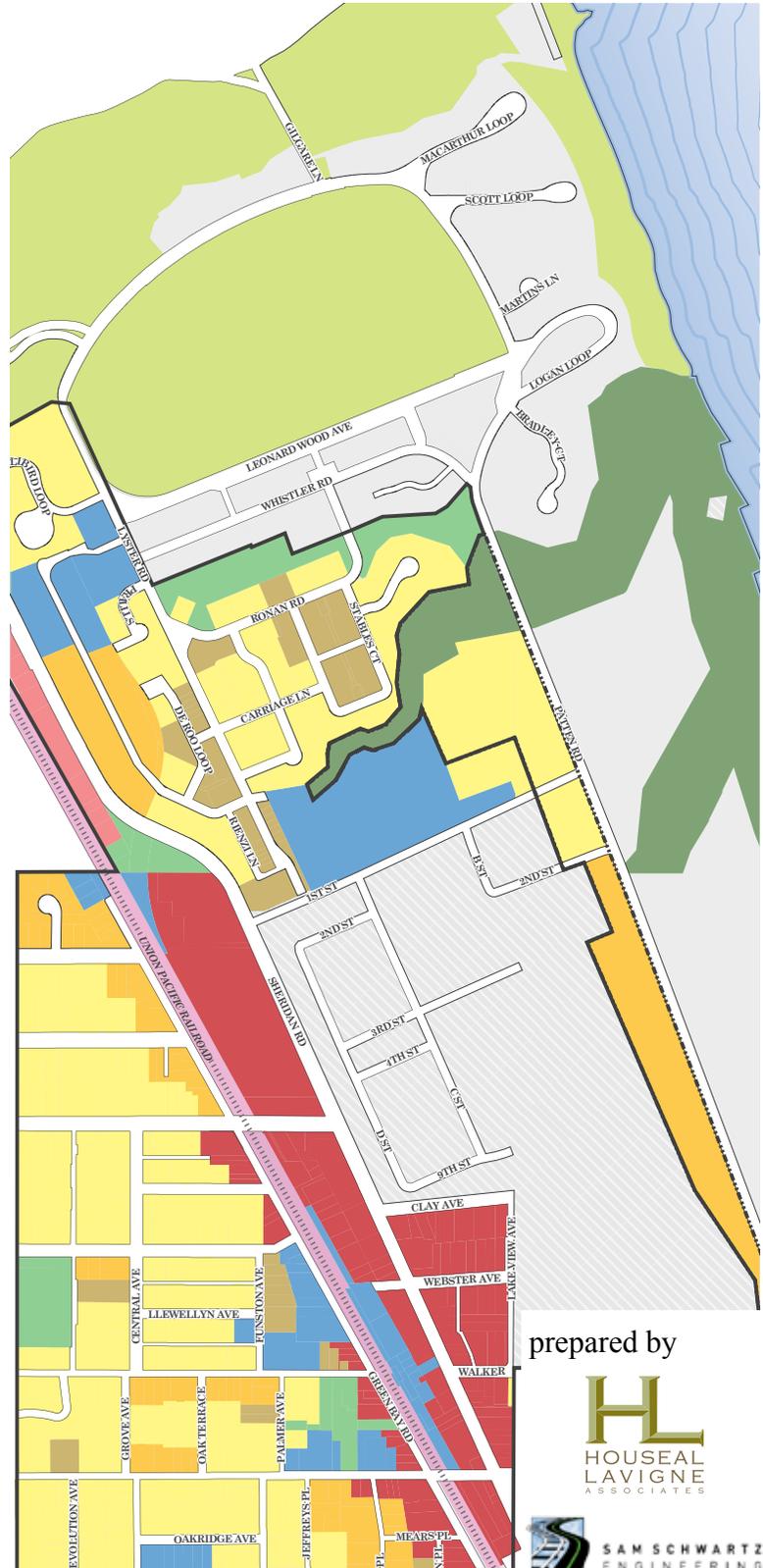


COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

City of Highwood, Illinois
Adopted January 15, 2013



prepared by

HL
HOUSEAL
LAVIGNE
ASSOCIATES

 **SAM SCHWARTZ**
ENGINEERING

CITY OF HIGHWOOD ORDINANCE 13-O-6

**AN ORDINANCE APPROVING AND ADOPTING THE OFFICIAL
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN OF THE CITY OF HIGHWOOD**

**ADOPTED BY THE CITY COUNCIL
OF THE
CITY OF HIGHWOOD, LAKE COUNTY, ILLINOIS
ON
THE 18th DAY OF January, 2013**

Published in pamphlet form by authority of the City Council
of the City of Highwood, Lake County, Illinois
on this 18th day of January, 2013

