



◦ DOWNTOWN ◦  
**ITASCA**  
STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN

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Fish Transportation Group  
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**DOWNTOWN ITASCA TODAY**

# INTRODUCTION

Downtown Itasca is small, compact, and located directly adjacent to the Itasca Metra Station. Realizing its unfulfilled potential, the Village partnered with the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) to create a vision and strategic plan for Downtown. This plan provides a strategy, development framework, and set of implementation actions to further enhance Downtown and support the highest and best use of land surrounding the Village's Metra station. The plan provides strategies and actions to improve Downtown by identifying opportunities for:

- *Business and housing growth.*
- *Redevelopment, improvement and conceptual massing of selected opportunity sites.*
- *Transportation and mobility improvements.*
- *Approaches to implementation and funding strategies.*

The plan is organized by the three character areas of Downtown: North Downtown, South Downtown, and the Irving Park Road Corridor. The plan makes recommendations and provides implementation strategies for each area through three primary topics related to development, design and transportation:

- *Economic Development*
- *Public Open Space and Urban Design*
- *Access and Mobility*

## PLANNING PROCESS

In 2020, the Village of Itasca and the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) embarked on the creation of a new Downtown Strategic Action Plan, an important policy document to guide future investment and development activity within and near the Downtown. The Lakota Group, a Chicago-based planning and urban design firm, was engaged by the Village and RTA to lead the development of the plan, along with real estate market and economic development consultant, Market and Feasibility Advisors, and transportation consultant, Fish Transportation Group. A Steering Committee of community volunteers, Downtown business and property owners, and area residents was assembled to help guide the planning process.

The Downtown Strategic Action Plan process was designed to maximize opportunities for community input, with various check points to gather ideas and feedback. The planning process was organized into three phases: **Engage, Envision, and Implement.**





## DOWNTOWN OPPORTUNITIES

Initial analysis of Downtown revealed several opportunities that have become themes and focus areas of this plan.

- **Opportunity Sites:** There are several key sites that present short and long-term opportunity for development or improvement. Some sites may be Village owned, or their location, condition or other ownership interests lend towards more short-term development potential. In the longer term, other sites may allow the chance for larger residential or mixed-use development.
- **Recreation/Parks/Open Spaces:** The abundance of parks, open space, and recreation uses in and near the Downtown provide natural activity generators, locations for community events, and offer landscape design opportunities to further strengthen the image of Downtown Itasca. The Water Park, library, Country Club, and other park spaces are popular and offer opportunities for partnerships with the Park District and other stakeholders for events and activities.
- **Irving Park Road Corridor:** Irving Park Road presents both a challenge and opportunity for improvement in Downtown Itasca. It serves as a challenge both in terms of physical barrier and perceived hazard. Pedestrian safety is compromised crossing between north and south parts of the Downtown. However, it does provide access to Downtown, serves as a gateway, and is the primary entry point to Downtown.
- **Authenticity and Charm:** Certain locations of Downtown offer strong architectural interest and character, well-designed streetscapes, historic structures, iconic viewpoints, and authentic charm. Preserving and strengthening this character will further enhance Downtown.
- **Community Gathering Spaces:** Although Downtown has many parks and open spaces, it lacks a central community gathering space and other places for strong personal connection between residents. The need for a central space was voiced throughout the planning process. The recent closure of businesses serving this purpose has left a void in the community and a need for more spaces for social interaction which could be served by a public space or new business.
- **Downtown Zoning:** The project area includes five different zoning districts. There is an opportunity to review the zoning districts for Downtown and consolidate or create one unified district. A consolidated set of districts, or one unified zoning district, governing the identified “Downtown” will provide a consistent set of standards and guidelines. Zoning standards can include reference to uses, heights and setbacks, as well as urban form standards to regulate the mass, scale, form, and style of architecture.
- **Historic Structures and Viewsheds:** Downtown Itasca has some older buildings and historic structures that contribute to the authenticity of the area. The Itasca Baptist Church is an iconic building and frames a beautiful viewshed in Downtown from the east along Irving Park Road. The gazebo in Usher Park also provides an identifiable landmark in the Downtown. Preserving and promoting these assets and viewsheds will help maintain Downtown Itasca’s charm and provide community landmarks.

# DOWNTOWN ITASCA TODAY

## DOWNTOWN CONTEXT

Downtown Itasca is concentrated around the Metra Station and the Walnut Avenue/West Irving Park Road intersection. West Irving Park Road bisects and provides primary access to Downtown. This results in a north and south Downtown area with different character, uses, and zoning districts. The primary, yet compact, commercial district is located along North Walnut Street between East Orchard and East Center Streets.

Single-family residential neighborhoods generally surround the Downtown. Hamilton Lakes Office Campus is further to the north; the Salt Creek Trail, the City of Wood Dale, Village of Bensenville, and O'Hare International Airport are located further to the east; single-family neighborhoods and the Songbird Slough Forest

Preserve are located further to the south; and Interstate 290, and large office, industrial and employment uses are located further to the west.

The project study area includes more than the Downtown core along North Walnut Street and is generally located between the Itasca Country Club on the east and Spring Brook Nature Center and Interstate 290 on the west. It extends to East Center Street along the north and includes Usher Park and portions of the Irving Park Road corridor along the south.

Major features and landmarks within and surrounding the Downtown are also identified in Exhibit 2, including parks and open spaces, the ½ and ¼ mile radius from the Metra Station,

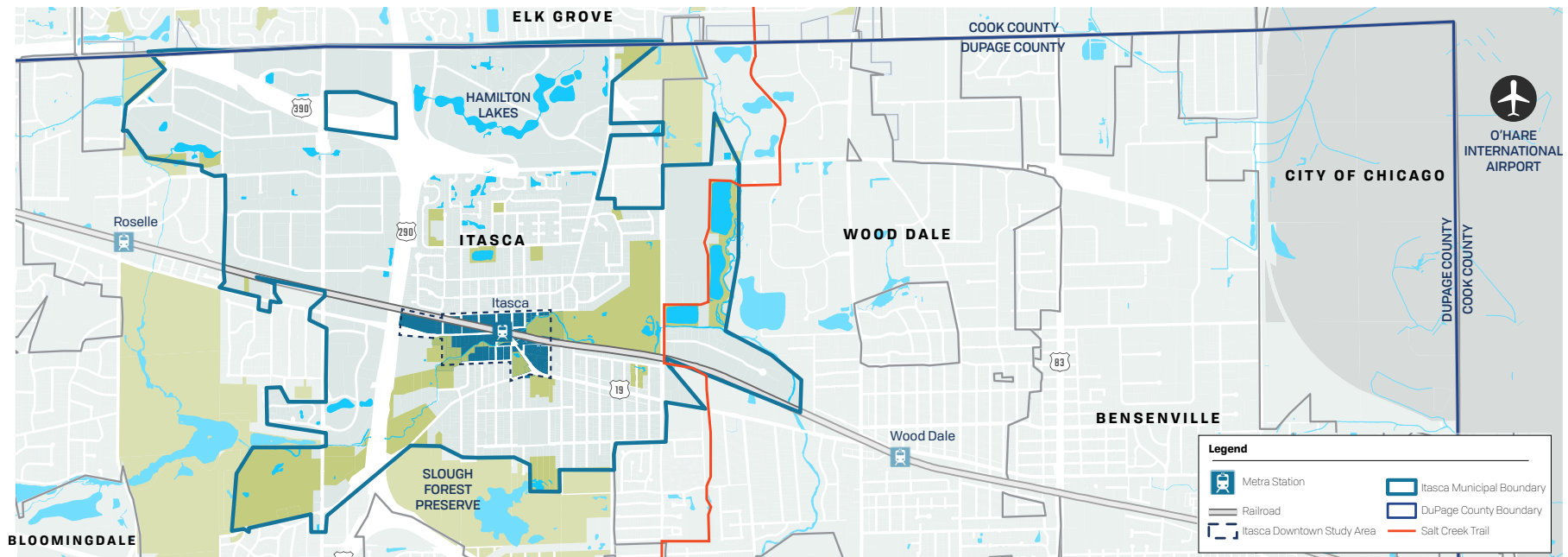
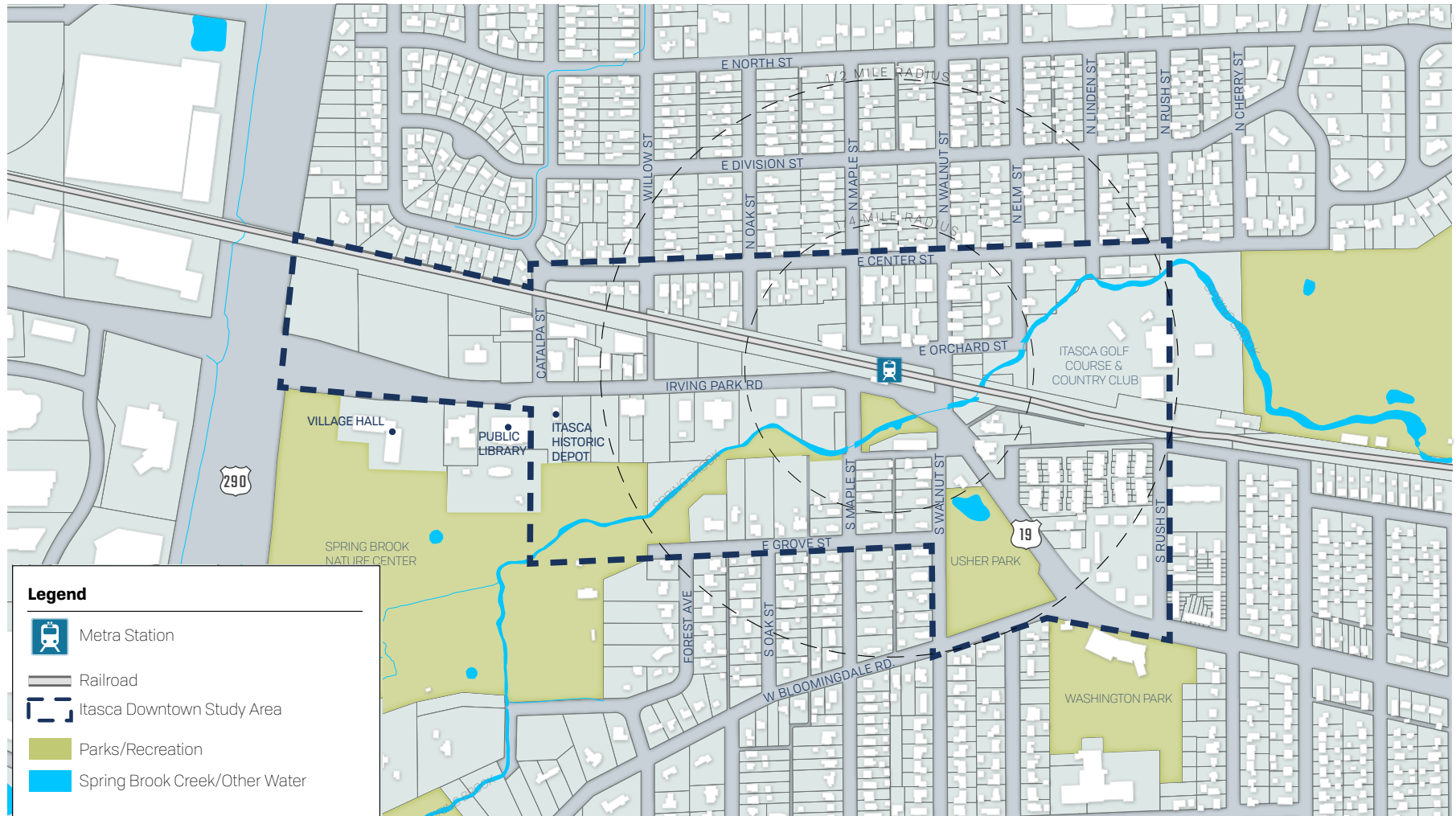


Exhibit 1 - Downtown Itasca - Regional Context



Exhibit 2 - Downtown Itasca - Study Area



public facilities, as well as Spring Brook Creek. The project study area includes more than the Downtown core along North Walnut Street. The project area is generally located between the Itasca Country Club on the east and Spring Brook Nature Center and Interstate 290 on the west. It extends to East Center Street along the north and includes Usher Park and portions of the Irving Park Road corridor along the south.

The goal of the Downtown Strategic Action Plan is to create a vision for Downtown Itasca and the surrounding neighborhoods that leverages existing transportation, real estate, and community involvement to create a Downtown that is a welcoming and active meeting place for residents and visitors. This plan will further enhance, promote, and encourage Downtown development and support the redevelopment and improvement of land surrounding the Village's Metra station.

## DEMOGRAPHIC & ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

### Demographic Trends

Demographic trends are an important consideration in long range planning. The following data suggests an upward trend over the next 20-25 years with the Village adding about 1,200 more residents. The daytime working population is also expected to increase which is a positive sign in terms of economic development and potential merchants to Village businesses.

#### Population

- The current population of Itasca is 9,261, a slight increase of about 600 residents in the last ten years. The 2010 population was 8,649.
- The population grew by 0.67% annually in this last decade.
- The five-year projection for the population in the Village is 9,413 a continued modest growth of 0.33% annually between 2020 to 2025.
- The total daytime population is estimated at 15,460, larger than the total resident population; 71% are employees and 29% are residents.
- The population is split between 48.8% male and 51.2% female.
- The median age has been trending upward and is 42.8, compared to U.S. median age of 38.5.

Figure 1: Village of Itasca Population Over Time



#### Households

- The household count in Itasca has increased from 3,325 in 2010 to 3,556 in 2020, a growth of 0.66% annually, consistent with population growth.
- The five-year projected number of households is 3,611 in 2025, an increase of 0.31% annually from the 2020 total, also consistent with projected population.
- Average household size is currently 2.58, compared similarly to 2.57 in 2010.

#### Income

- In 2020 the median household income was \$96,559 in Itasca, compared to \$62,203 for all U.S. households. Median household income is projected to be \$104,184 in 2025, compared to \$67,325 for all U.S. households. Median income divides the income distribution into two equal parts, representing the middle range.
- In 2020 the average household income was \$120,516 in Itasca, compared to \$90,054 for all U.S. households. Average household income is projected to be \$134,913 in 2025, compared to \$99,510 for all U.S. households.
- In 2020 the per capita income was \$45,846 in Itasca, compared to the U.S. per capita income of \$34,136. The per capita income is projected to be \$51,304 in 2025, compared to \$37,691 for all U.S. households. Per capita income is the amount of money earned per person in Itasca.
- Of the five neighboring communities of Addison, Bloomingdale, Elk Grove Village, Roselle, and Wood Dale, households in Itasca have the highest annual income – median, average, per capita and disposable.



## Ethnicity

- Demographic data indicates racial diversity is increasing in Itasca.
- Persons of Hispanic descent represent 11.4% of the population compared to 18.8% of the U.S. population.
- Persons of Asian ethnicity represent 10.2% of Itasca's population.
- The Diversity Index, which measures the probability that two people from the same area will be from different race/ethnic groups, is 45.4% in Itasca, compared to 65.1% for the entire U.S.
- Ethnic diversity is increasing in Itasca and could have long-term effects on retail and housing preferences.

## Housing Trends

- Currently, 63.6% of the 3,830 housing units in Itasca are owner occupied; 29.2% renter occupied; and 7.2% are vacant compared to the U.S. with 56.4% of all housing units owner occupied; 32.3% are renter occupied; and 11.3% are vacant. In 2010, there were 3,573 housing units in Itasca – 67.3% owner occupied, 25.8% renter occupied, and 6.9% vacant. The annual growth rate of housing units since 2010 is 3.14%. Median home value in Itasca is \$329,177, compared to \$235,127 for the U.S. By 2025, median value is projected to grow by 0.99% annually to \$345,801.
- The Housing Affordability Index (HAI) is 155 in the Village. The HAI measures the financial ability of a typical household to purchase an existing home in an area. A HAI of 100 represents an area that on average has sufficient household income to qualify for a loan on a home valued at the median home price. An index greater than 100 suggests homes are easily afforded by the average area resident. A HAI less than 100 suggests that homes are less affordable. The Housing Affordability Index is not applicable in areas with no households or in predominantly rental markets. Home value estimates cover owner-occupied homes only.
- In Itasca, detached single unit residential structures are the primary type of housing units with 54% of all housing units. Attached single unit residential units (e.g., rowhouse) account for 15.5% of all residential units.
- The most common multi-family residential structures in Itasca are housing structures with 50 or more residential units, almost 13% of all units, followed by residential structures with 20 to 49 units, accounting for 8% of all residential units in Itasca. The Residences at Hamilton Lakes is a recent example of successful rental housing with 50+ units.
- Midsize residential structures with 2 to 19 units account for roughly 10% of all housing units. This indicates that Itasca, while dominantly a single-family home community, includes some large high-density residential structures but lacks medium sized residential structures.
- Most housing units in Itasca were built before 1980. The time between 1990 and 2010 saw a construction boom adding 27% of all existing housing units to the stock. Since 2010 there were only marginal additions to the housing stock – accounting for a little less than 4% of all existing housing units in Itasca.
- In general, housing costs are the largest parts of a household budget. There are two main factors that influence the percentage of household income allocated for mortgage and rent. First the market demand, supply and interest rates all influence cost, and secondly overall household income. The lower the household income is, the higher the percentage that will go to pay for housing, especially when there are not many options to the lower income groups. Other factors that influence costs include the type and size of housing available for rent or sale.

Available data for Itasca indicates that most renter households (57%) use up to 30% of household income for rent payments while the majority of owner households (52%) use up to 35% of household income for mortgage payments. In both categories there are households that use more than 50% of income towards those payments – 16% of renter households and 9% of owner households in Itasca. While this exists, it is a relatively small percentage of households indicating most households in Itasca are in a financially stable situation. As a general rule the cost of housing should not exceed 30 percent of the household's gross income. That rule was established in 1969 by public housing regulations, which capped public housing rent at 25 percent of a tenant's income and increased up to 30 percent in the early 1980s. For renters, that means the 30 percent includes rent and utilities, for home owners that 30 percent includes mortgage, mortgage interest, property taxes, utilities and maintenance. Due to the higher costs of home ownership, 35% of household income was used.

## Sports & Activities

- Sports with the highest likelihood of participation compared to the national average are bicycling and running/jogging. Sports with the highest number of participating households are Walking for Exercise and swimming. The large number of parks and recreation uses within the study area allows this opportunity some potential for attracting more people to the Downtown area.
- Leisure activities with the highest likelihood of participation compared to the national average are attending a rock concert, visiting an indoor water park and visiting a museum. Leisure activities with the highest number of households participating are dining out and going to a bar/nightclub followed by visiting a museum. Inclusion of these uses in Downtown could help boost activity.

## Employment & Commute Trends

### Employment

- The professional service sector employs the largest share of Itasca's population, followed by management and administrative.
- White collar occupations account for most employment with 64%, while blue collar occupations account for 22%.

Figure 2: Downtown Itasca 2020 Employed by Occupation

2020 Employed by Occupation	
<b>White Collar</b>	<b>63.8%</b>
Management/Business/Financial	17.1%
Professional	18.8%
Sales	12.1%
Administrative Support	15.8%
Services	14.2%
<b>Blue Collar</b>	<b>22.1%</b>
Construction/Extraction	8.3%
Installation/Maintenance/Repair	2.6%
Production	4.6%
Transportation/Material Moving	6.5%
<i>Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2010 Census, ESRI BIS forecasts for 2020 and 2025, MFA</i>	

### Education

Itasca is educated with 47% of its population aged 25 or older having an associate degree or higher education level. Almost 40% have a bachelor's degree or higher.

## Place of Work & Commute

These numbers reflect pre-pandemic conditions.

- 5% of the employed population in Itasca is working from home.
- The vast majority (86%) use a car to commute to work.
- 5% took public transportation, 4.4% took Metra to commute to work.
- 20% of Itasca's employed population works within 15-minute commute time.
- 41% of the employed population commutes between 15 and 30 minutes to work.
- 28% of the employed population commutes between 30 and 60 minutes to work – this includes Downtown Chicago.
- 11% of the employed population commutes 60 or more minutes to work.
- The total daytime population is 15,460 larger than Itasca's residential population. This would imply additional weekday market potential for retail and restaurant businesses due to a higher concentration of people in the area.



209 N. Walnut Street

## Employment Centers

Unfortunately, the major employment centers in Itasca are not in the Downtown area. They are located further west of I-290 and north of the Elgin-O'Hare Expressway (Hamilton Lakes) and offer an opportunity to capture daytime weekday employees for Downtown businesses. This possibility exists with the right mix of uses in Downtown, for example a destination restaurant or other flagship type of use could unlock this market potential.

One first step to bring the working daytime population to Downtown could involve food trucks, mobile food halls and farmers markets combined with targeted information and marketing effort in those identified employment centers. This would allow Downtown restaurants and businesses to get exposure throughout the region and would create more foot traffic given parking is available close by. The data tables on the following pages summarize the employment, education, place of work and commute data.



Hamilton Lakes



## Household Spending

The following two tables show household spending in categories demonstrating the market potential for entertainment/leisure/recreation and restaurants.

- In all categories, the spending is well above the national average. Reasons for this are the overall higher household income but also the higher cost of living in the Chicago metro area.
- By far the largest budget item is spending for “Housing”, occupying more than 32% of the total household spending budget. Food, Pensions and Social Security and Transportation are the next largest budget items with 11.6%, 11.2% and 10.9% respectively.
- Dining Out and Entertainment account for 4.8% and 4.2% of household spending. That translates into an annual \$32.3 million in spending potential for both categories combined, a lot of which is currently leaking out of Itasca. New businesses in those categories would be an attractive addition to the Itasca Downtown area.
- Households in Itasca are highly likely to spend money especially for Tickets to Theatre/Operas/Concerts and Fees for Recreational Lessons. The item with the largest spending budget is for Membership Fees for Social/Recreation/Health clubs.

The spending potential index (SPI) compares the likelihood of a household spending money in a certain category to the national average of 100. The top four categories for household budget expenditures are highlighted in Figure 6, *Food, Housing, Transportation and Retirement Saving*.

Figure 3: Village of Itasca - Household Spending – Selected Leisure Spending

Item	Average Spent per HH	Total HH Spending	SPI
<b>Entertainment/Recreation Fees and Admissions</b>	<b>\$1,042.62</b>	<b>\$3,707,556</b>	<b>145</b>
Tickets to Theatre/Operas/Concerts	\$121.75	\$432,938	151
Tickets to Movies	\$74.85	\$266,168	130
Tickets to Parks or Museums	\$44.80	\$159,293	136
Admission to Sporting Events	\$85.26	\$303,199	136
Fees for Participant Sports	\$135.33	\$481,249	138
Fees for Recreational Lessons	\$229.02	\$814,394	158
Membership Fees for Social/Recreation/Health Clubs	\$351.61	\$1,250,316	147
<i>Source: 2017 and 2018 Consumer Expenditure Surveys, Bureau of Labor Statistics, MFA</i>			

Figure 4: Village of Itasca - Household Spending – Budget Spending

Item	Average Spent per HH	Total HH Spending	% of Total	SPI
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$101,000</b>	<b>\$359,155,556</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>131</b>
<b>Food</b>	\$11,672	\$41,504,281	11.6%	128
Food at Home (Groceries)	\$6,801	\$24,183,905	6.7%	127
Food Away from Home (Dining Out)	\$4,871	\$17,320,376	4.8%	129
Alcoholic Beverages	\$863	\$3,068,615	0.9%	139
<b>Housing</b>	\$32,746	\$116,444,921	<b>32.4%</b>	135
Shelter	\$26,746	\$95,109,543	<b>26.5%</b>	138
Utilities, Fuel and Public Services	\$6,000	\$21,335,379	5.9%	123
Household Operations	\$2,864	\$10,185,644	2.8%	134
Housekeeping Supplies	\$944	\$3,357,645	0.9%	122
Household Furnishings and Equipment	\$2,795	\$9,939,371	2.8%	128
Apparel and Services	\$2,783	\$9,895,873	2.8%	130
<b>Transportation</b>	\$10,977	\$39,035,876	<b>10.9%</b>	122
Travel	\$3,359	\$11,943,922	3.3%	139
Health Care	\$7,090	\$25,213,321	7.0%	123
Entertainment and Recreation	\$4,202	\$14,942,525	4.2%	129
Personal Care Products & Services	\$1,175	\$4,176,996	1.2%	128
Education	\$2,710	\$9,636,673	2.7%	152
Miscellaneous	\$1,458	\$5,183,863	1.4%	131
Support Payments/Cash Contribution/Gifts in Kind	\$2,756	\$9,801,225	2.7%	118
Life/Other Insurance	\$700	\$2,488,095	0.7%	129
<b>Pension and Social Security</b>	<b>\$11,316</b>	<b>\$40,238,764</b>	<b>11.2%</b>	137

Source: 2017 and 2018 Consumer Expenditure Surveys, Bureau of Labor Statistics, MFA

## MARKET ASSESSMENT

### Retail Gap

A retail gap represents the difference between household spending and retail sales in a defined trade area. It shows whether a trade area is under-served and spending (demand) is leaking, or whether sales (supply) is drawing in demand from outside the trade area. It should be noted that this data is variable and constantly changing. Long-term effects of the pandemic and further rise of “ecommerce” on retail spending in a downtown environment are not yet known.

- Supply (retail sales): This estimates sales to consumers by establishments. Sales to businesses are excluded.
- Demand (retail potential): This estimates the expected amount spent by consumers at retail establishments. Supply and demand estimates are in current dollars.
- The Leakage/Surplus: This presents a snapshot of retail opportunity. A positive value represents ‘leakage’ of retail opportunity outside the trade area. A negative value represents a surplus of retail sales, a market where customers are drawn in from outside the trade area.
- The Retail Gap: This represents the difference between Retail Potential and Retail Sales.

