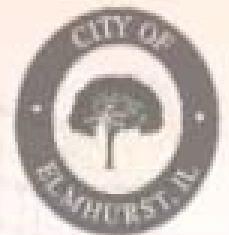




Downtown Plan

February 2006



City of Elmhurst, Illinois

Prepared By:

HNTB

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Purpose and Introduction.....i

- A. Purpose and Summary of the Downtown Plan.....i
- B. Previous Downtown Planning Policy Framework.....ii
- C. Redevelopment Trends.....vi
- D. Major Downtown Planning Issues.....vi
- E. Process for Preparing the Downtown Plan.....viii
- F. Plan Organization.....ix

Chapter I: A Vision for Downtown.....I-1

Chapter II: Planning Influences.....II-1

- A. Existing Land Use.....II-1
- B. Market Opportunities.....II-4
- C. Facilities.....II-8
- D. Access and Circulation.....II-9
- E. Public Transit.....II-11
- F. Parking.....II-11

Chapter III: Downtown Framework Plan.....III-1

- A. The Land Use Plan.....III-1
- B. Principles of Transit Oriented Development.....III-13
- C. Urban Design.....III-16
- D. Downtown Parking and Circulation.....III-39

Chapter IV: Realizing the Vision - Plan Implementation.....IV-1

- A. Downtown Management.....IV-1
- B. Downtown Finance Program.....IV-5
- C. Key Implementation Actions and Follow-Up.....IV-7

Chapter V: Downtown Subarea Plans.....V-1



TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

1. Downtown Redevelopment and Improvement Projects.....	vii
2. Existing Land Use and Study Area.....	II-2
3. Downtown Transportation Facilities.....	II-10
4. Land Use Plan.....	III-2
5. Downtown “Streetwall” Frontage Locations.....	III-6
6. Upper Story Setback.....	III-8
7. Cultural Campus Boundary.....	III-11
8. Existing Pedestrian Circulation.....	III-17
9. Downtown Pedestrian Framework Plan.....	III-22
10. Addison Avenue Improvement Concept.....	III-23
11. Open Space Framework.....	III-25
12. Outdoor Plaza Alternatives.....	III-28
13. Parking Analysis Boundaries.....	III-41



SUBAREA PLANS

14. Downtown Subareas.....V-2

15. Subarea A, Identification Map, York Street Commercial Corridor.....V-3

16. Subarea A, Framework Plan, York Street Commercial Corridor.....V-4

17. Subarea A, Illustrative Development Concept, York Street Commercial Corridor.....V-5

18. Subarea B, Identification Map, Addison Avenue.....V-6

19. Subarea B, Framework Plan, Addison Avenue.....V-7

20. Subarea B, Illustrative Development Concept, Addison Avenue.....V-8

21. Subarea C, Identification Map, North Robert Palmer Drive.....V-9

22. Subarea C, Framework Plan, North Robert Palmer Drive.....V-10

23. Subarea C, Illustrative Development Concept, North Robert Palmer Drive.....V-11

24. Subarea D, Identification Map, North Downtown.....V-12

25. Subarea D, Framework Plan, North Downtown.....V-13

26. Subarea D, Illustrative Development Concept, North Downtown.....V-14

27..Subarea E, Identification Map, First Street.....V-15

28..Subarea E, Framework Plan, First Street.....V-16

29..Subarea E, Illustrative Development Concept, First Street.....V-17

30..Subarea F, Identification Map, South Robert Palmer Drive.....V-18

31. Subarea F, Framework Plan, South Robert Palmer Drive.....V-19

32. Subarea F, Illustrative Development Concept, South Robert Palmer Drive.....V-20

33. Subarea G, Identification Map, Larch Avenue.....V-21

34. Subarea G, Framework Plan, Larch Avenue.....V-22

35. Subarea G, Illustrative Development Concept, Larch Avenue.....V-23

36. Subarea H, Identification Map, Crescent Court Block.....V-24

37. Subarea H, Framework Plan, Crescent Court Block.....V-25

38. Subarea H, Illustrative Development Concept, Crescent Court Block.....V-26

39. Subarea I, Identification Map, Cultural Campus.....V-27

40. Subarea I, Alternative A, Current Facilities Enhancement.....V-36

41. Subarea I, Alternative B, Retail Emphasis.....V-40

42. Subarea I, Alternative C, Wilder Park Gateway.....V-43

43. Subarea I, Illustrative Plan, Cultural Campus.....V-46

44. Subarea I, Illustrative Gateway Features, Cultural Campus.....V-47





Purpose and Introduction

A. PURPOSE AND SUMMARY OF THE DOWNTOWN PLAN

The City's first Downtown Plan was prepared as part of the City's Comprehensive Plan adopted in 1990. Over the last fifteen years, Downtown Elmhurst has continued to change and evolve, and the need for a new Downtown Plan to provide direction to current issues and community thinking has become apparent. While the 1990 Plan has provided strong and insightful direction for the Downtown and the community as a whole, new issues and priorities unforeseen at that time have unfolded which now require the City to "step back" and reconsider its program for the Downtown area. Thus, this Downtown Plan provides an updated framework based on current needs and community aspirations.

Downtown plans leading up to this update were comprised of a number of independent plans created over time that together form the adopted policy of the City. The City's level of interest and activity in downtown planning demonstrate its commitment to sustaining and improving its central area. This updated Plan has "knit" the relevant Downtown ideas and concepts into a single unified downtown planning program. There are several key purposes of the Downtown Plan:

- The Plan will guide physical improvement and redevelopment within the Downtown area.
- The Plan strives to articulate the community's "vision" for Downtown and prescribes policies and guidelines for achieving that vision.
- The Downtown Plan establishes the "ground rules" for public and private improvement and redevelopment. It should be used on a cooperative basis by the City and various organizations, institutions, property owners, merchants, homeowners and residents.
- The Plan provides guidelines by which City staff, the Zoning and Planning Commission and City Council can review and evaluate private redevelopment proposals.
- The Plan provides a guide for public investments and capital improvements, and can be used to help identify and schedule public improvement projects related to streets, pedestrian ways, infrastructure, and public sites and buildings.



PURPOSE AND INTRODUCTION

- The Plan provides a guide for Downtown property owners, designers and developers as they prepare plans for new redevelopment projects.
- The Plan provides a basis for refining the zoning ordinance and other development codes, all of which should be used to implement planning policies and recommendations.
- Finally, the Plan should serve as a marketing tool to promote Downtown Elmhurst's unique assets and advantages, and help to continue attracting desirable new investment and redevelopment to the area in the future.

B. PREVIOUS DOWNTOWN PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

Downtown Sector Plan (1990)

The City's first plan for the Downtown was the Downtown Sector Plan, which was developed as a subarea plan as part of the City's complete 1990 Comprehensive Plan. The 1990 Comprehensive Plan recommended improvement and enhancement of the historic role and character of Downtown, and also promoted new redevelopment in selected locations. Specific recommendations include:

- Downtown should be maintained as Elmhurst's multi-purpose commercial and service focal point.
- Downtown should remain relatively small and compact, and the present scale and character of the area should essentially be maintained.
- The blocks north of the railroad should be reinforced as Downtown's primary retail shopping area. This area, particularly the blocks flanking York Street, should be intensely developed and strongly oriented to pedestrian shopping.
- The blocks south of the railroad should be improved as a mixed commercial area dominated by office and service uses.
- Low- to medium-density residential uses should frame the Downtown and provide a transition between the commercial area and adjacent neighborhoods.
- The historic character of Downtown should be enhanced. Older commercial buildings should be improved and new construction should be compatible with the existing historic character.



PURPOSE AND INTRODUCTION

- An adequate and convenient supply of parking should be provided to serve the Downtown.
- The barrier effect created by the Chicago & Northwestern Railroad (now the Union Pacific) should be minimized. While major new overpasses and underpasses are not recommended, improved landscaping and pedestrian routes should help minimize the separation between the north and south sides of Downtown.
- The commuter station area should continue to be improved as a transportation center within the Downtown. Techniques for encouraging commuters to patronize nearby stores and shops should be explored.
- New open space areas should be provided to give variety to the Downtown environment.
- Streetscape improvements, including lighting, landscaping, sidewalks and signage, should continue to be undertaken to enhance the image and appearance of Downtown.

In addition, since the adoption of the 1990 Comprehensive Plan, the City has undertaken several important initiatives to continue to guide the Downtown improvement program. These initiatives build upon the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan, and have responded to unique needs and opportunities in the Downtown. They are briefly described below.

North Downtown Plan (2000)

This plan addressed basic development, design and zoning issues in the area between Third Street and North Avenue along York Street. Previous C2 zoning in this area would encourage more suburban “strip shopping center” style development. The City concluded that this area should function as a part of the Downtown core, and be subject to development regulations similar to the CBD regarding building setbacks, parking and other features to encourage a pedestrian environment. Following adoption of the North Downtown Plan, the City prepared and adopted the “C4A North Downtown Business District” zoning amendment to implement the development regulations and design principles of the North Downtown Plan. Since adoption of the Plan, the City has been assembling land for consolidated off-street parking in the area. Further, as described above, several new development projects have been initiated in the area as well. Many of the elements of the 2000 Plan have been brought forward in the City’s new Downtown Plan.



PURPOSE AND INTRODUCTION

Subarea “H” Crescent Court Interim Downtown Plan (2004)

A subarea plan was prepared early in the Downtown planning process to address the unique redevelopment needs of the former Fifth Third Bank block at the corner of York Street and Robert Palmer Drive. Land use mix, development intensity, building positioning, and the conservation of existing structures on the site were important issues addressed. The City Council accepted the Plan as an interim plan and strategy on June 16, 2003. Since that time, the Crescent Court Development (Subarea H) project has been approved, and developed. This plan has been made a part of the Downtown Plan.

Cultural Campus Plan (2004)

This plan was developed as the result of a number of simultaneous redevelopment proposals in the Wilder Park area. The new Elmhurst Public Library, ongoing campus master planning by Elmhurst College, ongoing planning of park facilities (including Wilder Park) by the Elmhurst Park District, proposed expansion by the Elmhurst Art Museum, and a variety of other activities created the need for the City to consider a coordination strategy among a range of public and institutional agencies in the Wilder Park area. The City first established the Cultural Campus Steering Committee in 2003. This ad hoc Committee, formed by the Mayor and City Council, developed a series of ideas for future Campus improvement and conservation. It included institutional uses in the area south of Park Avenue and west of York Street. Major issues addressed include off-street parking, pedestrian access and safety, the location and scale of new buildings, and the conservation of open space. Several alternative plans were developed, and accepted by the Steering Committee. These alternatives, within the Cultural Campus Plan, were provided to the Zoning and Planning Commission and City Council in 2004 as part of the ongoing Downtown Plan process. The Cultural Campus Plan is made part of the overall Downtown Plan. However, it is recognized that the College and Park District continue to review their plans and planning process periodically.

City Centre Plan (1999)

Finally, while not a part of the official planning program of the City, in 1999 the City Centre organization of Downtown Elmhurst developed an independent plan for the future of the Downtown. It included a number of design and development recommendations considered in the new Downtown Plan. The



PURPOSE AND INTRODUCTION

City and community are already pursuing many of these recommendations. A summary of the Plan's major improvement and redevelopment recommendations are highlighted below.

- Develop a “wayfinding” plan for directional signage that guides visitors to Downtown from major highways and transit facilities.
- Create a clear, identifiable signage program with four types of signs: a) gateway signs; b) identity signs; c) directional signs; and d) information signs.
- Improve building facades to enhance the “Main Street” character of Downtown.
- Establish architectural guidelines to encourage higher quality design for new and renovated buildings.
- Complete the City's streetscape project, especially along Addison Avenue.
- Continue to reevaluate Downtown's overall parking supply and traffic circulation system.
- Consider two-way traffic on various Downtown streets, including York, Cottage Hill and along Second Street between Addison and York.
- Consolidate and link adjacent parking lots to provide more efficient, shared parking and to increase parking supply.
- As Elmhurst College expands northward to Park Avenue, develop a landscaped “gateway” at the southwest corner of Prospect and Park.
- Study improvement concepts for Wilder Park, including:
 - a. Extension of the park north to Park Avenue;
 - b. Construction of a new Public Library at the northwest corner of Wilder Park;
 - c. Removal of the field house and tennis courts to create more green space in the center of Wilder Park.
 - d. Provision of a new access road into Wilder Park;
 - e. Conversion of the current Library building to a community/ cultural center, Park District headquarters, or similar use; and
 - f. Removal of the Park District office building to provide an unobstructed view of the Conservatory and allow for additional parking.
- Consider relocating the main Post Office out of Downtown. The building could be reused for a smaller Postal facility, a Park District headquarters, and/or a visitor's center.



C. REDEVELOPMENT TRENDS

Since 1994, Downtown Elmhurst has experienced a variety of new redevelopments which have a strong positive influence on the role and overall character of the Downtown. To better understand the range of these changes, they have been mapped in Figure 1: Downtown Redevelopment and Improvement Projects.

This has included 183,000 square feet of new commercial and office uses, 487 new dwellings, and 182,000 square feet of new public and institutional uses. In addition, over 45 façade grants and 24 business grants have been made to support Downtown businesses. This high level of investment demonstrates both public and private sector commitment to a successful and economically vital Downtown. The new Downtown Plan will continue conservation and development toward an economically sustainable Downtown.

D. MAJOR DOWNTOWN PLANNING ISSUES

Throughout the process of developing the new Downtown Plan, a number of key issues were identified to be addressed by the new Plan. These are briefly summarized below.

1. **On- and Off-Street Parking** – While the City has been very successful at balancing the supply and demand of off-street parking, it has always been an important Downtown Planning issue. With the potential for continued redevelopment in the Downtown, this element will continue to be an important part of the Downtown improvement strategy.
2. **Scale of Redevelopment** – In recent years, the scale of redevelopment in Downtown has been a point of substantial community discussion. The City has approved a variety of appropriately scaled developments in the Downtown.
3. **Economic Stability** – Over the last decade, the Downtown has evolved into a mixed-use community shopping and entertainment center. Redevelopment has emphasized a mix of residential, restaurant, entertainment, commercial, and cultural uses. Continued success in the Downtown will build upon existing assets and attract key niche retail market opportunities.

DOWNTOWN REDEVELOPMENT AND IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS



PURPOSE AND INTRODUCTION

4. **Urban Design** – The image and appearance of the Downtown, and the need to sustain a pedestrian environment are key to continued success. The Plan calls for continued development of a strong “public” environment within the Downtown to maintain its role as a popular cultural, entertainment and retail environment.
5. **Traffic and Circulation** – The Downtown circulation and access system has also been an issue of concern in the past. The issue of the continued use of one-way streets was discussed, and concluded by the City Council, and for the foreseeable future will remain in use. The decision was reached through technical work of the City’s traffic consultant as well as input from Downtown stakeholders and the community in general. Other issues include:
 - Traffic congestion on Park Avenue, and
 - Freight train traffic on the Union Pacific line. While conditions have improved in recent years, freight traffic still causes congestion along rail line crossings.

E. PROCESS FOR PREPARING THE DOWNTOWN PLAN

Preparation of the Downtown Plan has followed a rigorous public involvement process. It began with documentation of existing conditions and identification of issues or challenges facing the Downtown. Involvement techniques such as interviews, open houses, community workshops and meetings sought to gain public impressions and preferences for the future of the Downtown. Preparation of alternative plans and policies allowed citizens to compare and contrast alternative approaches to realizing community aspirations. Ultimately, consensus on a community vision, and a preferred comprehensive strategy was achieved. Implementation strategies to support preferred community improvement and conservation ideas were then developed. Key milestones included the following:

- **Program Initiation** – The official kickoff to the process was held by the Zoning and Planning Commission on July 26, 2001.
- **Key Person Interviews** - Interviews with key stakeholders, community leaders, officials and citizens to gain insight on community needs and opportunities were conducted in August and September of 2001.

- **Background Studies Report** - This report included an overall assessment of physical, design, and economic conditions within the Downtown. It was reviewed with the community on November 8, 2001.
- **Interim Downtown Plans** - As discussed above, on June 16, 2003, the City accepted the Subarea “H” Crescent Court Plan and the Cultural Campus Plan on an interim basis to provide guidance and direction to specific issues within the Downtown area.
- **Prepare Downtown Plan Concepts** - Complete Downtown land use and design concepts were prepared and considered by the Zoning and Planning Commission. These concept plans included urban design and subarea planning concepts as well.
- **Prepare the Complete Downtown Plan** - Based on the concept plans, and input and direction from the Zoning and Planning Commission, the complete Downtown Plan was prepared.

F. PLAN ORGANIZATION

The Downtown Plan is divided into five parts as described below:

I. A Vision for Downtown – The Vision for Downtown culminates citizens’ ideas and aspirations for Downtown in a single refined statement. The Vision serves as a critical guide to preparation of the Framework concepts, and ultimately the complete draft Plan for the Downtown.

II. Planning Influences – This part provides an overview understanding of several planning background considerations that were important in developing the new Plan. These include: A) Existing Land Use; B) Market Opportunities C) Facilities; D) Access and Circulation; E) Public Transit and F) Parking.

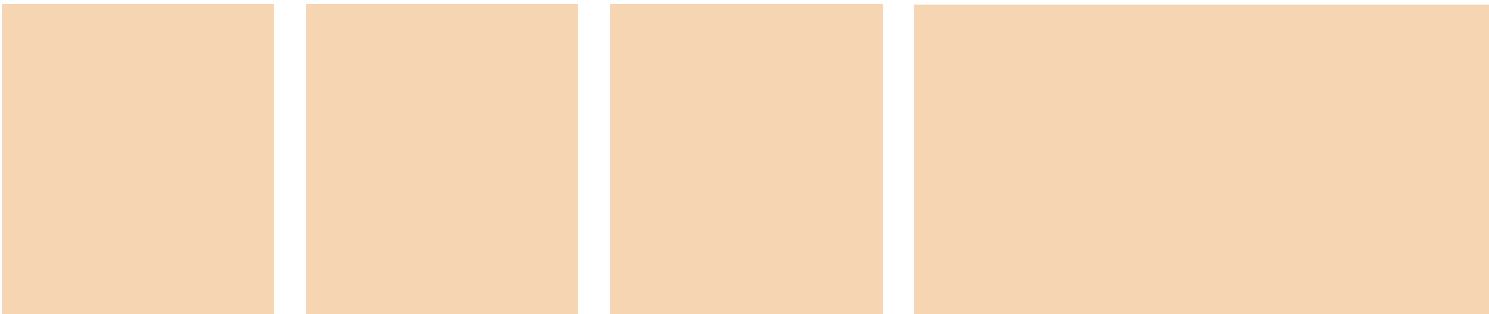
III. Downtown Framework Plan – The framework plan focuses on the major physical and design improvements which might be undertaken in the Downtown in the future. It is divided into four major elements including: A) The Land Use Plan; B) Principles of Transit oriented Development, C) Urban Design; and D) Parking and Circulation.



IV. Plan Implementation – This section sets forth actions required to implement the Plan. This part addresses various components of implementation, including responsible agencies key funding sources, specific projects and key activity recommendations.

V. Downtown Subarea Plans – The Downtown has been divided into several distinct planning subareas which examine improvement and conservation possibilities in more detail. The subarea plans build upon framework plans and provide a greater level of detail and understanding of the development, design and improvement opportunities within key areas of the Downtown.





A Vision for Downtown

A successful Downtown Plan must be based on the needs and aspirations of the community. Thus, before the Plan, there must be a vision. In Elmhurst, a variety of public participation activities, and review of existing conditions, has led the community to begin to define its choices for the future. The process has engaged citizens in identifying ways of dealing with community issues and capitalizing on opportunities. The activities undertaken in the planning process leading to the development of the Vision are described in the introduction above. In the end, Elmhurst's Vision for Downtown provides a central, orchestrating theme that has guided the development of the planning program.

Visioning means the process by which a community, with the involvement of citizens, characterizes its future aspirations for the Downtown, and plans how to achieve it.

a vision..

In the year 2020, Downtown Elmhurst continues to remain a vibrant, attractive and distinctive shopping, dining and entertainment center that serves the local population, daily commuters and surrounding communities. The Downtown is distinguished by its small town character, a range of living options, and diverse cultural activities.

- **Land Use and Business Mix:** Downtown Elmhurst sustains a diverse mix of stores and businesses. Many structures provide retail land use at street level with office and residential uses above. Downtown has maintained a compatible transition to surrounding neighborhood areas.
- **Design and Appearance:** Consistent street lights, landscaping, and other visual connections help to preserve Elmhurst's small town character. Directional and business signage and new gateways add to Downtown's ambience. A number of landmark structures have been preserved and enhanced. New buildings reflect the scale and character of the Downtown as a whole.
- **Access, Circulation and Parking:** Pedestrian and vehicular circulation is safe and easy throughout Downtown. Since parking is convenient, more residents and commuters are attracted to Downtown. Moving around is much easier with the local shuttles that run through Downtown and surrounding neighborhoods.
- **Parks, Plazas and Open Spaces:** Downtown has many beautifully landscaped open spaces and plazas that visually connect to the overall



A VISION *for* DOWNTOWN

streetscape. These parks, plazas and courtyards add to the community atmosphere and provide gathering spaces for the many community events that are held Downtown.

- **Partnerships, Community Involvement and Financial Resources:** Citizens and business interests remain actively involved in the Downtown including the Chamber of Commerce, City Centre, and other civic groups. Financial resources are generated through tax increment financing (TIF), sales tax revenue and investment by property owners and businesses. Government incentive programs, primarily funded by TIF, attract and retain small businesses.

An understanding of community issues and priorities for Downtown was sought early in the planning process. These were gleaned from a community workshop and visual preference surveys and provided an important basis for the Downtown vision. Citizen input regarding the Downtown is summarized below.

Key Issues

- A diversity of stable, quality, mixed uses (especially retail)
- Traffic circulation (need for a more comprehensive system)
- Adequate downtown parking
- Downtown aesthetics and visual quality
- Aggressive marketing of the Downtown
- Improved transitions between downtown and adjacent areas

Primary Assets and Advantages of Downtown

- Restaurants
- Metra Commuter Rail services
- Location proximate to highways and O'Hare Airport
- Quality stores and services
- Proximity to cultural uses in the southwestern portion of the Downtown
- Movie Theater
- Streetscape
- Events and festivals
- Historic buildings
- Small town character
- Clean and safe
- Pedestrian friendly





Chapter II

Planning Influences

This part presents several important planning influences that provided vital information in the creation of the new Downtown Plan. They include existing land use, a market overview, facilities, access and circulation, public transit and parking.

A. EXISTING LAND USE

Current patterns of land use have a strong influence on future land use patterns. Understanding the use character of the Downtown is necessary in planning for its future. The Downtown Elmhurst area is a true “mixed-use” area containing a variety of retail, service, office, public, institutional, open space, and residential land uses. Figure 2, Existing Land Use and Study Area, illustrates generalized existing land use within Downtown.

The high quality and character of Elmhurst’s Downtown has been recognized by area media sources, including newspapers, magazines and television shows. Most notably, Chicago magazine, and a companion piece on WGN Television, identified Elmhurst as the Number 1 community overall in the entire Chicagoland region. This ranking, coupled with other media recognition, helps ensure that the Downtown area is an attractive location for existing businesses to thrive and new businesses to locate here and be successful as well.

Retail Uses

Downtown Elmhurst maintains a small but relatively strong retail component. Retail uses are most prominent along and near York Street, particularly in the blocks between Third Street and the railroad, and along First Street between York and Addison. There is an attractive mix of small local and national retailers.

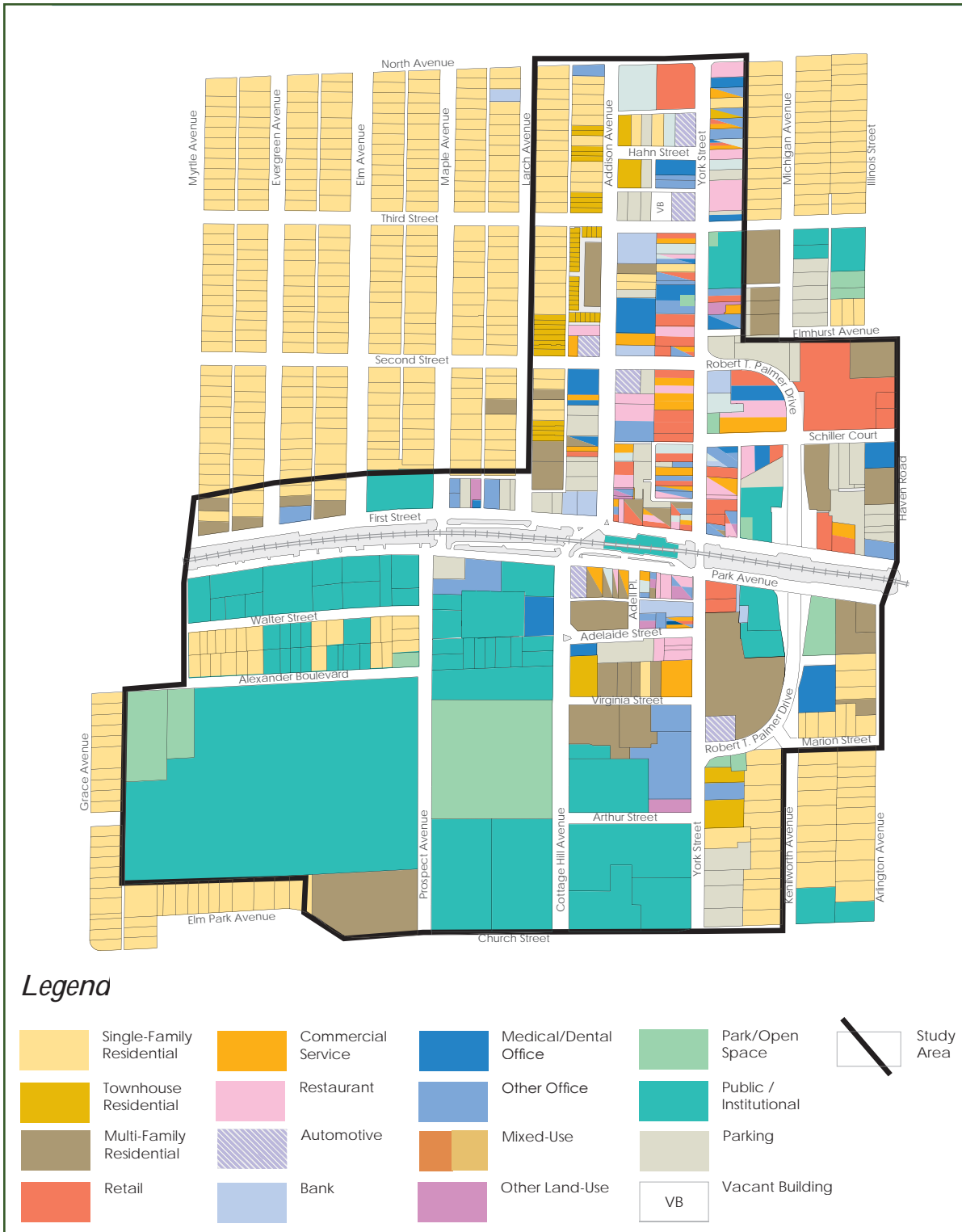
Restaurants

Downtown has over 25 restaurants which demonstrates an emerging and strong role as an entertainment center. While restaurants are widely scattered, a number are located along York Street between North Avenue and Adelaide Street. There is also a cluster of restaurants along First Street and Park Avenue, near the commuter station. Another signal of the Downtown’s evolving role as an entertainment center was the opening of Lucky Strike (now called Seven Ten Lanes) a “boutique” bowling business with a restaurant and billiards.



FIGURE 2

EXISTING LAND USE AND STUDY AREA



Commercial Services

Commercial service uses are widely scattered throughout the Downtown, particularly along York Street and Addison Avenue. These include banks, financial institutions, real estate offices, travel agencies and other business services; and barber shops, beauty shops, dry cleaners and other personal services. Of special note is the York Theater, with 9 screens and about 1676 seats, located along York Street near Schiller Street. In addition to being a major entertainment attraction, the theater building has long been a visual focal point for the area.

Offices

Office uses are also widely scattered throughout the Downtown, particularly along York Street, Addison Avenue, First Street, and Park Avenue. These include business and corporate offices, as well as offices for doctors, dentists, attorneys, and other professionals. Office uses are also located in smaller spaces, on the upper floors of mixed-use commercial buildings, and in converted residential structures around the periphery of Downtown. The City's R-5 zoning district could be appropriate in sensitive land use transition locations where adaptive re-use of historic structures may be desirable.

Auto-Oriented Commercial Uses

A few auto-oriented commercial uses, including gas stations and repair shops, are scattered throughout the Downtown. While these uses are not numerous, they do occupy prominent and highly visible corner sites along both York Street and Addison Avenue.

Public/Semi-Public Uses

Downtown is the site of a number of public and institutional facilities. All of these are sound and well maintained, and many are considering improvements or redevelopments. The Cultural Campus, which has been a Downtown Subarea focus, includes many of the community's significant institutional and cultural uses.

Single-Family Residential

Downtown is bordered on all sides by attractive and well-maintained residential neighborhoods, some of which have local historical and architectural interest. Single-family homes predominate within these neighborhoods, although a few two-family and multi-family structures are scattered throughout. The housing stock is generally sound, and these neighborhoods provide a strong base of support for many Downtown commercial uses.



PLANNING INFLUENCES

Multi-Family Residential

In recent years, Downtown areas have become popular housing locations for many segments of the population, particularly empty nesters and young professionals. Downtown Elmhurst offers the many advantages of in-town living, including nearby shops and services, proximity to public transportation, and an attractive physical setting. Several condominium and townhouse developments have been developed around the periphery of the commercial area. The Downtown benefits from the presence of senior citizen lifestyle housing such as Greencastle. In addition, residential units are located on the upper floors of several commercial buildings within the Downtown area.

Parks and Open Space

Wilder Park is a 17.5-acre neighborhood park located in the southern portion of the Downtown area. It was listed as the “Best Suburban Park” by Chicago magazine in 1997. The park includes a range of recreational facilities and open space areas, and is a major asset for the Downtown area. The Wilder Park Conservatory is located at the south end of the park. The park also creates an attractive setting for the Public Library, the Art Museum, and the Lapidary Lizzadro Museum. In addition, small plazas are located at York and Schiller, adjacent to City Hall, and next to the Police Facility. Several public and institutional uses, including the College, the museums, Glos Mausoleum, and area churches, have relatively large lawns, yards, and setbacks.

Parking

A significant amount of land within the Downtown is used for parking. Except for two municipal parking decks, most parking is provided on-street and in smaller surface lots scattered throughout the area.

B. MARKET OPPORTUNITIES

An understanding of market opportunities as they relate to redevelopment potential is an important step in understanding the level of private sector interest in the Downtown in the future. In November of 2001, Goodman Williams Group conducted an assessment of market conditions and potentials within the Downtown area, focusing on the retail, office, and residential markets.

Elmhurst has also been recognized as a destination community by various

media sources. Most notably, Chicago magazine ranked Elmhurst as the #1 overall community in the Chicagoland area (2003). The magazine identified Downtown as a showpiece for the City. Recognition of Downtown also came from Elmhurst College's Prospect magazine, which described Downtown as vibrant and attractive.

While its role has changed over the years, Downtown continues to play an important part in the life of the Elmhurst community. Leaders in the community recognize that Downtown is at a critical juncture. During the interviews held as a part of the market assessment, some expressed an optimistic view that Downtown Elmhurst is poised to continue to provide a healthy mix of businesses and capture emerging opportunities. Others expressed concerns about the long-term viability of many Downtown businesses.

While some of the concerns are justified, the Market Assessment suggests that Downtown Elmhurst has numerous strengths that should ensure its continued role as a major cultural, entertainment, and retail/service destination for Elmhurst residents and the surrounding region. Among those assets are the following:

- Wilder Park and several museums, which serve to attract tens of thousands of visitors on an annual basis.
- Elmhurst College, with enrollment of 2,362 full-time and 558 part-time students. Of that total, approximately 828 now live on or near campus.
- The Metra train station, which serves an average of 1,776 riders on a typical weekday.
- Nearly 250 retail, business, and service establishments. Included in this total are a Jewel Food Store, a CVS pharmacy, and a number of strong, independent retailers. City Hall, the Post Office, and other government functions are also located Downtown.
- Strong demographics for Elmhurst residents that will continue to attract the interest of retailers, service providers, and residential developers.

The major market challenges facing Downtown Elmhurst relate primarily to the need to attract a more desirable mix of retail, service, and entertainment establishments. In addition, the trip to and within Downtown should be more convenient and pleasant for the primary market it serves—Elmhurst residents. Despite its attractive demographics, Downtown Elmhurst is unlikely to attract major national apparel and life-style retailers in the near term. Downtown



PLANNING INFLUENCES

faces formidable competition from Oakbrook Center, the Elmhurst Crossing Shopping Center at Route 83 and St. Charles, and other retail centers in this trade area. It is important to point out that all of Downtown Elmhurst is within 5 miles of Oakbrook Center. Due to lease restrictions, businesses and retailers operating in Oakbrook Center cannot establish a competitive outlet within five miles of the Center, thus substantially limiting the range of eligible retailers in Downtown Elmhurst.

Retail and Service Opportunities

Elmhurst should work to encourage additional restaurants and evening entertainment venues that cater to various segments of the Downtown market, including empty nesters, families with children, young adults, and visitors to the area. The growing cluster of quality restaurants and bars Downtown are a natural complement to the York Movie Theater, Downtown Elmhurst's independent first-run movie house.

While not precluding opportunities for national lifestyle retailers, developers, landlords, business organizations and city officials should focus on retaining and attracting additional strong independent retailers within the following categories:

- Clothing and accessories
- Specialty food,
- Household/linen goods,
- Gifts and specialty items,
- Toys and hobbies, and
- Home improvement and accessories.

An inventory of older, renovated buildings, together with new infill development, will provide an assortment of attractive spaces and encourage a mix of new and existing businesses to locate in Downtown Elmhurst. Clustering similar or complementary businesses is one strategy for bringing more customers Downtown.

This approach is consistent with the Elmhurst CBD Five-Point Plan set forth by the former Elmhurst Economic Development Corporation. Further, the 1996 Central Business District Commission set forth a number of development and design objectives with which the new Plan is also consistent. Over time, the economic climate for existing national retailers may improve, and new store concepts will undoubtedly emerge. Eventually, it is likely that some

of these national retailers will discover the strengths of Downtown Elmhurst and may choose to locate there.

