will draw in visitors from throughout the region.

Consider Outlot Development

Several parking lots were often cited throughout the outreach process and in past planning efforts as areas for additional development (*See Outlot Development Map, page 31*). The Village should work to convert the lots identified in the Land Use Plan into appropriate uses, while maintaining an adequate supply of parking for Village facilities, special events, and shared parking if needed. Additionally, the Village should subdivide the properties to increase the ease of development.

📍 152 Main Street

The parking lot at 152 Main Street is about 2.25 acres and provides about 170 parking spaces. Should this lot develop as mixed-use, the site plan should include parking for DownTown employees and patrons. The amount of parking supplied should be in line with the requirements of the Village's Unified Development Ordinance.

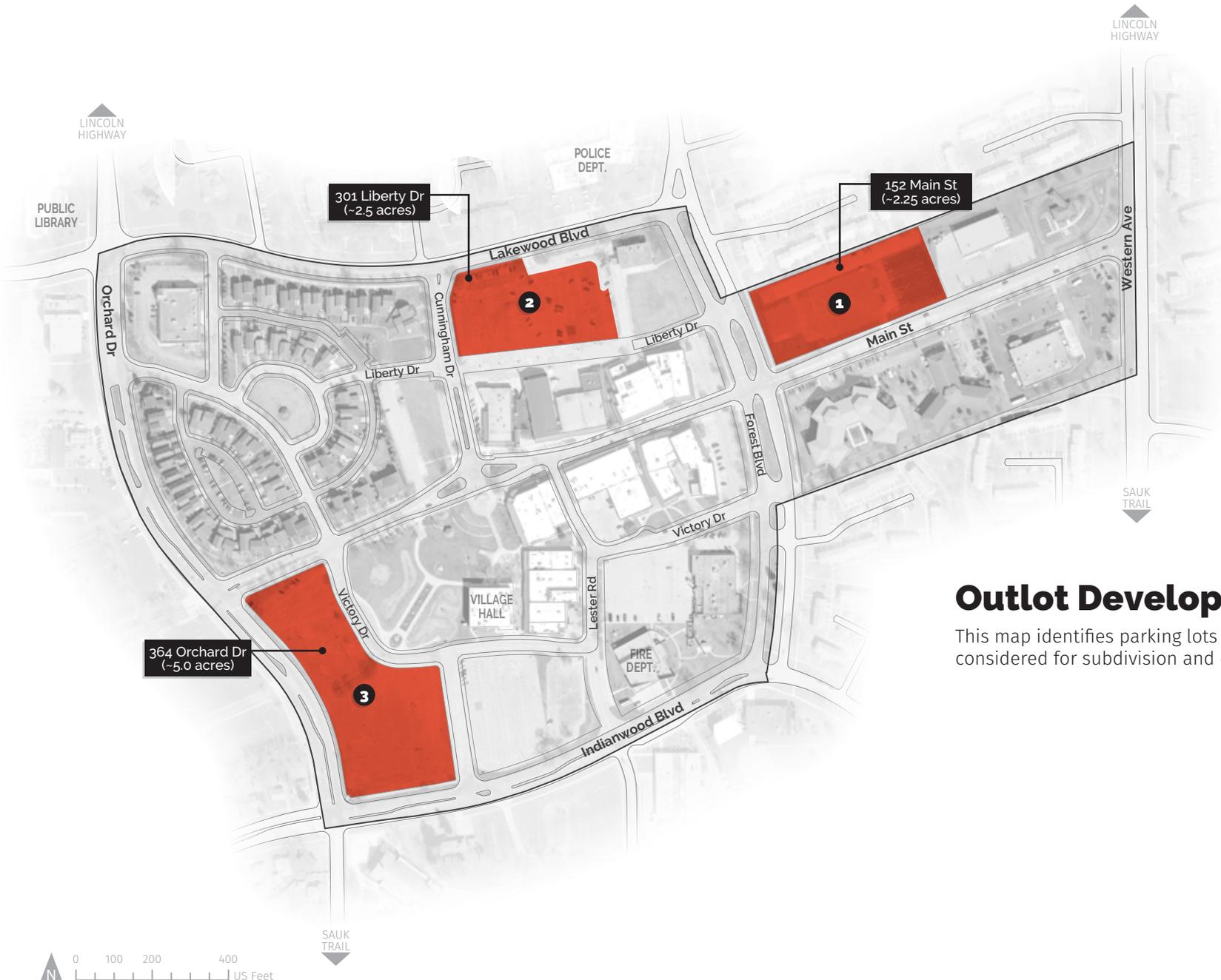
📍 300 Forest Boulevard

The parking lot at 300 Forest Boulevard is about 2.5 acres and provides about 325 parking spaces. It is the second largest parking lot in DownTown. The Land Use Plan identifies the western half of the parking lot as an appropriate location for a recreation facility. The eastern half of the parking lot should remain, preserving about 160 parking spaces.

📍 364 Orchard Drive

The parking lot at 364 Orchard Drive is about 5 acres and provides about 410 parking spaces. It is the largest parking lot in DownTown. The Land Use Plan identifies the southern half of the lot as an appropriate location for a mixed residential development including multi-family and single-family attached. The parking supplied for this type of development would be private parking for residents and guests.

The Land Use Plan identifies the northern portion of the parking lot as mixed-use. Should this area develop into mixed-use, the site plan should include parking for DownTown patrons. The amount of parking supplied should be in line with the requirements of the Village's Unified Development Ordinance.



Outlot Development

This map identifies parking lots that should be considered for subdivision and development.



Foster New Development Including Multi-Family and Mixed-Use

Several key parcels and parking lots surrounding the Downtown core (Main Street between Forest Boulevard and Cunningham Drive) should be targeted for mixed-use development to provide additional population to invigorate the area and support local businesses (See *Multi-Family & Mixed-Use Development Map, page 35*). While the demand for additional commercial space is uncertain, the Village should remain open to proposals for multi-family development in addition to mixed-use. The Land Use plan identifies several key locations as appropriate for new multi-family and mixed-use development.

If these sites develop, an adequate supply of parking for Village facilities, and special events should be maintained. The number of parking spaces required will ultimately be determined by the specific commercial uses within the development. For example, the Unified Development Ordinance requires 1 parking space per 60 square feet of public seating area for bar, tavern, and restaurant uses while retail goods establishments require 1 parking space per 300 square feet of gross floor area.

152 Main Street

This site is located on a critical parcel along Main Street that both frames the corridor and functions as a highly visible gateway for visitors from Western Avenue. As Downtown becomes a larger destination for entertainment and shopping, filling in key parcels such as 152 Main Street will be crucial. Currently the site is underutilized as a parking lot that hosts the Main Street Market. If transformed into a moderate-to high-density mixed-use development, Main Street would have a new residential and commercial anchor that could catalyze investment and draw in visitors from nearby Western Avenue. Past plans have repeatedly called for this, and the presence of the Market accentuates this need. A mixed-use development of this nature should be articulated toward Main Street with commercial and entertainment uses facing the street. The building should have a secondary frontage along Forest Boulevard to hold the corner of Main Street and Forest Boulevard.

If mixed-use is deemed infeasible, then multi-family residential could also be appropriate as it would bring more residents to Downtown, help frame Main Street, attract visitors from Western Avenue, and catalyze new development.

Development Scenario

This site may accommodate a three-story mixed-use building with retail on the ground floor and multi-family residential above.

152 Main Street Development Scenario Parking Requirements

Use	Gross Floor Area	# of Units	Required Parking
Retail	20,625 sq. ft.	N/A	69 spaces
Multi-family	41,250 sq. ft.	16 units per floor*	32 spaces

*assumes average unit size of 1,000 square feet and 20% of gross floor area allocated to interior circulation, electrical, and HVAC

202 Forest Boulevard

This vacant building was recently purchased by a church that will positively contribute to the character of DownTown. However, into the future, this location should be considered for mixed-use, oriented towards Lakewood Boulevard.

Development Scenario

This site may accommodate a two-story mixed-use building with a restaurant, bar, or tavern on the ground floor and residential above. The current use has an agreement with the Village to allow patron parking in the parking lot along Lakewood Boulevard. Should this property redevelop in the future, the Village should consider coming to a similar agreement with the future property owner.

350 Main Street

Located at the corner of Main Street and Cunningham Drive, this site buffers the existing residential area of DownTown from the commercial buildings on Main Street. The lot should be developed as a small-scale multi-family site or potentially a mixed-use site with retail on the first floor and housing above (if the market eventually accommodates the commercial space).

Development Scenario

The property at 350 Main Street can accommodate a three-story multi-family development. The eastern half of the adjacent parking lot can be utilized for residents parking.

202 Forest Blvd Development Scenario Parking Requirements

Use	Gross Floor Area	# of Units	Required Parking
Restaurant, bar, or tavern	7,500 sq. ft.	N/A	75 parking space*
Multi-family	7,500 sq. ft.	6 units per floor**	6 spaces

**assumes 60% of the gross floor area is allocated to public seating area*

***assumes average unit size of 1,000 square feet and 20% of gross floor area allocated to interior circulation, electrical, and HVAC*

350 Main Street Development Scenario Parking Requirements

Use	Gross Floor Area	# of Units	Required Parking
Multi-family	21,000 sq. ft.	8 units per floor*	24 spaces

**assumes average unit size of 1,000 square feet and 20% of gross floor area allocated to interior circulation, electrical, and HVAC*

364 Orchard Drive (North)

This site should be considered for mixed-use development with commercial on the ground floor and residential above. The development should be oriented along Main Street to encourage activity along Main Street near the DownTown core (Main Street between Forest Boulevard and Cunningham Drive). The development should have a secondary frontage along Orchard Drive to compliment potential outlot development on the commercial site on the west side of Orchard Drive, outside of the DownTown boundary.

Development Scenario

This site may accommodate a three-story mixed-use building with both retail and restaurant, bar, or tavern uses on the ground floor and multi-family residential above.

364 Orchard Drive (South)

This block fronts Orchard Drive from Indianwood Boulevard to Main Street and is a good location for residential development that can support Main Street commercial uses. It is the largest of the sites and represents the largest opportunity to infuse DownTown with new residents. The lot should ideally be programmed for a mix of densities including single family attached and multi-family. Future development should complement the adjacent residential area directly north of Main Street, and also include updated multi-family housing of a similar style to those found in nearby cooperatives and apartment complexes.

Development Scenario

The southern half of the 364 Orchard Drive site can accommodate a mix of single-family attached and multi-family residential. All residential unit types can be between two and three-stories tall. Single-family attached units parking may be accommodated as attached garages or in a shared parking lot.

364 Orchard Dr (N) Development Scenario Parking Requirements

Use	Gross Floor Area	# of Units	Required Parking
Retail	5,500	N/A	18 parking spaces
Restaurant, bar, or tavern	5,000	N/A	50 parking space*
Multi-family	21,000	8 units per floor**	16 spaces

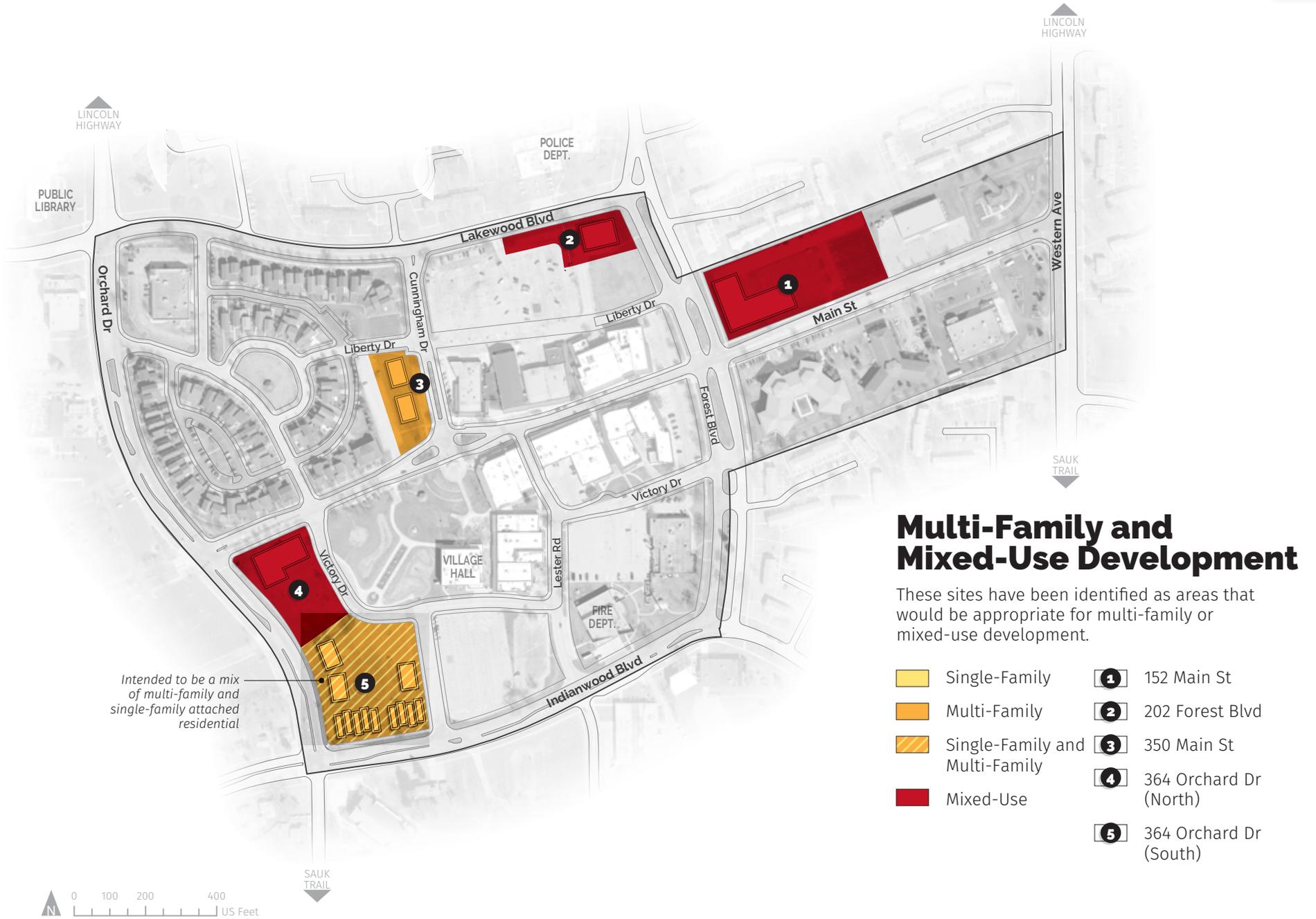
*assumes 60% of the gross floor area is allocated to public seating area

**assumes average unit size of 1,000 square feet and 20% of gross floor area allocated to interior circulation, electrical, and HVAC

364 Orchard Dr (S) Development Scenario Parking Requirements

Use	Gross Floor Area	# of Units	Required Parking
Single-family attached (rowhouse dwellings)	1,200	9 units	9 spaces
Multi-family	21,000	8 units per floor*	24 spaces

*assumes average unit size of 1,000 square feet and 20% of gross floor area allocated to interior circulation, electrical, and HVAC



Make DownTown a Destination

Key goals of the Master Plan are to make DownTown a destination for residents and visitors from Park Forest and the south suburbs, build upon the employee base, and increase daytime population. DownTown currently serves residents well with its mix of retailers and services, but there is a desire for the district to become a greater regional destination with visitors from the broader area to experience a unique environment where they can browse shops along Main Street, dine out, take in the arts, enjoy the farmers market in the summer and ice rink in the winter, and see a concert on the Village Green.

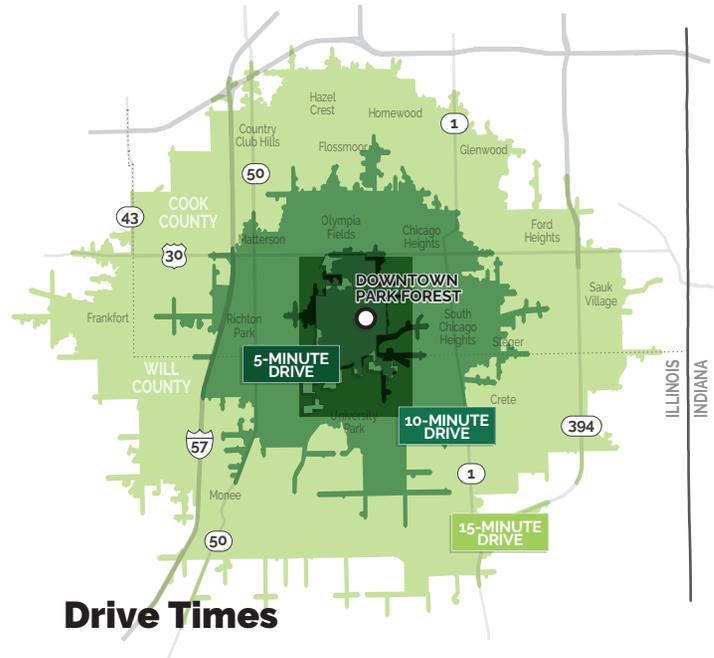
To achieve this vision, the visitor experience must be used to differentiate Main Street from nearby competition and draw from a larger market area. Market analysis shows there is potential for convenience type shops as well as some retail and food/drink establishments that draw a wider number of people. Businesses in this area will not do well if they seek to compete with the auto-oriented and chain establishments that line Lincoln Highway within a 10-minute drive time.

Note: As noted in Key Outreach Themes (page 18), the community expressed their desire to avoid any new liquor stores in DownTown. The Food & Drink industry that is utilized for this Retail Gap includes establishments that prepare meals, snacks, or beverages for immediate consumption. This category does not include liquor store establishments.

Retail Gap

	Drive Time: 5 minute radius	Drive Time: 10 minute radius	Drive Time: 15 minute radius
Total Retail Trade and Food & Drink	\$194,493,387	-\$287,922,374	\$275,946,334
Total Retail Trade	\$177,027,824	-\$275,970,294	\$239,708,037
Total Food & Drink	\$17,465,563	-\$11,952,081	\$36,238,297

Source: Esri and Data Axle. Esri 2021 Updated Demographics. Esri 2017 Retail MarketPlace. ©2021 Esri. ©2017 Data Axle, Inc. All rights reserved.

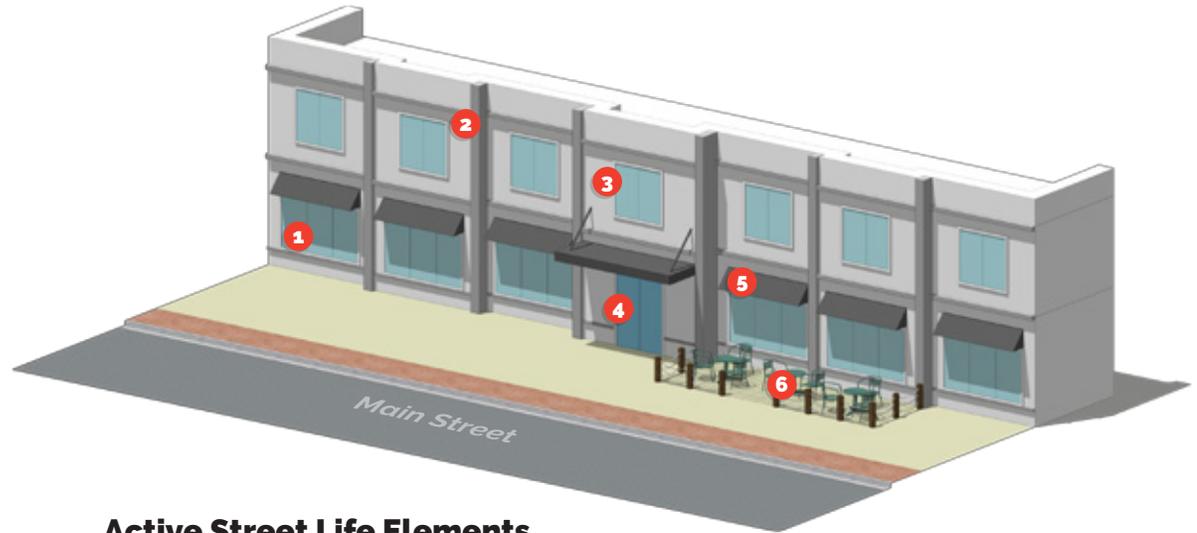


Retail Gap

The accompanying table illustrates the retail, food, and drink trade within a 5, 10, and 15-minute driving time. This table shows that DownTown has stiff competition from the retail establishments within a 10-minute drive, which includes the commercial centers near the I-57 interchange and along Lincoln Highway. However, there is an opportunity to capture the market potential within a 15-minute drive time with unique designation retail uses. There is also good potential for local-serving convenience retail, filling the retail gap within the 5-minute drive of DownTown.

