



## City of Des Plaines, Illinois



March 2007

# Comprehensive Plan

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## WORK PAPERS

Three work papers were prepared during the course of the planning study. These work papers include:

- o *Inventory and Analysis Memorandum* (HNTB Corporation, August 2005)
- o *Market Assessment* (Goodman Williams Group, December 2005)
- o *Preliminary Community-Wide and Downtown Subarea Concept Plans* (HNTB Corporation January 2006)

# I. INTRODUCTION

The Comprehensive Plan is the City of Des Plaines' official *policy guide* to future land use, development, and conservation within the community over the next ten to fifteen years. It provides guidance for current and future transportation and community facilities, while placing emphasis on land use, redevelopment, transportation and urban design issues within the City. It sets forth the vision, goals, objectives, policies, and guidelines intended to direct the present and future physical, social and economic development that occurs within Des Plaines' borders.

Unlike other City codes and ordinances which are adopted as enforceable law, a Comprehensive Plan is an advisory tool to be consulted and considered by the Plan Commission, City Council, and other officials and staff when land use changes and capital facilities are proposed. It is long-range in orientation and intended to express general community goals and aspirations. Yet, it is specific enough to guide the day-to-day activities of the City's elected and appointed officials.

## Local Planning Technical Assistance Act

The Comprehensive Plan has been developed in compliance with the Illinois Local Planning Technical Assistance Act (May 2002). The Act accomplished four significant updates to the State of Illinois' planning legislation:

- It provides the first definition in state law of a "Comprehensive Plan";
- It allows several state agencies to give preferences in funding programs to communities that have passed Comprehensive Plans in accordance with the legislation;
- It creates a Local Planning Fund to make technical assistance grants for planning and development;
- It declares that local government's land-use actions should be consistent with their Comprehensive Plans.

The purposes of the Act are:

1. To provide technical assistance to Illinois local governments for the development of local planning ordinances and regulations,
2. Encourages Illinois local governments to engage in planning, regulatory, and development approaches that promote and encourage comprehensive planning,
3. Supports local planning efforts in communities with limited financial means, and

4. Supports planning efforts that include one or more units of local government or planning agencies working together.

The Act stipulates that the Comprehensive Plan must address, but is not limited to addressing, each of the following elements:

- ***Issues and Opportunities*** - Identifies the major trends and forces affecting the local government and its citizens and sets goals and standards.
- ***Land Use*** - Provides the general pattern for the location, distribution, and characteristics of future land uses over a 20 year period.
- ***Transportation*** - Considers all relevant modes of transportation and establishes the framework for the acquisition, preservation, and protection of existing and future rights-of-way.
- ***Community Facilities*** – Provides information on the availability of schools, parks, police, fire, sewer and water in the City.
- ***Natural Resources*** – Identifies and defines the natural resources in the community with respect to water, land, flora, and fauna, and identifies mitigation efforts that are need to protect these resources.
- ***Telecommunications Infrastructure*** – Coordinates telecommunications initiatives and determines the existing telecommunications services of telecommunications providers, and establishes a framework for providing reasonable access to public rights of way.
- ***Housing*** – Documents the present needs for housing including affordable housing, assesses the condition of the local housing stock and develops strategies, programs and other actions to address the needs for a range of housing options.
- ***Economic Development***- Ensures that adequate economic development opportunities are available including identifying the strategic competitive advantages of the community and the surrounding region.
- ***Public Participation*** – Identifies the process for engaging the community in the planning process.

It is the City's intention to comply with the elements identified in the Illinois Local Planning Technical Assistance Act. By doing so, the City is in a good position to receive future planning assistance from the State, as described in this section. As such, the Plan addresses the elements of the Act in the goals and objectives. The various sections of the Plan also describe how the City currently, and in the future, will address each element. This information will be reviewed regularly to ensure that it consistent with current City policies and land use actions, in compliance with State law.

## A. BRIEF COMMUNITY HISTORY<sup>1</sup>

The Des Plaines River Valley was occupied by the Potawatomi, Ottawa, and Chippewa Indians immediately prior to the arrival of the first settlers from the Eastern United States during the second quarter of the nineteenth century. Following the Treaty of Chicago in 1833, pioneers from New England and New York, as well as German immigrants seeking economic and political freedom, arrived in the area in large numbers during the 1840's and 1850's.

The present site of Des Plaines was established in the 1850's by the Illinois and Wisconsin Land Company, a group of land speculators engaged in building a railroad from Chicago to Janesville, Wisconsin. In 1857 when the Chicago, Saint Paul, and Fond du Lac Railroad introduced daily train service between Janesville and Chicago, a subdivision plot was recorded for the "Town of Rand", named for Socrates Rand, one of the first settlers in the area. The railroad, which was purchased by the Chicago and North Western in 1859, named its station in the area "Des Plaines" after the Des Plaines River Valley, and in 1869 the subdivision name Town of Rand was changed to Des Plaines.

Des Plaines was incorporated in 1869 and within one year the population was recorded as 800 people. Des Plaines was officially organized in 1874 with the election of the first town board. Frank Whitcomb, a local brick manufacturer, was the first town President.

In addition to the railroad, local farmers were drawn to the steam powered grist mill next to the Des Plaines River in what is now downtown Des Plaines. Constructed by the railroad developers in 1852 to cut ties from the forested belt of burr oak and hickory along the river, the mill was purchased by Socrates Rand who converted it to a grist mill. It has since been demolished. The downtown business area of Des Plaines began to grow on either side of the tracks near the mill and at that point where trains would naturally stop to take on water.

Des Plaines was a thriving community when in 1925 voters approved a proposal to adopt the present City form of government with H.T. Bennet as the first Mayor. After that period, the City annexed areas to the south, known as Orchard Place and the City of Riverview, in order to increase its corporate limits.

Following World War II, movement of people from Chicago as well as the development of Chicago's O'Hare International Airport signaled a great period of growth for Des Plaines. Population jumped from 9,000 people prior to 1940 to over 50,000 after 1950.

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<sup>1</sup> Source: [www.desplaines.org/community/history](http://www.desplaines.org/community/history)

During the second half of the twentieth century, Des Plaines attracted industrial, office, and warehouse/distribution facilities due to its proximity to O'Hare Airport and the interstate highway system. The City also experienced an increase in its housing stock with many single-family detached units and some multi-family units built during the 1960's through the 1990's. At century's end, the City's downtown district was the home for multi-story condominium development.

## **B. PURPOSE OF THE PLAN**

The City of Des Plaines is at a critical point in its evolution as a community. It is a built-out, mature suburb with little available vacant land for development. Yet, reinvestment and redevelopment within the downtown and in other areas of the City over the last decade have raised redevelopment pressures on both commercial and residential properties. The downtown business district will continue to experience significant change in the coming years, change the City should proactively seek to direct for the benefit of the entire community. "Teardown" single-family residential redevelopment is also affecting older residential areas of the City, with the potential of altering the character of these neighborhoods. Key community organizations, such as the Police and Fire Departments, and the Des Plaines Park District, are facing the need to expand or relocate their facilities.

This Comprehensive Plan will provide basic direction for future land use and development patterns. As opportunities arise in the City to guide and direct land use changes, the Plan will serve as a valuable resource to decision-makers. Reviewing the maps, goals, objectives and policies contained within the Plan will ensure that decisions regarding public and private investments are made with regard for the larger context they will affect, and for the long range "vision" that the Plan represents.

Without the benefit of a clear statement of community expectations and aspirations, there would be little consensus upon which to evaluate land use and development decisions. This Comprehensive Plan fulfills that purpose. It has been developed with substantial community input and represents the conclusion of a year-long planning process.

## **C. PLANNING PROCESS**

Preparation of the Comprehensive Plan has followed a classic planning process. It began with a documentation of the existing conditions or data collection. A market assessment examining the potential commercial and residential market was completed. With continued citizen input, issues and opportunities were identified, and goals and objectives were established. Alternative future

scenario maps were prepared, reviewed, and revised. The result is a Comprehensive Plan with a long range land use map and strategies identified to implement the Plan.

As part of the planning process three other documents were produced as support documents and are considered part of the Comprehensive Plan. These documents are: *the Inventory and Analysis Memorandum* (August 2005), the *Market Assessment Report* (December 2005), and the *Preliminary Community-Wide and Downtown Sub Area Concept Plans Report* (January 2006).

## D. OVERVIEW OF THE PLAN

The Plan is divided into eleven chapters. Chapters II-X provide information on the nine elements as stipulated in the Local Planning Technical Assistance Act. Chapter XI provides information on implementation of the Plan.

- *Chapter I: Introduction*
- *Chapter II: Issues and Opportunities*
- *Chapter III: Community Wide Land Use*
- *Chapter IV: Downtown Subarea Land Use*
- *Chapter IV: Transportation*
- *Chapter V: Community Facilities (includes Natural Resources and Telecommunications)*
- *Chapter VI: Housing*
- *Chapter VII: Economic Development*
- *Chapter IX: Urban Design*
- *Chapter X: Public Participation*
- *Chapter XI: Implementation*

## II. ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The Comprehensive Plan was guided by a Steering Committee comprised of elected and appointed City officials. Meetings with the Steering Committee and with the public were held during the planning process to solicit citizen and stakeholder input and achieve consensus regarding the Plan. The first three meetings were held to elicit "issues and opportunities". These meetings were as follows:

- ✓ Key person interviews were held with members of the community on June 6, 2005.
- ✓ A kick off meeting and "issues and opportunities" workshop was held with the Steering Committee on July 27, 2005.
- ✓ A public meeting was held on November 3, 2005.

The following are a composite listing of the issues, opportunities and key planning considerations generated by the public interviewed in the process.

### A. SUMMARY OF ISSUES

The following were mentioned as potential "issues" for the City:

#### *Land Use and Development*

- Annexation possibilities
- Comprehensive Plan implementation
- How to plan for/handle residential teardowns
- Flood control-implementation and lack of funding
- Balance between retail and service
- Future of Holy Family Hospital and Maryville Academy
- Retain control of future development
- Grayfields/vacant shopping centers

#### *Transportation, Access, and Parking*

- Traffic congestion and flow
- Freight traffic/at-grade crossings are problematic
- Need for better transportation coordination and train/bus connection
- Need for additional parking in downtown

#### *Urban Design*

- High quality new development
- Transitions between different land uses
- Integration of older commercial buildings with new construction
- Preservation of green space

### ***Community Facilities and Services***

- Existing infrastructure in need of improvement
- Financial strength of school districts

### ***Economic Development***

- Need for additional retail
- Need for entertainment for all ages
- Decline in manufacturing base/retention of manufacturing
- Obsolete warehouse/manufacturing space
- Outdated commercial buildings
- City revenues/how to generate more tax revenue
- High Cook County commercial and industrial tax rates
- Lack of pro-active economic development planning
- High industrial land prices prohibiting future industrial development
- Need for improvement along Oakton-Lee retail center

### ***General / Quality of Life***

- Lack of affordable “workforce” housing
- Higher unemployment rate than state average
- Necessary to serve diverse population
- Effects of O’Hare Airport expansion
- Availability of social services for lower income-population
- Age diversity/change in population
- Need for community leadership
- Need to improve Des Plaines “image”

## **B. SUMMARY OF OPPORTUNITIES**

The following were mentioned as potential “opportunities” for the City:

### ***Land Use and Development***

- More affordable housing than neighboring communities
- Development opportunities
- Land use diversity
- Good housing stock

### ***Transportation, Access, and Parking***

- Excellent location
- Public transit availability
- Easy access to national and state highway system, rail and air
- Close to City of Chicago

### ***Community Facilities and Services***

- Excellent schools

- Oakton Community College
- Great Park District
- Beautiful new library
- Proximity to forest preserves

***Economic Development***

- Good population base to support local retailers and businesses
- Large workforce
- Great Chamber of Commerce
- Major employers in town

***General / Quality of Life***

- Diverse population

**C. KEY PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

Key planning considerations were generated from the issues and opportunities. These focused considerations help bring focus and order to the results of the community participation and inventory tasks to guide the properties of the *Future Long Range Land Use Plan*. These planning considerations, broken into different categories, are as follows.

***General***

- The downtown redevelopment effort, including the Library Plaza and Metropolitan Square, has made a positive impact to date. It is critical to keep momentum by establishing sound planning and development goals.
- There is a need to improve the City's image and to create a unique and distinctive identity.
- It is important to continue and create existing and future retail, service, and recreational opportunities to address the needs of the changing population, including income, age, and cultural diversity.
- Implementation of recommendations developed in the Comprehensive Plan is important.

***Land Use and Economic Development***

- As the single-family residential areas experience teardowns and redevelopment, there is a need to make sure controls are in place to address issues such as height, site coverage, and the inappropriate subdividing of lots.
- Large scale properties, such as the Maryville Academy and Holy Family Medical campuses, may one day exceed their useful life, causing a need for the City to be proactive in planning for future development of these sites.
- Redevelopment of large vacant retail sites, such as abandoned shopping centers, is critical for the City.

- A variety of land uses and a balance between service and retail uses in the downtown is important and will keep the downtown vibrant.
- Commercial districts, including Rand Road, Oakton Street, Lee Street, and Elmhurst Road are in need of updating, both in terms of their physical appearances as well as the mix of businesses within these districts.
- Flood control is a major concern for properties on the east side of the City and, until resolved, will affect the quality of life for residents.
- The City is surrounded by unincorporated areas on the north, northeast and southwest. Planning for the future and potential annexation of these sites should be an integral part of the Plan.
- There is a lack of “big box” retailers in Des Plaines. Planning for these types of stores should address traffic and circulation along the major arterials.
- Creating an entertainment venue would be a positive addition to the community and a draw for visitors.
- There has been a decline in the manufacturing base due to several factors, including obsolete facilities, high land prices, and high Cook County taxes. Maintaining and potentially expanding this tax base in appropriate areas of the City should be a consideration. Capitalizing on the proximity to O’Hare Airport and the demand for large logistics and distribution space is appropriate.
- Open space provides a valuable amenity to residents. Multi-use bike and pedestrian trails that provide a connection with residential and commercial spaces provide not only recreational benefits but economic benefits as well.
- The continued emphasis on a variety of housing types and working class housing is important to the community.
- The City’s proximity to O’Hare Airport is both an asset and a liability. Planning for the future use and connectivity of industrially zoned land to the southwest of the City in light of the recent airport acquisition is critical.

### ***Urban Design***

- High quality new development is an important goal.
- Transitions and buffers between different land uses must be improved.
- Implementation of the design guidelines for the downtown and along Oakton and Lee Streets is critical to successful redevelopment.
- Primary and secondary gateways into the City need to be determined and appropriate design and land use criteria developed.
- A variety of building types is important to an attractive downtown. Sensitive integration of older buildings with new construction is appropriate.

### ***Community Facilities and Services***

- In order to maintain the City’s quality schools, there is a need for additional financial resources.

- In order to maintain the existing, and in many cases, older infrastructure, there is a need to generate more revenue.
- The City benefits by the presence of Oakton Community College, a new library, and excellent park district, among other excellent facilities.
- The City's Police Department and Fire Department may need to expand or relocate from their existing facilities.

***Transportation, Access, and Parking***

- There are many major high profile regional commercial corridors in the City, including Rand Road, Des Plaines River Road, Elmhurst Road, Northwest Highway, Oakton Street, Golf Road and Touhy Avenue.
- Metra and Pace provide an important asset in town. The Metra/UP Des Plaines Station is a focal point in the downtown and provides an important "captive market" for downtown businesses.
- Redevelopment of the Cumberland Station as a transit-oriented development (TOD) could provide easier access to that station and create potential new retail and residential uses in that area.
- Parking is problematic in the downtown. Parking for the City Hall and other businesses is something that should be addressed.
- One-way streets in the downtown could be causing some difficulty in accessing specific businesses.
- Railroad crossings in the downtown and throughout the City increase traffic congestion. Taking this into consideration when planning new developments is important.

**D. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

From the issues and opportunities discussion and the public input, planning goals and objectives were developed. These goals and objectives are intended to provide land use policy direction when considering future physical and design actions. They are to be used in combination with other maps, policies, and recommendations to provide guidance for Des Plaines' future development. They are separated by category below.

As background, *goals and objectives* transform collective community values into operational guidelines. Each has a distinct and different purpose in realizing community aspirations:

- **Goals** describe a desired *end state* toward which planning efforts should be directed. They are broad-based and long-range in focus, representing an end to be achieved.

- **Objectives** describe *actions* that should be undertaken in order to achieve overall goals. They provide more precise and measurable steps for planning actions, guiding implementation and achievement.

## **A. LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT**

### **GOAL:**

***Seek to provide high quality and diverse housing options for City residents.***

### **OBJECTIVES:**

- a. Support the provision of housing of varying types, sizes, and price points, including additional workforce housing in appropriate locations.
- b. Protect the integrity and high quality of single-family residential neighborhoods throughout Des Plaines.
- c. Plan for organized residential development in areas that have the potential to be redeveloped from other uses per Plan direction.
- d. Create an affordable housing plan for Des Plaines, including provisions for workforce residential units, "work/live" units, and independent and supportive senior housing.
- e. Publicize Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and other federal funds to support single-family and multi-family residential rehabilitation.
- f. Promote the creation of rental housing by pursuing federal and state grants for subsidizing construction of apartments.
- g. Work with the banking community and the Illinois Housing Development Authority to create a "first-time" home buyers program, especially for children and family members of Des Plaines residents.

### **GOAL:**

***Ensure the compatibility of new housing with existing residential neighborhoods.***

### **OBJECTIVES:**

- a. Reinforce controls currently in place in single-family residential areas experiencing tear-downs and rebuilding, including maximum height, site coverage, and subdivision of lots.
- b. Review bulk regulations for multi-family developments to ensure that future developments provide adequate open space, appropriate densities, and an appropriate segue from multi-family to single-family neighborhoods.

GOAL:

***Strengthen the City's existing commercial areas.***

OBJECTIVES:

- a. Support new commercial development of varying scale and compatibility in the downtown business district.
- b. Attract new "large-format" retailing where feasible along the City's major arterial roadways.
- c. Encourage the upgrading and/or replacement of obsolete retail and office space where possible.
- d. Reduce the number of isolated commercial parcels along arterial roadways and encourage commercial zones near major intersections.

GOAL:

***Encourage "transit-oriented" redevelopment along the Metra/Union Pacific Railroad corridor.***

OBJECTIVES:

- a. Seek a varied and self-sustaining mix of uses adjacent to the downtown and Cumberland stations, consisting of retail, service, office, and residential projects that can benefit from transit access and a pedestrian-friendly environment.
- b. Encourage efficient shared parking arrangements to meet corridor parking needs.
- c. Promote the development of housing on upper stories of mixed-use buildings along the corridor.
- d. Encourage pedestrian linkages between the Cumberland and downtown Metra/UP stations.

GOAL:

***Revitalize the City's industrial base.***

OBJECTIVES:

- a. Encourage the concentration of industrial uses in the City's southwest area by offering relocation assistance for companies wishing to relocate from existing isolated locations.
- b. Continue to enforce zoning, nuisance, and performance standards to minimize industrial effects on nearby residential properties.
- c. Encourage redevelopment of obsolete and/or physically deteriorated industrial buildings.
- e. Capitalize on the City's proximity to O'Hare Airport and market demand for large logistics and distribution facilities.

- f. Undertake appropriate infrastructure upgrades to support the continuing viability of the industrial base.
- g. Expand the availability of industrially zoned parcels by considering the annexation of unincorporated parcels southwest of the City.
- h. Recognize and analyze potential implications of future development decisions in the vicinity of the proposed Metra Star Line station.

GOAL:

***Maintain and expand open space and recreational opportunities within the City.***

OBJECTIVES:

- a. Introduce appropriate open space and recreational opportunities in redevelopment areas.
- b. Support the expansion of open space and recreational amenities contiguous to existing parks and schools, and in the City's underserved areas, as opportunities arise.
- c. Construct bicycle and pedestrian paths throughout the City.
- d. Consider the annexation of unincorporated, vacant land for future recreational opportunities.
- e. Create a partnership between the City and the Cook County Forest Preserve District to extend recreational opportunities immediately outside the City limits.
- f. Utilize areas within the Des Plaines River floodplain for recreational opportunities.

## **B. TRANSPORTATION**

GOAL:

***Retain and enhance existing public transportation facilities and services.***

OBJECTIVES:

- a. Advocate continued cooperation between Metra and Pace, in order to provide seamless delivery of public transit for Des Plaines residents, including student, workforce, and senior passengers.
- b. Construct and maintain shelters where possible for Pace transit users.
- c. Pursue opportunities to improve passenger amenities at the Metra Cumberland station.

GOAL:

***Improve traffic flow and safety throughout the City.***

OBJECTIVES:

- a. Conduct a City-wide transportation study.
- b. Implement recommendations from the downtown traffic study to improve flow and access in the downtown
- c. Pursue federal, state, county, and City funding sources to improve the S-curve on Northwest Highway for both vehicular and pedestrian traffic.
- d. Work with railroad and transportation officials to implement safety improvements and improve traffic flow in the Metra/Union Pacific Railroad corridor.
- e. Consider a vehicular underpass in an appropriate location along the Metra/Union Pacific Northwest Line railroad corridor.
- f. Require traffic impact analysis of proposed redevelopments to address potential impacts on neighborhood streets.
- g. Work with the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) to improve access at the Rand/River Road corridor by eliminating turning restrictions
- h. Improve wayfinding signage throughout City to aid pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists in locating and accessing key community facilities.
- i. Widen and improve residential streets that do not meet current design standards.

GOAL:

***Maintain and determine adequate parking facilities to serve land uses throughout the City.***

OBJECTIVES:

- a. Actively monitor, manage, and address on-street and off-street parking needs within the City to ensure adequate and conveniently located parking to serve all current and future land uses.
- b. Pursue opportunities for the reconfiguration of off-street parking lots, and the establishment of shared parking agreements, to meet parking demands within neighborhood commercial areas in a coordinated and efficient manner.

GOAL:

*Enhance the pedestrian and bicycle experience throughout the City.*

OBJECTIVES:

- a. Improve pedestrian comfort, safety, and convenience through pedestrian access improvements throughout Des Plaines, along major thoroughfares and at busy intersections, especially near schools, parks, commercial areas, and the Metra stations.
- b. Encourage bicycle travel throughout the City, through a consistent system of on-street and off-street bicycle routes accessing major destinations such as the Metra stations, schools, parks, retailers, and the riverfront.
- c. Work with neighboring communities and agencies to create a series of pedestrian and bicycle connections to regional facilities, including forest preserves, parks, and other recreational amenities.
- d. Reduce pedestrian barriers in the Metra/Union Pacific railroad corridor by encouraging visual and physical treatments allowing pedestrian connections on either side of the railroad and Miner Street/Northwest Highway.

**C. COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND RESOURCES**

GOAL:

*Cooperate with public service providers and institutions within the City to serve Des Plaines residents.*

OBJECTIVES:

- a. Work with the Des Plaines and Mount Prospect Park Districts as opportunities arise, to accommodate facility and open space expansion needs as identified in their Master Plans.
- b. Establish requirements for open space dedications by developers of mixed use or multi-family developments.
- c. Encourage all new community facilities to be located and designed as key "landmark" structures within the City, with high-quality site improvements and architectural design.
- d. Enhance the significance of quality higher education facilities in town, including Oakton Community College and DePaul University, by promoting their location within Des Plaines.

GOAL:

*Expand and enhance cultural, arts and entertainment resources available to City residents and visitors.*

OBJECTIVES:

- a. Working with the local arts organizations and other groups, seek to attract art and cultural uses to the downtown area and in other appropriate areas of the City.
- b. Attract entertainment options such as a multi-screen movie theater, a championship golf course, or similar venues to expand the recreational opportunities within the City.
- c. Seek opportunities to integrate public amenities, such as plazas and public art, within the downtown business district.

GOAL:

*Protect and enhance existing historic and natural resources.*

OBJECTIVES:

- a. Encourage property owners and developers to preserve original properties through façade retention, and encourage renovations and/or additions that are consistent with the style and character of original construction.
- b. Implement appropriate regulations and practices to ensure the protection of existing trees and other natural resources during redevelopment within the City.
- c. Alleviate flooding problems along the Des Plaines River by actively supporting the Des Plaines River-Rand Park Flood Control Project.
- d. Promote the use of the proposed riverwalk by providing wayfinding signage and pedestrian friendly access.