Figure 5: Village of Itasca - Retail Gap, 2019

Retail Category	Retail Potential Spending	Retail Sales	Retail Gap
Motor Vehicle & Parts Dealers	\$29,041,397	\$68,211,842	\$39,170,445
Furniture & Home Furnishings Stores	\$4,780,880	\$10,157,257	\$5,376,377
Electronics & Appliance Stores	\$5,559,265	\$39,969,857	\$34,410,592
Bldg. Materials, Garden Equip. & Supply Stores	\$9,982,130	\$50,258,861	\$40,276,731
Food & Beverage Stores	\$23,426,034	\$8,570,070	-\$14,855,964
Health & Personal Care Stores	\$9,177,275	\$777,222	-\$8,400,053
Gasoline Stations	\$14,397,874	\$19,272,047	\$4,874,173
Clothing & Accessory Stores	\$8,194,693	\$0	-\$8,194,693
Sporting Goods, Hobby, Book & Music Stores	\$3,836,829	\$9,628,240	\$5,791,411
General Merchandise Stores	\$24,780,505	\$5,907,718	-\$18,872,787
Miscellaneous Store Retailers	\$5,034,485	\$33,847,017	\$28,812,532
Food Services & Drinking Places	\$16,384,450	\$11,018,095	-\$5,366,355
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$154,595,817</b>	<b>\$257,618,226</b>	<b>\$103,022,409</b>
Village of Itasca Demand			\$154,595,817
Draw from Outside the Market Area			\$158,712,261
Leakage out of the Market Area (Retail Potential)			-\$40,833,888
<i>Source: MFA, BLS, ESRI, Infogroup</i>			

### Retail Gap Analysis - Key Findings

Overall, the market area draws a relatively small amount of consumer/customer spending from the surrounding areas. This is an indication that some existing retailers are easily accessible, have products that require a larger market reach and offer high quality products that puts them ahead of the competition.

Some retail sectors leak spending potential out of the Itasca market area indicating that demand is not met within Itasca proper. These sectors hold the opportunity to capture some of the leakage with new retail inside the Village— efforts specifically targeted at the sectors that show leakage. These are business opportunities that could be pursued on a smaller footprint (square footage) and support economic development and business attraction.

- Specialty Food Stores
- Health & Personal Care Stores
- Clothing Stores (boutique)
- Shoe Stores (boutique)
- Restaurants/Other Eating Places
- Although there is leakage in the grocery store category there are, for example, two Jewel Osco grocery stores close by, one in Elk Grove Village (Elk Crossing Shopping Center) and across from the Georgetown Square along Irving Park Road in Wood Dale. Others exist as well, (Walmart, Aldi, Target, Sam's Club). Frank's Fresh Market is also located at Georgetown Square in Wood Dale.

Based on the retail gap analysis, the following sectors show an opportunity, meaning that demand (spending) is larger than the supply (sales). The retail sectors that are relevant for the Downtown project area are highlighted. As mentioned, a destination or anchor type of use would help create an attraction to Downtown Itasca. This could be a fine dining restaurant along North Walnut Street or a specialty grocery store or designer clothing boutique along West Irving Park Road.

Figure 6: Retail Opportunity Village of Itasca

Retail Sector	Opportunity/ (Leakage) Potential
Other Motor Vehicle Dealers	\$1,203,756
Auto Parts, Accessories & Tire Stores	\$2,146,125
Lawn & Garden Equip & Supply Stores	\$875,158
<b>Grocery Stores</b>	<b>(\$15,151,202)</b>
<b>Specialty Food Stores</b>	<b>(\$986,160)</b>
<b>Health &amp; Personal Care Stores</b>	<b>(\$8,400,053)</b>
<b>Clothing/Accessory Stores</b>	<b>(\$8,194,693)</b>
Book, Periodical & Music Stores	\$665,717
Department Stores Excluding Leased Depts.	\$13,216,010
Other General Merchandise Stores	\$5,656,777
<b>Restaurants/Food Service/Drinking Places</b>	<b>(\$5,366,355)</b>
<i>Source: MFA, BLS, ESRI, Infogroup</i>	



## TRANSPORTATION

### Transit Services

Itasca is served by Metra’s Milwaukee District West Line (MD-W). Itasca is also served by Pace bus service, however, Pace suspended several routes in November 2020, including in Itasca, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Metra lines have been operating on alternate schedules since April 2020 and are adjusted as ridership levels recover.

#### Metra Commuter Rail

Metra’s Milwaukee District West (MD-W) Line extends west from Chicago Union Station (CUS or “Union Station”) to the City of Elgin. The line serves portions of Cook, DuPage, and Kane Counties with 21 outlying stations along its 40-mile route. In 2017, 6.3 million trips were taken on the MD-W, the eighth-highest number of Metra’s 11 lines (based on ticket sales). Both the MD-N and MD-W are operated and maintained by Metra. The Itasca station is fully accessible. On a typical weekday pre-pandemic, 58 trains served the MD-W Line, with 29 inbound and 29 outbound trains. The number of trains serving the Itasca station in 2017 are presented in Figure 7, along with comparisons to other stations on the line.

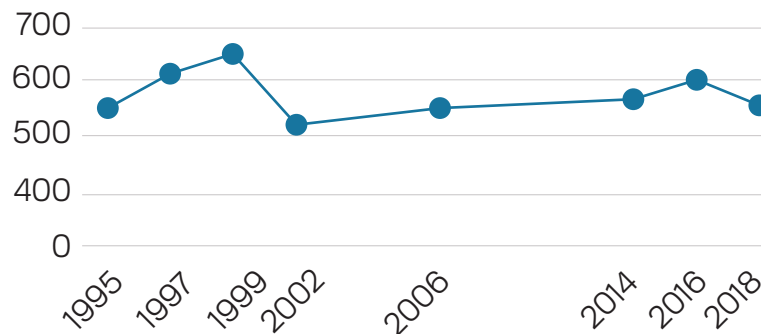
As presented in Figure 8, the Itasca station generated 555 typical weekday boardings in 2018. This number declined slightly since 2014, along with many other stations on the MD-W Line.

Figure 7: Level of Train Service by Station, 2017

Station	Number of Trains - Inbound	Number of Trains - Outbound
Bensenville	23	23
Wood Dale	23	24
<b>Itasca</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>23</b>
Medina	24	22
Roselle	25	25

*Source: Metra Division of Strategic Planning & Performance, Weekday Boardings & Alightings, Fall 2017*

Figure 8: Metra Boardings Over Time at Itasca Station



Note: Metra did not conduct ridership surveys for the 2008 to 2012 time period.



Metra Itasca Station

### Mode of Access

Modes of access to the Itasca station, based on Metra data collected during the Spring 2019, is presented in Figure 20. As with most suburban stations, the predominant station access is by driving alone. Compared to data collected in 2016, walk and bike access have declined. However, as shown in the following table, for stations west of Bensenville, Itasca has the highest walk access and has the highest bus access.

Figure 9: Itasca Mode of Access Comparison, 2016 & 2018

Mode of Access	2016	2018
Walk	24%	14%
Drive Alone	54%	68%
Carpool Driver	2%	2%
Carpool Passenger	0%	2%
Drop-Off	17%	8%
Pace Bus	0%	4%
Rideshare	0%	1%
Bike	2%	1%

Source: Metra Division of Strategic Planning & Performance, Origin-Destination Survey, 2017, 2019

Exhibit 3 - Metra Mode of Access by Origin Location

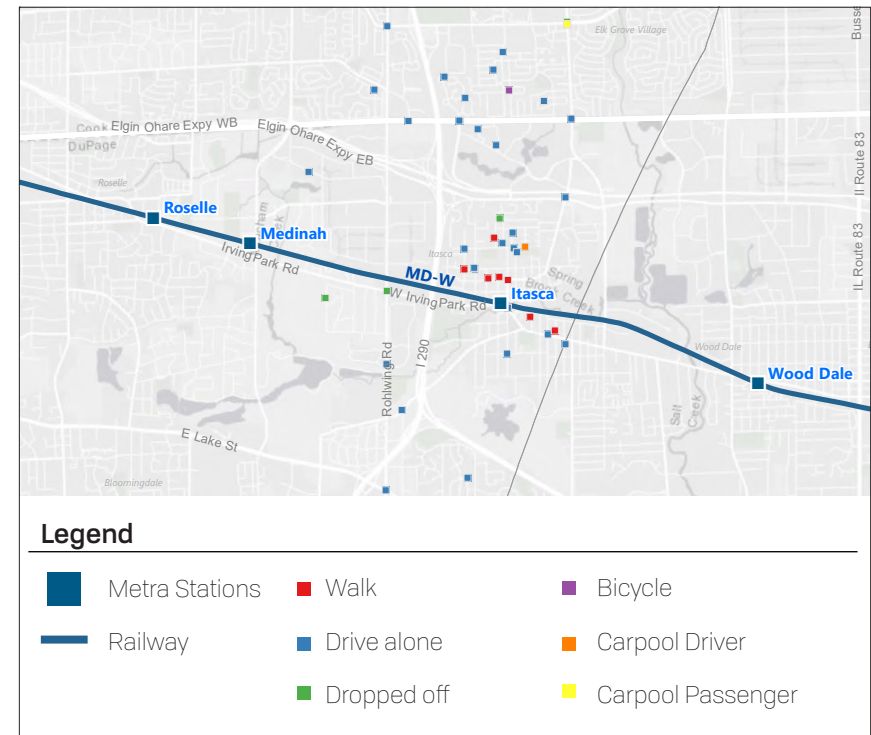


Figure 10: Mode of Access Comparisons, Metra MD-W

Station Name	Fare Zone	Walk	Drive Alone	Carpool Driver	Carpool Psngr	Drop-Off	Pace Bus	Taxi	Ride-Share	Bike
Bensenville	D	36%	46%	0%	0%	12%	2%	0%	1%	2%
Wood Dale	D	8%	72%	3%	2%	10%	0%	2%	2%	0%
<b>Itasca</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>68%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>1%</b>
Medinah	E	3%	80%	4%	1%	12%	0%	0%	1%	0%
Roselle	E	9%	70%	2%	2%	16%	1%	0%	1%	0%
Schaumburg	F	5%	75%	2%	2%	13%	1%	0%	1%	0%
Hanover Park	F	5%	72%	2%	3%	16%	0%	0%	1%	0%
Bartlett	F	11%	63%	2%	2%	20%	0%	0%	0%	0%

Source: Metra Division of Strategic Planning & Performance, Origin-Destination Survey, 2019

### Metra Commuter Parking

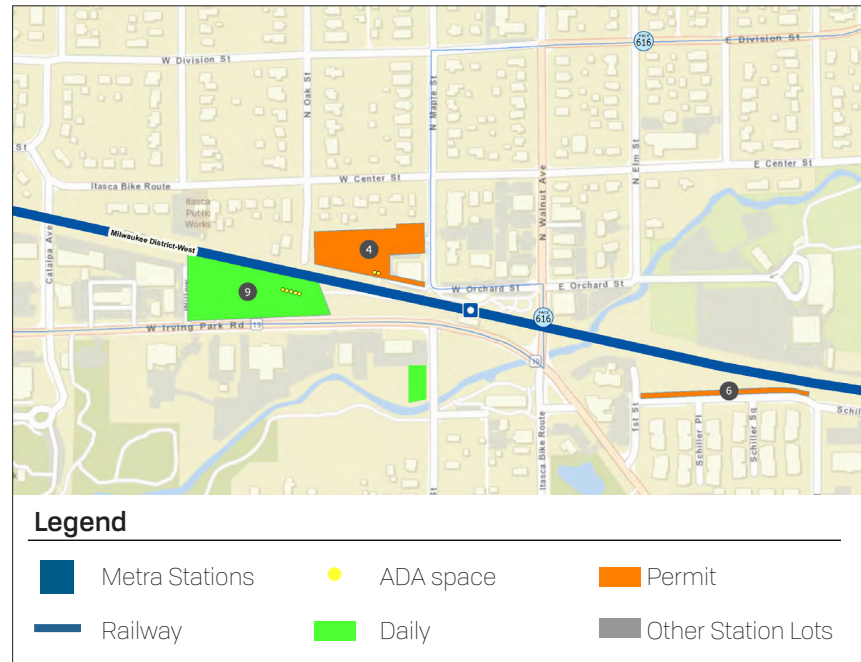
Commuter parking is provided in surface lots comprised of daily fee and permit spaces. Downtown Itasca has a total of 363 spaces for commuters spread out across three parking areas, with about three-fourths physically occupied at the time of Metra’s last survey in 2018 but considered nearly 100% occupied by considering all permit spaces full (“effective” use).

Figure 11: Itasca Station Commuter Parking Usage

Year	Utilization			
	Cap	O-Use	E-Use	%E-Use
2008	333	233	268	80%
2009	338	226	251	74%
2010	345	263	282	82%
2011	341	249	260	76%
2012	345	238	260	75%
2013	346	211	246	71%
2014	346	243	274	79%
2015	346	245	278	80%
2016	355	259	292	82%
2017	364	260	305	84%
2018	363	264	361	99%

Source: Metra Division of Strategic Capital Planning, 2019

Exhibit 4 - Downtown Itasca’s Metra Commuter Parking



Metra Permit Parking Lot



## Pace Suburban Bus

Pace Route #616 Rosemont-Itasca Limited, previously provided service to the Itasca Metra station. In the spring of 2020, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Pace announced the temporary suspension of 73 routes and reductions to another 25 routes on an emergency basis. Per FTA regulations, that “emergency” action can be in place for up to 12 months, at which point Pace would have had to restore the original level of service or hold public hearings to maintain these changes. Therefore, Pace held hearings in October 2020 to allow the Pace Board to consider formal action on those suspensions and reductions. On November 12, 2020, the Pace Board voted to approve the continuation of those suspensions and reductions as part of the 2021 budget approval. As a result, those services which had been suspended since spring 2020, which included Route #616 continue to be suspended. While Pace did formalize an indefinite continuation of the suspensions and reductions, depending upon availability of funding and return of commuter demand, Pace may re-evaluate and possibly reinstate some service

For future planning, Pace has developed Transit Supported Design Guidelines. These Guidelines present principles and standards for use by municipalities. Transit services and transit supportive development can provide a wide range of benefits across many sectors of a community. It is not simply the transit provider and rider who benefit; but also, the municipalities and development community, such as through more efficient infrastructure systems and maintenance, enhanced local services in more concentrated areas, and greater utilization of available land. These Guidelines should be referenced when redevelopment opportunities are considered.

Pace also offers complementary in-house technical review under its Design Review Assistance For Transit (D.R.A.F.T.) program. Developers and designers can participate in the program voluntarily, though municipalities may require Pace review as a part of local development review. These reviews are conducted by Pace’s Transportation Engineer and are designed to promote the incorporation of public transportation features in suburban developments. The provision of transit service also is analyzed during this plan review process.



*PACE #616 bus stop*



## Walking/Pedestrian Environment

As noted in the Village's Comprehensive Plan, the pedestrian network in the Village and planning area is currently not a cohesive framework that can provide safe pedestrian access to all parts of the Village and to regional trail networks. The system, consisting of sidewalks, paths and trails is inconsistent and incomplete. While much of the study area includes sidewalks, signalized intersections, crosswalks, and paths, there are locations that are not connected and in disrepair, providing opportunities to expand and enhance the pedestrian network and experience and increasing the attractiveness and safety of walking. The Spring Lake Business Park is within about a 15-minute walk from the Downtown, although requires walking along the narrow sidewalk on the south side of West Irving Park Road. Connections to Metra Lot #6 on the east side of Walnut Street requires walking through a commercial parking lot.

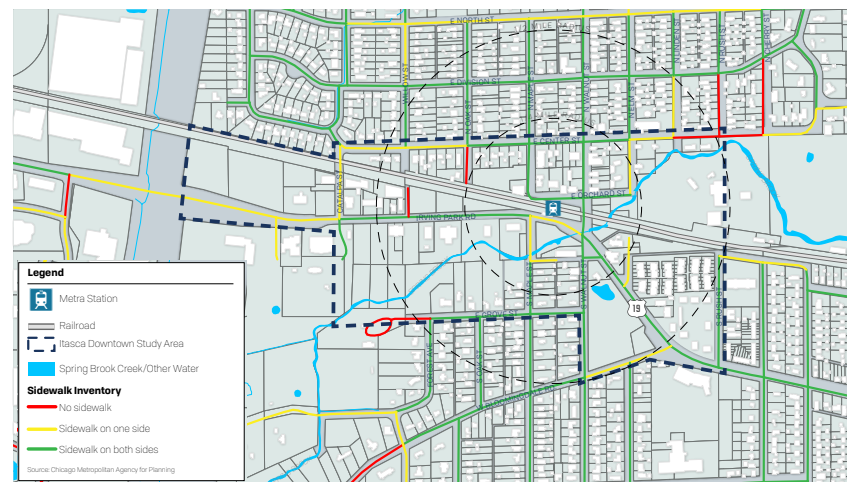
Walk Score ([www.walkscore.com](http://www.walkscore.com)) measures the walkability and pedestrian friendliness of an area by analyzing population density and road metrics such as block length and intersection density. According to Walk Score, Downtown Itasca has a relatively moderate walk score of 60 out of 100, defined as somewhat walkable, indicating some errands can be accomplished on foot.

CMAP recently completed a region-wide sidewalk inventory, documenting the existence of sidewalks, as well as whether those sidewalks have a barrier or buffer from moving traffic. The sidewalk segments were coded to indicate whether there are sidewalks on both sides, one side, or no sidewalks. This data was compiled to provide a useful starting point for the assessment of walkable paths to and from given locations, as well as supplementing prior regional walkability studies. However, the assessment does not indicate accessibility for wheelchairs or strollers, does not account for curb cuts or ramps, and does not

assume that the sidewalks are safe or comfortable for people of all abilities. CMAP's sidewalk inventory for the Downtown Itasca station area is shown below.

Physical and natural barriers should also be addressed as a component of the pedestrian network. Physical barriers in the downtown area include roadways and the railroad. The physical location and grade difference of both West Irving Park Road immediately south of the Metra station and the railroad divides the north and south regions of the study area. At-grade crossings are located at Walnut Street on the east end and Catalpa Avenue on the west end. The Spring Brook Creek creates a natural barrier between the north and south areas of the Downtown.

Exhibit 5 - CMAP Sidewalk Inventory for Downtown Itasca

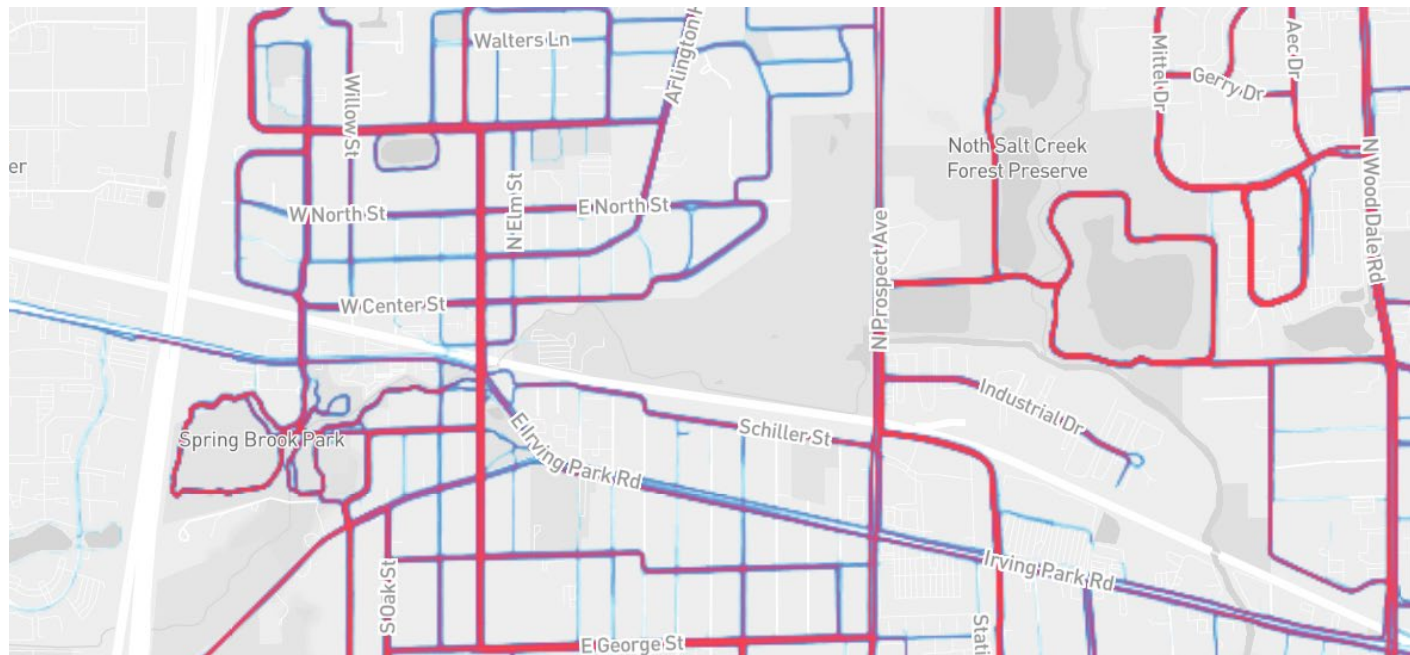


## Bicycling

The bicycle network in Itasca is made up of a combination of trails, shared use paths, and on-street signed routes. Bicycle parking is located at the Metra Station. The Spring Brook Nature Trail circulates around the Nature Center and connects to the Downtown, ending at Walnut Street. The Salt Creek Trail travels north-south and is located due west of the Downtown, with a portion traveling along Prospect Avenue. The Salt Creek connects to the newer shared-use path along IL 390. There are also paths in Memorial Park. While there are many opportunities for biking around the study area and beyond, linkages and signage are lacking. Connections from Metra and the Downtown to the Salt Creek Trail are possible, although requires traveling through a commercial parking lot to Schiller Street. Opportunities exist for improved continuity and expansion.

A tool for considering improvement to the bike network is provided through the crowd-sourced app call Strava, which generates bicycle and pedestrian activity “heat maps.” Data is populated by people biking and walking. The heat map shows ‘heat’ made by aggregated, public activities over the last two years and is updated monthly. The Strava heat maps for the study area is shown below. The colors range from light yellow to dark purple, indicating the increasing level of bicycle and pedestrian activity. Note that areas with little activity may not show any ‘heat.’ The heat map shows the preferred roadways for biking and walking which are also generally the roadways with bicycle infrastructure.

Exhibit 6 - Strava Heat Map



## Roadway Network

### Functional Classification

Roadway functional classification describes the character of the road in terms of vehicular access and mobility. Functional classification is designated by the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), although other national and local classification systems exist, such as the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE), the National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO), and the Congress for New Urbanism (CNU). Municipalities also establish functional classification to identify the role of the roadway within the local transportation network, addressing the level of access and connectivity to be provided. A roadway classification provides a template for determining design elements such as travel lanes, width, on-street parking, intersection geometry, traffic signal spacing, and speed limits.

Minor arterials serve moderate trip length, providing connections between higher volume facilities including highways, expressways, and principal arterials and collector roadways. The function of minor arterials is to provide intra-community continuity with more land access than principal arterials but not to provide direct access to local neighborhoods. Collector routes are typically shorter than arterial routes but longer than local streets. Collectors often provide traffic circulation within residential neighborhoods as well as commercial, industrial, or mixed use districts. In the context of functional classification, collectors are broken down into two categories: major and minor. Major collectors are generally longer in length and offer more mobility, while minor collectors offer more access.

Functional classification of study area and nearby key connecting roadways is listed below as presented in Village's Comprehensive Plan, along with IDOT's functional classification system.

Figure 12: Downtown Itasca Functional Classification

Roadway	Itasca Functional Class	IDOT Functional Class
IL19/W. Irving Park Road	Arterial	Minor Arterial
Prospect Avenue	Arterial	Minor Arterial
Bloomington Road	Collector	Major Collector
Walnut Street	Collector	Major Collector
Division Street	Collector	Major Collector
Mill Road	Collector	Major Collector

### Roadway Jurisdiction

Roadway jurisdiction dictates who is responsible for controlling and maintaining the roadway. Jurisdiction impacts the ability to control access, signalized intersections, make improvements or changes to the roadway geometrics, and balance the need between roadway users. Within the study area (and nearby), IDOT has jurisdiction of West Irving Park Road and DuPage County has jurisdiction over Prospect Avenue. All other roadways are under local jurisdiction. Interstate 290, under IDOT jurisdiction, is located to the west of the downtown. IL-390, located just under a mile to the north of the downtown area, is under the jurisdiction of the Illinois Tollway.

### State Route 19/West Irving Park Road

State Route 19/West Irving Park Road provides key east-west access to the Village and is strategically located between I-290 to the west and south, and IL-390 to the north. IL-390 opened November 1, 2017, with access provided via Prospect Avenue on the east of I-290 and Rohlwing Road west of I-290. A comparison of average daily traffic volumes (ADT) on West Irving Park Road between I-290 and Bloomingdale Road before and after IL-390 opened shows a decline of about nine percent. Volumes east of Bloomingdale Road shows a decline of nearly eight percent for the same time period.

The segment of West Irving Park Road between I-290 and Bloomingdale Road currently carries about 15,000 ADT, with nearly 11% of this being trucks. Most truck traffic is comprised of single-unit (two-axle) trucks. Although West Irving Park Road is not a designated truck route, trucks are allowed “reasonable access” between the Truck National Network (NN) and locations where freight is originating, terminating, or handled, as well as locations that provide access to food, fuel, repairs, and rest facilities. Reasonable access is defined as up to five miles from a designated route for deliveries, food, fuel, repairs, and rest. I-290 and IL-390 are the closest designated truck routes. A truck volume of almost 11% is a relatively high volume of trucks as a percentage of total vehicle trips, which may not be considered a “reasonable” amount of truck volume for a minor arterial roadway serving residential and commercial uses such as Downtown Itasca.

