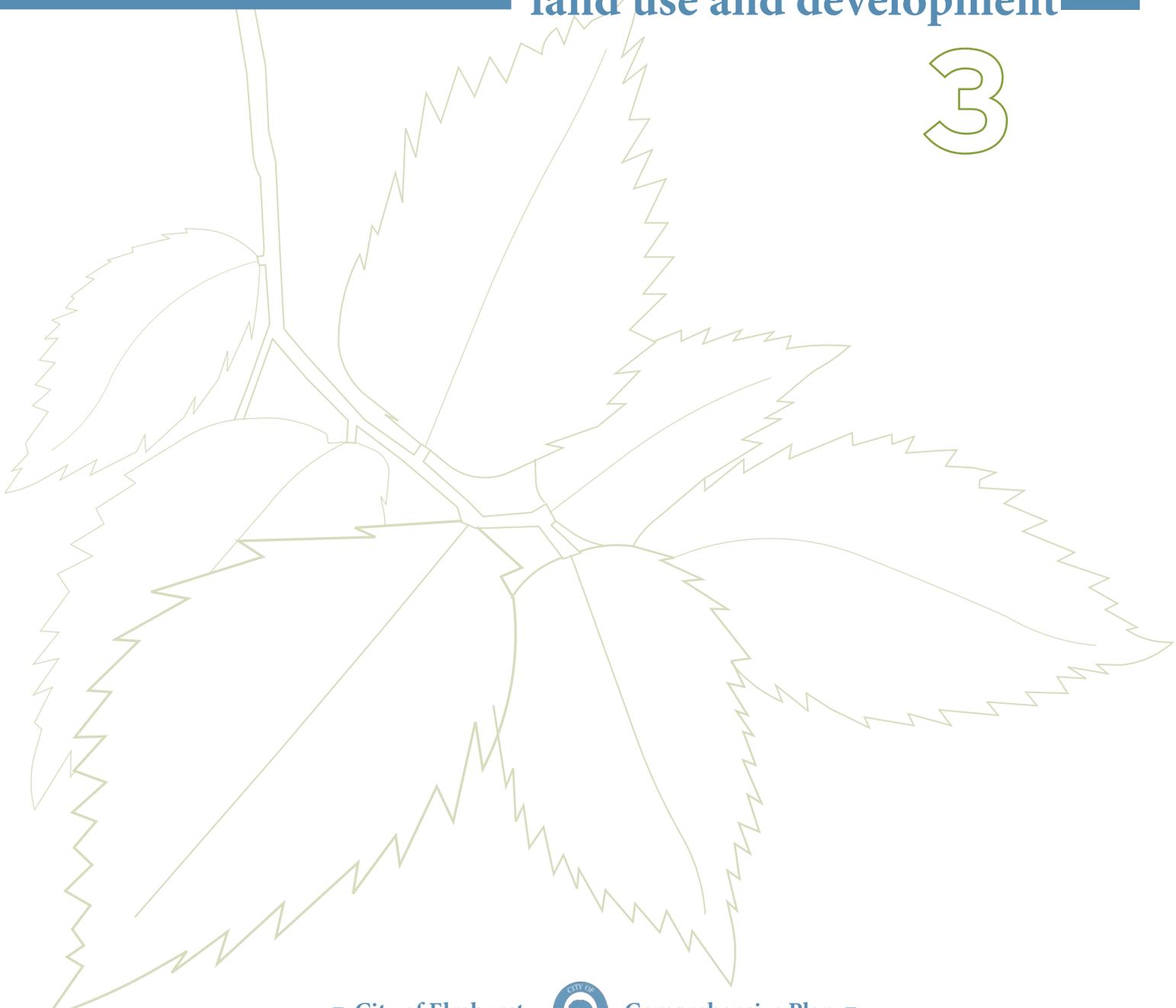


Land Use and Development
land use and development

3





LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT PATTERN

The City of Elmhurst is composed of well-designed residential, commercial and employment areas that are built on a grid network of streets which provide excellent highway and transit access. This chapter addresses key planning issues with regard to land use and development, and presents the Long-Range Future Land Use Framework and Sub-Area Plans for the City of Elmhurst. As mentioned in the Introduction, any references to the Downtown Plan are not intended to represent the entirety of the Downtown Plan. For more details on certain aspects of downtown planning, please reference the complete Downtown Plan (2006).



GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Goal 1: Maintain strong residential neighborhoods by continuing to provide quality infrastructure and promote development patterns that ensure their viability and aesthetic appeal.

Objectives:

1. Protect single-family residential areas from encroachment by land uses and traffic which may create adverse impacts.
2. Require adequate buffering and screening between residential areas and adjacent commercial, industrial or institutional uses, including parking facilities and loading areas.
3. Preserve and protect the quality of the existing housing stock through effective code enforcement.
4. Within established neighborhoods, encourage the compatibility of new and rehabilitated homes with the existing housing stock through appropriate bulk, density and design objectives.

Goal 2: Maintain the downtown as a vibrant, attractive and distinctive shopping, dining and entertainment center while retaining its small town character, range of living options, and diverse cultural activities.

Objectives:

1. Maintain a diversity of stable, high-quality uses that includes a strong retail component.
2. Implement the Downtown Plan, which provides recommendations for a transit-oriented development pattern
3. Ensure that new development and redevelopment of private properties are contextually appropriate and designed to complement existing development.
4. Facilitate safe and accessible circulation patterns throughout the downtown for both pedestrians and vehicles.



Community Commercial

5. Ensure the provision of adequate parking facilities in the downtown in order to attract and serve residents, commuters, and downtown employees.
6. Undertake an aggressive marketing campaign to highlight the strengths and assets of the downtown.
7. Improve the land use transitions between the downtown and adjacent neighborhoods.

Goal 3: Encourage a complementary and market-driven series of commercial developments that are organized to provide a variety of goods and services throughout the community.

Objectives:

1. Designate and facilitate a city-wide system of commercial and employment development by sub-area, providing for neighborhood, community and regional centers.
2. Seek a quantity and mix of commercial and retail development which meets the needs of the city over the planning period.
3. Ensure that all retail, office and commercial activities are concentrated within or near areas of compatible uses.
4. Discourage new strip commercial development within the city and encourage clustered commercial uses.
5. Ensure convenient access to and adequate parking within all shopping areas, encouraging consolidated parking facilities where feasible.
6. Encourage the design of commercial development sites that facilitate bicycle and pedestrian access.
7. Develop a process for designating and implementing Planned Development (PD) overlay districts.