## D. URBAN DESIGN

### GOAL:

*Enhance the appearance of neighborhood commercial areas and key community entry points and traffic routes.*

### OBJECTIVES:

- a. Follow the adopted *Business District Design Guidelines* in order to establish a consistent approach to streetscape treatments in the downtown business district, along Oakton Street, and along Lee Street.
- b. Establish and implement consistent "gateway" treatments at key primary and secondary entries into Des Plaines.
- c. Minimize the visual impact of surface parking areas through perimeter and interior landscaping, and placement of lots behind or beside buildings.
- d. Implement a coordinated landscaping program, where feasible, along arterial streets, especially where side and rear property lines create an inconsistent appearance.
- e. Bury overhead utility lines, where feasible, as upgrades are undertaken at key traffic routes.
- f. Provide transitions and barriers between different land uses throughout the City.

### GOAL:

*Create a visually appealing system of public improvements throughout downtown Des Plaines.*

### OBJECTIVES:

- a. Expand and enhance a consistent streetscape system throughout the downtown, with a particular emphasis in connecting both sides of the Union Pacific railroad corridor.
- b. Establish and implement consistent entryway treatments and wayfinding signage throughout the downtown.
- c. Provide a more inviting entryway to Metropolitan Square by improving the Miner Street frontage and providing better design enhancements to encourage pedestrian traffic.
- d. Continue to implement the City's Facade Rehabilitation Rebate program to encourage physical enhancements to commercial buildings.
- e. Retain a mix of building types by allowing for sensitive integration of older buildings with new construction where appropriate.

## E. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

### GOAL:

*Continue and enhance economic development efforts within the City.*

### OBJECTIVES:

- a. Concentrate on retention of industrial, office, and retail businesses throughout Des Plaines, through the Economic Development Commission's Business Visitation Program and other methods, including partnership with state and local agencies.
- b. Maintain the City's business attraction efforts, through attendance at retail, industrial, and office professional organization events and marketing to potential companies and merchants.
- c. Diversify the City's economic environment, that the provision of governmental services not rely solely on one specific tax base, and that the tax burden on residential property owners may be reduced over time.
- d. Support reinvestment by developers and businesses by utilizing the City's "economic toolbox" including Tax Increment Financing, Cook County property tax abatements, State of Illinois grants and abatements, and other financial incentives including Enterprise Zones.
- e. Fund continual maintenance of the City's infrastructure, so that current and future business may rely upon adequate water, sewer, stormwater, utility, and telecommunication systems.
- f. Establish a "theme" or "image" for the City and create "theme-based" marketing efforts to promote economic development in the downtown and in the neighborhoods.
- g. Continue to provide diverse employment opportunities within the City.
- h. Study methods to attract high-tech employers to Des Plaines.
- i. Capitalize on the City's proximity to O'Hare Airport, by encouraging entertainment, hospitality, and dining enterprises to locate to Des Plaines.

### GOAL:

*Continue to work with business partner organizations and agencies, including the Des Plaines Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Des Plaines Economic Development Commission to maintain and enhance the commercial mix.*

### OBJECTIVES:

- a. Work with the business community to maintain and develop regional patronage within the downtown business district through expansion of the business mix and targeted marketing efforts.
- b. Diversify retail and service opportunities to address the needs of the changing population, including age, income and cultural backgrounds.

- c. Highlight Des Plaines at public locations throughout the community, including both Metra stations, providing maps and information about upcoming community events.

## **F. ADMINISTRATION AND IMPLEMENTATION**

GOAL:

***Amend and enforce City codes, as appropriate, to support the purposes of the Plan.***

OBJECTIVES:

- a. Revise the City's zoning ordinance, so as to plan for and implement redevelopment in neighborhoods, commercial corridors, and the industrial sector.
- b. Establish appropriate allowable use, bulk and density requirements in areas likely to experience redevelopment pressure, to ensure redevelopment is consistent with the City's expectations.
- c. Provide the fiscal resources to ensure adequate building code enforcement throughout Des Plaines.

GOAL:

***Continue to provide high quality municipal services and facilities.***

OBJECTIVES:

- a. Continue an aggressive program of City infrastructure improvements including adequate stormwater, sewer, and water systems through strategic planning and the capital improvement program (CIP).
- b. Cooperate with other community service agencies and organizations in achieving their future service and facility development Plans.
- c. Provide wireless network (WI-FI) access in designated areas of the City.

GOAL:

***Work with regional agencies, neighboring municipalities and others as appropriate, to address issues of regional concern impacting the City.***

OBJECTIVES:

- a. Consider the negotiation of a boundary agreement with adjacent communities to address the future of unincorporated areas adjacent to Des Plaines.

### III. COMMUNITY WIDE LAND USE

The *Long Range Land Use Plan* translates the City's goals and objectives into physical terms and conservation preferences. It establishes the pattern of future land uses for the next 10 to 15 years. It also includes community land use policies and recommendations to realize the Plan. The *Long Range Land Use Plan* strives to maintain and enhance the basic physical character of the community, promotes improvements and upgrades as needed, and proactively manages market-driven redevelopment in select locations and in a compatible manner.

The *Long Range Land Use Plan* is to be used in concert with other elements of the Comprehensive Plan including the Downtown Subarea Plan presented in Chapter IV. Chapter III is organized into the following sections:

- A. Introduction to the Land Use Plan
- B. Residential Land Use
- C. Commercial Land Use
- D. Employment Land Use
- E. Public and Institutional Land Use
- F. Unincorporated Lands

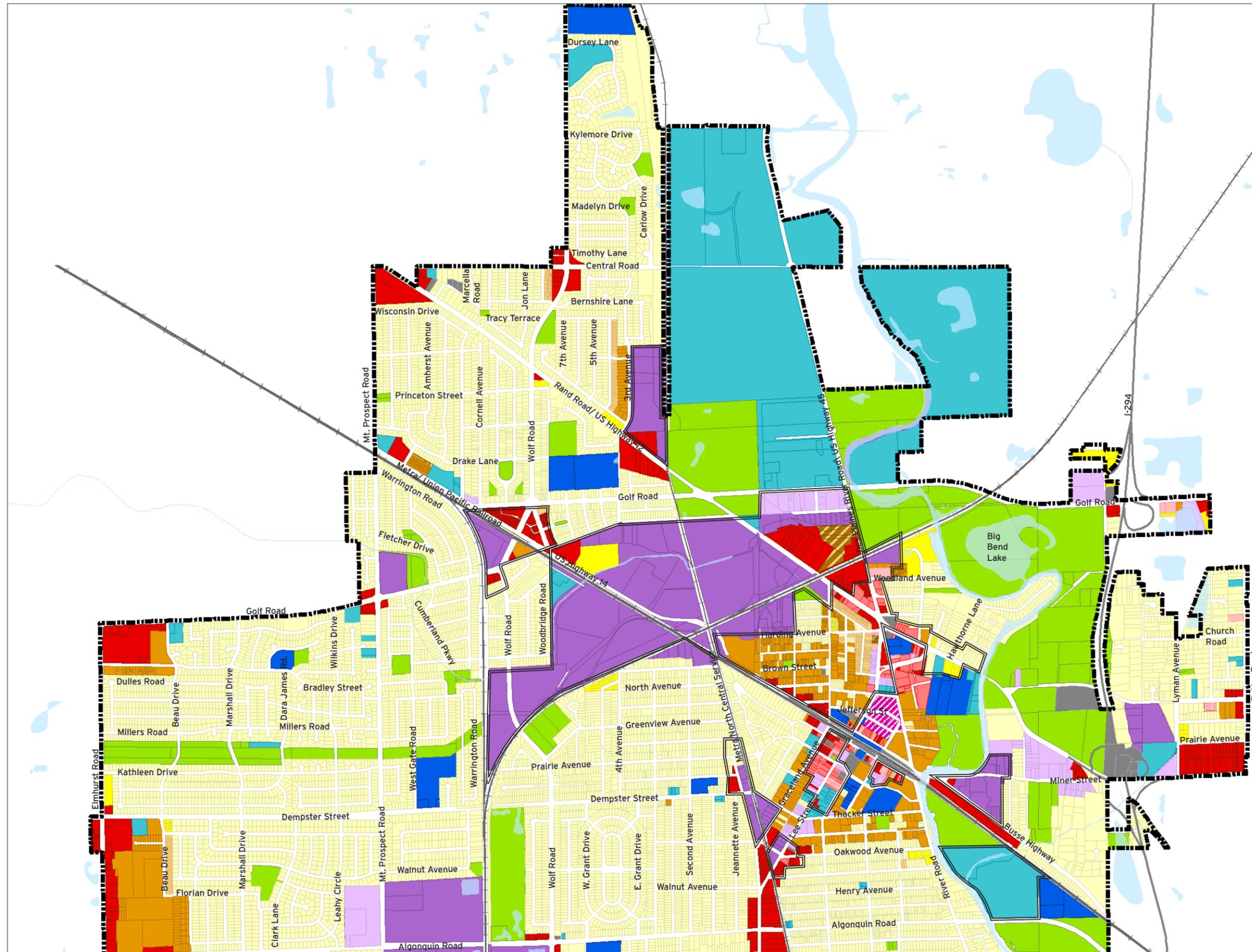
#### A. INTRODUCTION TO THE LAND USE PLAN

The existing pattern of land uses in the City is a strong influence on future land use and development patterns. The current pattern of land uses in the City is illustrated in *Figure 1a/b Existing Land Use*. To determine the type and location of land uses currently existing in the City of Des Plaines, field surveys were conducted in May 2005. Land uses observed at the time of the survey were mapped and are described in detail in the *Inventory and Analysis Memorandum (August 2005)*.

Overall, Des Plaines is a mature, low-density residential community with areas of significant commercial and industrial development. While some non-residential portions of the community are subject to change due to age, obsolescence or lower density than what is allowed in the City's zoning ordinance, the majority of the community has a physical pattern of development that is well organized and stable. And because of the quality of the living environment, as well as the City's location in the Chicago region, it is experiencing a high level of residential replacement housing, particularly multi-family housing.

*Figure 2a/b Long Range Land Use Plan* builds upon the pattern of existing land uses and provides a guide for future land use and development decisions. The

**FIGURE 1a**  
**EXISTING LAND USE**  
*COMMUNITY WIDE*  
 North of Algonquin Road



**City Boundary**

**Land Uses**

- Residential - Single Family
- Residential - Townhouse
- Residential - Duplex
- Residential - Multi-Family
- Residential - Mobile Homes
- Public
- Institutional
- Mixed Use
- Commercial - Retail
- Commercial - Service
- Restaurant / Entertainment
- Commercial - Office
- Industrial
- Parks and Open Space
- Vacant/ Parking Facility
- Areas of Proposed Change



**FIGURE 1b**  
**EXISTING LAND USE**  
*COMMUNITY WIDE*  
 South of Algonquin Road

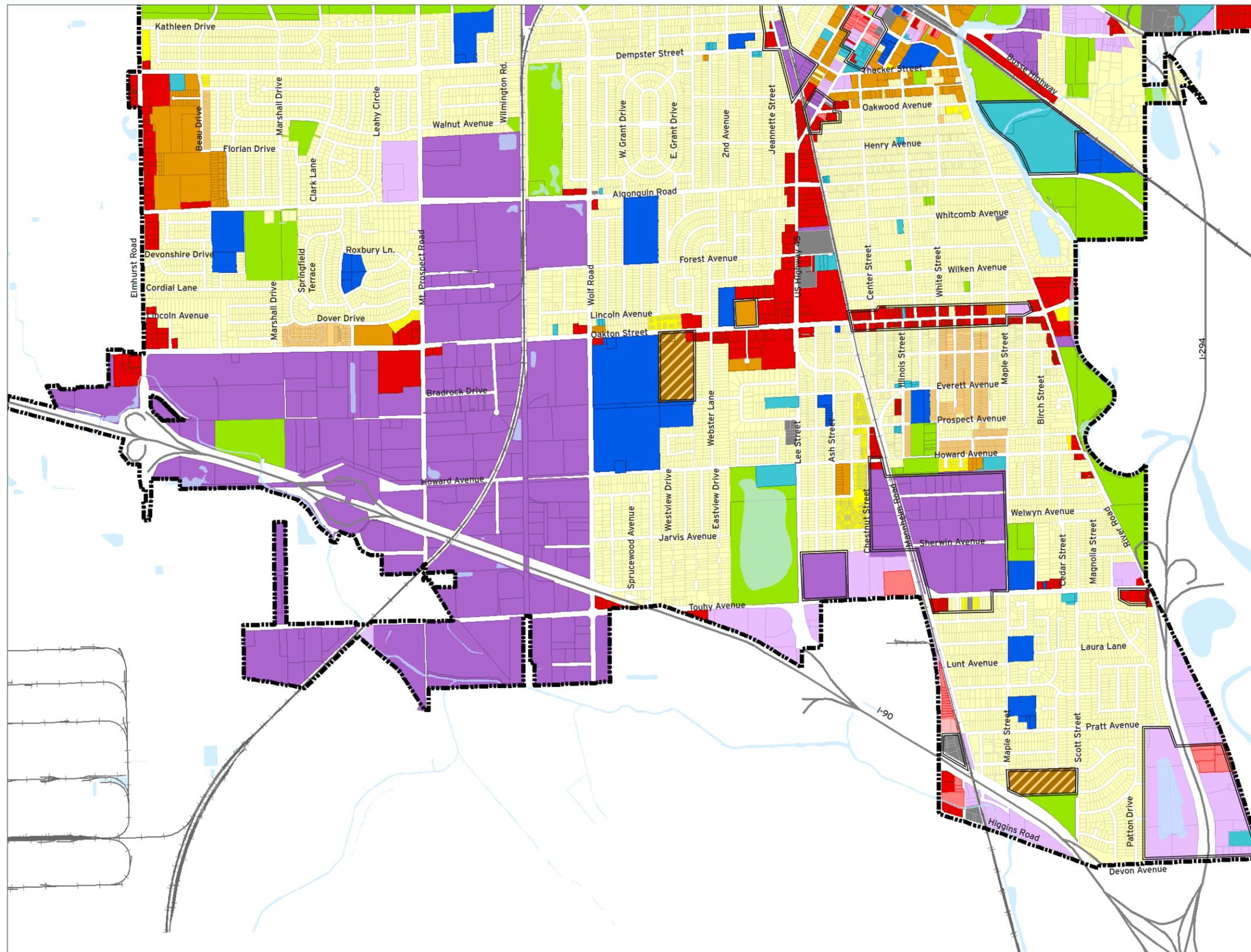
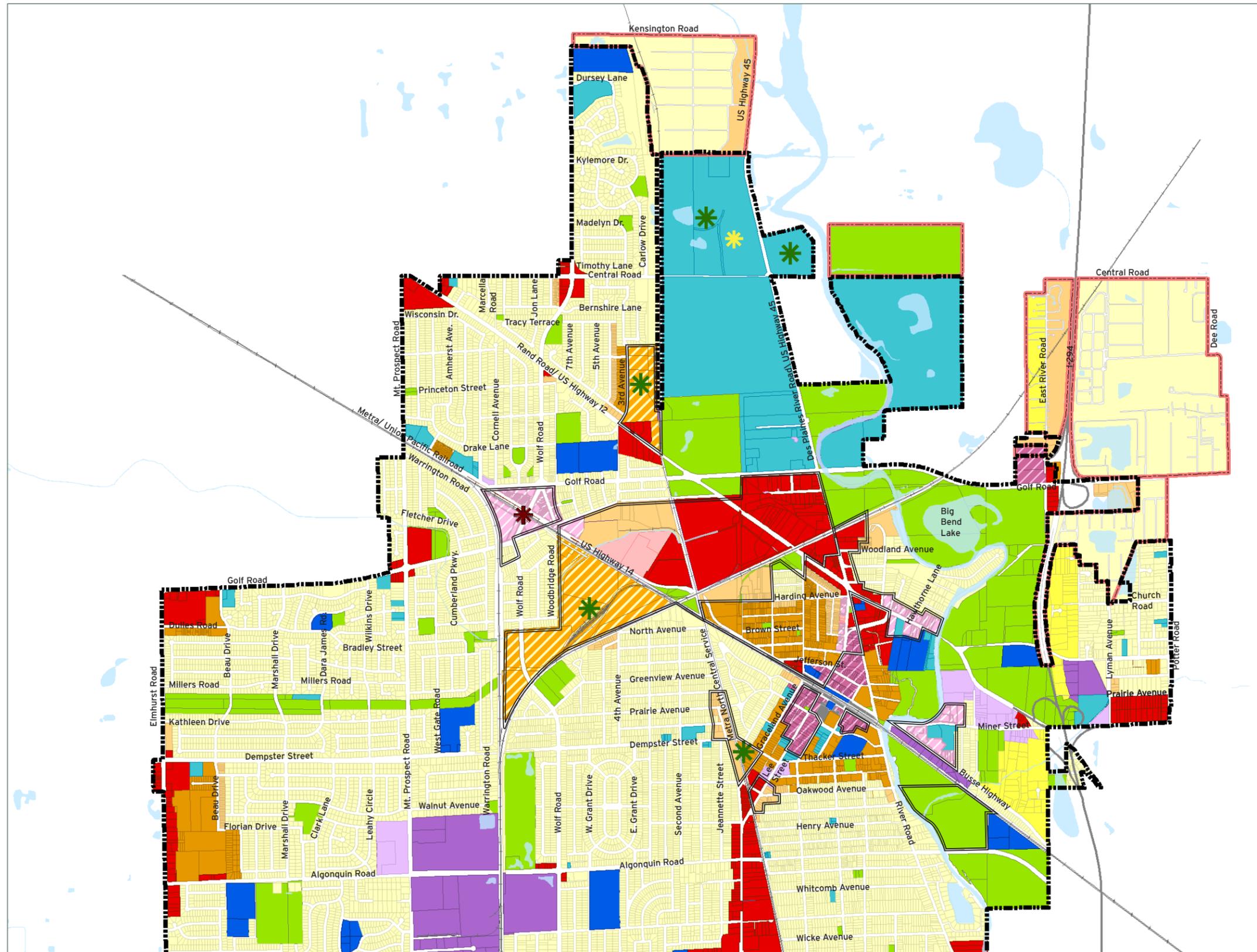


FIGURE 2a

# LONG RANGE LAND USE PLAN

COMMUNITY WIDE

North of Algonquin Road

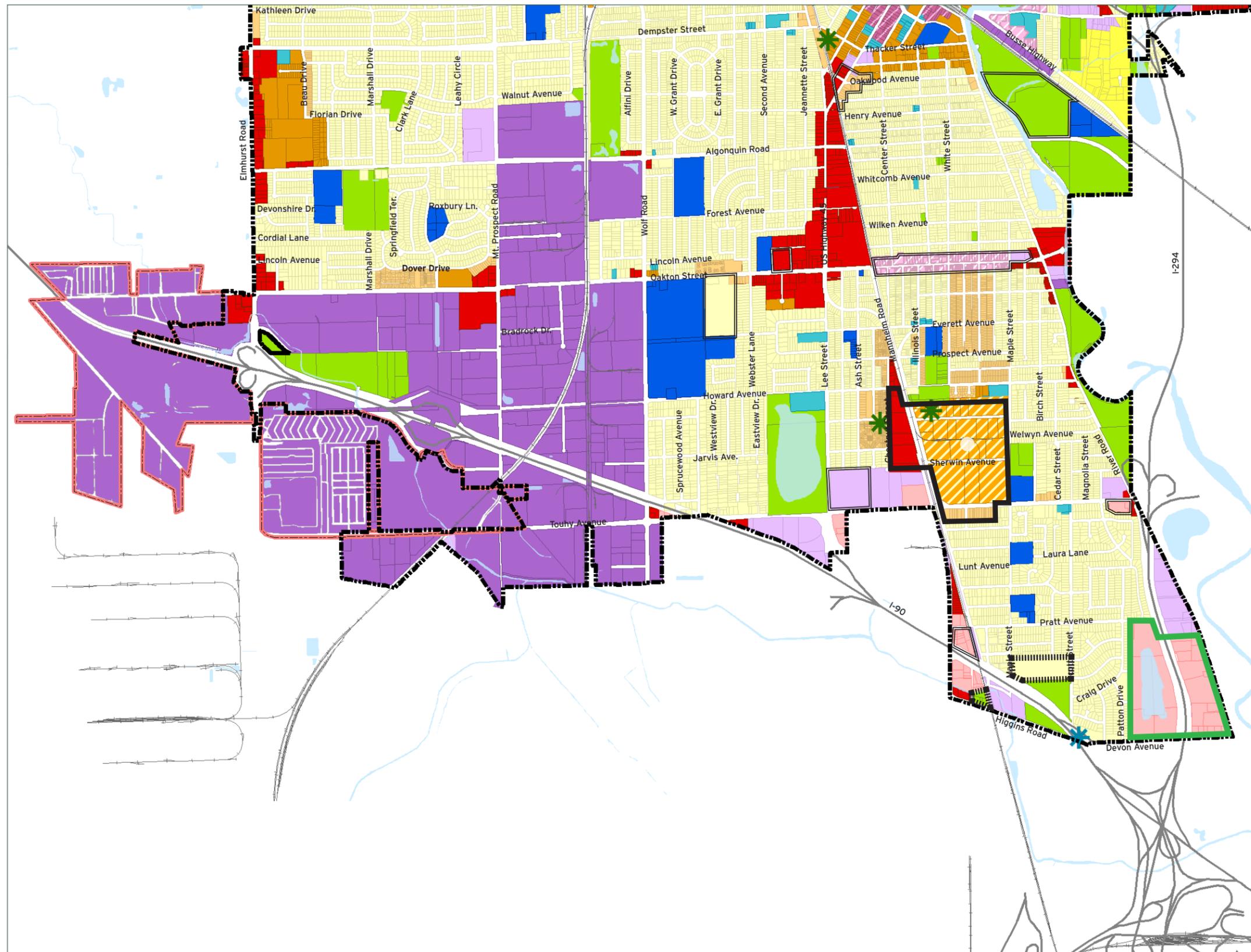


- City Boundary
- Unincorporated Areas
- Proposed Transit Oriented Development
- Proposed Commuter Station
- Proposed Park and Open Space
- Planned Unit Development

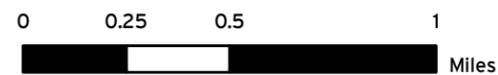
- Future Land Uses
- Residential - Traditional Single Family
  - Residential - Large Lot Single Family
  - Residential - Low Density Multi-Family
  - Residential - High Density Multi-Family
  - Residential - Mixed Density
  - Public
  - Institutional
  - Mixed Use - Low Density
  - Mixed Use - High Density
  - Community Commercial
  - Entertainment
  - Office
  - Industrial
  - Parks and Open Space
  - Parking Facility
  - Areas of Proposed Change



**FIGURE 2b**  
**LONG RANGE**  
**LAND USE PLAN**  
*COMMUNITY WIDE*  
 South of Algonquin Road



- City Boundary
  - Unincorporated Areas
  - Proposed Transit Oriented Development
  - Proposed Commuter Station
  - Proposed Park and Open Space
- Future Land Uses**
- Residential - Traditional Single Family
  - Residential - Large Lot Single Family
  - Residential - Low Density Multi-Family
  - Residential - High Density Multi-Family
  - Residential - Mixed Density
  - Public
  - Institutional
  - Mixed Use - Low Density
  - Mixed Use - High Density
  - Community Commercial
  - Entertainment
  - Office
  - Industrial
  - Parks and Open Space
  - Parking Facility
  - Areas of Proposed Change



*Long Range Land Use Plan* strives to promote a compatible arrangement of uses that makes efficient use of land resources and community facilities and services. The Land Use Plan also considers and reflects the market analysis detailed in the *Market Assessment Report* produced as part of the *Plan*. A description of the *Long Range Land Use Plan* and its associated recommendations are provided in the following sections.