### Recent & Future Projects

Projects are identified in the CMAP Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), the region’s six-year agenda of surface transportation projects, currently for the 2019 – 2024 time frame. Based on federal fiscal years that start on October 1, the TIP includes projects expected to receive federal funding in each federal fiscal year (FFY). Two recently completed improvement projects in the study area:

- Safe Routes to School/Downtown Pedestrian Improvements. Improvements included sidewalk and crosswalk improvements along West Irving Park Road from I-290 through (and beyond) the Downtown.
- Bridge Rehabilitation at I-290 and railroad.

A future improvement project includes reconstruction of Bloomingdale Road from West Irving Park Road to IL53, with an anticipated September 2022 start.



*Intersection at Irving Park Road & Walnut Street*



**Crash Data**

As with any area with multiple travel modes, conflicts occur. Points of modal conflicts and crashes within the study area reflect typical conflict locations including intersections (signalized and unsignalized), driveways, areas with mid-block crossings, and bike/pedestrian crossings. IDOT crash data was obtained for the most recent available past five years (2014 to 2018) as presented below. This data shows that within the study area, more crashes took place in the area along West Irving Park Road between Walnut Road and Rush Street, as well as near Catalpa Avenue.

Additionally, DuPage County Division of Transportation (DCDOT) provided crash data for locations along West Irving Park Road in the study area for 2017 – 2019. As presented below, the DCDOT data was similar to IDOT data with a higher number of crashes at Catalpa Avenue and at Walnut Avenue. The DCDOT also showed that two crashes in the three year period involved pedestrians, both near Usher Memorial Park.

Exhibit 7 - Downtown Itasca IDOT Crash Data Map, 2014-2018

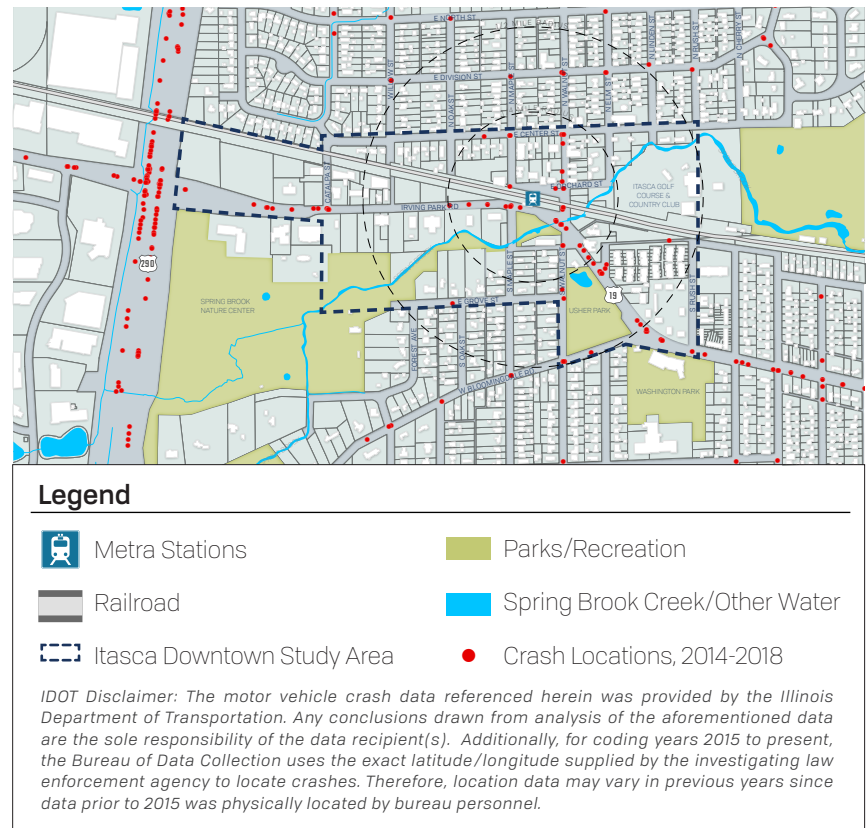


Figure 13: DuPage County Crash Data, 2017 – 2019

Location along W. Irving Park Road	Total Crashes	Crashes with Fatalities	Crashes with Injuries	Crashes with Property Damage Only	Crashes with Pedestrians
Catalpa Avenue	9	0	1	8	0
Maple Avenue	3	0	0	3	0
Walnut Avenue	12	0	4	8	0
1st Street	5	0	1	4	1
Bloomington Road	5	0	3	2	1
Rush Street	2	0	1	1	0

Source: DuPage County Division of Transportation, TCLS Crash Data Report, 2017-2019

## DOWNTOWN CHARACTER & URBAN DESIGN

### Character Areas

Downtown Itasca's existing character is largely defined by its traditional built environment, its location in the region, the Irving Park Road corridor, and surrounding open space areas. Part of the goal of this Plan is to refine and strengthen the character of Downtown to better reflect the intended image of the community. The project area has been organized into three character areas to better define the area.

#### North Downtown (ND)



*North Walnut Street*

This area includes the portion of Downtown, north of the Irving Park Road corridor and railroad tracks. The character is defined here by the North Walnut Street and East Orchard Street intersection and the traditional architectural styles, building form and scale at this location. However, the scale and form quickly recede as you travel north on North Walnut Street or east on East Orchard Street. The one block portion of Downtown along North Walnut

Street is quaint and includes some popular local businesses. The west side of the street is dominated by parking and a corner convenience store. The Downtown quickly transitions to residential neighborhoods as you travel north, east and west. The entrance to the Itasca Country Club is located directly to the east via East Orchard Street and over a small bridge passing Spring Brook Creek. Large parking lots, tennis courts, swimming pool, and large clubhouse and restaurant comprise the immediate portions of the Country Club closest to Downtown.

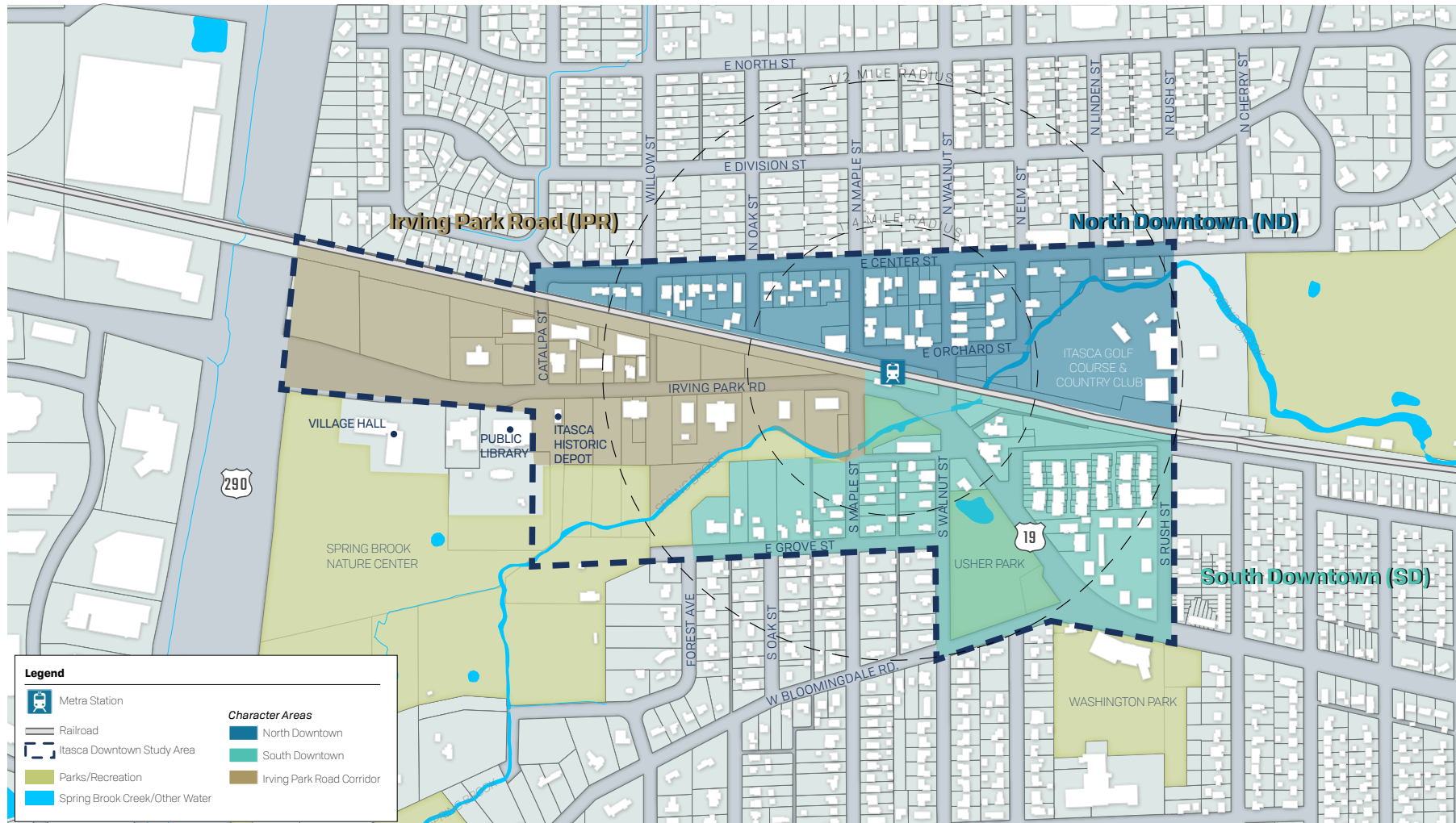
#### South Downtown (SD)



*Usher Park & Itasca Baptist Church*

The South Downtown area includes the area south of Irving Park Road and the railroad tracks and generally east of South Maple Street. The parks and creek walk largely define this area, as well as the traditional single-family homes found along South Maple, East Grove, and South Walnut Streets. Some commercial

Exhibit 8 - Downtown Itasca Character Areas Map





uses also exist along South Walnut and are housed in older, more traditional structures that may have been converted to commercial use over time. The Itasca Baptist Church and Usher Park establish the character for this area. An established multi-family residential development provides established housing and residents along the eastern portion of Irving Park Road.

### Irving Park Road Corridor (IPR)



308 West Irving Park Road

This portion of the study area includes the West Irving Park Road corridor as it travels west from the Metra Station to Interstate 290. The character along this corridor has yet to be fully established and consists of parking lots, commercial, institutional and professional service uses. The corridor is largely oriented to automobiles and bisects Downtown Itasca. It contributes to the character of the area as a more utilitarian and auto-oriented corridor. It includes some interesting architecture and several potential redevelopment sites.

## Streetscape & Urban Design

### Streetscape Design & Character



Metra Station Plaza

Downtown Itasca's streetscape transitions among different locations of the study area. The character along North Walnut and East Orchard Street in the vicinity of the Metra Station is pleasant and strongly pedestrian-oriented. This area includes pedestrian scaled lighting with seasonal flower baskets, landscape planters and street trees. Sidewalk widths are inconsistent but made of brick pavers and decorative materials. This character continues along North Walnut Street and East Orchard Streets and the commercial oriented streetscape quickly transitions to residential with continuous landscape strips, sidewalks and street trees.

The streetscape character in the southern portion of the Downtown is more auto-oriented along the Irving Park Road corridor but then again becomes pleasant and pedestrian-oriented south of the railroad and along the west side of South Walnut Street before it transitions to residential. The West Irving



Park Road streetscape character is auto-oriented and lacks pedestrian scale or amenities. Although it includes continuous sidewalks along both sides of the street, the narrow sidewalks offer little protection or barrier from the trucks and other fast-moving traffic along West Irving Park Road.



*Itasca Historic Business District*

### Gateways, Signage & Wayfinding

A small gateway sign into Downtown exists on North Walnut Street from West Irving Park Road. Street signs exist throughout the study area and there is some informational signage around the Downtown study area. The Village has an identifiable logo and brand which could be developed further into a more complete, branded signage and wayfinding plan for the Downtown. These design elements emphasize and strengthen the character of Downtown, further promote Village pride and offer another design element to support the existing streetscape.

### Urban Design Elements

Districts, Nodes, Paths, Edges and Landmarks – An urban design approach used to characterize and identify different parts of a city or town includes five elements that help residents and visitors identify with their surroundings. This approach can help to understand how people use a downtown or other spaces and offers insight into strategies that can create a positive experience so they return in the future.

- **Districts:** Large geographic areas typically defined by a specific identity or character. The district in this case is the Downtown project study area.
- **Nodes:** Activity generators, focal points or large intersections and transit facilities. The nodes in and around the study area include the Metra Station, Village Hall and nearby facilities, the water park, and the Itasca Country Club and Golf Course.
- **Paths:** Trails, sidewalks, streets and other points of mobility and connectivity. The paths in the study area include all sidewalks, the creek pathway, the Irving Park Road corridor and connections north to Hamilton Lakes. The Salt Creek trail further to the east is also a path.
- **Edges:** Boundaries, either physical or perceived, such as natural barriers, railroads, and water features. The edges in the study area include the railroad, Spring Brook Creek, Irving Park Road, the golf course, and Interstate 290.
- **Landmarks:** Local points of interest, design elements, focal points, and publicly identifiable objects. Landmarks in the study area include the Itasca Baptist Church, gazebos in Usher Park and other parks, the train station plaza, contributing building form and design at N. Walnut and E. Orchard Streets, and the Itasca Historic Depot.

Exhibit 9 - Downtown Itasca - Urban Design Conditions



Downtown Itasca was assessed using an urban design approach to organize and classify different features and landmarks. These major features, the Districts, Nodes, Paths, Edges and Landmarks, of Downtown Itasca provide the foundation for a comprehensive urban design approach to downtown planning and design. The large amount of open space uses, activity generators, public uses, transportation corridors, and isolated nature of the Downtown lend itself to this type of evaluation. Identifying and highlighting these features, connecting them together, and focusing improvements near and around them will help make Downtown more attractive, desirable, and enhance the experience and district identity.

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The community engagement process for the Itasca Downtown Strategic Action Plan included meetings, interviews, surveys and outreach with community residents, Downtown business and property owners, Village agencies and staff, community group representatives, and appointed and elected officials. From the start, stakeholders showed great community pride and were engaged in dialogue about the Downtown area, its key assets, items of concern and ideas for improvement.

The community engagement process was tailored to encourage participation through a number of different engagement activities including a project website, an online community survey, social media posts, stakeholders interviews, Steering Committee meetings and review sessions with the Village Board and Plan Commission.

### STEERING COMMITTEE

A Steering Committee of community volunteers representing Downtown business and property owners, community residents, community groups, and the local transit agencies was established to help guide the process. The Steering Committee met four times over the course of the project to provide input and guidance and review plan documents. The Committee met at the start of the process, and then three other times after the conclusion of each of the phases.

### STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

In February of 2021, the planning team spent two days in Itasca meeting with a variety of Downtown stakeholders. Stakeholder Interviews included elected officials, Village staff and representatives from regional transportation agencies such as Illinois Department of Transportation, Pace, and Metra, along with local business and property owners and residents. The series of interviews provided an indication of existing strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities in Downtown Itasca. The following is a summary of key themes that emerged.

#### *Local Destination*

Consensus arose that Downtown Itasca should focus on becoming a 'Local Destination' by attracting the '5-Mile Visitor,' people who live or work in the surrounding communities and could be attracted to Downtown Itasca on a regular basis. Focusing development and design strategies on attracting local visitors will help make Downtown Itasca prosper while maintaining its current charm and character. Stakeholders also mentioned the need for business attraction and retention strategies to help with diversification of the current business mix in Downtown Itasca.

Creating a shared vision for Downtown Itasca, with a focus on future land use and promoting a 'Local Destination' will encourage private investment in and around Downtown. With the separation of the Downtown by Irving Park Road and the railroad tracks development and investment should be dispersed along the Irving Park Corridor as well as the North and South Downtown areas while maintaining the existing character.



## A Place To Gather

A shared consensus grew for a central social and community gathering place. Currently, there are not enough public places to congregate or to encourage people to stay Downtown beyond the specific purpose of their visit. The Village of Itasca, and the Downtown specifically, hosts numerous events throughout the year that attract regional visitors from concerts in the park and Oktoberfest to Itasca Fest. While there is a need for additional events in the Downtown, providing intentional activated spaces for social and commercial uses will help bolster a sense of community in Downtown Itasca. West Orchard Street is sometimes temporarily closed for events such as Oktoberfest and some stakeholders expressed interest in more regular street closures as an opportunity to make Downtown Itasca a destination.

## Transportation

Downtown Itasca's Metra station was seen as a strong asset to the community. Stakeholders, notably residents and business owners, noted the importance of public transit to the success of the Downtown. Although the Metra Station was seen as a strength, Irving Park Road and the railroad tracks create a challenge to connectivity and pedestrian safety. Stakeholders expressed a lack of safe pedestrian access to the Metra station from the south side of Irving Park Road. Metra found that a lot of people who live south of Irving Park choose to drive to the station due to safety concerns with Irving Park Road and a lack of signage, even if they live within a walkable distance of the station. Improving existing crossings, streetscape, urban design, and wayfinding can help provide residents with a more comfortable experience along Irving Park Road.

## Urban Design & Character

Embracing Downtown Itasca's small-town charm and feel was noted by stakeholders as a good strategy for enhancing the current character of the community. The plaza by the train station was noted as an existing urban design element that should be expanded and activated. More seating, consistent streetscape elements and a reinvestment in public spaces were seen as opportunities to create a cohesive Downtown streetscape. Sidewalk connectivity to Downtown and surrounding amenities such as the Nature Center and Usher Park was another opportunity to bring more people into Downtown.



127 North Walnut Street



## COMMUNITY SURVEY RESULTS

A community survey was created to help understand the vision and hear ideas for the future of Downtown Itasca. Over 100 participants shared their ideas through the survey. The survey was divided amongst three sections: a visioning exercise, visual preference questions, and an initiative prioritizing activity. Below is a summary of the survey results:

### Downtown Itasca

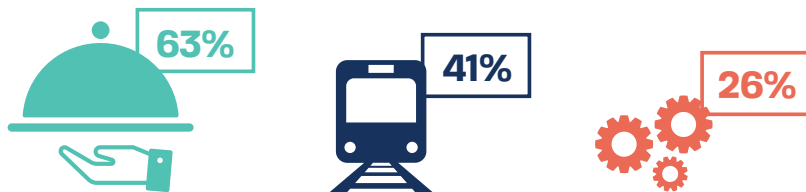
Participants were asked a series of questions about the current state of Downtown Itasca and their relationship to Downtown.

#### 1. How often do you visit Downtown Itasca?

Majority of respondents (49%) visit Downtown Itasca 'often' or 'all the time.' Still 47% visit Downtown 'sometimes' and only 5% 'never' visit Downtown.

#### 2. Why do you visit Downtown Itasca?

Respondents visit Downtown for 'Restaurants & Cafes' (63%), 'The Metra Station' (41%) and 'Services' (26%). A popular response in the open ended 'Other' category (39%) was for it's walkability, simply to walk and bike around.



#### 3. How far do you travel to get to Downtown Itasca?

Approximately 86% of respondents travel less than 5 minutes to reach Downtown. The remainder of respondents travel 5 to 20 minutes to reach Downtown.

#### 4. How do you get to Downtown Itasca?

The majority of visitors to Downtown Itasca travel by walking (58%), 28% drive, 13% walk, bike or drive, and 2% bike.



#### 5. If you drive, where do you like to park when visiting Downtown?

There was a range of responses to where people like to park but the majority were street parking or the parking lots in proximity to the final destination.

#### 6. How much time do you spend looking for parking in Downtown Itasca on a typical day (non-event)?

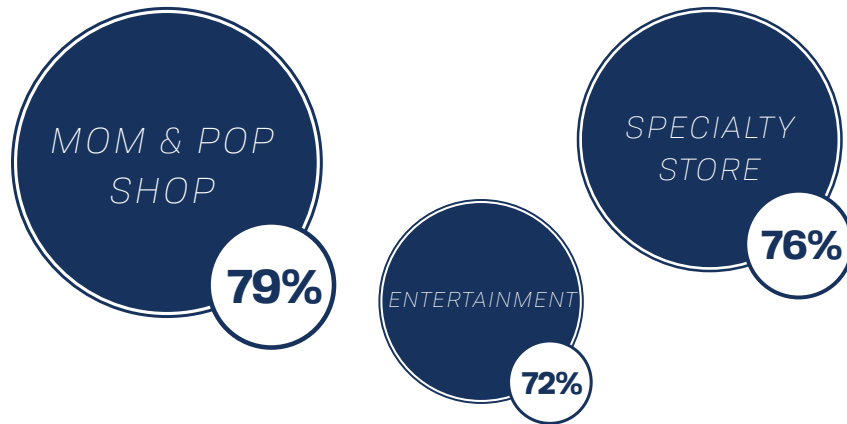
Finding a spot to park doesn't seem to be an issue for users of the Downtown, 92% of visitors can find parking in less than one minute on a typical day. 5% of visitors take 5 minutes to find parking and 3% find it takes 10+ minutes to find parking.

#### 7. How far are you willing to walk from your car to your ultimate destination?

Two to three minutes (1-2 blocks) was the typical time respondents are willing to walk from their car to their ultimate destination (55%). 30% are willing to walk 5+ minutes (3-4 blocks) and 16% won't walk far (less than a block).

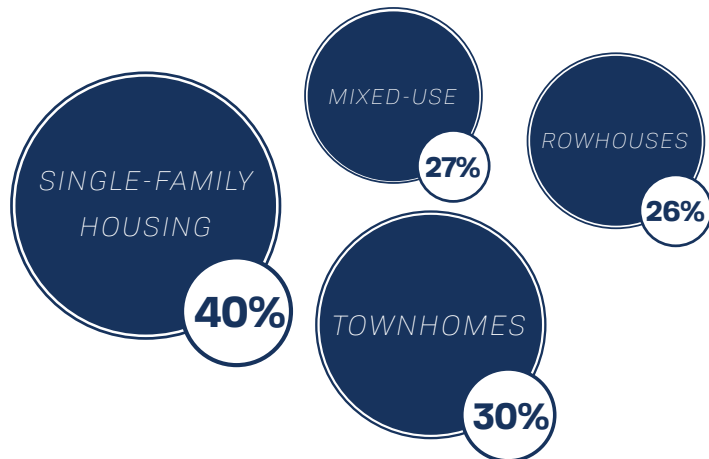
### 8. What type of retail would you like to see in Downtown Itasca?

Most response were aimed towards smaller, locally-owned businesses and entertainment uses.



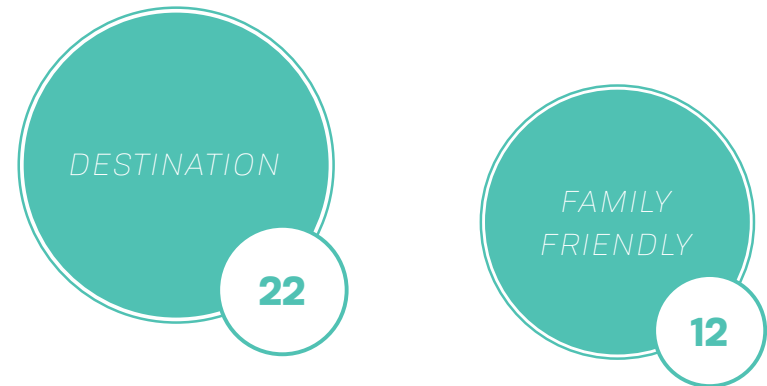
### 9. What type of housing would you like to see in Downtown Itasca?

A wide a variety of housing choices are desired in Downtown, although lower density, single-family homes are not appropriate.



### Future of Downtown Itasca

Survey respondents were asked an open-ended question about Downtown Itasca’s future: **“In ten years Downtown Itasca will be...”** The following collective themes emerged from responses:



*“Active meeting place for families”*



*“Central location for residents to meet and drink!”*

## Visual Preference

The goal of the visual preference survey was to introduce a range of potential improvements to gauge interest and understand the potential for improved character in the future Downtown. Participants were asked to rate their interest in a series of images. The numbers shown next to the following images represent the average ranking of survey responses on a scale of 1 to 100. Visual preference topics included:

1. **Image and Character** - public art, banners and signage and gateway elements.
2. **Architecture and Design** - massing, scale, height and styles, materials.
3. **Mobility and Connectivity** - pedestrian safety and types of bikeways.
4. **Community Gathering and Public Spaces** - types of public spaces, elements of public spaces, and temporary public spaces.
5. **Streetscape and Landscape** - lighting, seating, bike racks, receptacles, landscaping.

**Image and Character** Interactive public art elements were ranked highest by the community, in particular playful and youthful elements. Lighted gateways also ranked high as well as district branded signage.



82

*Play elements was ranked highest of the public art category.*



77

*Aluminum branded banners were ranked highest of the banners and signage category.*



86

*Lighted gateway was ranked highest of the gateway elements category.*



**Architecture and Design** Two and three story commercial buildings were ranked highest by participants. Interest was high in brick, traditional materials and varying density. Concrete and steel material for buildings and duplex/triplex multi-family scored low.



84

2-3 story commercial building



81

Brick building



70

3-Story Mixed-Use Building

**Mobility and Connectivity** The community showed high interest in improvements for pedestrian and bicyclist safety. Bump-outs, buffered bike lanes, and side paths were some favored improvements while painted and raised intersections scored lower at around a score of 40.