Goal 4: Encourage aesthetically-pleasing and functionally well-designed retail and commercial shopping area environments.

Objectives:

1. Encourage quality site development improvements and amenities in commercial areas.
2. Encourage coordinated and shared vehicle access, as well as bicycle parking facilities.
3. Maintain a program that reasonably and uniformly regulates signage while providing for the identification of City businesses.
4. Establish special design and improvement standards for commercial areas, particularly for development along the community's major street corridors.

Goal 5: Expand and maintain a strong employment base in Elmhurst which enhances the overall standard of living.

Objectives:

1. Continue to encourage diversification of employment opportunities within the community.
2. Ensure compatible land use relationships between employment centers and surrounding land uses.
3. Continue to attract new businesses that provide the opportunity for increasing individual and community wealth.

Goal 6: Strengthen the city's industrial base.

Objectives:

1. Encourage the concentration of industrial uses in the city's northwest corner.
2. Continue to enforce zoning, nuisance, and performance standards to minimize industrial effects on nearby residential properties.
3. Encourage redevelopment of obsolete and/or physically deteriorated industrial buildings.
4. Undertake appropriate infrastructure upgrades to support the continuing viability of the industrial base.

Policies

The following policies provide a framework for guiding the creation and implementation of land use and development strategies.

Residential Development

1. Preserve and enhance the existing visual and environmental character of Elmhurst's various residential neighborhoods by developing new residential design guidelines.
2. Construct small-scale "infill" single- and multi-family residential development within existing neighborhoods

- in a manner compatible in scale, mass and character with surrounding existing residential development.
3. Concentrate higher density/high-rise multi-family residential development in the downtown area.
 4. Promote Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design – Neighborhood Development (LEED-ND) strategies in neighborhood redevelopment efforts, specifically in Planned Development proposals.
 5. Modify the City's Zoning Ordinance to reflect the policies and objectives of the Future Land Use Framework.

Commercial, Industrial Employment Development

6. Implement policies included in the Downtown Plan (2006).
7. Protect and enhance the commercial land use functions of the Lake Street and Grand Avenue corridors and the industrial land use functions of the employment area between Grand Avenue and Lake Street, and Route 83 and York.
8. Develop a set of commercial design and maintenance guidelines to streamline universal improvements or needs such as streetscaping, landscaping, parking, etc.
9. Encourage continued development of office uses downtown and in sub-areas where transportation, visibility and access create opportunities for new and compatible development; permit and encourage desirable redevelopment and adaptive reuse in commercial areas.
10. Encourage the development of a complete sidewalk network, bike lanes, bicycle parking facilities and pedestrian amenities (lighting, signage, etc.) where possible.
11. Ensure that the design of commercial development supports and does not conflict with the adjoining street system and does not adversely impact adjacent residential areas.
12. Integrate open space in commercial development, including the preservation and enhancement of natural features, as well as new open areas, squares, plazas and courtyards as focal points for pedestrian activities.
13. Make municipal resources available for commercial/residential improvements, including facade improvements, streetscape improvements, parking, land acquisition, complete streets and other programs which will provide functional and appearance enhancements.



EXISTING LAND USE

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 Elmhurst is illustrated in *Figure 2: Existing Land Use*.

Elmhurst is a mature residential community. It consists mainly of well-established single-family neighborhoods. Elmhurst also offers a variety of other housing options including townhomes and multi-family apartments and condominiums. The majority of these residential types are concentrated in the downtown area where higher residential densities are desirable, and as a transition use between commercial uses and single-family neighborhoods.

Public schools and parks, and other institutional uses such as churches, are well-integrated throughout the community, ensuring that residential neighborhoods throughout the city have convenient access to these facilities. Several community institutions which serve as a community and regional draw are a part of the cultural campus in the southwest portion of the downtown area. It includes key community uses such as the public library, several museums and Elmhurst College.

Commercial land uses within the city are concentrated in several areas. These concentrations generally occur in nodes at major street intersections, with strip commercial development found in a limited number of areas. The downtown is the commercial center of Elmhurst and contains the city's widest variety of shopping, dining and service businesses, and has been the focus of much recent redevelopment efforts. Two smaller-scale neighborhood shopping areas are located south of the Downtown. Other larger-scale commercial uses are concentrated along North York Street, Grand Avenue, Lake Street and Butterfield Road. Large community-scale commercial developments, such as the auto dealerships, are located at the periphery of the community along Grand Avenue and IL Route 83.

Elmhurst also contains a variety of employment uses. The largest office and industrial uses in the city are concentrated in a business park in the northwest part of the city, north of Lake Street and west of York Street. Another industrial corridor containing heavier uses is located southwest of the city along South Riverside Drive. Smaller professional offices are located in the commercial nodes and corridors within the city, including the downtown.