## **B. RESIDENTIAL LAND USE**

Residential land uses in the *Long Range Land Use Plan* will continue to sustain an overall pattern of development consistent with the City's current pattern of land uses. A new residential land use category has been introduced to allow for a broader range of residential housing opportunities. Residential lands uses identified in *Figure 2a/b Long Range Land Use Plan*, are described below:

- *Large-Lot Single-Family Residential* - residential areas that include single-family detached dwellings on lots that are a minimum of one-half acre in size.
- *Traditional Single-Family Residential* - residential areas that include single-family detached dwellings at densities greater than the large-lot single-family residential classification.
- *Low-density Multi-Family Residential* - residential areas consisting primarily of low-rise multi-family, duplex, and townhouse dwellings, generally with a density of up to 22 dwelling units per acre. These housing types are typically two to three stories in height.
- *High-density Multi-Family Residential* - residential areas consisting of multi-family dwellings, generally at a density of up to 60 dwelling units per acre. This type of multi-family housing is typically in structures that are over four stories in overall height and includes physical characteristics such as shared lobbies and centralized parking facilities.
- *Mixed-density Residential* - residential areas consisting of traditional single-family residential and/or low-density multi-family residential (as described in the classifications above), depending upon market conditions and/or individual site characteristics. Since these housing types can be designed in a manner to be compatible adjacent to each other and surrounding residential development, individual developments could include a combination of both single-family and low-density multi-family residential.

### **Residential Area Recommendations and Policies**

The *Long Range Land Use Plan* largely reflects the current pattern of single-family residential land. Given the recent increase in "teardown" activity within the City, and the inevitability of this redevelopment eventually affecting older

neighborhoods, new or modified residential district development standards may be needed to accommodate infill residential development that is compatible in scale and design with existing neighborhoods. The *Future Long Range Land Use Plan* also reflects the City's preference to see large-lot single-family residential uses located in areas in single-family residential neighborhood between Busse Highway and Miner Street east of Des Plaines River Road. Introducing a "large-lot residential" category will help retain the existing character of the neighborhood.

High-density multi-family residential uses also largely follow the current land use pattern in the City. The majority of these areas are located mainly near the downtown area. Low-density multi-family residential uses are primarily located outside the downtown. Isolated industrial and vacant properties along Northwest Highway, west of the downtown, are suggested for future low-density multi-family residential use to continue the land use pattern that is occurring as industrial properties are redeveloped. The plan anticipates that the current market could support one or two low-density multi-family residential projects adding 75-100 new units per year for the next decade.

Mixed-density residential is proposed for areas currently adjacent to single-family residential neighborhoods, where either low-density multi-family or single-family residential could be located, based on market conditions and/or individual site characteristics. These areas are within current industrial areas along either Northwest Highway or in the Touhy/ Manheim area.

The *Long Range Land Use Plan* does not include a mobile home land use category. As existing mobile home parks are privately redeveloped over time, the City plans for these areas to consist of alternative land uses. Two of these areas are shown as traditional single-family in the future. The mobile home community along River Road is planned for commercial use in the future.

Several policies should guide improvement and conservation within residential areas of the City. These include:

- 1. Enforce controls related to residential scale and bulk.** As the single-family residential areas experience redevelopment and rebuilding, there is a need to make sure controls are in place to address issues such as height, site coverage setbacks, and the inappropriate subdividing of lots to ensure that new development is compatible with existing neighborhood development patterns.
- 2. Improve transitions and buffers between different land uses.** New landscaping or urban design treatments need to be introduced to screen residential areas from adjacent non-residential areas.

3. **Maintain a variety of high-quality housing types to address the different populations in town.** The City should continue to encourage a variety of sizes and types of high quality housing including single-family lots of various sizes, low-density multi-family residential, senior housing, and high-density multi-family residential in appropriate areas of the City.
4. **Include a distinctive landscaping and open space system as an integral part of the overall site design for new multi-family residential development.** Landscaping or other open space features, such as plazas, bikeways, and recreational facilities, should be encouraged as amenities within multi-family residential developments.

### C. COMMERCIAL LAND USE

The *Long Range Land Use Plan* for commercial land uses recommends a continued strong presence of retail and commercial uses throughout the City, particularly in the downtown area and at major intersections. The *Long Range Land Use Plan* consists of five commercial area types responding to the needs and diversity of the community and development patterns. Except in the Five Corners area where new commercial areas are proposed, the Plan does not necessarily expand the City's existing commercial footprint but does place a strong emphasis on enhancing and improving conditions in existing commercial locations.

Commercial land uses are identified in *Figure 2a/b Long Range Land Use Plan*. Refer to Chapter IV, the Downtown Subarea Plan, for a detailed discussion of the downtown area.

- *Community Commercial* – includes commercial areas providing neighborhood-and community-based retail goods and services located at major intersections in commercial districts. These commercial areas serve surrounding neighborhood residents as well as consumers from outside the City.
- *Low-density Mixed-Use* – areas containing a mix of uses within the same building, including retail, office, entertainment and residential. These areas are intended to be developed with reduced height and density allowances to maintain compatibility with adjacent single-family residential neighborhoods. Flexibility is provided in that any allowable land use, including retail, office, and/or residential, could be located on the ground floor of buildings. Without close proximity to municipal parking facilities, most development in these areas would be required to provide dedicated off-street parking on individual sites. Typical residential density for this category would be 22 dwelling units per acre.

- *High-density Mixed-Use*– areas containing a mix of uses within the same building with retail or entertainment uses on the ground floor of buildings, and office, commercial services, and residential dwellings above the ground floor. In order to maximize its pedestrian setting for retail and entertainment, there would be reduced off-street parking requirements for commercial and retail uses within this area. Shared parking is provided primarily by municipal parking facilities, supporting pedestrian movement and encouraging “multiple destination” shopping trips. Typical residential density for this category would be 43 dwelling units per acre.
- *Entertainment* –these areas include entertainment establishments, such as movie theaters, bowling alleys, casinos, indoor sports arenas, and restaurants.

### **Commercial Area Recommendations and Policies**

Community commercial land uses are located primarily along five distinct commercial corridors: Manheim/Higgins, Oakton Street, Lee Street, Elmhurst Road, and Rand/River Road. Community commercial areas are located at major intersections or “nodes”. The Plan emphasizes future commercial uses at major intersection areas or nodes, rather than have a number of smaller isolated commercial uses randomly dispersed along the City’s corridors. Isolated commercial areas that are currently located in mid-block areas are more appropriate for alternative uses. Concentrating new commercial development at nodes will serve to strengthen these areas and promote implementation of coordinated access, parking, and other design characteristics.

The *Long Range Land Use Plan* supports the Rand/River/Golf Road area for future community commercial. Parcels within this corridor are likely to be redeveloped with auto-oriented commercial uses. The Plan anticipates the potential support for 200,000 to 300,000 square feet of retail “big box” space, such as stores selling electronics, home improvements, pet supplies, books, office supplies, crafts, housewares, or home furnishings.

Community commercial development is also proposed for two existing industrial areas. The first is on the west side of Manheim Road, north of Touhy Avenue. Future redevelopment with commercial reflects the commercial development activity occurring on Manheim Road south of Touhy Avenue. Community commercial is also proposed for Northwest Highway, northwest of the downtown to provide retail and services for the residential developments.

Low-density mixed uses are planned for the Cumberland Station area, within the Oakton Street and Lee Street commercial districts, and in the area east of the downtown along Busse Highway. High-density mixed-use outside the downtown is advocated for the site previously occupied by United Stationers, located at

Golf Road and I-294. This property has recently been sold and will be converted to a mixed-use development.

Entertainment land uses are planned along the existing industrial area on Northwest Highway near the downtown. Also, entertainment land uses are shown along Des Plaines River Road near Higgins Road, to indicate the potential for a casino. Entertainment uses are also planned on the site of the existing O'Hare Lake Office Plaza on Devon Avenue.

The Cumberland Station area is indicated as a transit-oriented development (TOD) area. It is appropriate for the future development of this area to capitalize on the special needs and opportunities of transit facility development, transit users, and multimodal connections. It is important that this station area be connected with other areas of the City and the downtown by providing sidewalks and bicycle connections. TOD principles can be organized around the "3Ds" or "three dimensions": *density*, *design* and *diversity*. The level to which these principles apply varies from station to station, and from community to community. However, they provide a means for the City to evaluate and judge the appropriateness of private and public investments at the Cumberland Station area in the future. Principles of each are described as follows:

*Density*- Historically, a 10% increase in density has been shown to correspond to a 5% increase in transit boardings. Doubling density can reduce vehicle demand by as much as 20%. In Des Plaines, pertinent policies include:

- Encourage higher housing densities within one-quarter mile, or a five-minute walk of station areas. Densities should respect community sensitivity relative to building height, especially adjacent to single-family neighborhoods.
- Balance higher densities with publicly accessible open spaces, plazas, and bike/walking paths to enhance the pedestrian experience.

*Design* - Design is a critical element to successful transit-supportive land use and development. Key policies particularly applicable in Des Plaines include:

- Maintain pedestrian and bicycle orientations.
- Consider the reduction of off-street parking standards for commercial and residential uses in areas well-served by transit.
- Provide parking in locations that encourage use of commercial businesses and maintain a pedestrian environment.
- Address street hierarchy with a focus on pedestrian needs, rather than on typical vehicle capacity considerations.
- Consider inter-modal transit facilities for transferring passengers, including sensitive design of facilities, access, and safety. These facilities include bus

stops, bike storage areas, “kiss and ride” lanes and commuter parking facilities.

- Amenities, services and facilities which cater to the commuter/pedestrian should be considered.
- Roadway space should be allocated for required circulation, but signal timing and cross-walk right-of-way priorities should favor the pedestrian.
- Public spaces should feel secure, with adequate lighting and visibility.

*Diversity*- Diversity is applicable to the mix of land uses within a transit area. The policies advocate that the presence of diverse, but mutually reinforcing, land uses creates desirable living, working and recreational environments. In Des Plaines, consideration should be given to the following:

- Mixed-use development is highly desirable.
- Mixed uses may not always be accommodated within one building, but can be reflected in the transit station area as a whole.
- Varied housing types should be located within walking distance to transit facilities.
- Retail development must be market driven; transit access strengthens the market but does not create it.
- Density combined with mixed land use creates the most effective and successful TOD, particularly with regard to generating increased usage of transit facilities.

Several policies should guide improvement and conservation within commercial areas of the City. These include:

1. **Maintain and improve existing commercial areas.** Existing commercial areas should be improved and upgraded as required. Overall access, parking, and maintenance improvements should be undertaken where necessary.
2. **Update commercial districts, including Rand/River/Golf Road, Oakton Street, Lee Street, and Elmhurst Road.** The overall image and appearance of existing commercial areas should continue to be upgraded and improved, both in terms of their physical appearances as well as the mix of businesses along these districts. Much could be done to improve commercial areas including decorative lighting, landscaping, uniform signage, and pedestrian amenities. Implementation of the *Business District Design Guidelines* that are currently in place by the City would allow for a comprehensive and uniform vision for each of these commercial districts.
3. **Design new commercial properties to be compatible with the adjoining street system.** Access to commercial properties should be carefully designed to minimize conflicts with through traffic movements. The

consolidation of access drives for individual properties should be encouraged. Commercial areas should be designed to prohibit cut-through traffic.

4. **Encourage commercial zones near major intersections.** Reduce the number of isolated commercial parcels along arterial corridors and encourage commercial development only near major intersections.
  
5. **Encourage “transit-oriented” development around the Metra/Union Pacific Railroad stations.** As areas around the two Metra/Union Pacific Railroad stations are developed, encourage mixed-use development with a transit-oriented emphasis that would serve the needs of transit commuter and community residents alike. Integrate pedestrian linkages along the entire Metra/UP corridor by providing sidewalks and bicycle path connections between the corridor, the neighborhoods, and the downtown.

## D. EMPLOYMENT LAND USE

Employment land uses will continue to serve an important role in the future. Employment land use areas are identified in *Figure 2a/b Long Range Land Use Plan* and described below:

- *Industrial* - areas generally intended for a mix of light industrial uses including warehousing and distribution of wholesale goods and supplies, and light manufacturing and assembly of products.
  
- *Office* - areas consisting of professional, technical, and medical offices that are within freestanding buildings, and office campuses located throughout the City.

### Employment Area Recommendations and Policies

Des Plaines will continue to have a strong employment base in the future. The City's proximity to major transportation facilities makes it an ideal location for a range of employment activities. Industrial uses are primarily concentrated in the southwest portion of the City, proximate to O'Hare International Airport. There also are some smaller industrial uses expected to remain along Busse Highway on the eastern edge of the City adjacent to the Metra/UP tracks. The existing industrial area along Northwest Highway provides challenges to industries located in that corridor, since access to area expressways is less convenient and narrower streets pose a problem for truck traffic. Over the long term, industrial activity in this area should be discontinued, with viable businesses relocated to the southwestern industrial area.

The southwestern industrial area, including the area south of Interstate 90 (I-90) will continue to be a strong location for future industrial redevelopment. The industrial area enjoys convenient access to O'Hare Airport and I-90. O'Hare Airport has recently added a new cargo entrance on the north side proximate to the Des Plaines industrial area. The area has potential for an increase in new logistics and distribution type facilities that require proximity to the O'Hare air-cargo and air-freight facilities.

The industrial area along Northwest Highway area is proposed for mixed-density and low-density multi-family residential, and community commercial. This follows the patterns of conversion of former industrial land uses to multi-family residential properties. Mixed-density residential and commercial is also proposed for the current industrial uses to the east and west side of Manheim Road from Touhy to Howard Avenue.

Office uses are indicated in several areas of the City where it has been determined that they will most likely remain in the future. No expansion of office areas is proposed. The existing market for office space in the O'Hare market is relatively stagnant, with high vacancy rates. The current occupancy rate within the Des Plaines office market is 81.2%. The market for office development in the future is weak.

In a few areas of the City there have been some suggested changes from office to other uses, including mixed-use, multi-family, or entertainment. The United Stationers site located on East River Road and Golf Road has been sold and will be redeveloped as a high-density mixed-use redevelopment. Smaller office buildings along River Road and the O'Hare Lakes Office Plaza are shown as entertainment land uses on *Figure 2a/b Long Range Land Use Plan*.

Several policies should guide improvement and conservation within employment areas of the City. These include:

- 1. Revitalize the City's industrial base.** Encourage the concentration of industrial uses in the City's southwest area by offering relocation assistance for companies wishing to relocate from existing isolated locations. Capitalize on the City's proximity to O'Hare Airport and market demand for large logistics and distribution facilities. Consider active involvement in facilitating the land use transition of the Northwest Highway industrial area through assistance with land assembly, preliminary investigation of environmental issues, and the relocation of viable businesses.

2. **Encourage property owners to maintain and enhance the overall condition of existing industrial, business and office developments.** Continue to enforce zoning, nuisance, and performance standards to minimize industrial effects on nearby residential properties.
3. **Prepare for new development and redevelopment so that it occurs in a planned and unified manner.** In particular, plans should emphasize the consolidation of obsolete parcels and structures to meet current development needs.
4. **Provide for off-street parking and loading facilities.** Adequately screened off-street parking and loading facilities should be provided in light industrial areas.

## E. PUBLIC AND INSTITUTIONAL LAND USE

Public and institutional land uses are important for sustaining basic community service functions as well as enhancing the City's overall quality of life. Public and institutional land uses are briefly described here and are covered in more detail in Chapter VI-Community Facilities. Public and institutional land uses areas identified in *Figure 2a/b Long-Range Land Use Plan* are described below:

- *Public* - areas occupied by public community facilities such as public schools and municipal buildings including City Hall, police and fire stations, and the public library.
- *Institutional* - areas containing churches, private schools, cemeteries, non-profit organizations, and the Des Plaines Historical Society.
- *Parks and Open Space* - areas that include public parks and open spaces for active and passive recreation, including Cook County Forest Preserve District property.

### Public and Institutional Land Use Recommendations and Policies

Integral institutional uses within Des Plaines are expected to remain stable in the future. However, if these lands become available for redevelopment, it is appropriate for the City to proactively plan for their reuse. Redevelopment of the institutional uses north of Central Road (i.e. Maryville Academy and the Carmelite Monastery) should be planned in a comprehensive, rather than a piecemeal, manner. A range of different densities of residential, with a limited amount of community or "neighborhood" commercial may be appropriate for this area and is noted as a planned unit development on *Figure 2 a/b Long*

*Range Land Use Plan.* In addition, the Methodist Camp Ground on Algonquin Road is planned for parks and open space in the future. No other existing institutional properties have been recommended for change in the future.

With regard to Public land uses, the *Long Range Land Use Map* reflects the same public lands as the *Existing Land Use Map (Figure 1a/b)*. Both the City of Des Plaines Fire Department and Police Department are currently in the process of preparing a new facilities plan. The findings of both of these plans should be incorporated into the *Long Range Land Use Plan* when completed. There are no other anticipated land use changes associated with other public lands including schools.

For the Parks and Open Space land use category, the *Long Range Land Use Plan* identifies new park and open space in each new residential area. This reduces the need for more parkland identified by the Des Plaines Park District's Master Plan.

Several policies should guide improvement and conservation within public and institutional lands of the City. These include:

- 1. Consider the provision of new facilities and services which respond to the needs and desires of local residents and business.** The demands on community facilities and services may change in the years ahead. Different community populations may warrant new types of facilities and services.
- 2. Incorporate the Police and Fire Department Facilities Plans into the *Long Range Land Use Plan*.** The locations of new proposed new facilities should be added to the *Long Range Land Use Plan* as it becomes available.
- 3. Work with the Des Plaines Park District on the implementation of the Park District Master Plan.** The Park District Master Plan indicates that there is deficient amount of parkland in all areas of the City. Subsequently, the City should encourage new parks and recreational opportunities as a matter of policy in new residential redevelopment areas. The City should support the expansion of open space and recreational amenities contiguous to existing parks and schools. In addition, new bicycle and pedestrian paths as well as pedestrian-friendly connections to these paths should be encouraged.
- 4. Maximize the amount of new open space.** The City could consider the annexation of unincorporated, vacant land for future recreational opportunities, and could create a partnership between the City and the Cook County Forest Preserve to extend recreational opportunities immediately outside the City limits.

5. **Capitalize on the quality higher education facilities in town.** Enhance the significance of quality higher education facilities, including Oakton Community College and DePaul University, by promoting their location within Des Plaines.
6. **Encourage all new community facilities to be located and designed as key “landmark” structures within the City, with high-quality site improvements and architectural design.** New public buildings, such as the public library, represent a unique opportunity to develop new civic focal points. Des Plaines’ overall image and identity can be further enhanced by ensuring thoughtful and compatible design of new or redeveloped facilities in the context of their location. At a minimum, all facilities should be in good repair and be located on attractively landscaped sites.

## F. UNINCORPORATED LANDS

The planning process also requires the City to plan for unincorporated areas adjacent to the City. These unincorporated areas have been shown on the *Long Range Land Use Plan* and include areas to the north, northeast, east, and southwest.

It is important that Des Plaines clearly state its land use preferences for these areas to help ensure that any future changes do not negatively affect Des Plaines and will be consistent with the various goals, objectives, policies, and recommendations of this Plan. By stating land use preferences, it allows for a basis for evaluation by Cook County of proposals for subdivision or rezoning requests. Showing land use preferences also allows for a basis for evaluation of appropriate zoning should the City choose to annex a portion of, or all of a specific area. Finally, it provides a rationale for pursuing annexation and boundary agreements with adjoining municipalities should the City choose to do so.

### Unincorporated Lands Recommendations and Policies

The following recommendations are made for each of the unincorporated areas surrounding the City and are consistent with the *Long Range Land Use Plan*.

- For the area north of Maryville Academy, the *Long Range Land Use Plan reveals* that the existing single-family residential area could remain mainly single-family residential with low-density multi-family along Des Plaines River Road in the future. This land use strategy is consistent with the changes that are already occurring in this area along Des Plaines River Road.

- Along Central Road, east of Des Plaines River Road, the *Long Range Land Use Plan* indicates the existing landfill as Parks and Open Space to reflect the possibility of re-use for an eighteen-hole golf course, or other community recreational use.
- East of the City boundaries, the land use is shown as single-family residential in order to retain the character of the surrounding area.
- Southwest of the City, future land use is shown as industrial given the proximity of the site to O'Hare Airport and the expectation that existing industrial uses in other locations of the City may choose to relocate to this area in the future.

Policies to guide improvement and conservation within unincorporated lands adjacent to the City include:

1. **Consider the annexation of key parcels that would benefit economic development opportunities.** As the industrial areas in other parts of the City are being phased out due to obsolescence, it is appropriate that the City concentrate on the possibility of annexing areas southwest of the City. This would allow for an expansion of the industrial footprint adjacent to the existing industrial developments in the southwestern area of the City.
2. **Explore additional recreational opportunities in unincorporated areas.** Consider the annexation of the landfill along Central Road, east of Des Plaines River Road for conversion into an eighteen-hole golf course.
3. **Weigh the costs and benefits of annexation.** Further study would be required to weigh the benefits and costs of annexation including utility and roadway improvements. The City would need to determine who would pay for necessary infrastructure improvements in these areas prior to annexation.

## IV. DOWNTOWN SUBAREA LAND USE

The City of Des Plaines and its business community partners have worked hard to realize the success of the downtown area. This planning effort is intended to focus on strengthening and sustaining the downtown over the long-term, and expanding its positive impacts throughout the Metra/UP Railroad corridor. It will capitalize upon strengths and seek to correct weaknesses.

The *Long Range Land Use Plan* establishes that downtown Des Plaines will remain a mixed-use commercial and residential center, emphasizing its importance for shopping, entertainment, and transportation. The *Long Range Land Use Plan* seeks to address basic issues of land use type and intensity for the downtown and maintain and enhance its pedestrian orientation.

The City has diligently guided the “renaissance” of downtown Des Plaines over the last decade. The City has achieved many successes by facilitating redevelopment efforts but work remains as the City continues to define the future role and character of the downtown. As the real estate market continues to place redevelopment pressure on the downtown area, the *Plan* must clearly define the City’s preferences. The following analysis discusses and evaluates key questions in this regard.

Over the last ten years, a variety of improvements have been made. Some of these improvements are:

- The removal of a parking garage that was unsightly and a visual hindrance to redevelopment efforts.
- A new architecturally-significant public library with a community plaza area that serves as an easily accessible and gathering place. The new library not only created more pedestrian activity for businesses, but also signaled a new architectural direction for downtown development.
- The creation of TIF # 5 in 2001 which provided incentives to attract a full-service grocery store to the downtown.
- Metropolitan Square, a mixed-use residential and commercial planned development with restaurants, shops and a grocery store.
- New multi-family residential development to support an increasing number of places to shop and work within downtown Des Plaines.

## A. EXISTING LAND USE

*Figure 3 Existing Land Use- Downtown Subarea* illustrates the range of land uses within the downtown. The downtown subarea is the location of the Des Plaines Civic Center including City Hall and the Police Department, the public library and the Metra/Union Pacific Des Plaines Station. In addition, there are schools parks, and churches including St. Mary's Catholic Church and School, Central School, Central Park, Immanuel Lutheran Church and School, First United Methodist Church, First Congregational Church, the Christian Science Center, and the Good News Christian Church. Except for a potential relocation of the Police Department in the future, there are no known expansion or improvement plans of any of these other facilities.