Office Opportunities

Approximately one-third of all business establishments in Downtown Elmhurst occupy office space. Professional service firms, a category that includes attorneys, accountants, and insurance companies, among others, represent half of that total. While Downtown Elmhurst is unlikely to see an influx of large businesses, small medical, dental, and professional service firms will continue to be attracted to this location. The amenities available Downtown, including several pharmacies, a variety of restaurants, and available parking, are conducive to a variety of types of professional service firms.

Residential Opportunities

Over the past decade, Downtown living has gained in popularity among two major segments of the population: empty-nesters who choose to sell their single-family home once their children are grown; and young professionals, most of whom do not have school-aged children. Frequently, the Downtown resident is seeking a maintenance-free home located close to shopping, entertainment, and public transit. This trend toward Downtown living has fueled a construction boom in downtown Chicago as well as in many suburban communities.

Downtown Elmhurst has participated in this growth in Downtown housing. Beginning with construction of Elmhurst Place in 1991, approximately 260 new units have been added to the Downtown area. More than 100 of these units are rental apartments, and the rest are for-sale units, either condominiums or townhouses. Senior citizen independent living is also available downtown.

Increasing the residential population living within, or adjacent to, Downtown helps strengthen existing retailers and provides opportunities for additional businesses. Pedestrian activity along the street beyond the end of the business day creates a more desirable environment for those coming into Downtown to dine or see a movie. When located proximate to transit, new residential redevelopment also tends to increase ridership and reduce automobile trips. The City should continue to promote residential redevelopment that caters to a cross-section of the demand pool.



C. FACILITIES

Public and private facilities in Downtown Elmhurst are generally in fair to good condition, and no major infrastructure projects are anticipated to support the Downtown program. Very briefly, the condition of key facilities is described in this section.

Storm Sewer System

- Elmhurst's storm sewer system is designed to handle a 10-year storm event.
- No major projects have been identified or are planned for the Downtown area at this time.

Sanitary Sewer System

- The overall condition of the sanitary sewer system is fair to good, with adequate capacity.
- Since most Downtown buildings were constructed before the storm and sanitary sewer systems were separated, there are concerns with infiltration and inflow during heavy rainfall events.
- There are no major sanitary sewer projects planned for the Downtown area at this time.

Potable Water

- The overall condition of the water system is good with adequate capacity.
- In Downtown Elmhurst, the water works system is approximately 75 years old, and in fair condition. Much of the pipe material is cast iron, and is gradually being replaced with ductile iron pipe.
- In the future, segments of pipe will be replaced along Park, Myrtle, Evergreen, Elm, Maple, and Larch Avenues; Adell Place; and Virginia Street.

D. ACCESS AND CIRCULATION

Downtown Elmhurst is served by a grid pattern of streets that is modified by the presence of the railroad and several one-way streets. The existing street system includes arterial, collector, and local streets that provide access to the Downtown area from the surrounding region, connect the Downtown to other parts of the City, and accommodate the movement of vehicles and pedestrians within and through the area. Downtown is also served by Metra commuter rail service and several Pace bus routes. Key features of the existing access and circulation system are highlighted in Figure 3, Downtown Transportation Facilities.

Traffic Operations

Traffic operations have been a concern in the Downtown in the past. Participants in the Community Workshop frequently mentioned the need for improved traffic circulation within the Downtown. Some Downtown merchants are concerned that the present circulation system makes accessibility difficult for patrons, especially out of town customers. Specific concerns identified include:

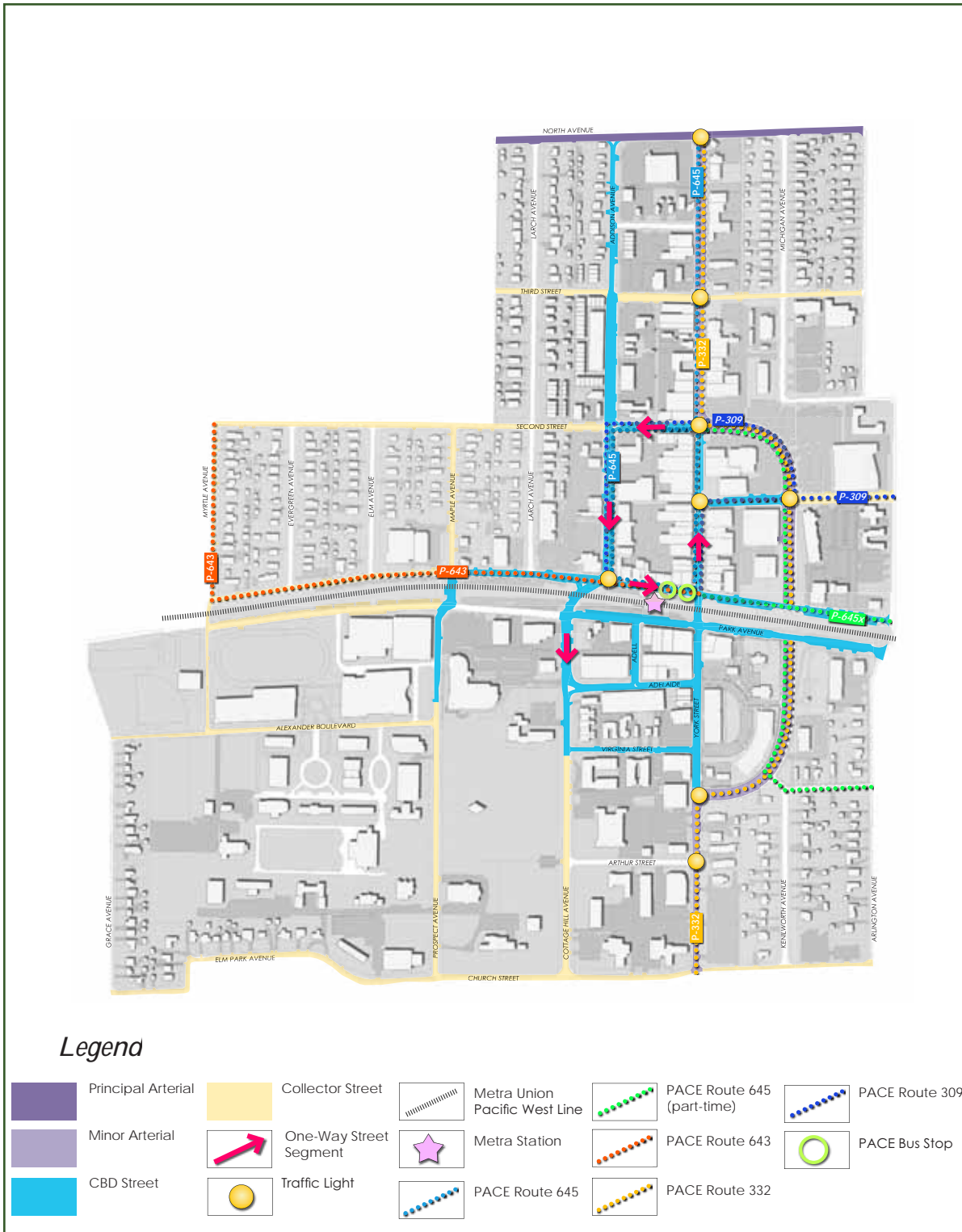
- a) Vehicle flow and access,
- b) One-way and two-way street circulation,
- c) Improving the railroad crossings at York Street and Addison Avenue, and
- d) Improving the pedestrian- and bicycle-friendliness of the area.

The City hired Civiltech Engineering, Inc. to study traffic access and circulation in the Downtown. The area addressed in the assignment is bounded by Third Street on the north, Arthur Street on the south, Addison Avenue on the west, and Robert Palmer Drive on the east. The focus of the study was to develop traffic circulation alternatives and to evaluate their impacts on traffic operation and congestion. The study, which compared alternative vehicle flow and on-street parking options with associated costs and benefits, concluded that the current Downtown street configuration should remain in its present configuration for the foreseeable future.



FIGURE 3

DOWNTOWN TRANSPORTATION FACILITIES



E. PUBLIC TRANSIT

The City of Elmhurst is well served by public transit services, including Metra and Pace Suburban bus service. These services are briefly described below.

Metra

Downtown Elmhurst is served by the Union Pacific West Line, which provides service between Chicago and Geneva, Illinois. Metra trains to and from Chicago make about 55 stops in Downtown on weekdays (including evenings), with stops approximately 15 minutes apart during rush hours. The commuter station is an important asset and “entryway” to Downtown Elmhurst.

The station was the second most frequently mentioned advantage of Downtown at the Community Workshop undertaken early in the downtown planning process. Several ideas were mentioned by workshop participants for enhancement of the station area, including: a) adding amenities, such as small stores and shops, in the Metra station, b) improving pedestrian and vehicular access across the rail tracks, and c) drawing more commuters into the Downtown business area.

Pace

Pace suburban bus service provides four routes that directly serve the Downtown area. Three of the routes serve the Elmhurst Metra Station. The fourth route stops at the intersection of Schiller Street and Palmer Drive, and connects to both the Chicago Transit Authority “blue line” station in Rosemont and the Oakbrook Shopping Center.

Pace bus service is an important linkage between Downtown, the surrounding community and nearby regional destinations.

F. PARKING

Adequate and convenient parking is essential to the continued success of Downtown Elmhurst. The City will need to continue to facilitate a balance



PLANNING INFLUENCES

of public and private parking Downtown. Key features of the existing parking system are highlighted below.

On-Street Parking

- Nearly 500 parallel and diagonal parking spaces are located along First, Second, Third, York, and Schiller Streets; Adell Place; and Cottage Hill, Park, Adelaide, and Addison Avenues. On-street parking is a mix of permit parking (mainly around the train station) and 90-minute and 3-hour time-zoned parking.
- All spaces (including permit spaces) are free after 5 PM weekdays and all day on weekends. The blend of parking types generally functions well for Downtown visitors and businesses, provided that short-term on-street parking spaces are not used by employees and commuters.
- Providing an effective mix of parking types, costs, locations, and time zones is a delicate balancing act.

Public Off-Street Parking

- The City of Elmhurst has three general categories of off-street parking facilities. There are twelve permit parking areas with a total of about 634 spaces and 11 handicap spaces and nine coin box commuter parking locations with a total of about 616 spaces and two handicap/coin spaces. An additional 69 spaces are located on the south side of Park, east of Arlington, just outside the Downtown area. Further, there is free shopper parking at fourteen locations with (all numbers approximate) 5 thirty-minute spaces, 92 ninety-minute spaces, 277 three-hour spaces, and 18 handicap spaces.
- In total, there are 1,650 public off-street parking spaces in two parking structures, thirteen parking lots, and thirteen parking areas along the Union Pacific right-of-way along First Street and Park Avenue.

Private Parking Facilities

- In addition to the public parking system, several private businesses provide their own off-street parking. The small private lots are generally not an efficient use of land, and the City has been acquiring a number of them to cre-

ate consolidated public parking areas that would increase the overall number of spaces available.

Bicycle Parking

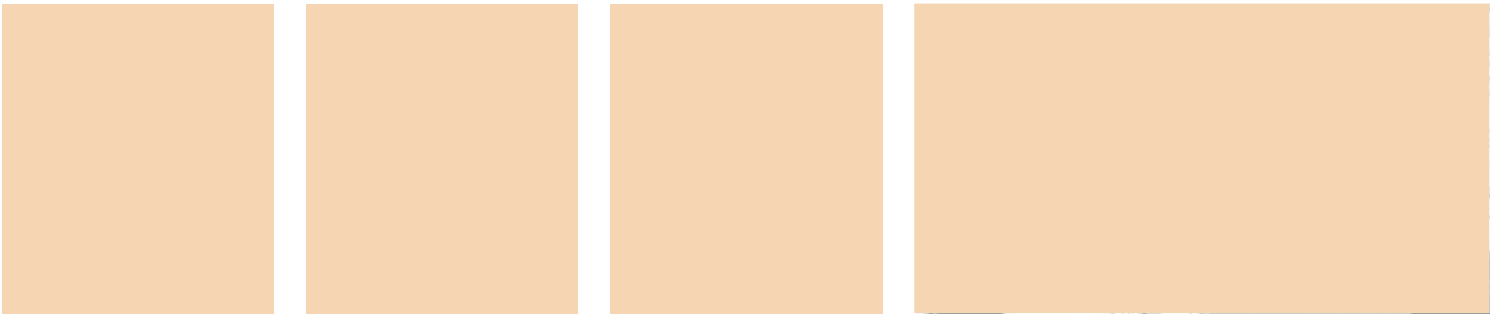
- There are currently no requirements for bicycle parking within the study area. The only existing bicycle parking facilities are located near City Hall and the Metra station.

Zoning Ordinance Parking Requirements

In the C-4 Central Business District, the Zoning Ordinance requires off street parking only for residential uses (at 2.5 spaces per dwelling unit). This is not to imply that the City does not require off-street parking through the redevelopment process. However, allowing the flexibility to require parking through redevelopment rather than the strict terms of zoning maintains a basic intent of the City to promote a more compact central business district. Parking requirements in other zoning districts vary according to use:

- Business or professional offices and most small retail stores – four parking spaces per 1,000 square feet of gross floor area.
- Convents, rectories, or religious retreats -- one space per 1,000 square feet of floor area; one space per six seats in churches, temples, or synagogues.
- Libraries, museums, and philanthropic organizations – two spaces per 1,000 square feet.
- Government or community buildings – three spaces per 1,000 square feet of floor area.
- High schools -- one space per employee, plus one space for every six students.
- Colleges and universities – one space per four enrolled students. Other schools -- one space per employee.
- Park and recreational areas – one space per 5,000 square feet of land area.





The Downtown Framework Plan establishes physical design and development parameters to guide change and conservation within the Downtown. It provides a basis for future land use and redevelopment decision making. It is based upon substantial community input in the planning process, as well as the input of many other interested agencies and organizations.

This part introduces downtown planning recommendations that describe the physical land use, design, and development recommendations for Downtown. Figure 4: Downtown Land Use Plan illustrates a number of Downtown land use recommendations. Proposed land use classifications are described, followed by a description of the key features. The Framework Plan serves as a basis for the preparation of the more detailed subarea plans included in the following section.

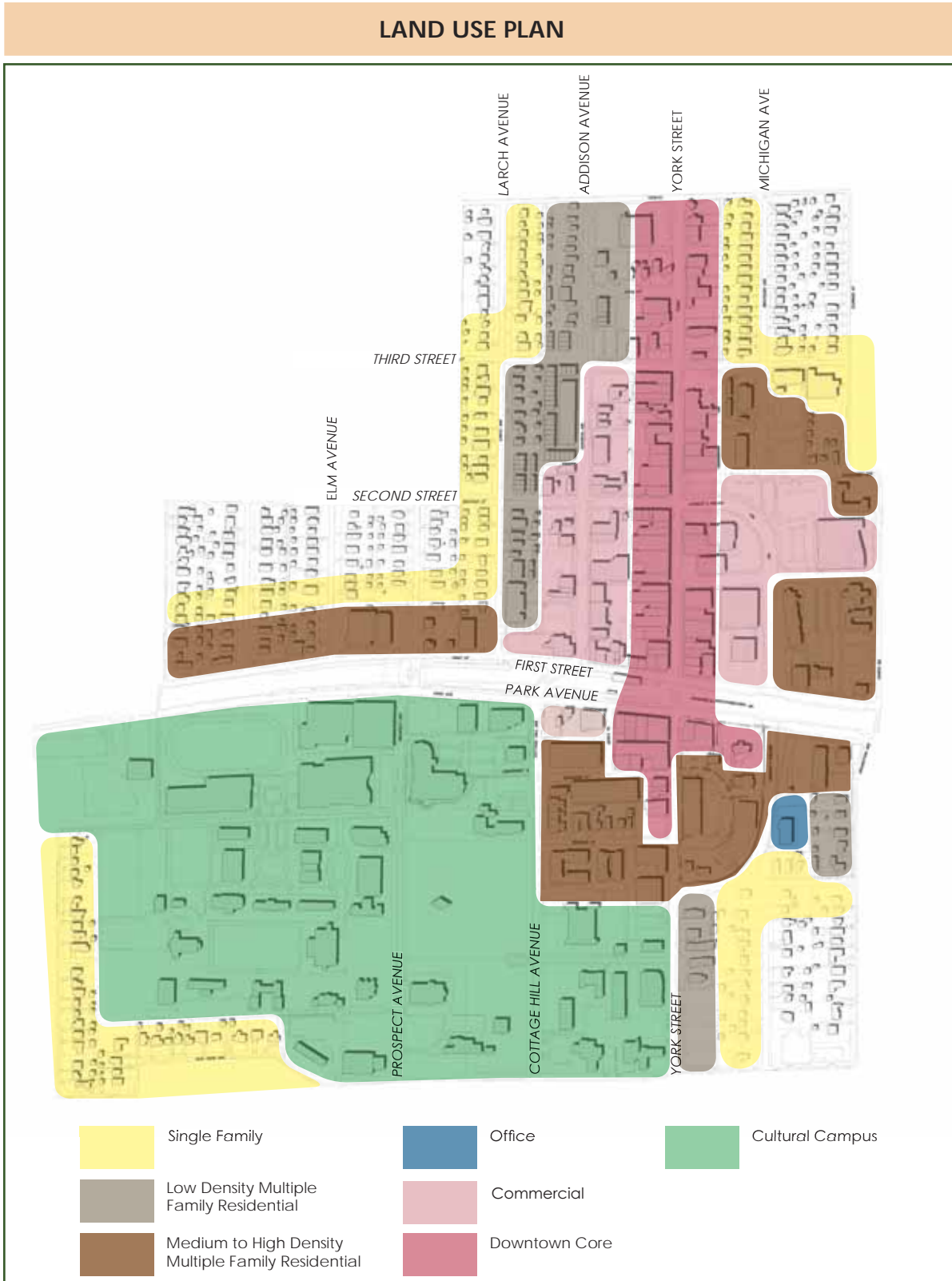
A. THE LAND USE PLAN

For the Downtown Plan to be effective, an overall land use plan must be developed which reflects community interest and direction. The first step is the creation of a land use classification system that embraces the range and intensity of land uses foreseen in the Downtown. This section briefly defines the land use categories that have been used in Figure 4: Land Use Plan, on the following page.

- **Single Family Detached Residential** – which includes single family detached residential uses.
- **Low Density Multiple Family Residential** –Which includes two family and attached dwellings at a low density.
- **Medium to High Density Multiple Family Residential** – which includes all types of multiple family residential such as duplex, town home, condominium, and other multiple family residential uses.
- **Downtown Commercial** – is one of two commercial areas within the Downtown. It includes a mix of retail, commercial service, and office uses complimentary to the Downtown Core and surrounding residential areas. This area is intended to be a higher intensity commercial location which also emphasizes residential development above first floor.
- **Downtown Core Commercial** – which is the retail center for the City of



FIGURE 4



Elmhurst. The core should sustain a wide mix of retail, restaurant, and entertainment uses, and function as a focal point for community shopping. The Downtown Core is oriented along York Street.

- **Office** – which includes areas devoted primarily business and professional offices.
- **Cultural Campus** – which includes primarily public, institutional and quasi-public uses in a concentrated location. The Plan recognizes the Cultural Campus as a special and unique mix of public and quasi-public uses.

Land Use and Improvement Recommendations

The Land Use Plan retains the current boundaries of the Downtown area. No expansion of commercial uses or more intensive residential uses are planned beyond the boundaries of the Downtown area.

The Land Use Plan does, however, suggest change in the role that areas within the existing Downtown may play in the future. Pertinent land use policies and recommendations have been identified below. The Subarea Plans, (Part V) also provide additional insight and direction regarding the redevelopment possibilities in each subarea.

Residential Policies and Recommendations

1. Adjoining Single Family Detached Residential Areas - The plan reinforces the pattern of existing single family residential use around the perimeter of the Downtown. No changes would be made to areas zoned for single family detached residential uses. Existing single-family residential areas surrounding the Downtown should be strengthened. These areas provide direct support to Downtown area businesses and services, and should continue to provide a high quality residential character surrounding the Downtown.

- Downtown Improvements adjacent to single family detached residential areas should provide for landscaping and screening to buffer adjoining single family uses from Downtown uses.
- Multiple family residential and commercial uses should not be permitted to penetrate surrounding neighborhoods. Driveway access, off-street parking, and other Downtown support functions should not be allowed



within single family detached neighborhoods.

- The Downtown and adjoining areas contain structures of historic significance. Where possible, the Plan encourages significant historical resources to be conserved.
- Public streets and other facilities in neighborhoods surrounding the Downtown should continue to be maintained at current high standards. Streetscape improvements in these areas (see Part III,C Urban Design) should benefit from neighborhood involvement in their design and implementation. The continued quality of adjoining neighborhoods is essential to the success of the Plan.

2. Low Density Multiple Family Residential Areas - The plan recommends two low density residential areas.

- A low density multiple family area is located along the western edge of the Downtown. This area provides a transition between Downtown and single family detached residential uses. Attractive two family and attached dwellings are predominant in the area. This basic land use pattern should remain.
- A low density multiple family area is recommended along Kenilworth Avenue south of the larger scale multiple family redevelopment to reflect the character and scale of single family uses along the other side of this minor neighborhood street. This area is already zoned for multiple family residential uses.

3. Medium to High Density Multiple Family Residential Areas – A number of higher density residential uses are clustered in locations throughout the Downtown. The Plan encourages continued maintenance of existing medium to high density residential areas.

- A new medium to high density residential area is planned along First Avenue west of Addison Avenue. This area is currently occupied by a mix of office, parking, institutional, and multiple family residential land uses. Over time, as land uses change, this area should have a focus on multiple family uses. The YMCA could be a multiple family residential redevelopment site, should another appropriate site be identified for a new

YMCA facility in the community. The western reaches of the First Avenue corridor should also function as a medium density residential transition between the railroad and single family detached residential uses to the north.

- Another new medium to high density residential area is recommended along the east side of York Street south of Robert Palmer Drive. This site currently serves as required off-street parking for Immaculate Conception Church. The Cultural campus Subarea Plan foresees the possibility of consolidating this parking lot with new parking facilities to be provided along the west side of York Street. This site should be subject of a change of use only under circumstances where Immaculate Conception has provided for adequate off-street parking in another location.

Commercial Policies and Recommendations

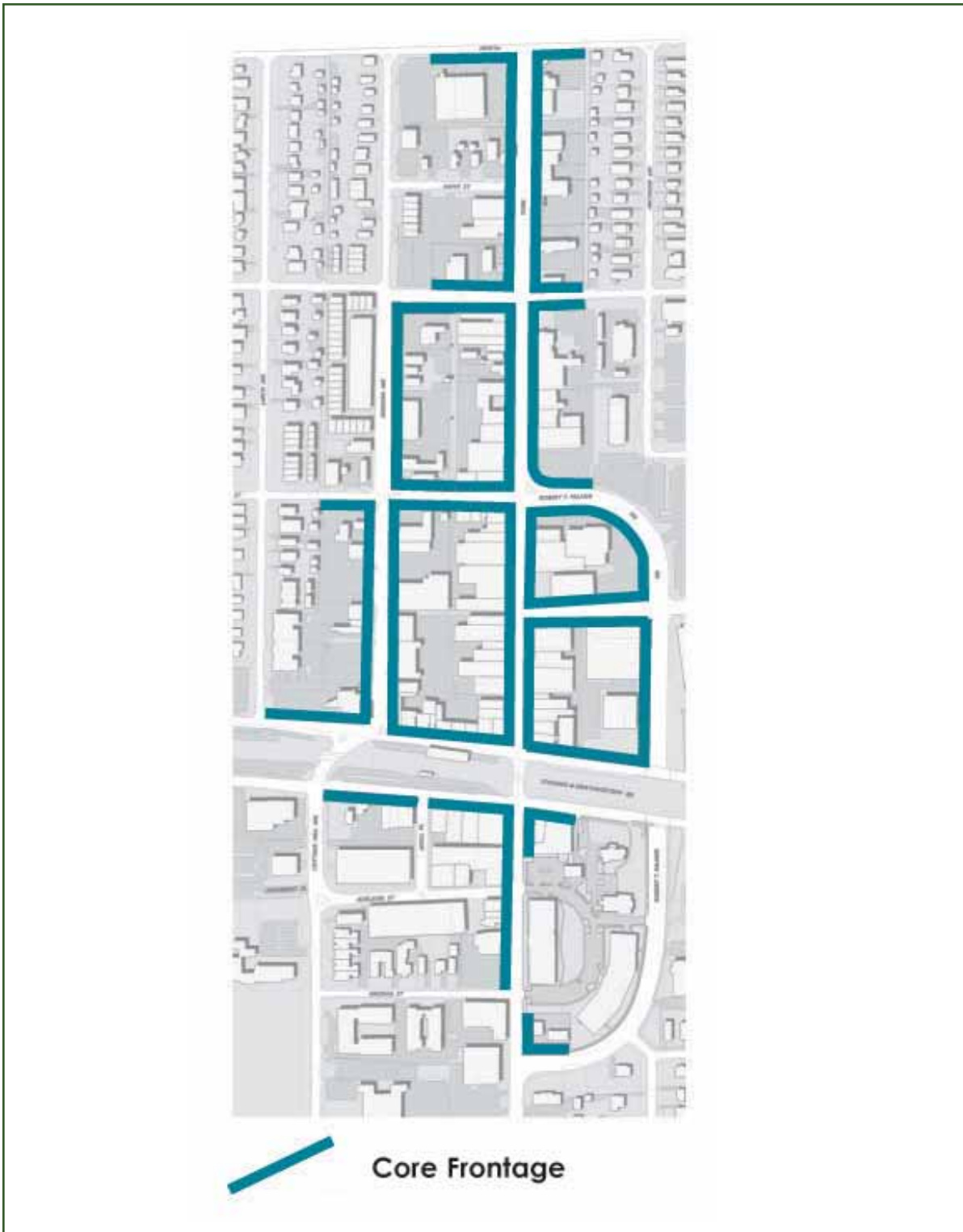
1. General Policies – Several general policies apply to the commercial areas of downtown, and these include:

- Maintain the Downtown “Streetwall” - The vast majority of buildings within the downtown are positioned at the front property line creating a pedestrian oriented “streetwall”. This feature is highly desirable in the Downtown and should be sustained in the future. The streetwall provides the necessary relationship between streets and buildings to encourage shopping and other pedestrian activities. Locations where the streetwall should be preserved, or established, are illustrated in Figure 5.
- A balance between preservation and redevelopment. Downtown has an image and character very different from the other commercial areas in Elmhurst and the surrounding region. This is due in part to the diverse mix of land uses within the area; the compact size and configuration of the commercial area; the strength and vitality of the retail sector; the attractive streets and pedestrian amenities; the large number of buildings with historic interest; and the close proximity of equally attractive institutional areas and residential neighborhoods.
- Encourage two to four story redevelopment while discouraging single story construction - Structures within a range of two four stories are clearly compatible with the Downtown environment. Should the City con-



FIGURE 5

DOWNTOWN STREETWALL FRONTAGE LOCATIONS



sider structures which are taller than three stories, the use of upper story setbacks consistent with the existing street profile can help minimize the perceived scale and mass of new buildings, as illustrated Figure 6. Given the overall pattern of development Downtown, single story structures, especially within commercial areas, are inconsistent in character, and should be discouraged.

- Encourage parking to the rear of structures, on-street or in other locations – As a function of maintaining the streetwall, providing parking to the rear of commercial structures, or in structured parking, is essential to maintaining the Downtown’s pedestrian environment.
- Encourage ground-floor space devoted to retail, restaurant or other active pedestrian-oriented uses - While office, residential, or other uses may be located on upper floors, they should be discouraged on the first floor; the first floor of buildings within the Downtown commercial area should be occupied by retail and commercial uses.
- Continue the Facade Improvement Program – The City’s facade improvement program (funded by the Downtown Tax Increment Finance District) has been highly successful in upgrading the appearance of the Downtown and should be continued in the future.

2. Core Commercial – The Core Commercial area should continue to function as the Downtown’s main shopping street. It should be the location of Downtown’s concentration of retail and entertainment uses.

- The Downtown core extends along York Street between North Avenue and a portion of the frontage just south of Park Avenue. This area should be the most intensively developed, and should maximize pedestrian amenities and facilities.
- Ideally, needed off-street parking should be located in other areas adjoining the core commercial frontage, or be provided as a component of mixed-use redevelopment in the form of structured parking.

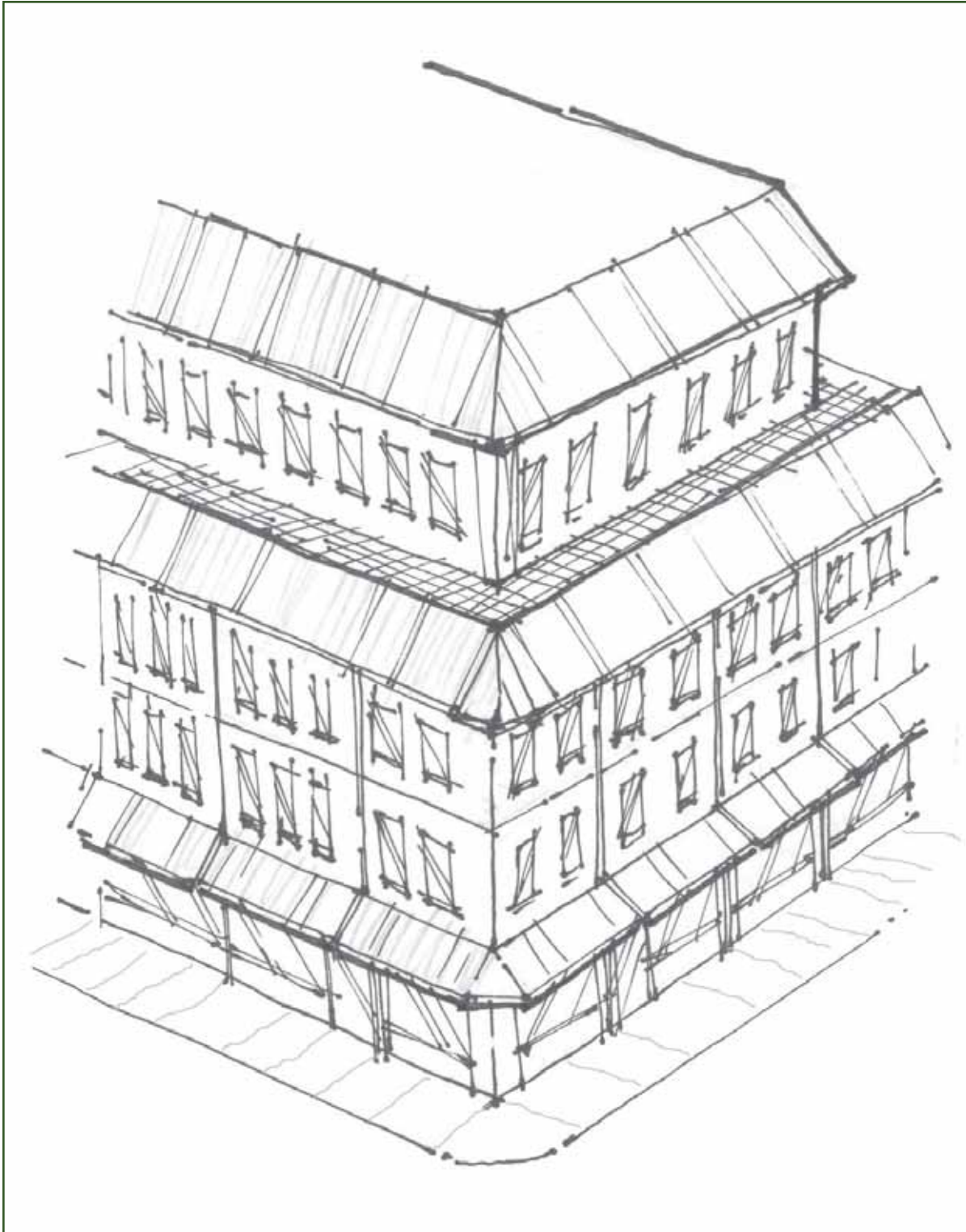
3. Downtown Commercial – Downtown commercial areas will continue to provide an important location for a mix of retail and commercial service uses.

- Existing Downtown commercial areas include a variety of building types,



FIGURE 6

UPPER STORY SETBACKS



a number of which do not sustain street oriented facades to encourage pedestrian activity. Any future redevelopment activity should focus on streetwall features that encourage pedestrian access and shopping.

- Surface parking lots, while not encouraged, may be appropriate within the Downtown commercial area. Should new lots be created, or existing lots be modified, as discussed under the Plan's urban design principles, it will be important to improve the image and appearance of these areas. Ideally, new parking would be provided as a part of mixed-use developments in the future.

Public and Institutional Use Recommendations

1. Maintain the strong presence of public and institutional uses in the Downtown – The Downtown area is truly the “heart and soul” of the Elmhurst community. It is the site of many of Elmhurst's significant public agencies and institutions. In general, the presence of these facilities in the Downtown is essential to sustain the vitality and mixed-use character of the area.