Mixed Use



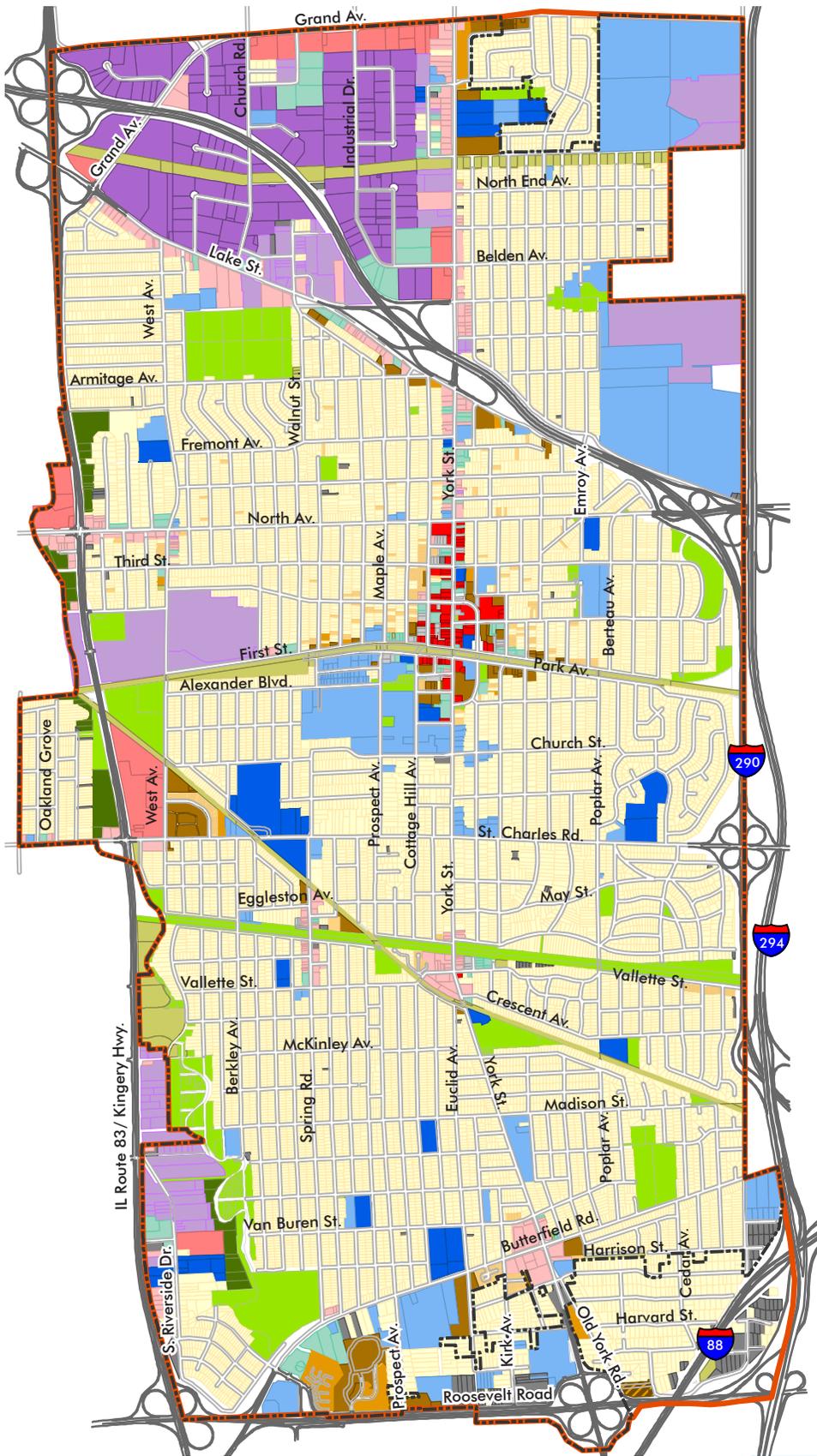
Single-Family Residential



FUTURE LAND USE PLAN – LAND USE CATEGORIES

Elmhurst's future land uses have been classified into categories described below. Currently, the primary land use in Elmhurst is residential. Because existing land uses are a key determinant of future land uses, it can be anticipated that Elmhurst will remain primarily a residential community for the foreseeable future. In order to support and strengthen the residential uses within the community, the City may transition targeted existing land uses to encourage new commercial, mixed-use and residential redevelopment. Land use recommendations of the Downtown Plan (2006) have been incorporated into the Future Land Use Framework and include downtown-specific land uses.





LEGEND

- City of Elmhurst Boundary
- Planning Area Boundary

Existing Land Uses

- Single Family Residential
- Duplex/Townhomes
- Multi-Family Residential (2-3 stories)
- Multi-Family Residential (> 3 stories)
- Mobile Home Park
- Public
- Institutional
- Neighborhood Commercial
- Community Commercial
- Downtown Commercial
- General Office
- General Industrial (Employment)
- Business Park (Employment)
- Parks and Open Space
- Forest Preserve
- Transportation/Utilities
- Parking
- Vacant

FIGURE 2: EXISTING LAND USE

Scale: 1" = .50 miles





Single-Family Residential (3-6 du/ac): Consisting of detached single-family homes, this is the predominant land use type within Elmhurst. The City contains a variety of homes differing in age, style and architectural character in its different neighborhoods. The oldest neighborhoods in Elmhurst are located surrounding the downtown. The Plan is intended to strengthen and maintain the city's existing single-family neighborhoods.

Duplex/Townhomes (5-8 du/ac): This category includes duplexes that contain two dwelling units in a single structure and townhomes, which are three or more dwelling units with individual exterior entrances. Townhomes are a relatively newer residential product type within the city. Duplexes and townhomes are present in several locations, including within neighborhoods that surround the downtown and as a transition between major arterials and single-family neighborhoods. In many instances duplexes within older neighborhoods are non-conforming uses within the R2 Single Family Residential District. The Future Land Use Framework suggests gradually phasing out isolated duplex uses.



Duplex/Townhomes

Medium-Density Multi-Family Residential (up to 15 du/ac): This category consists of buildings that contain multiple dwelling units in a single building accessed through a common entrance. This category includes smaller two- to three-story structures and is present in a variety of locations throughout the city, including the downtown and along major corridors like York and Lake Streets.

High-Density Multi-Family Residential (up to 20 du/ac):
This category consists of land uses that are

present primarily on the periphery of the downtown and along major corridors, including Lake Street, York Street, Butterfield Road, and Roosevelt Road. This category consists of buildings that are greater than three stories. These taller multi-family buildings in Elmhurst tend to range from four- to six-stories in height.