## B. FUTURE LAND USE

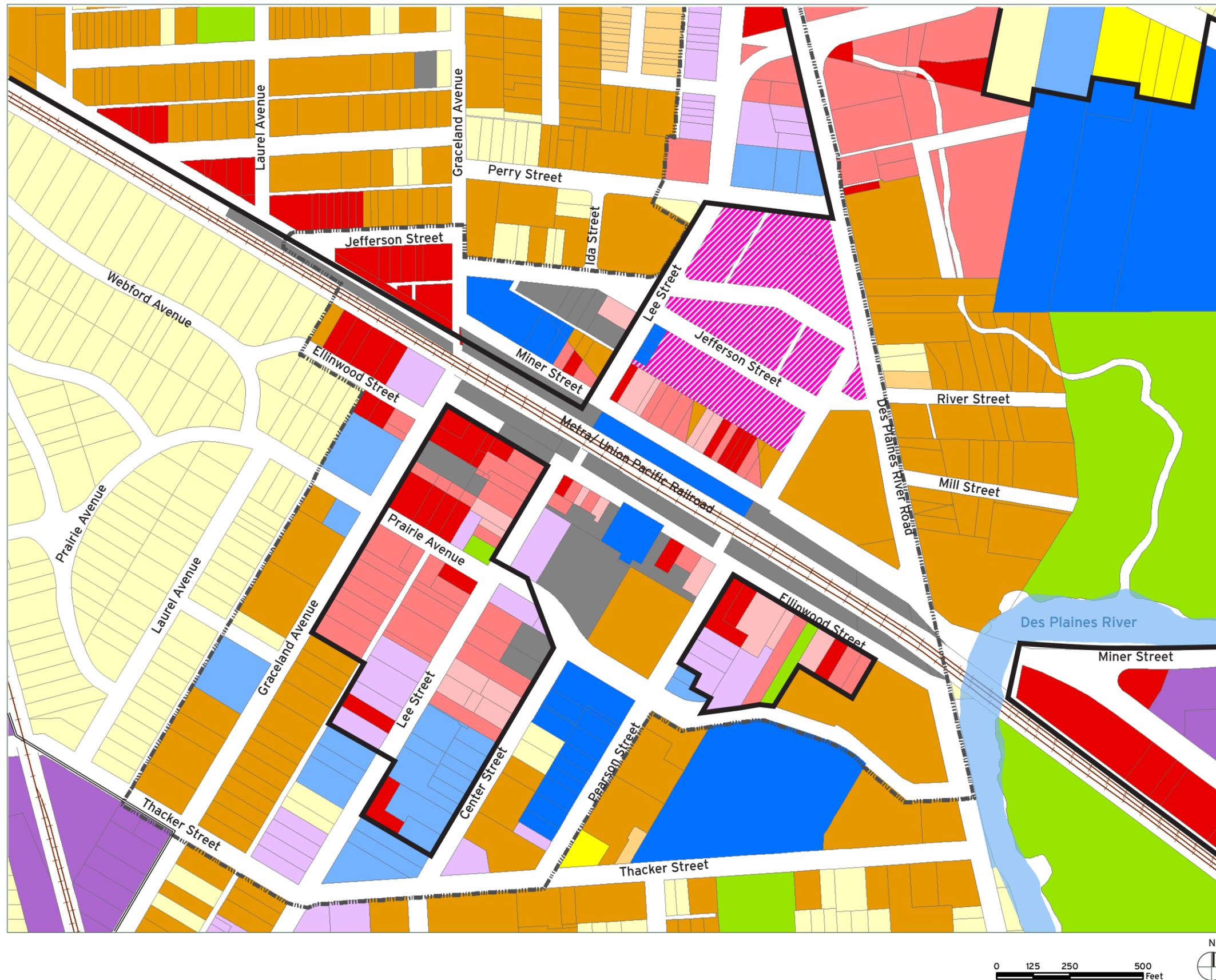
*Figure 4 Long Range Land Use Plan- Downtown Subarea* illustrates a number of locations where redevelopment may be possible in the future. Sites may be subject to redevelopment pressure for a number of reasons, as viewed from the private real estate investment perspective. Reasons for which property might be subject to redevelopment include underutilization, such as sites currently occupied with off-street surface parking lots or a single-story building in an area that can be intensified under current zoning regulations. The age of existing structures can also compel the market to seek reinvestment. Obsolescence in terms of smaller building footprints, lower building height, or outdated construction types can be factors determining whether sites are subject to change. Rising land values within Des Plaines and the larger Chicago region can also drive intensification of development.

Future land use in the downtown should emphasize a pedestrian orientation, requiring that all new buildings be built at the front lot line with shared parking facilities located behind or to the side of the buildings. Mixed use development in the downtown encourages a pedestrian orientation as a variety of services as well as housing opportunities are concentrated together.

In the *Long Range Land Use Plan*, the blocks north and south of the tracks are planned for high-density mixed-use. This would reflect a mix of retail, service, office and residential uses similar to the Metropolitan Square development. It may be appropriate to retain the key buildings on some of these blocks and to redevelop buildings that exhibit obsolescence. Chapter IX provides an urban design concept for Miner Street that details the potential to retain key direction.

With the increase in densities in the downtown area, it is expected that there will be an increase in height for commercial buildings as redevelopment of certain older one- and two-story buildings occurs along Miner and Ellinwood Streets.

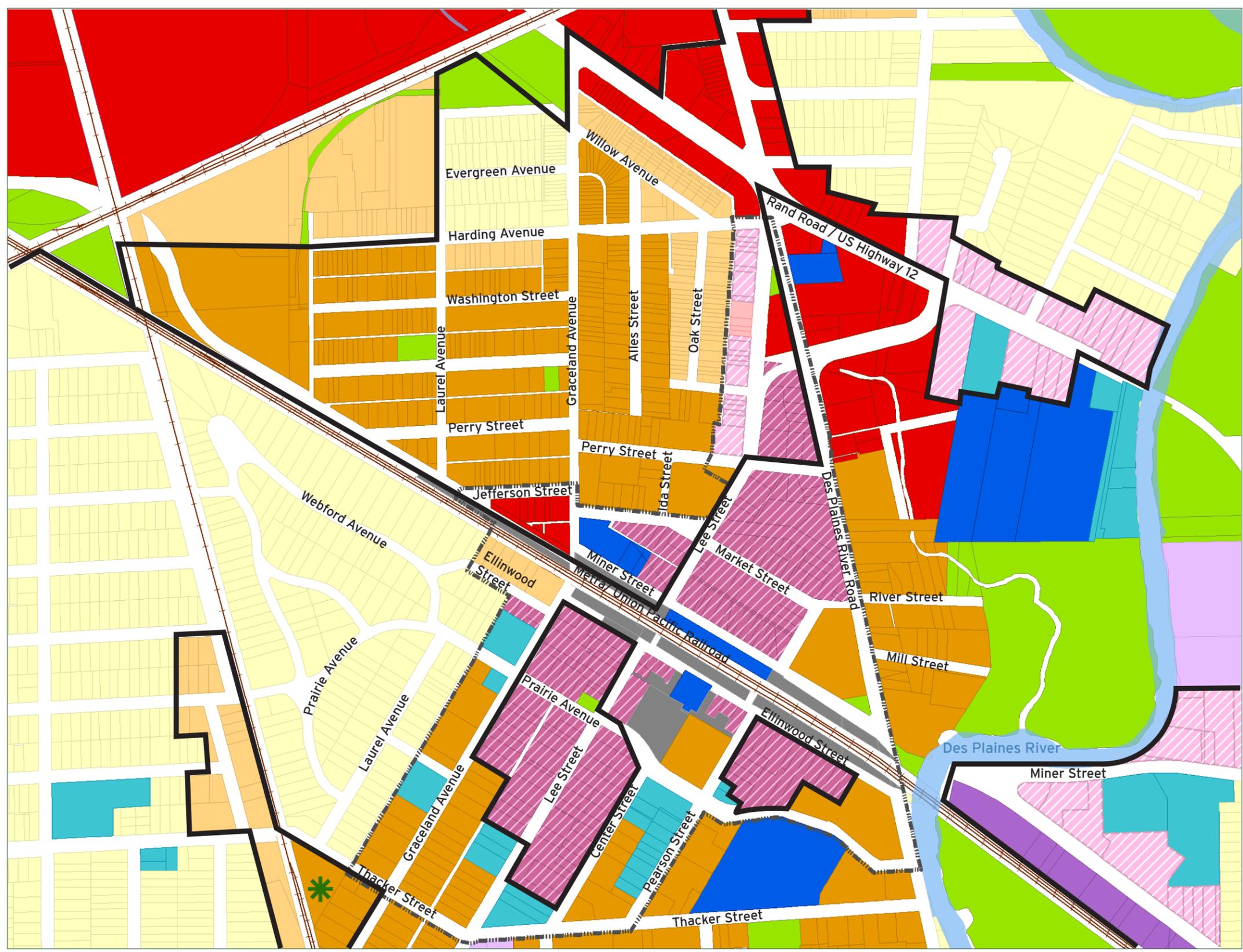
**FIGURE 3**  
**EXISTING LAND USE**  
 DOWNTOWN SUBAREA



-  Sub Area Boundary
- Land Uses**
-  Residential - Single Family
-  Residential - Townhouse
-  Residential - Duplex
-  Residential - Multi-Family
-  Public
-  Institutional
-  Mixed Use
-  Commercial - Retail
-  Commercial - Service
-  Restaurant / Entertainment
-  Commercial - Office
-  Industrial
-  Parks and Open Space
-  Vacant / Parking Facility
-  Areas of Proposed Change



**FIGURE 4**  
**LONG RANGE LAND USE PLAN**  
 DOWNTOWN SUB AREA



- Sub Area Boundary
- Proposed Park/ Open Space
- Future Land Uses**
- Residential - Traditional Single Family
- Residential - Large Lot Single Family
- Residential - Low Density Multi-Family
- Residential - High Density Multi-Family
- Residential - Mixed Density
- Public
- Institutional
- Mixed Use - Low Density
- Mixed Use - High Density
- Community Commercial
- Entertainment
- Office
- Parks and Open Space
- Parking Facility
- Areas of Proposed Change



Increased heights of up to 100 feet are currently permitted under the downtown's current C-5 zoning. Taller building heights in this area would be consistent with the building height of some existing buildings in the downtown, such as the 701 Lee Street office building (which is ten stories in height) and the SBC office building. It would also be consistent with many residential buildings which have been developed in the R-4 zoning district which permits building heights of up to 80 feet.

There are pressures to expand the "downtown" to the north along Lee Street, providing a connection to the Rand/River Road Five Corners area. The uses along this corridor are recommended to be low-density mixed-use, incorporating both residential and commercial uses. Consistent streetscape treatments and urban design elements will make a visual connection between the downtown and Rand Road, creating a pedestrian-friendly environment. Shallow lot depths are a development constraint along Lee Street. Because of this, the City should encourage land assembly rather than "piecemeal" development on lots that may be too small to accommodate modern commercial development.

The Plan anticipates that opportunities for new retail development in Des Plaines exist in the downtown as well as in areas outside the downtown. Retail space in the Metropolitan Square development, along with some of the vacancies or underutilized store fronts in other areas, is sufficient to satisfy current unmet retail demand in such categories as restaurants, specialty shops selling apparel, accessories, small household items, and gift shops.

With regard to high-density multi-family residential, the Plan reflects that there is substantial market support for new condominium development. Given the trend toward development in the downtown, it is expected that most of the new condominium development will occur in or near the downtown subarea.

## C. POLICIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Several recommendations are stated below to guide the City's land use and mobility policies for the downtown subarea. These include:

- 1. Take an active role in directing redevelopment in the downtown.** A variety of mixed land uses and a balance between residential, commercial, and entertainment uses in the downtown is important and will keep the downtown vibrant.
- 2. Future redevelopment should enforce transit-oriented development (TOD) principles in the downtown.** As redevelopment occurs, the three principles of TOD—design, density, and diversity—should be an integral component of the redevelopment scenario.

3. **Encourage streetscape, wayfinding, and other urban design features to enhance the pedestrian orientation of the downtown.** Implementing the *Business District Design Guidelines* and the *Urban Design Framework Plan* will allow for a consistent approach to visual treatment within the downtown and at key entryways into the downtown. Additionally, wayfinding that identifies connections across the Metra/UP tracks and to the riverfront path are important for pedestrian traffic.
4. **Retain a sense of unique physical character in the downtown.** The City should encourage property owners and developers to preserve original properties through façade retention if appropriate. Also, by encouraging renovations and/or additions that are consistent with the style and character of original construction, the unique character that currently exists in the downtown will be retained.
5. **Encourage comprehensive development in the downtown.** As downtown redevelopment occurs, the City should encourage land assembly rather than “piecemeal” development on lots that may be too small to accommodate modern commercial development.

## V. TRANSPORTATION

While the City of Des Plaines is a mature and developed community, the City could benefit from a variety of mobility improvements. Yet, Des Plaines' proximity to major transportation facilities is an asset frequently cited by residents and staff.

This chapter includes a discussion of:

- A. Existing Street Network and Functional Street Classification
- B. Street System Improvements
- C. Bicycle and Pedestrian Access
- D. Transit Facilities and Services
- E. Recommendations and Policies

The Des Plaines *Community Wide Mobility Plan* is illustrated in *Figure 5a/b*.

### A. EXISTING STREET NETWORK AND FUNCTIONAL STREET CLASSIFICATION

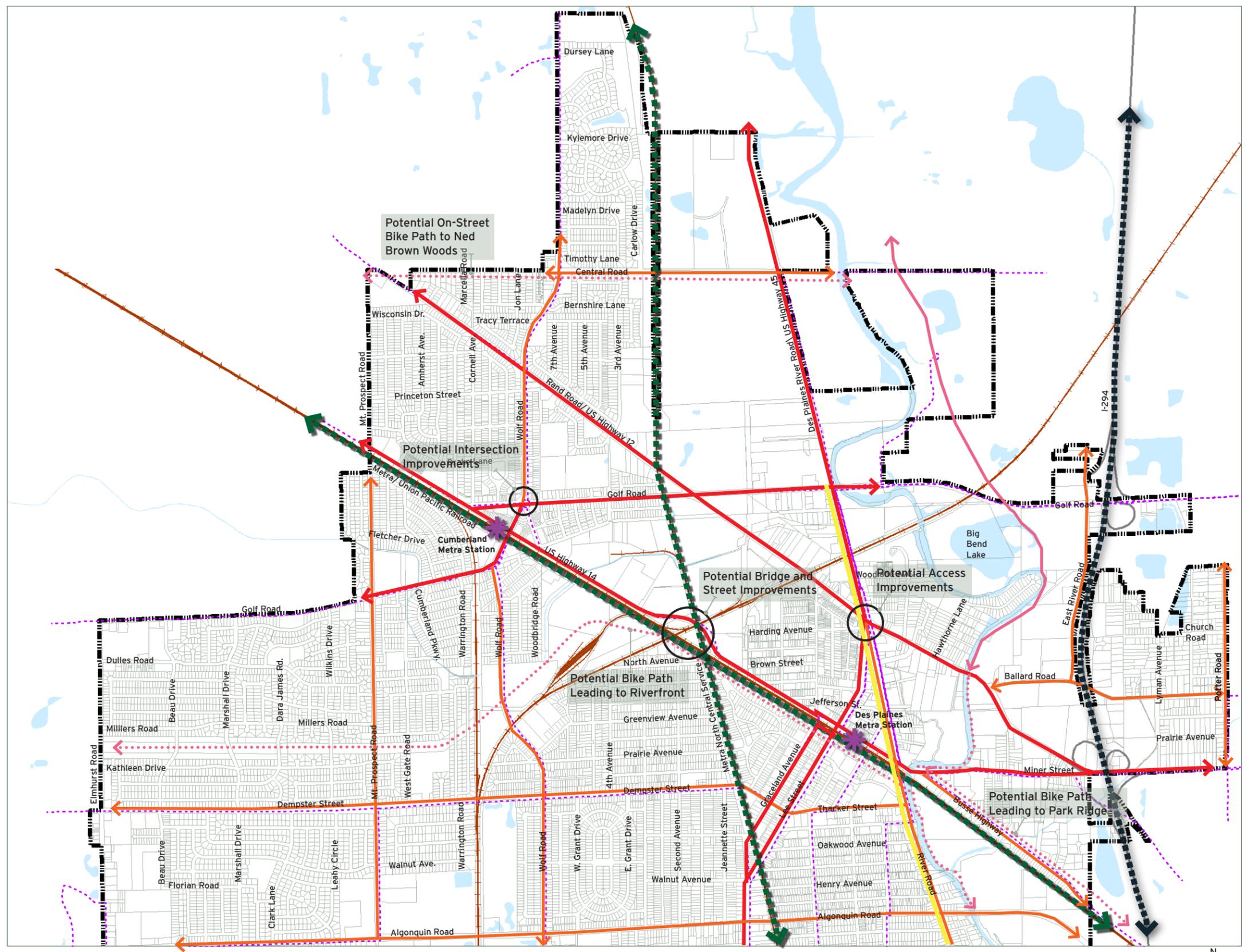
Functional classification of all City streets is a necessary first step in determining the need for future improvements to existing streets and appropriate land uses. Functional classification identifies the purpose of the street, such as whether it is to provide local access in residential neighborhoods or to move traffic through the community to other parts of the region. Several factors are considered when identifying the functional classification of all existing and proposed streets. These include:

- The number of traffic lanes, types of intersection, and access control
- The overall existing and anticipated traffic volumes to be carried by the street
- Whether the street extends beyond the City's boundaries

The classification of existing streets and highways that serve Des Plaines are described below and illustrated in *Figure 5a/b*.

- **Expressways:** Expressways or freeways are limited access roads extending far beyond the limits of the City, providing a transportation network throughout the Chicago metropolitan area. They are high speed arterials that carry large volumes of traffic and are access from select interchange locations.
- **Arterials:** Arterials are intended to serve all types of trips, with a significant portion representing trips with destinations beyond the boundaries of the community. Principal arterials have regional importance because of their

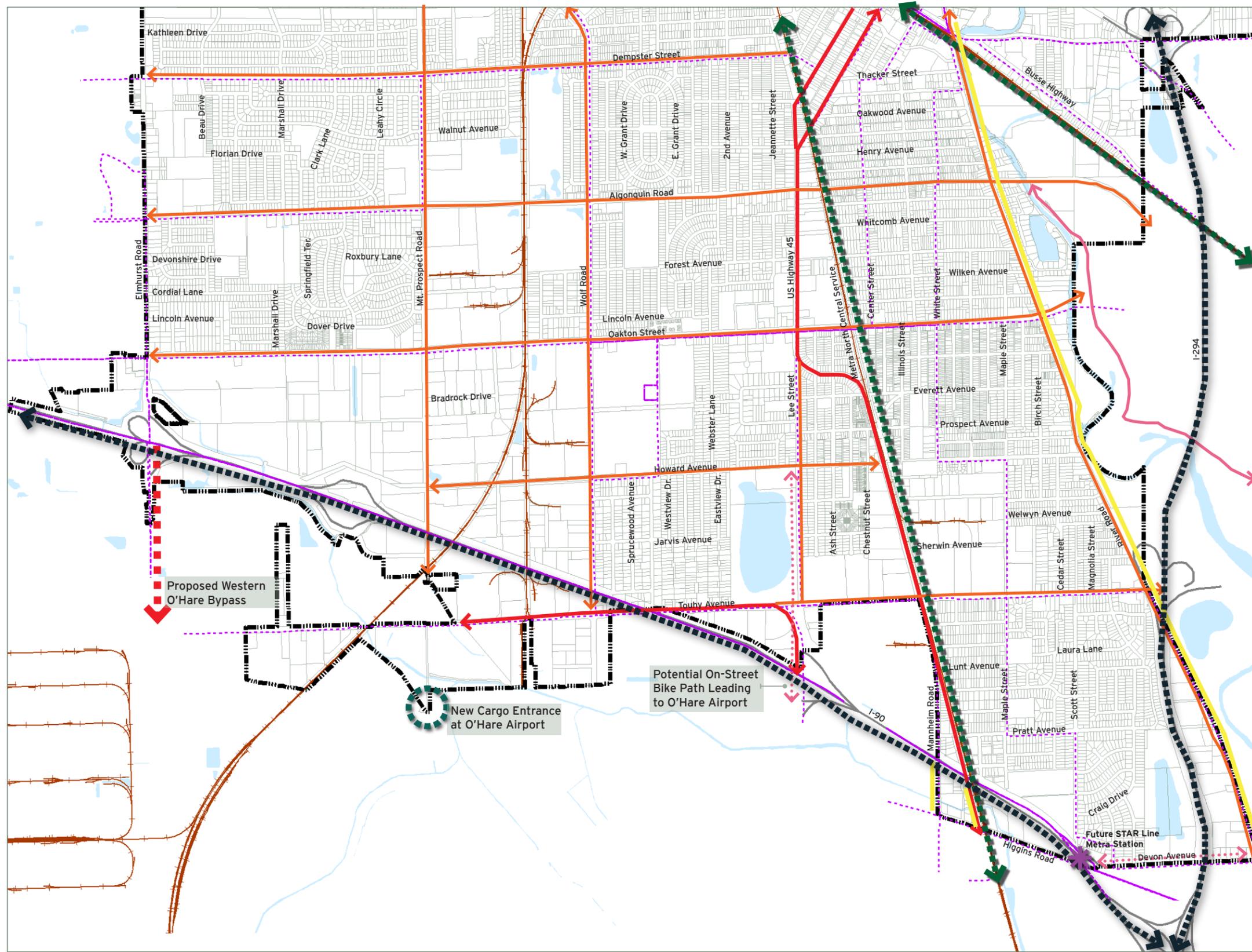
**FIGURE 5a**  
**MOBILITY PLAN**  
*COMMUNITY WIDE*  
 North of Algonquin Road



- Metra Station
- City Boundary
- Passenger Railroad
- Expressway
- Arterials
- Collectors
- Pace Bus Route
- Existing Bike/ Pedestrian Trail
- Proposed Bike/ Pedestrian Trail
- Proposed Street Widening



**FIGURE 5b**  
**MOBILITY PLAN**  
*COMMUNITY WIDE*  
 South of Algonquin Road



- Metra Station
- City Boundary
- Passenger Railroad
- Expressway
- Arterials
- Collectors
- Pace Bus Route
- Existing Bike/ Pedestrian Trail
- Proposed Bike/ Pedestrian Trail
- Proposed Street Widening



alignment, continuity, capacity and connections with regional traffic routes.

- **Collector Streets:** Collector streets are intended to serve vehicle trips generated to and from neighborhoods. Their function is to collect traffic from the local street system, distribute it between neighborhoods and community facilities, and provide access to the arterial street system.
- **Local Streets:** A local street is intended to serve only those vehicle trips generated by land uses abutting the street, providing access to and from individual properties within the neighborhood.

Regional access to and from the City is provided by two expressways, I-294 (Tri-State Tollway) and I-90 (Northwest Tollway). I-294 is located to the east with access to and from Des Plaines at Golf Road, Dempster Street, and Touhy. I-90 is located to the south of Des Plaines and provides access to Des Plaines at Elmhurst Road and Lee Street. Convenient access to Chicago's Loop and O'Hare Airport, and major employment centers north of Des Plaines is provided by these routes.

There are three major arterials which are under the State of Illinois jurisdiction, traversing the City: Manheim Road (U.S. Route 45), Northwest Highway (U.S. Route 14) and Rand Road (U.S. Route 12). U.S. Route 45 provides service in a north south direction through the City serving the downtown. U.S. Route 14 provides access in a northwest to southeast direction paralleling the Metra-UP NW Line through the downtown. U.S. Route 12 runs parallel to U.S. Route 14 approximately one mile to the north. These roads are maintained by the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT).

There are several arterials or collectors which provide access throughout the City and serve to collect and redistribute traffic from local residential streets onto more major roadways. These include the east-west arterials: Central Road, Golf Road, Dempster/Thacker Street, Algonquin Road, Oakton Street, Howard Avenue, and Touhy Avenue. North-south arterials include Elmhurst Road, Mount Prospect Road, Wolf Road, a portion of Lee Street, a portion of River Road, Bender Road/East River Road and Potter Road. Algonquin, Oakton, Golf, Touhy, Elmhurst and Lee, and River Road are under the jurisdiction of IDOT. Potter, Dempster and Mount Prospect Roads are under the jurisdiction of Cook County Highway Department. Busse Highway, which travels in a southeast to northwest direction provides access into Des Plaines from the southeast. All other streets are considered local streets and are under the jurisdiction of the City of Des Plaines who is responsible to maintain them.

## B. STREET SYSTEM IMPROVEMENTS

The City of Des Plaines 2005-2009 Capital Improvement Program indicates a variety of capital improvement projects programmed throughout the City. The

projects include street rehabilitation, storm/drainage improvements, water main improvements, and alley improvements.

In addition to the above improvements, other entities including the Illinois Department of Transportation and the Cook County Highway Department have improvements planned for streets within Des Plaines. These include:

- Roadway widening of Manheim Road (US 12/45) from Higgins Road to I-90
- Lane widening under bridges for Northwest Highway (U.S. 14) from Wisconsin Central Railroad to Union Pacific Railroad
- Reconstruction of Des Plaines River Road from U. S. 12/Rand Road to Devon Avenue
- Sidewalk improvements along Mount Prospect Road from Algonquin Road to Oakton Street
- Widening of Potter Road from Dempster to Golf Road
- Reconstruction of Joseph Schwab Road including shoulders for bicycle traffic
- Reconstruction of the Northwest Highway "S" curve including roadway realignment and bridge improvements

The City of Des Plaines has also notified the Illinois Toll Highway Authority that they would like full interchanges at Golf Road/I-294 and Dempster Road/I-294.