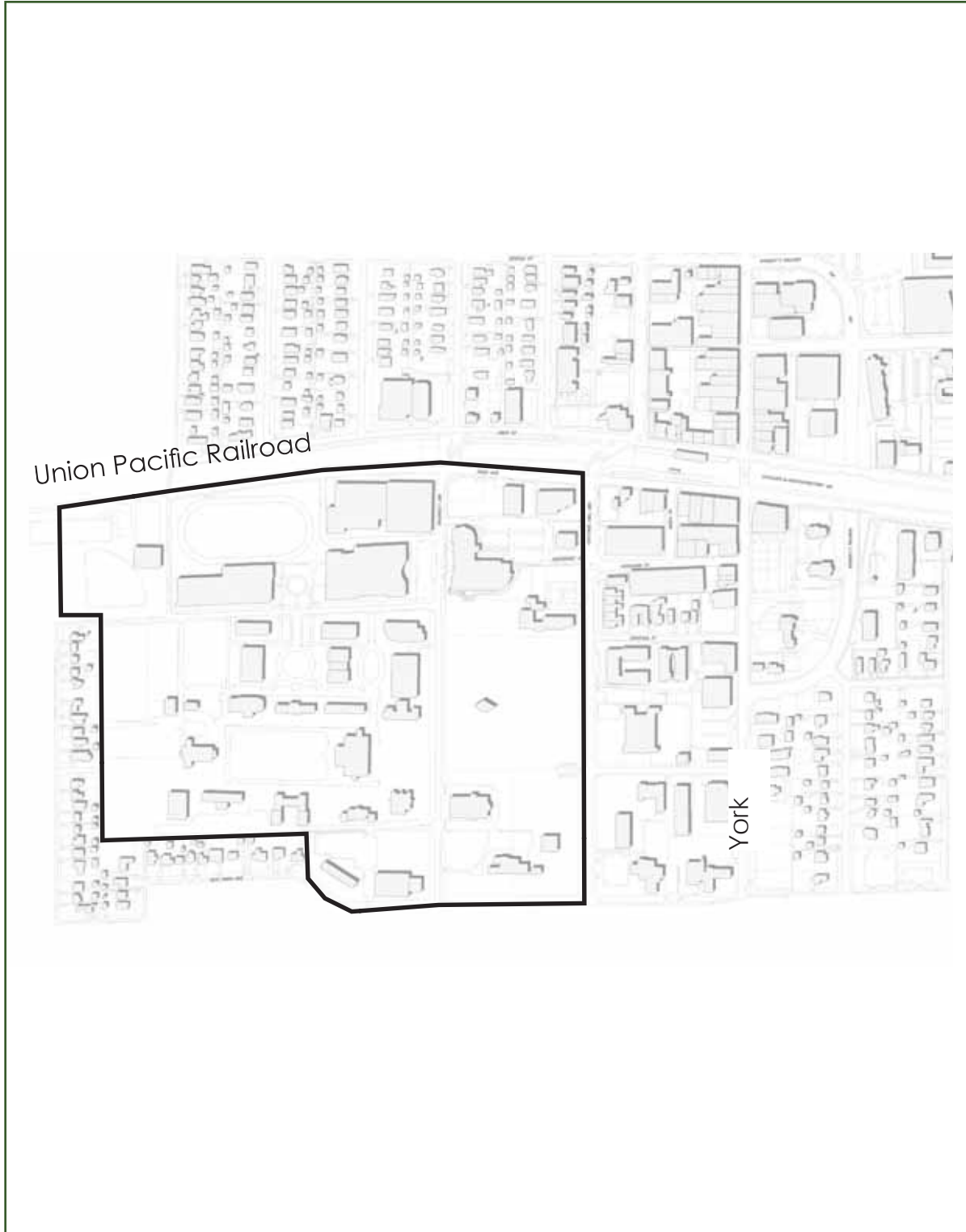
- The City should continue to collaborate and work closely with public service and institutional agencies in the Downtown to meet future needs.
- During the planning process, the need to provide a location for teens within the Downtown was discussed. As a follow-up action to the Plan, a special study regarding understanding and accommodating the needs of youth in the Downtown should be undertaken.
- The Metra Station is an important destination for many daily visitors to the Downtown. Interest has been expressed in expanding and moving the station slightly west. Community input has suggested that convenience retail services or a visitors' center be made available within the station.
- Special emphasis was given to the Cultural Campus as part of the Downtown Plan. The Plan has resulted in a detailed improvement program for this area which is described in detail in the Subarea Plan section of this report.



2. The Cultural Campus planning and design recommendations were the focus of a special planning process on behalf of the City of Elmhurst which built consensus among a range of public, institutional, religious, and non-profit agencies having interest in the area. Figure 7 identifies the location of the Cultural Campus. The subarea plan identifies a range collaborative development and facility improvement possibilities for the future. It also stresses the importance of agency collaboration as a means of implementation. The following principles apply to the Cultural Campus area.

- a. *Prepare a Concept Framework Plan for the Cultural Campus* - The City of Elmhurst has many quality cultural amenities in and around the Campus area. By unifying these amenities through appropriate urban design features and amenities, stronger physical integration of institutions and destinations to one another can be achieved. This will develop a visual and spatial relationship that addresses and emphasizes the unique image and character of the Campus area.
- b. *Relate the Cultural Campus to Downtown Elmhurst* - Currently, Downtown Elmhurst and the Cultural Campus area are “disconnected” physically and visually by the Union Pacific Railroad corridor. More effectively facilitating north-south bicycle and pedestrian access will help further integrate the two activity centers. This physical continuity is essential if the Cultural Campus is to benefit from its proximity to the core of the central business district. Clear pedestrian corridors should be defined at Cottage Hill and Prospect Avenues.
- c. *Protect and Enhance Wilder Park Open Space* - While the ultimate use and development of Wilder Park is the responsibility of the Elmhurst Park District, the preservation of this open space is a high priority to the community as a whole, and is recognized by the Collaborative. It will be important to maintain views to the park from Park Avenue in the future. In recent years, public and open space has increased with the addition of the Elmhurst Art Museum and the Elmhurst Public Library. At the time of Plan adoption, the Elmhurst Park District was evaluating their master plan.
- d. *Develop a “System” of Off-Street Parking to Meet Campus Needs* - A “system” of off-street parking should be developed for the campus area that encourages the joint and shared use of parking facilities to maxi-

CULTURAL CAMPUS BOUNDARY



mize public access and convenience in the Campus area. The Collaborative recognizes the current lack of adequate automobile and bus parking within the area. This system of parking could include both surface and structured off-street parking facilities (above and below grade) to reasonably minimize land consumption for parking purposes. Yet, although the need to provide additional parking is important, the development of new facilities should not negatively impact the visual quality of Wilder Park or the Campus in general.

- e. *Enhance Bicycle and Pedestrian Connections* - Within and around the campus, bicycle and pedestrian connections are important to enhance non-motorized accessibility in the area and maximize use of off-street parking facilities. Access corridors should be designed to provide safe and convenient access for all anticipated campus users. Separation of vehicle traffic from bicycle and pedestrian traffic should be a priority. The system could build upon the character and style of the City's current wayfinding signage program.
- f. *Establish a Unique Wayfinding System for the Campus* - An enhanced signage and wayfinding program in the campus area can help quickly orient citizens and visitors to features and amenities of the area. It can provide directory assistance to pedestrians and motorists alike, and aid in discouraging unwarranted access through surrounding neighborhoods.
- g. *Provide for Coordination of Implementation Activities* - Follow-up and implementation of the Concept Plans should occur on a coordinated basis among all interested agencies. Where new initiatives and major improvements are proposed, the Cultural Campus Collaborative Steering Committee should meet to advise and coordinate these activities.

B. PRINCIPLES OF TRANSIT ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT

Elmhurst has long utilized the principles of Transit Oriented Development (TOD) in the manner it has planned for the development of its Downtown. The importance of TOD in the Downtown is to recognize the strong and mutually reinforcing relationship between multimodal transit facilities and redevelopment possibilities. For instance, consistent with patterns in the greater Chicago region as a whole, residential investment is drawn to Downtown Elmhurst due, in part, to transit accessibility. Strong multimodal transit services are also important to the Downtown business community and Elmhurst commuter population. The commuter relies not only on the station for access to employment, but often utilizes retail and service businesses proximate and convenient to the Downtown along their daily commuter route.

As a result, it is important that transit facility development, the needs of transit users and multimodal connections be considered in relation to the Downtown improvement program as a whole. Transit oriented planning principles can be organized around the three dimensions, or “3D’s” of transit oriented development (TOD). The “3D’s” include: **Design, Diversity, and Density.**

Design

Design is a critical element to successful transit oriented land use and development. Key principles include:

- In private redevelopment proposals, consider the need for pedestrian and bicycle oriented facilities.



Far Left:
Streetscape, Downtown Phillips, PA

Left:
Density, Addison, TX



DOWNTOWN FRAMEWORK PLAN

- Provide adequate parking for both commuters and businesses, and continue to provide for shared parking opportunities.
- Street design should be approached with a focus on pedestrian needs, rather than typical vehicle capacity considerations.
- Inter-modal transit facilities should continue to maintain bus stops, bike storage areas, “kiss and ride” lanes and commuter parking facilities.
- Metra commuter station services and facilities which cater to the commuter/pedestrian should be considered.
- Roadway space should be allocated for required circulation, but signal timing and cross-walk right-of-way priorities should favor the pedestrian.
- Public open spaces and event spaces should feel secure, with adequate lighting and visibility.

Diversity

Diversity is applicable to the mix of land uses within a transit area. The principle advocates the presence of diverse, yet mutually reinforcing, land uses which create a desirable living, working and recreational environment. In Elmhurst, consideration should be given to the following:

- Mixed use development is highly desirable. Retail, office and residential land uses generate the greatest ridership and are most mutually supportive in a TOD area.



Top:
Community Library, Des Plaines, IL

Left:
Mixed Use Structure, Riverside, IL

- Mixed uses need not always be accommodated within one building, but can be reflected in the commuter station area as a whole.
- Consistent with past policy, varied housing types should continue to be located within walking distance to transit facilities.
- Density combined with mixed land use creates the most effective and successful TOD, particularly with regard to generating increased usage of transit facilities.

Density

Increased density (as opposed to what is experienced in non-Downtown locations) supports both retail and commercial uses in the Downtown, while enhancing transit ridership and reducing automobile dependence. In Elmhurst, pertinent principles include:

- Continue to provide new housing in the Downtown in accord with the recommendations of the Land Use Plan.
- When properly designed, private development projects can overcome the negative stereotypes of appearance and building mass.
- Balance densities with publicly accessible open spaces and plazas to enhance the pedestrian experience.



Mocking Bird DART Station, Dallas, TX



New Mixed Use Development, Mount Prospect, IL



C. URBAN DESIGN

Downtown Elmhurst is an attractive and highly active community center. The design of Downtown should support its varied and mixed functions including shopping, entertainment, education, public services, and transportation. The combined characteristics of the Downtown have strong implications for urban design features to support these varied activities. This section of the plan provides guidance on urban design components including: pedestrian access and streetscape, open space, and design guidelines for private redevelopment initiatives.

Pedestrian Access is the Priority

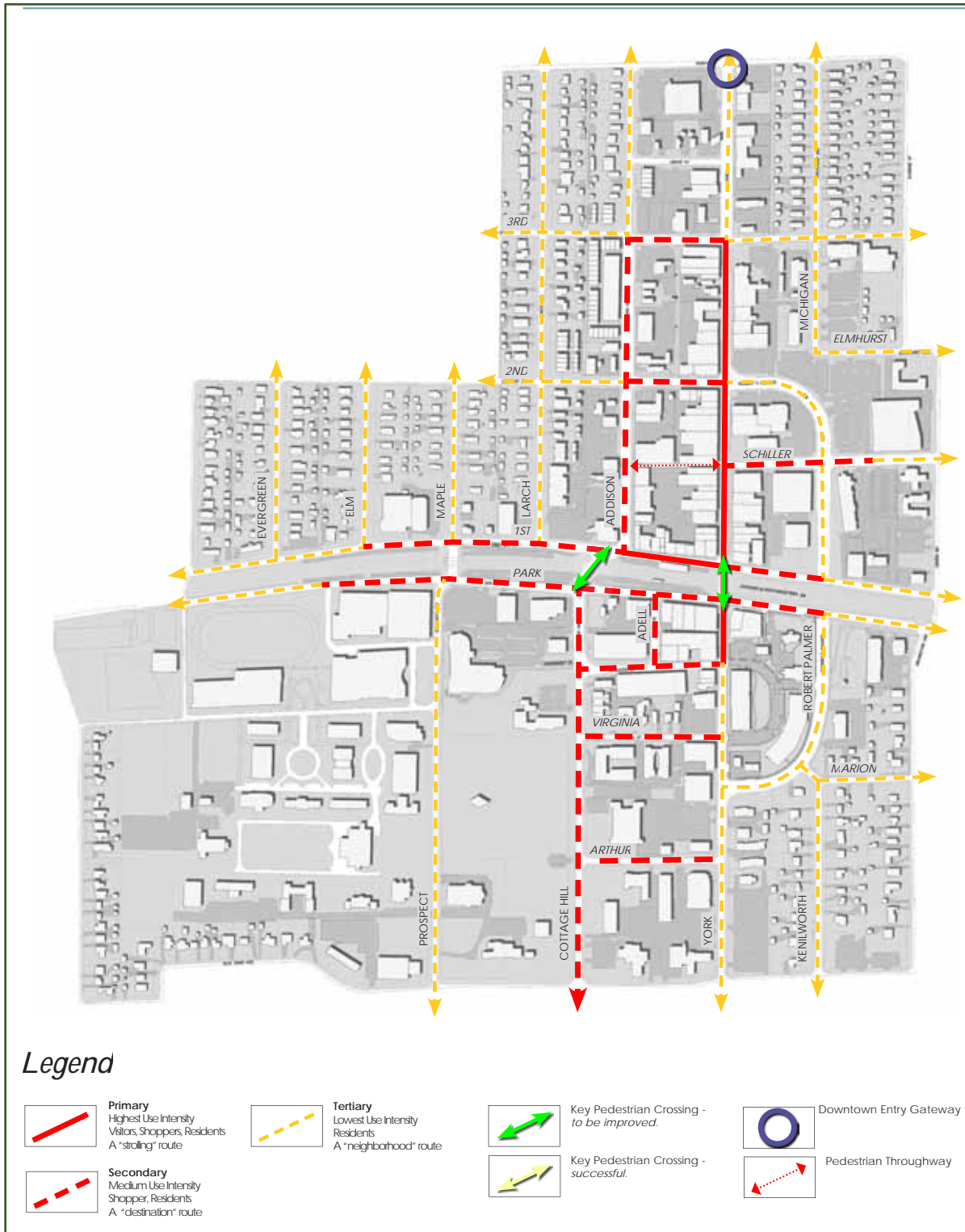
Downtown Elmhurst is a pedestrian oriented environment. This has several implications for the manner in which access patterns and pedestrian priorities are established for the Downtown. While adequate vehicle access and off-street parking remains essential, the need to accommodate the pedestrian is even more important.

The City of Elmhurst has been implementing a consistent urban design theme in combination with pedestrian improvements for a number of years. The streetscape incorporates special pavers, pedestrian amenities, decorative lighting and unique signage. The new streetscape has been effective at unifying the Downtown and providing a pleasant walking experience.

Yet, as the Downtown continues to evolve, certain additions and improvements can be made to this successful program. Figure 8, Existing Pedestrian Circulation, explores how pedestrians currently use the Downtown area. It identifies four types of travel routes through and around the Downtown:

1. **Primary Pedestrian Route** – These routes sustain the highest volumes of pedestrian traffic in the Downtown.
2. **Secondary Pedestrian Route** – These routes provide access to primary pedestrian routes in the Downtown.
3. **Tertiary Pedestrian Route** – The Tertiary Route provides access from local neighborhood areas to the Downtown.
4. **Pedestrian “Pedways”**- Pedways are Downtown pedestrian “shortcuts” extending off of the formal sidewalk system.

EXISTING PEDESTRIAN CIRCULATION



Each of these routes serves an important role in the overall pedestrian circulation system through and surrounding the Downtown. Yet each type of route has distinctly different physical design needs.

Primary Routes

These routes, located principally in the Downtown Core, experience the highest volume of pedestrian traffic. They serve residents, shoppers, and visitors and function as a “strolling street”. Pedestrians use these streets to experience the variety of retail, recreation, service and entertainment venues in the Downtown.

As illustrated in the photos below, the streetscape in these areas should include wide sidewalks to accommodate the volume of pedestrian use. Walkways should be the widest of all the routes (approximately 15'). Pedestrian amenities should include street trees, decorative pedestrian scale lights, a variety of seating options, refuse receptacles, and focal points such as sculptures, fountains or public art. Lighting levels should be higher than in adjacent areas to encourage night-time activity Downtown. Small parks, plazas, or resting places should also be incorporated throughout the primary pedestrian zone and should be programmed for activities like art fairs and small outdoor concerts. A sense of security should be provided by on-street parking and/or landscaping between the sidewalk and the trafficway.



Far Left:
Wide sidewalks to accommodate a high volume of pedestrians

Left:
Pedestrian amenities and landscaping

Secondary Routes

Secondary pedestrian routes are generally located around the Downtown core as well as Wilder Park and Elmhurst College. Pedestrians using these routes are generally destination oriented. An example of this route is Cottage Hill Avenue which serves the Cultural Campus.

The streetscape in these areas should incorporate unique hard surface sidewalk and plaza improvements as well as extensive landscaping elements. Parkways planted with street trees between the curb and sidewalks are appropriate in multi family areas while parkways with special paving and street trees are appropriate in commercial areas. Walkways should be between 8' to 12' wide and incorporate some special paving features. Other pedestrian amenities include street lights, trash receptacles, and some seating in defined pedestrian refuge areas. Lighting in these areas can be at a lower level than the primary areas but should still provide for safe night usage of the space.

Right:
Street trees with sidewalk grates



Far Right:
Parkways with street trees



Tertiary Routes

These routes primarily allow residents of adjoining neighborhoods to gain access to the Downtown. Examples of these low intensity routes include Second and Third Street heading west into the adjacent single family residential neighborhood. Comparable images are shown below.

These routes should include planted parkways in all areas. Sidewalk width should range between 4' to 8' depending on surrounding land uses and parkways should be 5' to 10' wide. Decorative pedestrian lighting should be provided but light levels can be slightly lower than the secondary zones.

Right:
Planted parkways separate sidewalk and street



Far Right:
Sidewalks are narrower (4 - 8 feet)



Pedways

Elmhurst currently enjoys a number of mid-block “pedways” that provide pedestrian short cuts through Downtown, as well as create possibilities for plazas and alternative business frontages. Pedways provide unlimited opportunity for imaginative design, seating, product display and other service functions of Downtown businesses. Preserving and enhancing these pedways is important to providing complete pedestrian access. Redevelopment should be encouraged to incorporate such pedways where appropriate.

Pictures:

Views of the Schiller Court Pedway in Elmhurst, IL



Future Pedestrian Circulation Improvements

Building upon the existing pedestrian system, Figure 9 illustrates the Downtown Pedestrian Framework Plan. Consistent with the Land Use Plan, it includes several extensions of the current system. These include:

Primary Routes

- Addison Avenue between Third and First Streets
- Park Avenue between York Street and Cottage Hill
- York Street between Third Avenue and North Avenue
- Second Street between York Street and Addison Avenue
- Adell Place

Secondary Routes

- Addison Avenue north of Third Avenue
- Prospect Avenue
- Robert Palmer Drive

These street segments should continue to be improved as part of the City's on going streetscape improvement program, according to their planned function.

Finally, Figure 9 illustrates the location of a new southern Downtown entry gateway at the corner of Roert Palmer Drive and York Street. Like the existing gateway signage announcing arrival to the Downtown at York Street and North Avenue, the southern gateway should establish an equally impressive announce of arrival the to the Downtown area.

Addison Street – Primary Pedestrian Route Improvements

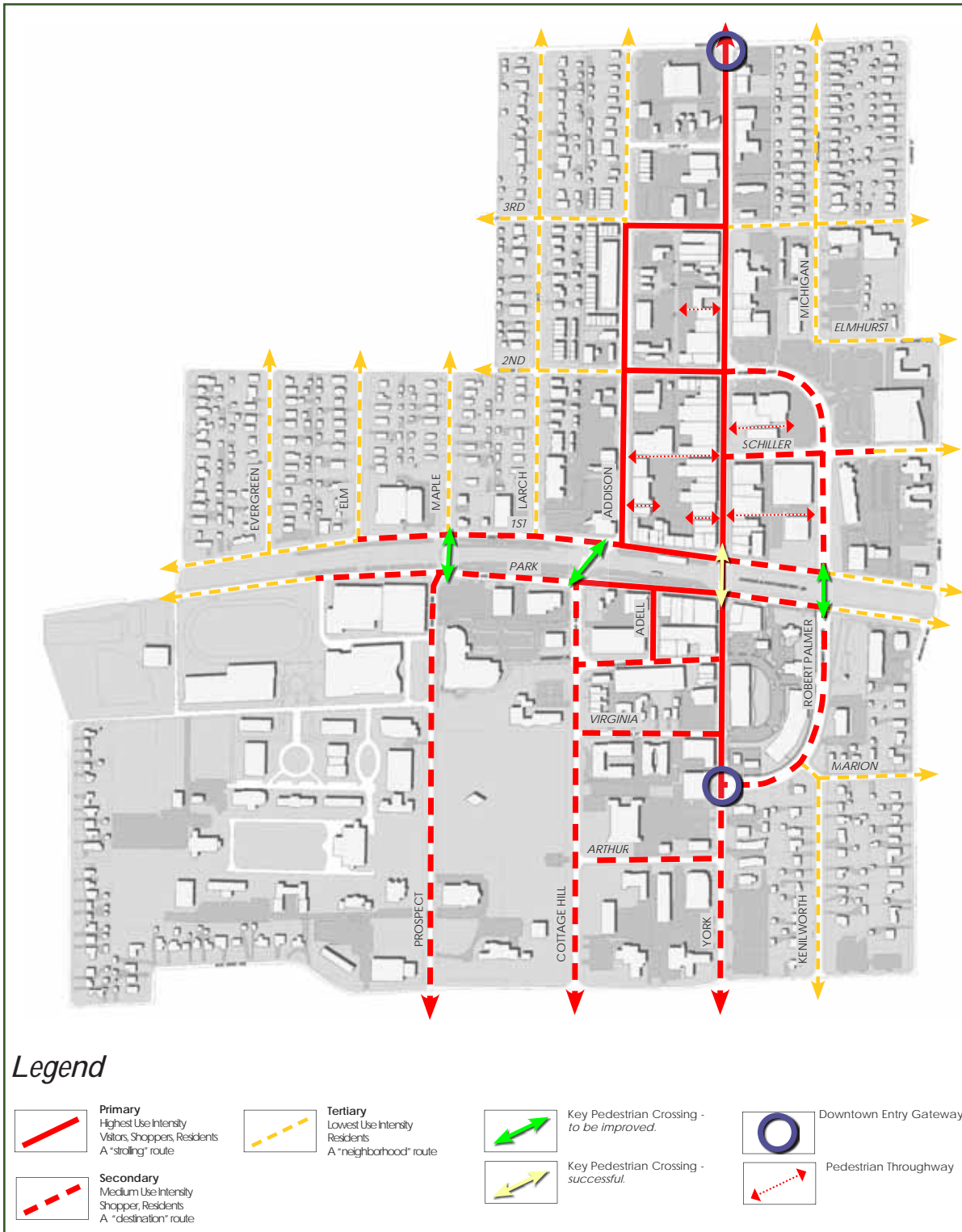
Addison Street will become a primary shopping street in Downtown in the future. The street cross-section maintains a wide right-of-way (80') which could be improved to better accommodate pedestrian traffic. Existing sidewalk widths are typically ten feet in width. As a primary route, the pedestrian walkway should be widened to approximately 15 feet.

Figure 10: Addison Street Improvement Concept illustrates current and proposed future conditions. Narrowing the traveled vehicle lanes will serve two important purposes: 1) to provide for desirable sidewalk width, and 2) aid in calming traffic speeds along Addison Street. Given the width of the right-of-way, these improvements can be accomplished while maintaining two travel lanes, and the current level of off-street parking.



FIGURE 9

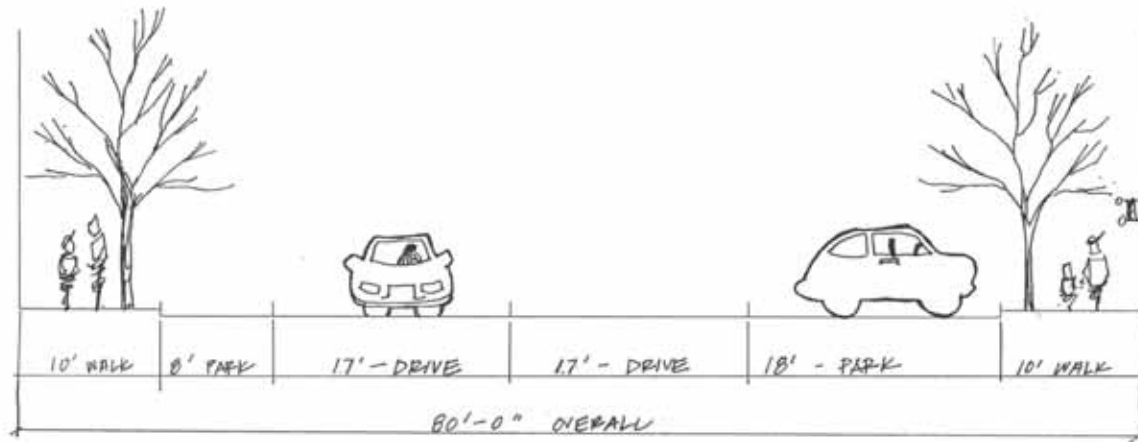
DOWNTOWN PEDESTRIAN FRAMEWORK PLAN



ADDISON AVENUE IMPROVEMENT CONCEPT

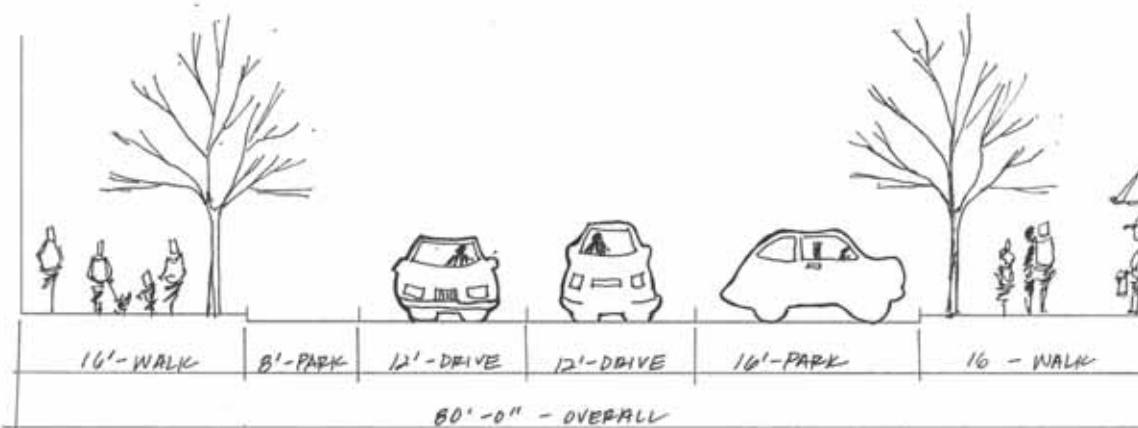
Existing Conditions

- 10'-0" Sidewalks
- 8'-0" Wide parallel parking spaces on west side of street
- 18'-0" diagonal parking spaces on east side of the street
- 17'-0" driving



Proposed Configuration

- 16'-0" Sidewalks
- 8'-0" Wide parallel parking spaces on west side of street
- 16'-0" diagonal parking spaces on east side of the street
- 12'-0" driving



Open Space

Open Space is becoming an increasingly important amenity within Downtown Elmhurst. Community participation in the Plan found that gathering spaces, resting locations, and outdoor seating areas are valued Downtown. Whether for active or passive use, an effective open space system is critical in creating a positive image and environment in the Downtown. Figure 11, Open Space Framework, illustrates:

- Existing open space including campus areas, parks, and plazas
- Existing open space with improvement potential
- Potential new open spaces (general locations)

Small Neighborhood Parks

Small parks can provide venues for farmers markets, outdoor concerts, and food vendors. These parks and plazas serve as destinations for area families as well as Downtown visitors, and should incorporate appropriate elements such as tot lots, open lawns and seating. Spaces should have a balance of “hardscape” areas such as sidewalks and paved plazas and “softscape” areas consisting of lawns and landscaped areas. Small parks are appropriate at the perimeter of the Downtown, accessible by residential neighborhoods. Possible general locations are described below and are illustrated in Figure 11 (letters reference sites on the map). These general locations may be subject to refinement depending upon ultimate development patterns in the Downtown.

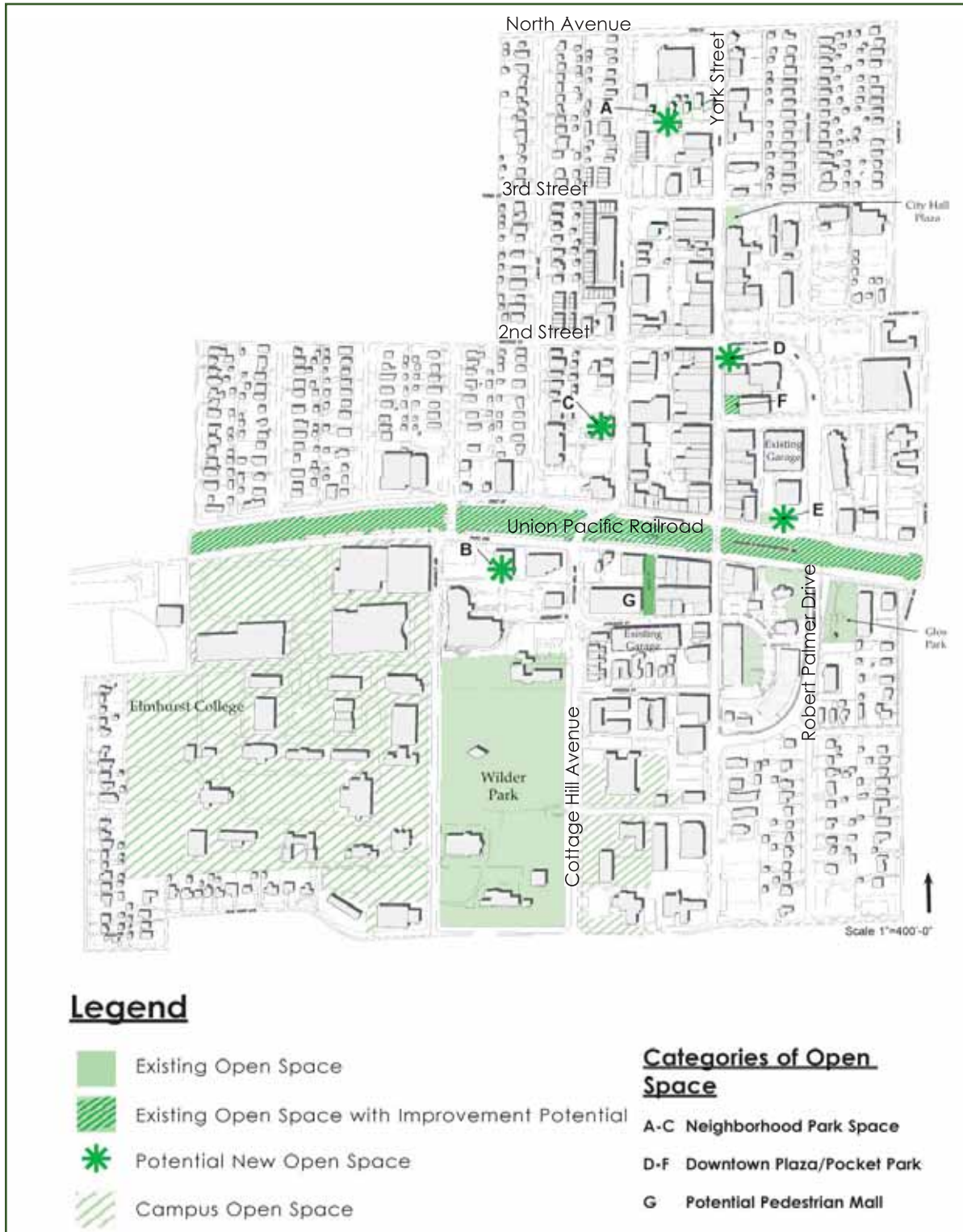
A – An open space north of the Downtown core would provide an alternative to traveling south to Wilder Park, or other community parks. As the north end of the Downtown core continues to change, this park will become an important asset to surrounding businesses, as well as residents in the area.



Far Left:
Destination for families and groups

Left:
Incorporate appropriate improvements

OPEN SPACE FRAMEWORK



B – This site is along Park Avenue between Prospect Avenue and Cottage Hill Avenue would provide green frontage and a vista into Wilder Park. This location is discussed extensively as a part of the Cultural Campus Plan (Part V).

C- A small community park in this area would provide a public destination at the Schiller Court Pedway, as well as an access route into the adjoining residential area. This site could be large enough to accommodate downtown gatherings and special events.

Pocket Parks and Plazas

These open space opportunities are located in the heart of Downtown, are small in scale, and would be aesthetically pleasing “wayside” spaces for visitors and shoppers to relax (typically from a few hundred square feet to not more two thousand square feet). Most often, these spaces are designed for a quiet retreat offering shade, passive seating, and visual interest. Similar to the plaza north of City Hall, these spaces should incorporate decorative plantings, special paving, pedestrian amenities and wayfinding signage. Special care should be taken to reflect the character of Elmhurst in the design of these spaces through public art such as sculpture, signage, planting and/or paving.

D – Located on southeast corner of the intersection of Robert Palmer and York Street, this space could “close the gap” created by parking on the east side of York Street. The space could be small, requiring only the removal of one or two parking spaces and would have significant positive visual impact.

E – The plaza in front of the Police headquarters on First Street could provide an extension of the existing “lawn” near the police station. An opportunity exists to create a more inviting front entrance into this important civic building.

Right:

“Wayside” spaces for visitors and shoppers to sit and relax

Far Right:

Provide seating and visual interest

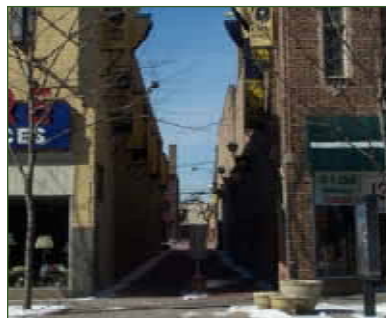


Improved Spaces

F – Existing Plaza at Schiller and York - This plaza enjoys a perfect location in the Downtown. Surrounded by small restaurants and shops, this space should truly function as an activity hub for visitors. Unfortunately, the current design discourages optimal use and interaction. The raised planters and a fountain divide the space into small segments. Although the planters provide seating, the plaza primarily encourages users to walk through the site by channeling foot traffic on an east/west axis through the space.

In order to capitalize on the potential this space offers, it should be redesigned as an “outdoor room”. The surrounding restaurants provide an ideal backdrop to the plaza. With these adjustments, business patrons and other visitors will garner more enjoyment of the Downtown.

Figure 12, Outdoor Plaza Alternatives, illustrates a number of design options for the plaza space. Each design successfully creates an enjoyable outdoor room. Trees help establish “walls”, special paving enhances the ground plane, and moveable tables and chairs offer choices for users. In Option A the entire ground plane is hardscape, which maximizes the use flexibility, minimizes maintenance and also provides an opportunity to create special visual interest in the paving. Option B incorporates a “lawn” panel that softens the space and provides some green in the Downtown. Options C and D explore a balance of vegetation and paving, utilizing planters in wither a geometric or circular arrangement.