Ensure Development Contributes to an Active Streetlife

To ensure DownTown becomes an active and vibrant entertainment destination, it is essential that buildings treat Main Street as their “front door.” Primary entrances, outdoor dining areas, porches and balconies should be located along Main Street. High levels of window and door transparency should be encouraged, and blank walls should be minimized. Building frontages should be used to provide a transition between private property and the public real, by promoting interaction between buildings and activity along Main Street, a welcoming and safe environment for residents, business patrons, and employees that encourages social interaction will be fostered.



Active Street Life Elements

This diagram shows some of the elements that can contribute to a more active street life on Main Street

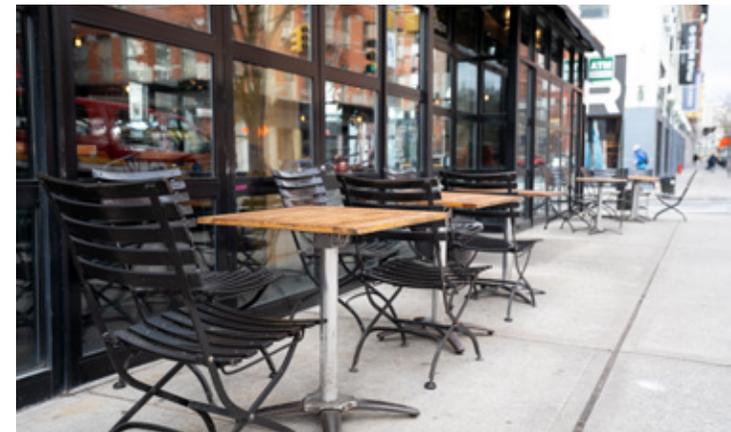
- 1 High Level of Transparency
- 2 Building Articulation
- 3 Minimal Blank Walls
- 4 Front Entrance on Main Street
- 5 Canopies, Patios, Balconies
- 6 Outdoor Dining on Main Street



High Level of Transparency



Front Entrance on Main Street



Outdoor Dining

Update DownTown Covenants

The DownTown Declaration of Covenants, Conditions, Restrictions, and Easements (DownTown Covenants) were last updated in 1997, which reflect the recommendations outlined in the 1997 DownTown Master Plan. The DownTown Covenants should be updated to align with this DownTown Master Plan and should reflect the current operation requirements for DownTown.

The DownTown Covenants should be reviewed and updated, if necessary, every two to five years. The Department of Economic Development and Planning should be responsible for this task and updated DownTown Covenants should be adopted by the Village Board. The Downtown Management Office and the Director of Economic Development and Planning should hold the covenants on file.

Create a Place for the Community

The Village should pursue the creation of a multi-use indoor/outdoor community center as a standalone destination (*See Places for the Community Map, page 39*). To house this space, the Village should acquire the vacant Park Forest Theatre building at 340 Main Street and dovetail programming with the proposed multi-use sports courts on the adjacent Lakewood/Cunningham lot (*See Bolster Year-Round Events and Activities, page 52*).

The current community recreation center is not easily accessible to residents because it is located within the Michelle Obama School of Technology and the Arts. The proposed facility would be centrally located and offer a gathering space for exercise and socialization during both the warm and cold weather months. It will also complement existing community spaces in DownTown, including Freedom Hall, Village Green, and the Park Forest Library, while adding a new attraction to catalyze investment and increase quality of life.



Community Spaces and Events



Places for the Community

This map identifies existing locations and proposed new location for places for the community to gather.

Existing

- 1 Village Green
- 2 Village Hall
- 3 Dining on the Green
- 4 Theater 47
- 5 Tall Grass
- 6 Main Street Market

Proposed

- 7 320 to 340 Main Street
- 8 Lakewood Boulevard
- 9 Forest Boulevard Linear Park



Reestablish the Merchant's Association

DownTown Park Forest once had an active Merchant's Association, which has been inactive for the past several years. The current DownTown Covenants note that, should a Merchant's Association be formed, each owner agrees to join and maintain membership. A Merchant's Association would provide business owners with numerous benefits such as:

- Networking opportunities
- Local business advice
- Advocacy on the behalf of members
- Stronger sense of business community
- Access to greater resources

The formation of a Merchant's Association can allow for the development and deployment of property management communication tools. Additionally, the association can put a larger emphasis on events that are not managed by Village staff, such as the Art Fair which is organized and hosted by Tall Grass Gallery. The National Main Street Program and International Downtown Association can be utilized as resources.

The creation and facilitation of a successful Merchant's Association requires the time and dedication of local businesses. The Village should establish a step-by-step guide for the formation and management of a Merchant's Association and provide this information to DownTown business owners. Some initial steps include:

- Engage local businesses to build support and participation
- Gather information on previous organizations, resources, and existing planning and economic development initiatives
- Create an inventory of existing businesses

Align Zoning to Planning Efforts

The Village should review the current zoning within DownTown and amend as needed to match planning efforts (*See Land & Zoning Alignment Map, page 41*). For example, the property at 350 Main Street has been consistently planned as either mixed-use residential, attached residential, or multi-family residential. It is currently zoned as C-2 Mixed-Use which has the following use regulations:

- **Permitted By-Right.** Dwellings above the ground floor and residential care facilities
- **Special Use.** Live/work and multi-family housing
- **Not Permitted.** Community residence, rowhomes, single-family homes, and two-family homes

If a builder ultimately shows interest in building single-family attached or multi-family housing, and a market for mixed-use does not materialize, then the current C-2 zoning at 350 Main Street would prevent the builder from moving forward with the development.

There are several options to amend the Village's Unified Development Ordinance to provide greater flexibility in the types of development allowed within DownTown. Options include the adoption of an overlay or allowing single-family attached uses as a special use. These options are discussed below. Ultimately, the Village should remain open to proposals for multi-family development.

Adopt an Overlay

As no other districts exist in Park Forest that allow the desired mixed-use and moderate- to high-density residential, the Village should consider adopting an overlay to the C-2 district within DownTown to allow townhomes, duplexes, and multi-family as of right.

Allow as Special Use

Currently, multi-family housing is allowed within the C-2 district as a special use. The approval of these uses requires the Planning and Zoning Commission to review the development proposal and grant a special use permit. This process allows the Village to discuss the development proposal and determine if it is appropriate. The Village should consider allowing townhomes, duplexes, and other two-family housing types as a Special Use within the C-2 district.



Land and Zoning Alignment

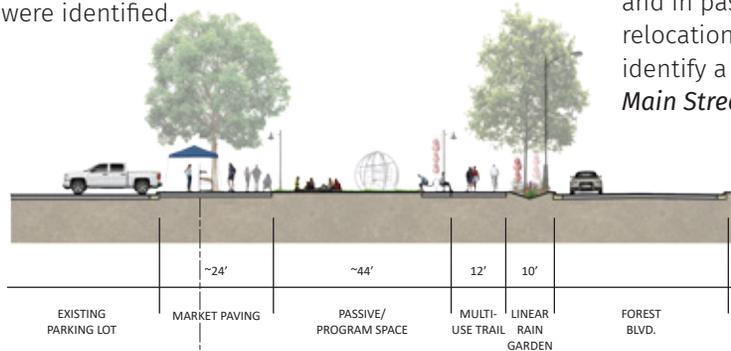
This map shows the parcels where the Land Use Plan and the current zoning district do not align.

- Single-Family
- Multi-Family
- Single-Family and Multi-Family



Find A Home for the Main Street Market

The Main Street Market is currently located in the parking lot at the northeast corner of Main Street and Forest Boulevard. This site has frequently been identified as a potential site for new development throughout the outreach process and within past planning efforts. During the outreach process for the *Park Forest DownTown Master Plan*, several alternative locations for the market were identified.



Forest Boulevard Linear Park Cross Section, Looking North

These alternative locations include:

- The parking lot at the southeast corner of Lake-wood Boulevard and Cunningham Drive
- The parking lot at the southeast corner of Main Street and Orchard Drive
- The parking lot at the northeast corner of Indi-anwood Boulevard and Orchard Drive

Like the current location of the Main Street Market, these sites have also been identified as potential development sites during the outreach process and in past planning efforts. To avoid continual relocation of the market, the Village should identify a more permanent location (*See Potential Main Street Market Location Map, page 43*).

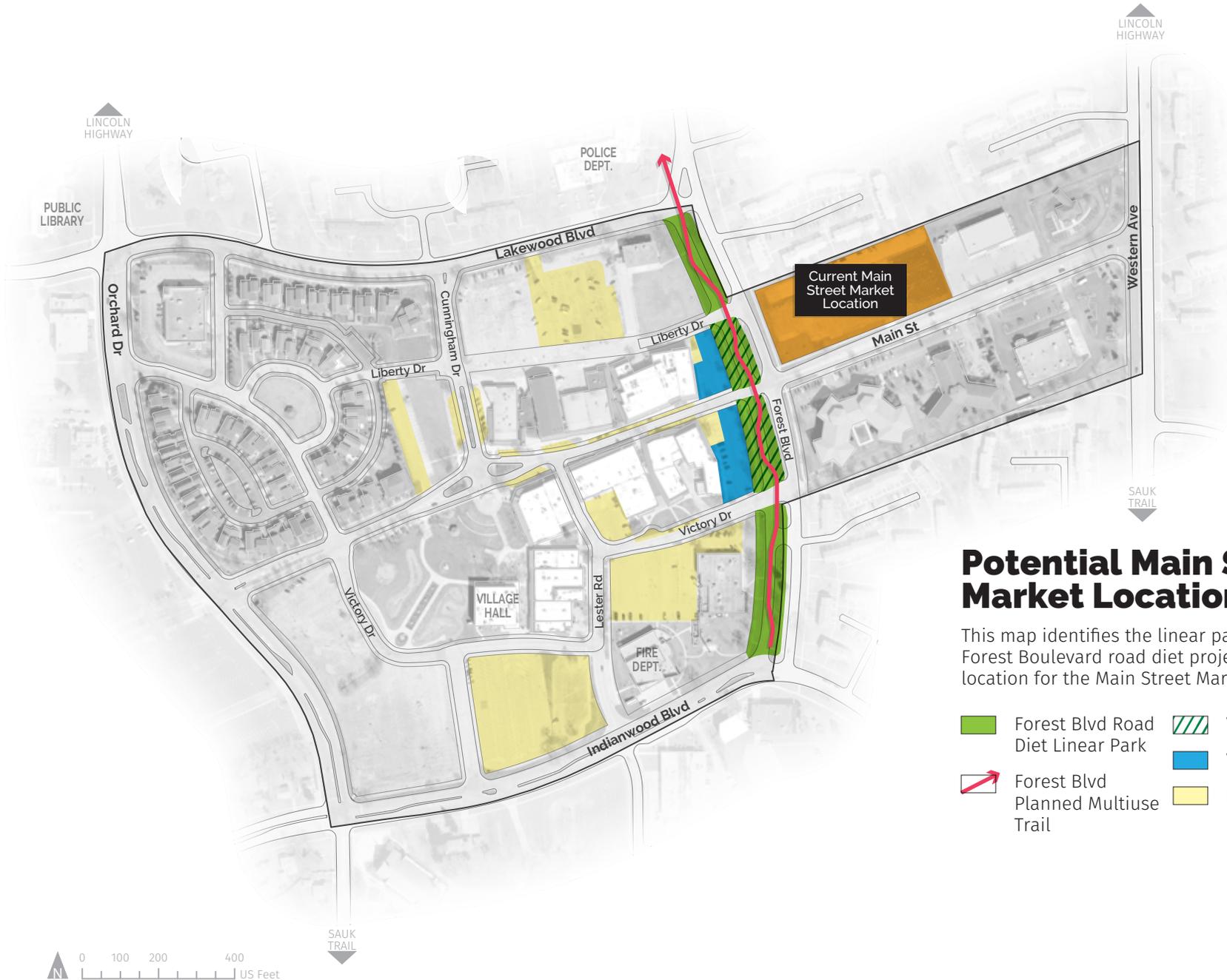
Forest Boulevard Linear Park

The Village plans to implement a road diet along Forest Boulevard. This improvement includes the addition of a linear park along the west side of the road. This new park space could be utilized by the market and improved with amenities like decorative paving to denote market stalls, festival lighting, access to electricity or shade canopies to provide a more formal dedication of space to the market.

The parking lots just west of Forest Boulevard could provide space for vendor parking and staging. Additionally, the Village could potentially partner with the owner of the lot at the corner of Liberty Drive and Forest Boulevard to provide additional space for the market.



Main Street Market Events



Potential Main Street Market Location

This map identifies the linear park created by the Forest Boulevard road diet project as a potential location for the Main Street Market.

- Forest Blvd Road Diet Linear Park
- Vendor Locations
- Vendor Parking
- Patron Parking
- Forest Blvd Planned Multiuse Trail

6

PLACEMAKING

Placemaking helps define a downtown's identity and contributes to a unique sense of place that differentiates it from other areas of the Village and the region. Placemaking combines branding, beautification, and functional infrastructure to create new draws to the community, encouraging formal and informal social interactions. The Village should pursue efforts that incorporate placemaking elements. Public gathering spaces such as parks and community centers should be used in combination with decorative signage and lighting, seating areas, planters, and other beautification elements to create cohesive and inviting destinations.

PUBLIC ART

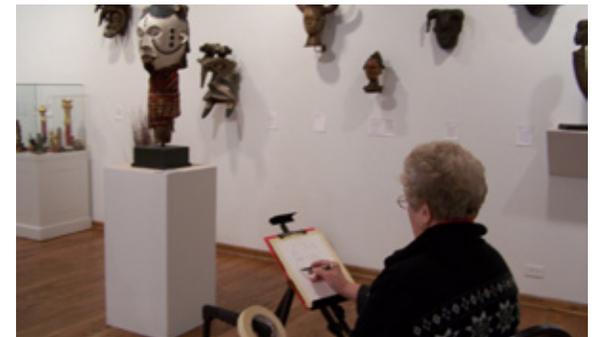
Public art is one of the most effective ways to make a community more attractive. Expanding the artistic and cultural offerings within a city or neighborhood encourages economic development and tourism, while providing a more interesting and engaging space for residents and employees.

The Village of Park Forest, particularly in DownTown, already has a thriving arts community with art galleries such as Tall Grass, studios such as Muzicnet and Fieldcrest School of Performing Arts, and theaters such as John Ruffin's Theater 47. Additionally, DownTown has multiple art installations and murals for people to enjoy. The Village should continue to foster the arts and cultural community within DownTown.

Encourage Unique Public Art Displays

To elevate Park Forest's profile as a destination for arts and culture, the Village should continue work to encourage unique public art displays, interactive installations, festivals, activities, and live music.

- Incorporate permanent and temporary public art installations and activities into Village initiatives *and* events.
- Conduct an analysis of all Village owned properties and rights-of-way to identify locations for public art installations in DownTown.
- Coordinate with business owners to identify additional spaces at key locations throughout DownTown, including blank façades that can be used for murals depicting local culture, history, and stories important to Park Forest.
- Coordinate with local artists and students to create artistic designs for Village amenities. The Village can engage students in conceptualizing designing and building unique gateway features, wayfinding elements, bicycle racks, and street furniture for installations throughout DownTown.
- Incorporate public art into DownTown gateway and wayfinding signage (*See Establish a Gateway and Wayfinding System, page 57*) to further establish DownTown as the community's center for arts and culture.



Park Forest Public Art



AR Overlay



AR Overlay



Splash Pad

Incorporate Interactive Displays

Interactive installations are simple but extremely effective ways of activating public spaces and should be strategically placed in Village Green and DownTown (See *Public Arts & Culture Map, page 48*). Fixtures ranging from traditional playgrounds to more contemporary equipment can enliven public spaces, encourage social interaction, and bring people joy. The installation of art that people want to take photos of and with to share with others also can help to attract new visitors to DownTown.

Interactive games and art displays of this nature should be strategically installed in Village Green, along the planned trail linear park on Forest Boulevard, and other future public spaces within DownTown as fun and engaging attractions for visitors of all ages. Examples of interactive displays include:

- **Life-size tabletop games.** Examples include life-size Connect-Four, Jenga, and Chess.
- **Musical swings.** Riding on musical swings results in different notes from musical instruments, creating fun melodies as multiple swings are used.

- **LED Seesaw.** LED lighting stripes tucked inside the body of a seesaw which move back and forth, following where the weight is shifted. This display demonstrates the kinetic physics of playground equipment in a fun learning experience.
- **Educational Murals.** Creating wall features or sidewalk features to educate people as to the history or ecology of the area around them makes the surroundings much more interactive.
- **AR Overlays.** Using simple apps and coding, it is possible to create an interactive space on people's phones. Using their camera, people can learn about the art and ecosystem around them.
- **Splash Pad.** Splash pads can be viewed as interactive fountains aimed at providing family-friendly recreation. Splash pads are usually designed so that standing water does not collect in the water play area.
- **Intergenerational Playground:** Designs vary but are focused on providing equipment for younger and older generations alike. Playground equipment should be enjoyable for children of all ages and mobilities. Low-impact fitness equipment can be utilized by older generations to promote physical activity.