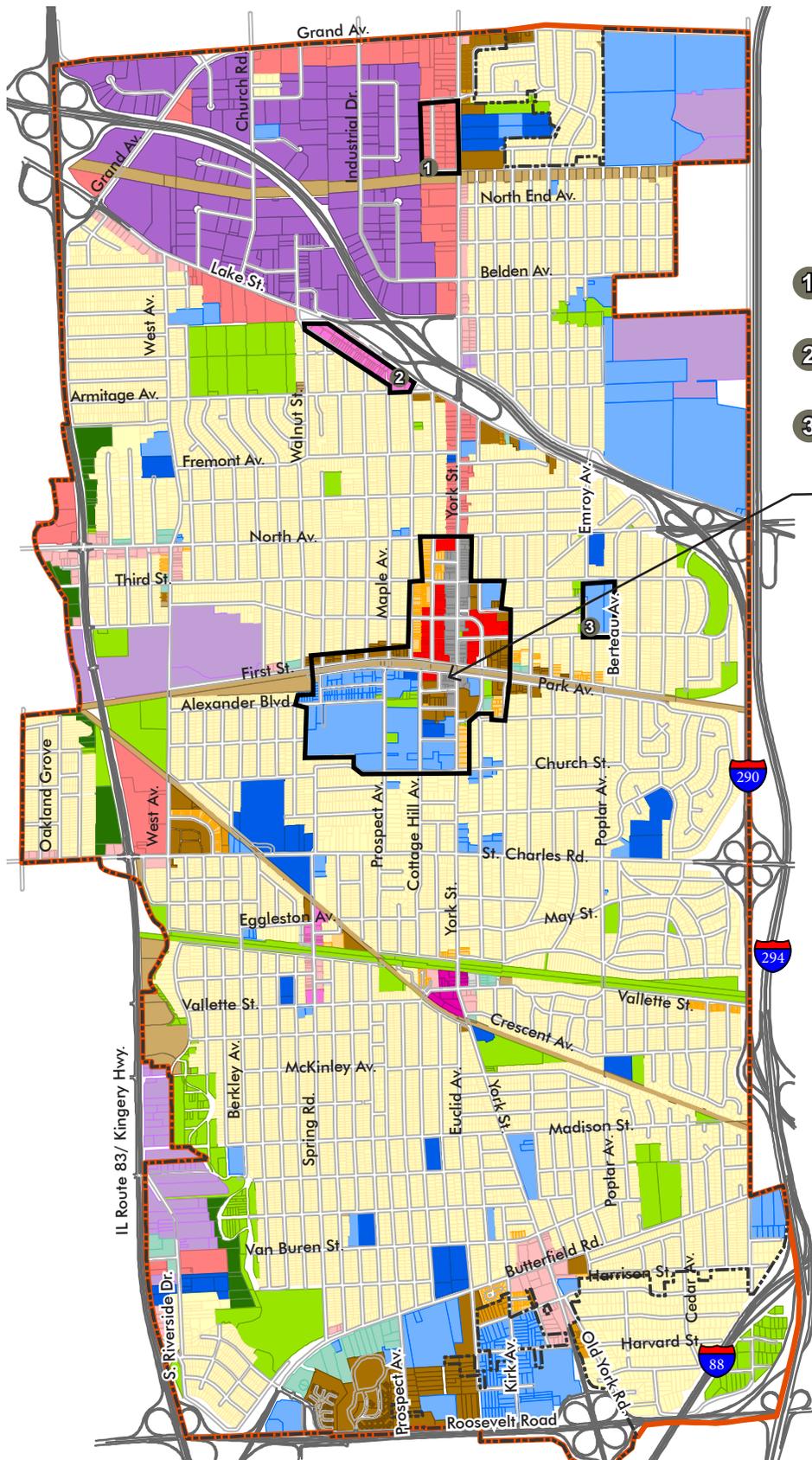
Public: Land uses include institutions directly operated by the City or other governmental agencies such as the public school and park districts. Many of the public facilities in Elmhurst are concentrated in the downtown area. These facilities are addressed in more detail in *Chapter 7: Community Facilities and Services*.

Institutional: This category includes a variety of community institutions that are operated by non-governmental and private agencies. Such institutions include places of worship, private schools, museums, Elmhurst College and Elmhurst Memorial Hospital. Land uses in this category can attract vehicular and pedestrian traffic, and are similar to the facilities described in the “public” category. While the museums and the College are located within the Elmhurst Cultural Campus in the downtown area, other institutions, such as churches, are present in different locations throughout the community. These facilities are addressed in more detail in Chapter 7: Community Facilities and Services.

Neighborhood Commercial: This category includes retail and service businesses, primarily to meet the convenience needs of surrounding neighborhoods. Small-scale stand-alone office uses can also be found in these areas. This land use type may occupy freestanding buildings or multi-tenant structures. Two such areas in Elmhurst are the Spring Road and the York/Valette business districts. In addition, neighborhood-scale commercial uses are present along North York Street, Lake Street and at the intersection of York Street and Butterfield Road. Several of these commercial concentrations are addressed in more detail in the sub-area plans to follow.

Community Commercial: This category includes businesses that draw patrons from throughout Elmhurst and surrounding communities. In Elmhurst, community commercial includes large stand-alone commercial uses such as auto-dealerships and integrated multi-tenant retail shopping centers with anchor stores. Stand-alone office uses are also included. The community commercial areas are located along the major corridors of Grand Avenue, North York Street, Lake Street, and Route 83. Most of these commercial concentrations are addressed in more detail in the sub-area plans to follow.





Planned Development Areas:

- ① York Street Planned Development
- ② Lake Street Planned Development
- ③ Berteau Ave Planned Development

This area is addressed in the Elmhurst Downtown Plan and the Elmhurst Cultural Campus Plan.

LEGEND

-  City of Elmhurst Boundary
-  Planning Area Boundary

Future Land Use

-  Single Family Residential
-  Duplex/Townhomes
-  Medium Density Multi-Family Residential
-  High Density Multi-Family Residential
-  Public
-  Institutional
-  Neighborhood Commercial
-  Community Commercial
-  Downtown Core
-  Downtown Retail
-  Low-Density Mixed Use
-  Medium-Density Mixed Use
-  General Office
-  General Industrial
-  Business Park
-  Open Space
-  Forest Preserve
-  Parking
-  Transportation/Utilities

FIGURE 3: FUTURE LAND USE

Scale: 1" = .50 miles





Low-Density Mixed Use (8-12 du/ac): This category allows for multiple uses within one building, and is typically structured with ground floor office, retail and/or commercial uses, and residential uses on upper floors. This category consists of buildings that are no more than three stories in height. Mixed-use developments allow more than one type of use in a building or set of buildings. Mixed-use developments consist of combinations of retail, commercial, office, professional and personal service designed with specific relationships to housing, particularly medium- to high-density housing. Mixed-use developments may also include a transit component as an integral part of overall design. The advantages of mixed-use development include more efficient use of land, lower costs to provide services, a diversity and/or transition of land uses, and a specific sense of community. In Elmhurst, this use is recommended in existing commercial districts or along main arterials.

Medium-Density Mixed Use (12-15 du/ac): This category consists of buildings that are greater than three stories. This higher-density mixed use category is appropriate for major commercial nodes, including the intersection of York and Vallette Streets.

Downtown Core Commercial: This category is intended for the downtown uses oriented along York Street. The Downtown Core Commercial should sustain a wide mix of retail, restaurant and entertainment uses, and function as a focal point for community shopping. Uses should be organized in mixed-use, multi-story buildings. High-density multi-family residential uses are acceptable in this zone. Buildings should not exceed eight stories in height.