Pedestrian only “pedway” areas

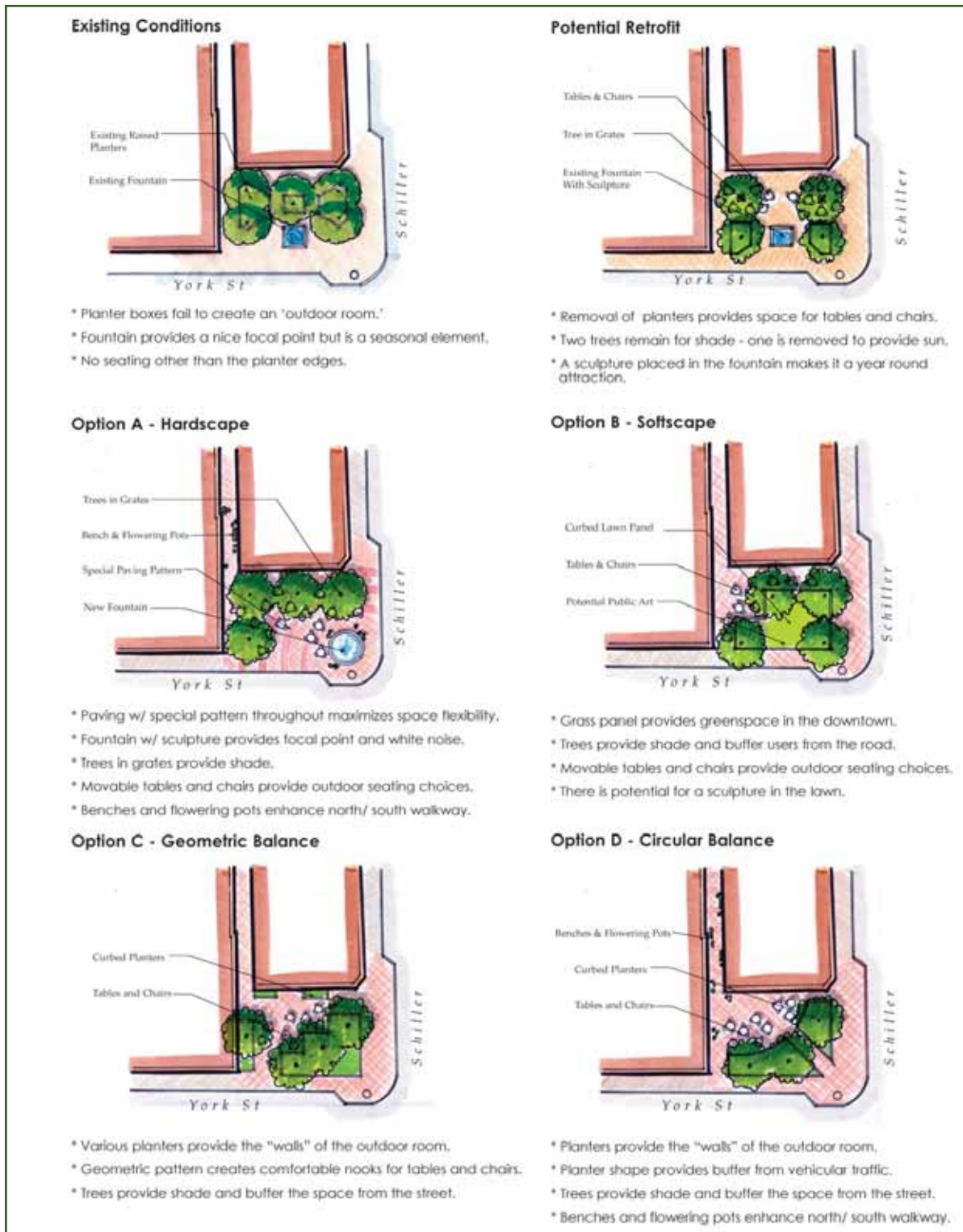


Paved plazas offer flexible use space



FIGURE 12

OUTDOOR PLAZA ALTERNATIVES



G – Potential “Pedestrian Mall” - It may be possible in the future to consider closure of Adell Place to traffic using the area exclusively as a pedestrian mall. It could provide entrances to adjoining business while serving as a pedestrian reprieve in the area south of the tracks. It could provide open space for existing and future residents of the area as well. The ultimate feasibility of this improvement, however, should consider the impacts of street closure to the adjoining alley and properties it serves.

Further, the “Schiller Alley” between York and Addison Streets could be a candidate for design as a pedestrian mall. Although the alley is rather narrow, it could provide building entrances and landscape and other enhancements could improve its current condition and appearance.

Building Design Guidelines

This section presents recommended building design guidelines for Downtown Elmhurst. While the previous section focused on public improvements in the Downtown, it is also important to consider private building and site development features. The Design Guidelines are focused on promoting high quality and compatible building improvements and new redevelopments that will complement the existing scale, character and “ambiance” of Elmhurst’s distinctive and attractive Downtown area.

Objectives

Downtown Elmhurst was developed over a period of many years. Downtown buildings have been more traditionally designed, with retail uses located on the ground floor and office and residential uses located on the upper floor(s). Most buildings are of masonry construction, have attractive entryway treatments and large display windows on the street level, and are characterized by earth tones in the red and buff color ranges. Many have attractive brick and stone accent treatments.

In recent years, there has been increasing interest in improving and upgrading existing structures, and replacing older buildings with new construction. As Downtown continues to evolve in the years ahead, it is important that building improvements and new developments be compatible with the overall scale and character of Downtown. While architectural styles need not be the same, all Downtown buildings should be generally compatible in terms of scale, placement, orientation, materials, color and façade articulation, par-



ticularly buildings along the same block face.

While architectural diversity should continue to be encouraged, it is recommended that the City adopt a set of basic “design guidelines” in order to maintain and enhance the existing character of Downtown, while still permitting desirable building improvements and new redevelopment. Recommended Design Guidelines are presented below.

Guideline 1: Building Scale

Downtown is composed of a range of building heights between one and ten stories. Many people perceive Downtown as having “small town” characteristics that are largely due to the compact size of the commercial area.

The following guidelines apply with regard to building height within the Downtown:

- Rehabilitation and new construction should respect the existing scale of Downtown and avoid extreme differences in building height; two- to four-story buildings should continue to predominate.
- Somewhat taller buildings may be appropriate adjacent to major intersections or at other selected locations, provided that they are more centrally located, and so not adjoin the perimeter of the Downtown adjacent to lower density residential areas.
- New one-story buildings are too small to maintain the urban character and “streetwall” effect (see Guideline 3) and should be discouraged within the Downtown.

Guideline 2: Building Bulk & Proportion

Much of the charm and character of Downtown results from the relatively consistent width of buildings that line the primary shopping streets. Most older commercial buildings have relatively small “footprints” and are located on lots with narrow widths. However, many contemporary commercial uses require larger spaces, more generous floor areas, and higher ceiling heights than are afforded by these older buildings.

The following guidelines apply with regard to the bulk and proportion of Downtown buildings:

- New construction should respect the existing scale and proportion of ex-

isting Downtown buildings.

- Columns, pilasters, window placement and other architectural features should be used to subdivide the facades of larger buildings into several smaller vertical segments to reflect the scale and proportion of adjacent properties.
- Architectural details on larger buildings should be used to help maintain the scale and proportion of Downtown. These details include the size of windows, the location of doorways, and the design and placement of columns, pilasters, moldings and other decorative features.
- Multiple storefronts that are part of the same building should have complementary facade designs, particularly with respect to color, cornice line and decorative materials.

Guideline 3: Building Placement & Orientation

Most blocks within the core of the Downtown are characterized by continuous rows of commercial buildings constructed at the sidewalk’s edge. This development pattern results in a distinctive “streetwall” effect which creates visual interest, enhances the pedestrian environment, and establishes a “human” scale within the Core area. This “streetwall” effect should be maintained and enhanced.

The following guidelines apply with regard to the placement and orientation of Downtown buildings:

- Setbacks within the core should be held to a minimum; new construction should be positioned at or very near the sidewalk line.
- In blocks where a “streetwall” is in place, new construction should occupy the entire width of the front lot line.
- Buildings should “front” the street; the placement of buildings at odd or irregular angles to the street should be avoided.
- While main entrances should be at the front of the building and should face the sidewalk, corner buildings might take advantage of their prominent locations with recessed or angled or other articulation on corner entrances.
- Any breaks in the “streetwall” should be used for open space, plazas, public art or pedestrian ways.
- Where building setbacks and parking exist along primary pedestrian and shopping streets, the “streetwall” should be maintained through the use



of landscaping, pedestrian amenities, and decorative walls or fencing to define the street edge.

Guideline 4: Architectural Style

In many ways, Downtown's special and distinctive character is due to its wide variety of architectural styles. This architectural diversity should be celebrated and enhanced.

The following guidelines apply with regard to architectural style in the Downtown:

- New buildings need not be historic replicas, but should offer high-quality and compatible interpretations of the predominant styles now present within the Downtown.
- Building improvements and additions should reinforce and enhance the original architectural characteristics of a building rather than apply new or different stylistic treatments.
- The distinguishing features of Downtown's older buildings should be retained and restored as required, particularly decorative cornices, columns, reliefs and other significant facade detailing.
- Where original features have been covered up, buildings should be closely examined and old photographs reviewed (if they are available) prior to undertaking significant improvements.

Guideline 5: Building Materials

The use of appropriate building materials is key to compatible rehabilitation and new construction. The building materials most common within Downtown are earth-toned brick and stone in the red and buff color ranges. Ceramic tile and terra cotta are also appropriate as ornamentation around doors, windows and cornices.

The following guidelines apply with regard to building materials in the Downtown:

- New buildings within the Core should be constructed of traditional building materials such as brick or stone.
- Whenever possible, original building materials should be maintained and restored.
- New materials, including the color, size and finish of brick and stone,

should be compatible with older existing materials; new mortars should also be compatible in color and texture.

- Rough saw wood, aluminum siding, rustic shingles and shakes, drivit, plastic panels, and other materials inconsistent with traditional building materials should not be used within the Downtown.

Guideline 6: Doors & Entrances

Doors and entrances are among a commercial building's most important features. They should provide an open invitation to potential customers, be attractive and inviting to pedestrians, and add visual interest to the street. Doors and windows should be appropriately sized and in scale with a building's facade.

The following guidelines apply with regard to doors and entrances on Downtown buildings:

- The front doors of new buildings should reflect the doorway placements and proportions of existing buildings along the same block.
- New doors should be compatible with the architectural style and character of the facade.
- Entrances should be clearly identified and emphasized with address numbers and attractive doorway detailing.
- Recessed entrances should be encouraged.

Guideline 7: Windows

Display windows on the ground floor of commercial buildings are a distinguishing feature of the Downtown. In general, passersby should be able to see the merchandise and activity within a commercial building from the sidewalk.

The following guidelines apply with regard to windows on Downtown buildings:

- The size and placement of windows on new buildings should reflect the window types, sizes, proportions and patterns on nearby existing buildings.
- Ground-floor display windows should be encouraged.
- Blank walls should be avoided, particularly next to pedestrian walkways.



- Where existing windows are important architectural features in a building's facade, window size and configuration should be maintained. Window glazing should be clear or slightly tinted, not dark or reflective.

Guideline 8: Rear Yards & Facades

The design, appearance and upkeep of the rear portions of commercial properties are also important, particularly where these areas are visible to the public.

The following guidelines apply with regard to rear yards and facades:

- The rear portions of all properties within the Downtown should be clean, well maintained and clear of trash and debris.
- Trash receptacles, dumpsters, service areas and outdoor storage facilities should be well maintained and screened from view from nearby streets, sidewalks, and parking areas.
- The backs of existing commercial buildings should be repaired, repainted and upgraded as required; new buildings within the core should have attractive rear facades.
- Rear entrances to stores and shops should be encouraged where practical, particularly on blocks where public parking or pedestrian walkways are located behind the buildings.
- Rear entrances to stores and shops should be attractive, safe and inviting, and should be characterized by design treatments that are "comparable" to front entrances.

Guideline 9: Rooflines & Parapets

Roofs within the Downtown Core are typically flat or shallow-sloped, sometimes with front parapets. The rooflines of some buildings are edged with accent masonry.

The following guidelines apply with regard to rooflines and parapets on Downtown buildings:

- New buildings should reflect and complement the established rooflines and cornice treatments of adjacent buildings.
- In most cases, the original roofline and cornice treatment of existing buildings should be maintained and restored.

- Roof parapets should be encouraged to create an interesting building profile when combined with neighboring buildings; parapets should extend above the roof to hide vents, coolers and other rooftop mechanical equipment.
- Gable roofs, which are acceptable within the Downtown's transitional areas, should be discouraged within the Core.
- Sloped mansard, shake or shingle roofs are not appropriate within the Core.

Guideline 10: Awnings & Canopies

Historically, a number of Downtown buildings have been fitted with colorful canvas awnings which are both functional and attractive. Awnings and canopies protect shoppers from the elements, and are an inexpensive way to provide color and vitality to the street.

The following guidelines apply with regard to awnings and canopies in the Downtown:

- Awnings and canopies should be in character with the architectural style of the building.
- Awnings and canopies should be positioned at least eight feet above the sidewalk.
- Awnings should fit within the frame of the storefront; they should not hide the building's facade, distort its proportions, or cover architectural features.
- Where several storefronts were developed as a single building, they should have awnings of a similar style and similar color.
- Adjacent buildings developed at different times should have awnings of a compatible style and color scheme.
- Awnings should be made of a canvas or durable fabric material that can be easily cleaned; vinyl or metal awnings should not be used in Downtown.
- Awning frames should be an accessory to the building facade and not a permanent fixture.
- Shingle, mansard and arch-profiled canopies should be avoided.



Guideline 11: Lighting

The lighting of a building's facade has the dual purpose of advertising a business and discouraging crime. The following guidelines should apply with regard to lighting on Downtown buildings:

- Front and rear entries should be adequately but not overly illuminated.
- Most exterior lighting sources should be concealed; where concealment is not practical, light fixtures should be compatible with storefront design.
- Incandescent and neon lighting create a warm atmosphere and should be encouraged for store identification and accent lighting within the Core; if neon is used, colors should be compatible with and complement the façade of the building.
- Exterior spotlighting could be used to illuminate prominent buildings and/or building details.

Guideline 12: Signage

Signs are among the most important features of a commercial building. Signs communicate the nature of a business and its products or services. Signs also influence the overall image and character of a commercial area. In general, signs should look like they belong on the building, not as if they were applied as an afterthought.

The following guidelines should apply with regard to signage on Downtown buildings:

- Exterior signs should be limited to business identification and description; product advertising signs should be discouraged.
- The size, material, color and shape of signs should complement the architectural style and scale of the building.
- When a building contains multiple storefronts, signage for all businesses should be consistent in design and placement.
- Signs on neighboring buildings should be compatible.
- Raised individual letters mounted directly on the building face should be encouraged.
- Wall-mounted signs should be designed as an integrated component of the building facade, and should not cover important architectural details.
- Illuminated box signs are not appropriate in the Downtown.
- Small signs, graphics and logos applied directly on glass windows and

doors should be encouraged at the street level.

- The use of temporary sidewalk “sandwich boards” signs could be considered, subject to strict control for safety.
- While temporary signs and posters may be applied to doors or windows, they should not be so large or so extensive that they obscure views into stores and shops or result in unnecessary visual clutter.

Guideline 13: Parking Facilities

Off-street parking lots and parking garages should be designed and located so that they are safe, efficient, and do not disrupt the traditional scale and character of Downtown. In general, parking structures should look like other Downtown buildings and should be designed to comply with all of the Design Guidelines presented here.

The following guidelines should apply with regard to Downtown parking facilities:

- Where possible, surface parking lots should be located behind buildings or at mid block; parking lots at corners should be avoided.
- Landscaping and decorative fencing should be installed along the edges of surface parking lots that border public walkways.
- Parking garages should complement the existing Downtown in terms of scale, materials, bulk, etc. the exterior “skin” of these structures on facades which face, or are visible from public right-of-way should seek to extend architectural styles of adjoining structures.
- The ground floor of parking structures within the Core should be used for retail stores or service establishments.
- Parking garage roof lines and floor level articulations that are visible from the street should be horizontal; ramps and inclines should occur within the structure or on the interior of the block.

Preservation of Existing Buildings

While many of the Design Guidelines focus on new construction, it is important to consider preserving existing Downtown buildings, particularly those with architectural or historic interest. Elmhurst has discussed a historic preservation survey including the Downtown, and is expected to establish a historic preservation commission to assist these efforts.



To help promote the preservation of the existing buildings, it is recommended that the City consider the possibility of providing financial and/or technical assistance to rehabilitate, reuse or otherwise improve buildings with architectural or historic significance.

The objective should not be to preclude redevelopment—which is essential to a viable and healthy Downtown—but rather to encourage property owners and developers to preserve locally significant buildings whenever possible.

Use and Application of the Design Guidelines

The Design Guidelines should be used by the City, Downtown organizations, architects, and developers on a cooperative basis to promote high quality new building redevelopment, while maintaining the character and charm that make Downtown Elmhurst unique.

- The Design Guidelines should be used as a framework by City staff and others in reviewing plans and proposals for new Downtown projects and improvements. This could include a staff level development plan review process. This technique should be studied by the City for implementation.
- The Design Guidelines should be distributed to property owners and prospective designers and developers as a statement of the City's desires and preferences regarding Downtown redevelopment.
- The Design Guidelines should be used as a reference by architects and developers as they prepare plans for new Downtown redevelopment projects.
- The Design Guidelines should also be used by City Centre and other Downtown organizations to advise and encourage Downtown merchants and property owners in the improvement and redevelopment process.

D. DOWNTOWN PARKING AND CIRCULATION

Downtown Parking

The provision of adequate parking in the Downtown will continue to be an important part of the City's improvement program. Public participation in the Elmhurst Downtown Plan process identified parking as an important issue.

Key issues include:

1. "Point of demand" and "area" parking

While a "parking shortage has been claimed in the Downtown, the inventory of parking indicates that there is an adequate supply (see below). The issue appears to be a shortage of "point of demand" parking in key locations rather than an overall area parking shortage.

- "Point of Demand" parking spaces are spaces that are provided at the demand location. They include both on-street and off-street spaces adjacent to the destination.
- "Area" parking entails off-street lots located within a convenient walking distance of the destination. Many view "area" parking lots and garages as primarily locations for employee and long-term parking.
- The Downtown Plan promotes a balance between the overall supply of parking spaces and the amount of "point of demand" parking that will be permitted.

2. Core area parking

The blocks with the most intense parking demand are along York Street. Sensitivity to redevelopment in this area is of particular concern in the Plan.

3. Design and appearance of parking facilities

While some parking lots are attractively edged with trees, landscaping and decorative fencing, other lots are not. Some lots have surfaces that are not properly paved and/or striped. A few parking lots are located along the frontage of Downtown's primary shopping streets and tend to weaken the continuity of the shopping experience.

Control of Parking

In the C-4 Central Business District and the C4A North Downtown Business District the Zoning Ordinance requires off-street parking only for residential



uses. This is not to imply that the City does not require off-street parking through the redevelopment process. It does through the development review process as well as the provision of public parking. Allowing the flexibility to require parking through redevelopment rather than the strict terms of zoning maintains the intent of the City to promote a more compact central business district.

In preparing and evaluating land use alternatives for the Downtown, it is important to consider the impact of redevelopment on the supply of parking. Even though future development trends are not always predictable, regular monitoring of parking demand and supply is important in a Downtown actively undergoing redevelopment such as Elmhurst. This overview analysis will help identify locations where parking supply may be under pressure in the future. HNTB has completed an overview analysis of existing and projected parking needs in the Downtown to help identify areas where more parking may be required in the future. Our approach and the implications of the analysis are discussed below. The blocks for which the analysis was undertaken are illustrated in Figure 13.

Through the course of developing subarea plans for the Downtown (Part V), a number of assumptions were made with regard to potential redevelopment. In general, development of two to three story buildings on select sites would be consistent with the principles of the Plan, and with current zoning. While the Plan does not necessarily advocate this level of development, it does provide a basis for determining future parking demand. Again, it is important to point out that redevelopment trends and patterns may change over time, and the ultimate amount of redevelopment will be influenced not only by City policy, but by market interest in the Downtown.

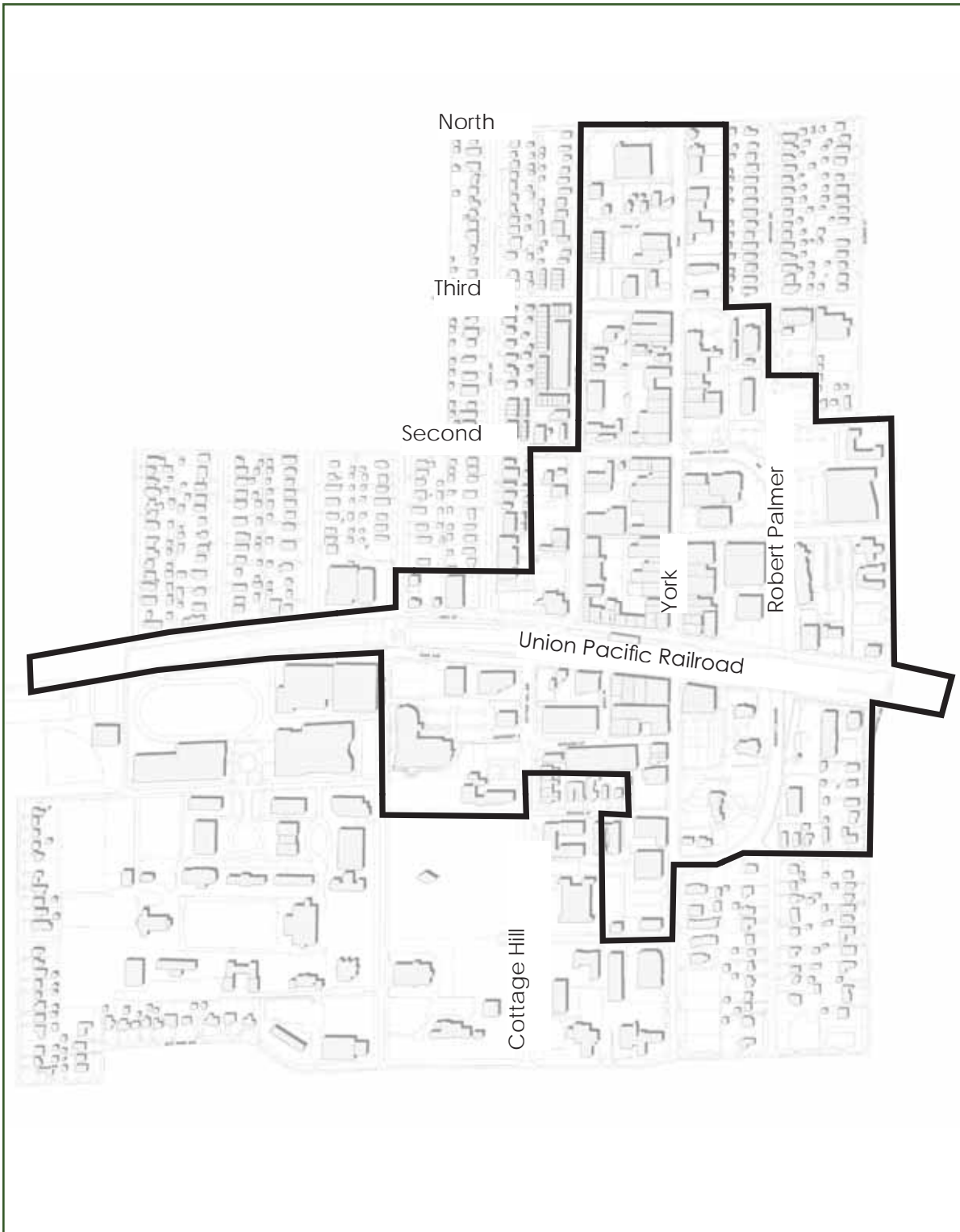
Parking Conditions

For this analysis, HNTB updated the City of Elmhurst's existing parking inventory, as well as the Inventory and Analysis Report completed in June 2002 for the Downtown to examine existing parking conditions. Using this information, existing and potential future parking conditions were analyzed.

1. Utilizing the City's updated Geographic Information System (GIS) inventory for the Downtown, we determined the current amount of retail, commercial and office space (By City code, residential uses must provide

FIGURE 13

PARKING ANALYSIS BOUNDARY



their own dedicated off-street parking).

2. The current parking supply was calculated for existing on- and off-street parking and included both private and public spaces. This information was originally drawn from the City's 2003 parking inventory and updated for recent developments. The current inventory provides a total of 723 on-street and 3041 off-street parking spaces. When Metra commuter parking is added, the total downtown inventory is 4,225 spaces.
3. The current number of spaces per 1,000 square feet of gross building floor area was calculated. This is the measure by which off-street parking requirements are typically calculated. Data identifying the type and scale of land uses was drawn from the City's GIS system.

Downtown Elmhurst relies on a “shared” parking approach, which is appropriate in Downtown settings. Shared parking simply recognizes that Downtown users will frequently park their vehicle in one location and walk to multiple destinations during their visit. This reduces the effective demand for parking from one space serving one use to one space serving multiple land uses. Currently, the Downtown provides parking at a rate of approximately 3.08 spaces for each 1,000 square feet of floor area. Including commuter parking the ratio increases to 3.48 spaces for each 1,000 sq. ft. of floor area. Commuter parking becomes available during evening and weekend hours, thus increasing the effective parking supply during these times. Many mixed-use downtowns in the Chicago metropolitan area, and across the country, frequently provide off-street parking within the range of 2.5 to 3.5 spaces per 1,000 sq. ft.

Collectively, the study area provides 4,225 on- and off-street parking spaces for 309,000 square feet of office uses, and 914,000 square feet of retail uses. The parking ratio of 3.26 spaces per 1,000 square feet of floor area was calculated for all uses uniformly throughout the Downtown. However, when the 3.08 ratio is applied independently to parking in land use areas north and south of the Union Pacific Railroad, the north side of the Downtown shows a deficit of 201 spaces without commuter parking and 94 with commuter parking. This is not surprising given the fact the Downtown's core retailing area is situated in the four blocks along York Street between First and Third Streets.

Future Parking Demand

The Downtown Plan anticipates that the City will undertake a variety of strategies to enhance parking supply commensurate with redevelopment. The system relies upon a combination of private and publicly developed spaces to meet Downtown parking demand. While the approach embraces the concept of “shared” parking, it also stresses the importance of providing as much on-site parking with redevelopment as practical. In recent years, Downtown developments have provided a significant supply of structured parking within principal buildings (at or below first floor). While many of these have been secured spaces for residential condominiums, some structures have included space for retail and office uses as well. In the future, it will likely be important to successfully integrate structured parking with most types of land uses Downtown to help ensure a convenient and adequate supply of off-street parking in the Downtown.

Land will remain a finite resource in Downtown Elmhurst. The Downtown Plan suggests infill development and some level of land use intensification will continue in the future. While on- and off-street surface parking will continue to be a key element of the overall strategy, structured parking will likely become increasingly important. Using the subarea plans prepared in Part V of the Plan, we have estimated the amount of new redevelopment anticipated in the Downtown, and the demand for additional parking. We used the current ratio of parking at 3.08 spaces per 1,000 square feet of floor area to determine future demand. Projected parking demand was based on anticipated new retail and office redevelopment (less any existing spaces removed).

It is important to point out that the subarea plans include a variety of assumptions regarding the type and location of future development in the Downtown. Certainly these assumptions are subject to change depending upon what is ultimately proposed at any location, and may result in different quantities of redevelopment, or somewhat different land use types. Again, our assumptions have not “pushed” the level of redevelopment possible, but considered typical three to four story developments in the Downtown. Thus, we can only provide rough estimates of what may happen in the future. Yet the exercise is beneficial to begin to understand the general order of magnitude of future parking supply needs, should anticipated redevelopment occur.



In summary, should the level of redevelopment anticipated in the subarea plans be realized, there would be a combined increase in retail and office space of 172,000 square feet, and a resulting increase in demand of 539 off street parking spaces (which excludes 110 spaces for Metra parking). The ratio of parking would remain roughly at 3.03 spaces per 1,000 square feet of floor area.

	Office Uses (sq. ft.)	Retail Uses (sq. ft.)	Total Office / Retail	Total Parking Available	Total Plus Commuter Parking
Existing Conditions	309,000	914,000	1,223,000	3,764	4,225
Future Conditions	255,000	1,164,000	1,419,000	4,303	4,794

Thus, assuming structured parking remains an acceptable approach to the provision of parking, capacity exists for redevelopment in the Downtown. As the City has effectively accomplished in the past, it will be important to continue to monitor the balance of development and off-street parking in the Downtown over time.

Parking Recommendations

Existing parking facilities - Several actions should be undertaken to improve existing parking facilities within the Downtown. Recommended actions include:

- Continue to encourage cooperation among property owners to combine and consolidate small separate off-street parking lots located within the same block. Consolidation and redesign can often improve efficiency and increase the total number of parking spaces.
- Continue to work with Downtown businesses and City Centre to identify locations for employee parking to maximize on- and off-street spaces most convenient to business patrons.
- Continue to make available public information regarding the location and management of Downtown parking to facilitate understanding and enhance system use.
- As discussed in more detail in the Cultural Campus subarea plan, should new parking structures be developed in the future, consider moving com-

muter parking to these structures.

- Develop more definitive guidelines for valet parking within the Downtown.

New parking facilities - The City should continue its policy of developing new parking facilities in selected locations convenient to the core of Downtown. Recommended actions include:

- Continue to work with developers and Downtown organizations to monitor the balance of available parking and provide needed spaces (private or public) in association with redevelopment.
- In the near term, consider the need for additional parking within and around the core of the Downtown. Areas likely needing additional parking in the future include York Street, Addison Avenue, and the northern portion of the Cultural Campus. Surface and structured parking options should be explored.
- As discussed in the Cultural Campus subarea plan, work jointly with Elmhurst College and other institutions considering new parking facilities to develop shared/joint use plans to maximize use of facilities and space.
- Wherever possible, continue to provide “point of demand” parking for business patron convenience as well as “area” parking facilities to serve overall Downtown needs.
- In the C4A North Downtown Business District, the City currently requires business or property owner participation to pay for future parking needs where parking is not provided on-site as part of the development. Because the C4A area is in the Downtown TIF District perhaps this requirement should be re-evaluated for consistency with the C4 District.

Appearance of parking facilities - Several actions should be undertaken to improve the appearance of public and private parking facilities. Recommended actions include:

- Promote the use of trees, landscaping and decorative fencing to screen and beautify surface parking lots throughout Downtown.
- Encourage the redevelopment of off-street parking lots behind buildings and at mid-block locations; discourage parking lots in front of buildings or on corner sites.
- Ensure that all Downtown parking structures conform to the Design Guidelines presented in this Plan. In general, parking structures should



be visually compatible with nearby buildings. Garages along primary shopping streets should have small stores or service uses along the sidewalk frontage.

Service access and loading - The City should continue its efforts to improve service vehicle access and loading within the Downtown. Recommended actions include:

- Require all delivery and service traffic to use alleys and rear-side lots wherever possible.
- Establish new guidelines for the design and location of private refuse collection areas in the Downtown.

Downtown Circulation

While the street network serving the community and the Downtown have long been established, a number of operational issues have been raised in the planning process. These are briefly highlighted below.

- **Access to Downtown**

Access to Downtown from the surrounding community and the regional highway system is constrained by the presence of the railroad, Elmhurst College, Wilder Park, and adjacent residential neighborhoods. As a result, primary access is limited to a few key roadways. The Downtown Plan strives to improve connections between Downtown and the Elmhurst community and surrounding region.

- **Traffic operations and traffic safety along York Street**

York Street, which is characterized by a wide cross section and high traffic volumes, creates a physical barrier that tends to divide Downtown. The Plan strives to improve traffic movement and traffic safety along York Street and minimize its “barrier effect” within Downtown.

- **Impact on adjacent neighborhoods**

There is concern regarding the encroachment of Downtown traffic into the adjacent neighborhoods. The Plan strives to improve Downtown traffic flow while also protecting adjacent neighborhoods.

- **Conflicts between vehicular, pedestrian and bicycle traffic**

The safe and convenient movement of pedestrians and bicyclists is an impor-

tant objective of the Downtown Plan. The Plan strives to establish a balance between the needs of the motorist and those of the pedestrian, and recommends several projects and actions for improving the relationship between motorists, pedestrians and bicyclists. Many related recommendations can be found in the Urban Design section of the Plan.

Recommended policies, actions and guidelines for improving traffic within Downtown Elmhurst are highlighted below.

Traffic Recommendations

Access to Downtown

It is recommended that the City implement a comprehensive signage program to better guide travelers to Downtown, and to more effectively direct movement within and around the Downtown. Recommended actions include:

- Build upon the City's high quality "wayfinding" signage program to better direct motorists to and from the Downtown from the surrounding community and the regional highway system. This will entail the placement of signs along roadways well outside the boundaries of Downtown.
- Provide improved signage within the boundaries of Downtown to better direct motorists to public parking areas and other key destinations.
- Place directional signage "before" street intersections along York Street to aid motorists and increase traffic safety.

York Street

It is recommended that the City undertake several actions to improve traffic circulation and pedestrian safety along York Street and reduce its east-west movement "barrier" effect within the Core. Recommended actions include:

- Lengthen the pedestrian phase on the York Street traffic signals during off-peak hours.
- Utilize "count down" crosswalk signals which have already been placed at key intersections, to provide pedestrians a clear indication of the amount of signal phase time remaining for them to cross the street.
- Consider constructing curb extensions on the side streets that intersect with York Street to provide more "refuge area" for waiting pedestrians at key intersections.



Other traffic improvements

It is recommended that several other actions be undertaken to improve traffic operations and traffic safety within the Downtown, including:

- Continue to provide upgraded pedestrian crosswalks at all intersections where crossing is allowed in order to facilitate pedestrian movements throughout the Downtown area.
- Provide more bicycle parking within the Downtown.
- Strictly enforce speed and traffic regulations within the Downtown area to improve traffic and pedestrian safety.



Realizing the Vision - Plan Implementation

The Downtown Plan sets forth an agreed-upon “road map” for improvement and development within Downtown Elmhurst during the next ten to fifteen years. It is the product of considerable effort on the part of the Zoning and Planning Commission, City staff, Downtown businesses and property owners, civic and public interests, and others within the Elmhurst community. The final Plan represents the consensus of all involved.