LED Seesaw



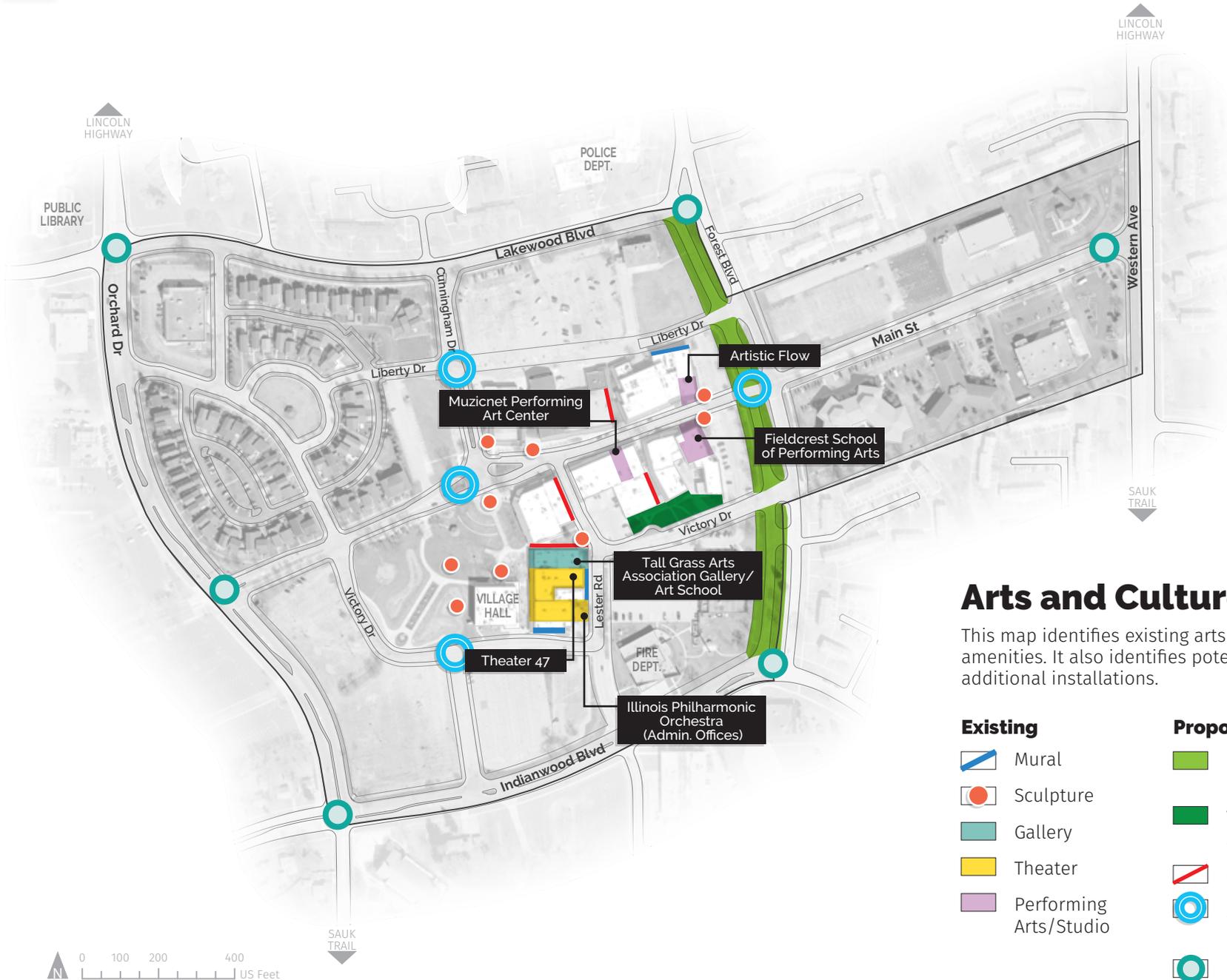
Life-Size Tabletop Game



Musical Swings



Musical Swings



Arts and Culture

This map identifies existing arts and cultural amenities. It also identifies potential locations for additional installations.

Existing

-  Mural
-  Sculpture
-  Gallery
-  Theater
-  Performing Arts/Studio

Proposed

-  Forest Blvd Linear Park Sculpture Area
-  Victory Dr Sculpture Area
-  Mural
-  Sculpture Intersection
-  Gateway and Wayfinding Art

Establish Arts and Culture Coalition

Establishing an Arts and Culture Coalition would organize the management of existing amenities, while building a network of arts, culture, and entertainment uses. This coalition could be comprised of local artists, gallerists, theater organizations, and any other group which has a vested interest in arts and culture. Providing a structure to the development of these features will ensure that they are created and placed in a manner which benefits everyone who wishes to experience them. With this coalition, those who are interested in encouraging arts and culture would have an official avenue to benefit their community.

Case Study Southeast, NY

One successful example of this is the Cultural Arts Coalition in the town of Southeast, New York. This non-profit organization has contracts to redevelop cultural sites within the community, connects residents to programming opportunities throughout the community, and hosts several events to engage the people they serve. This model could serve DownTown Park Forest, with the existing theaters, galleries, and local artists who could be involved.

Market and Promote Park Forest Arts and Culture

The Village should market itself as a regional center for arts and culture. Marketing efforts can be used to inform residents and visitors of the Village's numerous arts and cultural resources. Marketing partnerships among arts and cultural groups/organizations should be included in this effort. The Village should build on their existing arts and culture infrastructure. The Park Forest Art Fair is nationally renowned, having won several awards in the last decade.

Additionally, the Village already hosts concerts and festivals throughout the warmer months. However, the information regarding these events is not readily accessible, and should be promoted more widely. The information regarding arts and culture events in Park Forest is not readily available on the website and could easily be included in the home page slideshows. Additionally, the use of social media is important to spreading information, and the Village's presence is currently limited to Facebook. Expanding the social media reach of the Village, through arts and culture events, would tap into the \$2.4 billion arts and culture industry that encompasses Illinois' northeast region.

Encourage Public Involvement in the Arts

The community should be actively involved in Village initiatives related to arts and culture. This includes educating the public on the significance of these assets and strengthening the relations with and participation of local creatives. People connect with the arts in many ways – as visual artists and theater professionals, as dedicated amateurs, or as consumers. The Village should build upon this and partner with local artists and cultural groups to foster inclusivity within the arts community. Creating displays of public art that people can enjoy for free is one of the best ways to encourage artistic and cultural engagement in communities.

Given the support for arts and culture, especially in DownTown Park Forest, people should be encouraged to share their art in public spaces. It would be possible to present art made by local students in public buildings or public areas. The Village could hold a contest for local artists to submit their work to be featured on promotional material for the Park Forest Art Fair or a contest for local artist to design the Village sticker. Community theater groups could hold shows on the Village Green in warmer months, in addition to the wide variety of concerts already offered during Main Street Nights. Ensuring that people can interact with art for free is an important first step to encouraging involvement in the arts. By giving people a space to share their endeavors, the artistic community will grow.



Implement a Percent for the Arts Policy

The Village should consider implementing a “Percent for the Arts” policy to require new Village-led projects or projects receiving public funding to allocate a percentage of the construction budget towards public art either on-site or into a separate fund. Successful case studies should first be examined in comparable communities to determine the appropriate percentage amount, as well as whether the policy applies to all development, qualifying new development above a certain budget threshold/land use type/acreage, or within a defined area.

The Village also should determine whether this policy will only apply to funding on-site public art installations part of a new development or expanded to fund additional initiatives like off-site public art installations, maintenance of existing art and cultural assets, non-profit arts and culture organizations, and historic preservation projects. Large cities use these types of funds in large buildings and new construction to create permanent art, but the Village could create policy more suited to the local art scene, creating a more effective version for their needs. The program could also be tied to the Village’s capital budget.

Case Study Schaumburg, IL

A successful example of this policy is found in Schaumburg, IL. Active since 2000, their program is linked to the capital improvement budget where one percent is set aside for the creation of public art in the community each year. This has led to new sculptures in several locations including the Schaumburg Metra Railway Station, Schaumburg Town Square, and the Trickster Art Gallery.

EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

A sense of place is not only defined by the built environment, but also the people in a community. Community events organized by the Village, stakeholders and residents give the community a chance to shine and show what makes it unique. To showcase DownTown and bring together residents from in and around Park Forest, the Community should support grass roots activities and initiatives, bolster year-round programming, utilize Main Street as a festival street, and define a storage space to facilitate events.

Define a Space for Storage

Hosting events and activities requires equipment which needs to be stored when not in use. The Village should explore the possibility of using some of its available basement space as a location for storage. There are several options to consider for potential storage locations.

Basement Storage Space

An analysis of the basement spaces has identified the west side of Building 1 and Building 6b as areas that could be appropriate for Village or tenant storage (See *Basement Assessments and Modifications*, page 94, and *Basement Assessments*, page 110).

Pavilion

The Village may also consider a more permanent solution, such as a pavilion, that could also support events and activities in DownTown. A pavilion could be constructed in Village Green with storage for equipment, as well as restrooms, seating and potentially a snack bar or vending machines (See *Activity Spaces Map*, page 53).

Storage Container

Alternatively, the Village should explore the use of a container unit for storing seasonal items. The container unit could be decorated with a mural or interactive public art and either located DownTown year-round or relocated to another site in the months it is not in use. The storage container could also be used to sell concessions or rent ice-skates for a winter ink rink (See *Bolster Year-Round Events and Activities*, page 52).

Community Recreation Facility

Should the Village acquire the old theater building to be converted into a community recreation facility, the renovations can include a space that would accommodate Village storage. The renovations could also include a public restroom facility (See *Create a Space for the Community*, page 38).



Pavilions



Storage Container

Bolster Year-Round Events and Activities

Much of the outdoor entertainment and activities are dependent on the season. In the summer, Park Forest draws in residents and visitors to Down-Town with activities such as Main Street Nights and the Farmers Market. Community engagement for this planning process found that there is great resident interest in maintaining and expanding these events; input emphasized winter programming to complement the already strong summer offerings. Based on this feedback, the Village should work to develop a space that could be utilized for winter activities and events such as seasonal ice-skating rinks and holiday markets. This would help activate DownTown year-round (See Activity Spaces Map, page 53).

To accomplish this, the Village should first acquire the old Park Forest Theatre building and convert it into a more accessible community recreation center. Then, multiuse sports courts (maintained and programmed by the recreation center) should be constructed on the existing parking lot at the corner of Cunningham and Lakewood. Once constructed, this space should be equipped for flexible use as a seasonal event space. New events will in turn support additional economic activity and help to create a more robust year-round economy. The Village could also utilize elements such as lighting, music, and heat sources to create an inviting winter space.



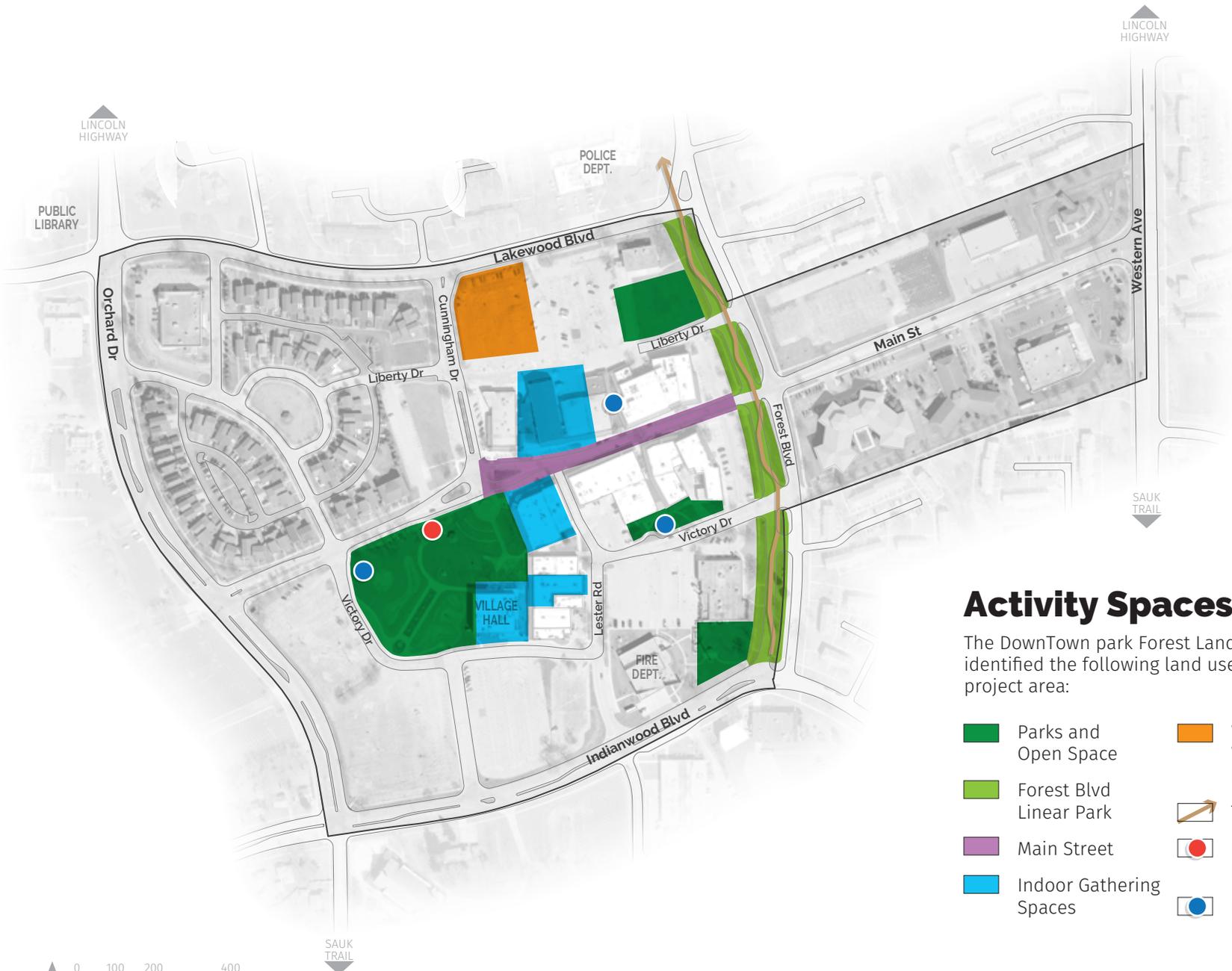
Park Forest Event



Ice Skating Rink



Park Forest Events and Activities



Activity Spaces

The DownTown park Forest Land Use Plan has identified the following land uses within the project area:

- Parks and Open Space
- Warm & Cold Weather Sport Facility
- Forest Blvd Linear Park
- Main Street
- Indoor Gathering Spaces
- Trail
- Potential Pavilion Location
- Potential Pocket Park Locations



Support Grass Roots Initiatives

The Village should empower local organizations and grass roots initiatives to assist with achieving the vision for DownTown Park Forest. The Village should encourage and support local activism for all things DownTown by fostering and promoting an “open door policy” with Village officials and staff, encouraging greater communication between passionate individuals and the Village as it relates to DownTown. Consider hosting an annual “DownTown Idea Forum” to hear and discuss ideas from interested residents, business owners, and stakeholders.

Utilize Main Street as a Festival Street

A festival street is a specific portion of the street that is intended to host community events and can be closed to vehicular traffic. Moveable bollards and planters can be used to temporarily close off the street to traffic during designated events, providing a unique venue where people can gather and socialize. A festival street should be considered for Main Street between Cunningham Drive and Forest Boulevard.

Traffic Management

Should Main Street be temporarily closed to vehicular traffic, DownTown’s existing roadway network would continue to allow vehicular circulation and access to parking facilities via Liberty Drive and Victory Drive (*See Main Street Festivals Map, page 55*).

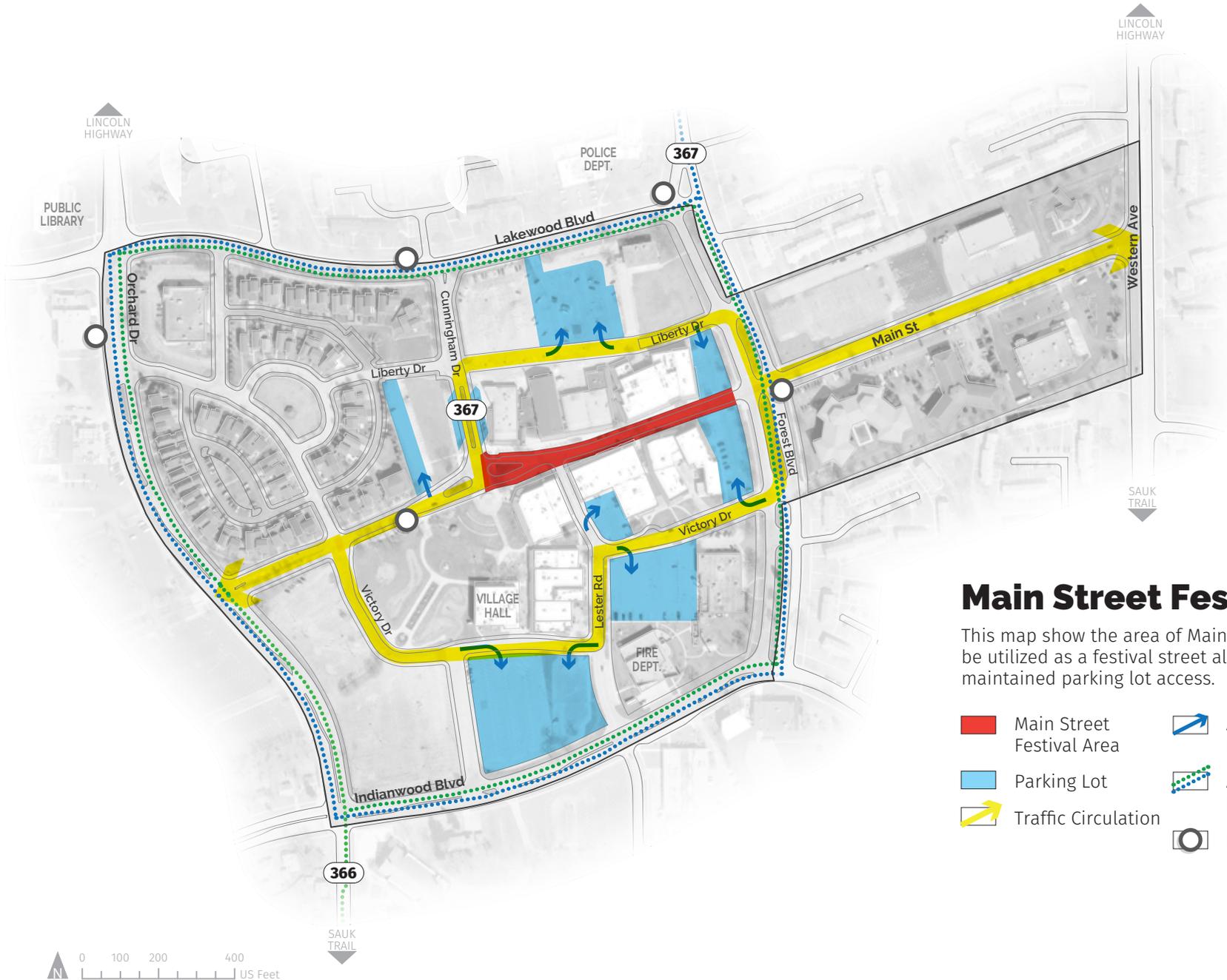
There are two Pace bus routes that run along Main Street – the 366 bus and the 367 bus. During festivals, these routes can be diverted east along Indianwood Boulevard, then north on Forest Boulevard. This reroute, however, would require the temporary relocation of the bus stop at Main Street and Forest Boulevard from the southwest corner to the southeast corner of the intersection. Coordination with Pace will be necessary.

With numerous parallel routes and all parking lots accessible from other routes, Main Street is an excellent candidate for special event closures. During special events Main Street would be closed from Lester Road to Forest Boulevard. Vehicles would be able to access all parking locations before reaching the section of closed road, and Liberty Drive and Victory Drive would provide simple and short detours for any though traffic.



Festival Street Events





Main Street Festivals

This map show the area of Main Street that could be utilized as a festival street along with maintained parking lot access.

- Main Street Festival Area
- Parking Lot
- Access to Parking Lot
- Alternative Pace Bus Route
- Bus Stop
- Traffic Circulation

DOWNTOWN SIGNAGE

Informational, wayfinding, and gateway signage help a community foster a clear sense of identity and place. Good branding can introduce personality, storytelling, and opportunities to capture the essence of a community, creating a stronger relationship between a place and its people.

DownTown should pursue an updated and modern signage system that clarifies its brand and makes the environment more navigable for both residents and visitors.

Informational signage orients people to their surroundings and offers context that may not be immediately clear; an informational board might describe the businesses in an area, their hours, and details on upcoming events. Gateway signs and wayfinding signs are tools used to get visitors from Point A to Point B, but they can also communicate a community's identity. Effective signs help people navigate and understand their environment while internalizing the community's brand, creating a strong sense of place and reinforcing a neighborhood's unique personality.

Enhance Informational Signage System

The Village has existing informational signage in high traffic areas such as the intersection of Lincoln Highway and Orchard Drive that inform travelers of some of DownTown's businesses. However, this signage could be refreshed with improved message sign and simplified messaging. In addition, the Village should consider installing an additional informational signage at the intersection of Western Avenue and Sauk Trail and the intersection of Orchard Drive and Indianwood Boulevard to increase the reach of DownTown. This sign should advertise businesses and direct travels towards DownTown. Informational signage should be a similar style/design to DownTown gateway and wayfinding signage.