Downtown Commercial: This category includes a mix of retail, commercial service and office uses that are complementary to the Downtown Core Commercial and surrounding residential areas, creating a buffer between the York Street high-intensity commercial uses and surrounding downtown residential development. This category allows for multiple uses within one building, and is typically structured with ground floor office, retail and/or commercial uses, and residential uses on upper floors. Medium-density multi-family residential and high-density mixed-uses are appropriate residential categories in this zone. Buildings should not exceed eight stories in height.

Cultural Campus: This category reflects an overlay zone in the downtown area that includes the Cultural Campus special planning area. Uses include a mix of public and quasi-public land uses that are unified through appropriate physical integration and connection to the downtown.

General Office: This category refers to stand-alone office buildings that accommodate medical, professional and other business services. These buildings can be single or multi-tenant and can be located in clusters or interspersed with other uses. Office uses are present mostly in the downtown, on North York Street, on North Avenue near Route 83, and in the employment area north of Lake Street.

Business Park: This category includes office, research and development, warehousing, distribution, and light manufacturing uses in a large-scale “campus-like” setting. Uses within this category typically generate significant employee and truck traffic.

General Industrial: This category refers to industrial uses such as manufacturing, processing, and warehousing facilities that are freestanding operations. In the Future Land Use Framework, several existing industrial land uses are included in the Business Park category to reflect the need to coordinate development in these areas in the area.

Transportation and Utilities: This category includes railroad rights-of-ways, utility rights-of-ways, water distribution, wastewater treatment and other such facilities. Public road rights-of-way are not included in this category.

Parks and Open Space: This category includes parks and open spaces for passive or active recreational purposes. These uses are located throughout the City, and most of the properties are managed by the Elmhurst Park District.

Forest Preserve: This category includes open space and natural areas owned and managed by the DuPage County Forest Preserve District. The forest preserves are public access areas and provide for both active and passive recreational facilities. The largest forest preserves within Elmhurst are the Salt Creek Greenway and the Graue Woods.

Parking: These are publicly-owned parking lots and structures, most of which are located in the downtown and the Spring Avenue shopping area. These facilities provide parking for business patrons and Metra commuters in the downtown.



FUTURE LAND USE FRAMEWORK

The City of Elmhurst is laid out on a grid network of streets, a development pattern that is easily navigable and encourages pedestrian usage. Elmhurst is known for a series of defined neighborhoods and a quality education system. Multi-family developments tend to be concentrated downtown, near the transit station. The commercial and employ-



ment base of the city can be found downtown and scattered among the separate sub-areas. Rather than expanding these existing clusters, new growth is expected to spur re-development activity that will sustain Elmhurst's strong employment base. The O'Hare Western Access project has the potential, if implemented, for major retail opportunities in the northern portion of the city, in the York Street and Elmhurst Employment Sub-Areas. Challenges include consolidating existing land uses, converting scattered residential uses to commercial, and controlling traffic access on this busy corridor. Several decisions will be made after this Plan is adopted that can have serious implications for the city. The remainder of this chapter will provide recommendations for addressing these upcoming opportunities and challenges and provides a framework for decision-making. The Future Land Use Framework seeks to organize land uses in a manner that efficiently coordinates future land use, community facilities, and services.. The overall land use framework is depicted in *Figure 3: Future Land Use Framework* and discussed further below.

Planned Development Areas

A number of areas are designated as Planned Developments (PD) in the long-range land use plan. The Planned Development technique requires that the entire area is designated by master plan for re-use and redevelopment as a unit, allowing the City and area residents and businesses to consider all aspects of a potential project's impact. The City's zoning ordinance should be amended to require planned developments in these boundaries as a means for implementing the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan.

Within the sub-areas (discussed in more detail later), the Future Land Use Framework identifies three Planned Development (PD) areas, including the York Street PD (Sub-Area 5), Lake Street PD (Sub-Area 6) and Berteau Avenue PD (Sub-Area 4) identified in *Figure 3: Future Land Use Framework*.

- The York Street Planned Development area is immediately west of York Street along Addison Avenue. This area currently has a mix of office, industrial and residential uses. Because of its strong presence on York Street, land should be assembled as it becomes available and this area should be redeveloped with retail uses that complement the planned land uses to the north and south.
- The Lake Street Planned Development is located along Lake between Walnut Street and Larch Avenue. This area is not very accessible due to the proximity to a traffic interchange with I-290. Because of these accessibility issues, this site could benefit from land as-



Elmhurst Library

sembly and redevelopment into a mixed-use site that includes upper-story residences and ground floor uses that do not rely on drive-by customer traffic, such as office or service uses.

- The Berteau Avenue Planned Development is the existing Elmhurst Memorial Hospital site. As the hospital is in the process of relocating its facilities to a larger campus further south, the existing hospital structures will remain amidst a single-family residential neighborhood. The designation of this site will allow master-planned, comprehensive redevelopment and coordination with the neighboring community to maintain compatibility of uses.

Downtown Elmhurst

The future land use pattern in the Downtown and Cultural Campus areas are addressed in more detail in the Downtown Plan (2006) and Cultural Campus Collaboration Plan (2004), previously adopted by the City.

Residential Redevelopment

The development and maintenance of strong neighborhoods and quality housing is key to the lasting success of the city. A mixture of new and established housing stock is necessary to order to maintain the vitality of the community. Elmhurst, like the rest of the country, has experienced a surge of residential redevelopment over the past decade.



This recent trend towards residential redevelopment has left some residents of Elmhurst concerned that these new homes are out of context with the surrounding neighborhood.¹ Elmhurst's grid street pattern and comparatively small lot sizes combine to visually magnify the perceived aesthetic disruption that redevelopment can cause. Specific zoning mechanisms, including bulk and area controls, are tools that may be applied to addressing these community concerns. Elmhurst currently has comparatively strict development regulations, including 30 percent lot coverage maximums and front setbacks that range from 25 to 40 feet, but may choose to more aggressively regulating the bulk and massing of structures through additional zoning controls. However, increasing zoning regulations may create a whole new class of non-conforming structures and function as a disincentive to future redevelopment. Any revisions to zoning regulations, then, must be carefully evaluated.

While additional regulatory controls may appear the most effective way to guide this type of development, incentives can induce developers to voluntarily comply with the redevelopment policies of the City. The City, for instance, may consider offering incentives, including streamlined permitting and reduced fees, in order to encourage the rehabilitation of existing housing stock, rather than demolition and replacement.