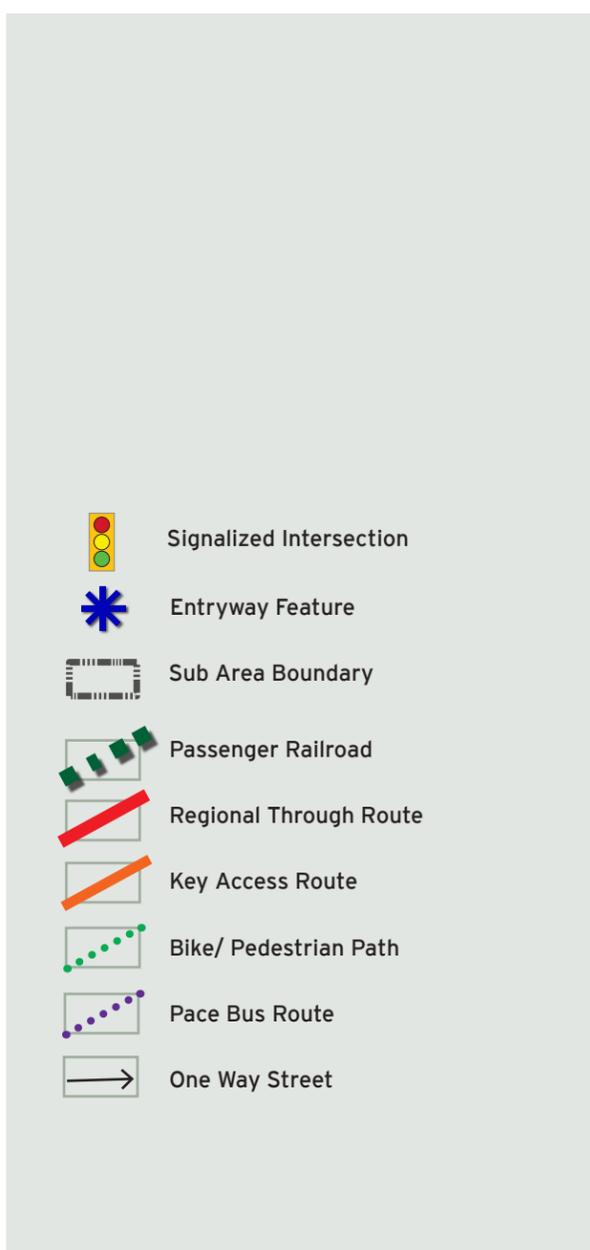
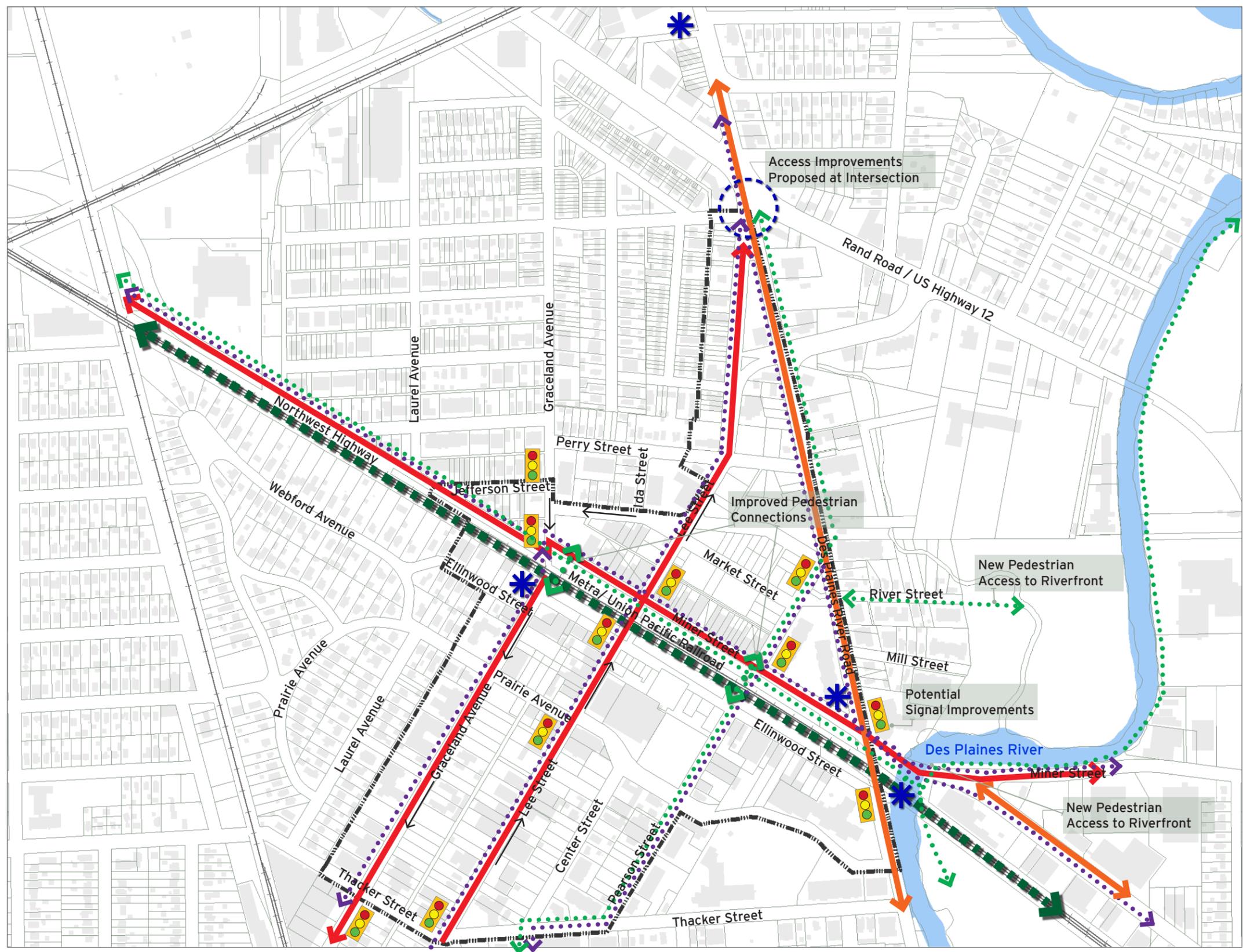
A study by the Illinois Tollway Authority is underway to provide a bypass that would loop around O'Hare Airport on the west, providing a new connection between I-294 and I-90. The proposed bypass is shown in the vicinity of Elmhurst Road as shown on *Figure 5a/b*. It is located in the southwestern industrial area and would provide direct access to employment locations.

During the planning process, other issues of traffic concerns were documented. These include:

- Traffic concerns and access in the downtown
- Improvement in traffic signals and train operations along the Metra/UP corridor
- Roadway widening to meet design standards
- The elimination of turning restrictions at the Five Corners area
- Improvement of the Northwest Highway "S" curve
- Improvements at the Golf Road traffic circle
- Pedestrian safety issues crossing Miner Street/Northwest Highway.

*Figure 6 Downtown Subarea Mobility Plan* shows the transportation framework for the downtown. Key to the Mobility Plan would be to implement

**FIGURE 6**  
**MOBILITY PLAN**  
 DOWNTOWN SUBAREA



recommendations from the downtown traffic study, access improvements at the Rand/River intersection, signal improvements at Miner/Des Plaines River Road and pedestrian improvements along Miner Street. In the downtown area, physical and visual design elements can be added to provide an easier movement and connection between both sides of the Metra/UP tracks as well as along the Metra/UP corridor. These include countdown pedestrian signals and design enhancements. Recommended design enhancements are explained in Chapter IX-Urban Design.

Vehicular congestion is most intense at the intersection of River Road and Route 14/Miner Street. The Metra/UP train tracks intersect at this corner. Train traffic, particularly in the morning and evening rush hours, cause traffic to back up several blocks on either side of the tracks, and is particularly problematic on the north side. Traffic congestion may increase on the north side of the tracks once Metropolitan Square development is complete.

## C. PARKING

Two types of parking are discussed below: commuter parking and parking for shoppers and employees. Parking locations are highlighted in *Figure 6*.

### Commuter Parking

Commuter parking at the Des Plaines Metra Station is provided in surface parking lots and in the Metropolitan Square public parking deck for a daily fee. Parking lots parallel the railroad tracks from Des Plaines River Road to Graceland Avenue. There is additional commuter parking on level four of the Metropolitan Square public parking deck. The commuter parking lots are expected to remain in the future.

### Central Business District Parking

Parking availability for commercial uses in the downtown area has been reported to be somewhat limited and not proximate to the places where shoppers want to go. Parking for City Hall visitors is particularly problematic. This problem is somewhat alleviated by the new Metropolitan Square parking deck. At the time of Plan development, the City was undertaking a traffic and parking study in the downtown area. The findings and recommendations should be incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan as they become available. It is recognized that redevelopment within the Central Business District will need to address additional parking demands. However, the Comprehensive Plan presumes a more transit-supportive and neo-traditional development. Therefore, it is anticipated that, some, if not all, of the parking demand generated by new commercial uses could be accommodated in few centralized, shared parking

areas. This pattern would reinforce a pedestrian-oriented “multiple destination” pattern of use in the area.

## D. BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN ACCESS

The Comprehensive Plan recommends the development of a local bicycle system with regional continuity. Coordination with entities such as the Des Plaines and Mount Prospect Park Districts, the Northeastern Illinois Regional Planning Commission (NIPC), Chicago Area Transportation Systems (CATS), Open Lands, Northwest Municipal Conference and other entities charged with regional bike planning is appropriate and encouraged. A preliminary bicycle route framework is illustrated in *Figure 5a/b Mobility Plan-Community Wide*.

Proposed bicycle routes throughout the City should be to facilitate safe bicycle movement between and through destinations such as the downtown, community neighborhoods, Metra stations, park and recreational facilities, forest preserves, and schools. Cooperation with transportation agencies and neighborhood communities to facilitate routes which have a regional emphasis is appropriate. A preliminary system is based on routes developed by the Northwest Municipal Conference, NIPC, Openlands Project, and CATS. It also reflects suggestions as a result of community input during the planning process to connect appropriate destinations.

Ideally, all on-street bicycle facilities would establish a marked bicycle travel lane of four feet in width. While this is not likely in many locations, the City should develop its own bike facility standards to reflect local conditions. Bicycle routes should include regulatory and identification signage as well. All on-street and off-street bike path improvements should be in conformance with the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) design and construction guidelines. Off street bicycle parking is appropriate and should be provided at public facilities, including public transportation facilities.

Given the City’s grid street pattern and the availability of sidewalks, pedestrian access tends to be adequate throughout most of the City. However, pedestrian movement could be improved in various locations. Pedestrian movement and access is difficult along or across major arterials, such as Rand Road, Northwest Highway, Elmhurst Road, Golf Road and sections of Des Plaines River Road. As these areas are redeveloped, design review should emphasize pedestrian access, primarily between bus stops and employment locations or other destinations, including City Hall where access across Northwest Highway is difficult. In addition, access to the Metra Cumberland Station is difficult for bicyclists and pedestrians due to its location along a busier section of Northwest

Highway. Although there is a marked crosswalk and an underground pedestrian tunnel at Golf Road, crossing Northwest Highway at grade during peak hour traffic is a safety concern.

Pedestrian friendly connections should be designed to better access the Des Plaines River, especially connections made between the downtown and the new multi-use path proposed as part of a flood control project along the Des Plaines River. Additional detail on appropriate urban design features allowing for pedestrian connections to this path is included in Chapter IX.

## E. TRANSIT FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Two public transit carriers currently serve the City of Des Plaines: the Metra/Union Pacific Northwest Line (commuter rail), and Pace Suburban Bus. Metra has two stations in Des Plaines: the Des Plaines Station located at 1501 N. Miner Street in downtown Des Plaines, and the Cumberland Station at 475 N. Northwest Highway, located west of the downtown. Pace bus routes operate throughout Des Plaines. The continued provision and even expansion of these services is an important component of the mobility system serving the City as well as integral to the development of future land uses along the transit corridor.

Additional information on Metra and Pace services is provided in the *Inventory and Analysis Memorandum* (August 2005).

### STAR Line

In the future, Des Plaines could also be served by a proposed new Metra rail service titled the STAR Line. The STAR Line will become the first commuter rail line in northeastern Illinois designed specifically to address suburb-to-suburb commutes. The STAR Line would utilize the existing EJ&E railroad corridor to provide north-south service to a direct connection to the northwest suburbs and other existing Metra commuter lines. Running along the Northwest Tollway from O'Hare Airport west to the Prairie Stone development in Hoffman Estates, the STAR line will provide a direct connection between Chicago, Rosemont, Des Plaines, Mount Prospect, Elk Grove Village, Arlington Heights, Rolling Meadows, Schaumburg and Hoffman Estates. From Hoffman Estates, the STAR line will follow the E J& E south to directly connect Bartlett, Elgin, West Chicago, Aurora, Naperville, Plainfield and Joliet with the Northwest Corridor. With regard to a future station location in Des Plaines, there have been discussions about a proposed station at Devon Road and I-90 as shown on the *Long Range Land Use Plan*.

## North Central Service

Metra operates the Metra North Central Service, a commuter rail service between the City of Chicago and Antioch, Illinois. This service operates on the Wisconsin Central Railroad tracks which bisect the City of Des Plaines west of the downtown (see *Figure 3a/b*). There are no station locations in Des Plaines. Stations proximate to Des Plaines are the O'Hare Transfer Station located on airport property and the Prospect Heights Station located at 55 South Wolf Road. At one time, there was discussion to locate a station immediately west of the Des Plaines Station at the point the Wisconsin Central tracks bisect the Metra/UP Northwest Line tracks. This location is no longer considered feasible.

## Transportation Services for Senior Citizens and People with Disabilities

In compliance with the American with Disabilities Act (ADA), Pace also provides paratransit services within the City of Des Plaines for those people who are disabled. It is a "curb to curb" service. Passengers must register for the trip 24 hours in advance. They can travel anywhere that Pace fixed route bus services go within the six county region. There are no restrictions on the type of travel.

Additionally, the City offers reduced taxicab rates to City residents, 65 years and older, and/or handicapped residents, who commute within the corporate City limits.

## F. POLICIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Several policies should guide transportation improvements within the City. These include:

- 1. Implement recommendations of the downtown traffic study.** Once the downtown traffic study has been completed, the recommendations that would improve access to existing and future businesses, as well, as traffic flow, should be incorporated into the *Long Range Land Use Plan*.
- 2. Continue to focus on maintenance and improvement of the existing street system.** The City's street network, while well-developed, could benefit from some operational adjustments and improvements.
- 3. Improve pedestrian access and mobility.** By implementing new pedestrian and bikeways, improving sidewalk conditions in certain areas, and promoting aesthetically pleasing walking environments, the City will retain its neo-traditional pedestrian flavor.
- 4. Base future land use decisions on the functional street classification system.** In the review of future public and private development proposals and

projects, the City should determine whether the improvements are consistent with the functional street classification.

- 5. Anticipate parking needs in all redevelopment plans.** Mixed-use development in the downtown will generate a need for additional parking to serve these uses. However, the downtown Subarea Plan presumes a more transit-supportive and neo-traditional design, so it is assumed that some, if not all, of the parking demand generated by new commercial uses could be accommodated in a few centralized, shared parking areas. This pattern would reinforce a pedestrian-oriented "multiple destination" pattern of use in the area.

## VI. COMMUNITY FACILITIES

The City of Des Plaines is host to a wide range of high quality community facilities and services, recreational facilities, and natural resources. The Comprehensive Plan seeks to sustain and enhance these as they are integral to the quality of life in the community.

The term “community facilities” includes buildings, land, interests in land (e.g. easements), and equipment of governmental services on behalf of the public. These may include facilities that are owned and operated by private (for profit or non-profit) enterprise for the benefit of the community.

Community facilities are an important aspect of the quality of life in the City, providing valuable services to residents and businesses. In most cases, community facilities in Des Plaines are stable and not in need of significant improvement. However, in a few instances, the facilities are in flux - in the process of reinventing themselves in terms of use or services, or finding a need to update their facilities to better meet community needs. Policies and Recommendations for Community Facilities are stated in Chapter III-Community Wide Land Use.

### A. EXISTING FACILITIES

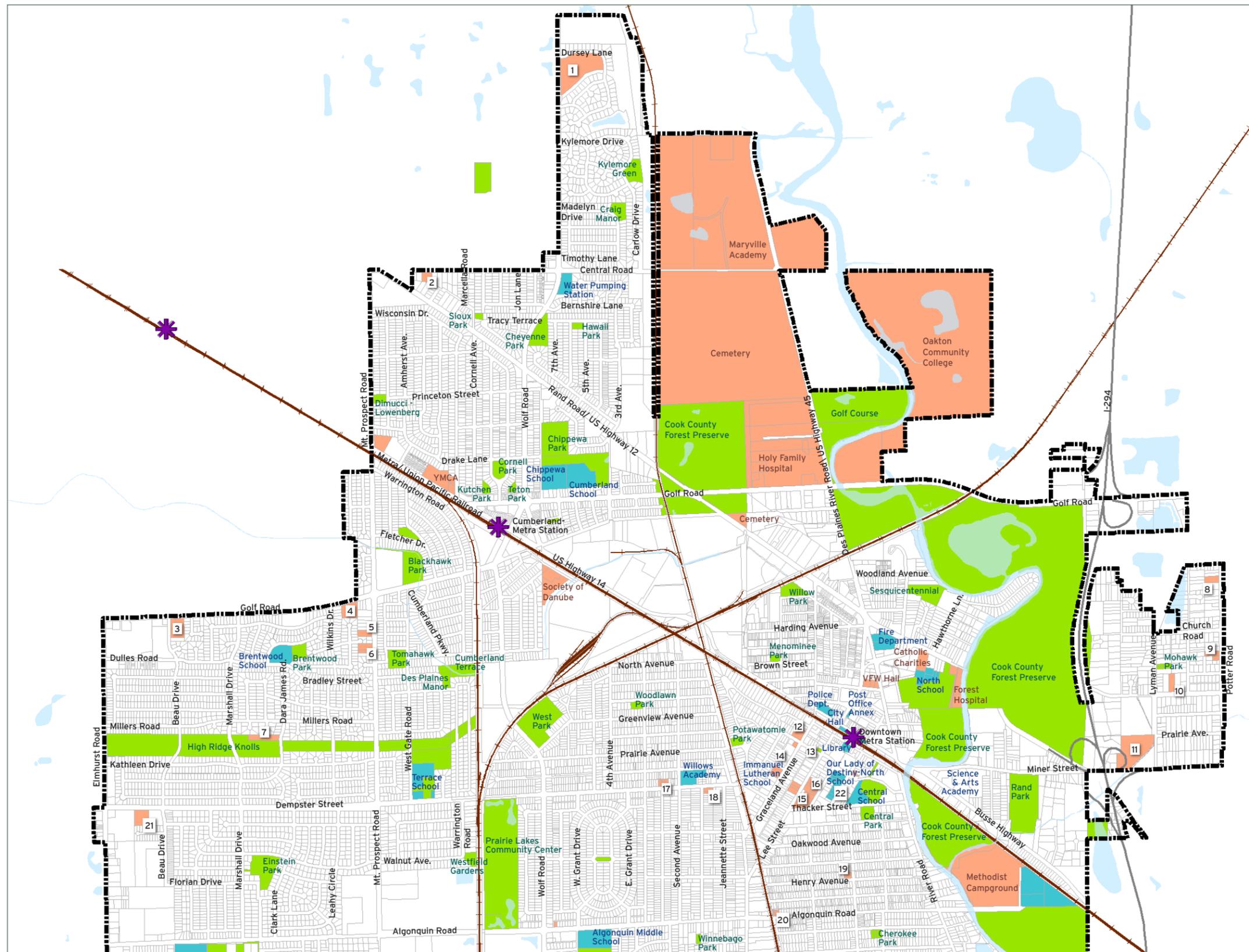
Des Plaines is currently served by a full range of community services and resources. A brief listing of these organizations providing services to the community is provided below. Further information on these providers is available in the *Inventory and Analysis Memorandum*.

- City Administration Offices and Public Works Facilities
- Police and Fire Services
- Schools and Colleges
- Des Plaines Public Library
- Park and Recreation Facilities
- Cook County Forest Preserve District Property
- Des Plaines River
- Methodist Camp Ground
- YMCA
- Maryville Academy
- Holy Family Hospital
- Des Plaines Historical Museum

### B. COMMUNITY FACILITIES PLAN

The *Community Facilities Plan, Figure 7a/b*, reflects existing facilities. While some new or expanded community facilities are anticipated, no new

**FIGURE 7a**  
**COMMUNITY FACILITIES PLAN**  
*COMMUNITY WIDE*  
 North of Algonquin Road



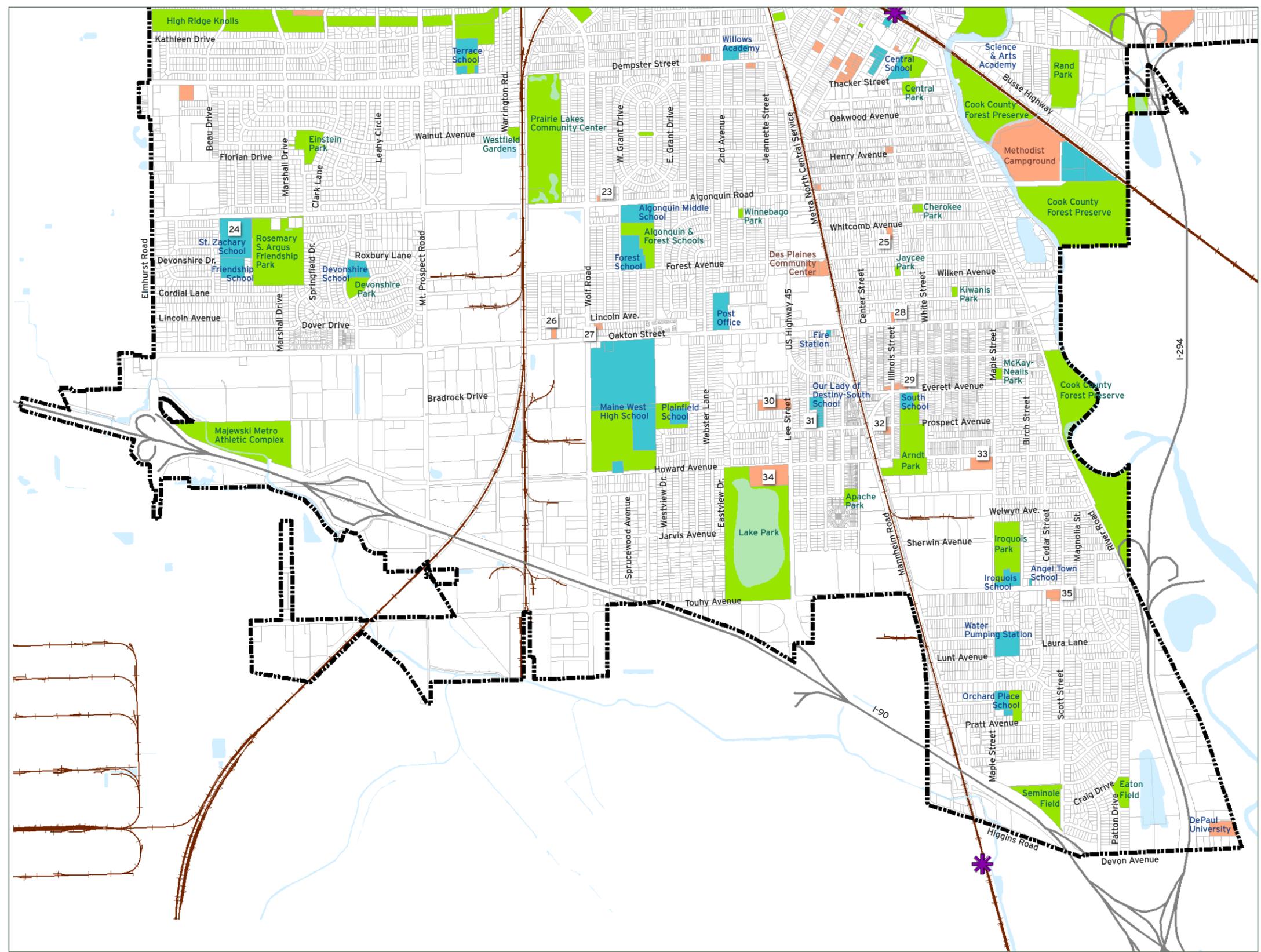
- # Places of Worship**
- 1: St. Chong Hasang Catholic Church
  - 2: Unity Northwest Church
  - 3: Golf Road Baptist Church
  - 4: Evangelical Free Church
  - 5: Jehovah Witnesses Church
  - 6: Faith Alliance Bible Church
  - 7: Brentwood Baptist Church
  - 8: Chicago Marthoma Church
  - 9: Islamic Community Center
  - 10: New International Pentecostal
  - 11: St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church
  - 12: First United Methodist Church
  - 13: Christian Science Center
  - 14: First Congregational Church
  - 15: Immanuel Lutheran Church
  - 16: Good News Christian Church
  - 17: Des Plaines Bible Church
  - 18: St. Martin's Episcopal Church
  - 19: Christ Church
  - 20: Bethesda Worship Center
  - 21: Sae Khwang United Presbyterian Church
  - 22: St. Mary's Catholic Church

- Metra Station
- City Boundary
- Public
- Institution
- Parks and Open Spaces

0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles



**FIGURE 7b**  
**COMMUNITY FACILITIES PLAN**  
*COMMUNITY WIDE*  
**South of Algonquin Road**



**# Places of Worship**

- 23: Trinity Lutheran Church
- 24: St. Zachary Catholic Church
- 25: Hahna Korean Presbyterian Church
- 26: Taiwan Presbyterian Church of Greater Chicago
- 27: Calvary (Korean) Baptist Church
- 28: Bulgarian Evangelical Church of God
- 29: Church of Christ of Des Plaines
- 30: Holy Virgin Protection Cathedral
- 31: St. Stephen Catholic Church
- 32: Phai Bao Buddhist Temple
- 33: First Presbyterian Church
- 34: Good Shepherd Lutheran Church
- 35: Korean Phillippi Presbyterian Church

**✳ Metra Station**

**⬛ City Boundary**

**■ Public**

**■ Institution**

**■ Parks and Open Spaces**



locations have been identified. However, the following details the potential for new facilities or improvements in the future:

### **City Administration Offices**

The City Hall was constructed in 1974, and although architecturally out of place in a traditional downtown setting, the building is in relatively good condition and adequate in size. While no new or expanded facilities are under discussion, the site lacks parking for employees and visitors, as well as loading facilities.