However, in many ways, the planning process in Downtown Elmhurst has just begun. Formal adoption of the Downtown Plan is only the first step, not the last. Without continuing action to implement Plan recommendations, the City’s efforts up to this point will have little lasting impact.

This section presents recommended implementation actions intended to help the City organize and initiate the Plan implementation process. This section includes recommendations pertaining to: A) Downtown Management; B) Downtown Program Finance; and C) Key Implementation and Follow-Up Actions.

A. DOWNTOWN MANAGEMENT

Historically, there has been a strong relationship between the City of Elmhurst and business sponsored organizations in actively directing the interests of the Downtown. It is important to bear in mind that the operations of the Downtown rely on a partnership between the City of Elmhurst and the local business community, property owners, and public agencies and institutions. It is the collaboration among all these agencies which has helped to build a strong and economically sustainable Downtown.

The elements for continued successful Downtown management are already in place in Elmhurst. These include a well-organized Downtown business community and City government interested in facilitating the area’s continued success. Several organizations have held long standing roles within the community and the Downtown and these are briefly described below.

The City of Elmhurst

The City of Elmhurst maintains primary responsibility for the direction and future of Downtown Elmhurst. Various City departments are responsible for



REALIZING THE VISION

infrastructure improvements, and for enforcing all building codes, fire and safety codes, and zoning and development regulations. In conjunction with a number of other organizations described below, the City is able to support and coordinate a range of programs to sustain Downtown Elmhurst. Key activities of the City include:

- Maintain a close working relationship with the business community and Downtown organizations.
- Maintain regulatory controls consistent with adopted plans and recommended programs for the Downtown, such as zoning, traffic, circulation, parking, and access.
- Maintain the overall Downtown infrastructure and improvement program including streetscape, parking and commuter facilities.
- Provide financial and business assistance support. Tools include the Downtown Special Service Area Districts, Tax Increment Finance District, Facade Improvement Program and other financial service programs.
- Lead, support or facilitate as appropriate community and other special events within the Downtown area.

A key responsibility of the City is to help ensure strong coordination among the many business, civic and institutional interests within the Downtown.

Elmhurst Economic Development Office

The Elmhurst Economic Development office often serves as a first point of contact for many business within the community. The office provides assistance to prospective investors and developers in Elmhurst and provides information on demographics, development sites and available properties, economic development assistance programs, and community resources.

The office is sponsored by the City of Elmhurst with a mission to "...retain and attract business to the City of Elmhurst." In this regard, the office focuses on developing the commercial, office and retail sectors of the Community as a whole. The office also partners with the Chamber of Commerce and City Centre organizations as needed to attract business to the community. The office also has responsibility for administering the Downtown business district retail grant program. The retail grant program provides grants up to a total of \$10,000 to support small businesses within the Downtown. To date, a total of

24 grant awards have been made. Since the program's inception in 2002, it has leveraged approximately 2.5 million dollars in investment.

Elmhurst City Centre

The Elmhurst City Centre is a non profit corporation organized and supported by the Downtown business community and the City of Elmhurst. City Centre provides a necessary voice and contact point for the Downtown business community. It not only serves as a basis for business organization and collaboration with the City of Elmhurst, but also serves as an important marketing, promotion and public relations agency. No less significant than other agencies, City Centre is also an important economic and business development contact for the Downtown. City Center projects and programs are funded through the City Center Special Service Area which is a special tax paid exclusively by Downtown property owners.

The mission of City Centre is "... to make Downtown a destination for consumers through concentrated efforts in marketing and special events, physical appearance standards and improvements, and business retention and recruitment." City Centre sponsors many Downtown activities and events, such as Elmhurst's Cool Cars and other festivals.

Elmhurst Chamber of Commerce

The Elmhurst Chamber of Commerce provides important business and economic development services community-wide, including the Downtown. As a voluntary membership organization, the Chamber of Commerce provides a variety of resources for business support, interaction and development within the City. Its principle activities include:

- Networking and Referral – which includes a number of regularly scheduled business networking opportunities such as membership breakfasts, and after hours events.
- Business Education – which includes such programs as Blueprint for Success, a high school mentoring program and educational partnership.
- Business Promotion – which includes publications regarding City businesses, activities, and business directories. The Chamber also sponsors a website and provides informational services.
- Government Action – which includes programs to support business



REALIZING THE VISION ---

needs from local through state government agencies.

- **Business Leadership** – which includes standing committees of the Chamber to provide input and direction on business development issues. It also includes relationships with community business associations.

Other Downtown Interests

Downtown Elmhurst is comprised of a range of other interests, all of which have a role in plan implementation. Very briefly, these include the following:

- **Public, Institutional and civic agencies** -The active participation and support of Elmhurst College, the Elmhurst Public Library, the Elmhurst Park District, the Historic Commission, Elmhurst School Districts, and a range of other institutions will be essential to the successful implementation of many of the community facility and service recommendations included in the new Plan.
- **Local businesses and property owners** - Individual businesses and institutions should continue to maintain their own properties while conforming to the overall guidelines and objectives of the Plan.
- **Local lending institutions** - Local lenders can provide active and direct assistance, particularly with respect to upgrading existing properties and facilitating redevelopment. Lenders can offer special programs for building improvements and repairs, and can also help finance redevelopment projects within the Downtown. Local lending institutions are currently providing programs and assistance to Downtown building and property owners, and should continue such efforts.
- **Builders and developers** - Private builders and developers can be recruited to rehabilitate existing buildings and undertake new construction that conforms to the Plan and enhances the overall quality and character of Downtown Elmhurst.
- **The Elmhurst community** - It should be emphasized that Downtown serves — and is an integral part of — nearby neighborhoods and the Elmhurst community as a whole. Residents and neighborhood groups should continue to be encouraged to participate in the Downtown improvement process, and should be given the opportunity to provide input on major improvement and development decisions within the area.

B. DOWNTOWN FINANCE PROGRAM

The effective implementation of the Downtown Plan will continue to require significant public and private resource commitments. In order to continue to realize success and prosperity over the long term, continued joint public and private finance strategies will be required. This section focuses on public investment and improvement strategies.

There are several types of funding and finance needs within the Downtown. These include; 1) funding for special events; 2) resources for maintenance of streetscape, infrastructure, parking and other facilities; 3) financial resources for promotion and marketing initiatives; and 4) sources for Downtown redevelopment and redevelopment projects. Several needs will require on-going funding while others are specific to particular projects.

While there are numerous financial resources which might be made available to the business community or the City in the future, this section of the Plan identifies the major tools best suited to support Downtown Elmhurst improvement programs. In general, these programs emphasize either on-going and longer term resources for operations and administrative activity, or physical improvement and redevelopment activity.

Municipal Funding Sources

Communities have a number of general sources of revenue which can be applied to any corporate purpose, including downtown improvements and programs. Typically, the largest of these is the general purpose property tax, which primarily funds the City's General Revenue Fund. Others include state income tax rebates, motor fuel tax funds, public utility taxes, retailers' occupational tax, plus various fees, fines and other receipts. Municipal bonds may also be considered for special projects during various phases of the implementation of the Plan requiring more long-term financing. The City has used combinations of these resources (except special assessment bonds) to fund Downtown initiatives in the past including the Main Street Organization, the Downtown streetscape and various Downtown special events.

In Elmhurst, these funds are currently used to support the streetscape program, parking improvement program, economic development activities, and



basic infrastructure maintenance of the Downtown

Special Services Area (SSA)

The SSA program is a finance tool that utilizes a real estate property tax levy to fund “special services” in a targeted area where property owners voluntarily tax themselves for these services. SSA services and programs are in addition to—and go beyond—the normal programs and services provided by the community. Typically, commercial and industrial areas are subject to an SSA tax, although they can be extended to residential properties. SSA services and improvements are funded entirely through the tax revenues generated by the special service tax. The revenue is derived from a computation using the Equalized Assessed Valuation (EAV) of the taxable parcels within the special service area boundaries.

In Elmhurst, the Special Service Area program (Elmhurst City Centre) is used to fund such items as lighting, marketing, landscaping, holiday decorations and maintenance.

Tax Increment Financing

Tax increment financing (TIF) is a mechanism used to carry out revitalization and redevelopment activities on a local basis. TIF allows a community to capture the increase in local property taxes that results from a redevelopment project in order to pay for the public costs involved in the project. While TIF districts have typically been used in commercial and industrial areas of communities throughout Illinois, TIF is being undertaken increasingly for mixed-use and residential areas as well.

TIF has proven to be an exceptional economic development tool enabling many communities to successfully finance public improvements, redevelopment activities and other economic development incentives, that would not otherwise have a multi-year funding source. Many of these activities are priority components of the implementation of the City’s Downtown Plan including:

- Acquisition, clearance and other land assembly and site preparation activities.
- Rehabilitation of older, deteriorating or functionally obsolete buildings.
- Incentives to attract or retain private development.
- Marketing of development sites.

Other redevelopment activities are also possible under TIF, including:

- Area-wide infrastructure improvements such as road repairs and utility upgrades.
- Correction or mitigation of environmental problems.
- Job training, workforce readiness and other related educational programs.
- Professional fees related to the project, such as legal, planning, and architectural services.

Necessary site or building improvements, such as streets, landscaping, property assembly and resale are typically accomplished using existing municipal revenues or revenues generated from the sale of municipal bonds. As a result of the public investment, private developers are encouraged to build or lease facilities in the area and generate new tax revenues from their business operations. The increased tax revenues generated by higher property values are used to pay for the initial public improvements.

In Elmhurst, the TIF redevelopment program has been used for many of the activities described above. Since adoptions of the original TIF district in 1986, the City has added 44 million dollars in overall equalized assessed valuation in the Downtown. TIF will remain an important tool in undertaking many of the program recommended as part of the Downtown Plan.

C. KEY IMPLEMENTATION AND FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS

In implementing the Downtown Plan over the next few years, there are several key actions which the City should undertake to realize the Community's vision for the Downtown. This section describes a number of key actions which should be undertaken by the City to implement the Plan.

Potential Zoning Ordinance Refinements

There are several changes which should be considered in the Zoning Ordinance to continue to reflect the unique character of the Downtown. A number of key actions are identified below. It is important to note that these suggestions are recommendations, and should be subject to more detailed study and refinement prior to adoption of any Zoning Ordinance amendments.



- **Front and Corner Side Yards** - Along streets where the street wall is critical to the Downtown pedestrian environment, there should be a front yard of not more than approximately three to five feet. Ideally buildings would remain on the street right-of-way line to maintain the historic Downtown “streetwall.”
- **Use Mix** - Within the Downtown core, residential uses should be precluded from the street level of buildings. Further, interest has been expressed in limiting the amount of commercial service uses, such as offices on the first floor in the Downtown. While limiting such uses can be desirable to bolster retail activity, the City must be careful that any such restrictions do not result in vacancies.
- **Off-Street Parking Requirements** – For the most part, Downtown parking requirements are adequate. The City should consider reducing the current off-street parking requirement for residential uses from two spaces per dwelling unit to 1.5 spaces per dwelling unit. An additional provision should be made for visitor parking at a rate of 1 space for every ten dwellings.

In the C4A North Downtown Business Zoning District, the City currently requires off-street parking, or may allow a developer / owner to pay the City for parking in lieu of building spaces on-site. The City may then pool these and other resources to construct centrally located parking facilities. The feasibility of this approach throughout the Downtown might be explored. However, because parking has not been required in the past, it is essential the City apply a mixed-use parking standard, and carefully consider an appropriate fee in lieu of parking that balances public and private investment interests.

- **Site Development Plan Review** – While City staff currently reviews re-development for conformity with the City’s development regulations as part of the building permit approval process, the site plan review process at the staff level could grant further authorization for the staff to consider planning and design recommendations contained within the Downtown Plan, and their applicability to a particular project. This would help ensure consistency in all Downtown projects, particularly those projects that would not otherwise be reviewed by the Zoning and Planning Commission and City Council.

- **First Floor Use Study** – The City should examine its zoning regulations for first floor uses in the C4 District to explore whether some level of restriction should be placed on commercial service and office uses in the Downtown. Caution should be exercised in applying such regulations, in consideration of realistic market opportunities in Elmhurst.

Mobility Improvements

- **Structured Parking** – Through the planning process, and under current zoning regulations, the potential need for additional structured parking in the Downtown has become apparent. Working with the business community, the City should continue to refine its preliminary preferred locations for new structured parking, and allocate financial resources for this purpose.
- **Employee and Commuter Parking** – As part of its continuing evaluation of parking needs and improvements, consistent with Plan recommendations, the City should refine its management strategy relative to Downtown employee and commuter parking. The effort seeks to maximize prime parking for retail uses. In addition, the Cultural Campus Subarea Plan recommends consolidating commuter parking along the Union Pacific railroad in other locations in order to improve circulation, access and the image and appearance of the area.
- **Metra Commuter Facility Improvements** – Community input has suggested that the Elmhurst Metra station should be upgraded and improved. This effort should be coordinated with other studies along the Union Pacific railroad so that commuter parking, street access and station improvements are part of an integrated facilities plan.
- **Freight Traffic on the Union Pacific Railroad** – Working with Metra, The City should continue to encourage capacity improvements in Proviso Yard, or other areas to minimize congestion. The City should also maintain contact with IDOT with respect to the Chicago Region Environmental and Transportation Efficiency Program (CREATE) improvements which could help to mitigate freight congestion.
- **Consider Valet Parking Regulations** – As the City's entertainment role evolves, there will likely be a need to develop a policy to manage valet

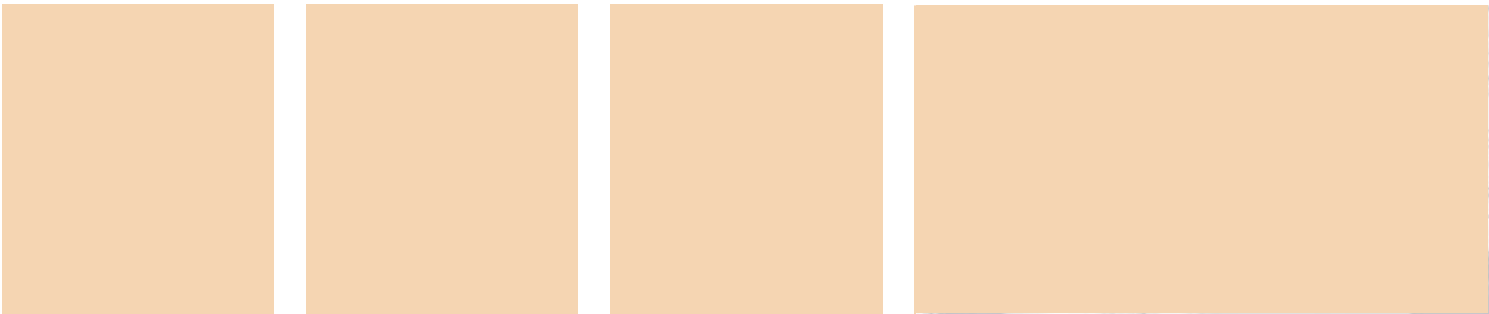


parking in context of the larger parking supply in the Downtown. The City should explore policy options for this.

Urban Design

- **Streetscape** – The City has completed streetscape throughout much of the Downtown. The urban design section of this Plan provides a variety of recommendations regarding completion and improvement of the system. The Downtown master streetscape plan should be updated to reflect the intent of the Downtown Plan.
- **Addison Avenue** – A number of substantial changes to the lane widths, parking configuration and streetscape are recommended for Addison Avenue as part of the Downtown Plan.
- **Downtown Parks and Plazas** - The Plan calls for the addition of a variety of public open spaces and plazas. The City should further study improvement options where feasible. Immediate options include the Schiller Street Plaza, the Police Department front lawn, and other areas.
- **Cultural Campus Plan** – The Cultural Campus Plan includes a number of recommendations related to urban design which will require coordination with a variety of agencies. These include modifications to the character and function of Park Avenue and First Street, as well as several recommended pedestrian pathway and open space improvements.

The City should regularly monitor its progress on Downtown Plan implementation. As conditions evolve in the Downtown, implementation strategies and priorities may change as well. Every year or two, the City should evaluate and update its implementation measure and priorities to reflect current Downtown needs.



Downtown Subarea Plans

The Subarea Plans for the Elmhurst Downtown Plan provide more detailed planning and design recommendations for “functional” subareas of the Downtown. The Downtown has been divided into nine distinct subareas which maintain similar characteristics, or have similar issues. Ensuring proper planning guidance in each of these areas is necessary for the long term stability and economic viability of the Downtown as a whole.

The subarea plans include more detailed land use planning and design recommendations to bring clarity to the intent and purpose of the Land Use Plan. Recommendations will help guide the type, location, quality and design of development and redevelopment within each subarea.

Nine subarea plans have been prepared for various parts of the community, including:

- A. York Street Commercial Core
- B. Addison Street
- C. North Robert Palmer Drive
- D. North Downtown
- E. First Street
- F. South Robert Palmer Drive
- G. Larch Avenue
- H. Crescent Court Block (Block 300)
- I. The Cultural Campus

The geographic location of each of these areas is illustrated in Figure 14, Downtown Subareas. Detailed recommendations for each subarea are provided on the following pages.

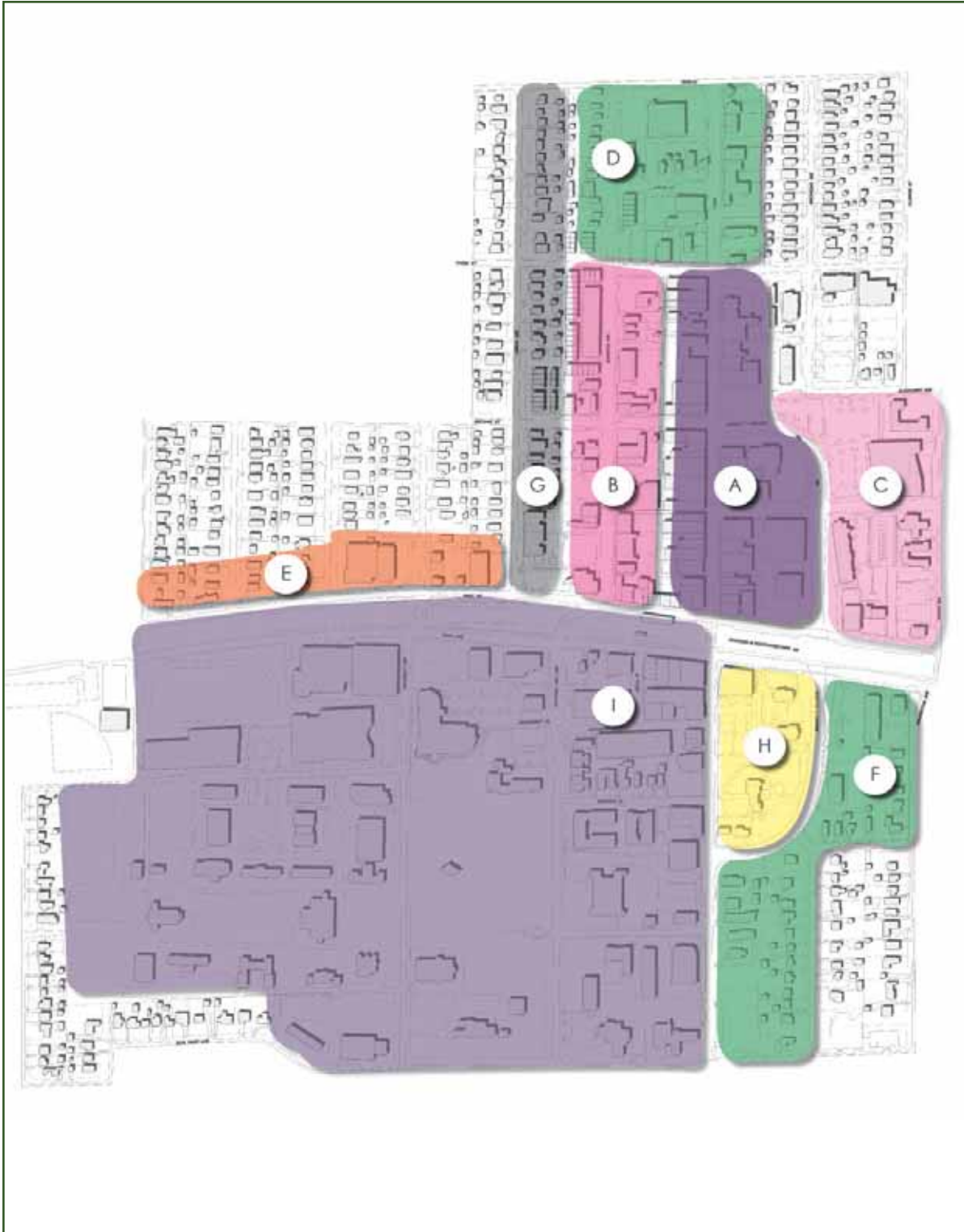
Each Subarea Plan includes:

- **Identification Map** – which illustrates the location of the subarea relative to the Downtown as a whole, and to the recommendations of the Downtown Land Use Plan.
- **Framework Plan** – which includes suggested development, design and improvement recommendations for each subarea.
- **Illustrative Improvement Concepts** – Illustrative redevelopment concepts have been prepared for each subarea provide solutions to indicate how varying public and private improvements can be implemented.



FIGURE 14

DOWNTOWN SUBAREAS

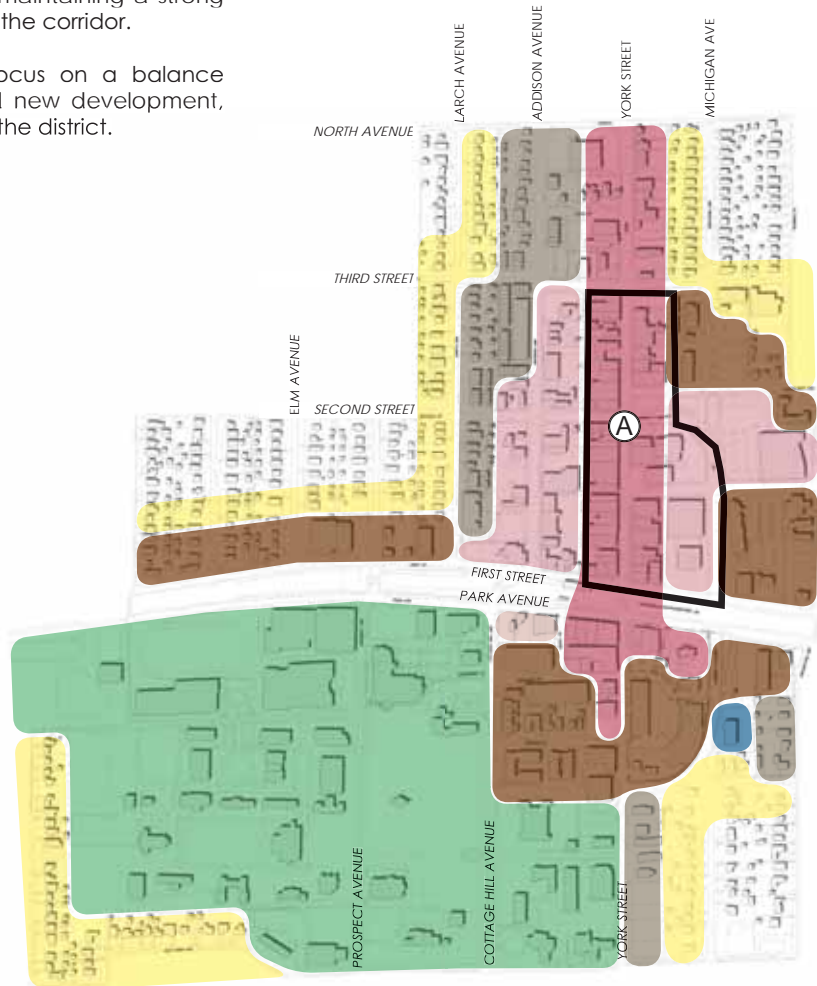


SUBAREA A, IDENTIFICATION MAP

York Street Commercial Core

The retail core in Downtown Elmhurst is strong and vital. It will continue its role in "niche" retail and entertainment uses. While well developed today, the area will likely realize additional development in the future. The Plan envisions maintaining a strong pedestrian environment along the corridor.

Subarea recommendations focus on a balance between desired parking and new development, while maintaining the scale of the district.










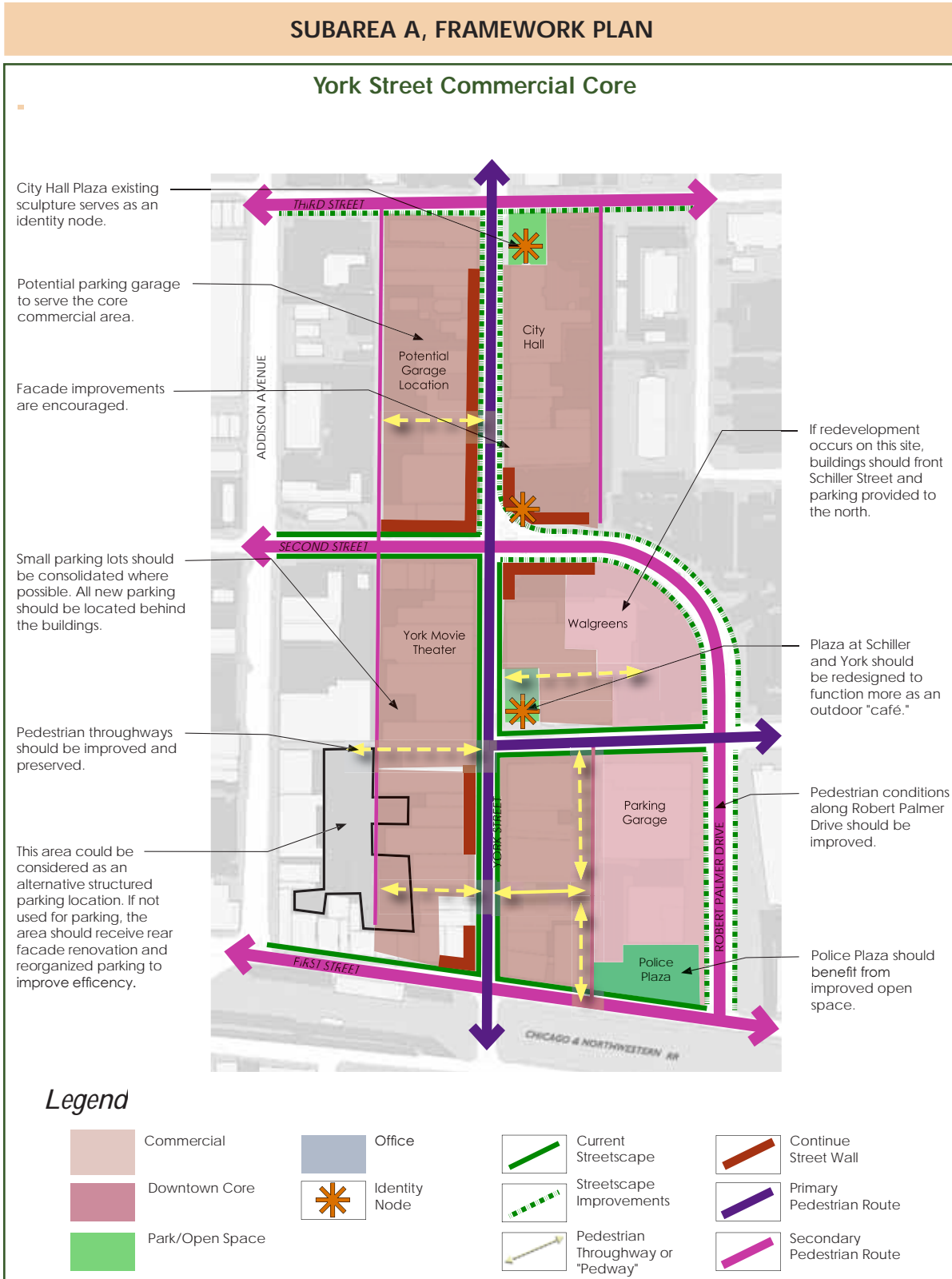
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|---|--|---|---------------|---|-----------------|
|  | Single Family |  | Office |  | Cultural Campus |
|  | Low Density Multiple Family Residential |  | Commercial | | |
|  | Medium to High Density Multiple Family Residential |  | Downtown Core | | |



FIGURE 16



SUBAREA A, ILLUSTRATIVE DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT

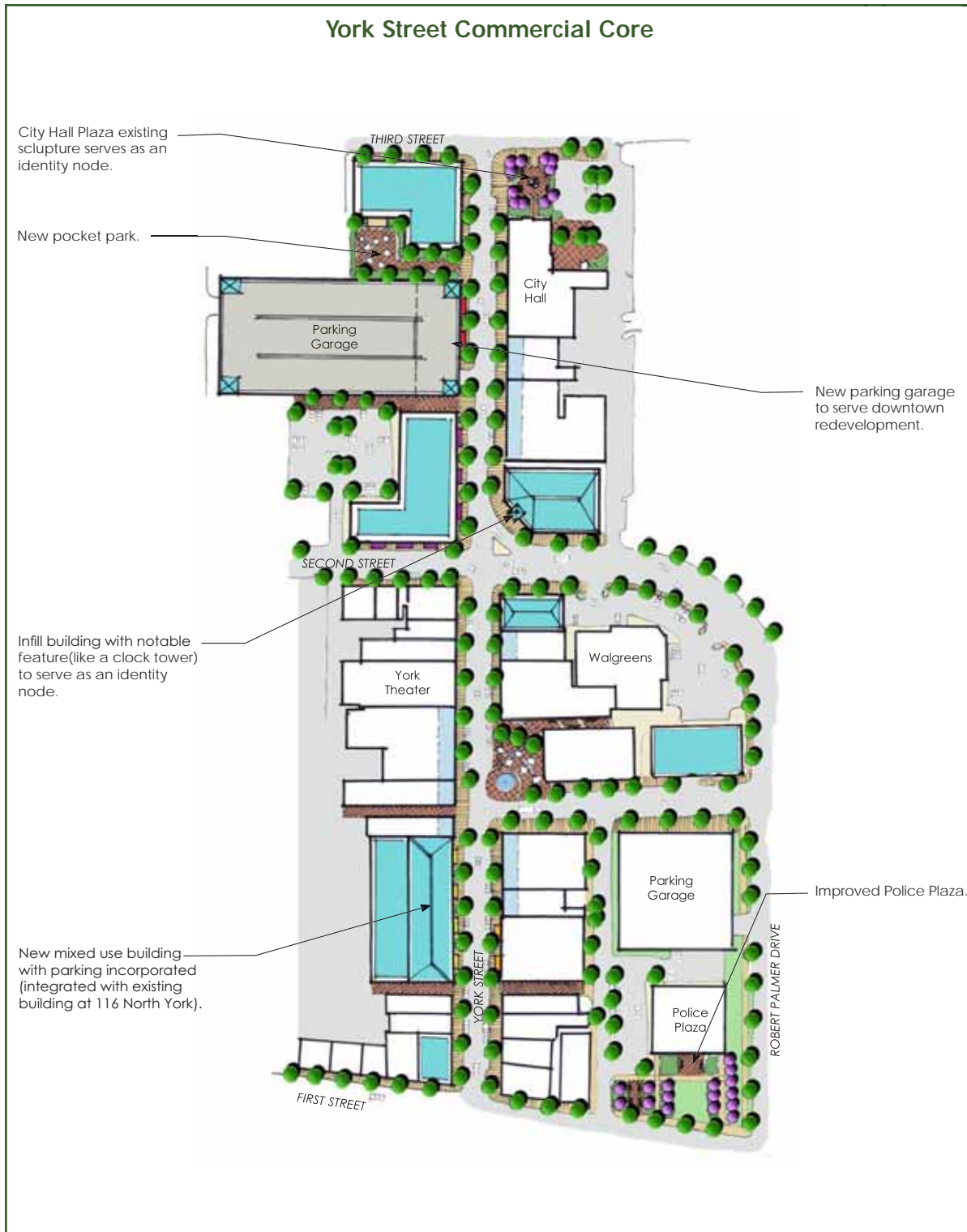


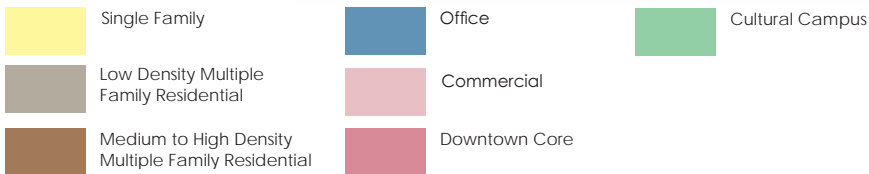
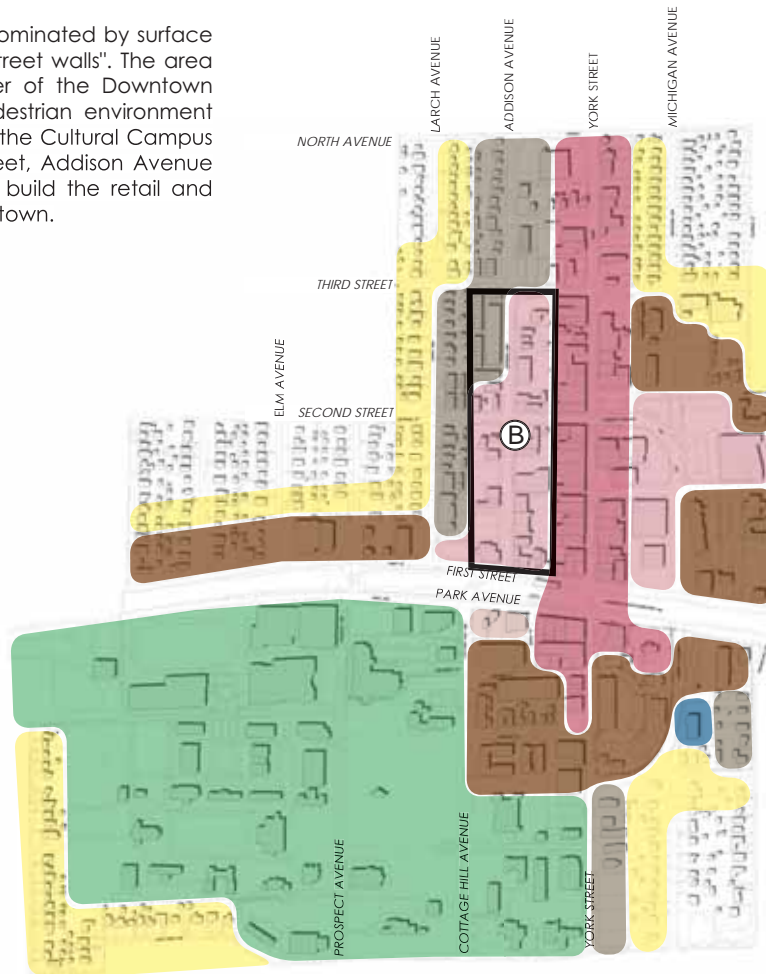
FIGURE 18

SUBAREA B, IDENTIFICATION MAP

Addison Avenue

Subarea B is served by Addison Avenue. The area is largely underutilized and potentially subject to redevelopment in the future. It would include a mix of commercial and retail uses.