Gateway and Informational Signage

Establish a Gateway and Wayfinding System

In an effort to announce one's arrival into DownTown, a gateway treatment should be employed at locations on the periphery, at key entry points into DownTown (*See Gateway & Wayfinding Map, page 58*). In addition to gateway signage at the periphery of DownTown, additional signage at key intersections throughout the Village, such as the intersection of Route 30/Lincoln Highway and Orchard Drive could be installed to help inform travelers of DownTown's location.

Wayfinding features should be located in key locations such as intersections and entry points to direct people to destinations in DownTown. Wayfinding signage outside of DownTown should direct travelers to DownTown. Wayfinding signage within DownTown should direct travels to specific destinations.

Existing and future informational, gateway, and wayfinding signage should be a new uniform style/design. Additional wayfinding signage at key intersections throughout the Village should be considered. Potential wayfinding signage locations include:

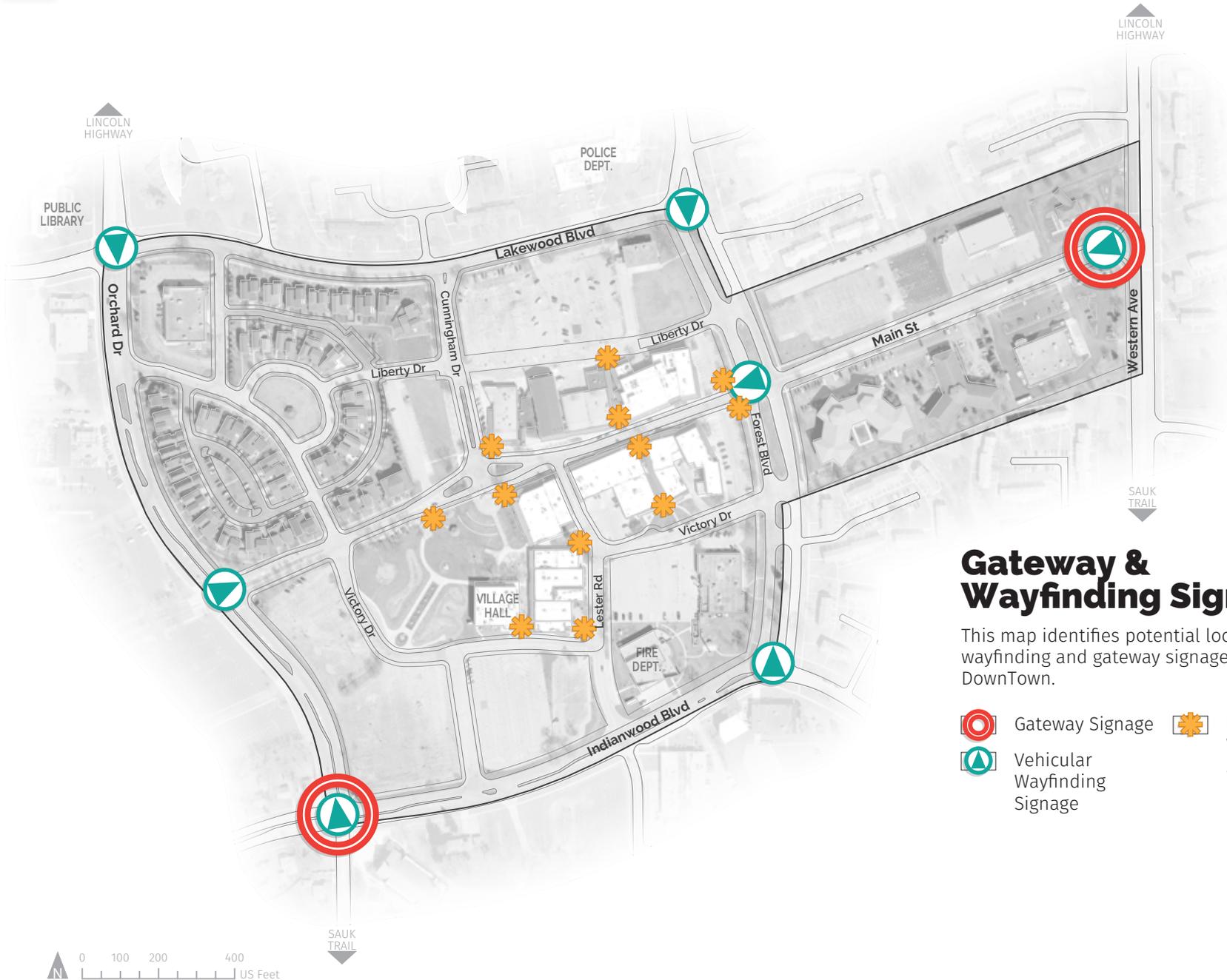
- Westwood Drive and Orchard Drive
- Westwood Drive/26th Street at Western Avenue
- Sauk Trail and Western Avenue
- Sauk Trail and Orchard Drive
- Sauk Trail and Lakewood Boulevard
- Indianwood Boulevard and Blackhawk Drive
- Indianwood Boulevard and Monee Road
- Orchard Drive and Route 30/Lincoln Highway
- Main Street & Western Avenue
- Indianwood Boulevard & Western Avenue
- Indianwood Boulevard & Sauk Trail



Community-wide Wayfinding Signage



Gateway and Wayfinding Signage



Gateway & Wayfinding Signage

This map identifies potential locations for wayfinding and gateway signage through DownTown.

-  Gateway Signage
-  Vehicular Wayfinding Signage
-  Pedestrian Wayfinding Signage



Façade Signage

A variety of façade signage types and locations increase the difficulty of locating various businesses and creates an inconsistent appearance throughout the DownTown corridor. To simplify the identification of destinations by visitors and create a more cohesive appearance, tenants' façade-mounted signage should be located in a consistent and visible location. Providing enhanced standards for sign-type will create a cleaner appearance and consistent visual cue for patrons seeking out specific businesses in the DownTown area.

Façade Sign Locations

The building façade area located directly above a tenant's space is ideal for the placement of main signage for businesses in the DownTown area. This location would increase visibility of signs from both the street and the sidewalk for vehicular and pedestrian traffic alike. However, these façade areas are currently limited due to the ridge height of the existing canopy system and fairly low parapet heights. This location is further obstructed by the depth of the canopy in most locations making it currently impossible to view from the sidewalk. In relation to the recommendations for the Canopy and Façade Strategies, a new "signage area" should be considered at a consistent height of 12-ft to 16-ft, and above any remaining or proposed canopies, pending the renovation of any façade heights.

Façade Sign Types

A variety of sign types can be observed in the DownTown area, ranging from unlit die-cut and rectangular-field signs to back-lit box and channel-letter signs. Back-lit individual channel letters are recommended as an initial consideration for a standard sign type. This type of sign is easily identifiable during day-time or night-time hours, and does not obstruct the visibility of façade materials or colors.



Façade Signage

STREETSCAPE

Streetscaping projects are an opportunity for the Village to beautify DownTown, draw in new residents and visitors, and leverage new investment. Effective streetscaping brings a neighborhood to life and encourages people to socialize, patronize shops and congregate for community events. A streetscape is typically comprised of all built elements in a right-of-way – sidewalks, curbs, benches, lighting, trees, and other pedestrian scale features.

Enhance DownTown Streetscape

Improvements to the streetscape should establish a complete and coordinated streetscape from Western Avenue to Orchard Drive. As improvement to building façades and canopies are planned, streetscape elements should also be planned in a coordinating style (*See Existing Streetscape Zones Map, page 61*). Improvements should:

- Incorporate environmentally friendly features such as electrical vehicle charging stations, permeable pavers, and rain gardens.
- Improve street lighting and electrical system to improve safety, enhance special events, and accommodate seasonal decorations.
- Native plantings to incorporate environmentally friendly vegetation.

- Consider resources for future maintenance when selecting streetscape elements and landscaping improvements. Landscaping improvements can include a refresh of existing planters, irrigation system installation, and additional parkway trees.
- Concurrent with the installation of irrigation systems, new water spigots and post hydrants can be installed to provide convenient hose hookups for planter watering and to provide water sources for special events. These spigots or post hydrants can be located anywhere within an irrigation system.

These improvements can be implemented incrementally, or as part of a larger project. For example, streetscape improvements can be tied to other public works and maintenance projects or complete collaboratively with new development or renovations.



Streetscape Improvement Elements



Existing Streetscape Zones

This map identifies three levels of existing streetscape along Main Street.

- Zone 1: No Streetscape
- Zone 2: Complete Streetscape
- Zone 3: Partial Streetscape



Tiered Approach for Streetscape

The following streetscape framework strategy designates roadways within the study area into three streetscape tiers based upon traffic and activity, the built form, and existing street configurations (*See Streetscape Tiers Map, page 63*). These tiers should guide the level of effort for streetscaping DownTown and inform the changes considered for each roadway.

Tier 1: Pedestrian-Focused

Tier 1 streetscapes should receive the greatest level of effort to create inviting, pedestrian-oriented environments. These streets should be fully improved with amenities that make them comfortable for pedestrians and create exciting, active public spaces. This should include street furniture, pedestrian lighting, parkway trees, and planters, public art and interactive installations, awnings and banners, and other amenities that foster an engaging pedestrian experience. Tier 1 Streetscapes should ensure safe and efficient mobility for all modes of transportation while prioritizing the pedestrian realm.

Tier 2: Access Roadways

Tier 2 streetscapes include low-volume roadways that provide access to specific businesses. These streets have a lower level of activity within DownTown and streetscape improvements along these routes can be completed concurrently with adjacent parking lot improvement projects. The Village should prioritize maintenance and upkeep and consider improvements to provide a comfortable and attractive environment for drivers, cyclists, and pedestrians. This includes filling in gaps in the sidewalk network, upgrading deteriorating sidewalk conditions, installing pedestrian lighting, and providing ADA accessible routes.

Tier 3: Gateway

Designed to carry larger volumes of vehicles along the perimeter of the DownTown, these streetscapes should remain optimized for car movement while incorporating streetscape elements to improve their character. Gateway features should be incorporated where these roadways intersect with the key entrances into the area. Potential streetscape elements include banner signs, pedestrian lighting, street trees, landscaping, and planters. Continuous sidewalks should be provided with high-visibility crossings to create safe pedestrian environments along the highly trafficked roadways.



Tier 1: Pedestrian-Focused



Tier 2: Access Roadways



Tier 3: Gateway



Streetscape Tiers

This map identifies three streetscape tiers based on traffic, activity, built form, and existing roadway configurations.

-  Tier 1: Pedestrian-Focused
-  Tier 2: Access Roadways
-  Tier 3: Gateway

Light Up DownTown

The existing decorative lighting theme could be expanded along Main Street to Western Avenue. Decorative lighting and seasonal decorations will draw attention from the busier north-south routes, such as Western Avenue, Orchard Drive, and Indianwood Boulevard, and could spur activity in DownTown.

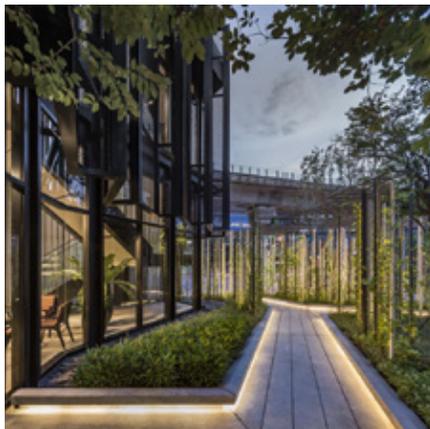
Pole-mounted or bollard-mounted lighting repeated along Main Street will help to further light and define the pedestrian areas adjacent to the roadway. Pole and light fixture types should complement the renewed architectural aesthetic of the building facades and streetscape but should ultimately focus on further defining space or boundary as opposed to serving as flood-light fixtures along Main Street. As the building facades are improved, linear roof lighting can be replaced with draped lighting along Main Street and/or in the pocket parks.

Additionally, modernization of the lighting system will provide better energy efficiency and safe lighting levels. Options for improving pedestrian safety can range from simple interventions such as raised crosswalks or speedbumps, to more holistic interventions using various design components like paving materials or lighted bollards within the corridor to help differentiate the space from a vehicular thorough. In essence, re-establishing the Main Street corridor as a pedestrian-focused area and hindering (but not prohibiting) vehicular traffic should be considered as a long-term goal for the DownTown streetscape.

Lighted columns can supplement street lighting to create points of interest along a corridor. The lighted columns on the right uses a weathering steel finish to compliment the natural color palette of the landscaping.



Lighting Improvements



Incorporate Pedestrian-friendly Streetscape Design

DownTown intersections should be improved to increase pedestrian visibility and enhance pedestrian safety. The ease and safety of crossing streets is an integral component to encourage walking to and around Downtown, thus creating a welcoming pedestrian experience. For example, despite stops signs at Cunningham Drive and Forest Boulevard, speeding vehicles have been reported along Main Street. A raised crosswalk could be installed at the existing crosswalk location at Founders Way. This traffic calming measure offers the benefit of reducing vehicle speeds like a speed hump or speed table while improving crosswalk visibility and pedestrian safety.



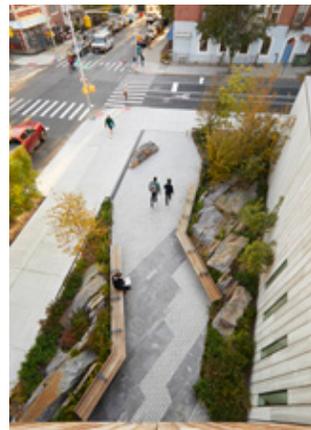
Existing Main Street Cross Section



Proposed Main Street Cross Section



Pedestrian-Oriented Streetscape Design



Alternative paving materials may include stamped concrete, brick pavers, or a combination of the two, which would help differentiate the Downtown streetscape from nearby collector roads.

Furthermore, the minimization or elimination of curb lines along portions of the streetscape would help to signify a pedestrian-friendly area. In lieu of concrete curbs used to contain vehicular traffic, consider the use of raised planters or bollards at strategic locations in collaboration with paving material changes to define safe and secure pedestrian-only areas.

The streetscape design and place-making should also extend into nearby pedestrian-only linear parks and alleyways to enhance the experience of visitors where additional retail and service tenants already exist. Many of the same design techniques and building design recommendations can be implemented into these alleyways, creating distinguishable spaces within the greater Downtown streetscape.



Existing Founders Way Pedestrian Alley



Proposed Founders Way Pedestrian Alley Streetscape



Pedestrian Alleyways

Encourage Outdoor Dining

A hallmark of active and lively village centers is outdoor dining. The Village should encourage outdoor dining and gathering spaces that promote active and lively streetscape environments. Ranging from covered street cafes to a simple table and chairs, outdoor dining adds intangible energy to a community that encourages residents and visitors to relax and spend time on the street.

For outdoor dining to be successful, several factors must align:

- The dining area should be seasonally versatile; ideally, it can accommodate sunny and rainy days, and hot or cold weather.
- The space should be open and airy during the daytime, while still well-defined at night. It should be physically and visually associated with the tenant space.
- The surrounding streets should be visually interesting, active and feature a diversity of uses.
- There should be a mix of hard and soft surfaces (for example, a brick patio with adjoining planter beds), and both covered and uncovered areas.

These factors are conducive to a high-quality outdoor dining experience, but do not all need to be in place for a community to become more vibrant; any mix of these factors will contribute to a more active and livelier DownTown.

Outdoor dining can continue through some of the colder months by employing common solutions for increased comfort. Some examples of ways to keep dining areas warm, without increased gas emission include electric infrared heating, temporary enclosures, and in-slab radiant heating systems.



Outdoor Dining

Activate Vacant Storefronts

Vacant buildings should not sit dormant without any hint of future investment. The Village and privately owned property owners should be encouraged to increase the vitality of their buildings by decorating the windows. Possibilities include public art or the posting the signs that says, “Coming Soon” or “What Should Go Here?”



Activating Vacant Storefronts



Screen Loading and Service Areas

To maintain a polished and attractive built environment in DownTown, parking lots and service/loading areas for buildings should be hidden from public view (*See Screening Map, page 69*). Utilizing landscaping, fencing, and walls where appropriate, screening seeks to minimize the unattractive necessities of maintaining a business. Screening should block loading docks for trucks, as well as dumpsters from public view. For parking lots, landscaped islands and perimeter landscaping treatments should be installed to break up the hard surface and minimize the negative visual impacts of large asphalt lots. Though screening these areas is desirable, the design and methods used for screening should be mindful as to not create dark and hidden areas that may be a cause for concern regarding public safety.



Parking Lot Screening



Dumpster Screening



Screening

This map identifies service/loading areas and parking lots that should be screened from public view.

-  Parking Lot or Service/Loading Area
-  Screening

7 BUILT FORM

The Built Form chapter is a key element of the *Park Forest DownTown Master Plan*. Ranging from buildings, to streets, to capital infrastructure, the built form of a community is foundational to its character and often contributes to the ultimate success of a place. This chapter lays out a guide to update the buildings and structures, infrastructure, parking and transportation facilities of DownTown.

BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES

DownTown is home to a mix of buildings of varying quality and character. They are architecturally cohesive but struggle to invite visitors and patrons. To modernize DownTown, this section outlines several building design improvements to make the structures more interesting, inviting, and attractive. Improvements include upgrades to canopies, updates to building facades, and the establishment of architectural gateways.

The proposed façade and awning recommendations found in this section are intended to provide a basis-of-design for how certain tenant types can be accommodated and differentiated. Tenants will still be allowed to span multiple storefront openings across varying façade and awning types. Additionally, the Village may curate tenants based on optimal space sizes, types, and locations.

Upgrade the Canopies

The visibility of the tenant spaces and user activity are obscured by the existing sidewalk canopy structure, generating a contrasted area from the vantage point of the street and the adjacent sidewalk. While the current canopy design provides 100% coverage from the elements along all street-facing facades in the DownTown area, this limits recognition of tenant services and can hinder the activation of the streetscape. Additionally, it limits other beneficial opportunities like daylighting that are often desirable among retail and food/beverage uses.

Throughout the outreach portion of the study, the existing canopy design was consistently mentioned as being an issue in several manners. In general, while the existing canopies provided sufficient shelter from the elements for pedestrians, the depth, height, and design of the canopy also hindered opportunities to take advantage of natural daylight, open up visibility into tenant spaces, and help discern between the multitude of current tenant spaces. The depth of the canopies creates a high lighting contrast from the street which makes the storefront feel dark and hidden. The depth of the canopies also hinders signage from being seen from a reasonable position.

The intent of recommending a canopy redesign is to help all these attributes to be utilized throughout the downtown environment, providing shelter where necessary, but also accommodating tenants by providing day-lit storefronts that are not only visible, but easily identifiable to potential patrons. By “right-sizing” the amount of canopy structures and introducing a variety of materials, the downtown environment has more potential to become an inviting and navigable space.



Existing Building Canopies. The Area of Impact shown on the accompanying diagram are the limits of the downtown Village-owned buildings as indicated by the dashed line.



Existing Façade and Canopy Conditional on Main Street (looking West)

Canopy Types

The continuity of the existing canopy structure creates a consistent image throughout the DownTown, but it also lacks visual cues that would be helpful in establishing a sense of scale and distinction of uses. A reconsideration of the canopy design and use strategies implemented in the DownTown area is crucial to revitalizing the DownTown aesthetics. Three attributes should be carefully considered in reassessing canopy strategies.

Structural Canopies

Includes larger permanently constructed canopy systems (8-ft to 12-ft deep) that may serve as protection from the elements, or solely as a shading device that permits filtered light to the hardscape below. This canopy type will have a structural support system with a footprint that will impact the sidewalk width. The use of structural canopies should be coordinated with consistent key accent materials used on updated facades throughout the DownTown.

Cantilevered Canopies

Includes smaller permanently constructed canopy systems (4-ft to 6-ft deep) that are generally prefabricated and offer a variety of benefits from shade-only to full protection from the elements. Since these canopy types are structurally supported from the wall, there is no footprint at the sidewalk.

These smaller scale canopies can be easily incorporated above both shorter single openings and longer ribbon openings where needed. The shallower depth also helps to maintain visibility of the façade materials and wall-mounted signage above.