The Public Works campus is located at 1111 Joseph Schwab Road. The buildings located on site are dated from the 1950's. In order to accommodate the need for more space, individual metal maintenance sheds have been erected throughout the grounds. Ideally, these functions should be centralized in an expanded building or buildings, most likely onsite. No other needs are known or anticipated.

### **Water and Sewer System**

The water plant is located at 2555 Maple Avenue. There is one pumping station located at 1000 E. Central. Overall, water distribution and storage capacity is good. The City is currently undertaking a water systems study to determine future requirements or improvements needed. With regard to sewers, the majority of Des Plaines has separate storm and sanitary sewers. There is a small area of combined sewers in the older part of town. The sewer system is adequate throughout most of Des Plaines except in the neighborhoods that are within the Des Plaines River floodplain and experience frequent flooding. It is anticipated that the Des Plaines River flood control project that is currently under design will alleviate flooding in these neighborhoods.

Sewer and water facilities for the Waycinden Park neighborhood, considered to be Dempster Street on the north, Alconquin Road on the south, IL Route 83 west, and Mt. Prospect on the east are owned and operated by a private provider, Illinois American Water. The City's goal would be to provide city services to this neighborhood in the future and is examining the cost of providing such services.

### **Police and Fire Services**

The Police Department is in need of a new police station. The current station next to City Hall was built in 1975, and encompasses 20,000 square feet. Due to the Department's growth over the years, a 60,000 square foot building would be necessary to handle their current staff size. To accommodate a new building, parking, and future expansion, a minimum of three acres is needed ideally within or adjacent to downtown Des Plaines. The Police Department is undertaking a Facilities Plan to identify future police facilities.

The Fire Department has initiated a master planning process to assess aging facilities, response time, station location, rolling stock, and future demands due to projected growth. The fire station at 130 E. Thacker is a 55-year old building, which was expanded two years ago. The station at 1313 Oakton Street is a 45-year old building that needs repair and upgrades. The station at 405 S. River Road is a 34-year old building that floods frequently and may need to be relocated. Due to growth in Des Plaines, a fourth station may be needed. It is thought that the need for additional fire department facilities may be influenced by an increasing number of freight trains which affect response time, greater residential densities, more senior citizen facilities, and flooding issues.

## **Historical Resources and Landmarks**

The Historical Society and Museum is located in the 1906 Benjamin F. Kinder House at 789 Pearson Street. It was established in 1967 and has a membership of individuals, families, and businesses interested in the preservation of local history. Des Plaines has one landmark registered on the National Register of Historic Places. The Des Plaines Methodist Campground, which began hosting religious meetings in 1865, was listed on the Register in June 2005.

Although not listed on the National Register, there has been a movement to add the Des Plaines Theater located in downtown Des Plaines to the Register. The theater was built in the 1920's and hosted a variety of live entertainment including WLS radio broadcasts, an indoor circus, and Gilbert and Sullivan operettas. The theater has been classified as "eligible" for placement on the National Register of Historic Places by the U.S. Department of the Interior.

## **Natural Resources**

Although not located within the boundaries of the City, the Cook County Forest Preserve District's Des Plaines Division and Indian Boundary Division extends along the entire length of Des Plaines on the east and provides significant recreational assets within close proximity to the City. The Des Plaines River meanders through the Forest Preserve.

The Des Plaines Division includes:

- Lion Woods on the north at Golf Road
- Big Bend Lake recreation area to the east of Lion Woods
- Belleau Lake recreation area just south of Dempster near I-294
- Northwestern Woods just south of Northwest Highway
- Camp Ground Road Woods just south of Algonquin Road and adjacent to the Methodist Camp Ground
- Algonquin Woods just south of Oakton

- Iroquois Woods just north of Touhy

The Indian Boundary Division contains:

- Axehead Lake recreation area
- Chippewa Woods, near Devon Avenue.

The Forest Preserve also owns a parcel of land at the corner of Rand and Golf called Harry H. Semrow D. R. Woods. Recreational amenities along the Forest Preserve corridor include picnic shelters, a golf driving range, foot paths and developed trails, shoreline fishing and wildflowers. Within Iroquois Woods, there is a low dam with a ramp for canoes and rowboats to enter the river. Proximate to Big Bend Lake is a historical archeological site of an Indian city.

Wetlands and floodplain areas are shown on *Figure 8a/b Natural Resources Map*. Flood plain areas are located along the Des Plaines River, as well as along Weller Creek which meanders through the City of Des Plaines in an east-west direction. The floodplain along the Des Plaines River extends to Des Plaines/River Road and in some locations to Manheim Road/U.S. 45. The land uses affected by the floodplain areas are single-family residential and the downtown business district. In order to control flooding in this area, the Rand Park Flood Control and Multi-Use Trail project was proposed. This project is the first of six flood control projects along the Des Plaines River. The project will be designed and constructed in three phases. The first and second phases have already been constructed and consist of installing a 48 foot culvert under the Union Pacific Railroad, construction of a gated closure structure and pump station on Farmers Creek immediately upstream of the Union Pacific Railroad, a floodwall between the railroad and Dempster Avenue, and environmental mitigation. Phase 3 includes floodwalls, levees and a multi-use trail.

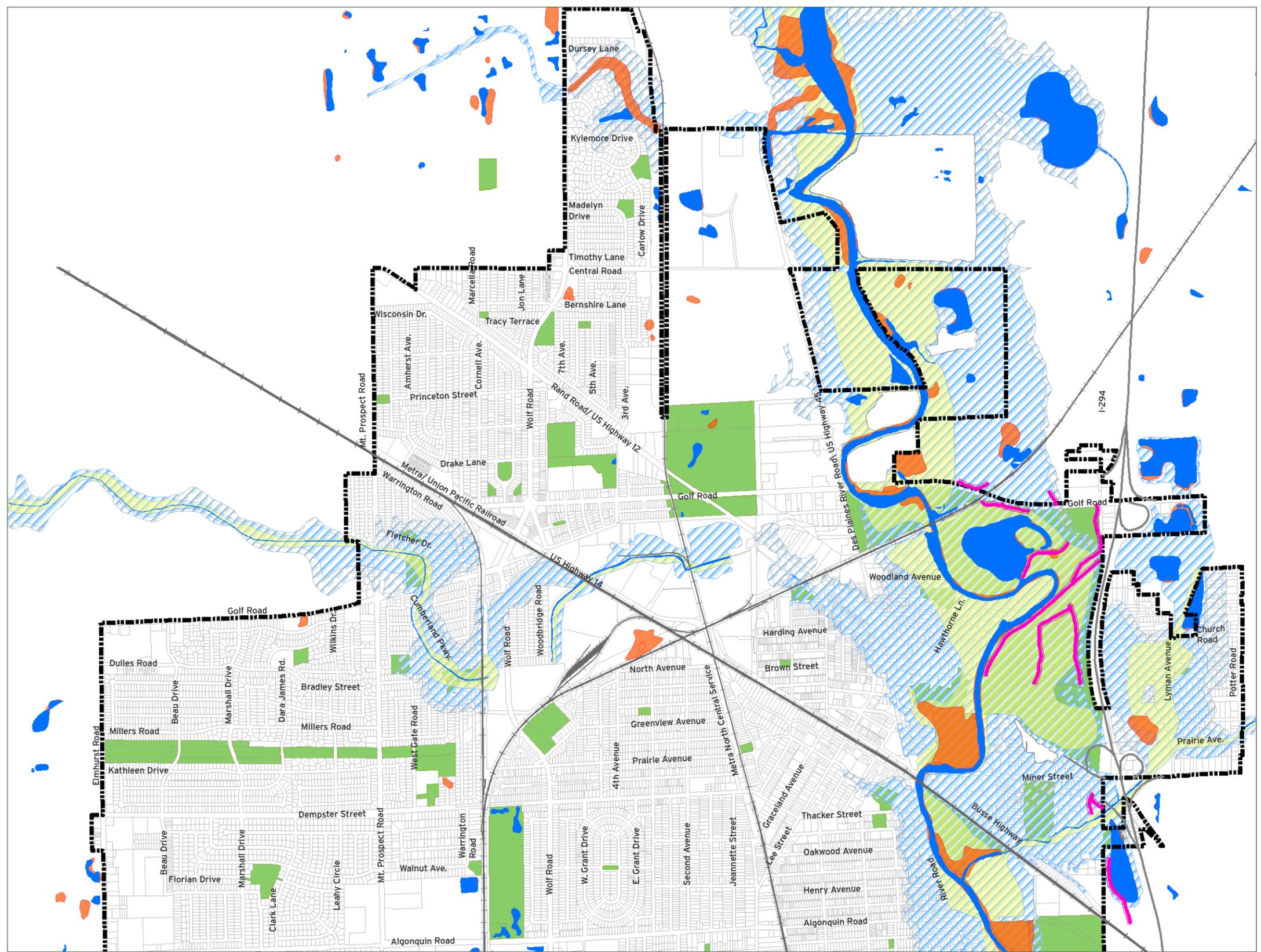
Wetlands are located in various places along the Des Plaines River. These wetlands vary between palustrine and riverine classifications. The *Long Range Land Use Plan* continues to protect the natural resources within the community.

## **Parks and Recreation**

Two park districts operate facilities within the City of Des Plaines: the Des Plaines Park District and the Mount Prospect Park District. The Des Plaines Park District operates all facilities within the City boundaries east of Mount Prospect Road. The Mount Prospect Park District operates those facilities west of Mount Prospect Road.

In June 2002, a Comprehensive Master Plan was completed for the Des Plaines Park District. The master plan detailed that all areas of the City are currently deficient in park and open space. One of the recommendations to increase

**FIGURE 8a**  
**NATURAL RESOURCES**  
**MAP**  
*COMMUNITY WIDE*  
 North of Algonquin Road

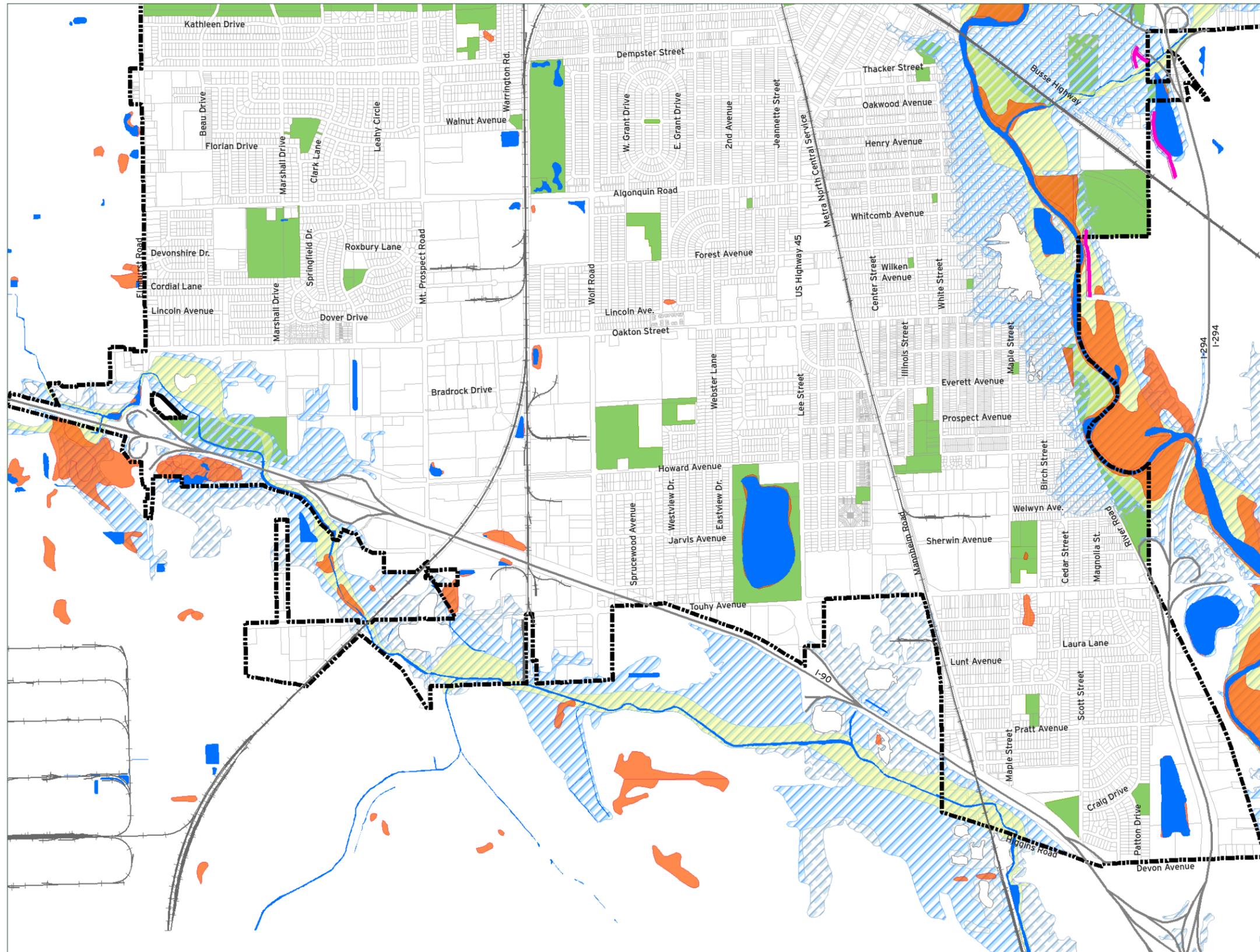


-  City Boundary
-  Trails
-  Water Bodies
-  Wetlands
-  Floodway
-  100 Year Floodplain
-  500 Year Floodplain
-  Parks and Open Space

**Data Sources**  
 Floodway and Floodplain, Parks and Open Space, Water Bodies - City of Des Plaines  
 Wetlands - Illinois Natural Resources Geospatial Data Clearinghouse



**FIGURE 8b**  
**NATURAL RESOURCES**  
**PLAN**  
*COMMUNITY WIDE*  
 South of Algonquin Road



-  City Boundary
-  Trails
-  Water Bodies
-  Wetlands
-  Floodway
-  100 Year Floodplain
-  500 Year Floodplain
-  Parks and Open Space

**Data Sources**  
 Floodway and Floodplain, Parks and Open Space, Water Bodies - City of Des Plaines  
 Wetlands - Illinois Natural Resources Geospatial Data Clearinghouse



parkland is to identify and acquire parcels which are contiguous to existing parks where possible. In addition, the master plan recommended that the Park District work with City of Des Plaines to adopt developer impact fees for park contributions.

The Mount Prospect Park District does not anticipate a large expansion in their facilities. In the next five years, the Mount Prospect Park District proposes to add one playground and two basketball courts to the High Ridge Knolls facility. Also, Einstein Park is planned for renovation. Other than these improvements, there are no planned improvements or expansions to park facilities within the City of Des Plaines.

### **Telecommunications**

The City of Des Plaines is currently served by two cable TV providers, Comcast Cable and Wide Open West (WOW) as well as with telephone and internet service provided by ATT/SBC. All areas of the City are served and there are no known infrastructure problems. While the City embraces advancement in new telecommunications technology, there are no specific plans in place to proactively encourage advanced technology at taxpayer expense. The City could seek the benefits of private public partnerships with the development community to facilitate the provision of broadband wireless technology in the future.

## VII. HOUSING

This section of the Comprehensive Plan documents the present needs for housing, including affordable housing, assesses the condition of the local housing stock, and develops policies to address the needs for a range of housing options.

### A. HOUSEHOLDS AND INCOME

According to the 2000 Census, the City of Des Plaines has a population of 58,720. The number of households is 22,363. More than two thirds (i.e. 67.4%) are considered to be family households (i.e. two or more related persons living together). Approximately one fourth of these households have children living at home.

The median household income in 1999 was \$53,638, according to the Census. The 2004 median household income according to the Market Assessment Report (December 2005-source: Claritas) has risen to \$58,478. As the following table indicates, relatively few households are in the upper income brackets, while 17.2% of households had incomes below \$25,000.

**Table 1**  
**ESTIMATED 2004 HOUSEHOLD INCOMES FOR DES PLAINES**

INCOME LEVEL	HOUSEHOLDS	PERCENT
Less than \$15,000	1,874	8.5%
\$15,00-\$24,999	1,933	8.7%
\$25,000-\$34,999	2,310	10.5%
\$35,000-\$49,999	3,179	14.4%
\$50,000-\$74,999	5,093	23.1%
\$75,000-\$99,000	3,642	16.5%
\$100,000-\$149,999	2,808	12.7%
\$150,000-\$249,000	899	4.1%
\$250,000-\$499,999	231	1.0%
\$500,000 and over	77	0.3%
<b>2004 Median Household Income</b>	<b>\$58,478</b>	

Source: Claritas (Market Assessment Report-December 2005)

## B. EXISTING HOUSING CONDITIONS

Des Plaines has a varied housing stock that includes single-family homes, a large and increasing supply of high rise condominium buildings, townhomes and mobile homes. As shown in the table below, the majority of the housing in Des Plaines is single-family units (15,238 units or 66%). Multi-family units in large and small buildings total 6,300 units or 27% of the occupied housing stock. Nearly 80% of the City's 22,851 housing units are owner-occupied.

**Table 2**  
**PROFILE OF DES PLAINES HOUSING STOCK**

	No. of Units	Percent
<b>Total Housing Units</b>	22,851	
<b>Occupied Units</b>	22,363	100%
Owner Occupied	17,739	79.3%
Renter Occupied	4,623	20.7%
<b>Vacant</b>	489	2.1%
<b>Building Size</b>		
Single-family	15,238	66.7%
2-4 Units	939	4.1%
5-49 Units	3,907	17.1%
50+ Units	1,454	6.4%
Mobile Homes	1,313	5.7%

Source: 2000 Census

Des Plaines is largely a single-family residential community. The age, size, and architectural style of homes vary according to neighborhood. Nearly three quarters of Des Plaines' residential units were built between 1940 and 1979. Only nine percent of the housing stock was built before 1939 and only eleven percent has been built since 1990. Dwelling units tend to be older and on smaller lots closest to the downtown. Newer homes are located on the western edge of the City. In the Lake Opeka area, homes appear to have been built in the 1960s to 1970s. With the exception of a few isolated properties, single-family homes appear to be well-maintained.

According to data from the Multiple Listing Service, the median price for single-family detached homes in Des Plaines was \$289,000 in 2004, based on the sale of 552 homes.

High-density multi-family residential areas are located in or near the downtown with some other locations near Elmhurst Road and in other isolated locations. Older duplex and low-density multi-family properties are also located north of

the downtown, south of Oakton, near Elmhurst Road, and in the Apache Park Area. Some of these properties appear to be overcrowded with insufficient open space and some suffer from maintenance issues.

There are three mobile home parks in the City. Two of the parks are located in residential areas. The third park is located within the commercial and industrial area of the Rand/River Road corridor. The *Long Range Land Use Plan* does not include a mobile home land use category and anticipates that as the market allows the mobile home parks will be converted to either single-family residential or to commercial for the one located in the Rand/River Road corridor.

### C. POLICIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Several recommendations are stated below to guide the City's housing policies. These include:

- 1. Maintain a variety of housing types to address the City's wide range of housing needs.** Currently, the variety of housing stock allows for an attraction of different types of income levels and types of family to the community. The City can encourage the continuation of varied housing by putting an affordable housing plan in place, including provisions for workforce residential units, "work/live" units, and independent and supportive senior housing.
- 2. Provide "workforce housing" in the future in compliance with the Affordable Housing Planning and Appeals Act of Illinois (Public Act 93-0595, August 2003)<sup>2</sup>.** As of 2005, approximately 25% of the City's housing stock is considered "affordable" per this act, an amount that exceeds the 10% requirement. The *Long Range Land Use Plan* is not expected to significantly alter the existing percentage.
- 3. Investigate different funding sources to encourage the development of high quality but lower cost housing.** The City can help facilitate lower cost housing by investigating Community Development Block Grants and other federal funds to support single-family and multi-family residential rehabilitation; promote the creating of rental housing by pursuing federal and state grants for subsidizing construction of apartments, and work with the banking community and the Illinois Housing Development Authority to create a "first-time" home buyers program, especially for children and family members of Des Plaines residents.

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<sup>2</sup> The Affordable Housing Planning and Appeals Act became effective January 1, 2004 throughout the State of Illinois. Based upon the criteria established by the Act an affordable housing unit in Cook County has currently been defined as having a sales price of less than \$125,244 or a monthly rent of less than \$775.

## VIII. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

**B**alancing economic resources in a mature residential community such as Des Plaines is a challenge. The Comprehensive Plan has identified a range of community facility and development needs. While public finance is an integral element of the Plan, equally important are the actions that the community can take relative to shaping and affecting market forces. The Economic Development Plan focuses on private initiatives which create economic opportunities for the City.

The Plan seeks to ensure that adequate economic development opportunities are available; identifies the strategic competitive advantages of the community and the surrounding region; assesses the community's strengths and weaknesses with respect to attracting and retaining business and industry; and defines the City's role within this broader strategy.

### A. EXISTING RESOURCES

#### **Des Plaines Economic Development Commission**

The Economic Development Commission serves as an advisor to the Des Plaines City Council in order to maintain a favorable business environment. Thirteen commissioners representing various businesses in Des Plaines meet on a regular basis to discuss revitalization, redevelopment, and business formation. The City's Deputy Director of Community and Economic Development serves as a resource for the Commission, as well as acting as a conduit for potential developers. Working with the City Administration, the Economic Development Commission is dedicated to proactively seeking business opportunities for Des Plaines.

#### **Des Plaines Chamber of Commerce & Industry**

Founded in 1934, the Des Plaines Chamber of Commerce and Industry is a member-based organization that seeks to enhance the local business climate and promote growth for new and existing enterprises. Currently, the Chamber contains over 600 members that include retailers, industries, and service providers. The Chamber promotes new business relationships through its membership directory, business support programs, networking events, and monthly newsletter "The Business Advocate."