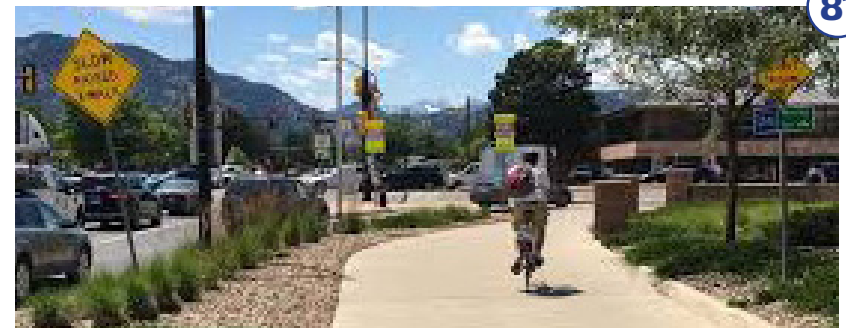
63

Bump-outs were favored as an improvement to pedestrian safety.



68

Buffered bike lanes were favored as an improvement to bicyclist safety.



81

Side path ranked highly for bike amenities.



**Community Gathering and Public Spaces** Participants showed significant interest in improvements to public spaces. Images of an urban plaza with decorative lighting had the most community support, shown below, while a parklet was ranked the lowest at 39.



85

Urban Plaza



80

Benches with lighting



83

Permanent outdoor market



81

Public sidewalk seating



39

Parklet (pop-up park in street parking spot)



83

Landscaping with benches

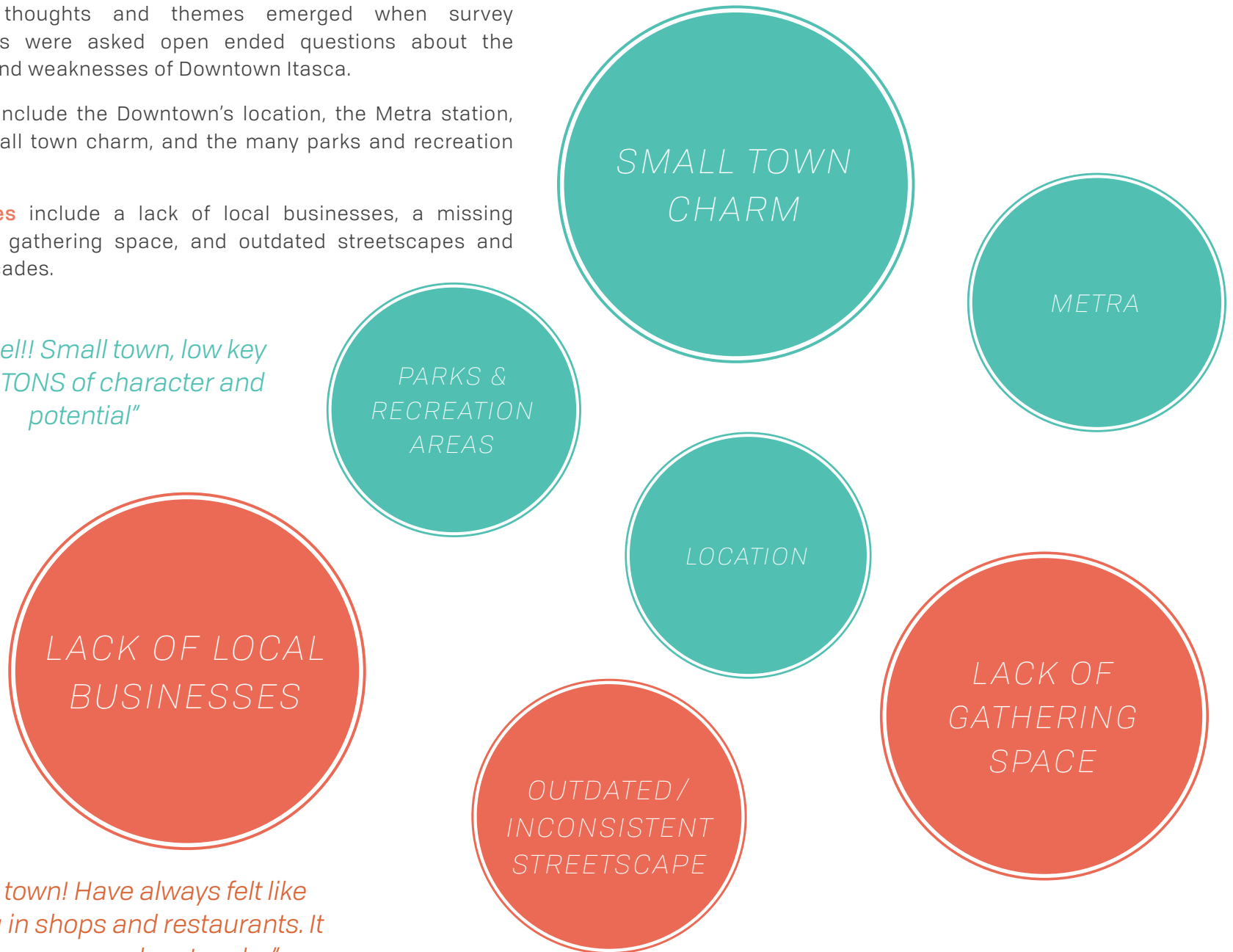
## Strengths & Weaknesses of Downtown Itasca

Collective thoughts and themes emerged when survey respondents were asked open ended questions about the strengths and weaknesses of Downtown Itasca.

**Strengths** include the Downtown's location, the Metra station, Itasca's small town charm, and the many parks and recreation areas.

**Weaknesses** include a lack of local businesses, a missing community gathering space, and outdated streetscapes and building facades.

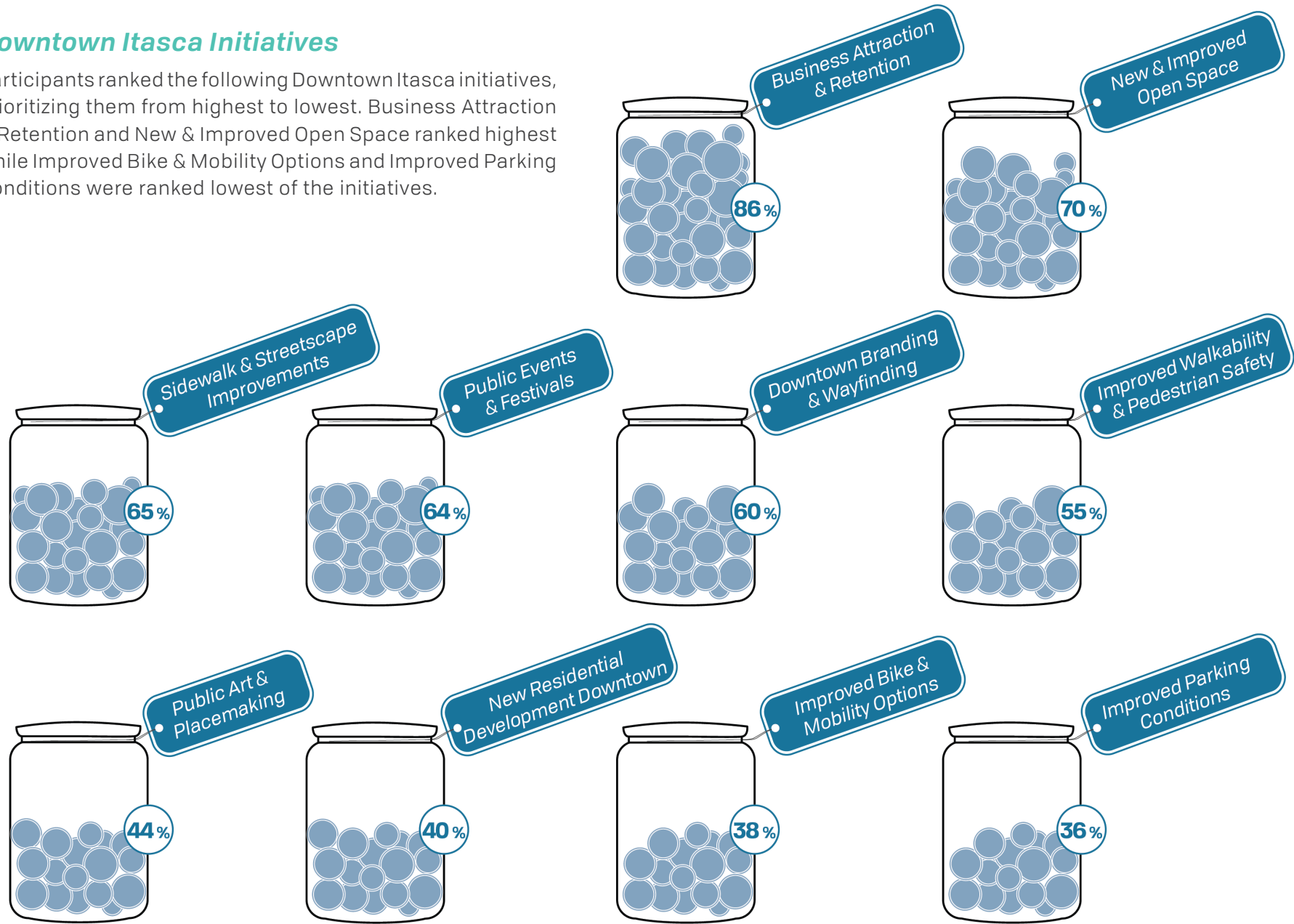
*"Great feel!! Small town, low key but with TONS of character and potential"*



*"Love the town! Have always felt like it's lacking in shops and restaurants. It needs a more modern touch..."*

### Downtown Itasca Initiatives

Participants ranked the following Downtown Itasca initiatives, prioritizing them from highest to lowest. Business Attraction & Retention and New & Improved Open Space ranked highest while Improved Bike & Mobility Options and Improved Parking Conditions were ranked lowest of the initiatives.





## COMMUNITY OPEN HOUSE #1

The project team, in conjunction with Village staff, held a community open house on September 23rd, 2021 to present the concepts and strategies to the larger community and Village residents. Approximately 35 people attended the open house.

The event was organized into five interactive stations:

- Station 1 – Introduction and Welcome
- Station 2 – North Walnut Character Area
- Station 3 – South Walnut Character Area
- Station 4 – Irving Park Road Character Area
- Station 5 – Visioning

The purpose of the open house was to inform the community of the process and information prepared for the project to date, receive specific insights on the future character of the different areas of Downtown Itasca, and hear the community's ideas and vision for the future of Downtown Itasca. A summary of the results from the activities held during the open house follows. Full size versions of the exhibits can be found on the project website: [www.ItascaDowntownPlan.com](http://www.ItascaDowntownPlan.com).

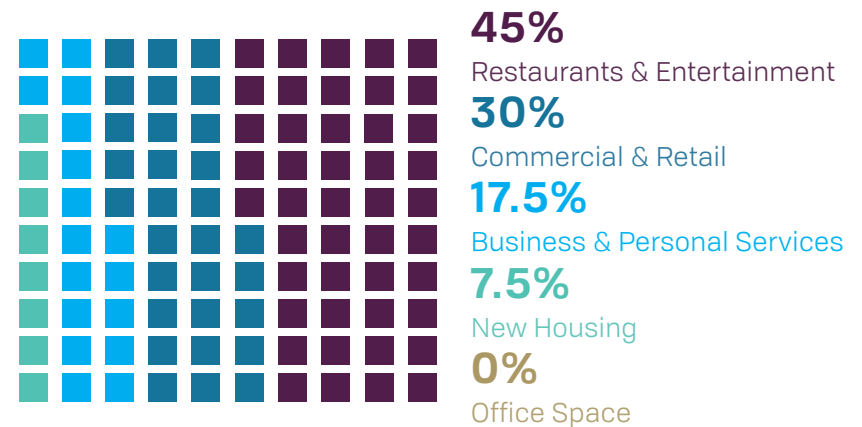


## Station 2: North Walnut Character Area

Participants were presented with a range of specific strategies highlighting key opportunities and approaches to strengthen Itasca's market position, improve connectivity, and enhance the physical environment of Downtown Itasca. **New/improved gathering spaces** (20%), **capitalizing on potential redevelopment sites** (18%), and **building façade enhancements** (16%) were chosen as the highest priority strategies to address.

When asked "for the future of Downtown Itasca, do you see North Walnut Street continuing to function as the Traditional Heart of Downtown/ Central Business District", **81% of respondents said yes.**

Participants were asked "what uses would you like to see in North Downtown along Walnut Street," **Restaurants and Entertainment** (45%) and **Commercial and Retail** (30%) ranked highest with Office Space receiving no votes.





An interactive exhibit presented the community with a range of possible building types and architecture styles that could be considered as part of future development proposals along North Walnut Street.

The area along Walnut Street, north of the tracks, has some potential for new development in the future, which could support broader revitalization efforts throughout Downtown.

The community was asked, "Of these images, please select the examples you would most like to see if development occurs in the future," below are the top 3 most favored images.



21



14



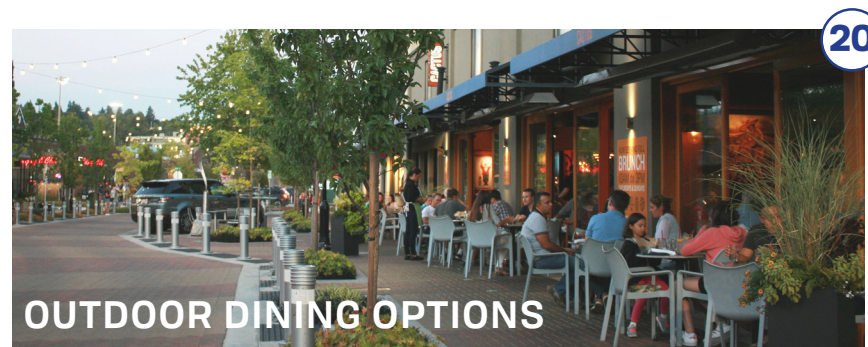
5

### Station 3: South Walnut Character Area

Participants were presented with a range of strategies, specific to the South Walnut Character Area that highlight key opportunities and approaches to strengthen Itasca's market position, improve connectivity, and enhance the physical environment of Downtown Itasca. **New/ improved gathering spaces (30%), creating a unique area with active uses (21%), and capitalizing on potential redevelopment sites (17.5%)** were chosen as the highest priority strategies to address.

When asked, "The planning team sees the future of South Downtown area, especially along Walnut Street as an area focused on dining and active commercial uses, tied together by a network of trails and small gathering spaces. Do you agree with this vision for the character of South Downtown," **91% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this statement.**

A series of urban design and placemaking elements were presented to the community. Participants were asked to choose the highest priorities for investment in Downtown Itasca. All elements presented were favored as high priorities for investment in Downtown Itasca. Plaza/open space activation, bike lane improvements, green infrastructure, public art opportunities, and enhanced signage and wayfinding were other elements shown and preferred by the community.



20

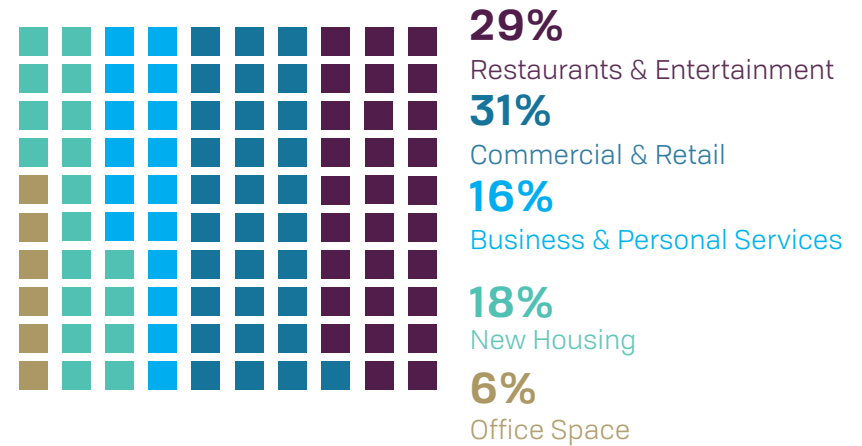
**OUTDOOR DINING OPTIONS**



### Station 4: Irving Park Road Character Area

Participants were presented with a range of strategies, specific to Irving Park Road Character Area that highlight key opportunities and approaches to strengthen Itasca’s market position, improve connectivity, and enhance the physical environment of Irving Park Road corridor. **Promoting a new activity hub near Catalpa Avenue (22%), transforming the overall character of Irving Park Road (22%), and more active/ attractive frontage conditions (16%)** were chosen as the highest priority strategies to address.

When asked “what uses would you like to see in the Irving Park Road Character Area,” **Commercial and Retail (31%)** and **Restaurants and Entertainment (29%)** ranked highest.



When asked “There has been strong interest in bringing a unique destination – such as a theater or performance space, boutique grocer or food hall – to Downtown Itasca, however the existing real estate market conditions may not allow such a use. Would you support an increase in residential density in this area if it helped to attract a new special use,” **majority of respondents (60%) strongly agreed or agreed**, while 22% were neutral, and 18% disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement.

A list of initiatives for Irving Park Road were presented to participants to choose the highest priorities for improvement on Irving Park Road. Below are the results.

- 24%** Establishing Irving Park Road as a highly ‘livable’ environment, the centerpiece of a new neighborhood area
- 24%** Establishing Irving Park Road as a more active corridor with frequent visitors and thriving commercial activity
- 20%** Attractive landscaping and high-quality streetscape elements
- 20%** Creating a safe environment for pedestrians
- 12%** Installing a safe and convenient infrastructure for bicyclists and other trail users.



## Station 5: Visioning

Below are some overarching themes heard during the event about big ideas and vision for the future Downtown Itasca.

**“Family-friendly activities spaces, and businesses.”**

**“Maintain historic buildings”**

**“Freshen” up Downtown buildings**

**“A charming destination with restaurants & gathering spaces.”**

**“Housing options for seniors.”**

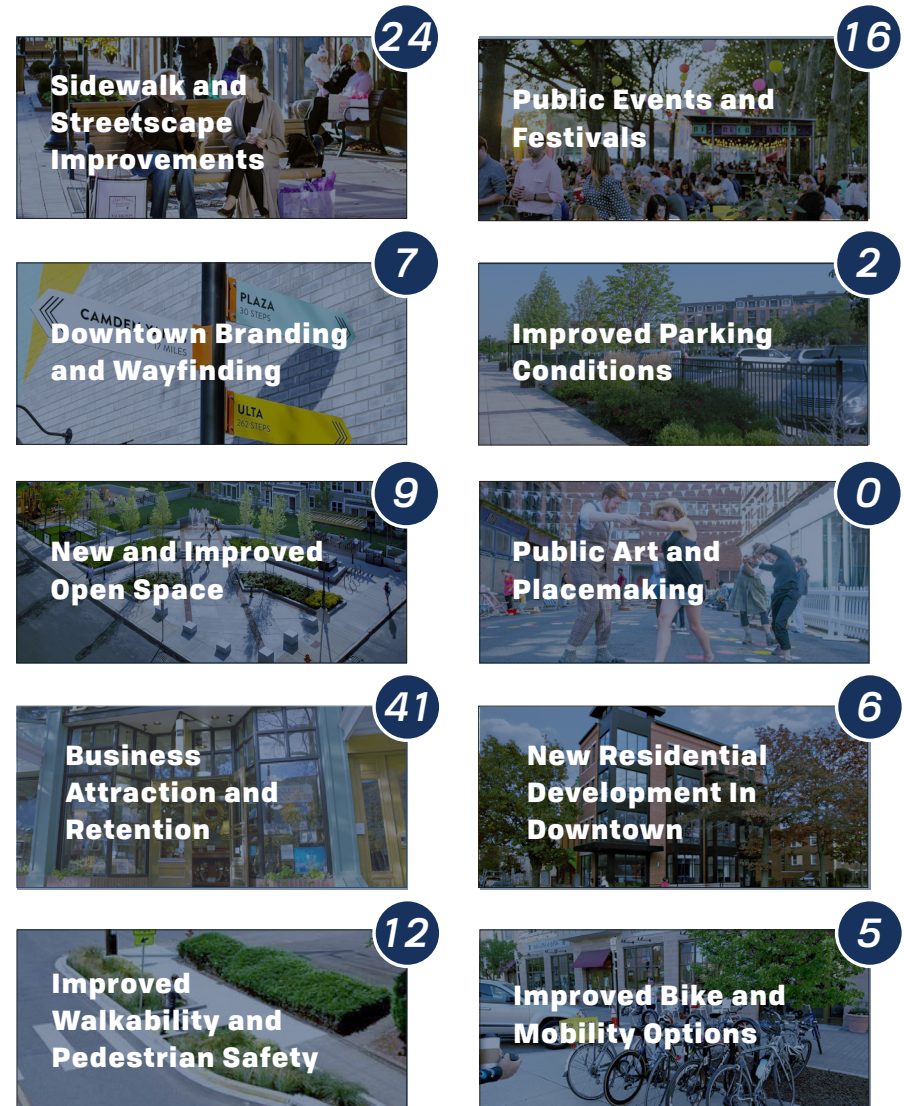
**“Creative & fun things to do to draw others here!”**

**“Improve walkability & beauty in all of Downtown.”**

**“More food options and outdoor dining!”**

**“Maintain the small-town feel.”**

Participants were asked to rank which initiatives were highest priority for Itasca to implement to reach their vision. Below are the results for how the community wishes to prioritize the initiatives.





## COMMUNITY OPEN HOUSE #2

The project team, in conjunction with Village staff, held a second community open house on January 20th, 2022 to present the Draft Downtown Strategic Action Plan. Approximately 250+ people attended the open house!

The open house was organized into five interactive stations:

- Station 1 - Welcome and Introduction
- Station 2 - Strategies and Recommendations
- Station 3 - Economic Development Recommendations and Actions
- Station 4 - Public Open Space and Urban Design Recommendations and Actions
- Station 5 - Access and Mobility Recommendations and Actions

The purpose of the open house was to talk about Downtown Itasca and the different recommendations and actions that will bring the vision for the future to reality. A follow up survey was posted to the website for those who were unable to attend. Below is a summary of the results from the activities held during the open house and the follow up survey. Full size versions of the exhibits can be found on the project website: [www.ItascaDowntownPlan.com](http://www.ItascaDowntownPlan.com).

### Station 3: Economic Development Recommendations and Actions

Participants were presented with the seven actions of the Economic Development Recommendation and asked to choose three actions the Village should place high priority on moving forward. Action 1, Development and Redevelopment Sites, and Action 7, Special Use were the highest priority actions as seen by the community. See the community's ranking for all the actions in the bubbles on this page. *To learn more about the ED Recommendation and Actions see page 56.*

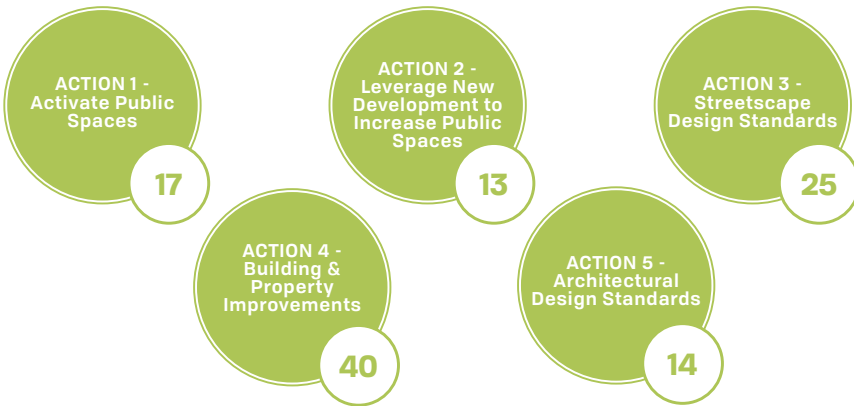


Participants were then asked to rank the level to which they like or dislike the images shown below, on a scale of 1 to 3. The images represent the potential range of development types and styles that might be appropriate for the Irving Park Road opportunity sites. Below are the rankings, with mixed-use development ranked highest by the community.



### Station 4: Public Open Space and Urban Design Recommendations and Actions

Participants were presented with the five actions of the Public Open Space and Urban Design Recommendation and asked to choose three actions the Village should place high priority on moving forward. Action 4, Building and Property Improvements, and Action 3, Streetscape and Design Standards were the highest priority actions as seen by the community. *To learn more about the Public Open Space and Urban Design Recommendation and Actions see page 64.*

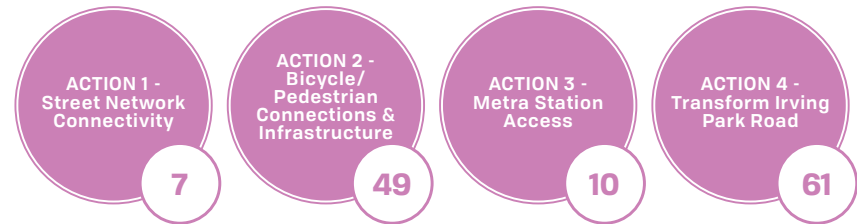


Participants were then asked to rank the level to which they like or dislike the visual simulation below of North Walnut Street and Orchard Street as a vision for the future of Downtown Itasca on a scale of 1 to 3. See page 67 for the full visual simulation.



### Station 4: Access and Mobility Recommendations and Actions

Participants were presented with the four actions of the Access and Mobility Recommendation and asked to choose three actions the Village should place high priority on moving forward. Action 4, Transform Irving Park Road, and Action 2, Bicycle/ Pedestrian Connection and Infrastructure were the highest priority actions as seen by the community. *To learn more about the Access and Mobility Recommendations and Actions see page 70.*



Participants were then asked to rank the level to which they like or dislike the visual simulation of Irving Park Road as an Urban Boulevard as a vision for the future of Downtown Itasca on a scale of 1 to 3. See page 49 for the full visual simulation.