Awnings

Includes smaller metal-framed structures with a fabric covering (2-ft to 4-ft deep). These types of system are generally used more for sun-shading over larger storefront openings without impeding visibility into the space. They are also often used for weather protection above single entries. Like cantilevered canopies, they are versatile in design and can provide protection from sun and precipitation while not obstructing the sidewalk or visibility of façade-mounted signage. Awnings should also be limited to use on façade materials with a cleaner texture or appearance.



Structural Canopies



Cantilevered Canopies



Awnings



Canopy Types



Canopy Use

Understanding the use of a canopy can help to determine how a space will be used. Understanding and curating the breakdown of tenant spaces within the DownTown helps to identify what canopy uses should be considered. If a tenant anticipates or desires large quantities of patrons to gather outside their establishment, a larger structural canopy should be implemented. On the opposite hand, where tenants may not desire the congregation of larger crowds, or where they may want to specifically direct patrons or users to an entry or window, smaller canopies should be utilized.

Food and Beverage

While not required, food and beverage uses have a high likelihood of incorporating outdoor dining within the streetscape. While smaller tenants may benefit from the implementation of smaller bistro tables and seasonal umbrellas, larger food and beverage anchor tenants may benefit from a larger canopy that helps to define a “patio dining” space. While a larger canopy could provide weather protection, it may be more reasonable for a canopy incorporated into such a space to provide more of a shading-only function. The dining experience could then be further enhanced by the tenant with the introduction of patio tables and seasonal umbrellas to break down the scale of the area below and around the canopy.

Service-Oriented Businesses

Where tenants have less of a retail presence with a greater focus on services, and where the congregation of large numbers of people are not anticipated nor desired, consider eliminating canopies altogether except where needed for entry protection or solar shading. In these instances, consider the use of cantilevered or awning type canopies to accomplish this.

Retail

Visibility is crucial to all kinds of retail tenants. Not only is visibility of product key, but also visibility of activity and interaction within a space. With that being said, some protection from the elements is beneficial, notably at entry points and display window where customers are likely to gather or circulate. By incorporating shallower cantilevered or awning type canopies near mercantile units, deep shadow lines can be avoided, helping to brighten the façade and visibility within the space. At the same time, a small degree of protection can still be provided where needed the most.

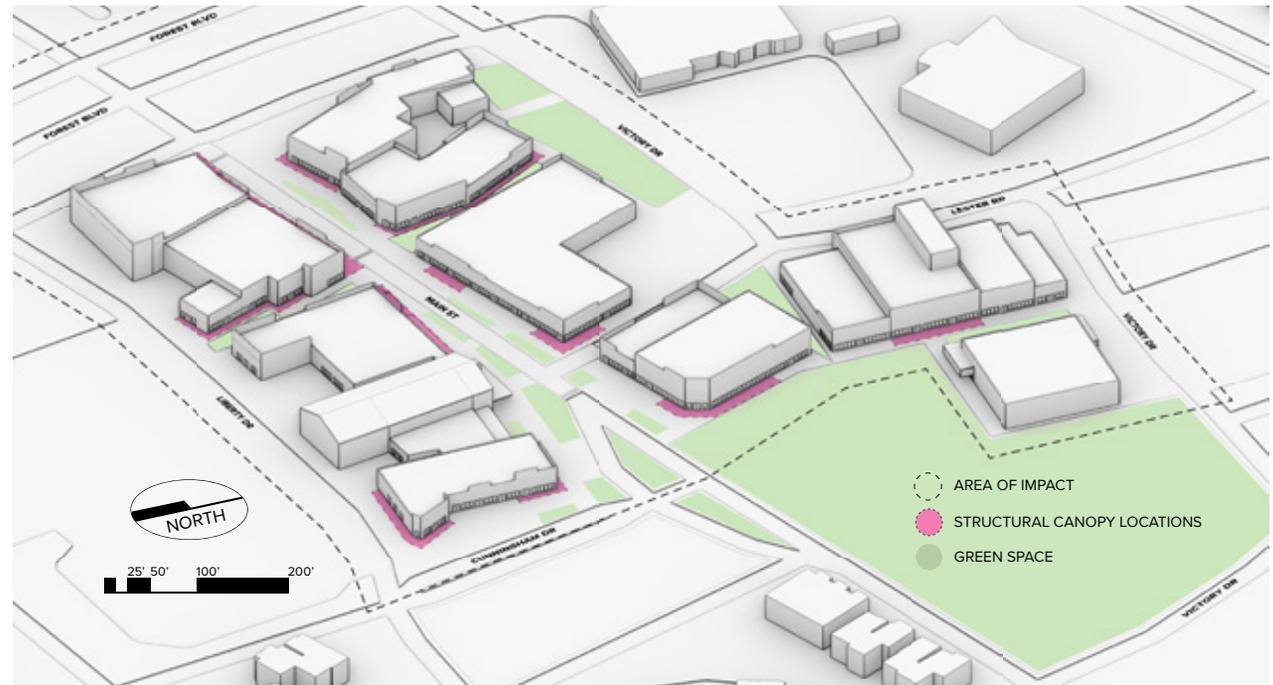
Institutional or Performance-based Uses

Like retail uses, educational spaces may benefit from the limited use of canopies at entries or windows where observations may occur. Canopies should be used sparingly in these instances and only where it is desired for observers to congregate to generate viewing interests.

Canopy Locations

Canopy elements can enhance the architectural vernacular of a space helping to define critical nodes or thresholds within a large streetscape. It is recommended that larger structural canopies be limited in their implementation throughout the DownTown streetscape, reserving them for use where larger anchor tenants may occupy an endcap near an intersection, or near the intersection of one of several existing pedestrian alleyways. In addition to providing a sense of place at these major nodes, the larger canopies can work together with the façade design to break down the scale of the streetscape by providing identifiable destinations and nodes of activity.

The Proposed Canopy Locations diagram illustrates a scenario in which about 70 percent of the DownTown canopy coverage would remain. Canopy coverage can be achieved through a variety of different structures such as awnings, structural canopies, and cantilevered canopies.



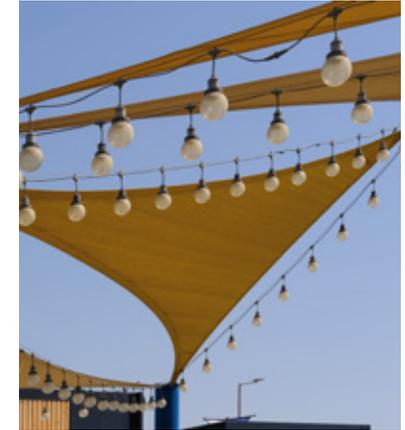
Proposed Canopy Locations

Alternative Elements

The following are alternative elements that may provide shade and shelter in the place of canopies.

Solar Arrays

Where adequate sun exposure permits, consider the use of a solar array system to serve as a canopy structure or canopy roof system. Depending on the amount of solar power able to be captured, these could be used to offset the electrical loads of exterior lighting, lighted signage, or interior house panels.



Temporary Shades or Umbrellas

Where restaurant or café tenants may desire outdoor dining, consider the use of temporary umbrellas or shades in lieu of permanent canopies or awnings as a more reasonable alternative considering seasonal opportunities for outdoor dining in this area. The coordinated use of a permanent canopy that only provides filtered shade (i.e. louvers) with temporary umbrellas for localized protection from direct sun or rain can help to provide a pleasant dining environment.



Temporary Shades or Umbrellas



Solar Arrays



Tension Fabric Canopies

Tension Fabric Canopies

Tension fabric canopies are cost-efficient ways to shade large, outdoor areas. Tension fabric canopies can be utilized on Village Green to support an environment which provides flexible shade. These structures can be used to provide relief from the heat during summer events and activities.

Improve Building Façades

Materials currently used throughout the downtown include a limited palette of monochromatic and dated finishes. The current colors and materials used for the building façades do not provide a distinguishable sense of scale or visual interest for DownTown. To help further differentiate between tenant spaces and break down the scale of the downtown area, it is recommended that façades be renovated in a way that helps distinguish between tenant entrances and their associated frontage through the use of different materials.

Changes in materials and opening styles should be incorporated every 15-ft to 30-ft to provide visual distinction across the façade. Selected materials should have a consistent use throughout the DownTown area to maintain a cohesive appearance but should also provide an adequate variety and contrast throughout as to not create the same effects of the existing scheme.

The use of warm, natural materials with neutral colors is recommended:

- **Warm or Wood-Colored Planks or Siding.** Accentuates key tenants like major food and beverage tenants or destination businesses.
- **Stone or Large-Format Cementitious Panels.** Identifies more intimate environments like boutique shops or small cafes.
- **Stucco (in very limited amounts, not at ground-level).** Serves as a background field perhaps for longer runs of similar individual tenants or wall-mounted signage near the parapet.
- **Black-Framed Storefront (for all tenants).** Creates a consistent language and condition throughout DownTown.
- **Clear Glazing.** Does not prohibit visibility into any publicly-accessible use.

The following materials **are not** recommended

- **Stucco (at ground level).** Susceptible to damage and not visually appealing at close range.
- **Corrugated Sheet Products.** Can diminish from a more refined or sophisticated visual appearance.
- **Rust-inhibited Metal Panels.** Creates stains on sidewalk and other façade materials that can be undesirable.
- **Bright or glossy colors.** Detract from a cohesive neutral pallet from which all tenants can benefit; can also become quickly outdated.



Façades Designs

Key Façade Improvements

A visual rendition of a possible solution is included here that helps to illustrate how some of these key recommendations can come together. This elevation study illustrates the use of the following.

Changes in Parapet Heights

Similar to the surface setback that occurs with changes in materials, changes made to the parapet heights can further accentuate key anchor tenants and break down the scale of the street façade. Again, these changes in parapet height can be minimal in order to achieve this intent (as little as 12" to 36" added to the existing parapet height in most places).

Changes in Opening Types and Sizes

Introducing variety in the height of the storefront glazing is recommended in coordination with the changes in parapet height. While the existing roof structure will ultimately limit how high a storefront can go, there is an opportunity to increase transparent window area for larger retail or food/beverage tenants. This creates desirable visibility from the streetscape for these types of spaces and increases the amount of daylight getting inside. Other portions of the façade may benefit from reducing the number of window and entry openings to the space in order to create an increased sense of refuge for occupants, or a more curated display of goods.



Proposed Façade Material Changes

Differing Materials

Contrasting accent materials like wood or large-format panels are used to break up a larger “field” materials like glass, stucco, or brick.

Surface Setbacks

Where there is a change in material, it is recommended that a break in the surface occurs. This can be as little as a few inches and helps provide a distinguished break in the façade.

A Variety of Canopy Systems and Strategies

The canopy strategy continues to play a crucial role in how the facades are redeveloped. Rather than provide 100% weather coverage and obscure visibility into tenant spaces, reserve larger architectural canopies for larger anchor tenants or end cap units where a gateway element may be desired. These larger canopies should focus on providing a sense of shelter and shade as opposed to providing 100% coverage from the elements. Where these larger canopies project further toward the street, it is recommended that the parapet height beyond increase to accommodate an easily visible signage area. This will increase the available window space below the signs, allowing more natural light to enter the space and outdoor dining areas throughout DownTown. Where entry protection or window shading is desired, the use of shallower cantilevered canopies or awnings is recommended. These keep the sidewalk and facades clear of visual obstructions and open up tenant storefronts for better visibility of activity and façade signage.



Existing Main Street, Looking West



Proposed Main Street, Looking West



Existing Elevation



Proposed Elevation

Establish an Architectural Gateway

The architecture can be used to aid in creating an entrance or gateway into the DownTown area by establishing common components and a typical façade “language”. At the east end of Main Street, the existing 2-story buildings on each side of the road should be improved to create a visual entrance into the core of DownTown that exist between Forest Boulevard and Cunningham Drive. This can be achieved through variation of architectural elements such as roof lines, building heights, windows, and façade materials.

Maximize the Use of Available Space

The Village owns over 48,000 square feet of basement space in its buildings. While there is a significant amount of square footage available, the potential uses for these spaces are limited due to existing egress and accessibility conditions, as well as achievable ceiling heights.

The use of basement spaces in building 1 and building 6b should be further explored to consider the constructability and economic feasibility of necessary upgrades to life safety and egress-related issues within these two spaces (*See Define a Space for Storage, page 51, Basement Assessments and Modifications, page 94, and Basement Assessments, page 110*). The east portion of building 1 basement is the most readily useable space. The Village should consider making interior demolition, lighting, finishes, HVAC, and plumbing systems, stairs, and accessibility improvements to allow for uses such as assembly, business, or mercantile.



Architectural Gateway Buildings



INFRASTRUCTURE

To update and modernize the infrastructure of DownTown, the Village must invest in contemporary green infrastructure techniques that will help ensure the long-term sustainability of DownTown Park Forest. To ensure the community is well-lit, safe, and energy efficient, the Village should make upgrades to the lighting system.

Incorporate Green Infrastructure

Green infrastructure needs to play a large role in future improvements to address stormwater management, reduce pollution, and become more energy efficient. The Village has established standards, goals, and criteria for green building including those set forth in documents listed below with relevant topics noted:

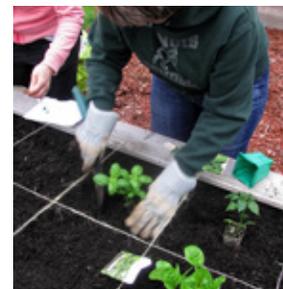
- **The Unified Development Ordinance.** Landscaping and stormwater management standards
- **Climate Action and Resilience Plan.** Alternative modes of transportation, prioritize open spaces, and more
- **Sustainability Plan.** Housing diversity, mobility, water resources, energy efficiency, arts and culture

The DownTown Master Plan should set the foundation for new development, renovations of buildings, and infrastructure projects within DownTown to meet or exceed the goals and practices recommended by the above listed documents.



Additionally, as infrastructure improvements are completed, environmentally friendly features such as electric vehicle charging stations, permeable pavers, and rain gardens can be incorporated to improve sustainability. A rain garden is a depressed area in the landscape that is designed to collect rainwater runoff and allows it to soak into the ground. Environmental benefits include:

- Increase the amount of water that can soak into the ground to replenish ground water supplies and reduce flooding.
- Protect water quality of streams and lakes by trapping sediment, fertilizers, and other pollutants.
- Native plants provide food and shelter for butterflies, birds, and other animals.
- Enhance the landscape or streetscape.



Green Infrastructure Elements

Improve the Electrical System

The Main Street luminaires use incandescent fixtures with LED bulbs which results in unpredictable lighting levels. Replacing the fixtures with modern LED fixtures would result in proper light levels and distribution and improved energy efficiency. This lighting improvement would offer improved safety and comfort. As the decorative lighting theme is expanded along Main Street to Western Avenue, power connections for decorative lighting and seasonal decorations can be incorporated into the improvements.

As electrical systems are upgraded in areas that will be used for special events, additional upgrades can be completed such as:

- Power distribution to power equipment used for entertainment and vendors.
- Data and Wi-Fi improvements to provide internet access to event organizers/attendees and provide connectivity for audio and video distribution.
- Support interactive displays with electrical and data systems connections.

In addition, the Village should implement dark skies strategies to reduce light pollution. Strategies include:

- Encouraging the use of quality, energy-efficient outdoor lighting that directs light downwards, which reduces energy consumption and light pollution
- Using LED light (warm-white bulbs) to reduce illumination levels and conserve energy and save money
- Educating residents and businesses owners on the environmental benefits and cost savings of reducing outdoor light levels
- Adopting a dark skies ordinance



Lighting Improvements

MOBILITY AND PARKING

The Mobility and Parking section builds upon previous planning efforts to enhance DownTown with a focus on multi-modal transportation infrastructure to balance the needs of all users. Improving the pedestrian network will be key to DownTown's future as an entertainment and shopping destination, and the modernization of sidewalks will provide equitable access to amenities for people of all abilities.

There is currently a surplus of parking in DownTown with several large lots comprising approximately 35% of the land in the area. As the Land Use and Development chapter describes, many of these have been targeted for redevelopment, but some should be maintained for resident, employees, and visitor use. This section describes approaches to improving the lots so they are more compatible with the surrounding environment, as well as strategies to make parking in DownTown more efficient.

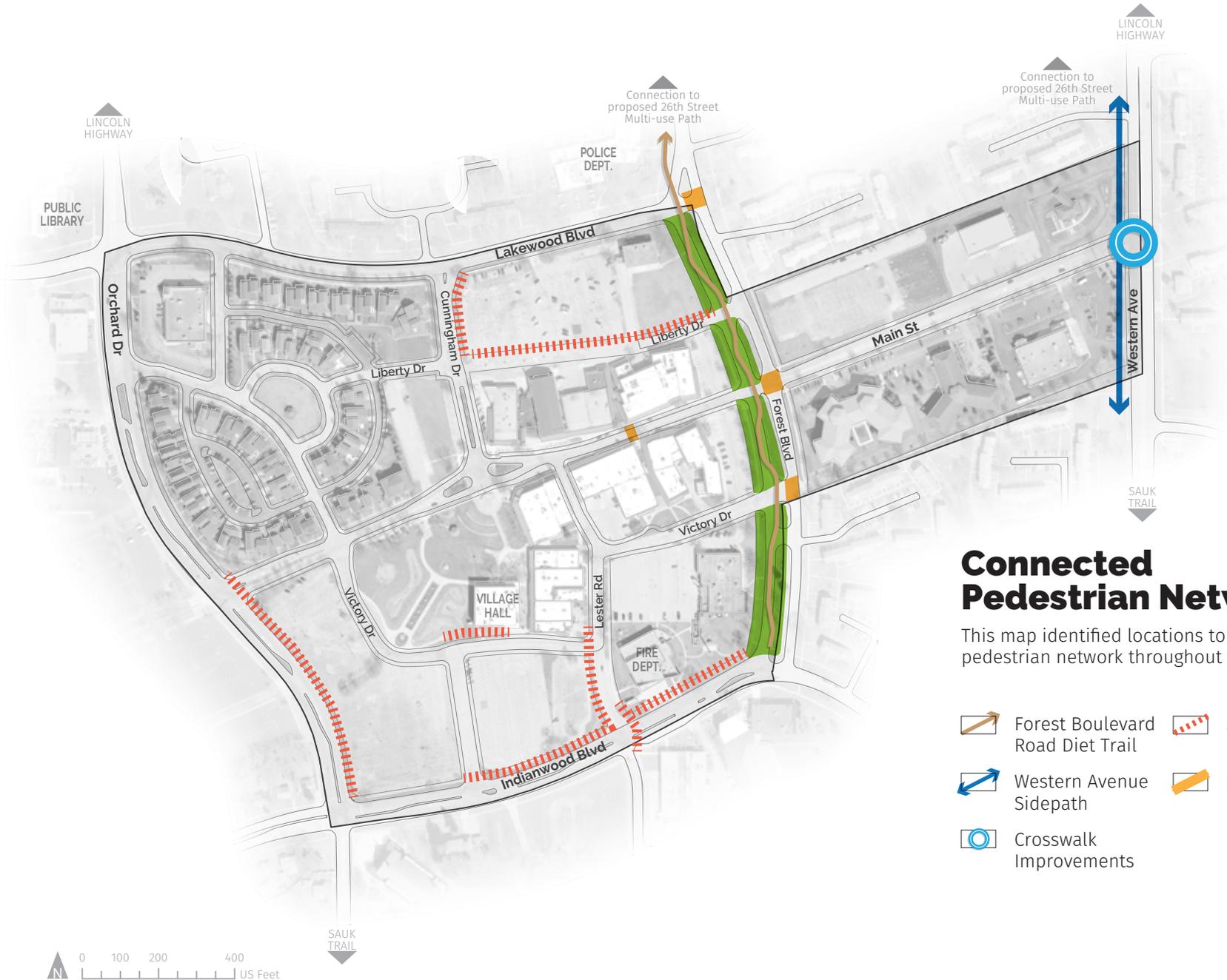
Create a Connected Pedestrian Network

Bicycle and pedestrian improvements create a safe and efficient system that connects residents with key community destinations like DownTown. To improve pedestrian connectivity, the Village should undertake the following:

- Coordinate with IDOT to construct a sidepath along Western to improve pedestrian circulation along this key arterial roadway.
 - Conduct a feasibility study to determine if Main Street can accommodate a dedicated bike lane while still allowing for on-street parking.
 - Provide connections to planned multi-use paths along Forest Boulevard and 26th Street for connectivity to the regional trail system including the Forest Preserve's Thorn Creek Trail. These connections would encourage non-residents to visit DownTown.
 - Install sidewalk between the south entrance to Village Hall and the southwest sidewalk entrance to the Village Green (along Victory Drive).
 - Install sidewalk between the northeast and southeast quadrants of the intersection of Indianwood Boulevard and Lester Road.
- Install shared lanes/sharrows along key collector streets such as Orchard Drive south of Lakewood Boulevard and Indianwood Boulevard to provide connectivity between residential neighborhoods and DownTown.
 - Ensure there are no gaps in the sidewalk network by constructing sidewalks along Orchard Drive and Indianwood Boulevard.
 - Create a connection to Old Plank Trail through signage.