Addison Avenue is currently dominated by surface parking and poorly defined "street walls". The area should emulate the character of the Downtown Core to create a strong pedestrian environment and enhance connectivity to the Cultural Campus to the south. Next to York Street, Addison Avenue has the greatest potential to build the retail and commercial base of the Downtown.



SUBAREA B, FRAMEWORK PLAN

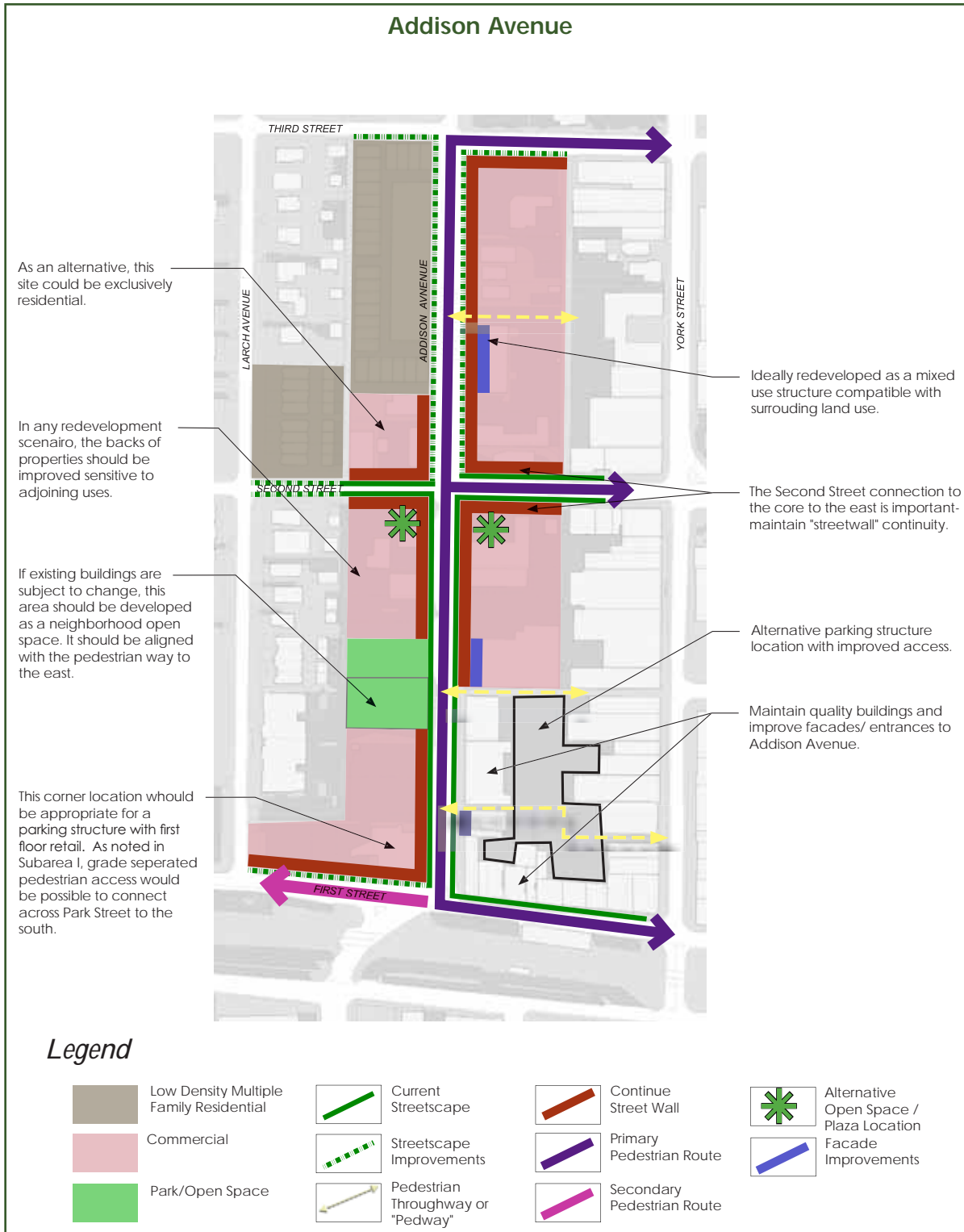


FIGURE 20

SUBAREA B, ILLUSTRATIVE DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT



SUBAREA C, IDENTIFICATION MAP

North Robert Palmer Drive

Subarea C contains a mix of office, commercial, and multi family residential developments. The area is developed at a lower density than the other areas of the Downtown, and sustains a very different character.

It is more auto-oriented in use and design, and requires significant off-street parking. One of the challenges of this area is to make it more pedestrian friendly as a cohesive extension of the Downtown Core. Several ideas are offered in the following pages.

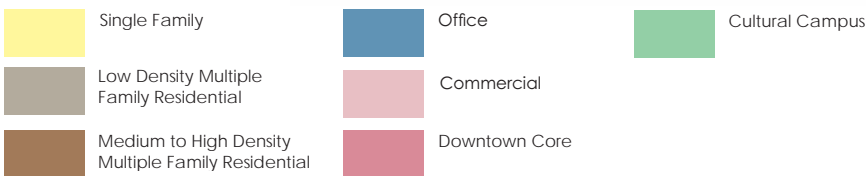
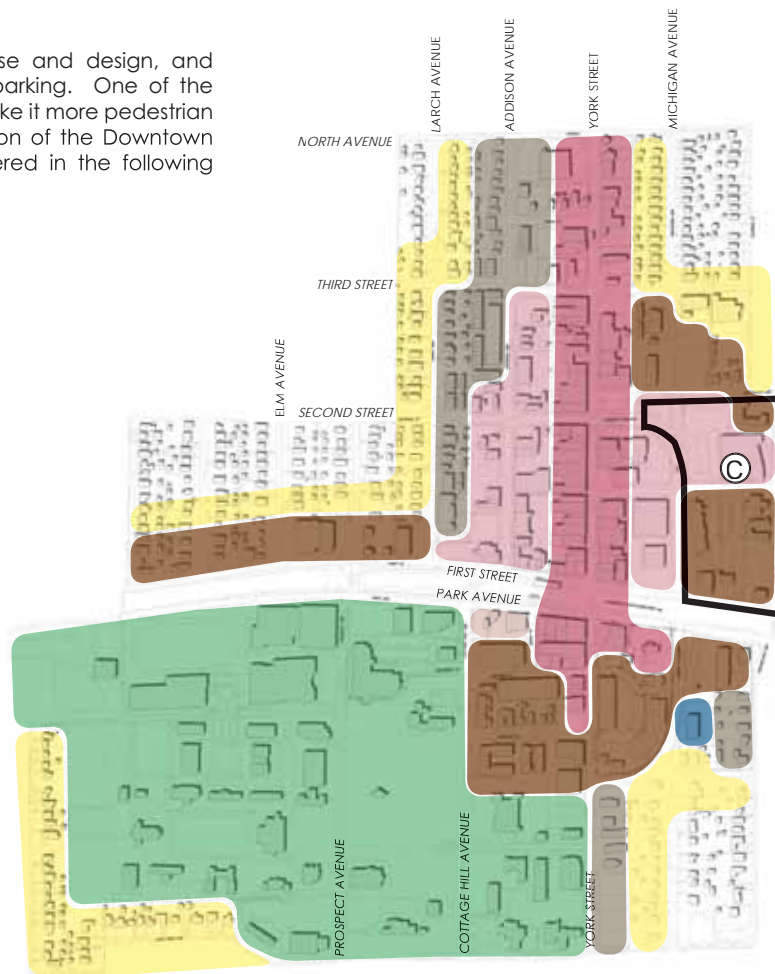
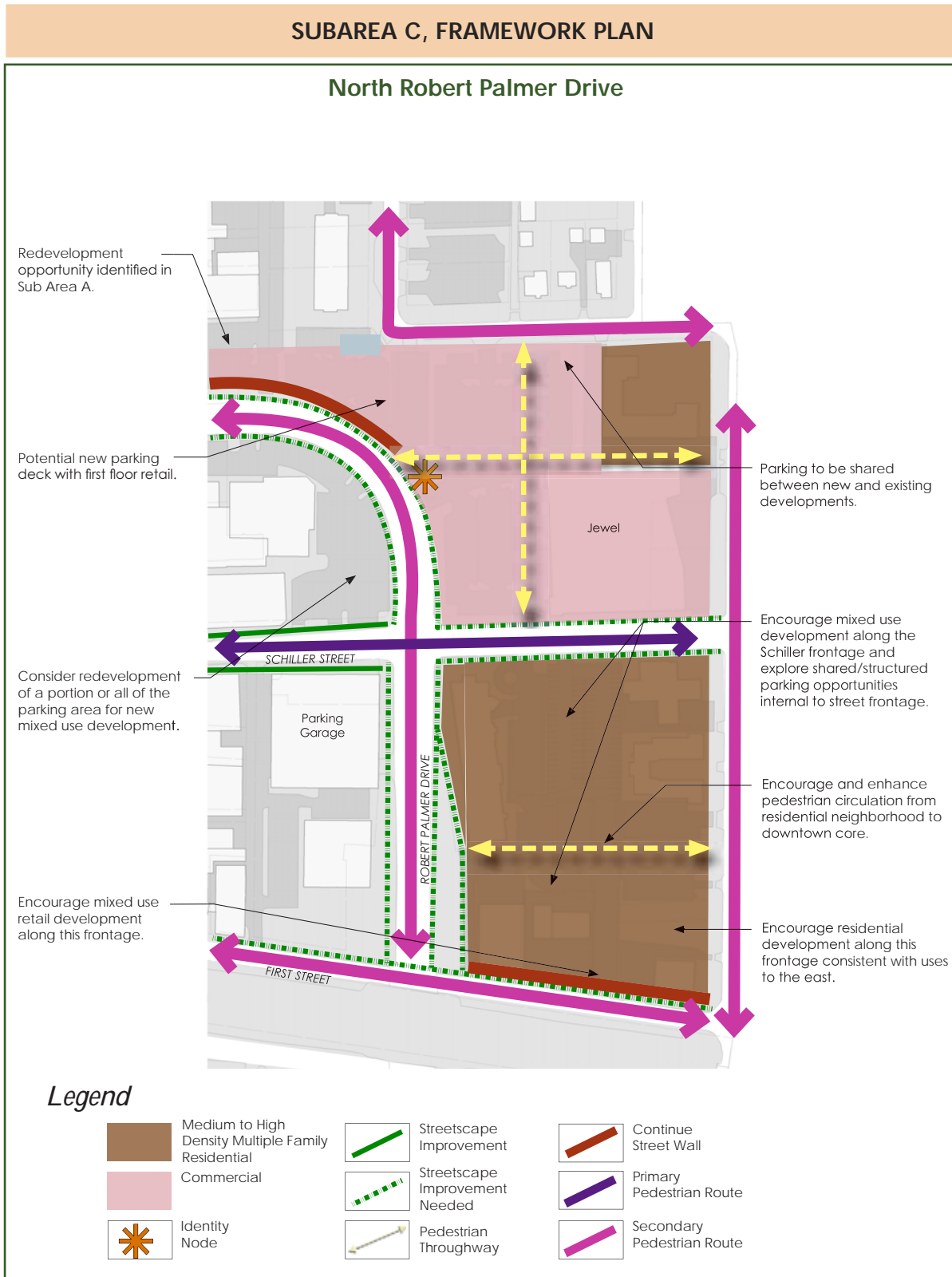


FIGURE 22



SUBAREA C, ILLUSTRATIVE DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT

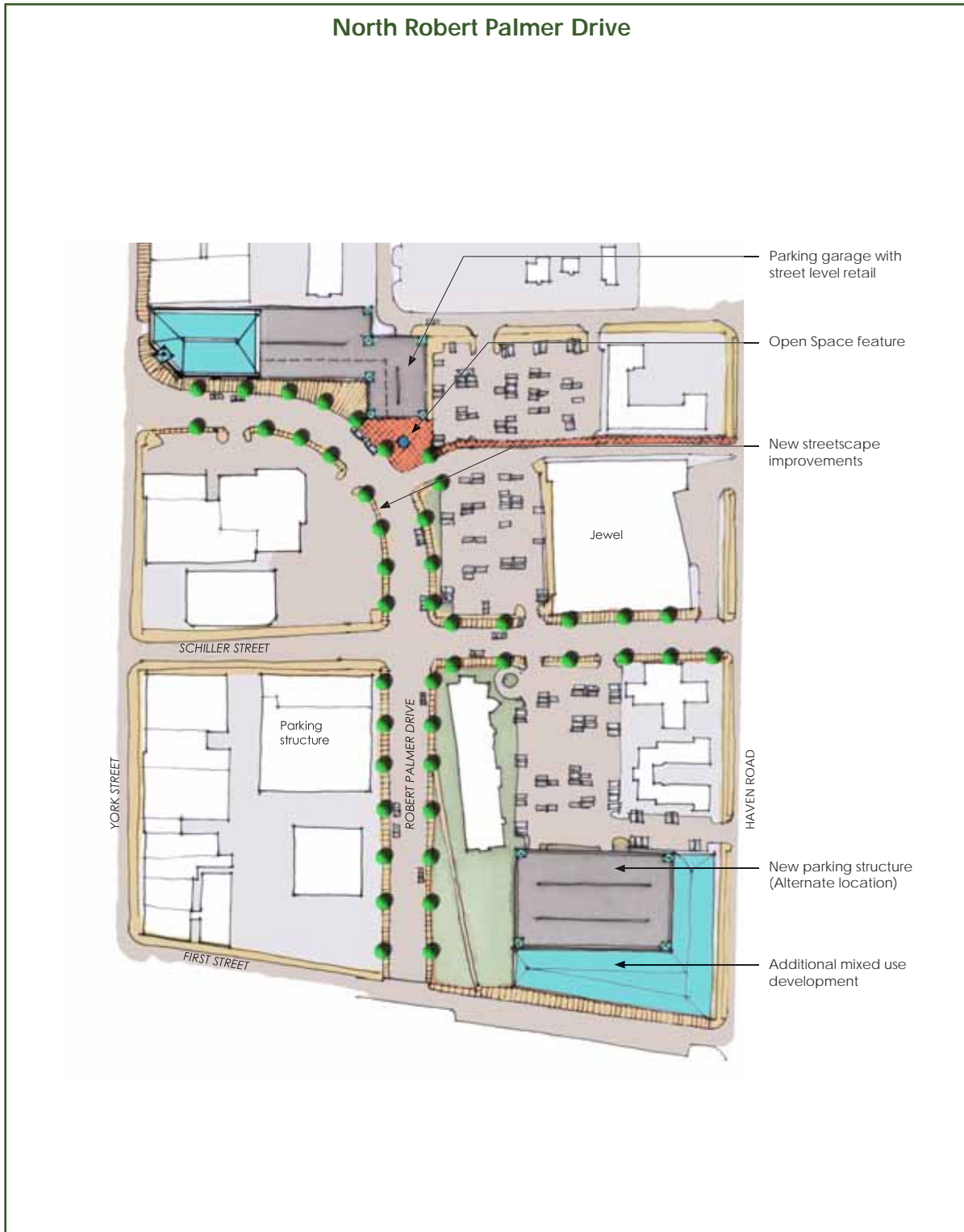


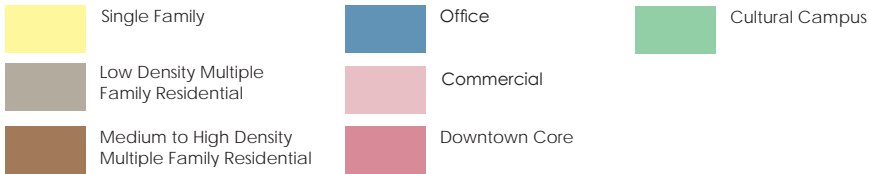
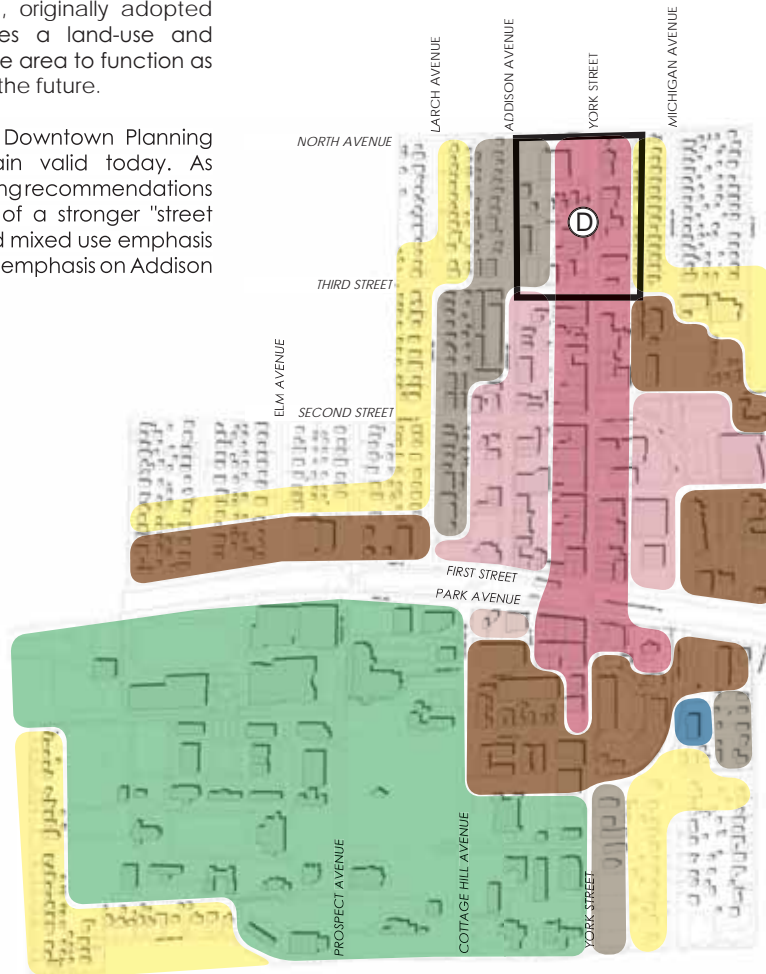
FIGURE 24

SUBAREA D, IDENTIFICATION MAP

North Downtown

The North Downtown area includes a mix of building and development types. In the past it has functioned as a transition between the Downtown Core to the south and more auto oriented uses to the north. The North Downtown Design Plan, originally adopted by the City in 2000 provides a land-use and development framework for the area to function as part of the Downtown Core in the future.

The conclusions of the North Downtown Planning Program for the area remain valid today. As illustrated in this subarea, planning recommendations emphasize the establishment of a stronger "street wall", shared parking, retail and mixed use emphasis on York Street, and a residential emphasis on Addison Avenue.



SUBAREA D, FRAMEWORK PLAN

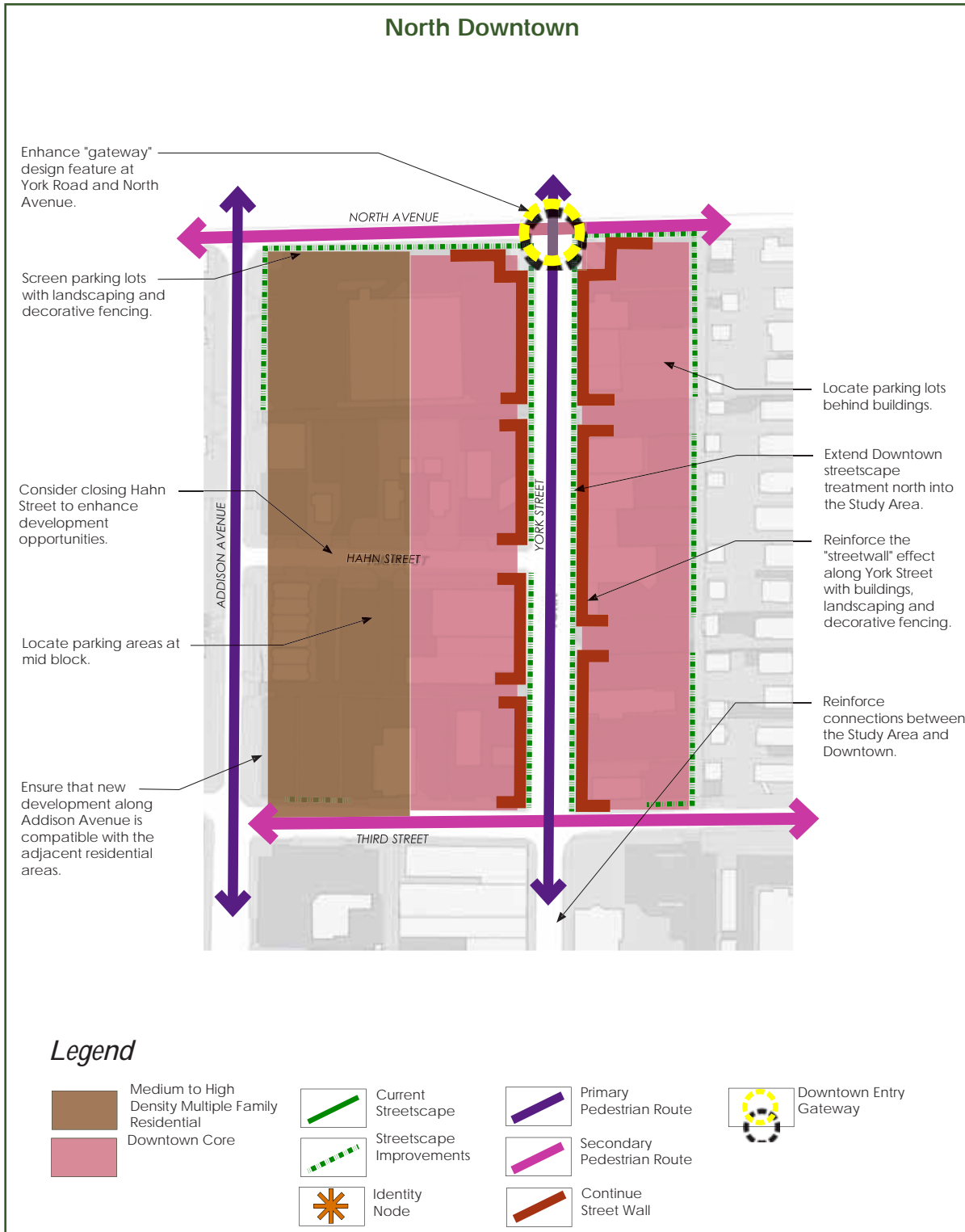
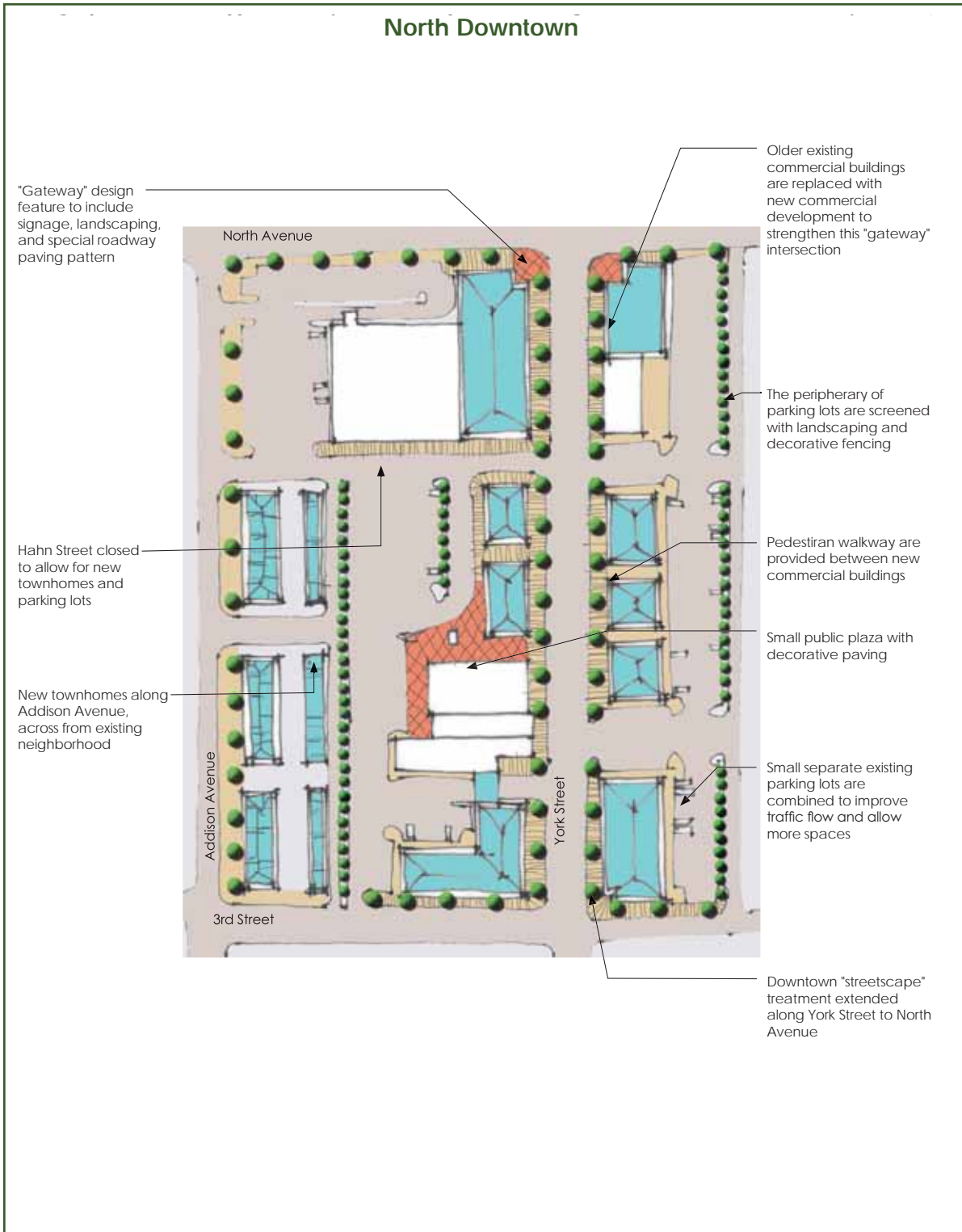


FIGURE 26

SUBAREA D, ILLUSTRATIVE CONCEPT PLAN

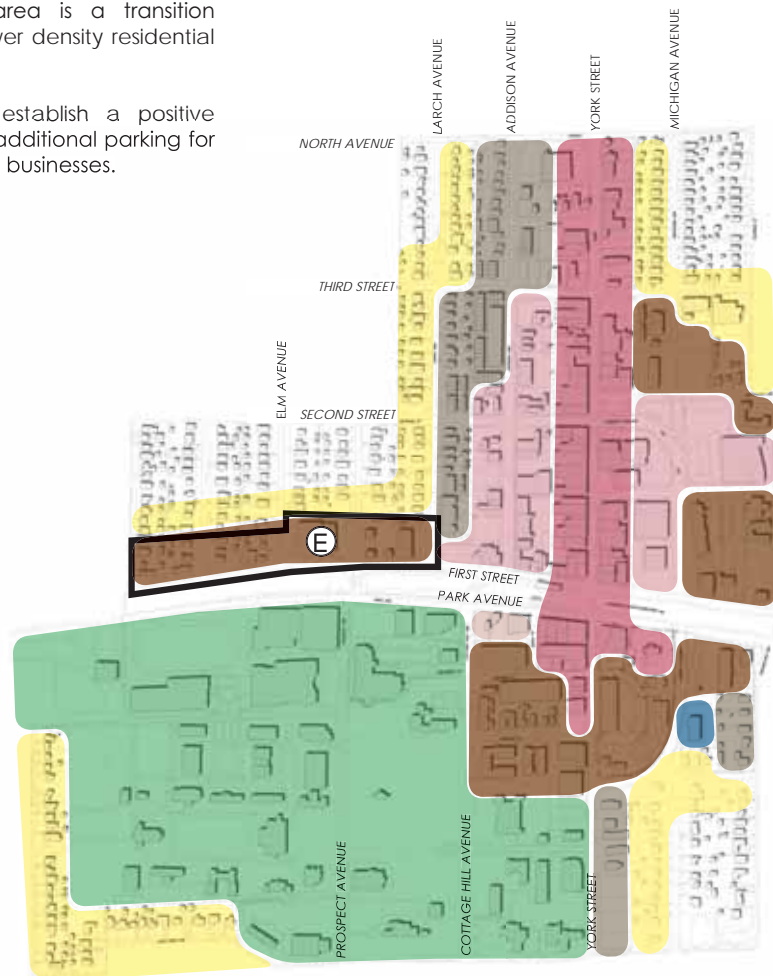


SUBAREA E, IDENTIFICATION MAP

First Street

This subarea is adjacent and along the north side of the Union Pacific/Metra Railroad Corridor. It consists of older commercial, retail, and institutional uses. A number of these properties are becoming functionally obsolete. The area is a transition between the railroad and lower density residential uses northwest of the corridor.

Updating the use mix will establish a positive transition, and could provide additional parking for commuters and for Downtown businesses.










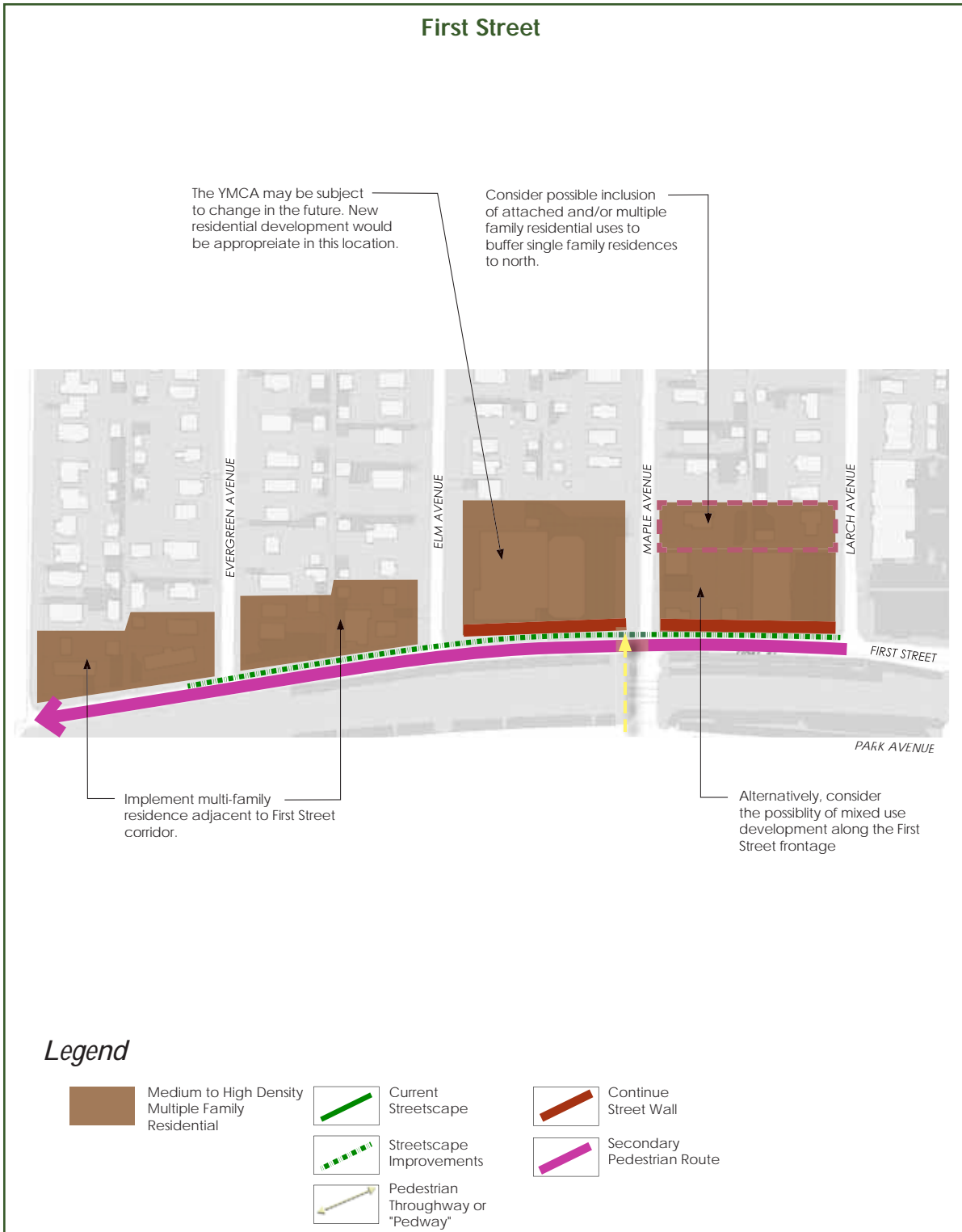
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|---|--|---|---------------|---|-----------------|
|  | Single Family |  | Office |  | Cultural Campus |
|  | Low Density Multiple Family Residential |  | Commercial | | |
|  | Medium to High Density Multiple Family Residential |  | Downtown Core | | |



FIGURE 28

SUBAREA E, FRAMEWORK PLAN

First Street



SUBAREA E, ILLUSTRATIVE DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT

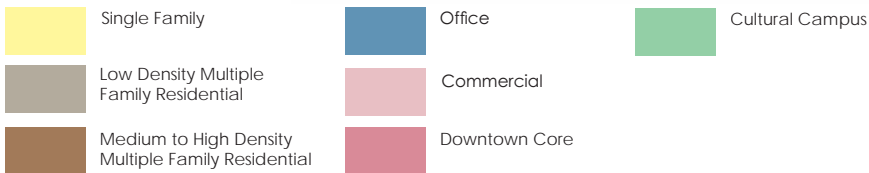
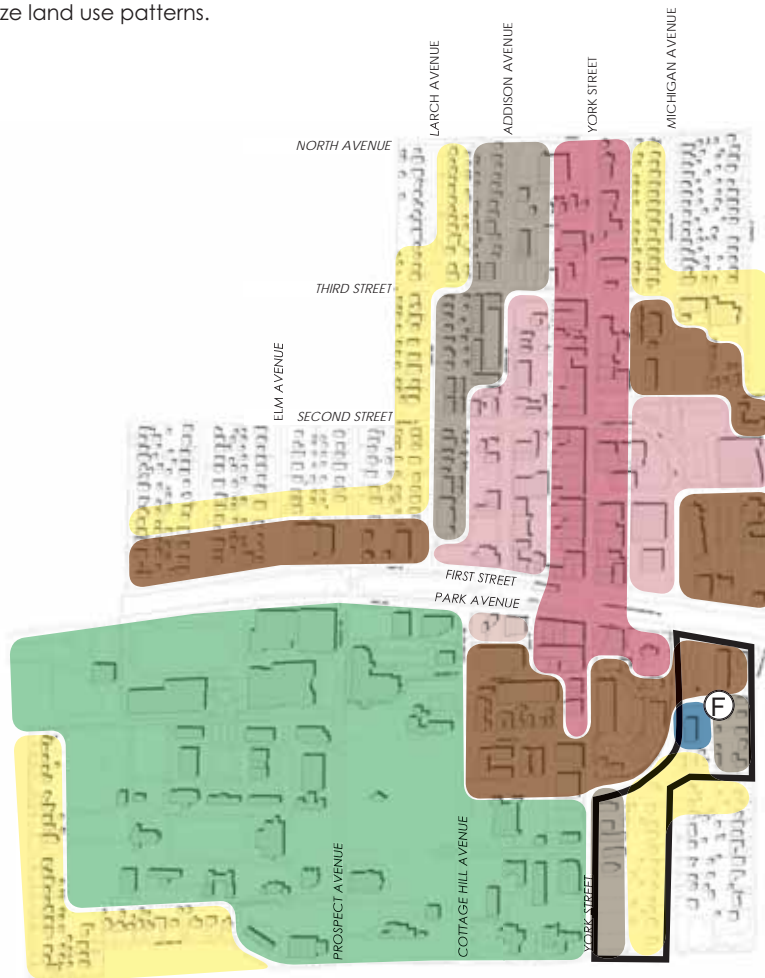


FIGURE 30

SUBAREA F, IDENTIFICATION MAP

South Robert Palmer Drive

Situated at the southeast corner of the Downtown, Subarea F is comprised of institutional, office, and residential land uses. Portions of the frontage along Robert Palmer Drive are single family in character, presenting challenges to stabilize land use patterns.