2

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**DOWNTOWN STRATEGIES &  
RECOMMENDATIONS**

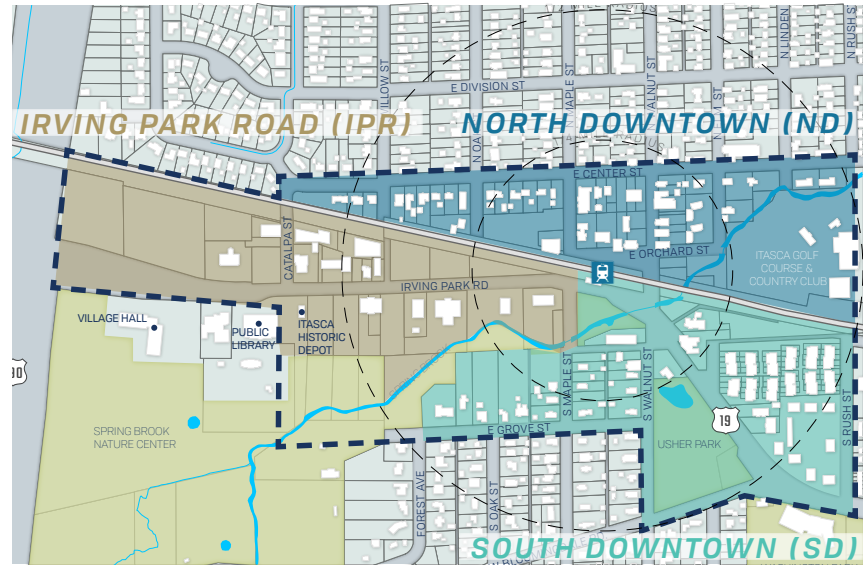


## DOWNTOWN STRATEGY FRAMEWORK

Itasca's Downtown Strategy Framework recognizes the interconnectivity between economic development, urban design, and transportation to achieve Downtown Itasca's vision. The framework identifies two primary activity hubs of Downtown: 1) North and South Walnut Avenue, the traditional core of Downtown Itasca; and, 2) Catalpa Avenue/Irving Park Road, envisioned as a new focus area that can contribute to Downtown's vibrancy. The activity hubs are connected by significant improvement and transformation of Irving Park Road as an urban boulevard, a block system to strengthen the overall connectivity network, and a new pedestrian connection bisecting the blocks north of Irving Park Road. Key intersection enhancements further strengthen pedestrian connections and safety while linking these two activity hubs.

Key strategies of the framework are organized on the following pages by character areas; North Downtown, South Downtown, and the Irving Park Road Corridor. These strategies highlight key opportunities and approaches, unique to each area to strengthen Itasca's market position, improve connectivity, and enhance the physical environment of Downtown.

Key recommendations and actions for economic development, public open space and urban design, and access and mobility follow the strategies, to create a road map to actively improve and develop North and South Downtown Itasca and the Irving Park Road corridor. These recommendations illustrate the interrelationship between the wide array of strategies and actions and how they work together to form a comprehensive vision for Downtown.



*Downtown Itasca's Character Areas*



*View looking east on Irving Park Road*





Visual simulation of Irving Park Road as an urban boulevard (view looking east on Irving Park Road)



## NORTH DOWNTOWN KEY STRATEGIES





## NORTH DOWNTOWN KEY STRATEGIES

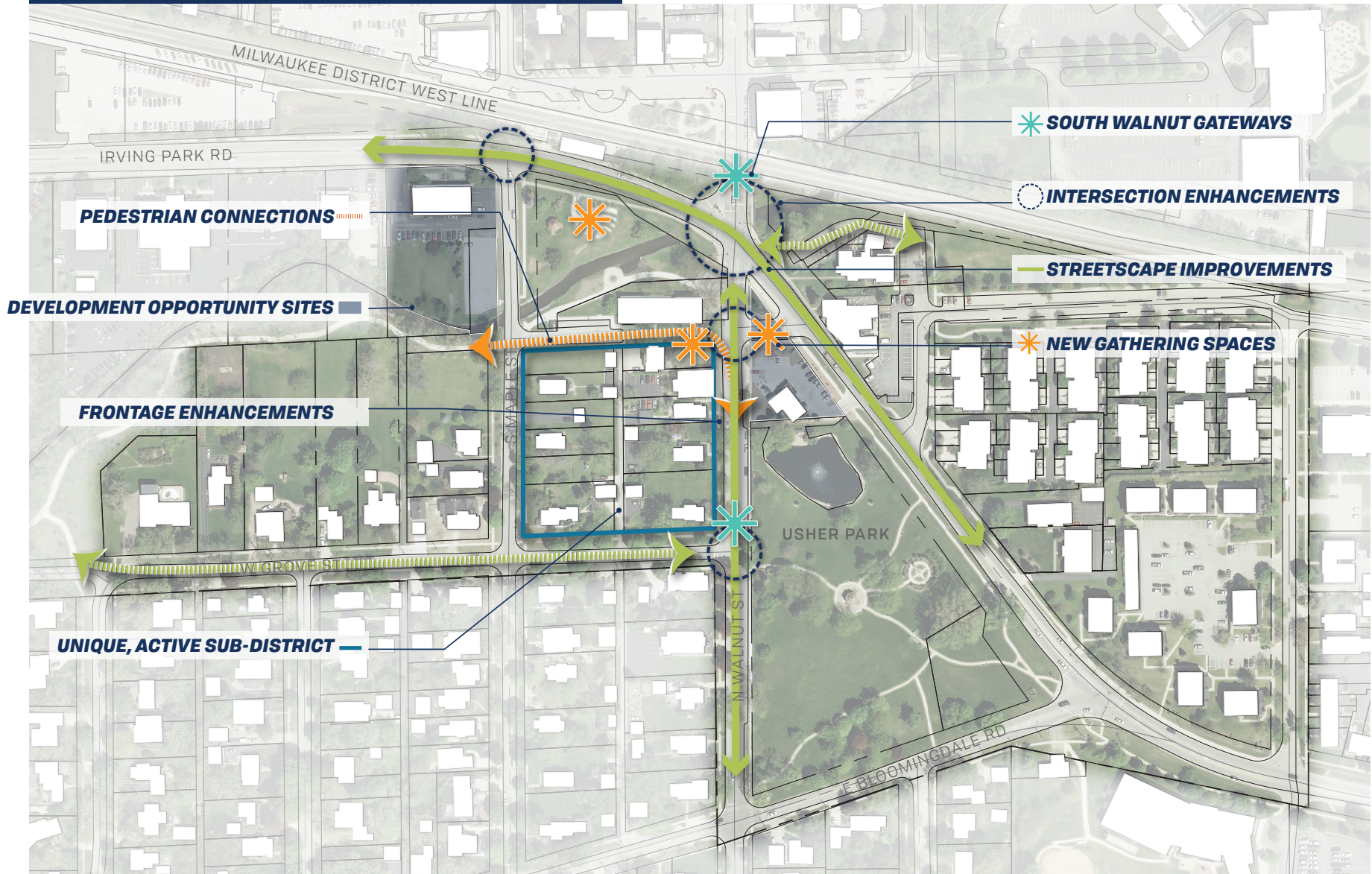
North Downtown along North Walnut Street is seen as the traditional heart of Downtown.

- **Streetscape Improvements:** Improve the pedestrian experience and establish a higher quality character along North Walnut Street and West Orchard Street. Consider lighting, seating, pavement materials, and signage elements to improve this quality.
- **Active Frontages:** Create more engaging frontage conditions at locations along North Walnut and West Orchard with higher visibility and activity. The public and private realms should blend seamlessly and create interest along the street.
- **Development Opportunity Sites:** Redevelop sites with strong potential for infill or redevelopment as higher intensity uses, which occur on both sides of North Walnut Street between Orchard and Center Streets. The Village controls some of these sites. Another opportunity may exist at the Metra commuter lot on the corner of North Maple and East Orchard Streets. However, limited access to this site and its proximity to single-family residential lots precluded in-depth analysis of redevelopment options although some opportunities may exist.
- **Pedestrian Connection :** Strengthen connectivity between north and south areas of Downtown to the Metra Station and across Irving Park Road through improved paths and sidewalk connections.
- **Metra Enhancements:** Enhance amenities and facilities adjacent to the Metra station including plaza improvements, seating, and bike parking. Work with Metra to consider reuse of the train station building to a commercial or public access use.
- **Gathering Spaces:** Explore opportunities to activate underutilized spaces and connect a network of public and private open spaces. Create programs and events focused in these spaces to bring interest and activity to Downtown.
- **Intersection Enhancements:** Improve key intersections at North Walnut and Center Street, and North Walnut and Orchard Street, to promote pedestrian safety and urban design character.
- **North Walnut Gateways:** The entrance to Downtown at North Walnut and East Orchard Streets should be identified and highlighted with signage, public art, and wayfinding elements.
- **Facade Enhancements:** Promote facade and building improvements to enhance existing building character along North Walnut for properties that do not redevelop.



217 N Walnut St

## SOUTH DOWNTOWN KEY STRATEGIES





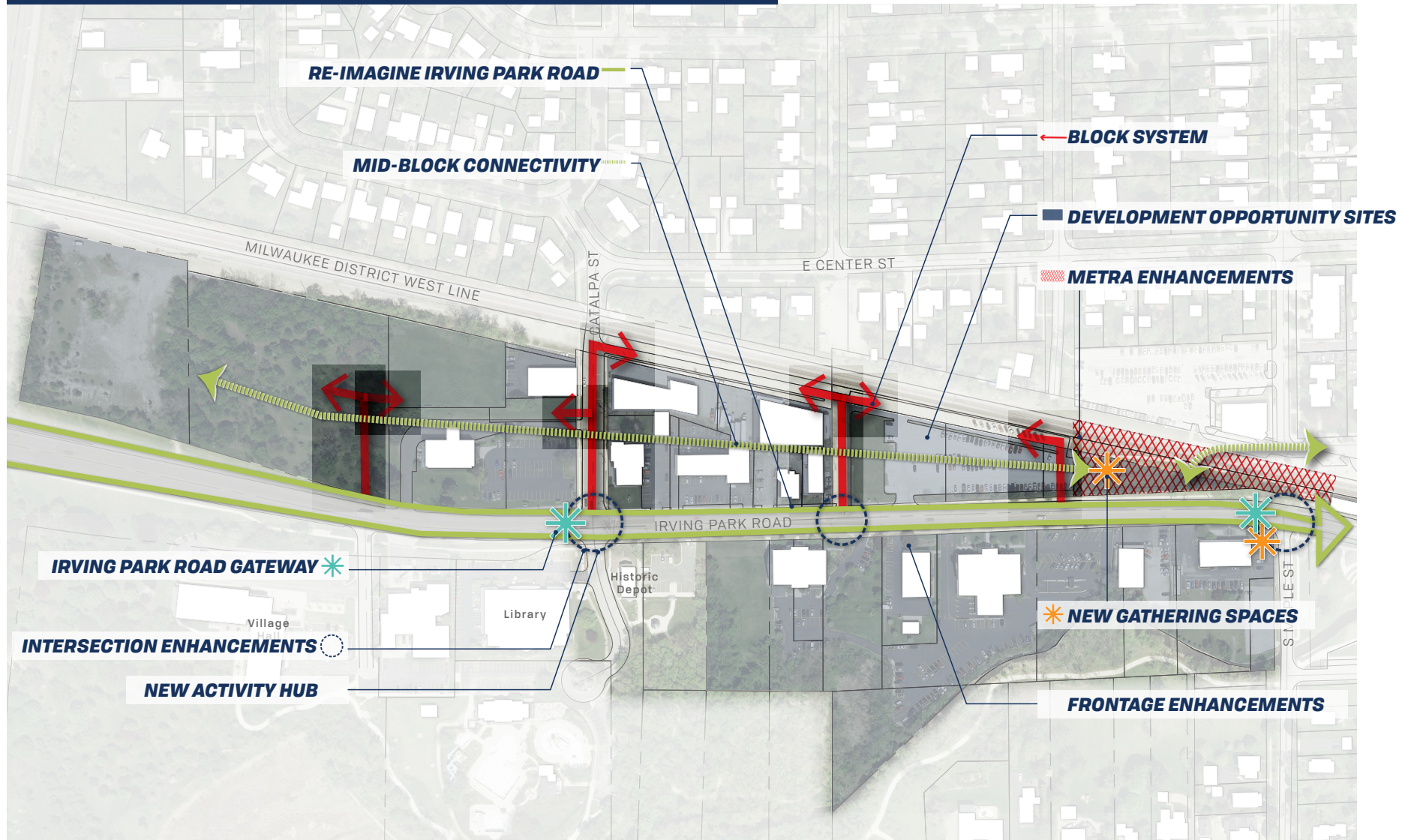
## SOUTH DOWNTOWN KEY STRATEGIES

South Downtown, especially along South Walnut Street, is envisioned as an area focused on dining and active commercial uses, tied together by a network of trails and small gathering spaces.

- **Pedestrian Connections:** Better connect the different areas of South Walnut through improved pathway connections with additional branding, signage and placemaking elements. Specifically, the link between South Walnut and South Maple near the former Village Hall building should be a key focus connection, as well as a dedicated pedestrian connection from the easterly Metra parking lot to the Metra Station near Schiller Street.
- **Development Opportunity Sites:** Promote development of sites with strong potential for infill or redevelopment. Within this area prioritize adaptive use of existing buildings for commercial use when possible. Specifically, the southwest corner of South Maple and Irving Park Road should be a focus.
- **Unique, Active Sub-District:** The central location and important historic character of the area between South Maple and South Walnut Streets may present an opportunity to establish a unique cultural subdistrict with active uses – such as local restaurants, studios, boutiques, and bed and breakfast lodging – in a more park like setting. Existing residential buildings would be preserved, but repositioned for commercial use over time. Additional parking would be restricted to the interior of the block to minimize visual impacts.
- **Frontage/Streetscape Enhancements:** Improve frontage conditions along South Walnut, Irving Park Road, and South Maple with increased landscaping, furnishings, and identity elements. The enhancements should also focus on the pedestrian environment and strengthening the connection between the public streetscape and private property.
- **South Walnut Gateways:** Better identify the entrance to Downtown with signage, public art, and wayfinding elements. Particular attention should be focused on South Walnut and Irving Park Road, and South Walnut and Bloomingdale Road.
- **Intersection Enhancements:** Improve key intersection and crossings to promote pedestrian safety, urban design character, and improve access to the Metra station. Key intersections along South Walnut include Irving Park Road, Gigi Gruber Lane, and West Grove Street.
- **New Gathering Spaces:** Explore opportunities to activate underutilized spaces and connect a network of public and private open spaces. A key element of this character area is vacating Gigi Gruber Lane as a public street and creating an enlarged plaza at this location.



## IRVING PARK ROAD CORRIDOR KEY STRATEGIES



## IRVING PARK ROAD CORRIDOR KEY STRATEGIES

The Irving Park Road Corridor is envisioned as a highly 'livable' environment, the centerpiece of a new neighborhood area, and a more active corridor with frequent visitors and thriving commercial activity.

- **Re-imagine Irving Park Road:** Transform Irving Park Road into an active, pedestrian-oriented corridor with streetscape enhancements, on-street parking, landscaped medians, traffic calming strategies, community character, and placemaking elements.
- **New Activity Hub:** Leverage existing uses and high priority opportunity sites near Irving Park Road and Catalpa Avenue to promote activity along the corridor. Encourage catalytic development and use opportunities on the large vacant site at this location and capitalize on existing activity generators to revitalize Irving Park Road as a new destination corridor.
- **Mid-Block Connectivity:** Explore opportunities to establish additional 'active frontages' and pedestrian connections between the railroad tracks and Irving Park Road by introducing new mid-block access routes. Incorporate public spaces and pedestrian linkages to improve connectivity.
- **Irving Park Road Gateway:** Better identify the entrance to Downtown at the Irving Park Road/Catalpa Avenue intersection with signage, public art, and wayfinding elements.
- **Intersection/Frontage Enhancements:** Improve key crossings to promote pedestrian safety and urban design character particularly at the Irving Park Road/Catalpa Avenue intersection and any new intersections created along the corridor. Promote facade, landscape, and other corridor improvements to enhance the character of Irving Park Road.
- **Block System:** Create and reinforce the traditional block network pattern north of Irving Park Road with a new public street parallel to the railroad tracks, improvement of Willow Street, and establish more regular and visible crossing points.
- **Development Opportunity Sites:** Identify and actively engage property owners of sites with strong potential for redevelopment – including higher density uses. Special attention should be focused on the Metra commuter lot at this location. Higher density uses and taller buildings should be located near Irving Park Road and Catalpa Avenue given the location of this site adjacent to Interstate 290.
- **Metra Enhancements:** Enhance commuter amenities and facilities near the Metra station including additional seating and bike parking, ticketing kiosks, and real time train information. Opportunities to extend the platforms westward may also exist, though will require further study for feasibility.
- **New Gathering Spaces:** Explore opportunities to activate under-utilized spaces and connect a network of public and private open spaces.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

### **Recommendation: Strengthen Downtown Itasca's market position & enhance the physical environment of Downtown.**

*The economic development recommendations are intended to supplement the development and design recommendations, and the transportation and mobility recommendations. The economic development recommendations are based on the current market realities while also recognizing current trends and attempting to capitalize on those trends. They largely intend to improve the quality of life in Itasca and help create a thriving Downtown. The term "quality of life" sets communities apart from one another. Cultivating a good quality of life in your community supports both residents and businesses. Factors that can improve quality of life include a thriving Downtown or commercial district and a variety of transportation options. Community resources, gathering spaces, and aesthetic improvements also tend to enhance quality of life.*

**Action 1 - Development & Redevelopment Sites:** Prioritize development on vacant and underutilized sites in prominent locations.

Sites in close proximity to the Metra Station and along active commercial frontages within the Downtown core along North Walnut Street should be targeted. Specifically, Village owned sites along North Walnut Street provide immediate opportunities for redevelopment. The west side of the street is vastly underutilized and is largely comprised of parking lots. An opportunity exists here for new pedestrian scaled mixed-use development. New development along North Walnut Street should reinforce the desired scale and character of the traditional Downtown area.

- The typical height for new development on North Walnut should be three stories. Additional stories may be warranted and are acceptable, but should be stepped back to maintain the desired scale.
- Similarly, building floor stepbacks and setbacks should also be utilized on the rear and sides of new development to help respect the scale of lower-scale residential on adjacent blocks.
- Prioritize mixed-use development with active commercial frontage (i.e. storefronts & services), however other uses, such as residential or office, may also be acceptable if designed properly. This includes maintaining active uses at key corners such as North Walnut and West Orchard, and avoiding blank façades.
- Larger, full-block redevelopment is generally discouraged in this area, however if pursued, the building façade should be 'broken up' by changes in form, texture, and uses to maintain an active and interesting streetscape.
- Consider reductions to minimum parking, minimum lot size, and ground-floor commercial use as a compromise for projects that respect the desired character and incorporate high-caliber architectural design and uses.

### **Implementation Tasks:**

- Establish and maintain communications with local business and property owners, to create a business attraction and retention program.
- Small business assistance to coach existing businesses to become experience-oriented.
- Identify, support, and create dialogue with local entrepreneurs, chefs, and artists.
- Fill empty storefronts with "experience oriented" and "experimental" retail businesses, pop-ups, and food related choices.



National chains follow higher density residential development. New higher density multifamily developments west of Willow along Irving Park Road would support this. In order to maximize that type of development along Irving Park Road existing businesses have to relocate or integrate into the new high-density development. The Village will need to assist with these efforts.

- Consider Village sponsored development Request for Proposals (RFPs) for Village owned sites/properties along North Walnut Street.
- Assist with parcel assembly and consolidation to create larger, cost efficient sites for redevelopment.
- Consider strategies to expand and acquire public right-of-way dedication and future street connectivity.



115 W Orchard Street

**Action 2 - Transit Supportive Development Along Irving Park Road:** Encourage transit-supportive development along the Irving Park Road Corridor, west of South Maple Street, as a catalyst for a new Irving Park Road District.

The site located at the corner of Irving Park Road and South Maple Street is a potential catalytic gateway site. It currently contains an automotive repair shop and print shop.

- Increased height, density, and intensity of use along this corridor is warranted due to the scale of Irving Park Road, proximity to the Metra Station, and notable activity generating uses, ease of access, and separation from existing residential neighborhoods.
- Other key opportunity sites for new transit-supportive development include the south Metra parking lot, underutilized sites along the north side of Irving Park Road and vacant sites near Catalpa Avenue.

#### **Implementation Tasks:**

- Property owner outreach to gauge interest in redevelopment and assisting with existing business relocation efforts.
- Public infrastructure and streetscape improvements as necessary to support redevelopment.
- Zoning amendments, site development concepts, and design studies to provide clear direction for intended use and design of redevelopment.
- Integrate uses such as law offices, realtors, and other service businesses that require office space and provide shared space in a new higher density mixed-use development.

**Action 3 - Active Use Cluster At Catalpa Avenue:** Establish a new active use cluster near Catalpa Avenue to support and encourage synergy with the existing activity generators south of Irving Park Road (Aquatic Park, Library and Village Hall).

Allow increased density and intensity of use when developing vacant sites - and on potential infill development opportunities - in the surrounding area in order to capitalize on the area's potential as a catalyst for broader Downtown revitalization efforts.

Consider a "residential village" concept with varying housing types, open spaces/plazas, and pedestrian connectivity on the large vacant site at Catalpa/Irving Park Road.

With several highly active uses in the area around Catalpa Avenue - such as Village Hall, the water park and library - potential exists to establish a more substantial and dynamic area of activity. The vacant and under-utilized parcels on the north side of Irving Park Road across from Village Hall present strong opportunities for development due to the size of these sites and their proximity to the Metra Station and Downtown businesses. Encouraging increased residential activity and density in this area would provide a substantial benefit to efforts to revitalize the Irving Park Corridor and help support a broad range of other Downtown planning goals and improvements.

The site study examples to the right represent potential forms that future development of active use cluster might take. These scenarios were developed to help test ideas and are highly conceptual.

Elements Include:

- Inclusion of off-street pedestrian pathways, including a pedestrian 'paseo' between the railroad tracks and Irving Park Road would help connect these sites to the Metra Station and local businesses close to North and South Walnut Streets.

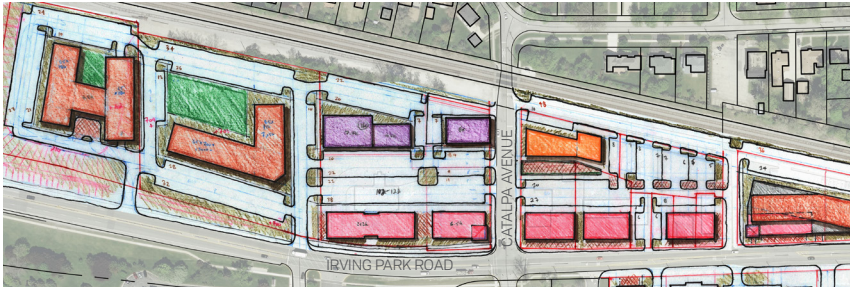
- Residential uses should incorporate a network of small open spaces, parks, and plaza spaces. These spaces could also potentially support adjacent commercial uses and outdoor dining space
- New development should reinforce the traditional block network, provide additional frontage locations and reduce loading and access pressure from Irving Park Road.
- Future development along the corridor can occur in site by site increments that build around existing uses, or occur in the form of a more comprehensive planned development.
- Parcel assembly and consolidation would likely be needed and coordinated by the Village with multiple property owners.

#### **Implementation Tasks:**

- Property owner outreach to gauge interest in development and assisting with existing business relocation efforts. Site acquisition of vacant sites may also be an option.
- Public infrastructure and streetscape improvements as necessary to support redevelopment.
- Zoning amendments to the B-3 District, site development concepts, and design studies to provide clear direction for intended use and design of redevelopment.



*Irving Park Road looking west towards Catalpa Avenue intersection*



Active Use Cluster Site Study - Concept 1

- This concept maintains and potentially expands commercial uses near Catalpa, with denser new residential development in the range of 4 to 5-stories occurring to the west.
- Residential development could occur on a site by site increment or in the form of a more comprehensive planned development.



Active Use Cluster Site Study - Concept 2

- This concept shows a more substantial mixed-use residential development at Catalpa, and then transitions down in scale to the west. Inclusion of a larger parking structure allows for residential parking and supports commercial uses.
- New development is meant to establish a more consistent 'street wall' along Irving Park Road.
- Semi-enclosed open spaces help to soften the density and create quiet pleasant spaces for local residents and patrons of ground-floor businesses.

**Action 4 - Zoning Amendments:** Modify zoning districts as necessary to adequately address land use mix and development standards for the north and south Downtown area, and for the Irving Park Road corridor per the development and improvement recommendations of the Downtown Strategic Action Plan.

More information on zoning amendments is provided in the Implementation section.

#### **Implementation Tasks:**

- Amend and consolidate the B-4 and B-5 districts consistent with the Downtown Strategic Action Plan.
- Amend the B-6 district consistent with the new vision for Irving Park Road and Downtown Strategic Action Plan.
- Rezone the B-2 and B-3 districts that exist in the Downtown Strategic Action Plan project area to B-6 or consistent with B-6 district modifications.

**Action 5 - Green Infrastructure:** Incorporate green infrastructure and stormwater management best practices into new development, streetscape improvements, and existing locations to help alleviate flooding issues.

Consider public investment in flood mitigation infrastructure in locations with known flood issues where new development may not be feasible as a result. In-kind subsidies – such as land swaps or zoning relief – could also be considered on privately-owned sites that are partially encumbered by flood zones or have been prone to flooding. Examples include the western portions of the Itasca Country Club parking lot or on parcels on the south side of Irving Park Road adjacent to Spring Brook.