In addition to supporting redevelopment of the existing housing stock, the City should work to encourage new multi-family residential development. This could include townhome development located within or near single-family neighborhoods, as well as higher-rise buildings in the downtown area. As part of comprehensive Plan implementation, the City should continue to provide quality infrastructure and services to neighborhoods, as well as maintain appropriate buffers between residential and commercial areas. Policies and recommendations related to residential redevelopment and specific housing type and bulk are discussed in *Chapter 6: Housing*.

LEED-Neighborhood Development (ND)

Throughout the community, Elmhurst should encourage incorporation of LEED-ND standards in neighborhood and community development. This program is still in its pilot phase, but offers many good recommendations for community development. General principles include:

- **Reduce unplanned growth:** While Elmhurst's bound-

¹ The determination of whether residential redevelopment in a community issue is unclear. It is perceived to be problematic, however a recently released City resident survey shows that less than 4 percent of the respondents cited residential redevelopment as an issue.



Neighborhood Commercial

aries are geographically constrained by abutting communities, unplanned growth can still occur within the city limits. This growth can be manifest in the development of multi-tenant structures with too many curb cuts to an arterial road, through the development of auto-oriented uses near a transit center, or through the siting of incompatible uses. Redevelopment should be concentrated in locations that are close to downtown and existing business districts/employment centers. These areas should have good transit access.

- **Encourage healthy living:** LEED for Neighborhood Development emphasizes the creation of compact, walkable, vibrant, mixed-use neighborhoods with good connections to nearby communities. This development pattern results in increased rates of bicycle and pedestrian usage, which improves health.
- **Protect threatened species:** LEED encourages compact development patterns and the selection of sites that are within or adjacent to existing development to minimize habitat fragmentation. This development pattern can also help preserve areas for recreation.
- **Increase transportation choice and decrease automobile dependence:** An increase in the variety of transportation choices decreases reliance on automobile use. Redevelopment efforts should occur near convenient transportation choices such as buses, trains, car pools, bicycle lanes and sidewalks.





SUB-AREA PLANS

An extensive public involvement process was undertaken to gather community input for the new Plan. The City of Elmhurst is largely composed of stable single-family neighborhoods that are not expected to undergo significant changes in land use. A series of nine sub-areas were identified to focus input and community interaction to those locations that are, or expected to experience, pressure for change, or that require a more focused and detailed planning program to better understand and fulfill community objectives for the area. Issues, opportunities and needs were identified for each sub-area that were then subject to community review and discussion. This was followed by a brainstorming session to develop general solutions and detailed recommendations. The sub-areas, listed below, are illustrated on *Figure 4: Planning Sub-Areas*:

1. Spring Road Business District
2. York/Vallette Business District
3. North Avenue / Route 83 Area
4. Elmhurst Memorial Hospital (Berteau location)
5. North York Street and Grand Avenue Corridors
6. Lake Street Corridor
7. Elmhurst Employment District (area west of York Street and north of Lake Street)
8. South Riverside Drive Corridor
9. Yorkfield Area

The following pages discuss the sub-areas in more detail, including a discussion of land use and redevelopment, urban design and circulation and implementation recommendations.

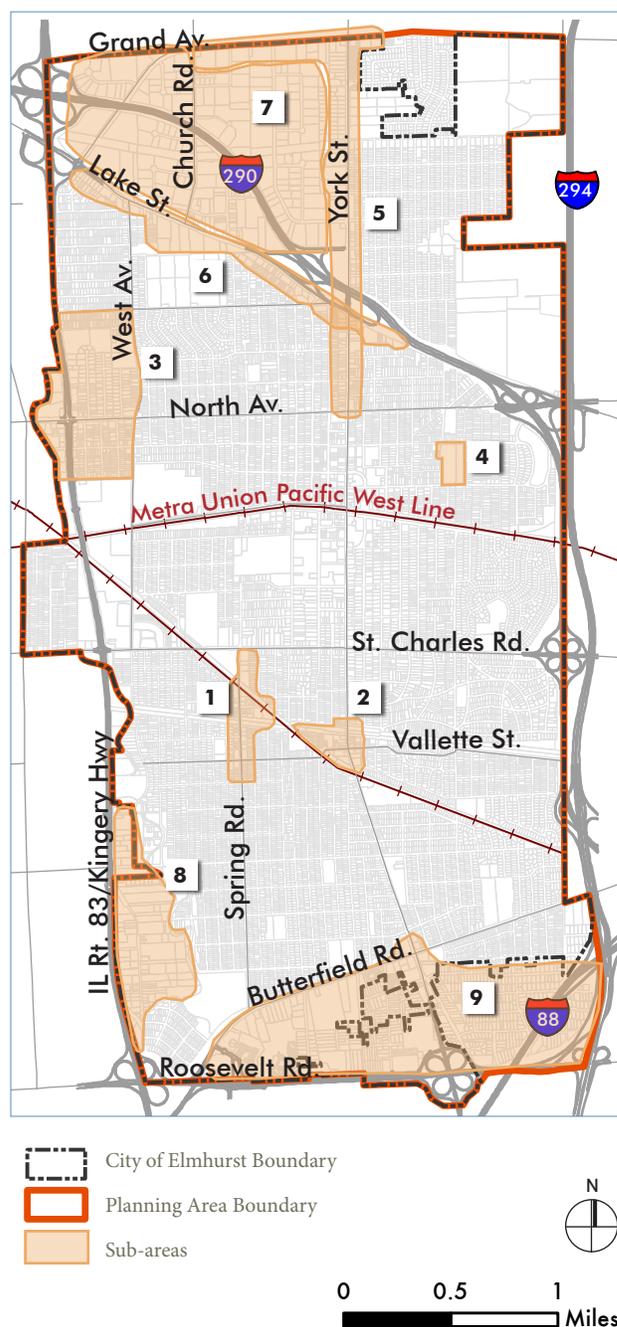


FIGURE 4: PLANNING SUB-AREAS



LEGEND

- Single Family Residential
- Duplex/Townhomes
- Multi-Family Residential (> 3 stories)
- Public
- Institutional
- Neighborhood Commercial
- Mixed Use (up to 3 stories)
- Parks and Open Space
- Transportation and Utilities
- Parking

LAND USE AND REDEVELOPMENT

The Spring Road business district is a highly successful neighborhood shopping district located on a four-block stretch along Spring Road from Vallette Street on the south to the Canadian National Railroad (CN) on the north. Spring Road is an important north-south collector street, as well as a high-quality pedestrian-oriented shopping district. It sustains a vibrant mix of retail, service and restaurant uses, most of which are locally-owned. Businesses are concentrated on the half-block facing Spring Road on either side and are surrounded mostly by stable, single-family residential neighborhoods. The Illinois Prairie Path passes through the center of the district.