SUBAREA F, FRAMEWORK PLAN

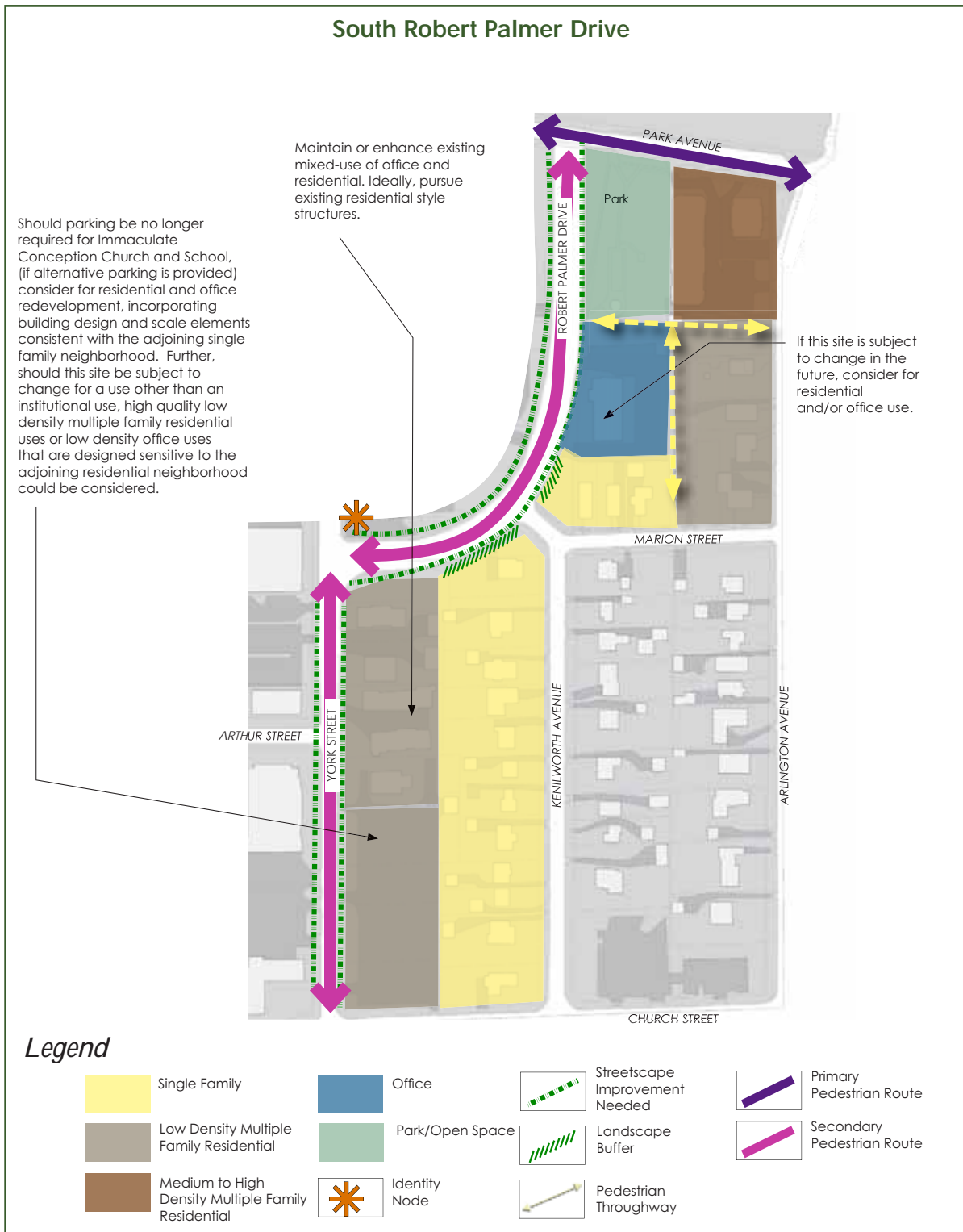
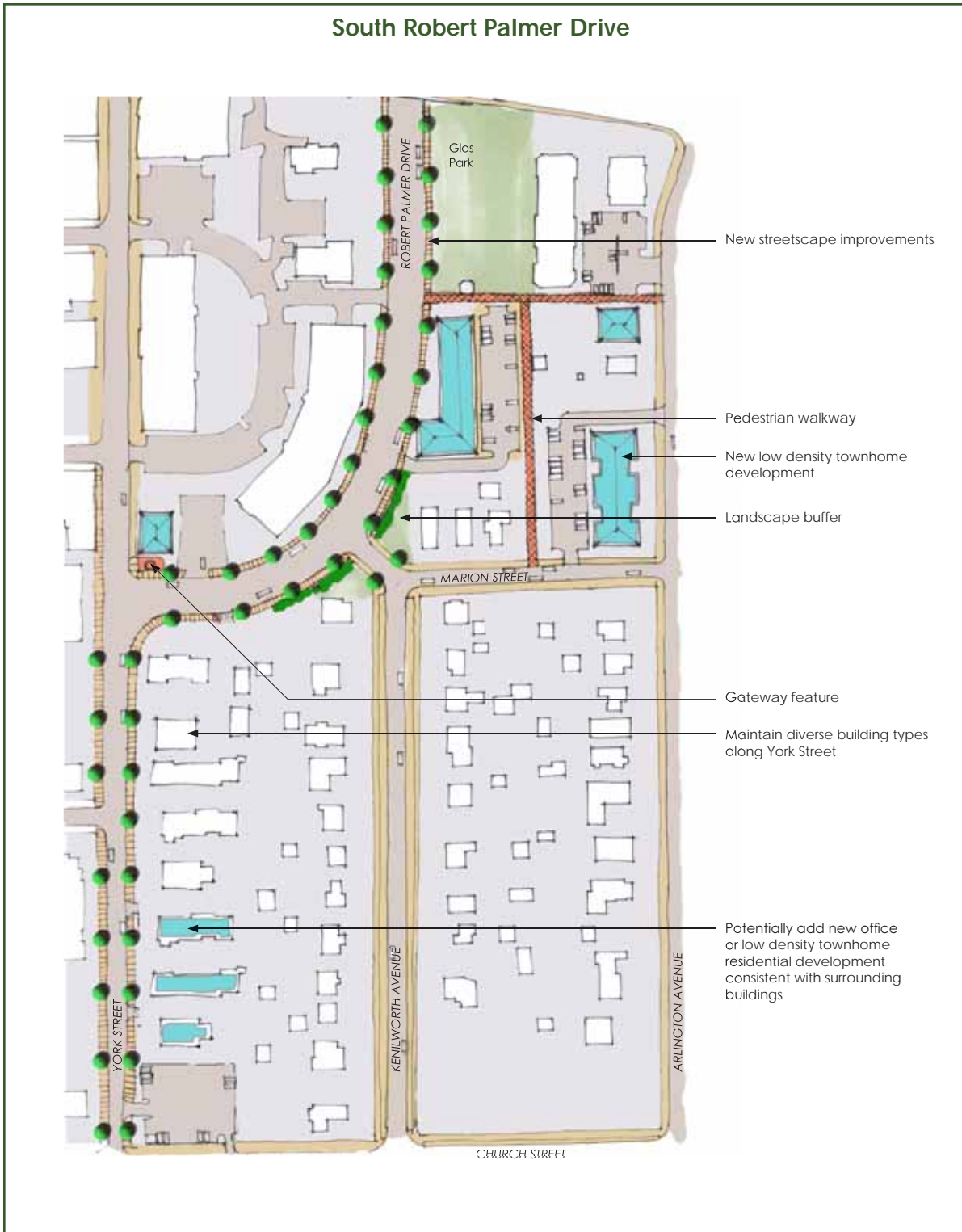


FIGURE 32

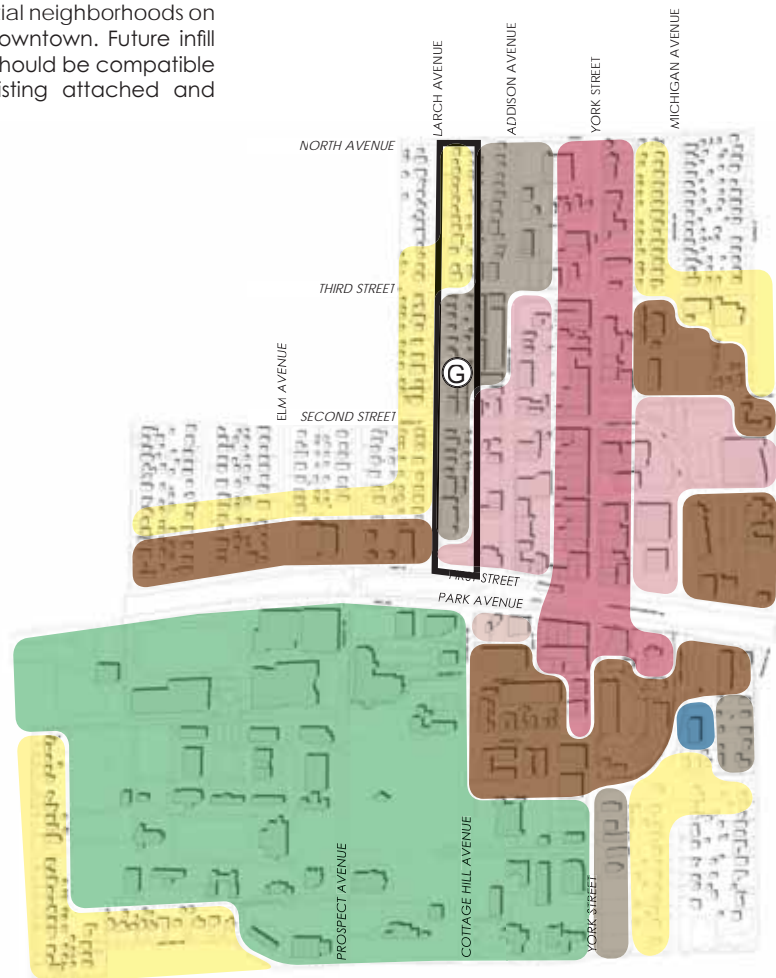
SUBAREA F, ILLUSTRATIVE DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT



SUBAREA G, IDENTIFICATION MAP

Larch Avenue

Larch Avenue is predominantly residential in character. It includes a variety of single family attached and detached dwellings, as well as multiple family residential units. It marks an important transition between the residential neighborhoods on the northwest side and the Downtown. Future infill development within this area should be compatible in scale and intensity of existing attached and multiple family residential uses.

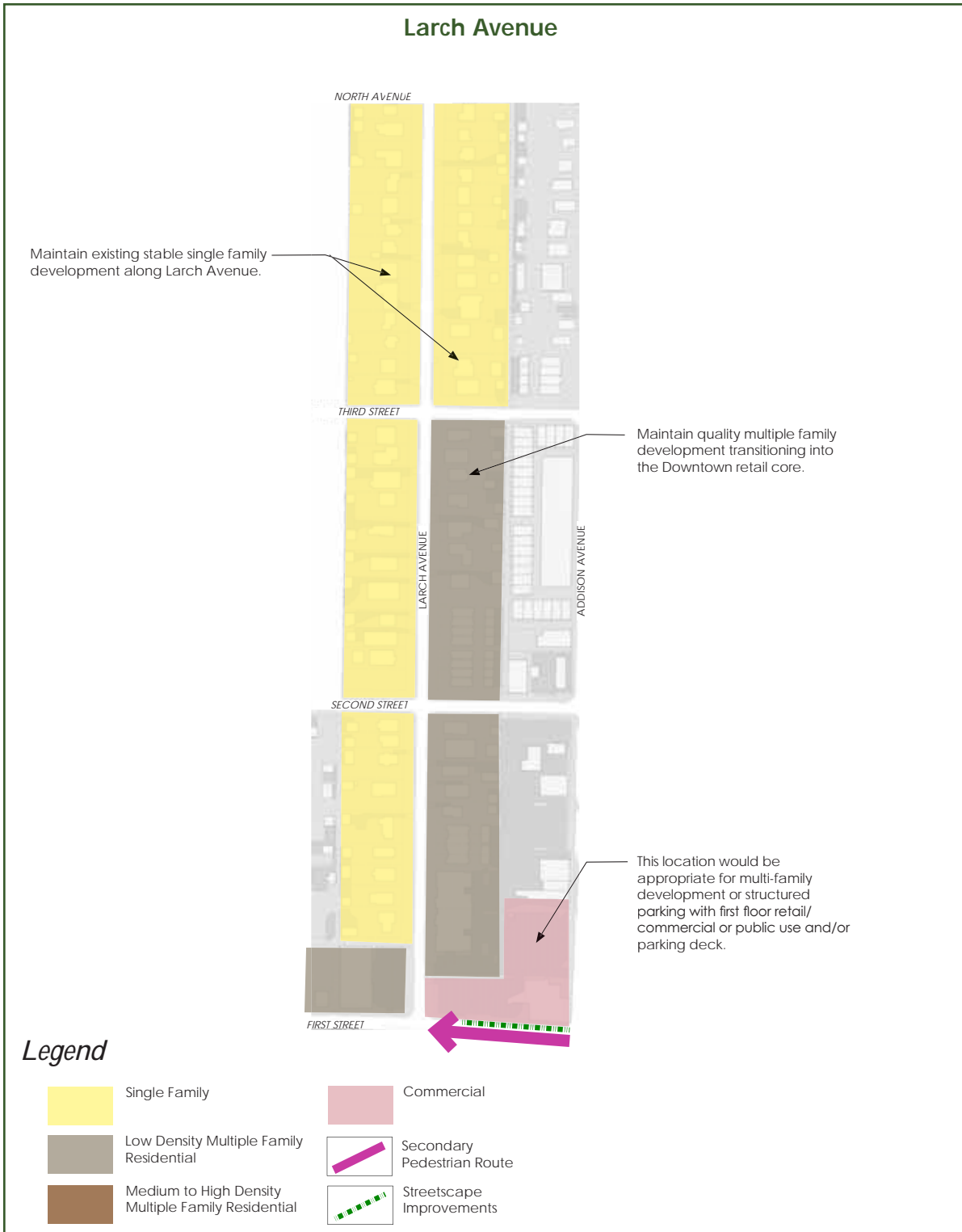


- Single Family
- Low Density Multiple Family Residential
- Medium to High Density Multiple Family Residential
- Office
- Commercial
- Downtown Core
- Cultural Campus



FIGURE 34

SUBAREA G, FRAMEWORK PLAN



SUBAREA G, ILLUSTRATIVE DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT

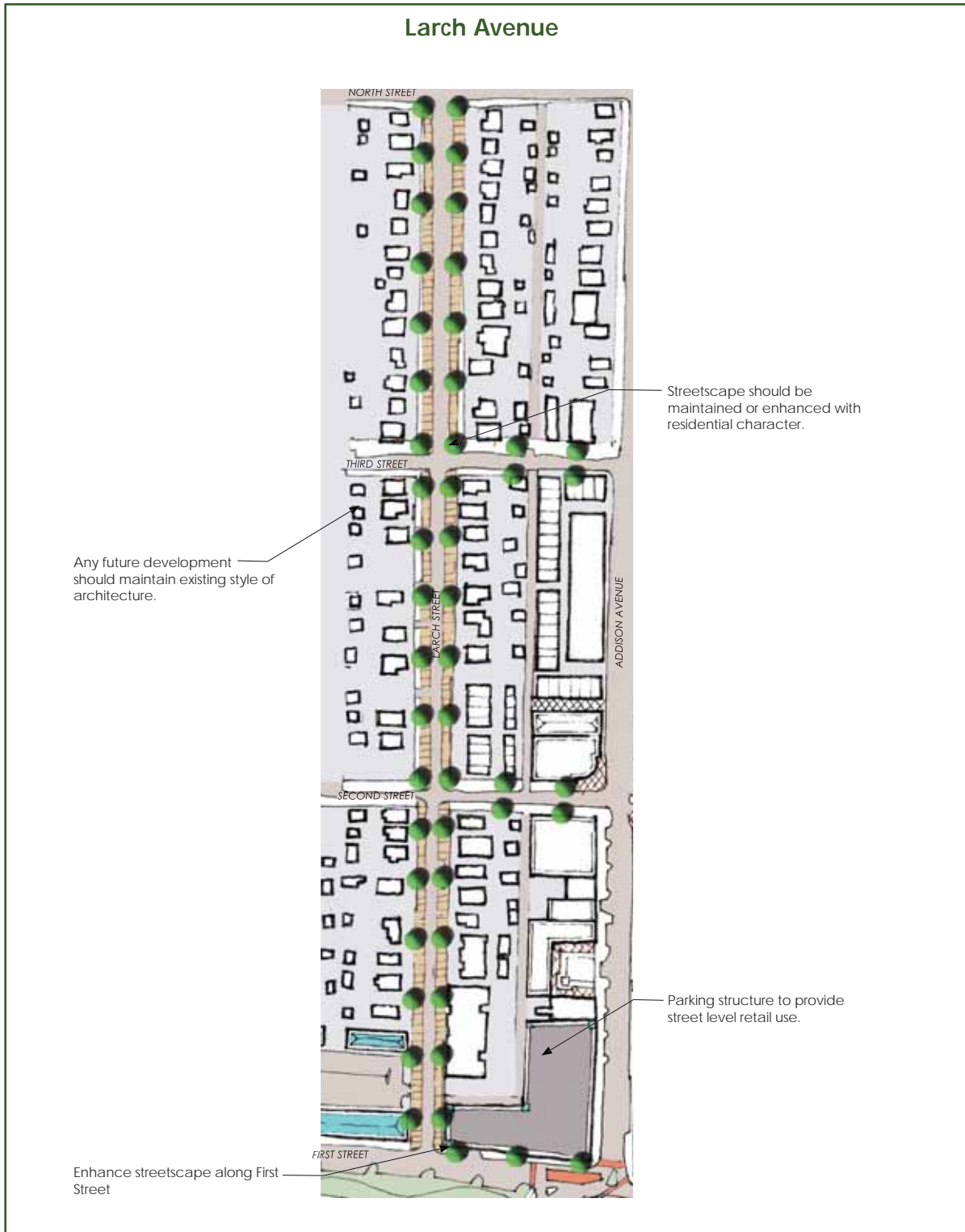
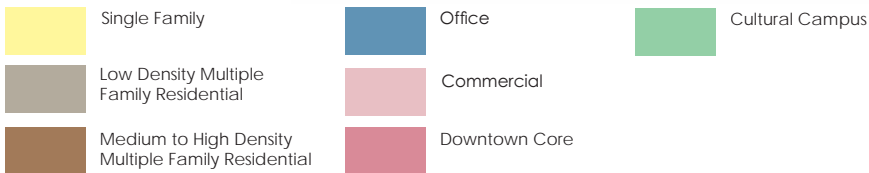
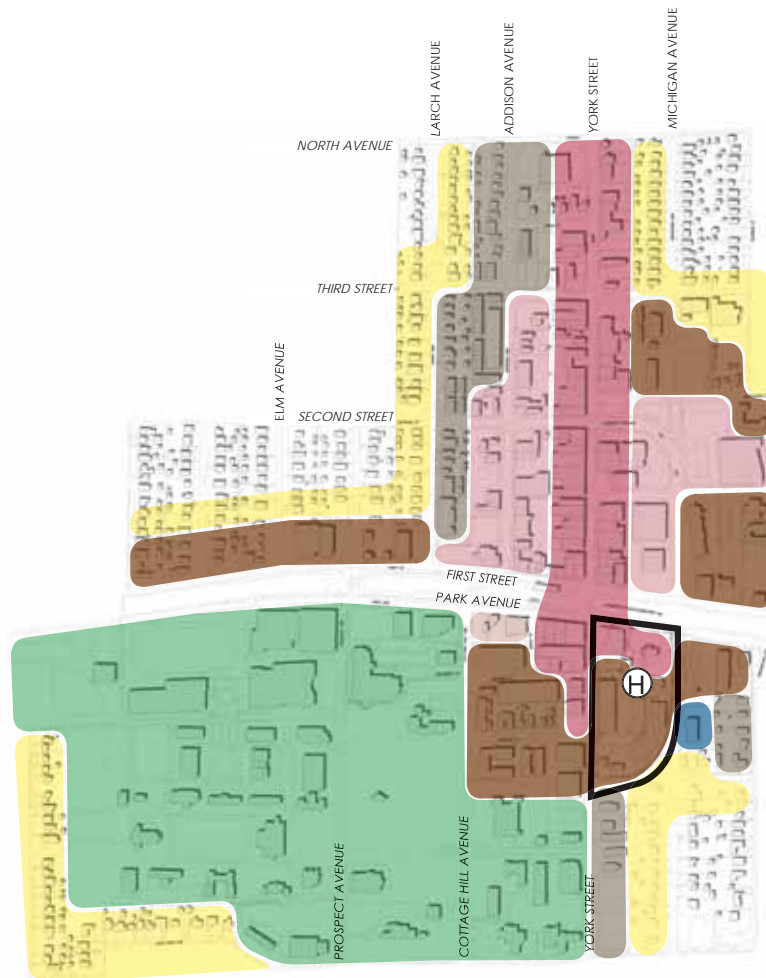


FIGURE 36

SUBAREA H, IDENTIFICATION MAP

Crescent Court Block

This subarea has recently been subject to a major redevelopment program emphasizing residential land uses. Yet, portions of the study area remain subject to change in the future and should be considered as part of the Plan.



SUBAREA H, FRAMEWORK PLAN

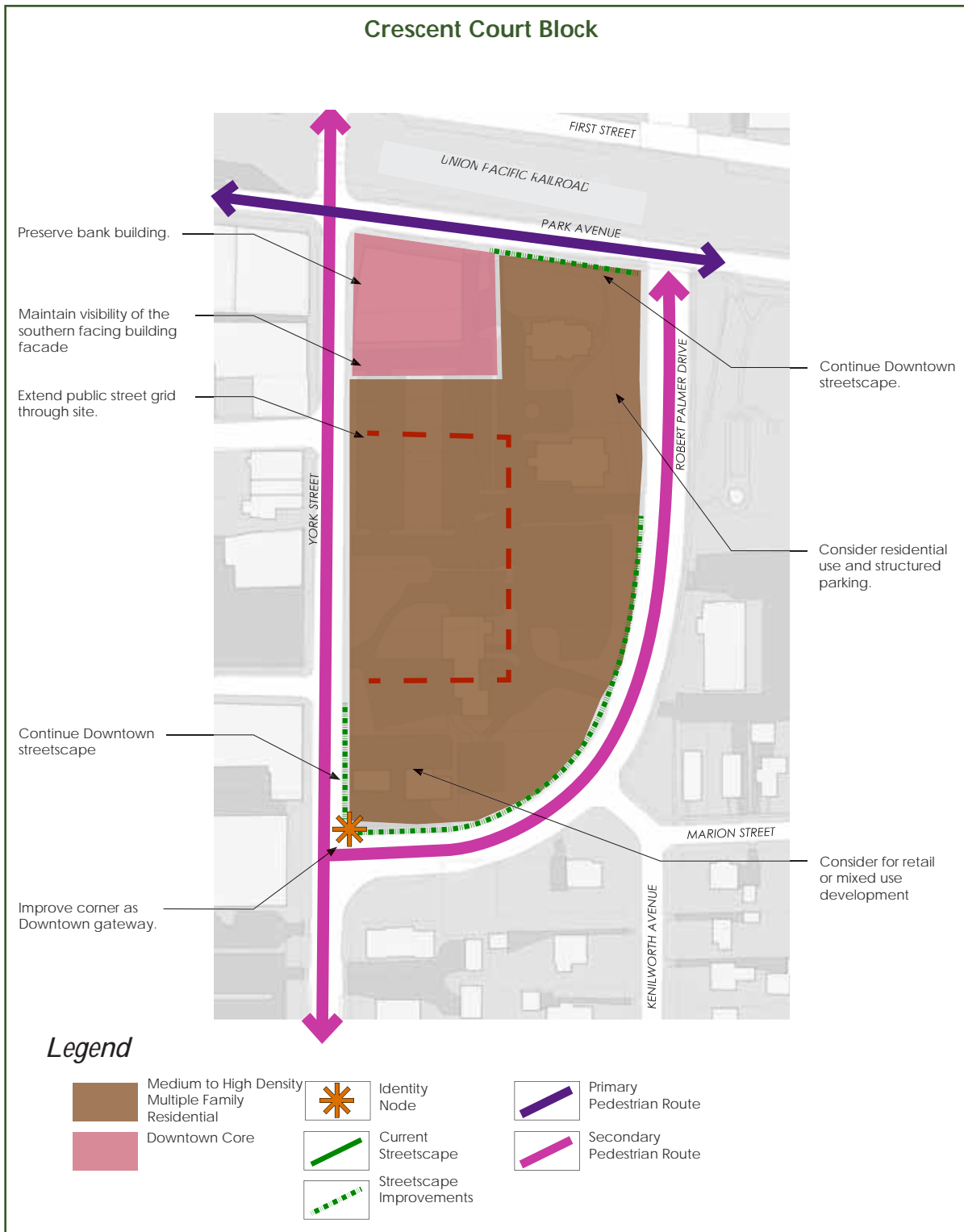


FIGURE 38

SUBAREA H, ILLUSTRATIVE DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT



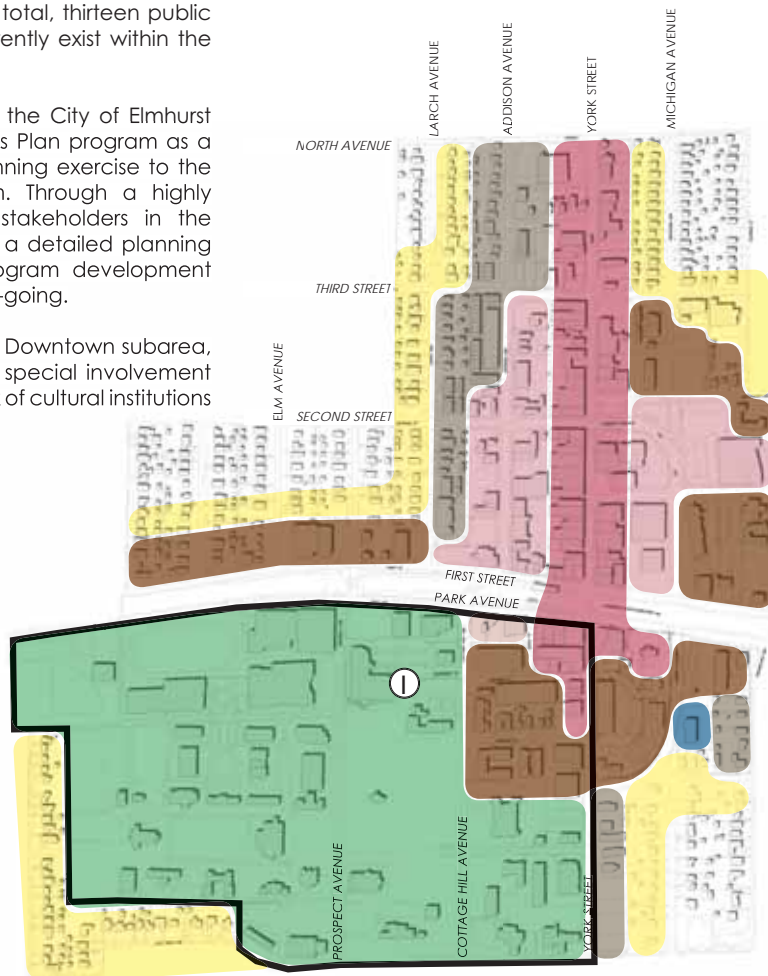
SUBAREA I, IDENTIFICATION MAP








Cultural Campus

The Cultural Campus is located south of the Union Pacific Railroad Corridor and east of York Street. It consists of several key public and civic uses in the City including the Elmhurst Public Library, Wilder Park, and Elmhurst College. In total, thirteen public and institutional agencies currently exist within the area.

Due to its scale and diversity, the City of Elmhurst launched the Cultural Campus Plan program as a related, but independent planning exercise to the Downtown planning program. Through a highly interactive process with all stakeholders in the area for a four month period, a detailed planning program was developed. Program development and implementation will be on-going.

The cultural campus remains a Downtown subarea, but will continue to include a special involvement program suited to its unique mix of cultural institutions in the future.



- | | | |
|--|---|---|
|  Single Family |  Office |  Cultural Campus |
|  Low Density Multiple Family Residential |  Commercial | |
|  Medium to High Density Multiple Family Residential |  Downtown Core | |



SUBAREA I - THE CULTURAL CAMPUS PLAN

Introduction: The Elmhurst Cultural Campus Collaborative

Purpose of the Collaborative and Role in the Downtown Planning Process:

The Elmhurst Cultural Campus Collaborative was created in 2004 as a tool to actively plan for the improvement and design of the City's unique cultural campus area in the southwest sector of Downtown Elmhurst. This area contains many of the City's fine cultural, recreational, and educational facilities and services uniquely organized around Wilder Park. A variety of improvement efforts are planned or underway in the area.

The intent of the Collaborative is to coordinate individual agency programs for the benefit of the area as a whole. Representatives from each of these agencies form the "Cultural Campus Collaborative Steering Committee." Organizations and agencies which provide representation on the Cultural Collaborative Campus Steering Committee include: Elmhurst Public Library, Lizzadro Museum, Elmhurst College, Elmhurst Park District, Elmhurst Art Museum, Elmhurst Historical Museum, Elmhurst Zoning and Planning Commission, Elmhurst City Council, School District 205, the YMCA, the U.S. Post Office, First United Methodist Church, Immaculate Conception Church, St. Peters United Church of Christ, and Elmhurst Masonic Lodge 941. Other participants include the Elmhurst City Centre and the Elmhurst Chamber of Commerce.

The greater Wilder Park area of Elmhurst is a truly unique location within the greater metropolitan area due to its unique concentration of important public and institutional uses. With the support and assistance of the City of Elmhurst, the purpose of the Collaborative is to not only maintain, but also to improve and enhance the character and quality of the area. In recent years, several major improvements have been made in the area; most recently the new Elmhurst Public Library. A variety of institutions are making plans to improve facilities and services in the years ahead. The Collaborative provides an important venue for all interested organizations in the campus area to share information, and work together on solving mutual concerns while clearly allowing each agency to pursue its own mission. In short, participating

organizations understand that improvement possibilities will be far more efficient and effective through mutual collaboration of interests.

There are several key issues and concerns of common interest addressed in the planning effort. First, the provision for adequate future off-street parking is a critical concern. As organizations make plans for improvement and expansion, it will be important that citizens and visitors alike are offered adequate parking facilities in the campus area. Second, maintaining and enhancing the unique collection of museums, institutions and educational facilities within the campus area is a fundamental need directly related to the future success of the area. Finally, connections to and from the campus area whether by vehicle, bicycle, or foot, play an important role in maintaining a high level of safe and efficient access to the campus. A strong physical relationship to Downtown Elmhurst is an important objective of campus connectivity.

With the assistance from the City of Elmhurst and its consultants, the Steering Committee has developed improvement ideas for the greater campus area that address common issues and opportunities. To the extent practical, Steering Committee membership has shared information on current service and operational issues, and short- and long-term improvement plans that will affect the development and use of the Campus in the future. The Steering Committee understands the interdependence among agencies involved, and constraints of space within the Campus area.

This planning effort was not intended to arrive at a single plan or improvement strategy for the Campus. Rather, by consensus of the Steering Committee as a whole, it will provide a “collection” of plausible ideas and opportunities for future improvement to the campus area. Many of these ideas are “actionable”. When opportunities for collaboration arise, their potential for implementation can be directly explored. Through mutual interest and cooperation, the Cultural Campus Collaborative can have significant impact on sustaining the quality and character of the greater campus area.

The Cultural Campus

The Elmhurst Cultural Campus Collaborative Concept Plan presents a framework for coordinating public improvement initiatives within the Campus area. While service providers within the campus area will each continue to pursue their respective missions and service goals, the collaborative plan provides a



framework for decision making for all agencies.