What is a Sidepath?

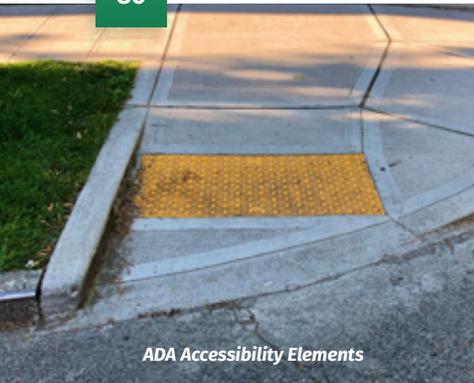
Similar to a sidewalk, a sidepath is a pedestrian facility located alongside a roadway. The variation comes in the design and location. A sidepath is a bidirectional, shared use path that is typically 8 feet in width. Sidepaths are typically located on higher-volume roadways such as arterial and collector streets. They offer a low-stress experience for bicyclists and pedestrians on roadways otherwise inhospitable to walking and bicycling due to high-speed or high-volume traffic.



Connected Pedestrian Network

This map identified locations to improve the pedestrian network throughout DownTown

-  Forest Boulevard Road Diet Trail
-  Sidewalk Connections
-  Western Avenue Sidepath
-  Raised Crosswalk
-  Crosswalk Improvements



ADA Accessibility Elements



Ensure Accessibility Throughout Downtown

For all Village owned streets, roads, parking lots, and sidewalks, a planned approach is necessary for establishing and maintaining accessibility in accordance with the Americans with Disability Act of 1990 (ADA) since bringing existing facilities into compliance can be costly and ongoing maintenance is required to keep facilities accessible. As the Downtown streets, sidewalks, and parking lots are improved and rehabilitated, ADA improvements should be included. Annual budgets should include maintenance of existing facilities.

The planned approach should also:

- Identify physical obstacles in the facilities that limit the accessibility of its programs or activities to individuals with disabilities.
- Identify the methods that will be used to make the facilities accessible.
- Specify the schedule for taking the steps necessary to achieve compliance.

While much of the area is accessible to people with disabilities, ongoing evaluation and maintenance is needed to identify deficiencies that develop over time. Spot checks were completed during the site evaluation to help develop a budget for future ADA improvements to address items such as sidewalk slopes exceeding 2%, curb ramps with missing detectable warnings or excessive slopes, and insufficient handicap parking spaces.

Additionally, as signage is replaced or new signage is installed, sign content should be bilingual and accessible to those that are visually impaired.

Expand Use of Shared Parking

Shared parking refers to parking lots or spaces that are shared by more than one user, which allows parking facilities to be used more efficiently. Common Area Maintenance fees are currently charged to all owners of properties to allow them use of parking areas. As excess parking areas are developed, new shared use parking arrangements should be encouraged throughout Downtown to get the maximum use of parking lots and reduce the need for more surface parking.



Improve Parking Lots

Large, unattractive parking lots on the perimeter of DownTown can hinder revitalization. In the survey of the existing parking facilities, 13 parking lots areas were identified, and the total parking capacity amounts to over 1,400 spaces. With a surplus of parking spaces, some parking lots can be selected for sale and development. This will remove the burden of maintenance and provide new land use.

For each parking facility, the conditions were evaluated and assigned a condition rating number using the Pavement Surface Evaluation and Rating (PASER) system. Additionally, estimates for pavement patching and curb and gutter repair were recorded. For parking lots that will remain in service, maintenance activities can be prioritized and planned according to the available budget and PASER ratings for each lot.

Many of the existing parking lots are vast open spaces of pavement with lighting towers. As parking lots are rehabilitated, landscaped medians and vegetative screening can be added to break up the expanses of pavement, creating a more

welcoming aesthetic. Landscaping improvements should follow the guidance of the Unified Development Ordinance which provides guidance for items such as tree canopy coverage and screening requirements. During rehabilitation, electrical systems can be upgraded, and lighting towers replaced with shorter and more frequently spaced decorative light poles to enhance the appearance and reduce light pollution.

Parking lots should be improved to encourage more use and to create an attractive entrance into the core of DownTown – along Main Street between Forest Boulevard and Cunningham Drive. Improvements to parking lots could include:

- **Resurfacing and restriping.** Parking lots should be well maintained with clear and delineated parking lot stalls.
- **Lighting.** Parking lots should have lighting on the perimeter and strategically disperse around the parking lot so all pedestrians and drivers can see their surroundings clearly.
- **Electric vehicle charging stations.** The Village should identify additional opportunities to install electric vehicle charging stations in public parking lots.

- **Landscaping.** Landscaping should include perimeter landscaping to shield adjacent uses from vehicle lights and screen the bulk of the vehicles from the public right-of-way. Landscape islands throughout the parking lot help to soften the visual impact of parking infrastructure and also increase the permeable surfaces.
- **Sidewalks and pedestrian paths.** Parking lots should be improved with pedestrian paths from the parking lot to the building entrance. Paths can be incorporated into parking lot landscaping islands.
- **Wayfinding signage.** Wayfinding signage should be incorporated into parking lot improvements. Wayfinding signage should include business names and key destinations.
- **Use of permeable pavers.** Permeable paving can reduce the quantity of surface runoff. Permeable pavers should be incorporated into the parking lot improvements when appropriate.

Parking areas that will be used for special events should be improved with streetscape elements, power distribution, and Wi-Fi connectivity in addition to the improvements listed above.

8

IMPLEMENTATION

The *Park Forest DownTown Master Plan* provides recommendations that the Village should undertake over the next 10 to 15 years. This chapter outlines a Capital Improvement Plan, best practices on how to utilize the Plan, as well as potential funding mechanisms to consider.

A Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) is a multi-year program for expenditures by the Village of Park Forest. Projects considered through the CIP process involve proposed investments in the Village's infrastructure and facilities, such as transportation improvements or Village-owned building renovations.

UTILIZING THE PLAN

Regular Use of the DownTown Master Plan

The *Park Forest DownTown Master Plan* should be used as the official policy guide for planning and development decisions made by the Village Staff, the Village Board, the Planning and Zoning Commission, and other boards and commissions. The Plan should act as a primary reference in evaluating projects and planning initiatives, reviewing development proposals, and prioritizing public expenditures in DownTown. Referencing the Plan will ensure future planning efforts align with the long-term goals for DownTown. Developers should also be encouraged to utilize the Plan when considering new projects.

To promote regular use of the Plan, the Village should:

- Publish the Plan document on the Village's website and make it available as hard copies in the Village Hall and Village's Public Library for public access.
- Utilize the Plan in the development review process to ensure future (re)developments align with DownTown's vision and recommendations.
- Use this Plan as a reference document to coordinate with potential developers about future and possible (re)development opportunities.
- Meet with the Village's key department heads, officials, and commissions to explain the Plan's purpose, importance, and benefits.

Reviewing and Updating the Plan

The *Park Forest DownTown Master Plan* is not a static document and must be able to evolve and change over time. For example, if new issues arise that are beyond the Plan's current scope, the Plan should be revised and updated accordingly.

The Village should undertake a complete review and update of the Plan every five years, and intermittent evaluations every two to three years to identify smaller changes. The Village should maintain a public list of potential amendments, issues, or needs. Ideally, these reviews should coincide with the preparation and adoption of the Village's budget and Capital Improvement Program. In this manner, recommendations or changes relating to capital improvements or other programs can be considered as part of the commitments for the upcoming fiscal year. The Village should also coordinate and assist with the Village Board in the Plan amendment process, if needed. Routine examination of the Plan will help ensure that the planning program remains relevant to community needs and aspirations.

Review of Zoning and Development Controls

The Village's Unified Development Ordinance is the most direct tool in implementing the Plan's recommendations. They guide the nature and design of development throughout the Village. All development controls should be consistent with and complement the *DownTown Master Plan's* vision, goals, and recommendations. The Village may have existing ordinances that contradict new or revised policies or prohibit desired improvements. The Village should review all development regulations and amend them as necessary to ensure they align with the recommendations of the *Park Forest DownTown Master Plan*.

As noted in the *Land Use and Development* chapter under *Align Zoning to Planning Efforts*, the Village should consider adopting an overlay to the C-2 district within DownTown to allow townhomes, duplexes, and multifamily as a right. This update will provide the Village with the flexibility to allow a variety of housing types within DownTown, in addition to the mixed-use development type that the C-2 district already permits.

For more information see *Foster New Development Including Multifamily and Mixed Use*, page 32, and *Align Zoning to Planning Efforts*, page 41, sections found in the *Land Use and Development* chapter.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Capital Improvements

Capital improvements are permanent, physical improvements, generally expected to have a normal life of 10 years or longer. Equipment needed for day-to-day use is not considered capital improvements. Smaller projects that are intended to last for fewer than 10 years are funded through the Village's operating budget.

The CIP and Budgeting

A CIP is typically prepared and adopted by a municipality annually. Each year, the CIP should identify the physical needs of the Village's departments, estimate the cost of proposed projects, and recommend expenditures and sources of funding for priority capital improvements. The CIP process should precede the budget process and be used to develop the capital projects portion of the annual budget.

The CIP and the Park Forest DownTown Master Plan

The CIP plays a significant role in the implementation of the *DownTown Master Plan* by providing a link between planning and budgeting for capital projects. The CIP is intended to complement the Master Plan to establish a clear definition of needs and priorities to assist in budget development annually.

Improvement Project Timing

Each key project can be treated as a standalone project and no project is dependent on another being previously completed. Therefore, the sequence of improvements can be timed based on the Village's priorities, funding opportunities, or adjacent redevelopments. Due to the significant costs for each project, the funding mechanisms are likely to be a driving factor for the timing, and as grants are pursued and project design develops, the timing of construction can be more accurately predicted. More information about funding mechanisms is provided following the project descriptions.

Organization of the CIP

The capital improvements proposed by the Master Plan can be grouped into seven key projects as follows:

- DownTown Building Facades and Canopy Upgrades
- Basement Assessment and Modifications
- Main Streetscape
- Signage Improvements
- Parking Lot Improvements
- Sound Systems
- Interior Barrier-free Accessibility

Due to the scope and nature of these improvements, it is anticipated that they will be one-time expenditures rather than recurring costs that can be distributed across the life of the Capital Plan. Each key project is described in the following sections and anticipated costs are provided. ***Please note that all costs are based on current market prices and will need to be adjusted for inflation.*** Additionally, the construction market has been volatile in recent years and ongoing evaluation of costs based on construction market pricing is needed to maintain accurate cost estimates.

DownTown Building Facades and Canopy Upgrades

The revitalization of existing Village-owned downtown storefront facades and canopy systems is proposed to aid in the development of a unique and vibrant destination for Park Forest residents and visitors. These proposed improvements include the incorporation of new materials and finishes, storefront window openings and entrances, façade lighting, tenant signage standards, and canopy systems. Improvements to the facades and canopies aim to improve overall visual interest, enhance tenant identities, supplement streetscape improvements, promote community safety, and further activate the streetscape while creating a cohesive look and feel for the Downtown area.

The renovation of facades and canopies to help differentiate between tenant spaces or village buildings should include interventions that both cater to and help curate desired tenant space typologies along Main Street like variations in parapet heights, storefront opening sizes, and finish material selections. In implementing such methods, the scale of the Main Street corridor will become more identifiable, navigable, and sociable for patrons. Properties within the Downtown that are not owned by the Village are excluded from this specific exercise, but similar tactics should be encouraged by the Village to either be implemented by the other property owners or incorporated into future development. The cost data below includes the cost of construction as well as an approximate allowance for professional design and engineering services. The cost is based on approximately 60,000 square feet of building façade throughout the Village-owned properties.

Construction Costs	Total Cost
Façade Improvements	\$ 4,037,000
<i>Finishes & Materials (36,000 SF)</i>	\$ 1,404,000
<i>Parapet Extensions (15,000 SF)</i>	\$ 293,000
<i>Storefront Replacement (24,000 SF)</i>	\$ 2,340,000
Canopy Improvements	\$ 1,024,000
<i>Demolition (20,000 SF)</i>	\$ 150,000
<i>Structural Canopies (325 LF)</i>	\$ 436,000
<i>Cantilevered Canopies (200 LF)</i>	\$ 250,000
<i>Awnings (150 LF)</i>	\$ 188,000
Exterior Tenant Signage Upgrades (approx. 40 tenant signs)	\$ 364,000
Exterior Façade & Canopy Lighting (3,750 LF of façade)	\$ 488,000
30% Contingency	\$ 1,773,900
Total Construction Cost	\$ 7,686,900

Phase Costs	Total Cost
Phase I – 1-2 years (25%) <i>Single-story, multi-tenant storefront façades along Main Street (10%)</i> <i>Multi-story, multi-tenant first-floor façades along Main Street (15%)</i>	\$ 1,921,725
Phase II – 3-5 years, Multi-story, non-storefront façades (35%)	\$ 2,690,400
Phase III – 5-10 years, Single-story, multi-tenant storefront façades along walkways (40%)	\$ 3,074,775
Price Escalation (5% per year)	\$ 1,830,000
Total Project Cost	\$ 9,516,900

Basement Assessments and Modifications

The existing Village-owned buildings include four (4) basement level spaces that are currently being used in a minimal capacity relative to storage, mechanical, and utility needs. Basement spaces within four (4) of the seven (7) Village-owned properties were assessed to determine potential opportunities for the under-utilized spaces. The following is a synopsis of the assessed spaces and recommendations for potential redevelopment.

Building 1 Northwest Corner of Forest Boulevard and Main Street

The basement below building 1 consists of two portions separated by a structural wall. The West portion does not lend itself to opportunities beyond private storage, mechanical, and utility functions. It is recommended that this space be maintained as it currently exists. The East portion affords the best opportunity for development into leasable space out of all the basement spaces. It has few accessibility concerns as it is already equipped with elevator access and two (2) egress stairs. It is recommended to develop the space into a “white box” condition, complete with finished perimeter walls, leveled floor slab, sanitary mains (and ejector pumps if required), domestic water service, building mechanical systems, electrical service, fire suppression system, and fire alarm system.

Building 5 Northwest Corner of Lester Road and Victory Drive

The existing basement space in this building does not lend itself to easy development due to limited accessibility, multiple floor levels, and low ceiling heights. It is recommended that the existing space be maintained to function in its current use as a mechanical space with limited storage use in the most northern portion of the basement level.

Building 6b Southeast Corner of Main Street and Lester Road

The basement space in Building 6b offers some potential for future development but will require significant costs in order to introduce adequate egress stairs and elevators. The ceiling heights in this basement space are more than adequate to achieve a minimum of 9-foot ceiling heights. This basement also contains a large amount of developable area for tenant use. As it exists without adequate egress stairs and elevator access, the space can only be utilized for private storage, mechanical, and utility applications relative to the tenant spaces above. Should the Village be interested in developing this basement level into leasable space, it is recommended that new stairs and elevator be constructed, and the space developed into a white box condition for future tenants.

Building 7 Southwest Corner of Forest Boulevard and Main Street

The existing basement space in this building does not lend itself to easy development due to limited accessibility and low ceiling heights. It is recommended that the existing space be maintained to function in its current use as a mechanical space.

Construction Costs	Total Cost
Building 1 <i>East Basement White Box Conditions 5,400 SF @ \$60/sf</i>	\$ 324,000
Building 6b <i>Full Basement Level White Box Condition</i>	\$ 948,000
<i>13,300 SF @ \$60/sf Egress Stairs & Elevators</i>	\$ 150,000
20% Contingency	\$ 254,400
Total Construction Cost	\$ 1,526,400
Total Project Cost	\$ 4,514,400

Main Streetscape

The *Park Forest DownTown Master Plan* recommends the establishment of a complete and coordinated streetscape from Western Avenue to Orchard Drive. These improvements include new landscaping, lighting, sidewalks, decorative pavers, and furnishings such as benches and planters. Improvements to the street lighting and electrical system will aim to improve safety, enhance special events, and accommodate seasonal decorations. Streetscape improvements should incorporate environmentally friendly features such as electrical vehicle charging stations, permeable pavers, and rain gardens. Additionally, the Plan proposes the installation of irrigation systems which include new water spigots or post hydrants to provide convenient hose hookups for planter watering and to provide water sources for special events.

In addition to improving the aesthetics along this corridor, these improvements are meant to draw attention from passersby on the busier north-south routes, such as Western Avenue, Orchard Drive, and Indianwood Boulevard, and spur activity in DownTown. The area immediately adjacent to the DownTown buildings will be excluded from this project due to canopy overhang and planned disturbance and rehabilitation of the adjacent streetscape area as part of that project. The cost data below includes the cost of construction as well as preliminary and design engineering. In the preliminary engineering stage, the palette of materials and furnishing will be selected by the Village and coordinated with IDOT to keep the project eligible for federal funding. The cost is based on approximately 1,900 linear feet of streetscaping work along Main Street.

It should be noted that streetscape improvements include addressing any ADA deficiencies such as insufficient curb ramps and sidewalk crossing slopes. These items can be addressed as part of the sidewalk/brick paver replacement.

Construction Costs	Total Cost
Hardscape Improvements (Sidewalks, Decorative Pavers)	\$ 855,000
Lighting and Electrical Improvements (Roadway, Pedestrian and Decorative)	\$ 752,400
Roadway Resurfacing	\$ 444,600
Drainage Improvements and Stormwater Management	\$ 342,000
30% Contingency	\$ 1,026,000
Total Construction Cost	\$ 3,420,000

Phase Costs	Total Cost
Phase I – 1-2 years, Preliminary Engineering (10%)	\$ 342,000
Phase II – 1-2 years, Design Engineering (10%)	\$ 342,000
Phase III – 1-2 years, Construction Engineering (12%)	\$ 410,400
Phase IV – 3-5 years, Construction (68%)	\$ 3,420,000
Total Project Cost	\$ 4,514,400

Signage Improvements

This project includes installation of gateway signage on the periphery of the DownTown area, wayfinding signage to direct vehicular traffic to the DownTown area, and wayfinding/directory signage within the area of the DownTown area buildings. Gateway signs are proposed at three locations along the Route 30/Lincoln Highway, Orchard Drive and Western Avenue. Wayfinding features should be in key locations such as intersections and entry points to direct traffic to destinations in DownTown. Wayfinding signage outside of DownTown should direct travelers to DownTown.

Pedestrian oriented wayfinding signage is proposed on the sidewalks surrounding the DownTown shops to direct foot traffic and shoppers to individual stores. The Construction Cost table includes the cost of construction as well as design engineering. While installation/construction of each category of signs could be completed under separate contracts to spread out the expense, it is recommended that the engineering be completed under one contract for efficiency and to reduce costs.