**Action 6 - South Walnut District:** Establish a unique, active use district in the South Walnut area centered around a collection of linked and highly programmed open spaces.

The central location and important historic character of the area between Maple and Walnut Streets presents an opportunity to establish a unique sub-district with active uses – such as local restaurants, studios and boutiques, and bed & breakfast lodging – in a more park-like setting. Existing residential buildings would be preserved, but repositioned for commercial use over time. Additional parking would be restricted to the interior of the block to minimize visual impacts.

- This initiative would include vacating Gigi Gruber Lane and converting the space to a public plaza area and providing public improvements and activation around the former Village Hall building – including an enhanced pedestrian connection between Walnut and Maple Streets.
- Focus economic development efforts on expanded and synergistic uses in this area that address missing or untapped market potential, specialty food/beverage uses, and smaller scale entertainment or recreation uses.

**Implementation Tasks:**

- Property owner outreach to gauge interest in redevelopment and assisting with existing business relocation efforts.
- Business attraction, marketing, and economic development efforts to find suitable tenants and promote this district.
- Zoning amendments, site development concepts, and design studies to provide clear direction for intended use and design of redevelopment.

- Increase marketing efforts and create a Village-wide branding and communication strategy focused on:
  - » Enhance branding for Itasca, highlighting the lively Downtown and authentic local amenities.
  - » Include Itasca's unique story.
  - » Coordinate social media so that Itasca presents itself with a clear and consistent identity.
  - » Encourage business and other networks to use common branding in social media.
  - » Engage residents and local business owners as powerful ambassadors.
- A community prospectus provides implementation strategies that can assist to attract developers, tenants and users to achieve the goals set forth in the Downtown Strategic Action Plan. Some examples, which are further detailed in the Implementation Section, include:
  - » Identify and Activate Stakeholders
  - » Prioritize Projects
  - » Identify Financing such as Bonds, Special Tax Districts Tax Credit Programs, Revolving Loan Funds, Federal Grants and Loans
  - » Invest in needed infrastructure (utilities, street improvements)
  - » Package Incentives (Streamlined permitting, tax credits, density bonuses and financing support)
  - » Align local partners (Investors are looking for cooperation among local agencies and stakeholders.)



**SOUTH DOWNTOWN DISTRICT - PLAN INFORMATION**

- |                                       |  |                                     |                                     |
|---------------------------------------|--|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <b>1</b> Intersection enhancements    | <b>6</b> Potential shared street       | <b>11</b> Gateway element           | <b>16</b> Intersection enhancements |
| <b>2</b> New gathering space          | <b>7</b> New pedestrian connection     | <b>12</b> Intersection enhancements | <b>17</b> New pedestrian connection |
| <b>3</b> Potential future development | <b>8</b> Intersection enhancements     | <b>13</b> Gigi Gruber Plaza         | <b>18</b> Intersection enhancements |
| <b>4</b> New gathering space          | <b>9</b> New gathering space           | <b>14</b> Landscaping buffer        |                                     |
| <b>5</b> Potential future development | <b>10</b> Potential future parking lot | <b>15</b> Improved streetscape      |                                     |

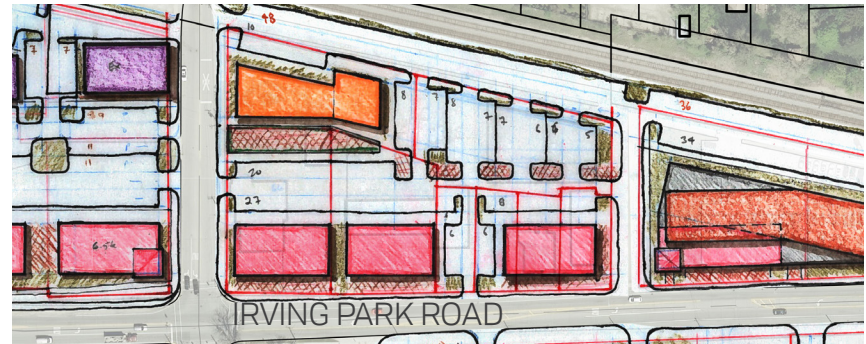


**Action 7 - Special Use:** Establish a notable destination business or use within Downtown Itasca.

Interest in having a notable destination business or use within Downtown Itasca was raised during the planning process. Examples could include a live theater or performing arts space, hybrid gallery and event space, boutique grocer, or market and food hall. The site study examples to the right represent potential forms that future development of a special use might take. These scenarios were developed to help test ideas and are highly conceptual.

**Implementation Tasks:**

- Community partnerships to garner support for a performing arts space as a shared facility with multiple entities providing input into programming and activities. It is imperative that a space of this type be available to a wide range of community groups and performing artists to ensure year round use, which includes the school district, local artists, dance groups, musicians and others.
- Consolidation of parking for Metra commuters and local businesses within shared lots, allowing greater efficiency and synergy between uses. Metra parking could also support the new special uses through its availability during non-peak commute times (typically nights and weekends) which would coincide with peak time of this special use.
- Incorporation of small gathering spaces and seating areas – including open building facades that support indoor/outdoor dining areas would provide locations for community space. These spaces are especially important for food related uses or other uses that encourage gathering or may require outdoor seating.
- Outreach to multiple property owners, parcel assembly and consolidation would likely be needed and could be coordinated by the Village.



- **Building Reuse:** Assumes reuse and design of an existing building as a special use facility. Where possible, building openings are created connecting to outdoor seating areas. Active commercial uses – such as food/beverage service and retail – located nearby.





## PUBLIC OPEN SPACE & URBAN DESIGN

**Recommendation:** Capitalize on the existing network of public spaces in Downtown and create new opportunities for outdoor enjoyment, placemaking, and areas of interest.

*Spring Brook Creek flows through the Downtown and provides an excellent opportunity for public art and a destination itself. A “creek walk” follows the creek as it flows to the Spring Brook Nature Center and expands to a larger network of trails through a forested marsh. Two larger community parks, Usher and Washington, are also located in Downtown and provide open space areas and locations for community events and Downtown activities. Usher Park includes an iconic gazebo that is popular for weddings, graduations, and other photo opportunities. Other opportunities for expanded spaces exist at the North Walnut and Orchard intersection, and as part of new development project near Catalpa Avenue.*

**Action 1 - Activate Public Spaces:** Prioritize public space investments in programming, furnishings, and amenities to better activate Downtown’s public spaces.

### Implementation Tasks:

- Include a range of spaces in this approach, including existing plazas and parks; publicly-occupied but privately owned sites (such as outdoor dining areas); and informal or reclaimed sites, such as temporary or permanent street closures, parklets, or under-utilized parking lots and paved areas.
- Establish a robust public space network within the Downtown area by enhancing key trails and linkages through public art, wayfinding, and placemaking improvements.

- Consider vacating Gigi Gruber Lane between Irving Park Road and South Walnut Street and convert this area into an expanded public plaza.
  - » Gigi Gruber Lane, the short access lane just North of Usher Park, has the potential to serve as a valuable community gathering space for the Downtown Itasca. Its key location at the entrance to Downtown can act as a gateway, activate an underutilized street, and anchor a network of public and private open spaces. The Village would need to conduct a traffic operations study to evaluate the feasibility of vacating this public street. IDOT coordination and a series of public meetings would also be needed to ensure this opportunity is viable and to consider public comment and sentiment about this proposal.
- Specific focus should be concentrated on the Creekwalk and its connection to Spring Brook Nature Center, connections to Usher Park, new plaza at Gigi Gruber Lane.



**BEFORE**

View looking southwest towards Walnut Street, from Irving Park Road





**AFTER**

Visual simulation of Gigi Gruber Plaza (view looking southwest towards Walnut Street, from Irving Park Road)



**Action 2 - Leverage New Development to Increase Public Spaces.** Leverage new development and commercial activity to increase the size and amount of open space.

Where practical and possible, incorporate modest plazas or gathering spaces as part of new development proposals, with a special emphasis on strategic locations where active commercial uses are desired.

Wherever possible, encourage and enable synergy between open spaces and commercial use(s). Examples include providing space for small vendors – such as kiosks, ‘pop-up shops’, or food trucks; incorporating flexible space and functionality to provide opportunities for markets/fairs, outdoor events and classes; and working with food and beverage vendors to facilitate sidewalk cafes and outdoor dining opportunities.

The existing plaza space at Orchard and North Walnut Streets offers one example, which could potentially be enhanced or expanded as part of a more robust ‘transit plaza’ and shared streetscape. However, improvements of this nature could be costly and may only be warranted and justified if a more substantial redevelopment effort at the corner of North Walnut were to occur as well.

A second example is to create a ‘transit plaza’ with a kiosk and enhanced transit infrastructure on the south side of the tracks as part of a reconfiguration and infill development effort on the south commuter lot. This would support multiple Downtown planning objectives and provide a notable opportunity to enhance the functionality of the station and the commuter experience.

### **Implementation Tasks:**

- Consider requiring a public space/plaza development fee for Downtown development to acquire funds for new and improved public spaces.
- Prioritize public infrastructure and streetscape improvements as necessary to support public space improvements.
- Engage and collaborate with Metra for improvements to the train station area, plaza, and public spaces.



*View looking northwest towards Orchard Street, from North Walnut Street*





**AFTER**

Visual simulation of view looking northwest towards Orchard Street from North Walnut Street



**Action 3 - Streetscape Design Standards:** Unify the character, identity, and design of Downtown through improved streetscape design following the Design Guidelines and Downtown Strategic Action Plan.

The existing Downtown Design Guidelines provide guidance for design considerations related to streetscape and architectural building design. The Design Guidelines and Downtown Strategic Action plan are consistent in their objectives.

**Implementation Tasks:**

- Consider codifying select sections of the Streetscape Design Guidelines and requiring certain improvements for Downtown development and redevelopment.
- Engage IDOT and private property owners to assist with implementing consistent streetscape design throughout the Downtown based on the Downtown Design Guidelines.
- Utilize the Downtown Strategic Action Plan and Downtown Design Guidelines to create consistent streetscape design improvements plans for all Downtown corridors and Irving Park Road.
- Encourage or require “green” infrastructure measures and stormwater best practices as part of new or redesigned streetscapes.



*Intersection bump-out*



*Planted median*



**Action 4 - Building & Property Improvements:** Provide a clean, modern design and improve the character and impression of Downtown through facade, building, signage, and property improvements.

Opportunities exist for facade, building, signage and property improvements to provide a clean, modern design and improve the character and impression of Downtown. Building improvements are warranted in the Downtown core along Walnut Street, and along Irving Park Road.

The Downtown Design Guidelines offer direction and provide a range of design standards for building and facade design.

**Implementation Tasks:**

- Create and provide financial incentives, such as matching grants and low interest loans, and offer assistance to building and property owners for design plans, façade rehabilitation, contractor negotiation, signage enhancements, and building and property improvements.
- Create a specific facade improvement program to assist building owners with building improvements and facade rehabilitation projects.
- Utilize the Downtown Design Guidelines to guide consistent building and property improvements plans for all Downtown and Irving Park Road properties.

**Action 5 - Architectural Design Standards:** Utilize and apply the Downtown Design Guidelines as the primary design document for Downtown improvements, development, and redevelopment projects.

Apply consistent standards and guidelines for adjacent properties near each other and seek a consistent design theme based on the character area of both Design Guidelines and Downtown Strategic Action Plan.

**Implementation Tasks:**

- Consider codifying select sections of the Design Guidelines into the Zoning Ordinance.
- Encourage or require compliance with the Design Guidelines for all development and redevelopment projects within the Downtown and Irving Park Road corridor.



*Brick mixed-use building with modern corner feature*

## ACCESS & MOBILITY

**Recommendation:** Provide an interconnected system of transportation infrastructure to facilitate the safe and efficient movement of vehicles and pedestrians within and through the Village of Itasca.

*The goal of the Village's transportation network is to provide an interconnected system of transportation infrastructure consisting of roads, sidewalks, trails, paths, and public transit to facilitate the safe and efficient movement of vehicles and pedestrians within and through the Village of Itasca. The Downtown Strategic Action Plan furthers the work that has been completed by the Village, addressing current environments, and providing an updated action vision and action plan. Recommendations consist of mobility improvements along and across Irving Park Road, intersection enhancement to better connect the north and south cores of Downtown, expansion of bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, and improvements to Metra station access.*

**Action 1 - Street Network Connectivity:** Create a connected street network for improved circulation, strengthen and expand multi-modal access options, create linkages between land uses, and allow for greater shared parking opportunities.

Improvements include intersection enhancements, mid-block crossing opportunities, and more direct pedestrian and bicycle access.

- Transforming Irving Park Road as a Downtown corridor and not just a through street requires connecting the north and south areas of Downtown. Explore opportunities to establish intersection improvements and pedestrian crossings to create linkages between districts north and south of Irving Park Road. Refer to Action 4 on page 74, of the Access and Mobility Recommendations for more detail.

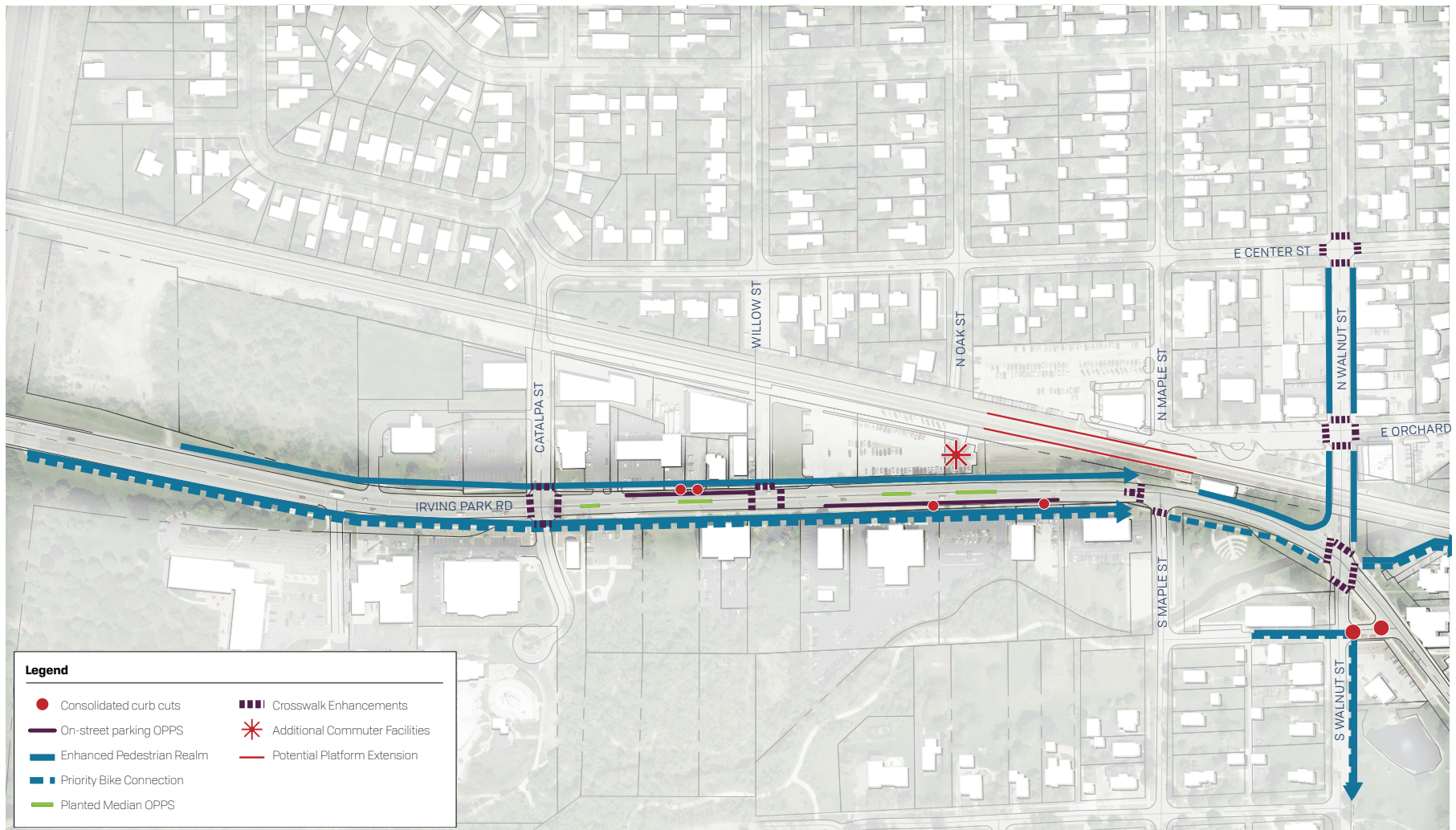
- Reestablish/Reinforce a more traditional block structure between Irving Park Road and the Milwaukee District West Line with crossing points and enhanced pedestrian facilities at regular intervals.
- Coordinate with IDOT on potential safety enhancements at Irving Park Road and Walnut Street such as widened crossings, upgraded signals with LPI and audible signals, and additional signage.
- Vacate Gruber Lane (north of the old Starbucks site). Options might include eliminating this short roadway between the Starbucks site and the triangle to make one larger parcel; or at a minimum reduce the size and convert to one-way eastbound. Remove the on-street striping and expand the plaza area.
- All intersections, signalized and unsignalized, should be marked with high visibility crosswalks. Ensure all pedestrian crossings have ADA accommodations, particularly curb ramps. Curb ramps provide access between the sidewalk and roadway for people using wheelchairs, strollers, walkers, crutches, handcars, and bicycles, or who have mobility restrictions that make it difficult to step up and down high curbs. Curb ramps must be installed at all intersections and mid-block locations where there are pedestrian crossings.

### **Implementation Tasks:**

- This action will require coordinating with IDOT to agree upon preferred design concepts, traffic signal changes, and potential funding sources.
- Coordination with landowners to consolidate and assemble properties and acquire potential right-of-way.
- Village to coordinate design and construction of new roadway segments and enhanced plaza at Gigi Gruber Lane.



Exhibit 10 - Access and Mobility Recommendations



The access and mobility recommendation focuses on measures to improve vehicular and pedestrian access and connectivity. Strategies include consolidating curb cuts to limit turn movements along Irving Park Road; on-street parking opportunities along Irving Park Road to support local businesses and calm traffic; and enhancing the pedestrian and bicycle experience along Irving Park Road. A pedestrian connection exists to the west, across Interstate 290, linking the Downtown to this connection is an important factor. Additional Metra commuter facilities such as a ticket kiosk and relocation of the train platform further west are also two improvement strategies. These improvements could help facilitate additional development along Irving Park Road.



### Action 2 - Bicycle/Pedestrian Connections & Infrastructure:

Expand and enhance the pedestrian network and experience to increase the attractiveness and safety of walking and biking.

Physical barriers are problematic for the Downtown bike and pedestrian network. Traffic volumes on Irving Park Road create a negative walking experience, resulting in an unsafe and unprotected pedestrian environment. Opportunities exist to expand and enhance the pedestrian network and experience. Actions to increase the attractiveness and safety of walking include completing sidewalk gaps, regular sidewalk maintenance, and enhancing pedestrian crossings at signalized and unsignalized intersections.

Bicycle travel can be an effective travel mode in the Downtown, serving both recreational trips as well as work and school trips, but requires comfortable travel routes along with addressing crossing locations, network gaps, and maintenance. The Downtown area would also benefit from expanded bike parking stations and covered bike parking.

- As described in Action 4 on page 74 of the Access and Mobility Recommendations, incorporate robust bike and pedestrian infrastructure along Irving Park Road.
- Strengthen pedestrian connections from the easterly Metra parking lot to the Metra Station along Schiller Street.
- Link Downtown to the Salt Creek Trail on Prospect Avenue by creating an east-west connection from Spring Brook Trail through Usher Park to Schiller Street and creating a “trailhead” connection at Springbrook Nature Center or Usher Park. A new pedestrian crossing should be considered at First Street.
- Add shared uses at the Metra station, Spring Brook Nature Center, and the Village complex to include bike and e-bike sharing and scooters.

- Add bicycle parking throughout Downtown, including a bike station at the Metra station which could include covered bike parking with seasonal bike repair kiosk.

### Implementation Tasks:

- Coordination with IDOT to address Irving Park Road crossings.
- Coordination with Spring Brook Nature Center and Metra to add bike parking and shared uses.
- Work with potential vendors to install bike and scooter sharing infrastructure.
- Coordinate with IDOT regarding new pedestrian crossings along Irving Park Road.
- Village should identify locations and install bike parking.



Shared Path



Marked bike path

**Action 3 - Metra Station Access:** Address access challenges and constraints to the Metra station and parking lots to strengthen overall connectivity in Downtown.

The Metra station and parking lots are a key public resource for Downtown Itasca. This action focuses on access to and around the station which will also strengthen overall connectivity in Downtown. Opportunities exist to address access challenges and constraints, such as West Irving Park Road crossings, disconnected sidewalks, lack of direct pedestrian paths to the station, and wayfinding.

- Establish a more connected and functional station and commuter drop-off hub on the south side of the railroad. This could be a ‘transit plaza’ as part of a reconfiguration and infill development effort on the south commuter lot.
- Study the viability of a westward Metra platform extension, with key goals of mitigating traffic impacts at Walnut Street and to promote transit-oriented development along the Irving Park Road corridor through proximity and enhanced access.
- Identify direct pedestrian and bicycle access to Metra through wayfinding signage.
- Investigate potential for car-sharing to connect Metra to employment destinations.
- New developments should reference Pace’s Transit Supportive Design Guidelines.
- Although Pace’s service has been terminated due to COVID-19, the Village should continue to coordinate with Pace for future service options, as guided by Pace’s strategic plan update, Driving Innovation. Driving Innovation is based on how to provide the most appropriate level of service, or the “right size” of transit using a family of mobility services menu. Using TOD as a foundation for

determining the appropriate level of transit will provide a basis for more appropriate and effective access and better support transit. Pace’s Transit Supportive Guidelines also provide direction on providing accessible transit improvements.

- In addressing Downtown parking strategically, the City should continue working with Metra to rethink the demand for commuter parking, particularly changes that have occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Implementation Tasks**

- Coordination with Metra to discuss platform extension and demand for commuter parking.
- Continue to work with Pace and Metra on transit service changes in post-COVID era. Utilize their Transit Supportive Guidelines to guide transit improvements.
- Village should identify locations, design and install wayfinding signage.



*Metra covered bike parking*

**Action 4 - Transform Irving Park Road:** Transform Irving Park Road into an Urban Boulevard with a focus on streetscape elements, sidewalk and crossing improvements, bicycle access, traffic calming, and safety-focused elements.

Reinforce the identity of Irving Park Road as the primary corridor of Downtown and not purely as an arterial road. Robust bike and pedestrian infrastructure should be included along Irving Park Road. Specific transportation elements for the urban boulevard concept could include:

- Convert center lane as a combination planted median/turn lanes where needed.
- Driveway access changes such as consolidation or converting to right-in/right-out to reduce conflict points between modes.
- Reduce travel lanes to 11 feet and center median/turn lanes to 10 feet.
- Combination of an off-road shared path and on-street protected bike lanes, dependent upon available space. West of Catalpa space is available for a shared path while east of Catalpa would reallocate shoulder space, narrow travel lanes and potentially use existing parkway space for protected bike lanes.
- Enhanced crossing locations, both signalized and unsignalized.

*Opportunities for specific segments along Irving Park Road.*

- Village Complex to Catalpa
  - » Provide a safe, direct route from neighborhoods on the north to the Village Complex - Village Hall, library, and pool.
  - » Install a two-way 12-foot shared path on the south side of the corridor to access the pedestrian bridge over I-290.
  - » Improve intersection design at Irving Park Road and Catalpa to add green bike boxes on both approaches of Catalpa to increase visibility of bicyclists along with wider crosswalks on the west and north leg where increased pedestrian and bicycle movements are anticipated.
  - » Upgrade traffic signals to include Leading Pedestrian Intervals (LPI) and audible signals to prioritize pedestrians.
- Catalpa to Maple
  - » Provide safe, multi-modal access to adjacent businesses and transit.
  - » Reallocate shoulder space, narrow travel lanes, and potentially use existing parkway space for protected bike lanes.
  - » Eliminate continuous center turn lane except as needed at driveways and add planted center medians.
  - » Expand sidewalks along Irving Park Road along with additional streetscape elements.
  - » Consolidate, change to right-in/right-out, or eliminate driveways along Irving Park Road. There are many blocks with numerous driveways, creating conflict between motorists, pedestrians, and bicyclists.
  - » Improve existing crossing at Metra station to be more visible, possibly with overhead signage, depending on IDOT guidance.
  - » A new intersection crossing near Willow connecting to potential redevelopment.