The City should continue to promote an attractive mix of ground level uses within the district to maintain a neighborhood-scale area with a vibrant, pedestrian-oriented character. The City should consider creating a new mixed use zoning district to serve this sub-area, as well as the similar character type of the York/Vallette Road Business District. New businesses should be actively recruited (by the Spring Road Business Association and/or Chamber of Commerce) to further diversify and strengthen the retail/service mix in the district to fill any vacancies that may arise.

As new commercial uses are proposed, their impact on parking will need to be studied carefully.

Over time, increased demand may necessitate the provision of additional municipal parking

- A** The northeast and northwest corners of Vallette Street and Spring Road should transition from office and neighborhood commercial use to low-density mixed-use.
- B** The parcels along Spring Road between the Illinois Prairie Path and Eggleston Avenue could also be transitioned from neighborhood commercial uses to medium-density mixed-use. This land use category would serve to support the existing shopping district and capitalize on the proximity of the Illinois Prairie Path as a recreational resource. Existing neighborhood commercial uses could serve as a link and buffer between these two mixed-use nodes and the Prairie Path. Pending future development proposals, neighboring residential parcels to the east could serve to expand this mixed-use area.

URBAN DESIGN AND CIRCULATION

Most properties within the Spring Road business district are well-maintained and the buildings are built-up to the sidewalk with storefronts creating a pedestrian-friendly environment. Future developments should maintain the existing strong streetwall and continue to have a strong pedestrian orientation. The City should consider establishing a build-to line as part of its zoning requirements.

Some buildings could benefit from facade improvements. A facade improvement grant program could be established to provide financial assistance to property owners for upgrading deteriorated building facades which would improve the overall appearance of the district. The area also lacks a distinctive streetscape and pedestrian amenities, including street furniture. A streetscape improvement program with special signage, sidewalks and crosswalks, and amenities like pedestrian-scale lighting, benches and public art, should be considered to enhance the pedestrian experience and the image of the area (see Chapter 10: Urban Design for more details).

Parking for commercial uses is provided on-street and in consolidated surface parking lots located at the side and rear of buildings. While the existing parking supply is sufficient, as new commercial development, especially restaurants, are proposed in the future, the demand for parking facilities within the area should be re-evaluated. New residential development is required to provide on-site dedicated parking, and is not expected to impact the parking available for commercial uses.

If sufficient demand exists, the City should consider expanding public parking in the area in the future. Potential strategies for providing additional parking include:

- C** Developing a surface parking lot along Prairie Path Lane on the east side of Spring Road (similar to the lot on the west side). This would require collaboration with the Park District.
- D** Building a parking garage on the City-owned surface parking lot northwest of the Prairie Path.
- E** Adequate buffers should be provided between commercial uses, including parking, and residential uses. Use of landscaping, berms or other improvements can achieve this goal while maintaining a convenient pedestrian connection between the shopping area and the adjacent residential neighborhood.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Construct new parking as warranted. Structured and/or shared parking should be encouraged where feasible.
2. Maintain the existing streetwall in all new development and redevelopment.
3. Site structures to retain the pedestrian-orientation of the district.
4. Implement a streetscape program to create a pedestrian-welcome environment, as well as produce a unified image for the district.
5. Extend the Facade Improvement Program from the central business district (downtown) to also apply to the Spring Road Business District.



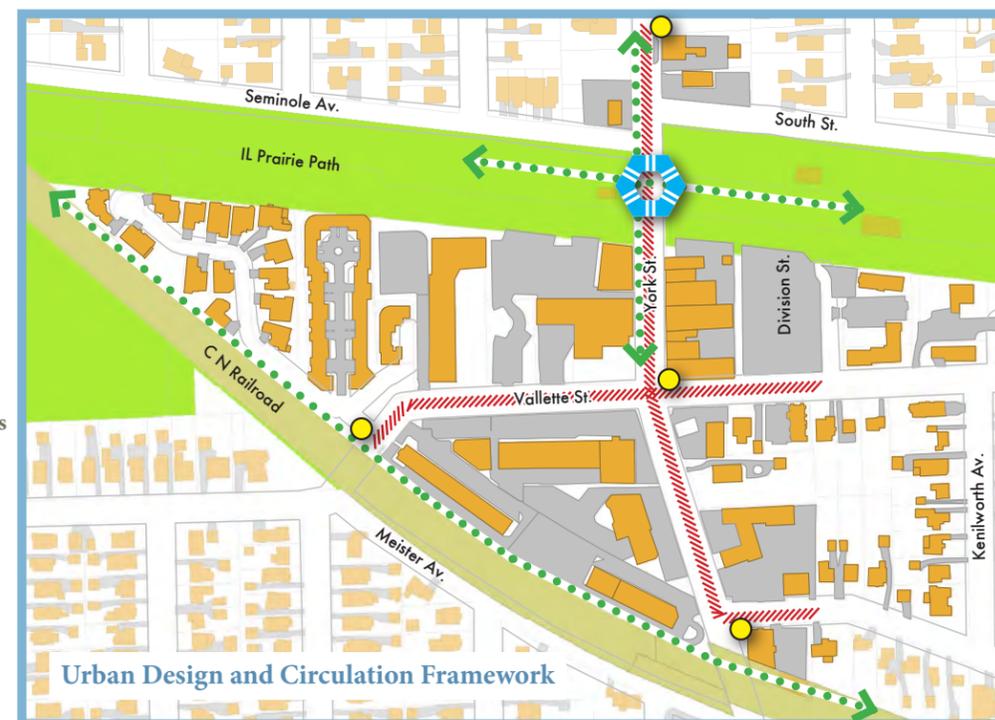
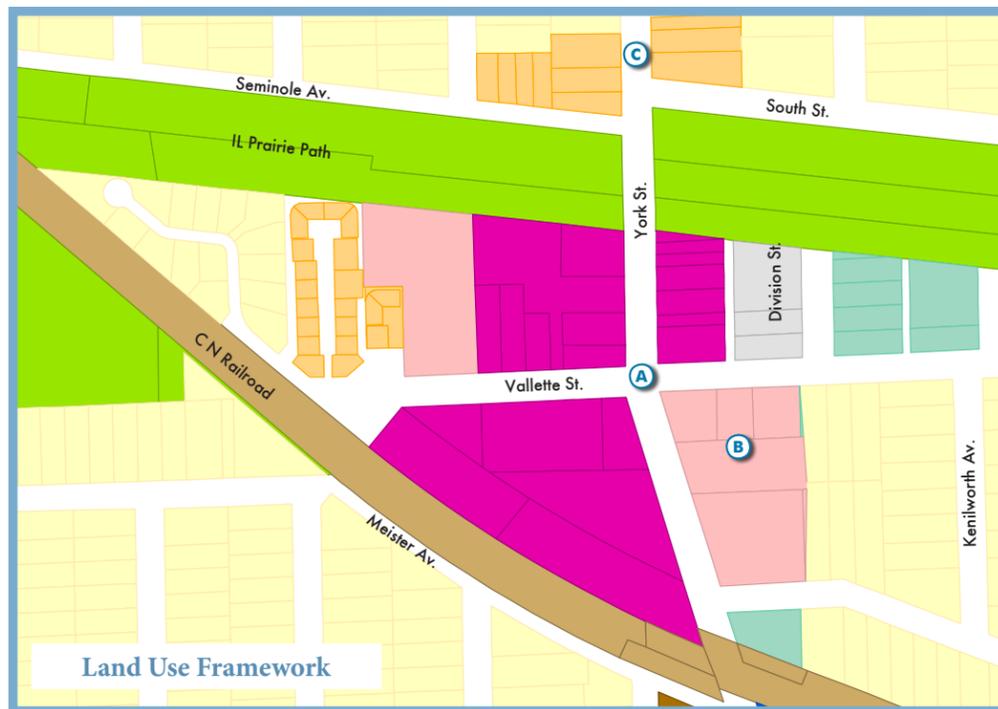
Current Physical Configuration