Construction Costs	Total Cost
Wayfinding Signage (vehicular) (8 locations)	\$ 80,000
Wayfinding (pedestrian/tenant directory) (12 locations)	\$ 60,000
Gateway and Information Signage (3 locations)	\$ 600,000
Total Construction Cost	\$ 740,000

Phase Costs	Total Cost
Phase I, Preliminary Engineering (0%)	N/A
Phase II – 1-2 years, Design Engineering (10%)	\$ 74,000
Phase III – 1-2 years, Construction Engineering (5%)	\$ 37,000
Phase IV – 3-5 years, Construction (85%)	\$ 740,000
Total Project Cost	\$ 851,000

Parking Lot Improvements

Improvements to two areas of existing parking are proposed to revitalize some of the unattractive parking lots on the perimeter of DownTown. These existing parking lots are vast open spaces of pavement with lighting towers. As parking lots are rehabilitated, landscaped medians and vegetative screening will be added to break up the expanses of pavement, creating a more welcoming aesthetic. Landscaping improvements will establish green space and tree canopy coverage.

During rehabilitation, electrical systems can be upgraded, and lighting towers replaced with shorter and more frequently spaced decorative light poles to enhance the appearance and reduce light pollution. The improvements will incorporate environmentally friendly features such as electrical vehicle charging stations, permeable pavers, and rain gardens. Gaps in the existing sidewalk network will be closed as the adjacent parking areas are improved.

The Phase Cost table includes the cost of construction as well as design engineering. Engineering and construction can be completed under separate design and construction contracts and can be timed to occur in place of the next major maintenance expenditure. Improvements to parking lot 10 can be timed to be concurrent with redevelopment of the adjacent church (formerly bank). The cost is based on project areas of approximately 16,000 square yards for lots 3 and 4 and 17,000 square yards for lot 10.

Construction Costs	Total Cost
Parking Lots 3 and 4 (Southwest quadrant of Victory Drive and Lester Road)	
Hardscape Improvements (parking lot pavement, curb & gutter, sidewalk)	\$ 960,000
Lighting and Electrical Improvements	\$ 640,000
Drainage Improvements and Stormwater Management	\$ 640,000
30% Contingency	\$ 960,000
Subtotal	\$ 3,200,000
Parking Lot 10 (Southeast quadrant of Lakewood Boulevard at Cunningham Drive)	
Hardscape Improvements (parking lot pavement, curb & gutter, sidewalk)	\$ 1,020,000
Lighting and Electrical Improvements	\$ 680,000
Drainage Improvements and Stormwater Management	\$ 680,000
30% Contingency	\$ 1,020,000
Subtotal	\$ 3,400,000
Total Construction Cost	\$ 6,600,000

Phase Costs	Total Cost
Phase I, Preliminary Engineering (0%)	N/A
Phase II – 1-2 years, Design Engineering (6%)	\$ 396,000
Phase III – 1-2 years, Construction Engineering (8%)	\$ 528,000
Phase IV – 3-5 years, Construction (86%)	\$ 6,600,000
Total Project Cost	\$ 7,524,000

Sound Systems

As the Village considers undertaking upgrades to the streetscape environment, it should also consider the implementation of an outdoor audio system to enhance the user experience throughout all of downtown by providing seasonal music, informational announcements, and emergency notifications. There are many wireless options available that can help to minimize infrastructure costs and streamline installation. Audio coverage can be tailored to accommodate as small or as large an area as desired. Another benefit of the wireless technology is that the installation can be easily phased over a period of time, allowing the Village to more easily adhere to a budgeted amount as funds become available. Depending on the desired area of coverage, a total budget between \$30,000 and \$60,000 to provide and install a complete audio system along Main Street and into the adjacent green spaces should be considered.

Interior Barrier-free Accessibility

Due to the age of the Village-owned buildings, there are a number of existing interior conditions that would not comply with current accessibility standards. These minor conditions were mostly observed in the buildings containing common lobbies and corridors where stairs and elevators are provided. While these existing conditions are not required to be mitigated at the moment, should the Village provide any significant renovations to a building exceeding over 50% of the building value, the conditions will need to be further assessed and resolved in order to provide compliant conditions.

Building 1 Lobby Areas

The stair and handrail conditions within the common lobbies were one such area noted during the assessment. The landing at the base of the stairs leading from the first floor to the second floor was smaller than required. The existing handrails also did not meet the requirements for extension beyond the final tread/riser. The elevator and controls within the lobby areas appear to be compliant.

Building 7 Lobby Area and Common Corridor

The second floor of this building is accessible only by a single staircase from a common lobby on the East side of the building. The stairs present accessibility issues relative to head clearance and handrail standards, and there is also no elevator system provided for accessing the second floor. The lack of an elevator currently prohibits a number of tenant-types from occupying the second floor. Emergency egress is achieved via exterior stairs. Beyond improvements to the stair handrails and head clearance protections, other accessibility improvements are not likely warranted within this building due to existing conditions, foreseeable uses, and unreasonable costs associated with such improvements.

Other accessibility-related improvements associated with the recommended basement level improvements have been included within the estimated costs for those improvements.

Improvement Project Timing

The accompanying table illustrates when each of the phases for the key improvement projects can occur. As previously noted, each key project can be treated as a standalone project and no project is dependent on another being previously completed. The sequence of improvements can be timed based on the Village’s priorities, funding opportunities, or adjacent redevelopments.

Improvement Project	Timeframe		
	1-2 years	3-5 years	5-10 years
DownTown Building Façades and Canopy Upgrades			
Phase I – Single-story, multi-tenant storefront façades along Main Street (10%)	●		
Phase I – Multi-story, multi-tenant first-floor façades along Main Street (15%)	●		
Phase II – Multi-story, non-storefront façades (35%)		●	
Phase III – Single-story, multi-tenant storefront façades along walkways (40%)			●
Main Streetscape			
Phase I – Preliminary Engineering (10%)	●		
Phase II – Design Engineering (10%)	●		
Phase III – Construction Engineering (12%)	●		
Phase IV – Construction (68%)		●	
Signage Improvements			
Phase I – Preliminary Engineering (0%)	●		
Phase II – Design Engineering (10%)	●		
Phase III – Construction Engineering (5%)	●		
Phase IV – Construction (85%)		●	
Parking Lot Improvements			
Phase I – Preliminary Engineering (0%)	●		
Phase II – Design Engineering (6%)	●		
Phase III – Construction Engineering (8%)	●		
Phase IV – Construction (86%)		●	

FUNDING MECHANISMS

The following is a review of how the Village has funded capital improvements in the past along with an overview of potential funding sources that the Village can pursue to support the implementation of the Plan.

Review of Past Improvement Project Funding Mechanisms

Over the years, the Village has strategically used available funding sources to complete major improvement projects in DownTown. Below is a brief overview of these sources.

State Grants

The Village also received several grants from the State to aid the construction costs for redeveloping the DownTown area. The Village received three grants totaling \$1,315,000 for the demolition of the former Sears building, for Main Street construction and for construction of parking lots.

Tax Increment Financing

Tax Increment Financing (TIF) utilizes future increases in property tax revenues generated within a designated area or district, to pay for improvements and further incentivize continued reinvestment. As the Equalized Assessed Value (EAV) of properties within a TIF District increases, the incremental growth in property tax over the base year that the TIF was established, is reinvested in that area. Local officials may then issue bonds or undertake other financial obligations based on the growth in new revenue. The Village needs to be judicious in how funds are allocated to ensure that catalyst projects receive priority.

The Downtown TIF was established in 1986 and set to expire in 2020, but the Village advocated to extend the TIF for another 12 years. A portion of the balance in the TIF fund was transferred to the DownTown to complete construction of Phase II of the DownTown area redevelopment. There has been over \$2 million allocated to the DownTown Fund from the TIF District for improvements.

Settlement

When Sears left the Village, Sears donated their land and buildings, appraised at more than \$6,000,000 to the Village and a cash settlement of \$2,600,000 to replace lost sales and property taxes for a two-year period.

Motor Fuel Tax Funds

Phases I and II of the DownTown redevelopment utilized funds from the Motor Fuel Tax. Motor Fuel Tax funds were used for construction of a new roadway system. Total Motor Fuel Tax funds utilized for the funding of DownTown improvements equaled \$850,000.

Community Development Block Grant

Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity's Office of Community Development supports economic development, community development, and infrastructure improvements in Illinois communities with substantial low-to-moderate-income populations. The Office administers the federally funded Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program that assists low-to-moderate-income populations.

The Village received and utilized a total of \$2,834,417 CDBG funds for a variety of projects within the DownTown area. Some of the funds were awarded for the purpose of demolishing residential structures and commercial properties such as Marshall Fields.

Potential Funding Mechanisms

The following is a review of potential funding sources that the Village and its partners can pursue to support the implementation of the Plan. It is important to note that funding mechanisms are subject to change over time. As such, the Village should continue to research and monitor grants, funding agencies, and programs to identify deadlines, funding specifications, and new opportunities as they become available. These programs are organized by funding categories, which include:

- General Economic Development
- Transportation and Infrastructure
- Parks, Trails, and Open Spaces
- Incentives

General Economic Development

Invest in Cook

Invest in Cook grants help municipalities further their transportation projects by covering the cost of planning, engineering, right-of-way acquisition and construction associated with transportation improvements sponsored by local governments and private partners. Engineering projects for federally funded transportation improvements are good candidates for this funding source.

Sales Tax Rebate

A sales tax rebate is a tool typically used by municipalities to encourage businesses to relocate. The rebate is offered as a percentage of the annual sales tax revenue generated by the establishment and is often tied to benchmarks such as sales volume increases. Sales tax rebate percentages can range from one percent to 100 percent and are dependent on the goals and objectives of the municipality. Sales tax rebates have proven effective in attracting new businesses and encouraging redevelopment and renovation.

Business Districts

As authorized by Division 74.3 of the Municipal Code of the State of Illinois, a municipality may designate, after public hearings, an area as a Business Development District (BDD). A BDD would allow the Village to levy up to an additional one percent retailer's occupation tax, one percent hotel tax, and one percent sales tax within a designated district. Similar to a TIF district, a BDD has a maximum life of 23 years. BDD legislation also permits municipalities to utilize tax revenue growth that has been generated by BDD properties to fund improvements in the district.

Special Service Area

Special Service Areas (SSA) can be used to fund improvements and programs within a designated territory. In an SSA, a percentage is added to property tax within the defined service area. The revenue received from this increase is channeled back into projects and programs benefiting those properties. An SSA can be rejected if 51% of the property owners and electors within a designated area object.

CMAP Technical Assistance

This program provides support to communities by offering planning and implementation assistance, providing interagency expertise, leverage the region's transit network, and building local government capacity. Since the formation of this program CMAP has funded over 200 projects.

Other Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity Grant Programs

Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity recent grant programs included the Main Street & Downtown Capital Program and the Rebuild Illinois Programs. While these programs have been discontinued, the agency is likely to have similar programs in the future that could serve as a funding source for the DownTown projects. Future coordination is needed with local elected officials or representatives to keep informed of upcoming opportunities.

Transportation and Infrastructure

Surface Transportation Block Grant Program

Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STBGP) funds are allocated to coordinating regional councils to be used for roadway and roadway related items. Projects in this funding category require a local sponsor and are selected based on a ranking scale that takes into account the regional benefits provided by the project among other factors. STBGP funds may be used for a variety of project types including roadway rehabilitation, reconstruction and restoration, widening and adding lanes; intersection improvements, traffic signage improvements, and green infrastructure funding.

Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program

The Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program (ITEP) is a competitive grant program administered by the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) for projects that enhance pedestrian and bicycle facilities. ITEP funds can also be used for streetscape beautification and other projects that enhance the historic, aesthetic, or environmental impact of transportation infrastructure. Local governments and nonprofits are eligible for ITEP grants. Funding reimbursement is available for up to 50% of the cost for right-of-way and 80% for preliminary and final engineering and construction costs. The Illinois 2019 capital plan, for the first time ever, included dedicated funding for walking and biking projects. This state funding is now being distributed through ITEP, which was previously solely federally funded. To advance transportation equity, the bill designates that at least 25 percent of total ITEP funds are directed towards projects in high-need areas, with a sliding-scale local match based on need. Projects eligible for ITEP funding include new sidewalks, the replacement of existing sidewalks, pedestrian crossings, bike lanes, side paths, and trails that provide a transportation option for people walking or biking. A 20 percent local match will be required for most communities.

Urban and Community Forestry Grant

The Urban and Community Forestry Grant provides funding assistance to communities to improve the urban forest. Grants are administrated by the Morton Arboretum and can range from \$5,000 - \$25, 000. The grant's purpose is to improve the quality of life through the preservation and protection of trees, and improved understanding of what forest composition and structure exists to support improved management and health, improved care of urban forest for short and long term, and the increased health and growth of the urban forest. Projects that can be funded include, an urban forest management plan based on a digital and current tree inventory, an inventory of public trees in the community and an urban forest management plan that addresses some portion of the results, development or enhancement of a tree preservation ordinance without an additional project component, or tree planting on public property.

Illinois Power Agency

The Illinois Power Agency created the Illinois Solar for All program which makes solar installations for income-eligible households and organizations more affordable through state incentives. The program is eligible for homeowners, renters, non-profit organizations, and public facilities. Applicants can participate by installing solar on their property or by participating in Community Solar.

Motor Fuel Tax

The State of Illinois collects a Motor Fuel Tax (MFT), and the proceeds of this tax are allotted to counties, townships, and municipalities. These funds can be used for the construction, maintenance and related engineering for improvements to eligible public roadways.

Parks, Trails, and Open Spaces

Illinois Department of Natural Resources Bike Paths and Recreational Trails Program

The Recreational Trails Program (RTP) is a federal grant program managed by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR). These funds may be used for motorized or non-motorized trails and require a 20% non-federal match. In the past, IDNR has used this grant program to fund trail construction and rehabilitation, restoration of natural areas adjacent to existing trails, and land acquisition for future trails.

Illinois Bicycle Path Program

The Illinois Bicycle Path (IBP) Program is a grant program that provides local units of government with funding to develop, expand, and enhance non-motorized paths and trails. Local units of government are eligible to apply for a grant. Funds awarded through the program may be used for land acquisition, trail construction, signage, fencing, draining, or construction of support facilities, such as water fountains and restrooms. Illinois Bicycle Path Program grants will cover up to 50% of total project costs, with a maximum of \$200,000 per year for development projects and no maximum for land acquisition.

PeopleForBikes Community Grant Program

The PeopleForBikes (PFB) Community Grant Program supports bicycle infrastructure projects and targeted advocacy initiatives that make it easier and safer for people of all ages and abilities to ride. PeopleForBikes accepts grant applications from non-profit organizations with a focus on bicycling, active transportation, or community development; from Village or county agencies or departments and from state or federal agencies working locally. PeopleForBikes focuses most grant funds on bicycle infrastructure projects, such as bike paths, lanes, trails, and bridges; mountain bike facilities; Bike parks and pump tracks; BMX facilities; and end-of-trip facilities such as bike racks, bike parking, bike repair stations and bike storage.

PeopleForBikes will fund engineering and design work, construction costs including materials, labor and equipment rental and reasonable volunteer support costs. For advocacy projects, staffing that is directly related to accomplishing the goals of the initiative may be funded. PeopleForBikes accepts requests for funding up to \$10,000. There is not specific percentage match, but the organization looks at leverage and funding partnerships very carefully. Grant requests for funding of more than 50% of the project budget are not considered.

Openlands ComEd Green Region Program

The Openland ComEd Green Region Program (GRP) provides grants of up to \$10,000 to support open space projects, including trails. This annual grant typically opens every January.

AARP Livable Communities

The American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) Community Challenge grant program is part of the nationwide AARP Livable Communities initiative, which helps communities become great places to live for residents of all ages. The program is intended to help communities make immediate improvements and jump-start long-term progress in support of residents of all ages. Priority projects include projects that create vibrant public places that improve open spaces, parks and access to other amenities and projects that deliver a range of transportation and mobility options that increase connectivity, walkability, bikeability, wayfinding, access to transportation options and roadway improvements.

Wastewater and Drinking Water

The Wastewater and Drinking Water loan programs provide low-interest loans through the State Revolving Fund (SRF). The SRF includes two loan programs: the Water Pollution Control Loan Program (WPCLP) which funds both wastewater and storm water projects, and the Public Water Supply Loan Program (PWSLP) for drinking water projects. These programs are annually the recipients of federal capitalization funding which is combined with state matching funds, interest earnings, repayment money, and the sale of bonds to form a source of financing for infrastructure projects.

These programs provide financial assistance to eligible public or private applicants for the design and construction of a wide variety of projects that protect or improve the quality of Illinois' water resources. Eligible projects include new drinking water or wastewater infrastructure construction; upgrading or rehabilitating existing infrastructure; storm water-related projects that benefit water quality; and a variety of other projects that protect or improve the quality of Illinois' rivers, streams, and lakes.

Incentives

It should be noted that the following section highlights tools that provide financial incentives with the aim to attract development.

Illinois Revolving Loan Fund

A Revolving Loan Fund is administered to provide financial support and assistance to new or expanding businesses, funded through the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity. The borrower may use the low-interest loan for construction, property rehabilitation/improvements, and land acquisition, among other things. As the Village aims to develop key sites within Downtown, this funding opportunity should be considered for use, and marketed to local entrepreneurs seeking to grow their businesses.

Property Tax Abatement

A property tax abatement is a versatile tool that can be applied to address a wide range of community issues. Property tax abatements are typically used as an incentive to attract businesses and revitalize the local economy. Cook County can abate any portion of the tax that they individually levy on a property. Common tax abatement programs that can be taken advantage of including, Class 6b, Class 7a, Class 7b, Class 7c, Class 8, Class 9, Class C, Class L, and Class S programs. These programs are used to offer incentives to the development and redevelopment of commercial, industrial, multi-family, contaminated, landmark or, Section 8 properties.

One example of the property tax abatement for Cook County is the Class 8 real estate tax incentive. The Class 8 real estate tax incentive is designed to encourage industrial and commercial development in areas of the County that are not experiencing growth. This allows the Assessor to certify that certain areas are in need of reinvestment. Within an eligible certified Class 8 area, all subsequent new construction, substantial rehabilitation or reutilization of abandoned buildings, developed or reoccupied for industrial or commercial use, may qualify for the incentive. The incentive assesses qualifying real estate at a reduced assessment level for a period of twelve years from the date that the project is completed. The assessment levels are ten percent of the market value for ten years, fifteen percent in year eleven and twenty percent in year twelve.

Payment in Lieu of Taxes

Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) is a tool similar to tax abatement. The Village can use PILOT to reduce the property tax burden of a business for a predetermined period. In this instance, the Village and property owners will agree to the annual payment of a set fee in place of property taxes. Payments are generally made in the form of a fixed sum, but they may also be paid as a percentage of the income generated by a property. PILOT can also be a means of reducing the fiscal impact on the Village of a nonprofit, institutional use, or other non-taxpaying entity location on a key site. While such uses can be desirable as activity generators, they can also negatively impact municipal services because they do not pay taxes. Provisions can be made to offset that negative impact by allowing the Village to be compensated for at least a portion of the revenue that would otherwise be collected in the form of property tax.

Village Revolving Loan Fund

The Village has established a revolving loan to aid businesses that may need financial assistance. The loans can be used by businesses within the Village. Additionally, items that qualify for the use of the loan program are the acquisition of real property, construction of a new building, an addition to an existing building, remodeling or reconstruction of an existing building, leasehold improvements, construction of parking areas in relation to the business, or the purchase of business-related equipment and fixtures. A requirement of the project is that it will increase the local property or sales tax and/or increase employment opportunities. The application must indicate how this will be achieved.