## B. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TOOLS

### Façade Rehabilitation Program

The Economic Development Commission designed a façade rehabilitation program to help improve commercial storefronts throughout the City. The program encourages improvements by offering grants to property owners or tenants for up to 50% of project costs. If visible from main shopping streets, the rear and sides of commercial buildings also may be eligible. The program may be used for minor repairs or complete renovations, such as signage, window/door replacement, and architectural restoration, as well as for professional design or permit fees. Significantly, the City offers detailed design guidelines to provide storefront improvement ideas. All façade improvement proposals must be reviewed and approved by the Economic Development Commission.

### Tax Increment Finance (TIF) Districts

Tax increment financing is a tool authorized by the State of Illinois over 20 years ago to help municipalities with economic development efforts in problematic or slow growth areas. By creating a TIF district, municipalities can encourage new development by allowing the tax revenue to be generated by that development to stay in the district for public improvements, such as new streets and sewers. The tax revenue collected during the year prior to district creation is the “base” amount that continues to be distributed as before; the additional revenues generated within the district are the “increment” set aside for district-specific initiatives. The presence of a TIF district may aid in securing developer interest and investment in future projects likely to be identified during the planning process, as well as the implementation of public realm improvements that the Plan may identify as high priority.

In 1983, Des Plaines created its first TIF district to encompass the Central Business District (TIF District #1), which helps the City proactively encourage revitalization and redevelopment projects. The Heritage, an assisted living facility at River Road and Ellingwood Street, was the first project to use TIF benefits. The new public library and related development also benefited from the TIF district. More recently, the City created District #5 as a supplement to District #1 in order to facilitate the proposed Metropolitan Square development, which will include new retail, office space, grocery store, condominiums, and parking garage. Clearly, the TIF districts have helped with the resurgence of downtown Des Plaines.

In 2000, the City created TIF District #3 along Willie Road in its industrial zone bordering I-90 and O’Hare Airport. TIF District #3 is facilitating industrial

warehouse development, including over 400,000 square feet in the initial phase. The second phase will offer approximately one million square feet. In 2001, the City created another district adjacent to I-90, TIF District #6, for the Mannheim/Higgins Road gateway area. The target developments for this area include hotels, a restaurant, and retail. Lastly, the City is now studying the potential for a TIF district for the Rand/River Road area near downtown Des Plaines.

### **Enterprise Zones**

Enterprise Zones are among Illinois' most important tools to stimulate economic growth and neighborhood revitalization. The Enterprise Zone program, administered at the state level by the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO), depends upon a creative partnership between state and local government, businesses, labor and community groups to encourage economic growth in the areas designated as Enterprise Zones. Each zone offers distinctive state and local incentives to enhance business or neighborhood development efforts. State incentives include sales tax exemption on building materials to be used in construction within the zone, sales tax exemptions on purchases of tangible personal property to be used in manufacturing or assembly process purposes, a utility tax exemption on gas, electric and telecommunications, a tax credit for taxpayers investing in qualified property in a zone, and a jobs tax credit for each job created in the zone. Local incentives can include abatement of property taxes on new improvements, homesteading and shopsteading programs, waiver of business licensing and permit fees, streamlined building code and zoning requirements, and special local financing programs and resources.

### **Cook County Property Tax Abatement Incentive Program (6b)**

Cook County offers a property tax abatement incentive program, known as the 6b program, to stimulate industrial development. Types of properties eligible for this program include new construction, expansion and substantial rehabilitation of manufacturing, warehousing and distribution facilities. In order to be eligible for the program, Cook County applies the "but for" test to each application. Under that test, assessing officials must be reasonably certain that the proposed project will not become a reality "but for" the existence of tax incentives. If the subject property qualifies, the building portion of the assessed valuation will be assessed at 16% during the first 10 years, 23% during the 11<sup>th</sup> year, and 30% during the 12<sup>th</sup> year.

### **Capital Development Program**

The City recognizes that an important component of economic development is the maintenance and upgrade of its existing infrastructure. The City maintains and annually updates a Capital Improvement Program which represents staff's

recommendation of the city's street and utility infrastructure needs for the next five years.

The revenue for these improvement projects comes from the City's General Improvement Fund, Motor Fuel Tax Fund, and Water Fund. The City's Engineering Department is responsible for annually updating the Capital Improvement Program, and for implementing the program's projects through design plans, construction, and management.

### C. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The following information is from the Market Assessment Report (December 2005). The report should be referenced for additional information.

#### Residential

Despite the fact that Des Plaines is a mature, built-out community, opportunities for additional residential development are numerous, as described below. New residential developments in first-ring suburbs with excellent expressway access and transit options will continue to attract buyers. With varying product being planned, no single segment of the market is likely to be overbuilt in the foreseeable future.

- ***Condominium development.*** Despite some concerns that this market may be saturated, there is ample market support for an additional 100 units a year on average. Increasingly, new condominium developments may have to distinguish themselves from existing projects by including a higher level of amenities or through more distinctive architectural character. Providing adequate parking for residents and guests will help address the concern of existing residents as well as ensure the marketability of the units. Additional residential developments for seniors are also likely given the demographic trends of Des Plaines.
- ***Townhouses.*** Townhouses will be an increasingly popular choice to attract younger residents into the community. This housing type is particularly appropriate on infill sites or former commercial or industrial areas in need of redevelopment. One or two projects per year adding 75 to 100 new units could be supported in this market.
- ***Single-Family Homes.*** Des Plaines is a predominantly single-family community, and this remains the preferred housing choice of most area residents. New single-family homes will continue to be built on individual lots, replacing older less functional homes. Regulating these "teardowns" will ensure that they do not overwhelm or compromise existing neighborhoods. In addition, if land were to be made available, the

market would support a new high-end residential subdivision of single-family homes.

## Retail

Opportunities for new retail development in Des Plaines exist in the downtown, in the Five Corners Area north of downtown, and along the major commercial arteries.

- ***Metropolitan Square and Downtown Retail Opportunities.*** Downtown Des Plaines has the potential to support more convenience and specialty retail to serve the growing base of downtown residents, commuters, and workers. In addition to the 40,000-square-foot Save & Shop Marketplace, Metropolitan Square is adding 74,000 square feet of retail space. This space, along with some of the vacancies or underutilized store fronts along Miner Street, is more than sufficient to satisfy the unmet retail demand in such categories as: restaurants; specialty shops selling apparel, accessories, small household items; and gift shops.

Current leasing efforts at Metropolitan Square are being hampered by the appearance of the Miner Street frontage, which serves as the “front door” to Metropolitan Square. As construction is completed and Metropolitan Square is leased out, attention must be paid to upgrading the appearance and functionality of the commercial spaces on Miner Street.

- **Larger Format Retailing in the “Five Corners” Area.** The Five Corners Area north of downtown has been proposed for designation as a redevelopment area. It is expected that large-format retail development is appropriate for this area. The Plan suggests potential support for 200,000 to 300,000 square feet of retail space that might include the following types of stores: electronics, home improvement, pet supply, books, office supply, crafts, housewares, and home furnishings. Planning for this area should address the traffic and circulation along the major arterials: Rand, Golf, and River Roads. In addition, this area must be appropriately tied into Metropolitan Square as well as the residential buildings along River Road.
- ***Commercial Districts: Lee Street, Oakton Street and Elmhurst Roads.*** The major commercial districts are in need of updating, both in terms of their physical appearances and the mix of businesses. The City should continue to work with existing shopping center owners to help market the strip centers and keep them leased. In areas where the retail and businesses are spotty, consideration should be given to clustering the retail around the key intersections and allowing mixed-use buildings with residential components in the mid-blocks.

## Entertainment

New entertainment venues would be a positive addition to the community. It would also give Des Plaines a more prominent identity by drawing visitors into the community. Among the ideas worth pursuing are:

- ***The Des Plaines Theater.*** A decision needs to be made on the future of the Des Plaines Theater. Significant public investment will be needed to insure quality restoration and programming that serves all segments of the community. The theater occupies one of the most prominent corners in downtown Des Plaines, and potentially could become once again a focal point of downtown Des Plaines.
- ***New Construction Cineplex.*** A multi-screen movie theater would need a large site (in excess of ten acres) that could accommodate the required parking. Discussions with those knowledgeable about film distribution zones could help determine the feasibility of locating a new cineplex in Des Plaines.
- ***Golf Course.*** If adequate acreage could be identified a public course would be a welcome amenity to this community. A landfill property located north of Central Avenue and east of Des Plaines River Road in unincorporated Cook County has been referenced in this Plan as a potential site for a golf course.

## Industrial

Des Plaines has a large and diversified base of manufacturing and distribution firms. Retaining existing manufacturing firms will prove increasingly challenging in coming years, as buildings become obsolete and land prices escalate. Pressure will increase to rezone individual properties for residential or retail uses, particularly along Northwest Highway and in other scattered industrial areas. While maintaining Des Plaines' industrial base is an important goal, selective rezonings in the northern portion of the City should be considered in the context of the new Comprehensive Plan.

Des Plaines should also embrace the growing demand for logistics and distribution space that can best be accommodated in the southwest portion of the City, nearest to O'Hare and the expressways. Demand for large sophisticated distribution facilities, like the 411,000 square foot building recently completed in Willie Road TIF District #3, should increase in the coming decade, in response both to changes in the logistics industry and improvements to the airport and its cargo operations.

## Office

Located within the O'Hare office submarket, Des Plaines has a competitive office inventory of 13 primarily Class B and C buildings with a total of 2.5 million square feet of space. The O'Hare submarket, as well as the other office submarkets in metropolitan Chicago, have been suffering through a period of high vacancy rates and modest demand for new space. Recovery is projected to be slow, and no new investment-grade office buildings are likely to be built for the foreseeable future.

Des Plaines also has a sizable inventory of smaller office buildings and commercial spaces occupied by medical, dental, legal, real estate, insurance, and other professional service firms that primarily serve the local population. Downtown Des Plaines will be adding 22,000 square feet of new office space with the completion of Metropolitan Square. This new space is likely to meet any new demand for quality local space in the community for the foreseeable future.

## D. POLICIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Due to its convenient distance to downtown Chicago, O'Hare International Airport, and all modes of transportation, the City of Des Plaines offers a very desirable location for residential, commercial, and industrial development. However, since it is a mature "built-out" community with little vacant land, the City of Des Plaines will need to remain focused on revitalization and redevelopment efforts to maintain vibrant business and industrial districts and offer a diversity of housing choices.

Several recommendations are stated below to guide the City's economic development policies. These include:

- 1. Continue to provide resources for economic development activities in Des Plaines.** The Economic Development Commission's Business Visitation Program, the Des Plaines Chamber of Commerce, and existing state and local agencies provides needed resources to expand economic development in Des Plaines.
- 2. Promote art and cultural venues as growth segments for the community.** Expanded activities and improved or new facilities, particularly in the downtown, will support a core entertainment role that could serve as a catalyst for other activities in the downtown. The City and the Economic Development Commission should work together to define opportunities. Cultural opportunities are typically both publicly and privately sponsored.

3. **Continue to support business networking and marketing.** The City should continue to play an active role in networking and marketing for business development activities.

## IX. URBAN DESIGN

A critical component of the Comprehensive Plan is the Urban Design Framework Plan. The following describes design treatments that would be appropriate community wide, at primary and secondary gateways, and in the downtown area. Together with land use regulations, such as the City's zoning code, urban design improvements can be an important tool to enhance the quality and character of the City.

### A. URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK PLAN

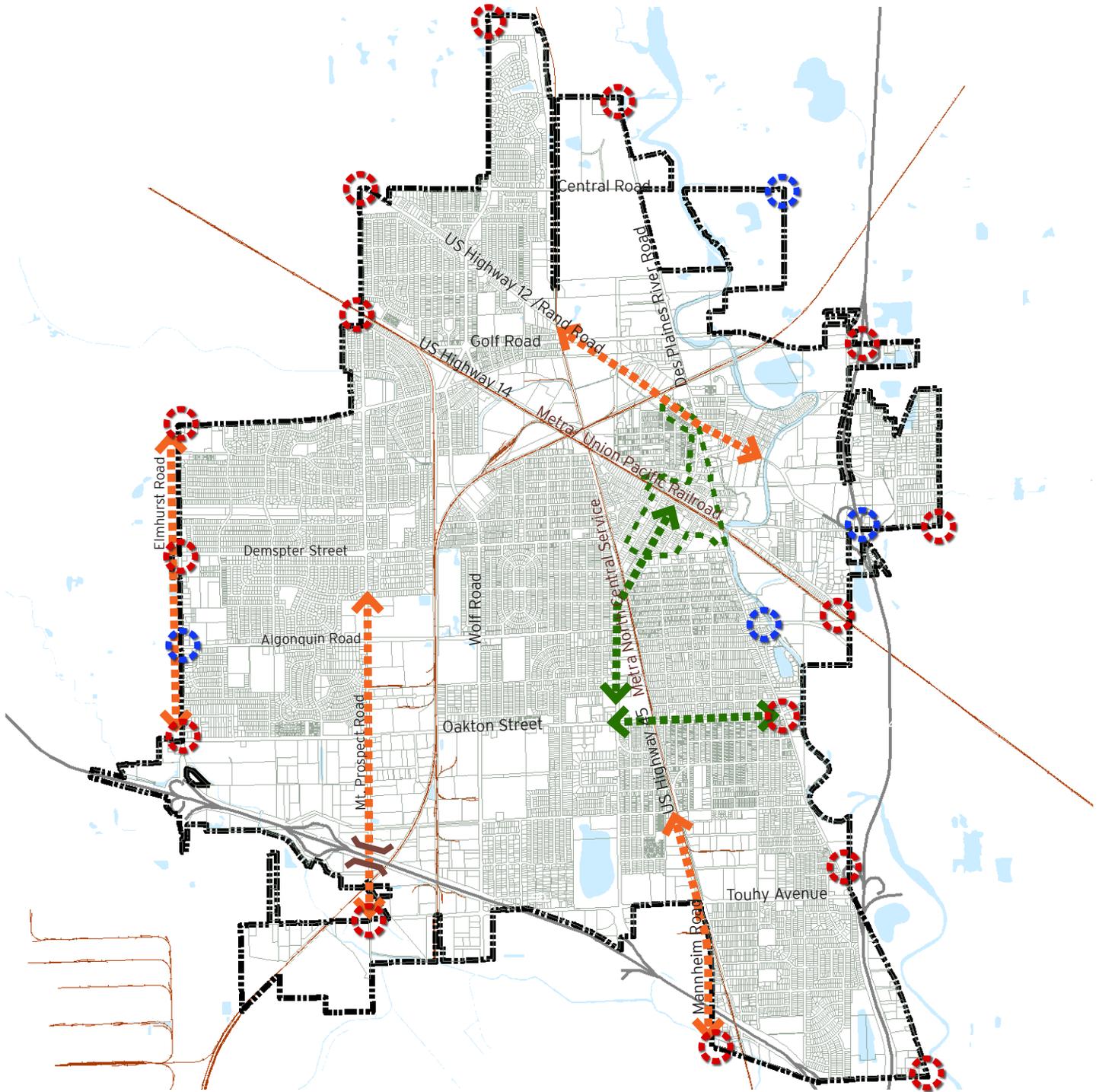
*Figure 9 Urban Design Framework – Community Wide* provides the overall urban design plan for the entire community. Design guidelines for the Lee Street, Oakton Street, and downtown business districts have been developed and should be implemented to go hand in hand with Plan recommendations. In addition, a coordinated streetscape treatment is suggested along other commercial districts including Manheim Road, Elmhurst Road and Rand Road. In order to provide a connection within the southwestern industrial area on either side of Interstate 90, it is recommended that a streetscape that is reflective of the industrial corridor be implemented along Mount Prospect Road. Underpass improvements under Interstate 90 are suggested to provide a visual and pedestrian friendly connection between both sides of the interstate. This is particularly important if the City increases its industrial area south of Interstate 90.

Other significant planned community features are primary and secondary gateways. *Figure 10 Primary Gateway Concept* illustrates appropriate treatments for those gateways that are considered "primary". Although limited to some extent by land availability, primary gateway features should include the following elements:

- Rows of street trees along parkway to define entryway
- Landscaped median with street trees
- Gateway signage enhanced with landscaping, including multi-stemmed and closely spaced trees providing a background
- Decorative paving at crosswalk visually connecting both sides of roadway
- Large planting beds to address vehicular scale
- Lighting hidden within landscaping within the entire gateway area providing night time effect
- Landscaping to be arranged in masses to divert attention to gateway signage

FIGURE 9

URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK - COMMUNITY WIDE



-  Primary Gateways
-  Secondary Gateways
-  Design Guidelines for Business District

-  Suggested Streetscape Improvements for Commercial Corridors
-  Suggested Underpass Improvements



FIGURE 10  
PRIMARY GATEWAY  
CONCEPT



**Elements**

- Rows of street trees along parkway to define entryway
- Landscaped median with street trees
- Gateway signage enhanced with landscaping, including multi-stemmed and closely spaced trees providing a background
- Decorative paving at crosswalk visually connecting both sides of roadway
- Large planting beds to address vehicular scale
- Lighting hidden within landscaping within the entire gateway area providing night time effect
- Landscaping to be arranged in masses to align eye movement to gateway signage

CONCEPT ONLY



*Figure 11 Secondary Gateway Concept* includes some of the same elements as the primary gateway concept but the proposed design treatment is intended to be of a reduced scale. Recommended elements include:

- Large planting beds to address vehicular scale
- Gateway signage enhanced with landscaping, including multi-stemmed and closely spaced trees providing a background
- Landscaping to be arranged in masses to align eye movement to gateway signage
- Lighting hidden within landscaping at the monument sign providing night time effect

*Figure 12 Urban Design Framework- Downtown Subarea* establishes the overall urban design plan for the downtown. *Figure 12* illustrates treatments associated with pedestrian oriented streetscape enhancements, automobile oriented streetscape enhancements, parks and open space, bicycle paths, pedestrian walkways or "pedways," and land use and architectural elements. Each of the design treatments associated with these various elements are highlighted below:

#### Pedestrian Oriented Streetscape Enhancement

- Ornamental lighting with banners
- Pedestrian signalized intersections
- Special paving at crosswalks
- Accommodation of cafes and/or sidewalk activities
- Street trees
- Decorative paving
- Seasonal planting
- Planters
- Architectural amenities (awnings, pedestrian oriented signage, articulated facades, etc.)
- Wayfinding for automobiles and pedestrians
- Bollards to define pedestrian and vehicular movement at intersections
- Provision of clear definition and movement for pedestrian movement
- Wider sidewalks to allow for pedestrian oriented amenities at the Metropolitan Square entrance

#### Automobile Oriented Streetscape Enhancement

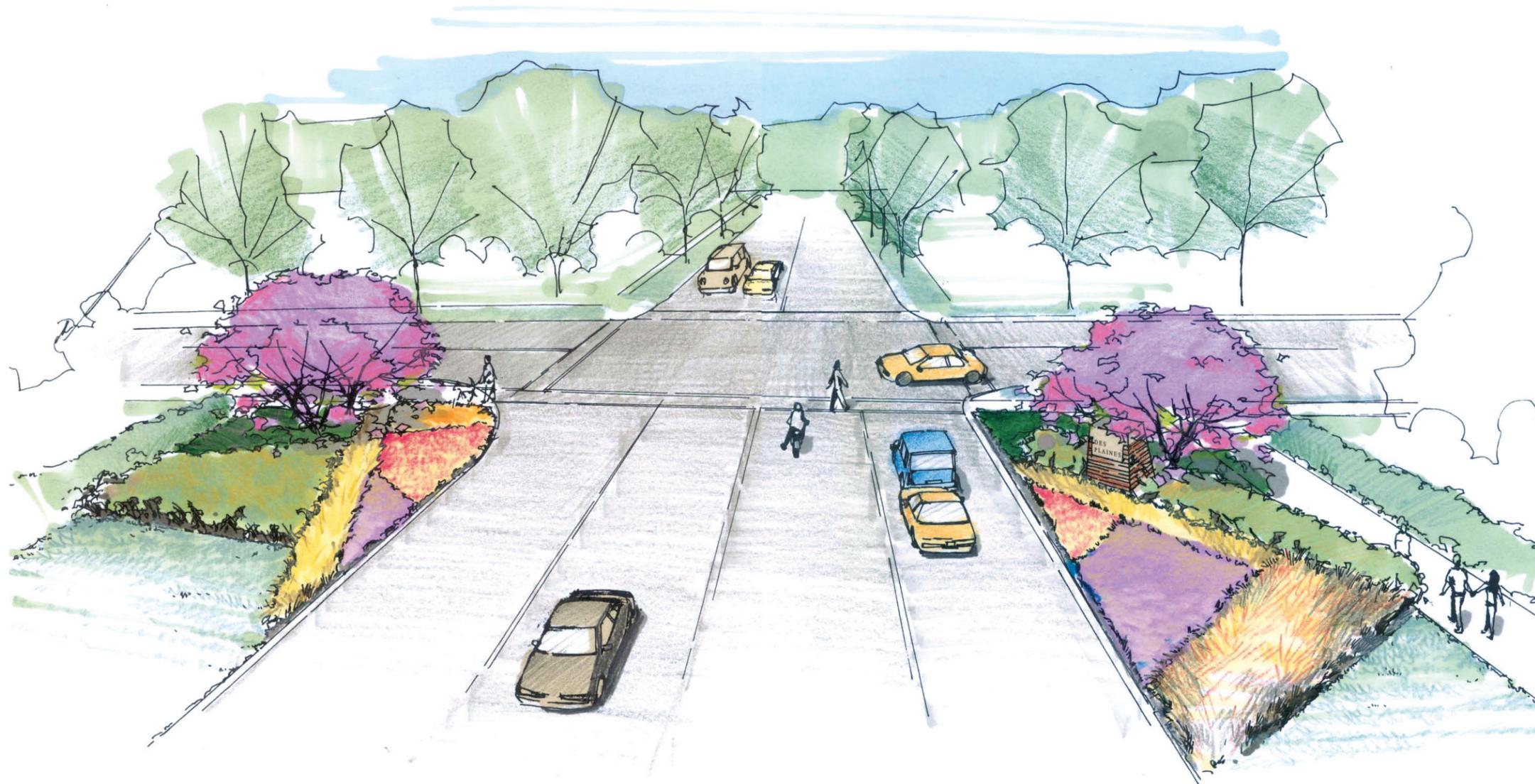
- Ornamental lighting with banners
- Street trees
- Wayfinding for automobiles
- Identification of pedestrian movement, where dominated by automobile traffic