Information was requested from each Collaborative member to understand future space needs. Information received included the following:

- **Elmhurst Art Museum** has obtained additional parking spaces, doubling its previous parking capacity. The museum has discussed an expansion to their facility as a long term planning goal. A significant parking expansion was accomplished in 2005.
- **Elmhurst Public Library** has obtained an additional 50 parking spaces, to be added to its previous capacity. Several meeting rooms within the facility have not been utilized to their full potential due to this parking deficit.
- **The Elmhurst YMCA** seeks an additional 50 parking spaces to meet a deficit of parking during special events. The YMCA is considering various improvements to its facility including the possibility of enclosing the outdoor ice skating rink for additional year round program space.
- **Elmhurst College** provided its current campus master plan for consideration. This phased program includes a variety of building and open space improvements, and relocation of recreation fields. The college is reviewing possible updates to its master plan, and may consider various alternatives for future growth based on the Plan as part of its ongoing planning process.
- **The Elmhurst Park District** is currently working through a public process to identify improvements to Wilder Park. The District is discussing alternative adaptive re-use improvements to Wilder mansion, as well as upgrades to other park facilities as part of its ongoing planning process.

Issues and Opportunities

The Elmhurst Cultural Campus maintains a number of local, regional, and national attractions. These attractions make the campus area a major destination at many levels. While each of these destinations somewhat relate to Wilder Park as a “center piece” for the campus, the physical elements of these relationships can be improved. Among elements, surface parking, sidewalks, and campus “wayfinding” can be significantly enhanced. These improvements should be undertaken in a consistent and coordinated manner.

Civic and Institutional Land Use

There is significant civic and institutional activity within the Campus. Key uses within the Campus area are briefly identified below.

1. **Elmhurst Public Library** – Drawing primarily from the greater Elmhurst community, the Library is a major destination. It provides a variety of programming and activity opportunities to the community.
2. **Elmhurst Art Museum** - Few communities can claim such a resource as the Art Museum. The quality of museum programming and the historic significance of the museum space create an important attraction for the greater Chicago region.
3. **Wilder Park and Wilder Park Conservatory** – Owned and managed by the Elmhurst Park District, this large open space provides community activity areas and brings nature to the City. Wilder Park is widely recognized as one of Chicago’s most desirable urban parks.
4. **Lizzadro Museum of Lapidary Arts** – This is the only museum exclusively devoted to lapidary arts in the United States.
5. **Elmhurst Park District/Wilder Mansion** - reflects an important structure within Wilder Park. Wilder Mansion was the previous home to the Elmhurst Public Library.
6. **Downtown Metra Station** – While not an attraction unto its own, the station does provide an important transit/transportation connection to both the Downtown and the Campus. As such, maintaining pedestrian connections to and from the campus to this facility is important.
7. **YMCA** – This facility is an important community recreation asset, and will continue to be a major attraction with the variety of events and activities it offers.
8. **Elmhurst College** – The College is a major regional draw and currently serves 2,920 students. While largely a commuter campus today, the College plans to add additional student housing in the future, as well as a new performing arts center and other publicly oriented spaces. Plans also suggest possible structured parking, although the ultimate location and number



of spaces have yet to be defined. These improvements will not only serve to facilitate the mission of the College, but will provide and extend new cultural and entertainment venues to the City.

9. Elmhurst Post Office – The U.S. Post Office represents a typical Downtown use. However, due to its location, the sorting and distribution operations have been a growing issue for the community as it impedes an enhanced physical connection between the campus and the core of the Downtown, and is also a source of traffic congestion. While the U.S Postal Service has not been presented with, or endorsed any type of relocation plan, the possibility of moving the Elmhurst Post Office to a location more compatible with its operations should be actively pursued by City leadership.

10. First United Methodist Church, Immaculate Conception Church, St. Peter’s United Church of Christ, and Immaculate Conception High School and Grade School – These institutions provide a stable draw of city residents to the area. They also tie into the cultural character of Wilder Park.

11. Hawthorne School – The Hawthorne School occupies a key activity area along the eastern edge of the Campus. As a high activity area involving the community’s youth, continued safety of students for traffic access, circulation and off-street parking in the area is an important issue on the Plan.

A key design consideration is how the Cultural Campus relates to the core of Downtown Elmhurst to the north. The Union Pacific Railroad corridor west of the station prohibits easy pedestrian access to areas north and south of the railroad. The railroad does not provide a defined area for pedestrian traffic to cross between First Street and Park Avenue. The scale of commuter parking and lack of design enhancements create a visual barrier along the corridor. Improvements are needed to enhance pedestrian security and comfort at key crossings.

Finally, while not currently located within the Cultural Campus, the City should give consideration to whether the Elmhurst Historical Museum and/or Elmhurst Visitors Center might be located within the Campus. The City completed a strategic planning assessment regarding community preferences in the location of the Elmhurst Historical Museum. Key findings suggest that among the options, the Wilder Mansion would be a preferred location for the Museum. If the site should prove infeasible, the next preference is to locate in

a new building within the Cultural Campus area.

Commercial Land Use

Commercial uses are located along Park Avenue, First Street, and York Street. Limited commercial and retail uses are located along First and Park. Commercial uses could compliment the major destinations that occur in the Campus area, such as catering to the daytime college population.

Residential Land Use

The residential environment within and surrounding the Cultural Campus area is clearly one of the strongest assets of the area. It will be important to ensure that any new improvements within the campus are compatible with the surrounding neighborhood.

Parking

Surface parking is predominant in this area. On street parking is allowed throughout most of the area. Structured parking consisting of 311 parking spaces is located south of the intersection of Adell and Adelaide. Approximately 251 parking spaces are devoted to commuters and 60 parking spaces are devoted to general public use. The Cultural Campus has less than adequate parking. This is evident from the needs expressed by those agencies responding to the facilities questionnaire.

Cultural Campus Area Planning Principles

To guide the development of concepts and recommendations, several Planning Principles for the Campus area have been prepared. These principles are central to future activities of the Cultural Campus Collaborative. While the expression of the physical design concepts to follow may change over time, the principles expressed below reflect key community values against which all projects should be judged.

1. Maintain a Concept Framework Plan for the Cultural Campus

The City of Elmhurst has many quality cultural amenities in and around the Campus. By unifying these amenities through appropriate urban design features and amenities, stronger physical integration of institutions and destinations with one another can be achieved. This will develop a visual and spatial relationship that addresses and emphasizes the unique image and character



of the Campus area.

2. Relate the Cultural Campus to Downtown Elmhurst

Currently, Downtown Elmhurst and the Cultural Campus area are “disconnected” physically and visually by the Union Pacific Railroad corridor. More effectively linking north-south bicycle and pedestrian access will help further integrate the two activity centers. This physical continuity is essential if the Cultural Campus is to benefit from its proximity to the core of the central business district. Clear pedestrian corridors should be defined at Cottage Hill and Prospect Avenues.

3. Protect and Enhance Wilder Park Open Space

While the ultimate use and development of Wilder Park is the responsibility of the Elmhurst Park District, the preservation of this open space is a high priority to the community as a whole, and is recognized by the Collaborative. It will be important to maintain views to the park from Park Avenue in the future.

4. Develop a “System” of Off-Street Parking to Meet Campus Needs

A “system” of off-street parking should be developed for the campus area that encourages the joint and shared use of parking facilities to maximize public access and convenience within the Campus. The Collaborative recognizes the need for additional parking within the Campus. This system of parking could include both surface and structured off-street parking facilities (above and below grade) to reasonably minimize land consumption for parking purposes. Yet, although the need to provide additional parking is important, the development of new facilities should not negatively impact the visual quality of Wilder Park or the Campus in general.

5. Enhance Bicycle and Pedestrian Connections Within and Around the Campus

Bicycle and pedestrian connections within and around the campus are important to enhance non-motorized accessibility in the area and maximize use of off-street parking facilities. Access corridors should be designed to provide safe and convenient access for all anticipated campus users. Separation of vehicle traffic from bicycle and pedestrian traffic should be a priority.

6. Establish a Unique Wayfinding System for the Campus

An enhanced signage and wayfinding program can help quickly orient citi-

zens and visitors to Campus features and amenities. It can provide directory guidance to pedestrians and motorists alike, and aid in discouraging unwarranted access through surrounding neighborhoods.

7. Provide for Coordination of Implementation Activities

Follow-up and implementation of the concept plans should occur on a coordinated basis among all interested agencies. Where new initiatives and major improvements are proposed, the Cultural Campus Collaborative Steering Committee should meet to understand and coordinate these activities.

Cultural Campus Concept Plan Alternatives

The three alternative concept plans in the following pages illustrate ways in which the Campus can be conserved and improved in the future. The concept plans build upon the planning principles discussed above, and serve to illustrate ways in which improvements can be made to the Campus consistent with the Collaborative's intentions. Not all possible alternatives have been prepared, nor do they reflect any particular community preference. Rather, they serve as interpretive ideas of the principles to generate dialogue and consensus among Collaborative members and the greater Elmhurst community.

Campus Alternative A – Current Facilities Enhancement

Functional Land Use

In this alternative, institutional and civic activities have been maintained in their current locations. Retail uses have been incorporated along Park Avenue, possibly serving Downtown shoppers and Elmhurst College (Figure 40).

Buildings and Development

Civic and Institutional Land Uses

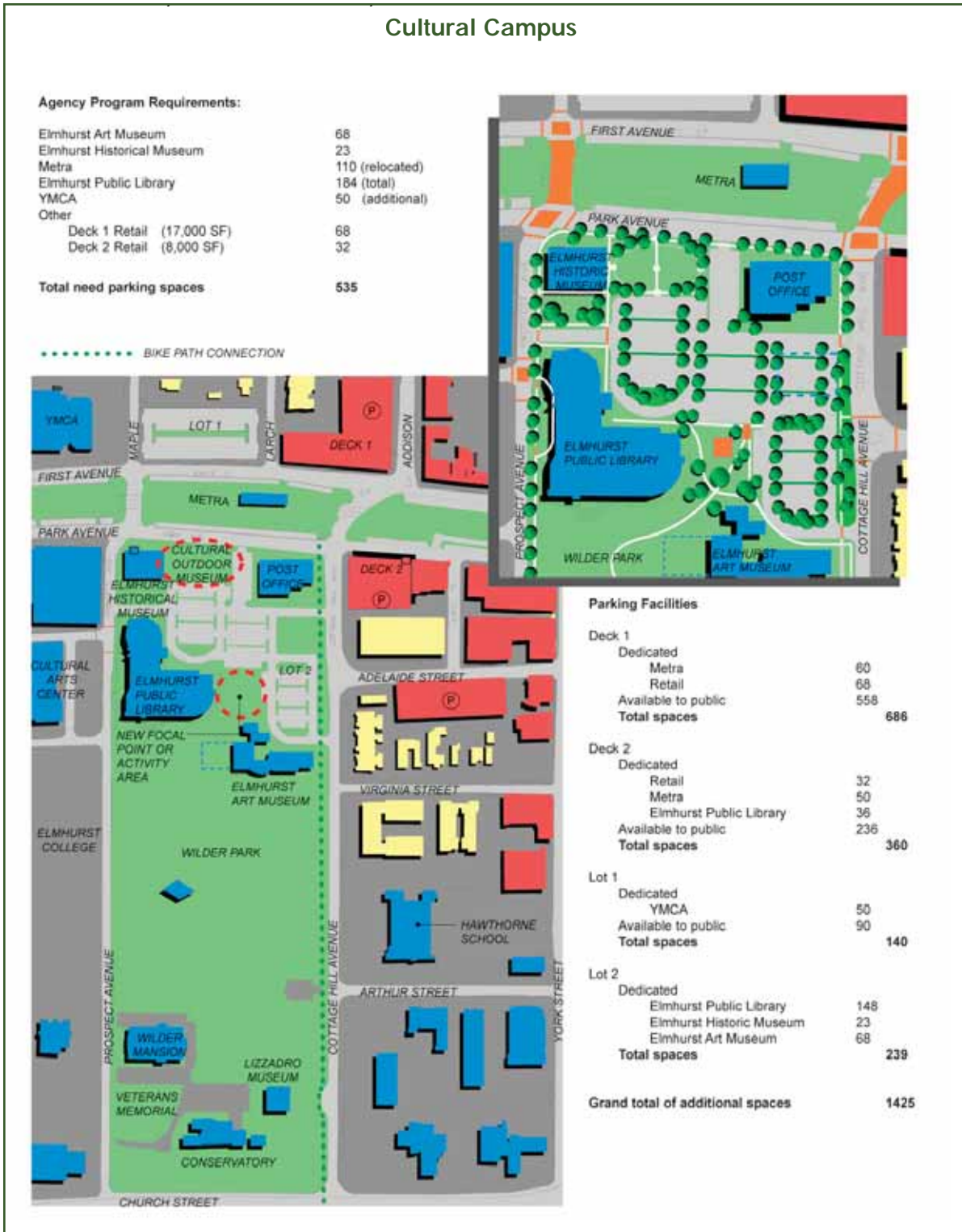
It may be possible to site a new structure on the southeast corner of Park and Prospect Avenues to serve as a new location for the historic museum.

At this time, it is not expected that the Elmhurst Post Office would consider moving its sorting and distribution facilities out of the Downtown. Thus, the Post Office continues to occupy the southwest corner of Park and Cottage



FIGURE 40

SUBAREA I, ALTERNATIVE A: CURRENT FACILITIES ENHANCEMENT



Hill Avenues. However, if in the future postal operations are relocated, the Post Office building could be re-used either as open space or possibly combined with structured off-street parking.

Retail and Commercial Land Uses

Approximately 25,000 square feet of commercial use is proposed north of Wilder Park. These uses would be located in two structured parking facilities at the street level. Deck 1 will add nearly 17,000 square feet of retail along First and Addison Avenue. Deck 2 would add nearly 8,000 square feet of retail along Park Avenue. Retail uses at this location recognize the role of Park Avenue as a shopping street. They also provide a commercial activity connection to the Downtown along Cottage Hill and Addison Avenue.

Parking

Structured parking with street level retail could replace the building on the northwest corner of Addison Avenue and First Street. This structure would accommodate parking demand for new retail uses, as well as provide for parking required within the Greater Downtown to the north.

As discussed above, in this scenario, a second parking structure with street level retail would replace several buildings and surface parking on the southeast corner of Park Avenue and Cottage Hill Avenue. This facility will accommodate parking requirements for retail uses to the north along Addison Street, displaced Metra parking as a result of improvements along the railroad corridor, and needed parking for the Elmhurst Public Library and the Elmhurst Art Museum.

In all cases, the exterior “skin” of proposed parking structures, along with any structural elements, should be designed as a positive aesthetic contribution to the appearance of the Campus area. The type of exterior materials should be consistent and architecturally integrated with surrounding structures. The design process should involve interaction and commentary from the City and Cultural Campus partners.

A surface parking lot is suggested east of Maple Avenue along First Street to accommodate the YMCA and any additional parking for the Downtown area. In the future, this lot could support structured parking and potentially retail shops at the street level of the garage.



Open Space

An open space has been identified along Park Avenue on the north to extend open space to the street, and more formally announce arrival to the Campus. This scenario anticipates improving the open space in a more formal fashion, such as an interpretive trail illustrating the history of buildings and properties within the campus area.

As discussed in the Framework and Analysis Plans, Metra parking would be relocated and enhanced and the railroad right-of-way enhanced with special landscape treatment. This will improve the views along First Street and Park Avenue. It will help establish the Metra corridor as a visual amenity.

A new focal point or activity area could be added between the Library and the Art Museum. This would act as an entryway feature to Wilder Park.

Utility Facilities

In general, exposed overhead utilities such as electrical, telephone and related transmission lines should be buried underground wherever feasible. While placing utilities below ground can be very expensive, the Collaborative is committed to financially feasible solutions to enhance the environmental and visual quality of the Campus area.

Commuter Station Facilities

In this scenario, the Elmhurst Metra station has been moved one block west between Cottage Hill and Prospect Avenues. The benefit of moving the station west would be to align it more closely with future structured parking that would serve the station, and to move intensive pedestrian activities further west of York Street.

Circulation and Access

Working with the Park District and its current plan, the perimeter of Wilder Park could be enhanced and further defined by lighting, benches, landscaping, etc. Crosswalks could include special paving to define pedestrian crossings and entrances into the park.

Enhancements to the Metra crossings at Cottage Hill Avenue and Prospect Avenue are also desirable. Special paving would define zones for pedestrian and vehicular traffic. Additional enhancements would be provided across the railroad right-of-way at street crossings to create a safer pedestrian crossing

environment.

A multi-use path along Cottage Hill Avenue could provide a connection to the regional bicycle path south of the City. This improvement will reinforce a connection with the Wilder Park Conservatory and gardens on the south side.

Campus Alternative B – Retail Emphasis

Functional Land Use

This alternative emphasizes retail land use development along the Park Avenue corridor. It also introduces several other institutional and parking improvement options (Figure 41).

Building and Development

Civic and Institutional Land Uses

In this scenario, it is assumed that the Park District will consider relocating its administrative offices to another location. Wilder Mansion could be renovated to accommodate other public facilities as may be allowed.

This scenario assumes the Post Office can be relocated. While postal services should remain in the Downtown, package sorting and distribution functions should occur elsewhere.

Open Space

This alternative is similar to Alternative A except that there is less recommended open space along the Park Avenue frontage. While the scenario extends the retail shopping street along this frontage of Park Avenue, it further obscures and blocks views and vistas to Wilder Park to the south. In a sense, it “hides” the park from view along the railroad corridor.

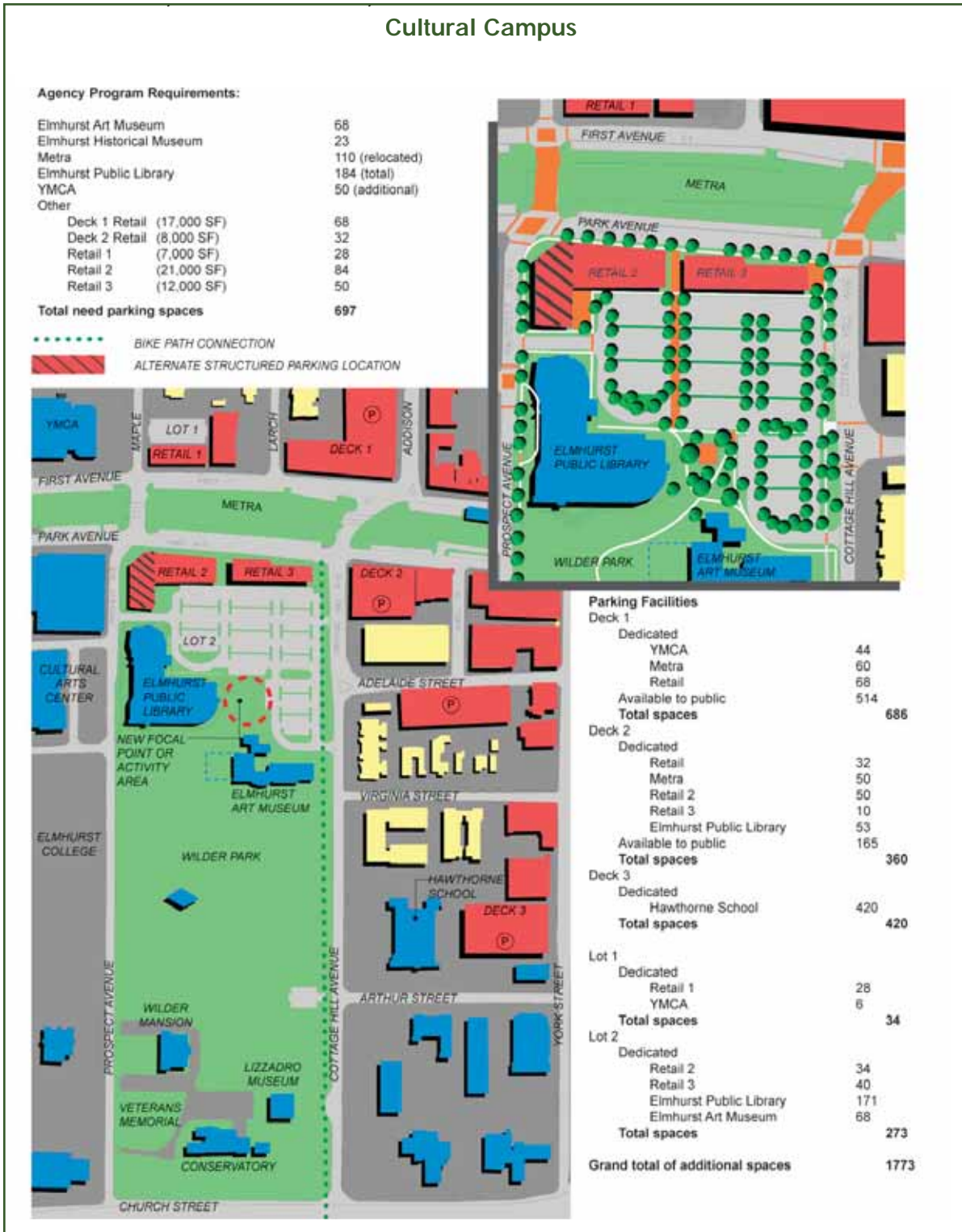
Retail and Commercial Land Uses

Approximately 33,000 square feet of retail use has been suggested along Park Avenue between Cottage Hill and Prospect Avenues to extend the retail “street wall” into the campus area close to Elmhurst College. Retail uses are also suggested to be developed east of the YMCA along First Street. The intent is to further integrate the Campus into the Downtown through retail development connections.



FIGURE 41

SUBAREA I, ALTERNATIVE B: RETAIL EMPHASIS



Circulation and Access

Working with the Park District, the perimeter of Wilder Park could be enhanced to include sidewalks and lighting and define the perimeter of the Park. Crosswalks should include special paving to define pedestrian crossing and entrances into the park.

Similar to Alternative A, enhancements will need to occur at the Metra crossings for Cottage Hill Avenue and Prospect Avenue. Special paving would define zones for pedestrian and vehicular traffic. Additional enhancements will be provided to encourage the Metra crossing as a Campus entrance and promote pedestrian traffic between the downtown and Cultural Campus.

Parking

In Alternative B, additional parking (74 spaces) is provided behind the retail frontage on Park Avenue to serve new retail development. This parking could be shared during off-peak hours with surrounding institutional uses. Further, additional parking for new retail uses along the north side of First Street is provided to serve this new development.

Also in this scenario, a parking structure of approximately 420 parking spaces is suggested east of Hawthorne School fronting York Street. Institutional uses in this area are deficient parking and a structure would create the opportunity for additional open space. Currently, Immaculate Conception School makes play space available through the temporary closure of Arthur Street during recess. Either above-grade or below-grade parking could be considered for the area east of Hawthorne School. Such a structure, if below-ground, could provide open recreation space for Immaculate Conception and Hawthorne Schools, free adjacent streets for vehicle circulation, and contribute to more effective use of ground level land area. However, the feasibility of either approach would be subject to funding availability.

The upper floors of the retail building at the southeast corner of Park and Prospect Avenues might be used for structured parking to serve retail and Library and related uses.

In other respects, parking in this alternative is similar to Alternative A.



Campus Alternative C – Wilder Park Gateway

Functional Land Use

In Alternative C, the emphasis is on removing buildings and structures along the south side of Park Avenue, opening the vista to institutional uses and Wilder Park as much as practical (Figure 42).

Buildings and Development

Civic and Institutional Land Uses

In this alternative the Post Office has been moved. Again, this is a long-term objective of the City and will likely take a period of time to accomplish. It may be possible to retain and incorporate aesthetically pleasing elements of the original structure as part of the new park area. The City, working with the Park District, might consider moving the Historical Museum to the Wilder Mansion.

Open Space

The key new proposal in this alternative is opening the views to Wilder Park from Park Avenue. This is accomplished by eliminating all buildings fronting the street and establishing a large open space to the front of the campus. This area could be improved in many ways. An interpretive park is one concept that could relate historical facts about the campus area to the visiting public.

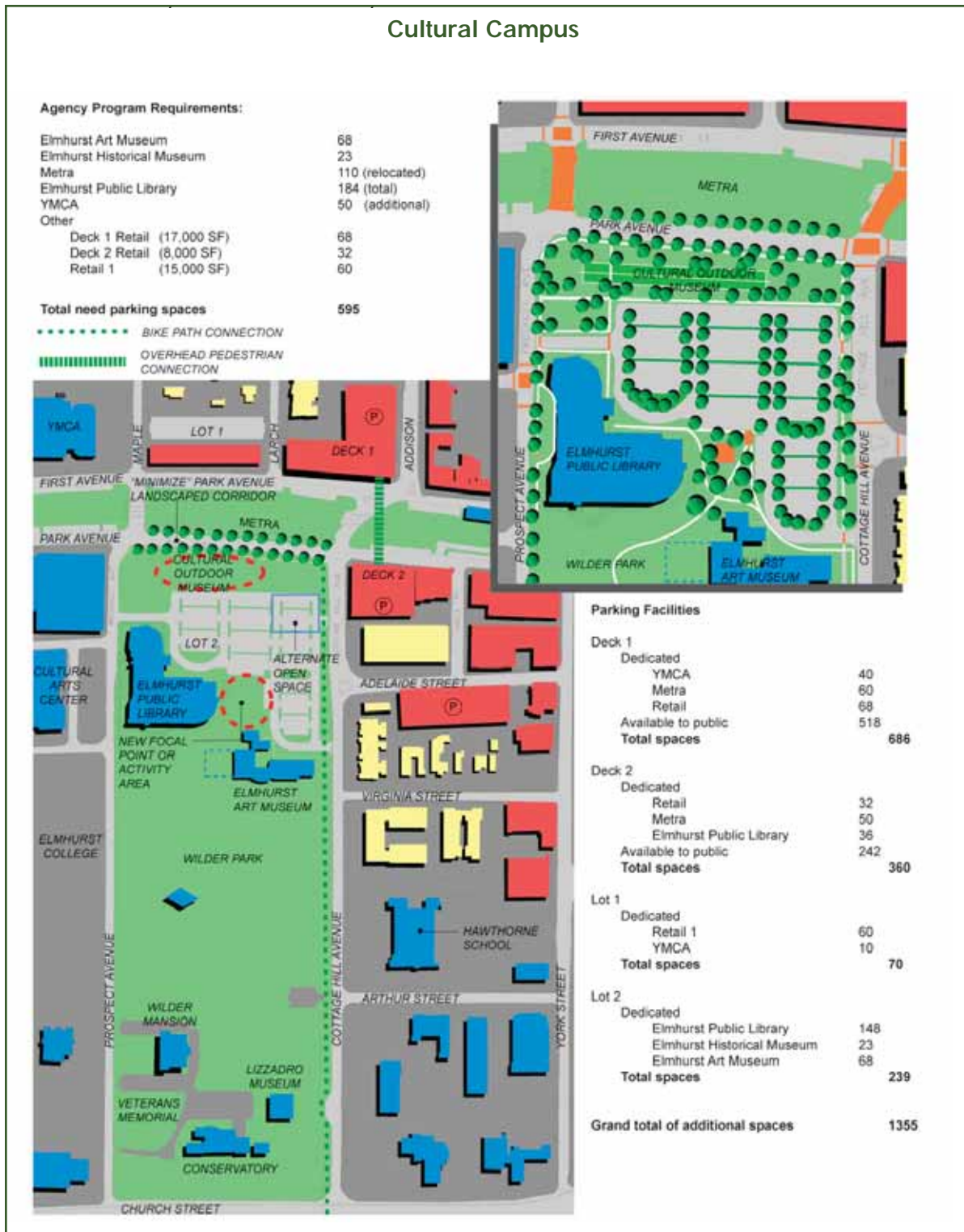
Retail and Commercial Land Uses

This alternative is similar to Alternative A, however the full frontage of First Street between Maple and Larch Avenues is devoted to new retail uses. The area would accommodate approximately 15,000 square feet of new commercial or retail use.

Circulation and Access

This alternative seeks to redesign Park Avenue between Cottage Hill and Prospect Avenues to eliminate on-street parking and minimize the width of the street. Such an improvement will help emphasize the open space and pedestrian character of the area. While the roadway is required to provide necessary vehicular circulation, minimizing roadway improvements will serve as a visual and functional queue of the presence of a key pedestrian zone.

SUBAREA I, ALTERNATIVE C: WILDER PARK GATEWAY



DOWNTOWN SUBAREA PLANS

A distinguishing feature of this alternative is the introduction of a pedestrian walkway over the railroad corridor connecting the two parking structures at Cottage Hill Avenue. This would provide grade-separated access close to the Campus area. Alternatively, access could be provided through the construction of an underpass – perhaps coupled with provision of underground parking.

In other respects, this scenario incorporates similar principles regarding access and circulation as the first two alternatives.

Parking

Alternative C is similar to the other two alternatives. However, a pedestrian walkway connects the two parking decks. Grade separation will minimize vehicle/pedestrian conflicts. Depending on the design of the bridge, it could serve as a gateway feature along the corridor. A key element in the design of any new pedestrian bridge will be pedestrian safety within the parking structure and overhead walkway corridor. It will be important that these passages are visible from the exterior and well lit.

In addition, the City might explore the development of a below grade off-street parking structure in the expanded park area. While this may be technically feasible, cost may be the ultimate concern. The City, along with other campus area organizations should seek and explore other potential funding opportunities for off-street parking improvements in the area. Options such as metered parking, special service areas, or impact fees, or a combination of these strategies might be considered.

Conceptual Views of Alternative Campus Improvements

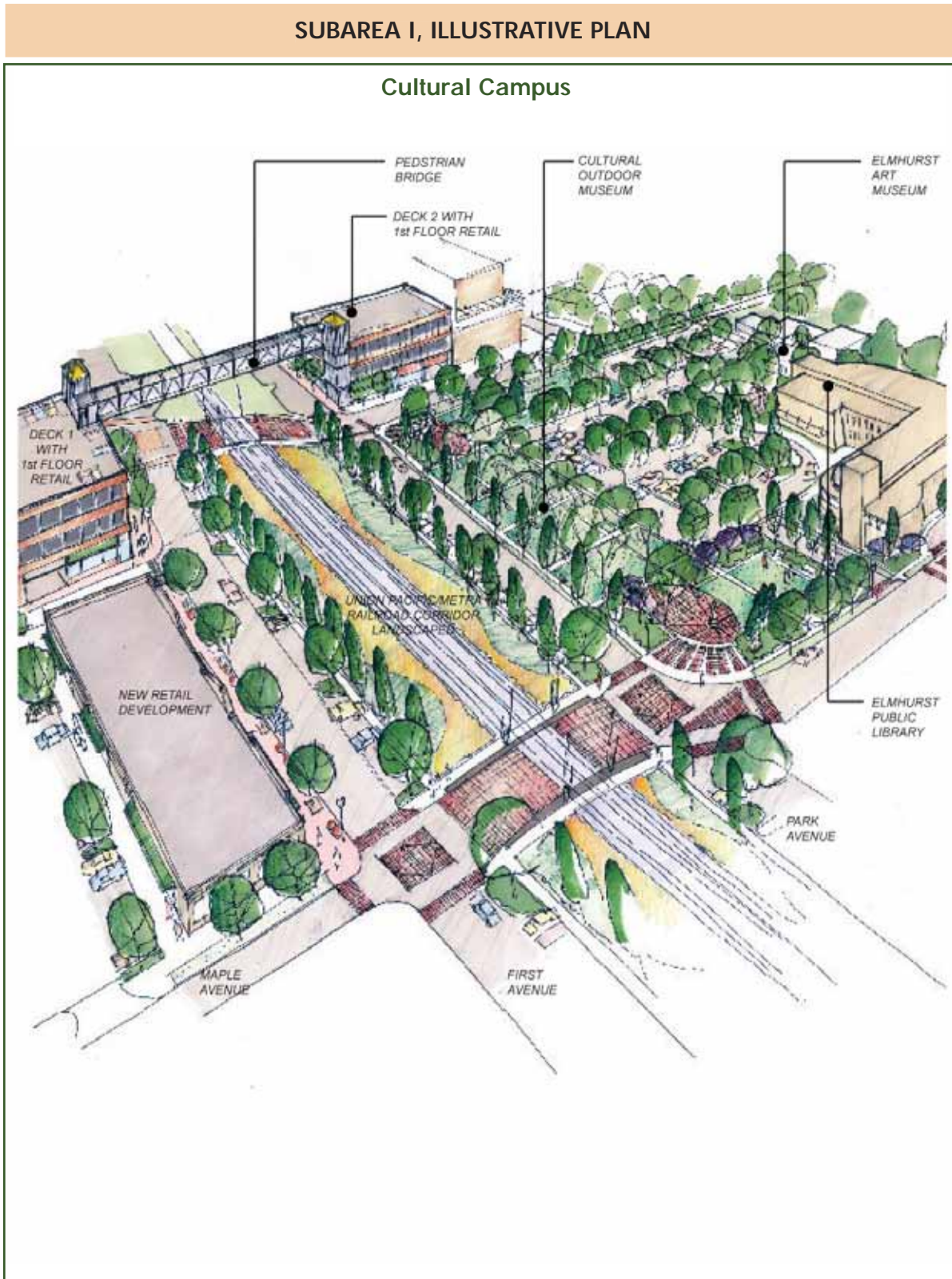
Two axonometric views of alternative Cultural Campus improvements have been prepared to help the reader understand how campus area improvements might appear in the future. They provide an understanding of the potential scale, physical order and orientation of new improvements.

Figure 43, Illustrative Plan provides a conceptual illustration of improvements along the Union Pacific Railroad Corridor. This view, looking southeast along the rail corridor, shows the area between the Cultural Campus and the downtown. It illustrates Metra/Union Pacific Railroad Corridor enhancements, additional building development, and streetscape improvements. It depicts how landscape improvements along the railroad corridor would increase its visual quality as a campus connection to the Downtown. New retail development and parking structures illustrate how a “street wall” can be created along both Park and First Avenues. An elevated pedestrian crossing is suggested between the two parking structures.

Figure 44, Illustrative Gateway Features identifies improvements to the northern border of Wilder Park and the Cultural Campus. This view looks west towards Wilder Park and the Elmhurst Public Library. It illustrates additional open space, Union Pacific/Metra Railroad Corridor enhancements, and streetscape enhancements to develop a new open space “promenade” along Park Avenue. Formal and informal landscape improvements could provide new educational and recreational venues for City residents.



FIGURE 43



SUBAREA I, ILLUSTRATIVE GATEWAY FEATURES