Sign Grant

The Village of Park Forest will issue grants up to \$1,000 per business. Applications must be submitted using the Village of Park Forest Sign Grant Program Application. The grant amount cannot exceed more than half of the total cost of the sign. The signs cannot be installed without a permit and must conform to all of Park Forest's regulations. Sign grants allow businesses to have the opportunity to adhere to the Village sign regulations without being restricted by costs.

Small Business Energy Efficiency Grant Application

Small Business Energy Efficiency Grants are available to help businesses in Park Forest reduce their environmental impact and save money. The grant must not exceed half of the total cost of the project up to \$1,000. Work must be done in partnership with ComEd and Nicor's energy efficiency programs. In addition, the applicant must agree to share their data of total electricity use for a minimum of five years. Some of the programs that are offered by ComEd and Nicor include facility assessments as well as incentives and rebates for business who install energy efficient appliances or equipment. These incentives can be used to increase energy efficiency as well as save Park Forest businesses money.

Opportunity Zones

DownTown Park Forest is fully within one of the 181 Opportunity Zones within Cook County. This incentive works by an investor re-investing some or all of a capital gain into a Qualified Opportunity Fund (QOF) within 180 days of recognition. The Qualified Opportunity Fund invests in Qualified Opportunity Zone Property, bringing funding to a traditionally disinvested area. The investor can defer recognition of his capital gain until December 31, 2026. The amount of gain realized can be reduced by up to 10% if it is invested in the Qualified Opportunity Fund for at least 5 years. This funding tool can be used by property or business owners within the eligible areas of Park Forest.

Enterprise Zones

The Village of Park Forest is a part of and DownTown is fully within the I-57 Will/Cook Enterprise Zone. This area includes portions of the neighboring communities of Matteson, Monee, Richton Park, and University Park. This enterprise zone was formed to provide commercial and industrial project expansions and new construction, business development tax incentives, real estate, sales tax and construction cost savings, and utility tax exemptions. The purpose of the zone is to attract industry and revitalize existing businesses by providing targeted initiatives and financial incentives.

A APPENDIX

The Appendix of the *Park Forest DownTown Master Plan* includes additional information related to DownTown's built form. This includes basements, roofs, parking lots, and ADA accessibility.

Basement Assessments

The physical condition of the basements within Village-owned buildings was assessed during the initial phase of the planning process. The assessment reviewed conditions such as the number of exits, ceiling heights, and access to determine what improvements can be made to transform them into more usable spaces. Basement spaces exist in buildings 1, 5, 6b, and 7.

While there is a significant amount of square footage available between the four assessed basement levels, the available uses for these spaces are limited due to existing egress and accessibility conditions, as well as achievable ceiling heights.

Accessory Storage and Utility

In order to maintain a cost-effective and feasible approach to the use of these spaces, further exploration of variance options is warranted relative to accessibility requirements. If proposed as an accessory use to existing occupancies in order to provide greater value for tenants, several of the spaces in buildings 1, 5, and 7 may offer some additional means of lease revenue via “accessory” storage.

Assembly, Business, or Retail

Two basement spaces stand out as having the greatest potential for better use. With the existing elevator in building 1, and with the potential for an additional stair and lift in building 6b, an additional 18,000 square feet in total could provide further opportunity for assembly, business, or retail tenant use.



Downtown Buildings

This map shows the ownership of Downtown buildings, as well as the Village owned basement areas.

- Village Owned
- Village Owned Basement Area
- Privately Owned



PUBLIC LIBRARY

POLICE DEPT.

Lakewood Blvd

Orchard Dr

Liberty Dr

Cunningham Dr

Liberty Dr

Main St

Western Ave

Forest Blvd

Victory Dr

Victory Dr

Indianwood Blvd

Lester Rd

VILLAGE HALL

FIRE DEPT.

4

6a

6b

7

2

1

N

0 100 200 400 US Feet

SAUK TRAIL

LINCOLN HIGHWAY

SAUK TRAIL

Roof Evaluation for Solar Panels

As part of the planning process, building roofs were evaluated to determine their ability to support solar panels. The evaluation determined that DownTown buildings are not good candidates for solar panel installation. The DownTown building roof structures all use *light-frame* construction including the following systems:

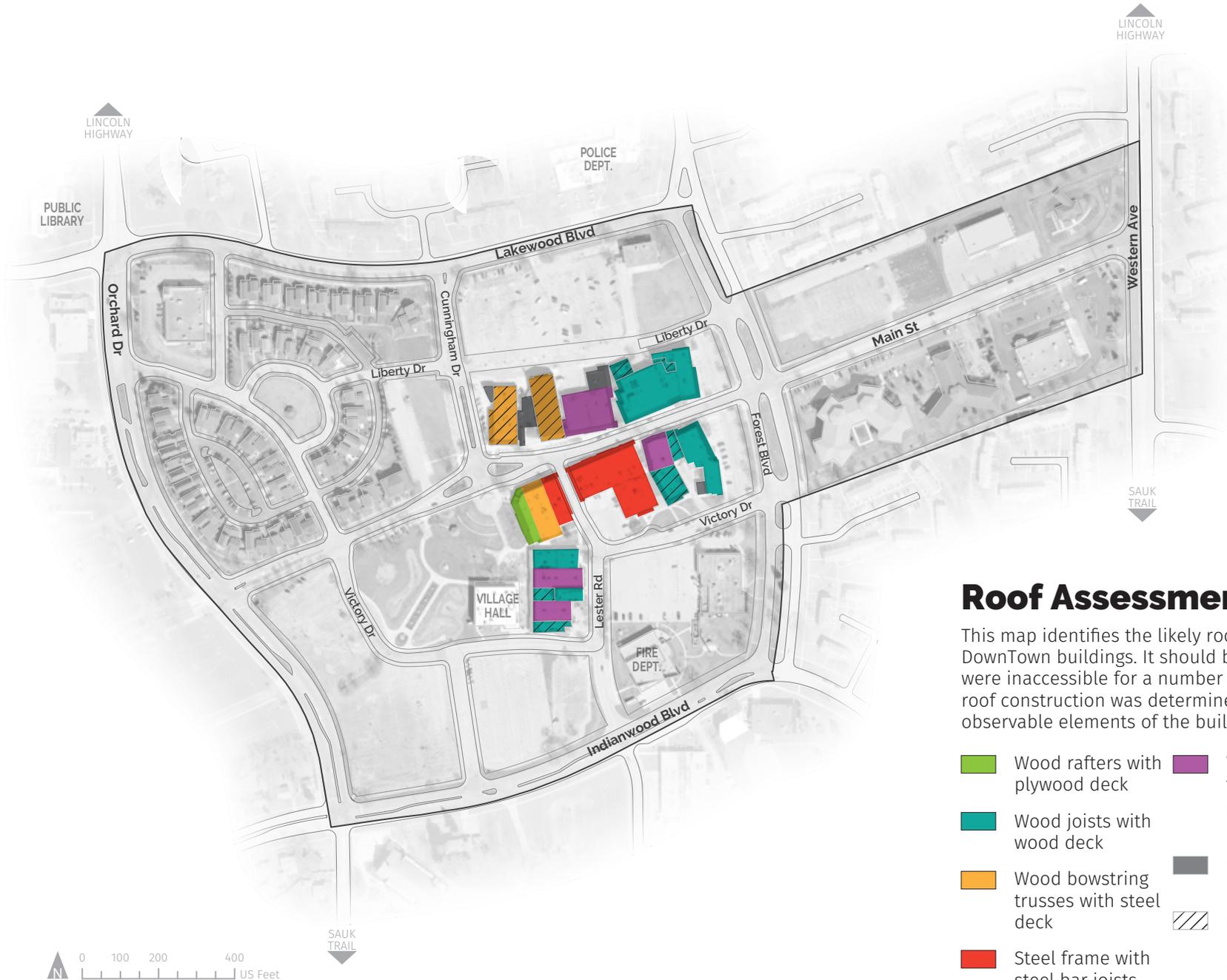
- Wood rafters with plywood deck
- Wood rafters with wood deck
- Wood bowstring trusses with steel deck
- Wood bowstring trusses with wood purlins and wood deck
- Steel frame with steel bar joists and steel deck

These types of roof structures are unlikely to have excess load-bearing capacity needed for support of solar panel systems. Buildings with these types of light-frame roof construction require a comprehensive evaluation and inspection, typically involving demolition of some interior wall and ceiling panels so that structural elements can be recorded and verified. Additionally, original record drawings and shop drawings for performance-based design elements such as wood trusses and steel joists would be required to perform this detailed evaluation. The necessary drawings were not included in the building plans and information files provided by the Village.

The roofing system on the DownTown buildings appears to be a fully adhered single-ply thermoplastic polyolefin (TPO) membrane which poses additional challenges for solar panel installations. Solar panels are typically installed on flat membrane roofs with titled racking systems in one of two ways:

- **Ballasted with concrete blocks:** This type of system adds significant load to the roof and can exceed the structural capacity of the roof structure. Ballasted installations can lead to ponding and membrane tears at supports if coverboard is not installed under the membrane.
- **Anchored through the roofing system into the roof structure:** This requires penetrations through roofing membrane which introduces potential for leaks and uses proprietary anchoring systems with flashing.

As a result, these buildings are not good candidates for solar panel installation because they use light-frame construction, and the membrane roofing system poses additional installation challenges.



Roof Assessment

This map identifies the likely roof construction of DownTown buildings. It should be noted roofs were inaccessible for a number of buildings. Likely roof construction was determined based on other observable elements of the building construction.

- | | | | |
|---|--|---|--|
|  | Wood rafters with plywood deck |  | Wood bowstring trusses with wood purlins and wood deck |
|  | Wood joists with wood deck |  | Roof structure unknown |
|  | Wood bowstring trusses with steel deck |  | Roof inaccessible, construction indicated by exterior |
|  | Steel frame with steel bar joists and steel deck | | |

Date of Assessment: 4/12/2022

Parking Facilities Inventory

The existing parking lots were inventoried, and capacity was determined. The conditions were evaluated and assigned a condition rating number using the Pavement Surface Evaluation and Rating (PASER) system. Additionally, estimates for pavement patching and curb and gutter repair were recorded.

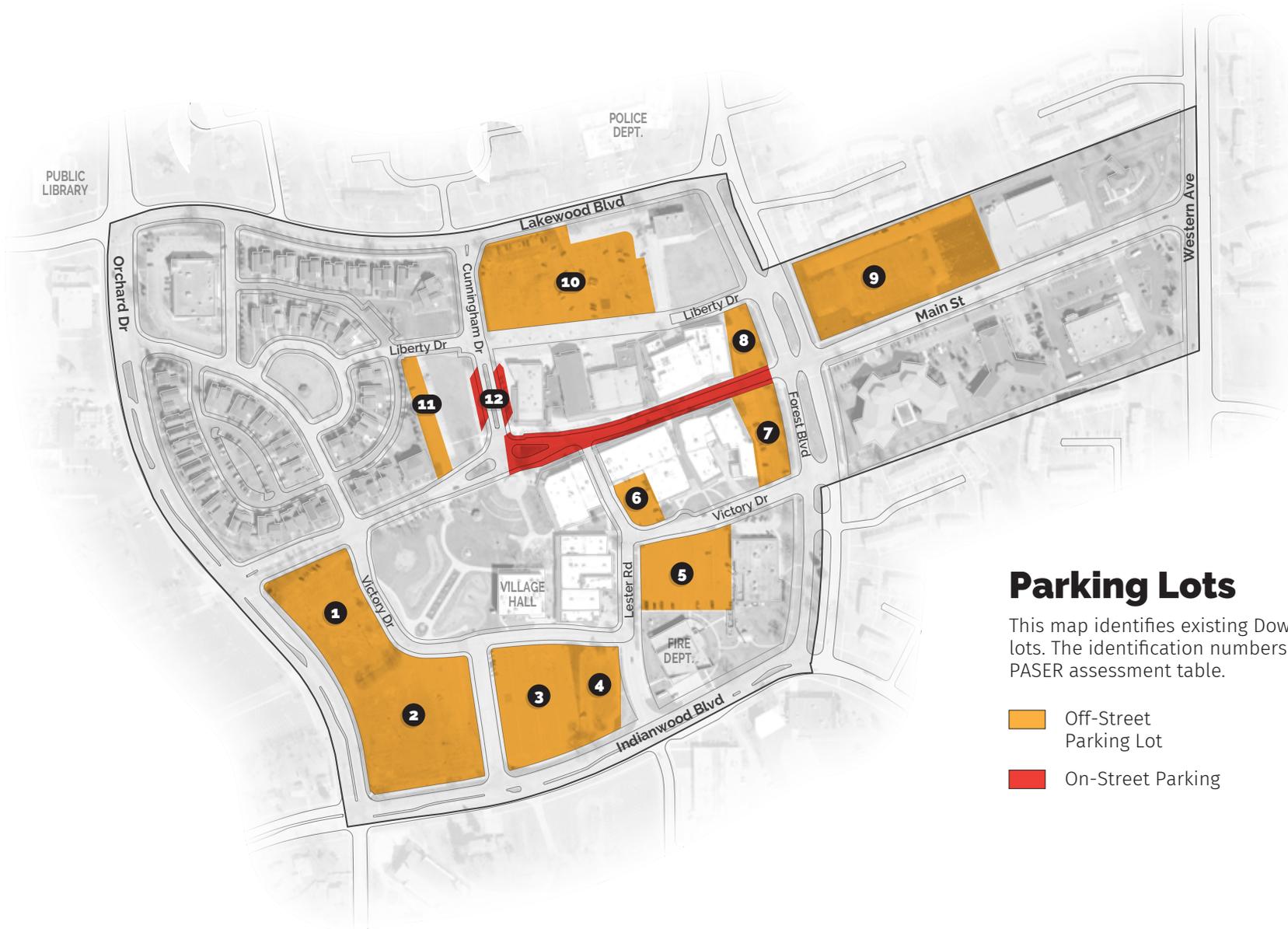
The PASER ratings are translatable to the condition and recommended maintenance options.

PASER Ratings

Quality	Rating	Maintenance
Excellent	9-10	No maintenance required
Very Good	8	Little or no maintenance required
Good	7	Routine maintenance, crack sealing, and minor patching
Fair	5-6	Preservation treatments (sealcoating)
Poor	3-4	Structural improvement and leveling (overlay or recycling)
Failed	1-2	Reconstruction

PASER Assessment

Parking Lot Number	Parking Spaces	Handicap Parking Spaces	Pavement PASER Rating (1 to 10)	Estimated Pavement Patching	Estimated Curb Replacement
1	140	0	2	30%	20%
2	270	0	3	40%	25%
3	181	6	8	<10%	<10%
4	65	2	2	100%	15%
5	115	5	7	10%	15%
6	20	0	6	20%	N/A
7	43	3	6	15%	<10%
8	25	1	6	10%	10%
9	166	0	7	<10%	<10%
10	325	10	3	30%	35%
11	53	3	8	<10%	<10%
12	18	2	8	15%	15%
13	34	2	8	20%	25%



Parking Lots

This map identifies existing DownTown parking lots. The identification numbers are tied to the PASER assessment table.

-  Off-Street Parking Lot
-  On-Street Parking

ADA Accessibility

Spot checks were completed during the site evaluation to help develop a budget for future ADA improvements to address items such as sidewalk slopes exceeding 2%, curb ramps with missing detectable warnings or excessive slopes, and insufficient handicap parking spaces. The Village should conduct a detailed ADA accessibility study throughout DownTown to determine which sidewalks, curb ramps, and crosswalks should be updated to meet the current ADA/PROWAG (Public Rights-of-Way Accessibility Guidelines) for accessibility.

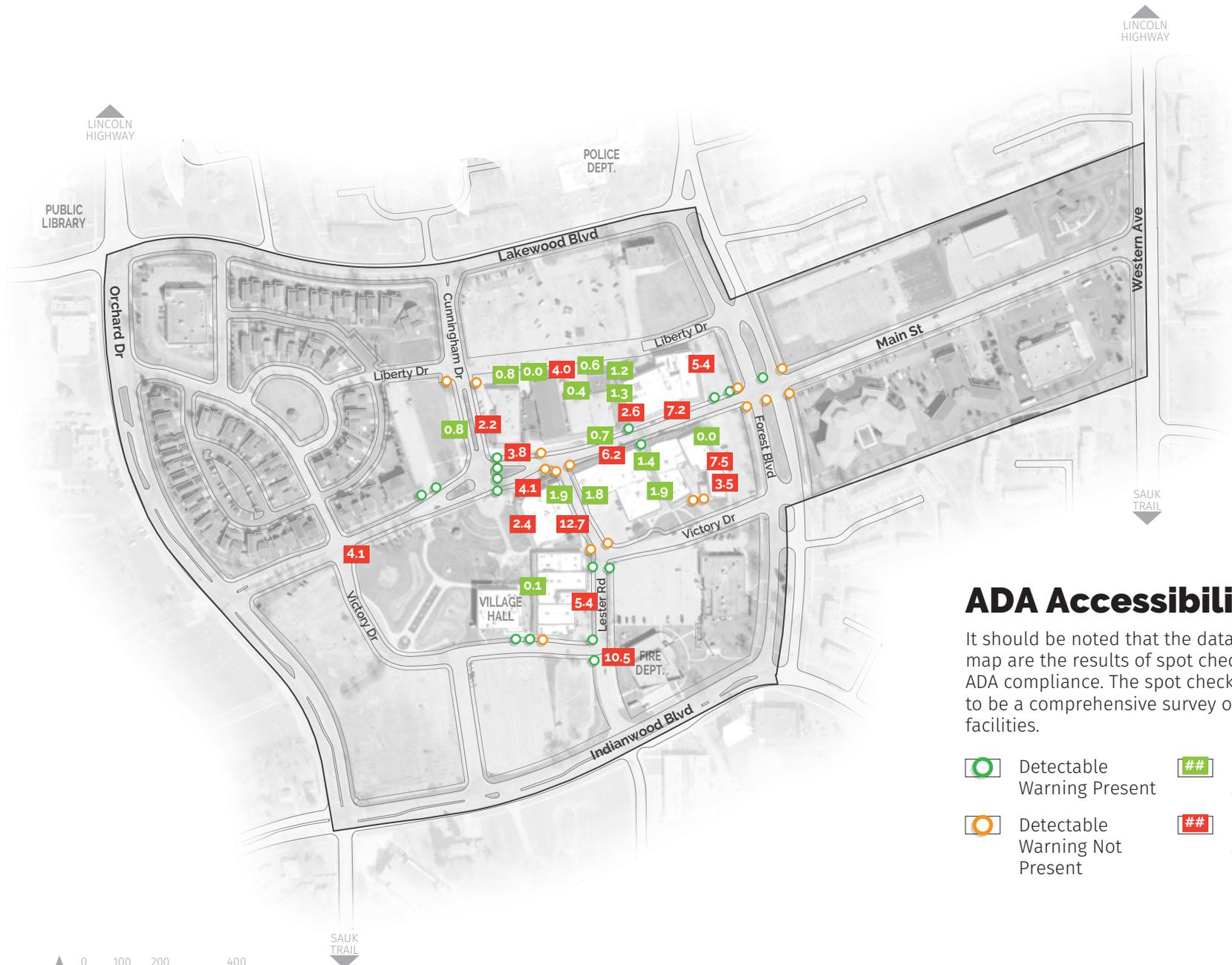
The Capital Improvement Plan ([page 94](#)) incorporates ADA improvements into the overall Main Street streetscape enhancements. The accompanying ADA Accessibility map highlights the observations related to ADA accessibility identified as part of the DownTown site evaluation.



Existing Crossing at Main Street and Founders Way - Detectable Warning Present



Existing Crossing at Lester Road and Victory Drive - Detectable Warning Not Present



ADA Accessibility

It should be noted that the data shown on this map are the results of spot checks to help assess ADA compliance. The spot checks are not intended to be a comprehensive survey of all routes and facilities.

- Detectable Warning Present
- Detectable Warning Not Present
- ### Compliant Sidewalk Slope (%)
- ### Non-Compliant Sidewalk Slope (%)



Date of Assessment: 4/12/2022