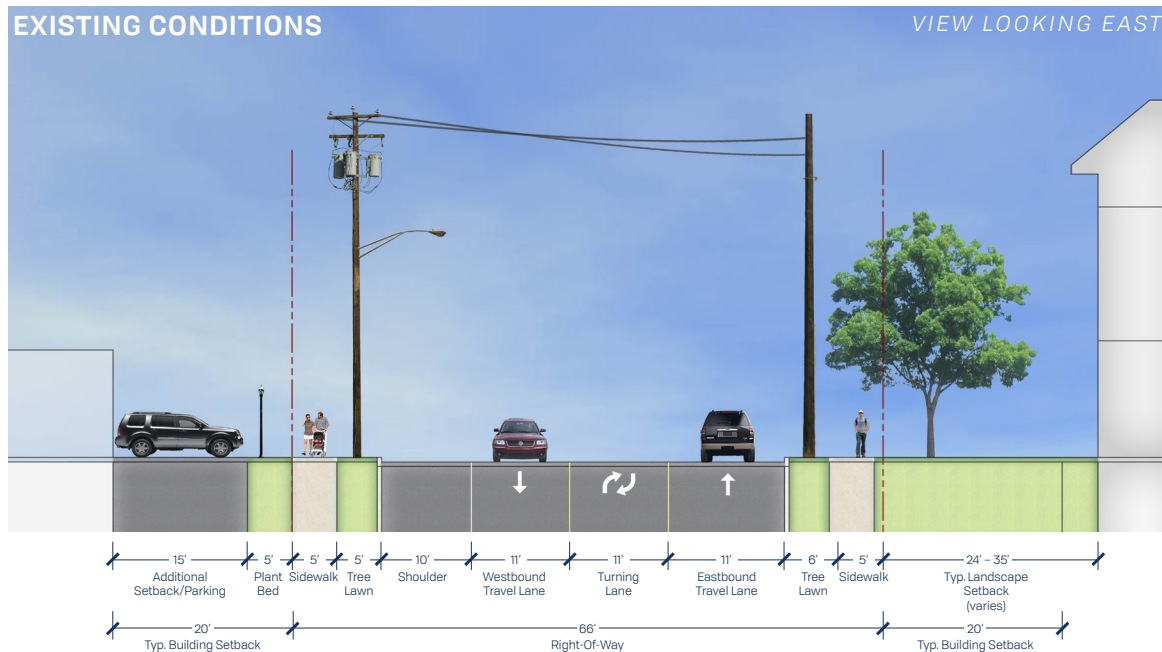


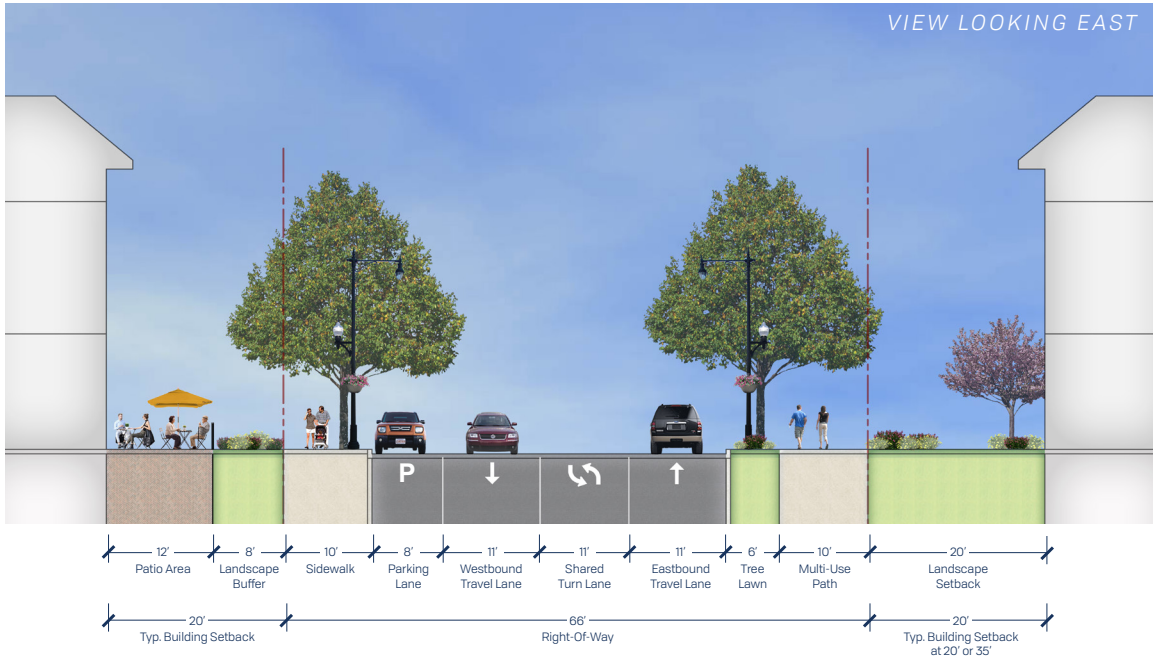
- At Maple
  - » Transition bike lane to the path traveling to the Spring Brook Nature Center.
  - » Widen/improve sidewalk and access to Metra station.
  - » Add gateway, directional, and informational signage.

**Implementation Tasks:**

- This action will require coordinating with IDOT to agree upon preferred design concepts and potential funding sources to address.
- Install on-street bike lanes by reallocating on-street parking and using available right-of-way.

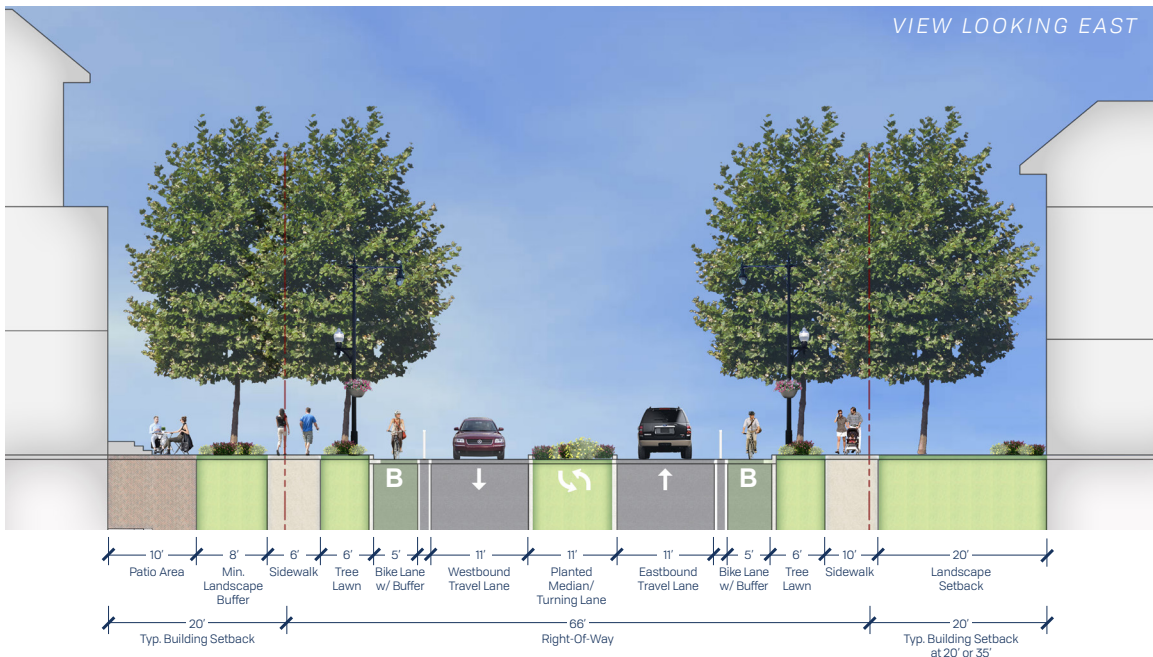
- Narrowing of travel lanes
- Removing continuous center turn lane.
- New intersection and pedestrian crossings
- Coordination with land-owners regarding driveway changes and potential for cross-easements.
- Village to coordinate design of shared-use path on the south side of Irving Park Road. Design elements would include signage and green paint at driveway crossings.





### Commercial Corridor Concept

- This scenario reimagines Irving Park Road as a more pedestrian-oriented corridor lined with active commercial uses.
- Front yard setback areas could provide opportunities for outdoor seating.
- On-street parking and bike lanes could be included along portions of the street.



### Urban Boulevard Concept

- This scenario envisions Irving Park Road reconstructed as an 'urban boulevard' with adjacent residential, office, and other uses.
- High emphasis on increased landscaping and buffering – including multiple rows of canopy trees.
- Enhanced bike facilities connect to Metra and regional trails

**3**

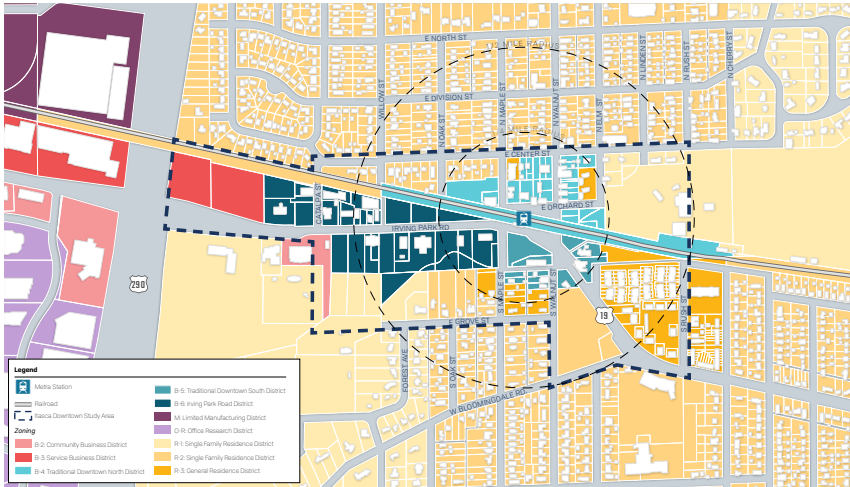
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**IMPLEMENTATION**



# IMPLEMENTATION

## ZONING STRATEGY



The Village's Zoning Ordinance was updated in 2012 and provides comprehensive development standards and regulations for all zoning districts in the Village. The Downtown Strategic Action Plan's zoning strategy should strengthen and reflect Downtown's character areas and recommended development and improvement actions. A focus on B-4 and B-5 Districts at North and South Walnut Street, and the B-6 District along Irving Park Road corridor should be considered. Many sections of the Zoning Ordinance are relevant to this strategy including off-street parking, signs, and the Planned Development ordinance. The project area is also within a Historic District as identified on the 2020 Official Itasca Zoning Map. The Zoning Ordinance does not address specific standards for the Historic District with the exception of special parking provisions.

The Strategic Action Plan defines three character areas - first identified in the State of the Downtown report - as North Downtown, South Downtown, and Irving Park Road. The character areas largely coincide with three separate zoning districts: the B-4, Traditional Downtown North Business District, the B-5, Traditional Downtown South Business District, and the B-6, Irving Park Road Business District. There is also one site in the project area, just east of Catalpa Avenue, that is zoned B-3, Service Business District, and one site along Irving Park Road zoned B-2, Community Business District.

The Village also has Downtown Design Guidelines that apply to the B-4, B-5 and B-6 Districts. These guidelines provide streetscape and building design recommendations for new and existing development. They form part of the strategy and are discussed further in the Implementation Section.

Moving forward, the Village should consider refinements and consolidation of the zoning districts encompassing the project area based on the existing character areas and Strategic Action Plan objectives. The B-3 and B-2 Districts within the project area also warrant consideration for rezoning to eliminate these spot zones within the project area. A zoning overlay for the entire project area is not recommended due to the different character areas as the development form, scale, and mix of uses changes from North Walnut Street to Irving Park Road.



217 N Walnut St

### **B-4 and B-5 Downtown District Amendments**

The B-4 and B-5 District regulations are largely the same with the exception of some minor discrepancies in building setback requirements. The B-5, South Downtown District allows some front building setbacks whereas the B-4, North Downtown District does not allow building setbacks. The lack of building setbacks along the street helps strengthen the pedestrian experience. Given the similar nature of these two districts, consideration should be given to combining them into one “Downtown District” and modify the standards and use mix accordingly.

The use and development standards for the B-4 and B-5 Districts are generally conducive to traditional mixed-use downtown business districts. These include allowances of up to 55 feet in height, or four stories, no building setbacks (B-4 District) and the allowance of residential uses above the ground floor. The general permitted use mix is oriented towards retail, commercial service, and restaurant uses. The uses permitted or specially permitted also include those identified in B-1 District with exception of some office uses. However, some of the permitted uses for the B-4 and B-5 districts warrant consideration for revisions. Some permitted uses such as tobacco shops should be defined clearly and may present undesirable circumstances if not properly

regulated. Others like VCR/video/disc rental are outdated and warrant revision. Certain office uses may also be warranted, perhaps above the ground floor, as recent trends in office uses may now be more focused on a shared office or co-working spaces that could increase pedestrian traffic in the Downtown. Catering establishments are also permitted but typically do not create pedestrian traffic.

Surface parking lots are also specially allowed but do not contribute to a pedestrian environment or achieve the objectives of the Strategic Action Plan. Some special uses allowed in the B-1 District such as sewage treatment plants and other public utility uses, are not appropriate in the Downtown. Others, such as meeting halls or fire stations, may require special site conditions or may operate at specific times only and remain largely unused.



308 West Irving Park Road

### **B-6, Irving Park Road Business District Amendments**

The B-6, Irving Park Corridor District, is designed to accommodate high traffic, automobile-oriented commercial uses along Irving Park Road, west of the traditional downtown area. The Downtown Strategic Action Plan re-imagines the Irving Park Road corridor so the specific intent and purpose of this district should be modified. The B-6 use and district standards are generally based on the



B-3, Service Business District and may warrant an examination and amendments to be consistent with the Downtown Strategic Action Plan objectives. Rather than modeling this district on the B-3 District, a more specific and unique intent and purpose is appropriate for this district.

Uses along Irving Park Road and permitted in the B-6 District typically require larger sites and buildings and may provide services not compatible with other commercial or residential uses. Residential uses are permitted in this district above ground floor. The development standards are generally appropriate and align with the objectives of the Downtown Strategic Action Plan, Combined heights up to 65 feet with a maximum Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of 0.8 are allowed but may be difficult to achieve. FAR limits could be increased to allow full utilization of property. Given this district is isolated to this location, a comprehensive amendment to align the specific use mix and development standards with the Downtown Strategic Action Plan objectives would be appropriate.



500 W Irving Park Rd

### **B-3 and B-2 Districts Rezoning**

The remaining zoning districts that are represented in the project area are the B-3, Service Business District and the B-2, Community Business District. These are isolated spot zones in the project area and would be appropriate candidates for rezoning to a district consistent with the Irving Park Road corridor.



127 North Walnut Street

### **Planned Developments**

The Village also allows Planned Developments for sites three acres or larger. The purpose of Planned Developments are to encourage the most orderly development of properties through advance planning and assure adequate standards for the development of residential neighborhoods.

Depending on the type of project and location, the Planned Development option may present advantages for private development projects within the Downtown project area, particularly for projects located near or adjacent to existing residential uses to ensure any potential impacts are minimized.

### **Parking**

Section 12.00 of the Zoning Ordinance regulates off street parking requirements. There are also some specific parking provisions in each of the individual zoning districts. These provisions encourage common and shared parking lots and structures, parking behind buildings, and parking structures to the rear of the site. The B-4 and B-5 districts also allow an in-lieu cash contribution as an alternative to providing off-street parking except for residential uses.



Specific to the Historic District which incorporates the Downtown Strategic Action Plan project area, there is a provision for retail uses that allows up to 50% of the parking to be provided via on-street parking or other approved public parking. The combination of in-lieu cash contribution and allowance of street or public parking for retail uses are two incentives that help to encourage retail uses without the undue burden of providing off-street parking.

Parking standards for Multi-Family Uses in the B-4 and B-5 Districts require 1.75 spaces per unit plus 1 space per employee if also a business use. Parking spaces based on employee can be subjective and fluctuate widely so consideration should be given to another metric or separate evaluation for mixed-use projects altogether. Other existing parking requirements that apply to the project area include:

- Retail uses Village-wide require one space per 250 square feet of gross floor area. (4 spaces per 1,000 square feet)
- Restaurants require one space per 100 square feet of gross floor area. (10 spaces per 1,000 square feet)
- Professional offices require one space per 333 square feet of gross floor area. (3 spaces per 1,000 square feet)
- Medical/dental offices require one space per 166 square feet of gross floor area. (6 spaces per 1,000 square feet)
- Theaters require one space per three seats and one space per employee.
- Places of assembly require a number of spaces equal to 25% capacity or as recommended by the Plan Commission.

Given the ample supply of Metra parking and potential for repositioned parking in the Downtown, the Village should consider

revisions to parking standards in the Downtown Strategic Action Plan project area. Metra parking could be used for off-peak nighttime and weekend use. Reducing parking requirements also provides the indirect benefit of reducing impervious surface area, thus reducing stormwater runoff and impacts to the storm drain system.

Accordingly, it is recommended that the Village consider the following zoning changes as they relate to parking requirements:

- The Village could consider eliminating or reducing minimum parking requirements for uses within the North and South Downtown Project Area. An exception to this is for new residential uses and a new use on the former Starbucks sites which is oriented to the automobile. At a minimum, the boundaries with reduced parking requirements should include the area currently delineated as the B-4 and B-5 zoning districts. Reliance on on-street parking, shared lots, and Metra parking could fulfill the anticipated parking need.
- Require a shared parking study be completed for new mixed-use development in the North and South Downtown Project Area to ensure that parking is not overbuilt or underserved.
- Allow Plan Commission discretion to require or eliminate parking for new uses and development based on the type, intensity, and scale of new development.
- Parking space size for perpendicular parking is 9' x 18', or 162 square feet. These are generally accepted standards although the Village may consider a certain percentage of parking spaces to be allowed as a smaller "compact car" spaces. These are generally 8' x 16' in size, or 128 square feet and also can greatly reduce impervious surface area.
- Consider installing Electric Vehicle (EV) charging stations in some public parking lots and developing standards for EV locations.



200 N Walnut St

### Reduction of Parking Minimum - Case Studies

The planning blog, Strong Towns, has mapped all cities within the US that have eliminated or reduced their parking requirements. The following are examples of cities that have reduced parking requirements:

- Chicago eliminated minimum parking requirements for certain parts of the City within 1,320 feet (1/4 mile) of a Chicago Transit Authority or Metra train station, and 2,640 feet if that building is on a zoned "Pedestrian Street".
- Watertown, WI does not have adopted parking requirements for their Central Business District.
- Peoria, IL eliminated minimum parking standards for commercial development.
- Berrien Springs, MI adopted form based code recently which does not require parking for new development.

See the cities across the county who have removed parking minimums at the link below:

<https://www.strongtowns.org/parking>

## Signs

Section 13.00 of the Zoning Ordinance regulates signage. All types of building and property signage are permitted Village-wide and there are no specific requirements for the Downtown project area. Signage is an important component to the overall urban design and character of a place. Specific signage requirements and standards for Downtown could allow creativity and artistic expression adding to the vibrancy of the Downtown. Signs and signage design can help provide identity, strengthen character, and increase visual interest. The Village should consider separate sign requirements for Downtown.

The Village allows a Master Sign Plan for multi-business buildings. These can be a useful tool to complement design character for a building. Alternatively, master sign plans or programs for a larger area or district can provide specific details on the types of signs allowed, sign content and design, size, lighting, materials and hardware and other factors integral to design, placement and installation.

The Downtown's logo and branding effort is also an important component that can be used as the basis for signage design, as well as the theme for gateway, directional and other public Downtown signage. A sign program would include business signage but could also include public signage as well to further integrate the private and public realms.

## Downtown Design Guidelines

The Village has existing, relevant design guidelines for the North and South Downtown areas and Irving Park Road corridor. The guidelines are organized by land use and generally correlate to the Downtown Strategic Action Plan's character areas. The guidelines provide recommended design strategies for both architecture and streetscape.

The architectural design guidelines provide guidance on:

- Building Form
- Exterior Building Treatments
- Site Enhancements

The streetscape design guidelines provide guidance on:

- Signage treatments including gateway and directional signage
- Pedestrian connectivity
- Downtown, neighborhood and Irving Park Road right-of-way design treatments
- Creek trail design treatment
- Green parking lot design treatment
- Suggested plant lists for parkways, buffer yard areas and foundation plantings

The guidelines also include an implementation strategy and suggested Village sponsored projects, including the following, some of which have been completed:

1. Creekside Trail - In conjunction with the Spring Brook Nature Center's efforts to expand the trail system, the Village may reinforce the trail system with naturalized landscape plantings at the creek edge, interpretive signage, and a public art program.
2. Enhanced Railroad Crossings - In conjunction with efforts by the Village Police Department to promote safety through environmental design, the existing railroad crossings could be enhanced with safety gates, lighting, decorative paving and plantings.
3. Civic Plaza at the Historical Museum - The landscape immediately surrounding the historical museum may be further enhanced as a

civic plaza which both enhances the existing Historical Museum as a Village resource as well as promotes pedestrian use along the Irving Park Road corridor.

4. Gateway Signage - Gateway signage, directional signage, and other identity signage are high impact/low cost projects which may be constructed with minimal effort on publicly owned lands.

Application and implementation of the Downtown Design Guidelines is consistent with the Downtown Strategic Plan and offers a companion implementation framework for realization of the Downtown development objectives. The Village should continue to apply these guidelines to new Downtown development and improvements, as well as redevelopment and building rehabilitation projects.



*Creekside Trail Signage*



## ORGANIZATIONAL LEADERSHIP

The Village of Itasca, its Boards, Commissions, and Committees, and other partners all have a role in implementing Downtown plan objectives and economic development initiatives. The Itasca Chamber of Commerce also plays a role in this process. The Village has recognized this through the adoption of the Economic Development Assistance Policy. But an entity focused on Downtown Itasca and specific incentives for Downtown development, particularly as it relates to marketing and offering financial incentives to stimulate investment could help spur development.

There are various jurisdictional and tax implications for these programs so further examination of each should be conducted as a follow up to this plan to determine what is the best fit for the Village. Some of these are also identified as part of the Economic Development Assistance Policy:

- **Business Improvement District (BID).** A Village may designate an area as a 'Business Improvement District' and create a Business District Development and Redevelopment Commission to assist the Village to acquire, manage, help fund, or otherwise work on development and redevelopment projects within the District.
- **Special Service Area (SSA).** SSA's authorize local governments to add a small additional tax to properties within a defined geographic area and deliver special services or physical improvements within that area. These services could include marketing efforts, infrastructure improvements, or funds to redevelop specific buildings or sites.
- **Community Development Corporation.** Typically, an independent, not-for-profit organization governed by a board that brings expertise in real estate, businesses development, and community-building. CDCs often bring financial commitments from local financial institutions or public funding sources.

- **National Main Street Center.** The potential exists for the Village to have a strategic partnership with this larger group. The National Main Street Center is committed to strengthening communities through preservation-based economic development in older and historic downtowns and neighborhood commercial districts.



209 N Walnut

## PARTNERS

The implementation of the Downtown Itasca Strategic Action Plan will depend on partnerships between the Village, DuPage County, Metra, Pace, IDOT, other public agencies, as well as the Chamber of Commerce, downtown business and property owners, developers, investors, local institutions, and residents.

### *Village of Itasca*

The Village will need to take the key leadership roles in implementing the Strategic Action Plan moving forward. Sample Village roles and responsibilities should include:

- Formally approving the Downtown Strategic Action Plan.
- Considering developer and business targeted RFP(s) for Village-owned sites.
- Amending zoning and other relevant development regulations to support Strategic Action Plan implementation.
- Coordinating the Downtown Strategic Action Plan with transportation agencies, including RTA, Metra, IDOT, and Pace, on the placement, access and configuration of potential transit service amenities and support facilities.
- Participating in the preparation and underwriting of detailed design and construction documents for recommended public community spaces, plazas, streetscape, signage, transportation, and physical improvements, working closely with DuPage County, Metra and the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT).
- Assisting the Chamber of Commerce and other entities in promoting and implementing business development and building improvement initiatives.
- Participating in efforts to recruit developers and engaging owners of key opportunity sites to gain support and involvement in

redevelopment activities, particularly reaching out to the owners of sites along Irving Park Road.

- Facilitating discussion and implementation priorities with the Plan Commission and Village Board. Work to allocate local resources for Downtown planning and preliminary design to best position projects for outside agency funding, such as regional bikeway connections, sidewalk improvements, crosswalks, traffic signal, and other pedestrian safety improvements.
- Assisting with the assembly and acquisition of property to facilitate redevelopment projects.

### *Regional Transportation Authority (RTA)*

- RTA coordinates the Chicago region's transit system, oversees its financing with transparency and accountability, and plans for a future with adequate, accessible, and equitable public transportation for the six counties of Northeastern Illinois. The RTA's Community Planning program provides funding and technical assistance for transit-oriented planning and implementation initiatives with local partners throughout the six-county service area. The goal is to foster the growth of sustainable, equitable, walkable, and transit-friendly communities around transit assets by encouraging transit-supportive land uses and infrastructure.

### *Illinois Department of Transportation*

- The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) has jurisdiction over the portion of Irving Park Road (Illinois 19) that travels through Downtown. IDOT has been involved in the preparation of this plan and will be an important partner to help facilitate pedestrian and safety improvements along Irving Park Road.

## **Metra**

- Metra is a project partner that has been involved in the preparation of this plan. They operate the train station and manage the parking lots that are adjacent. Metra is a willing partner regarding property redevelopment, parking strategies and design improvements to increase multi-modal access to the station. They've also expressed a willingness to further examine and consider train station platform relocation so long as funding for the relocation is secured by the Village.

## **Pace**

- Pace suburban bus service provides access to the Itasca Metra Station. Accommodation for Pace vehicles at the Metra station, implementation of their Transit Supportive Guidelines and coordination with "first and last mile" connections provide important actions for partnering.

## **DuPage County**

- DuPage County and specifically their Department of Transportation is an important partner to facilitate and support regional trail improvements as well as some street improvements.

## **Choose DuPage**

- Choose DuPage is an economic development alliance that represents the DuPage County business community. Their overall goal is to support County-wide economic development initiatives and provide support to communities on economic and business development.

## **Itasca Chamber of Commerce**

- The Itasca Chamber of Commerce is an important project partner. The Chamber can assist with actions related to business recruitment and retention and providing support to the business community, as well as foster growth and economic development through marketing, technical assistance to small businesses, workforce development and event management.