#### Parks and Open Space Enhancement

- Open spaces are located to provide gateway for downtown business area

FIGURE 11

## SECONDARY GATEWAY CONCEPT



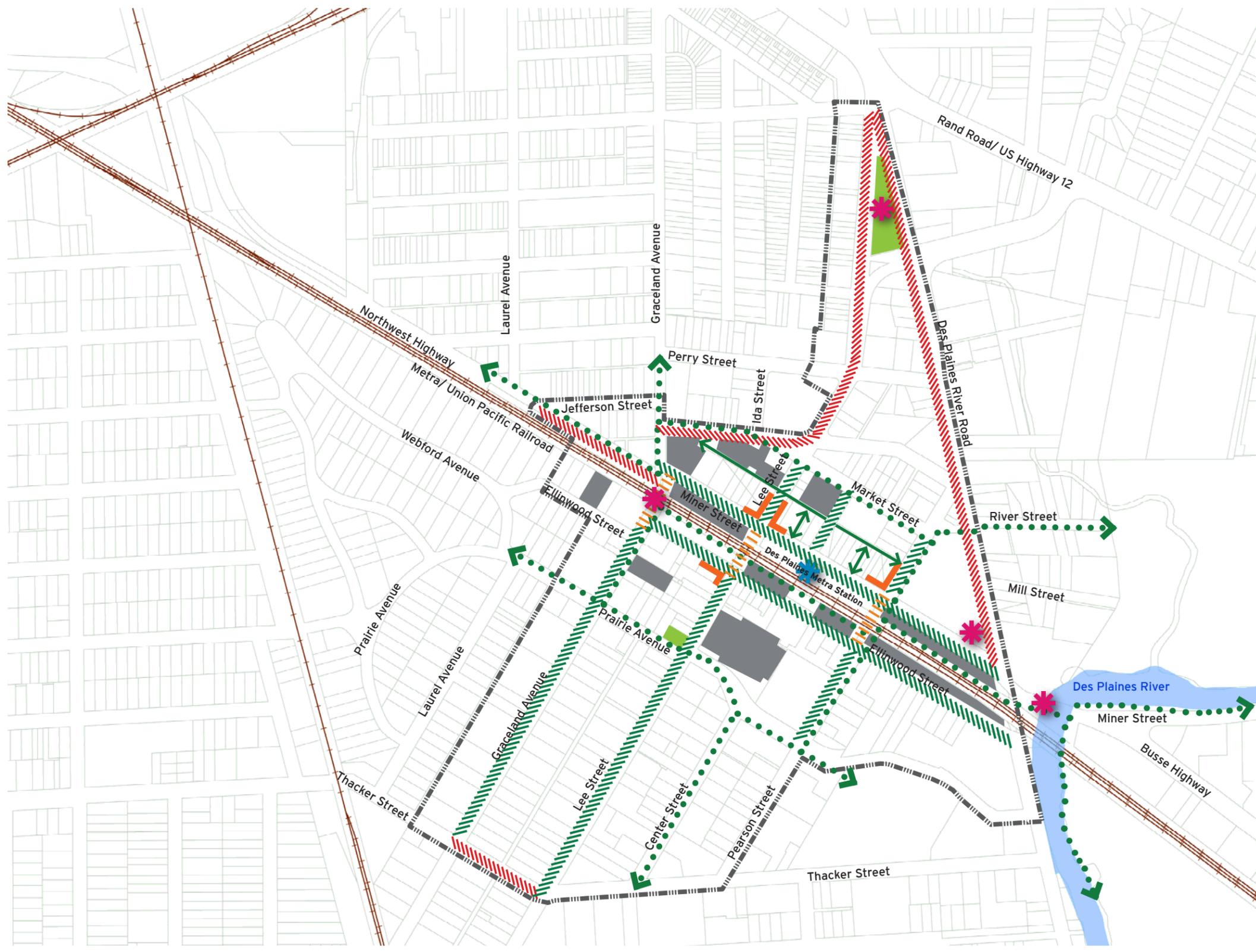
### Elements

- Large planting beds to address vehicular scale
- Gateway signage enhanced with landscaping, including multi-stemmed and closely spaced trees providing a background
- Landscaping to be arranged in masses to align eye movement to gateway signage
- Lighting hidden within landscaping at the monument sign providing night time effect

CONCEPT ONLY



**FIGURE 12**  
**URBAN DESIGN**  
**FRAMEWORK**  
 DOWNTOWN SUBAREA



- Proposed Land Uses**
- Parks and Open Space
  - Parking
  - Entryway Feature
  - Auto-Oriented Streetscape Enhancements
  - Pedestrian-Oriented Streetscape Enhancements
  - Pedway
  - Crosswalk Improvements
  - Facade Improvements
  - Bike Path
  - Metra Station
  - Sub Area Boundary



- Crosswalk improvements to encourage pedestrian traffic on both sides of Miner Street

#### Bike Path Enhancement

- Routes to connect adjacent residential neighborhoods into Metropolitan Square, library, and to Des Plaines River bike trail
- Bike paths to be designated lanes on street
- Bike racks at strategic location within the downtown business district

#### Land Use and Architecture Enhancement

- Maintenance of historic buildings and “bookends” to City blocks
- Provision of setback for developments along Metropolitan Square entrance to allow for pedestrian scale amenities and street side cafes.
- Increased presence of Metra station with landscape and urban design enhancements

#### Pedway Enhancement

- Primarily or exclusively designed for pedestrian activity and movement
- Alley/pedway north of Miner Street will share with service vehicles only
- Drive for service vehicles to be constructed of decorative paving to reduce traffic speeds
- Bollards to define pedestrian and vehicular movement at intersections and along sidewalks
- Wayfinding for pedestrians
- Pedways off Miner Street provided with amenities similar to small parks and will accommodate pedestrian “gathering spaces.”
- Ornamental lighting with banners
- Provision of visual access to Metropolitan Square from Miner Street

*Figure 13 Downtown Redevelopment Concept* provides a concept of the Miner Street frontage. The Miner Street frontage is an important element in the redevelopment scenario of the downtown as it is the main retail street and provides the “front door” for Metropolitan Square. The concept provides an illustration of how key building frontages can remain, and new development can be introduced. Key elements of this illustration include:

- Buildings are six to seven stories in height
- Uses are retail at the street level and residential above
- Pedways allow visibility to Metropolitan Square from Miner Street
- Decorative paving within street continues across Metra tracks to unify business district
- Pedestrian scaled elements (lighting, landscaping, paving, etc.) provide pedestrian scale environment
- Paving within the pedways, Metropolitan Square entrance, and Metra Station drop-off to match paving at library’s plaza



FIGURE 13

## DOWNTOWN REDEVELOPMENT CONCEPT

### Elements

- Buildings are six to seven stories in height
- Uses are retail at the street level and residential above
- Pedways allow visibility to Metropolitan Square from Miner Street
- Decorative paving within street continues across Metra tracks to unify business district
- Pedestrian scaled elements (lighting, landscaping, paving, etc.) provide pedestrian scale environment
- Paving within the pedways, Metropolitan Square entrance, and Metra Station drop-off to match paving at library's plaza
- Bollards located at intersections and drop-off areas
- Café style seating within pedways provided off Miner street
- Street trees and landscaping within medians adjacent to the Metra station
- Street trees located in parkway planters
- Signature buildings remain as "bookends" for new development

CONCEPT ONLY



- Bollards located at intersections and drop-off areas
- Café style seating within pedways provided off Miner street
- Street trees and landscaping within medians adjacent to the Metra station
- Street trees located in parkway planters
- Signature buildings remain as “bookends” for new development

*Figure 14 Downtown Pedway Concept* provides design guidance for creating a pedway linking the Miner Street frontage with Metropolitan Square development, linking the Metropolitan Square development with proposed development to the west, and providing a pedestrian friendly link internal to the development. Key elements of this illustration include:

- Pedestrian scaled lighting to increase security
- Special paving at crosswalks
- Service vehicle route to be paved with decorative paving
- Pedestrian and vehicular movement are divided with bollards
- All rear or service access to buildings are screened with wood fencing and vines

*Figure 15 Downtown Entry Concept* provides key design elements to be located at downtown entryway locations. These entryway features would provide urban design elements to provide a distinct entrance into the central business district. Key elements at the entryway locations are:

- Gateway intersections have monumental sculptures at the northwest, southwest, and southeast corners of Miner Street and River Road
- Paving within plazas to match library’s plaza
- An on-street bike path connection provided east bound over the bridge and connecting on the east side of Des Plaines River
- Landscaping to frame monumental gateway sculptures
- Design features added to the Miner Street bridge including bollards, overlooks, lighting, decorative railings, and decorative paving to feature the bridge as an entryway to the downtown and to respond to a pedestrian scale
- Special paving at crosswalks
- Removal of unsightly overhead power lines at the Miner Street/River Road intersection



FIGURE 14  
DOWNTOWN PEDWAY  
CONCEPT

**Elements**

- Pedestrian scaled lighting to increase security
- Special paving at crosswalks
- Service vehicle route to be paved with decorative paving
- Pedestrian and vehicular movement are divided with bollards
- All rear or service access to buildings are screened with wood fencing and vines

CONCEPT ONLY





FIGURE 15  
DOWNTOWN ENTRY  
CONCEPT

**Elements**

- Gateway intersections have monumental sculptures at the northwest, southwest, and southeast corners of Miner Street and River Road
- Paving within plazas to match library's plaza
- An on-street bike path connection provided east bound over the bridge and connecting on the east side of Des Plaines River
- Landscaping to frame monumental gateway sculptures
- Design features added to the Miner Street bridge including bollards, overlooks, lighting, decorative railings, and decorative paving to feature the bridge as an entryway to the downtown and to respond to a pedestrian scale
- Special paving at crosswalks
- Removal of unsightly overhead power lines at the Miner Street/ River Road intersection

CONCEPT ONLY



## X. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Comprehensive Plan was guided by a Steering Committee comprised of City staff and officials. The public was an integral component of the planning process. Meetings were held to incorporate public comment and input.

The following meetings were held with the Steering Committee and the public:

June 6, 2005	Key Person Interviews
July 27, 2005	Steering Committee Meeting
September 27, 2005	Steering Committee Meeting
November 3, 2005	Public Meeting
January 25, 2006	Steering Committee Meeting
February 23, 2006	Public Meeting
May 8, 2006	Plan Commission Meeting and Public Hearing

Comments received key person interviews and at the November 3, 2005 meeting are summarized as the "Issues and Opportunities" presented in Chapter II. Comments received during later meetings served to provide guidance to the consulting team and Steering Committee as specific land use and transportation concepts and policies were developed.

## XI. IMPLEMENTATION

The planning process in Des Plaines has just begun. In many ways, formal adoption of the Comprehensive Plan is only the first step. Without continuing action to implement and update the Plan, the Plan will be lost.

The Comprehensive Plan sets forth an agreed upon “road map” for the next ten to fifteen years. It is the product of considerable effort on the part of the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee, the residents, the Plan Commission and the City Council.

### A. IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS

The purpose of the implementation program is to ensure that key Plan activities are translated into actions that are designed to advance Plan recommendations. The implementation program should give meaning to the Vision, Goals and Objectives of the Plan. A few key implementation items are identified below.

#### Development Controls

Adoption of the Comprehensive Plan should be followed by a review and update of the City’s various development controls including zoning, subdivision regulations, and other related codes and ordinances. It is essential that all development controls be consistent with this Comprehensive Plan.

There are a number of specific zoning code changes that would be appropriate in order to implement portions of this Plan. These are as follows:

#### Residential Districts

***Large-Lot Single-Family:*** Under the current zoning ordinance, R-1 is the only single-family residential district. In this district, the minimum lot size is 6,875 square feet for interior lots and 8,125 square feet for corner lots. To facilitate residential development on larger lots north of Central Road, a new large-lot residential zoning district would need to be established. This zoning district would have a minimum lot size of ½ acre (21,780 square feet)

***Traditional Single-Family:*** To accommodate infill residential development that is compatible in scale and design with existing neighborhoods, new or modified residential district standards may be needed. For example, if there are neighborhoods where the existing pattern of development has variable front yards, replacing the 25-foot minimum front yard requirement in R-1 with

a provision that requires “averaging” of the front yards along each residential blockface may be appropriate.

If there are entire neighborhoods with substantially different bulk or design characteristics, a neighborhood conservation overlay district with specific development standards that reflect the character of the neighborhood may be warranted. To determine the need for this type of district, it may be useful to review past variance requests and the degree of nonconformities within older neighborhoods. If numerous variances have been requested or there are an excessive number of nonconformities under the current district requirements, there may be justification for a conservation district. This district would consist of bulk and design standards that better “fit” existing neighborhood conditions so variance requests would be reduced. The standards would also protect these neighborhoods from residential “tear-down” activity that is out-of-scale with surrounding homes.

In many cases, property owners would initiate reuse and expansion of existing homes if the approval and permitting procedures were less onerous. It is recognized that there can be building and health code issues that preclude the rehabilitation of older buildings; however, often the primary obstacle is existing bulk and site design requirements. For example, many older buildings exceed current lot coverage requirements and/or encroach into required setbacks. Where this is the case, variances are needed to permit any expansion of the structure.

One option would be to build flexibility into the provisions for nonconformities at least for residential structures, by permitting the extension of nonconforming walls, provided they avoid farther encroachment into required yards. Typically this type of flexibility is only offered for extension of nonconforming side or rear walls for existing dwellings.

***Mixed-density Residential:*** The *Long Range Land Use Plan* designates areas for mixed residential development. However, the existing residential district structure does not permit a diversity of housing types in any residential district. As such, variances or a request for a planned unit development would be needed to develop new housing and maintain existing neighborhoods with mixed housing. Expanding the permitted housing types in at least R-3 and R-4 districts would permit a broader range of housing. Another option would be to create a new district for areas designated for “mixed-density residential.” This district could permit the full range of housing types at a density compatible with surrounding development patterns.

## Commercial Districts

*High-density Mixed-Use in the Downtown Subarea:* The C-5 Central Business District is currently mapped on both the north and south sides of the railroad tracks in the downtown subarea. High-density mixed-use is shown on the proposed future land use map in these locations. This high-density, mixed-use area is characterized by much taller buildings, high-density residential and a predominance of commercial uses on the ground floor. The mixed land use pattern is permitted under the current C-5 zoning.

The current density requirements in the C-5 district range from 26 to 43 dwelling units per acre, dependent upon the number of bedrooms in each unit. A maximum density of 43 dwelling units per acre can only be achieved if all units are efficiencies. It is recommended that the City consider modifying the density requirements for the downtown area to possibly permit up to 43 dwelling units per acre, regardless of the number of bedrooms, provided that sufficient parking and other site improvements are provided.

Currently, the size of buildings in the downtown is limited by requirements for building height and setbacks. Another way that many communities regulate building size is by imposing a maximum floor area ratio (FAR). Floor area ratio is calculated as the gross floor area of all buildings or structures on a lot divided by the total lot area. Many communities also establish FAR premiums or bonuses for developments in a downtown area that incorporates design features and amenities that benefit the public. Elements that may qualify a development for FAR premiums could include enclosed parking plazas/arcades, extensive landscaping, upper floor setbacks, public art, wider sidewalks, rooftop gardens and bicycle facilities.

There is currently no minimum front yard requirement for the C-5 Central Business District. This allows a property owner to construct a building on the front building line; however, this requirement does not preclude a property owner from locating the building toward the rear of the site and parking in the front yard. The latter pattern is inconsistent with the pedestrian-oriented character of Des Plaines' downtown. Rather than have a minimum setback, the downtown and possibly other pedestrian-oriented commercial areas could have a maximum setback or "build-to line." This standard would require buildings to be located at or close to the sidewalk and prohibit parking and signs between the building and sidewalk.

A number of auto-oriented uses including drive-thrus, auto-service repair, gas stations, and vehicle rental are permitted in the C-5 district. However, these uses are inconsistent with the pedestrian-character of the downtown. It may be appropriate to prohibit these types of auto-oriented uses or establish specific use standards that limit these uses in downtown subarea.

Parking requirements can often impede infill and redevelopment. For example, in the C-5 Central Business District, the first 2,500 square feet of floor area is exempt from parking requirements, but additional square footage requires on-site parking. It is often not possible, nor desirable to provide required parking on individual sites in the pedestrian-oriented downtown. In the downtown where there are centralized parking facilities and in other areas where site size may constrain the provision of parking for individual uses, submission of an alternative parking Plan could be allowed. Such a Plan would permit modification of strict parking ratios for individual uses and/or provide meaningful incentives to encourage structured and shared parking facilities.

### ***Low-density and High-density Mixed-Use Outside the Downtown Subarea***

The *Long Range Land Use Plan* calls for both low- and high-density mixed-use development in areas outside the downtown subarea. However, commercial zoning in these areas do not permit residential with the exception of along the Oakton Street commercial district. Even along Oakton Street, mixed-use development as described in this Plan could not be implemented because the current C-3 zoning only permits one dwelling unit per lot and it must be located above the ground floor.

To permit high and low-density mixed-use development in areas identified on the future land use map, a new mixed-use district(s) or overlay zone(s) is likely needed. A new mixed-use district for the low-density mixed-use area would permit residential or commercial uses on the ground floor and have tailored bulk requirements to ensure that densities, building height, and setbacks are compatible with adjoining single-family neighborhoods. Standards for screening, parking, and access would also need to be tailored for these areas to provide flexibility on shallow sites and at the same time, protect adjoining residential uses from potential adverse impacts. For proposed high-density mixed-use areas, higher residential densities, increased building height, and residential only above the ground floor would be permitted.

## **B. FUNDING SOURCE OPTIONS**

Below, a variety of funding source options has been identified to assist in implementation projects. These include long-term multi-year programs and annual or single purpose resources. In developing more refined funding strategies for Plan implementation, it will be important to consider the longevity of the funding source in relation to implementation needs. While both will be important in implementation, their effectiveness must match the finance requirements of implementation activities.

Multi-year sources and other funding sources are each identified below. The reader should be aware that funding programs frequently change, especially those which can be characterized as single purpose or project restricted programs. The City will need to stay abreast of changes in funding programs over the planning period.

## General Multi-Year Funding Resources

- **General Fund Sources** - Communities have a number of general sources of revenue that can be applied to any corporate purpose that will benefit the community as a whole. The largest of these is normally the general-purpose property tax, which primarily funds the City's General Revenue Fund. Others include state income tax rebates, motor fuel tax funds, public utility taxes, hotel/motel tax, plus various fees, fines, and other receipts. Municipal bonds may also be considered for special projects during various phases of the implementation of the Plan that may require more long-term financing. Another type of bond that could be considered for targeted area projects is the special assessment bond. These bonds are issued to finance improvements that are to be paid for by special assessments against benefited properties. Bond obligations are payable only from the special assessment receipts, are not backed by general taxes, and usually carry higher interest rates.
- **Tax Increment Financing (TIF)** - Tax increment financing (TIF) is a mechanism used to carry out revitalization and redevelopment activities on a local basis. TIF allows a community to capture the increase in local property taxes that results from a redevelopment project in order to pay for the public costs involved in the project. Des Plaines has adopted TIF in its downtown area as well as in other areas in the City, and has stimulated substantial amounts of new private and public development improvements. The term of the district is limited by law.
- **Business Improvement District** - Business Improvement Districts are authorized by Division 74.3 of the Municipal Code of the State of Illinois. A community may designate an area as a Business Improvement District after a public hearing. In carrying out business district development or redevelopment Plan recommendations, a municipality is given the statutory authority to:
  - ✓ Approve all development and redevelopment proposals.
  - ✓ Exercise the use of eminent domain for the acquisition of real and personal property for the purpose of a development or redevelopment project.
  - ✓ Acquire, manage, convey or otherwise dispose of real and personal property acquired pursuant to the provisions of a development or redevelopment Plan.

- ✓ Apply for and accept capital grants and loans from the United States and the State of Illinois, or any instrumentality of the United States or the State, for business district development and redevelopment.
- ✓ Borrow funds as it may be deemed necessary for the purpose of business district development and redevelopment, and in this connection issue such obligation or revenue bonds as it shall be deemed necessary, subject to applicable statutory limitations.
- ✓ Enter into contracts with any public or private agency or person.
- ✓ Sell, lease, trade or improve such real property as may be acquired in connection with business district development and redevelopment Plans.
- ✓ Expend such public funds as may be necessary for the planning, execution and implementation of the business district Plans.
- ✓ Establish by ordinance or resolution procedures for the planning, execution and implementation of business district Plans.
- ✓ Create a Business District Development and Redevelopment Commission to act as agent for the City for the purposes of business district development and redevelopment.

The benefits of a Business Improvement District could include: 1) providing the ability to control and dispose of property; 2) securing financing for improvements; and 3) monitoring and reviewing development and redevelopment proposals. The process to establish a business improvement district is fairly simple to execute. The City does not currently utilize Business Improvement Districts.

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

Utilizing these mechanisms can provide a community the ability to exercise greater oversight over the redevelopment process, and to work proactively to control potential development impacts.

### Other Annual or Use Restricted Programs

- **Small Business Administration (SBA) Guaranty Loans** - The SBA can usually guarantee up to \$750,000 of a private sector loan. The maximum on loans in

excess of \$150,000 is 85 percent. Proceeds may be used to finance fixed assets for up to 25 years and working capital for five to seven years. New programs include *Low Doc* for loans less than \$100,000, and *Greenline* which provides short-term working capital for businesses. SBA determines if companies qualify as a small business based on the average number of employees for the prior 12 months or on the sales volume averaged over a three year period.

- **Small Business Administration (SBA) Women-Owned Businesses** - The SBA has a program targeted specifically to women business owners. This program will pre-qualify women-owned businesses and back those with a SBA guarantee prior to approaching lenders for credit.
- **Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO)** – DCEO annually provide a range of opportunities which may be of interest to the City and local businesses. Information on these programs are readily available through the State of Illinois’ web site. Briefly, some of these include: Community Service Block Grant Loan, State Treasurer’s Economic Program, Community Development Assistance Program, and Illinois Technology Enterprise Center.
- **Metra Capital Improvement Program** - Metra’s capital program consists primarily of federal, state, and RTA grant sources, most of which are listed here. The Metra five-year program allocates funds for station and parking improvements. Metra examines its station assessment and parking databases to determine necessary improvements at each station. Land acquisition for new parking lots can be a major impediment to developing additional parking, so Metra works closely with local communities to assess areas for future parking development.
- **Transportation Equity Act (“TEA”) Bill** - Based on the types of improvements recommended for downtown, the funding sources that will most likely be applicable to Des Plaines are future programs of the predecessor Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21), including ITEP, CMAQ and STP Programs. The TEA programs are administered through various regional and state agencies and are supported by federal revenues. While the details of project eligibility vary from program to program, they all generally require that a project have a local sponsor (the City of Des Plaines), and some evidence of local support of the project. Brief descriptions of the component programs of TEA-21 are described below.

*Transportation Enhancement Program (ITEP)* - This funding source is administered by the Illinois Department of Transportation and is a set-aside fund from the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21). Among the projects that are eligible for this competitive funding source include bicycle/pedestrian facilities, streetscape, landscaping, historic preservation and projects that control or remove outdoor advertising. Federal

reimbursement is available for up to 50 percent of the cost of right of way and easement acquisition and 80 percent of the cost for preliminary engineering, utility relocations, construction engineering and construction costs.

*Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ)* - The CMAQ program is also part of TEA, and it focuses on projects that provide solutions to regional congestion and air quality problems. Eligible project types include transit improvements, commuter parking lots, traffic flow improvements, bicycle/pedestrian projects and projects that result in emissions reductions. These projects are also federally funded at 80 percent of project costs. The competitive program is administered through the Chicago Area Transportation Study (CATS). Transit improvements and commuter parking lot projects typically score higher when supported by Metra. Similarly, bicycle and pedestrian projects which are coordinated with neighboring jurisdictions are also rated highly. In most cases, grants are not available to assist in financing the replacement of existing commuter parking spaces or other improvements that were originally federally funded, should they be displaced for redevelopment purposes.

*Surface Transportation Program (STP)* - These funds are allocated to coordinating regional councils to be used for all roadway and roadway related items. Projects in this funding category must have a local sponsor and are selected based, among other factors, on a ranking scale that takes into account the regional benefits provided by the project among other factors. STP funds are allocated among the following programs: demonstration projects; enhancement; hazard elimination; and urban funds.

- **Endowments and Gifts:** For certain projects, such as public art or fountains, the City might consider soliciting endowments and gifts to help fund and support implementation activities.

## C. PLAN REVIEW

The Comprehensive Plan is not a static document; the planning process must be continuous. The Plan should be monitored and updated on a regular basis. The need for Plan amendments can arise as the result of many community influences. Most frequently these are brought about by changes in attitudes or emerging needs not foreseen at the time of Plan adoption. The following describe the procedures that apply to keep the Comprehensive Plan current.

In order for the Plan to be “maintained” and updated in a timely manner, the designation of an agency responsible for coordinating planning activities, receiving community input and comments, as well as providing and disseminating information regarding the Plan is required. While the Plan Commission and City Council are ultimately responsible for implementing the

Plan, the City staff is the most appropriate group to carry out the ongoing activities of administering the Plan. The City staff should:

1. Make available copies of the Plan document for public purchase.
2. Post the most recent version of the Plan on the City's website.
3. Provide the most recent version of the Plan at the Public Library.
4. Provide assistance to the public in explaining the Plan and its relationship to private and public development projects and other proposals, as appropriate.
5. Assist the City Council in the ongoing administration, interpretation and application of the Plan.
6. Maintain a list of current possible amendments, issues or needs that may be a subject of change, addition or deletion from the *Future Long Range Land Use Plan*.
7. Coordinate with, and assist the City Council in the Plan amendment process.

Although a proposal to amend the Plan can be brought forth by petition at any time, the City should regularly undertake a systematic review of the Plan. Although an annual review is desirable, the City should initiate a review of the Plan at least every four years. Ideally, this review should coincide with the preparation of the annual budget and capital improvement program. In this manner, recommendations or changes relating to capital improvements or other programs can be considered as part of the upcoming commitments for the fiscal year. Routine examination of the Plan will help ensure that the planning program remains relevant to community needs and aspirations.