- Building Footprints
- Paved Drive/Parking Area
- Parks and Open Space
- Transportation and Utilities

Recommendations

- Streetscape
- Signage
- Gateway
- Connections / Nodes
- Key Pedestrian and Bike Routes





LAND USE AND REDEVELOPMENT

The York/Vallette business district is located at the intersection of York and Vallette Streets between the Canadian National (CN) Railroad and the Prairie Path. The area has a variety of retail, service and restaurant uses located in single-story commercial centers and some low-rise office buildings. Most buildings are placed behind disconnected surface parking lots, resulting in an auto-oriented environment. The commercial district is surrounded by established single-family residential neighborhoods. New businesses should be recruited (by the York and Vallette Business Association and/or Chamber of Commerce) to further diversify and strengthen the retail/service mix in the district to fill any vacancies.

The City should consider creating a new mixed use zoning district to serve this sub-area, as well as the similar character type of the Spring Road Business District. In this district, the City should pursue shared parking facilities as a long-term strategy. In the future, the City parking lot on the northeast corner could potentially be redeveloped together with the adjacent commercial uses. The new development should include a parking structure to meet some of the shared parking needs of the business district.

A The disconnected, obsolete commercial centers on the southwest corner, the bank building and the older office uses on the northwest corner and the commercial and vacant uses on the northeast and southeast side are all subject to redevelopment. The City should promote mixed-use buildings on these parcels in a pedestrian-friendly environment to create a stronger and more vibrant commercial district.

B A new specialty grocery store and nursery with a rooftop café is proposed on the southeast corner of the district; a pedestrian-friendly design should be encouraged for this key corner location.

C Single-family homes predominate along the northern border of the Prairie Path, but the adjacent mix of uses and pedestrian-friendly environment could support comparatively higher-density townhomes to replace the two commercial lots currently located to the north.

URBAN DESIGN AND CIRCULATION

As the York/Vallette business district experiences redevelopment, the City should encourage pedestrian-oriented design in the area. Buildings should be brought forward to the sidewalk and parking provided at the rear or on interior lots to create a continuous streetwall. The tallest buildings, four to five stories in height, should be located near the York/Vallette intersection, with reduced heights (two to three stories) closer to the single-family neighborhoods. Building facades should be designed to create an engaging pedestrian environment by including elements such as attractive storefronts, well-articulated entryways, awnings and well-designed signage. The City should consider developing and adopting design guidelines to guide future development in the York/Vallette business district (see *Chapter 10: Urban Design* for more details).

In addition to regulating building placement and design, the City should implement a streetscape improvement program to create a strong pedestrian character in the York/Vallette area.

Improvements such as wide sidewalks, well-defined crosswalks, pedestrian-scale lighting and street furniture will help in creating a safer and more comfortable pedestrian environment. Additionally, the City could consider using elements such as special signage, banners and public art with a distinctive theme to create a unique identity for the area. Its proximity and connections to significant open spaces, including the Prairie Path and York Commons, should be highlighted in the new streetscape program.

Currently, parking for commercial development in the district is provided in disconnected surface parking lots associated with the different commercial centers and in a City-owned surface lot. Under the existing system, a significant amount of land in the York/Vallette business district is dedicated to parking, and vehicular circulation is often inefficient and confusing. The City could take several measures to reduce the amount of surface parking

while improving circulation within the district. These measures include:

- Consolidate parking in locations that are within easy walking distance of the commercial uses to encourage customers to park once and walk to various destinations within the district.
- Encourage shared parking between uses that have different peak usage hours, such as offices and restaurants, to minimize the total number of parking spaces required.
- Provide parking garages within mixed-use developments where feasible.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Study and enact an appropriate financing mechanism (i.e. tax-increment finance district, business improvement district, etc.) to raise funds for redevelopment efforts.
2. Encourage mixed-use development with first floor office, retail and/or commercial and upper-story residential. Building heights should be higher in the core of the business district (four- to five-stories) (corners of York and Vallette Streets) with lesser heights (two- to three-stories) surrounding the core. Large, vacant parcels should be master planned to create a cohesive development pattern.
3. Construct new parking as warranted and consolidate existing parking to allow additional developable space. Structured and/or shared parking should be encouraged where feasible. Off-street surface parking should be provided to the rear.
4. Reduce setbacks and construct a continuous streetwall along the sidewalk edge.
5. Implement a streetscape program to create a pedestrian-welcome environment, as well as produce a unified image for the district.
6. Develop and enforce “Design Guidelines” to construct new development in a uniform character.