## **Greater O'Hare Regional Business Association**

- The Greater O'Hare RBA promotes business growth and alliances in DuPage County. They also sponsor events, and provide programming and training that support professional development.

## **Business/Property Owners**

- Downtown business and property owners are critical stakeholders in Downtown Strategic Action Plan implementation. Local owners can initiate building and property improvements such as signage, window displays, bike racks, parking lot, and participate in Village-sponsored facade and building improvement incentive programs. Businesses can also partake in area marketing activities and business/developer recruitment.

## **Private Developers**

- Recruitment of experienced developers and investors from the Chicagoland region is an important facet of plan implementation.

## **Financial Institutions**

- With involvement from the local financial community, the Village and other stakeholders could facilitate implementation with financing for projects or participating in new incentive programs that support local business and development initiatives, such as façade/building/site improvement projects.



## **Regional Organizations**

- Coordination with the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP), and its regional ONTO 2050 Plan, is critical for gaining funding and implementing projects that improve walking, biking and accessing transit.

## **Itasca Park District**

- The Park District manages a variety of park, recreation and open space resources located in the Downtown. The Park District is an important partner and will be a valuable resource to assist with plan implementation.

## **MARKET BASED STRATEGY**

Market Based Strategies are grounded in the current economic context and consider potential areas of future growth. While they are primarily about business attraction and retention, consumer behavior and position in the market place, they go hand in hand with residential development, marketing campaigns, and infrastructure improvements related to access, mobility and streetscape.

## **Cultural Village Strategy**

This strategy would fit the downtown area along North Walnut, and extend to the South Walnut/South Maple sub-district. The Village could incentivize a cluster of mixed-use developments, such as a pop-up restaurants, a community kitchen, a café with a modest performing arts venue, an art gallery and local retail such as crafts and handmade products. It creates a node, a destination and a community gathering place. This strategy can utilize Usher Memorial Park for festivals and larger events drawing visitation from outside of Itasca.

## **Lifecycle Strategy (Aging in Place)**

This strategy would address the area south of the railroad, west of Willow Street, east of I-290, on the north side of Irving Park Road. The Village could incentivize residential multi-family and higher density housing development that targets young singles or couples as well as empty nesters and active senior households. This would bring additional “rooftops” to Downtown and help support existing and attract new businesses. A potential business mix that would match this type of development are doctors and medical offices, bars/cafes, healthy food stores and restaurants (organic, vegan), fitness and gyms for both household age groups, delivery service businesses, cleaning and home service businesses, and home office support businesses.

## **Neighborhood Convenience Strategy**

This strategy would incorporate the whole project area. Besides a diversified and more complete day-to-day business mix, it promotes a sustainable, clean and safe neighborhood commercial center/downtown. In addition to the existing assets – Metra station, Country Club, parks and open space, retail, restaurant and residential uses would also be desired. It includes daycares, after school care, and technology related businesses. This strategy is targeted at the local community thus it may not attract from outside of Itasca. In general, local businesses, new and existing, will have to be of high enough quality and convenience to attract a large portion of the local buying power due to existing shopping centers in close proximity to Downtown.

## TRANSPORTATION STRATEGY TOOLBOX

### *Pedestrian Strategies*

A pedestrian-first hierarchy, that of prioritizing pedestrians, is a primary foundation of transit oriented development as everyone is a pedestrian at some point of their trip, whether they walked to the station, rode their bike, were dropped off, or drove and parked. Many factors impact pedestrian accessibility: direct connections, clear paths of travel, sufficient sidewalk width, safe and visible crossings, protection from traveling vehicles, and curb ramps at intersections. Implementing design elements that address these factors can create walkable places that are safe, secure, and easily accessible.

- **Curb Extension:** Curb extensions, or “bump outs” extend the curb line into the roadway, increasing the visibility of pedestrians and shortening the crossing distance. Curb Extensions minimize pedestrian exposure during crossing by shortening crossing distance and giving pedestrians a better chance to see and be seen before committing to crossing.
- **High Visibility Crosswalks:** High Visibility Crosswalks signal to motorists that they must stop for pedestrians and encourage pedestrians to cross at designated locations.
- **Raised Crosswalks:** Serve as a marked pedestrian crossing and provide stronger visual clues for drivers. These are particularly useful at midblock crossings. Benefits can include visibility improvements to areas with limited sight distance, enhanced pedestrian safety, reduced vehicular speed, and traffic calming. Raised crosswalks should include advance signage and high-visibility markings. Street lighting is important for improved nighttime lighting.
- **Mid-block Crossing:** Mid-block crossings provide a more direct path for pedestrians and with appropriate design increase safety and visibility of pedestrians. When installed at a midblock crossing, the island should be supplemented with a marked high-visibility crosswalk along with consideration of advance lighting to provide illumination of the pedestrian.
- **Pedestrian Signal Timing:** Use leading pedestrian intervals (LPIs), give people crossing the street a head start before cars are given a green light, typically providing the WALK signal 3-7 seconds before the motorists are allowed to proceed through the intersection. LPIs are particularly helpful for crossing with high volumes of pedestrians or those accommodating school-aged children or persons needing more time to cross the street.
- **Median Refuge Islands:** Median refuge islands help improve pedestrian safety by allowing pedestrians to cross one direction of traffic at a time. Refuge islands minimize pedestrian exposure by shortening crossing distance and increasing the number of available gaps for crossing. Active Warning Beacons, such as a Pedestrian Hybrid Beacon (PHB), are user-actuated illuminated devices used to warn and control traffic at an unsignalized location to assist pedestrians in crossing a street or highway at a marked crosswalk. PHBs can be used if gaps in traffic are not adequate to permit pedestrians to cross, or if the speed for vehicles approaching on the major street is too high to permit pedestrians to cross.
- **ADA Accessibility:** ADA accessibility strategies address the concept of universal mobility, in that all transportation networks and infrastructure systems should be accessible to all, including those with disabilities and the most vulnerable. Connectivity and accessibility to transit services provide access to jobs, schools, and other needs. Barrier-free design of pedestrian street crossings, curb ramps, detectable warning surfaces, and pedestrian access

routes create pathways so that a person with a disability can proceed unimpeded. Tactile as well as visual cues and landmarks, as well as accessible pedestrian signals are design elements to support accessible paths of travel.

- **Intersection/Railroad Improvement:** Railroad crossings can present safety issues for pedestrians, particularly those using wheeled devices such as wheelchairs and scooters. All pedestrian railroad crossings should be designed to minimize the time required for pedestrians to cross, with emphasis on avoiding entrapment of pedestrians on or between sets of tracks. Pedestrian safety can be improved by better delineating the pedestrian space through the use of fencing, channelization, swing gates; pedestrian barriers, pavement markings, widened crossings, and refuge areas. Optimally the crossing should be designed so that the pedestrian paths of travel intersect the railroad track at a 90 degree angle.



*Raised Intersection*

## **Bike Connections**

An interconnected network of bikeways within communities and neighborhoods can provide convenient connections to transit and encourage the use of biking as a primary mode to transit station and Downtown destinations. Whether riding a bike and parking at the station, combining a bike and bus trip, or using bike share to access destinations, supporting bike infrastructure investments can create a safe, affordable, sustainable, and healthy way to travel. Bike networks also include support facilities such as covered bike parking, bike lockers, and bike stations. Providing secure, long-term bike parking such as lockers or space in parking garages can provide additional incentives for biking to transit.

- **Shared-Use Trail/Sidepath:** Sidepaths are like multi-use trails, sometimes called sidepaths, alongside the road are completely separated from vehicular lanes and include paved space for both bicyclists and pedestrians. In locations where sidewalks already exist the design would involve widening the sidewalk by a few to several feet. Intersection and crossing improvements for pedestrians and bicyclists should be made wherever a shared used path crosses the roadway. Shared use paths are lower stress facilities than on-street bike lanes and recommended on roadways where right-of-way is available and the roadway may have higher traffic volumes, vehicle speeds, or wider pavement.
- **Protected Bike Lane:** Protected bike lanes are dedicated bike lanes that physically separate bike riders from vehicular traffic, increase safety and comfort for those traveling on bikes while creating limited negative impacts on vehicular traffic. PBLs define and allocate space exclusively for those on bikes – not shared with pedestrians or vehicular traffic. This is accomplished through a variety of separation designs between moving vehicular traffic and the bike lane such as plastic posts, bollards, curbs, planters, or raised bumps. In some cases, adding a PBL requires converting space dedicated to on-street parking, shoulder space, or travel lanes.



- **Bike Box:** Bike boxes provide priority for bicyclists at signalized intersections. They can reduce signal delay for bicyclists and help prevent 'right-hook' conflicts with turning vehicles at the start of the green signal. Bike boxes can be appropriate at signalized intersections with high volumes of bicycles and/or motor vehicles, especially those where there may be right or left-turning conflicts between bicyclists and motorists, or where there is a desire to better accommodate left turning bicycle traffic.



Protected Bike Lane

## Vehicular Travel

- **Access Management:** Motorist access across a sidewalk not only degrades the quality of the pedestrian environment, but it also increases the potential for motorist-motorist and motorist-pedestrian conflicts. When providing access to adjacent property, the number of motorist access points across the pedestrian path should be minimized. Commercial driveways can have higher motorist volumes than other driveway types and have the greatest potential for conflicts between motorists and pedestrians. Limiting and consolidating multiple driveways reduces the number of conflict points and can also redirect motorists to intersections with appropriate control devices.

- **Curb Use:** Drop-off and pick-up functions are particularly challenging for transit stations as this has a significant impact on curb use. Curbside use at transit stations requires special attention due to competing interests and conflicts involving pedestrians, bus boardings and lightings, on-street bike lanes, personal autos, TNCs, and taxis. While drop-offs should be convenient, this use should not have priority at the transit station entrance. Curbside management strategies could include dedicated transit lanes, time-based restrictions (i.e., peak period restrictions), defining pick up and drop off locations near the station but not at the entrance, and creating specific locations to wait for passengers.
- **Shared Street:** Shared streets prioritize walking over all other movements, while allowing motor vehicle access at extremely low speeds. Depending on a street's volume and role in the traffic network, both residential and commercial streets have the potential to be redesigned and enhanced as shared streets. Shared streets are created by removing the formal separations and distinctions between spaces dedicated to pedestrians, cyclists, and motorized vehicles, so that the street is shared by everyone. Designs can vary, but typically curbs are removed, and the materials and space allocation indicate that the space is shared by all users. Street furniture, including bollards, benches, planters, and bicycle parking, can help define a shared space.

## Transit Parking

Park and ride management should be flexible with the ability to change over time as ridership levels and travel pattern changes may impact parking demand. Pay structures should vary to include short-term hourly parking and long-term daily parking to serve different trip functions. The use of smart meter technology or parking apps could be used to provide variable rates as needed and direct use to the desired park and ride lot. Parking spaces could be shared with adjacent businesses and spaces designated for employee parking or car sharing.

## GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGY

Green infrastructure refers to the practice of using landscaping and the natural environment to manage stormwater runoff. Green infrastructure includes a variety of techniques that use plants, grasses, vegetation, soils, and natural processes to imitate natural hydrology. Site-specific green infrastructure practices, such as vegetated swales, permeable pavements, and rain gardens, can serve as effective alternatives to traditional engineered storm drain infrastructure systems. Like other forms of infrastructure, green infrastructure needs to be planned, managed, and maintained. Given past flooding issues in the Downtown, the Village should consider a green infrastructure strategy to new development, redevelopment and property improvements.

### Green Infrastructure Examples

Green infrastructure can be installed throughout a community at several scales. Examples at the residential or business scale could include a rain barrel against a house or business, permeable pavement for driveways, walks, and parking lots, trees and landscaping along a street or within a driveway. Neighborhood scale green infrastructure includes vegetated swales, planting rain gardens or restoring a wetland or riparian area or greening an alleyway. Other examples of green infrastructure include: Downspout disconnections; rainwater harvesting; planter boxes; vegetated swales; permeable pavements; green streets, alleys, and parking; green roofs; a more developed urban tree canopy; land conservation and open space designations.

### Green Infrastructure Resources

CMAP has an abundance of resources to assist local communities with installing green infrastructure. They offer many programs and initiatives related to sustainability and planning, including water resource protection and stormwater management. They

also help communities plan for sustainability more broadly by aiding in the creation of sustainability plans through the CMAP Local Technical Assistance (LTA) program. The Illinois EPA also has a grant funding program to assist local communities with green infrastructure and stormwater management.



*Permeable Pavement*



*Rain Garden*



*Vegetated Swale*



*Parking Lot Swale*



*Hollywood Driveway*

## COSTS & FUNDING

### *Financial Subsidies and Funding Programs*

Financial incentives are likely going to be needed over the near-term to attract developers and businesses into Downtown Itasca. In addition to lowering the purchase price of property, on-going financial incentives may be necessary to facilitate reinvestment and redevelopment in the Downtown and Irving Park Road corridor.

- A Tax Increment Financing (TIF) district could be considered that includes portions of Downtown project area and the Irving Park Road corridor. In a TIF district, the incremental property taxes over the base year amount can be used to pay for incentives or infrastructure improvements.
- Consideration of tax abatements or lowering taxes to encourage investment in the Downtown project area and the Irving Park Road corridor can be a significant incentive to attract new development. A property tax abatement program can reduce property tax payments on property for a specific duration. Some municipalities offer tax abatements on designated areas or to low-to-middle-income property owners, but many programs have no income restrictions.
- Façade Improvement Programs can help revitalize the Downtown project area and the Irving Park Road corridor by improving the appearance of buildings and storefronts. This financial incentive is typically offered from the Village in the form of a matching grant or low interest loan, tax incentive, or design assistance.
- Revolving Loan Funds (RLF) are a gap financing measure used for the development and expansion of small businesses. RLF funds are self-replenishing, utilizing interest and principal payments on old loans to issue new loans to support local businesses.

### **Other financial subsidies could include:**

- Low-Interest loans or grants to help building and site improvements
- Village paid infrastructure improvements
- Waiving of permit fees or other development costs
- Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) programs
- Municipal support for projects seeking tax credits
- Village provided land
- Updated zoning to be supportive of transit oriented development style development and streamline the approval process for projects consistent with the Downtown Strategic Action.

### *Local Funding Strategies*

It is recommended the Village Board consider local resources for planning, engineering studies, and specific projects in the Downtown and Irving Park Road corridor. Outside agencies are often more willing to fund projects that have planning and design plan complete based on local initiative with local resources.

- Community Development Tax Increment Financing
- Special Service Area or Business Improvement District
- General revenues, bonds, grants
- Bike/vehicle/EV registration fees
- Advanced Transportation District/Impact Fees

### *Transportation Funding Sources*

Federal, state, regional, county, and private organizations provide funding for mobility and transportation projects and programs. The table on the next page summarizes the applicability of various funding sources to projects proposed in the plan.



Figure 14: Potential Transportation Funding Sources

Potential Funding Source	Administrator	Bike Facilities	Sidewalk	Access to Transit	Planning
Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ)	CMAP	Y	M	Y	N
Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP)	IDOT	Y	M	M	N
Illinois Trails Grant Program (ITP)	IDNR	Y	M	M	N
Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program (ITEP)	IDOT	Y	Y	Y	Y
Motor Fuel Tax (MFT)	IDOT, RTA, Village	Y	Y	Y	Y
Recreational Trails Program (RTP)	IDNR	Y	N	N	N
Safe Routes to School (SRTS)	IDOT	Y	Y	M	Y
Surface Transportation Program - Local (STP-L)	Council of Mayors	M	N	M	N
Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP-L)	CMAP	Y	Y	Y	N
Access to Transit Program	RTA	Y	Y	Y	N
Community Planning	RTA	M	M	M	Y

PRIVATE Funding Source	Administrator	Bike Facilities	Sidewalk	Access to Transit	Planning
Grants	Projects for Public Space	M	M	M	Y
People for Bikes	Bikes Belong	Y	N	M	M
Made to Move	Blue Moves LLC.	Y	Y	Y	Y
Various Grants	i.e. Rails to Trails Conservancy; EPA	Y	M	N	M

## IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX

The matrix on the following pages organizes the Strategic Plan recommendations, actions, and implementation items and further identifies partners, funding sources, and time frame.

The Village should initially lead all efforts while building relationships and partnerships to see the plan to fruition. Partners include other governmental agencies, Village departments, and other local and regional organizations and entities when appropriate. Some key partners will be more involved for specific actions.

Key Partners include, among others:

- RTA - Regional Transportation Agency
- Metra
- IDOT - Illinois Department of Transportation
- Pace Suburban Bus
- DuPage County
- Itasca Chamber of Commerce
- Greater O'Hare Regional Business Association
- Business and Property Owners
- Private Developers and Financial Institutions
- Local Residents

As previously identified, funding sources for projects and actions related to the Strategic Plan include a range of financial incentives, tax strategies, infrastructure programs, grants, developer contributions, local funding programs, and general revenues.

There are a number of sources identified for transportation focused projects as well as state and regional programs for a variety of development and design improvements.

Potential funding sources for transportation, access, and mobility related improvements include a wide range of grant and funding opportunities as identified in the table on page 93.

Time Frame		
Short Term	0-3 years	>
Mid Term	3-5 years	>>
Long Term	5+ years	>>>

## RECOMMENDATION 1: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Strengthen Downtown Itasca's market position and enhance the physical environment of Downtown.

ACTIONS	IMPLEMENTATION	KEY PARTNERS	POTENTIAL FUNDING	TIME FRAME
<b>Development &amp; Redevelopment Sites</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Village Sponsored RFPs</li> <li>· Parcel Assembly/Consolidation</li> <li>· Acquire Public Right-of-Way</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Business/Property Owners</li> <li>· Local Financial Institutions</li> <li>· Chamber of Commerce</li> <li>· Private Developers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Private Investment</li> <li>· Local Financial Institutions</li> <li>· General Fund, Development Fees, Public Investment</li> </ul>	>
<b>Transit Supportive Development Along Irving Park Road</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Property Owner Outreach</li> <li>· Public infrastructure Improvements</li> <li>· Coordination with IDOT</li> <li>· Streetscape Design Improvements</li> <li>· Zoning Amendments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Business/Property Owners</li> <li>· Local Financial Institutions</li> <li>· Chamber of Commerce</li> <li>· Private Developers</li> <li>· RTA</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Private Investment</li> <li>· Local Financial Institutions</li> </ul>	>
<b>Active Use Cluster At Catalpa Avenue</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Property Owner Outreach</li> <li>· Public infrastructure Improvements</li> <li>· Coordination with IDOT</li> <li>· Streetscape Design Improvements</li> <li>· Zoning Amendments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Business/Property Owners</li> <li>· Local Financial Institutions</li> <li>· Chamber of Commerce</li> <li>· Private Developers</li> <li>· IDOT</li> <li>· RTA</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Private Investment</li> <li>· Local Financial Institutions</li> </ul>	>
<b>South Walnut District</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Property Owner Outreach</li> <li>· Business Attraction Efforts</li> <li>· Marketing and Branding of Downtown and South Sub-District</li> <li>· Zoning Amendments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Business/Property Owners</li> <li>· Local Financial Institutions</li> <li>· Chamber of Commerce</li> <li>· Choose DuPage</li> <li>· Private Developers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Private Investment</li> <li>· General Fund, Development Fees, Public Investment</li> <li>· Local Financial Institutions</li> </ul>	>>>
<b>Special Use</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Cultivate Community Partnerships</li> <li>· Create Parking Management Plan</li> <li>· Parcel Assembly and Consolidation</li> <li>· Property Owner Outreach</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Business/Property Owners</li> <li>· Local Financial Institutions</li> <li>· Chamber of Commerce</li> <li>· Choose DuPage</li> <li>· Private Developers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Private Investment</li> <li>· General Fund, Development Fees, Public Investment</li> <li>· Local Financial Institutions</li> </ul>	>>
<b>Zoning Amendments</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Amend/Consolidate B-4 and B-5 Districts</li> <li>· Amend B-6 District</li> <li>· Rezone B-2 and B-3 Districts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Village of Itasca</li> <li>· Business/Property Owners</li> <li>· Regional Organizations</li> <li>· RTA</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· General Fund, Development Fees, Public Investment</li> </ul>	>
<b>Green Infrastructure</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Public Investment in Flood Mitigation</li> <li>· Create Design Standards for Green Infrastructure</li> <li>· Consider Stormwater Utility Impact Fee</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Village of Itasca</li> <li>· Business/Property Owners</li> <li>· Regional Organizations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Private Investment</li> <li>· General Fund, Development Fees, Public Investment</li> <li>· State of IL/EPA/CMAP Grants</li> </ul>	>






## RECOMMENDATION 2: PUBLIC OPEN SPACE & URBAN DESIGN

Capitalize on the existing network of public spaces in Downtown and create new opportunities for outdoor enjoyment, placemaking, and areas of interest.

ACTIONS	IMPLEMENTATION	KEY PARTNERS	POTENTIAL FUNDING	TIME FRAME
<b>Activate Public Spaces</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Create Open Space Programming</li> <li>· Formalize Downtown Park and Open Space Network</li> <li>· Vacate Gigi Gruber Lane</li> <li>· Activate Creekwalk with Art, Benches, Design Elements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Business/Property Owners</li> <li>· Local Financial Institutions</li> <li>· Chamber of Commerce</li> <li>· Park District</li> <li>· Private Developers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Private Investment</li> <li>· General Fund, Development Fees, Public Investment</li> <li>· Local Financial Institutions</li> </ul>	>
<b>Leverage New Development to Increase Public Spaces</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Consider Impact Fee for Downtown Public Open Space</li> <li>· Prioritize Public Infrastructure and Streetscape Improvements</li> <li>· Engage Metra for Train Station Plaza improvements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Private Developers</li> <li>· Business/Property Owners</li> <li>· Local Financial Institutions</li> <li>· Metra</li> <li>· Village of Itasca</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Private Investment</li> <li>· General Fund, Development Fees, Public Investment</li> <li>· Local Financial Institutions</li> </ul>	>>
<b>Streetscape Design Standards</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Consider Codifying Sections of Design Guidelines</li> <li>· Engage IDOT/others to install streetscapes and implement guidelines</li> <li>· Apply Downtown Action Plan and Design Guidelines consistently</li> <li>· Encourage/Require Green Infrastructure Measures in New Streetscapes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Private Developers</li> <li>· Business/Property Owners</li> <li>· Village of Itasca</li> <li>· IDOT</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Private Investment</li> <li>· General Fund, Development Fees, Public Investment</li> <li>· Local Financial Institutions</li> </ul>	>
<b>Building &amp; Property Improvements</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Consider/create financial incentive toolbox for building/property owners</li> <li>· Create a Facade Improvement Program</li> <li>· Utilize Downtown Design Guidelines</li> <li>· Business and Property Owner Outreach</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Private Developers</li> <li>· Business/Property Owners</li> <li>· Local Financial Institutions</li> <li>· Village of Itasca</li> <li>· RTA</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Private Investment</li> <li>· General Fund, Development Fees, Public Investment</li> <li>· Local Financial Institutions</li> </ul>	>>
<b>Architectural Design Standards</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Consider Codifying Sections of Design Guidelines</li> <li>· Encourage and Require Compliance with Design Guidelines</li> <li>· Business and Property Owner Outreach</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Private Developers</li> <li>· Business/Property Owners</li> <li>· Local Financial Institutions</li> <li>· Village of Itasca</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Private Investment</li> <li>· General Fund, Development Fees, Public Investment</li> <li>· Local Financial Institutions</li> </ul>	>

## RECOMMENDATION 3: ACCESS & MOBILITY

Provide an interconnected system of transportation infrastructure to facilitate the safe and efficient movement of vehicles and pedestrians within and through the Village of Itasca.

ACTIONS	IMPLEMENTATION	KEY PARTNERS	POTENTIAL FUNDING	TIME FRAME
<b>Street Network Connectivity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Coordination with IDOT</li> <li>Property Owner Outreach</li> <li>Prepare Preliminary Design Studies and Concepts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>IDOT</li> <li>Metra</li> <li>Property Owners</li> <li>Village of Itasca</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ITEP, STP-L</li> <li>Private Investment</li> <li>General Fund, Development Fees, Public Investment</li> <li>Local Financial Institutions</li> </ul>	
<b>Bicycle/Pedestrian Connections &amp; Infrastructure</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Coordination with IDOT</li> <li>Collaboration with Spring Brook Nature Center and Metra for Bike Facilities</li> <li>Coordinate with Vendors for Bike Share and E-scooters</li> <li>Install additional Bike Parking/Racks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>IDOT</li> <li>Metra</li> <li>Pace</li> <li>RTA</li> <li>Property Owners</li> <li>Private Vendors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CMAQ Grants, ITEP, HSIP, ITP, SRTS, RTP, TAP-L</li> <li>Private Investment</li> <li>General Fund, Development Fees, Public Investment</li> <li>Local Financial Institutions</li> </ul>	
<b>Metra Station Access</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Coordination with Metra regarding parking demand, EV parking, possible platform extension, train station facilities</li> <li>Work with Pace/Metra on schedule changes and updates</li> <li>Identify locations for wayfinding and directional signage</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>IDOT</li> <li>Metra</li> <li>Pace</li> <li>Property Owners</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ITEP, MFT, STP-L, TAP-L</li> <li>Private Investment</li> <li>General Fund, Development Fees, Public Investment</li> <li>Local Financial Institutions</li> </ul>	
<b>Transform Irving Park Road</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Coordination with IDOT</li> <li>Prepare Engineered Streetscape and Roadway Design Concepts</li> <li>Property Owner Outreach</li> <li>Coordinate Design of Shared Use Path</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>IDOT</li> <li>Metra</li> <li>Property Owners</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ITEP, ITP</li> <li>Private Investment</li> <li>General Fund, Development Fees, Public Investment</li> <li>Local Financial Institutions</li> </ul>	