City-wide

Mayor: Charlie Pecaro
City Clerk: *Vacant*
City Treasurer: *Vacant*

City Manager: Scott Hartman

City Attorney: James V. Ferolo
Klein, Thorpe, Jenkins, Ltd

Aldermen

Ward 1: Harvey Knapp
Daniel Andre

Ward 2: Mike Fiore
Andy Peterson

Ward 3: Kathy Murphy-Pieri
Louise Linari

Ward 4: Eric Falberg
James Levi

ORDINANCE NO. 13-O-6

**AN ORDINANCE APPROVING AND ADOPTING THE OFFICIAL
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN OF THE CITY OF HIGHWOOD**

WHEREAS, the City of Highwood is a home rule unit of government under Section 6(a); Article VII of the 1970 Constitution of the State of Illinois, and may exercise powers pertaining to its local governmental affairs; and

WHEREAS, Sections 11-12-6 and 11-12-7 of the Illinois Municipal Code (65 ILCS 5/11-12-6 and 5/11-12-7) authorize the Mayor and City Council of the City of Highwood to adopt an official comprehensive plan; and

WHEREAS, a proposed comprehensive plan (the "Comprehensive Plan"), attached hereto and incorporated herein as **Exhibit "A"**, has been submitted to the Plan Commission of the City of Highwood for its consideration and recommendation thereon; and

WHEREAS, said Plan Commission held a public hearing to consider the content of the Comprehensive Plan on December 10, 2012, at which time all persons present were afforded an opportunity to be heard regarding the content of the Comprehensive Plan; and

WHEREAS, public notice in the form required by State law was given of said public hearing by publication not less than fifteen (15) days prior to the December 10, 2012 public hearing; and

WHEREAS, the Plan Commission of the City of Highwood has filed its report of findings and recommendations regarding the Comprehensive Plan with the Mayor and City Council, and the Mayor and City Council have taken said report's findings and recommendations under advisement and have incorporated by reference said report's findings and recommendations into this Ordinance.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF HIGHWOOD, LAKE COUNTY, ILLINOIS, as follows:

SECTION 1: After considering the report's findings and recommendations of the Plan Commission and other amendments to the Comprehensive Plan raised by City Council members and the public, the Mayor and City Council find that it is in the best interest of the City of Highwood that the Comprehensive Plan be approved and adopted by them in the same form and content as the Comprehensive Plan attached hereto as **Exhibit A**.

SECTION 2: The Mayor and City Council hereby adopt and approve the Comprehensive Plan attached hereto as **Exhibit "A"** as the Official Comprehensive Plan of the City of Highwood.

SECTION 3: All previously adopted ordinances related to prior versions of the Comprehensive Plan are repealed, and the Comprehensive Plan attached hereto as **Exhibit "A"** supersedes and takes the place of any official comprehensive plans attached to said repealed ordinances.

SECTION 4: The City Clerk or City Manager is hereby authorized and directed to publish this Ordinance in pamphlet form as provided by law.

SECTION 5: The City Clerk or City Manager is hereby authorized and directed to file with the Lake County Recorder of Deeds notice of the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan.

SECTION 6: This ordinance shall be in full force and effect from and after its adoption and publication in pamphlet form as provided by law.

SECTION 7: In the event any part or parts of this Ordinance shall be found to be unconstitutional by a court of competent jurisdiction, such unconstitutionality shall not affect the validity of the remaining parts of this Ordinance.

ADOPTED this 18th day of January, 2013, pursuant to a roll call vote as follows:

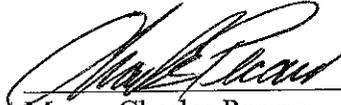
Daniel Andre	aye	Louise Linari	aye
Eric Falberg	aye	Kathy Murphy-Pieri	aye
Mike Fiore	aye	Andy Peterson	aye
James Levi	aye	Harvey Knapp	absent

AYES: _____ 7 _____

NAYS: _____ 0 _____

ABSENT: _____ 1 _____

APPROVED by the City Council of the City of Highwood this 18th day of January, 2013.



Mayor Charles Pecaro

ATTEST:

Deputy City Clerk

City of Highwood

17 Highwood Avenue
Highwood, Lake County, Illinois

Telephone (847) 432-1924
Fax (847) 432-0735



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Page 1 of 3
Fees: \$29.00
IL Rental Housing Fund: \$0.00
Lake County IL Recorder
Mary Ellen Vanderverter Recorder

File 6964774

COPY

Charlie Pecaro, Mayor

State of Illinois)
County of Lake)SS
City of Highwood)

CERTIFICATION BY CITY CLERK

I, **Karin J. Baruffi**, do hereby certify that I am the City Deputy Clerk of the City of Highwood, Lake County, Illinois, and as such, keeper of the records, ordinances, files and seal of said City:

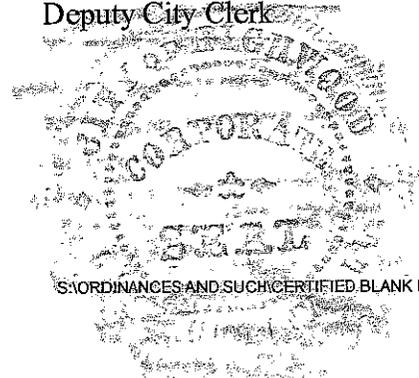
I **HEREBY CERTIFY** that the attached document is a true and Correct copy of:

CITY OF HIGHWOOD

RECORDING COVER SHEET FOR NOTICE OF ADOPTION OF AMENDED
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

IN WITNESS WHERE OF, I have here unto set my hand and affixed the Corporate Seal of the City of Highwood, this 12th of February, 2013

Karin J. Baruffi
Karin J. Baruffi,
Deputy City Clerk



ORDINANCES AND SUCH CERTIFIED BLANK FOR KARIN BARUFFI.DOC

3 JT

The Cover Sheet was prepared,
under direction, by:
James V. Ferolo
Klein Thorpe and Jenkins, Ltd.
20 North Wacker Drive
Suite 1660
Chicago, IL 60606

[Above space for Recorder's Office]

RECORDING COVER SHEET FOR NOTICE OF ADOPTION OF AMENDED COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Which document was prepared by:
James V. Ferolo, Esq.
Klein, Thorpe & Jenkins, Ltd.
20 N. Wacker Drive, Suite 1660
Chicago, IL 60606

To be recorded in the Recorder of Deeds of Lake County, Illinois

LAKE COUNTY RECORDER OF DEEDS, AFTER RECORDING RETURN TO:
James V. Ferolo
Klein, Thorpe & Jenkins, Ltd.
20 North Wacker Drive, Suite 1660
Chicago, IL 60606

STATE OF ILLINOIS)
) SS.
COUNTY OF LAKE)

NOTICE OF ADOPTION OF AMENDED COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Corporate Authorities of the City of Highwood, Lake County, Illinois, pursuant to Section 11-12-7 of the Illinois Municipal Code (65 ILCS 5/11-12-7), and Ordinance duly adopted at the Regular Meeting of the Corporate Authorities on January 15, 2013, did adopt an Amended Comprehensive Plan for land use for all territory within the City of Highwood as more specifically described in said Comprehensive Plan.

BY ORDER OF THE CORPORATE AUTHORITIES OF THE CITY OF HIGHWOOD, LAKE COUNTY, ILLINOIS, THIS NOTICE IS BEING FILED WITH THE OFFICE OF THE LAKE COUNTY RECORDER OF DEEDS.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the undersigned have hereunto subscribed their hands this 12th day of February, 2013.



Mayor

ATTEST:



Deputy
City Clerk



City of Highwood, Illinois Comprehensive Plan

Acknowledgements

A special thank you to everyone who participated in the planning process for the City of Highwood Comprehensive Plan. This Plan was made possible by the contributions and insights of the residents, business persons, property owners, and representatives from various groups and organizations.

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Laurie Marston

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Charlie Pecaro, Mayor

Daniel Andre, First Ward Alderman

Harvey Knapp, First Ward Alderman

Mike Fiore, Second Ward Alderman

Andy Peterson, Second Ward Alderman

Louise Linari, Third Ward Alderman

Kathy Murphy-Pieri, Third Ward Alderman

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Plan Summary

Highwood, a community of approximately 5,400 people just a stone's throw from Lake Michigan. Surrounded by larger, traditional North Shore neighbors, this city of approximately one square mile is anything but small, turning its size and character into a unique and valuable asset.

Since its founding in 1887, countless residents and business owners have invested their time and energy to make Highwood a truly special place. This tradition of community involvement and positive growth continues with the 2011 Comprehensive Plan.

Planning for Highwood's Future

A Comprehensive Plan serves as a tool to guide the City for the next decade and beyond. It provides the blueprint and roadmap for everything from growth and redevelopment to future parks and community facilities needs.

Highwood's Comprehensive Plan builds on wide and deep input from Highwood citizens, businesses and governing departments. The Plan's success rests on the sheer determination of Highwood government officials, residents and volunteers committing to a shared vision and the steps needed to succeed. The Plan is a celebration of what the City's residents hold most dear and take the most pride in: excellent schools, access to parks, celebrations of the arts, preserved architecture, and a rich history that includes Fort Sheridan and all the dignity and honor that this historic facility represents.

A Thoughtful, Disciplined Process

The Comprehensive Plan is the result of a multi-phased planning process that included:

1. Extensive community outreach;
2. Inventorying and analyzing existing conditions and identifying issues and concerns;
3. Setting an overall "vision" for the community and formulating goals and objectives;
4. Preparing plans and policies for the future;
5. Identifying framework plans for key focus areas; and
6. Establishing implementation recommendations.

The process was designed to produce a Comprehensive Plan that promotes strong, vibrant neighborhoods that increase the overall assessed value of the community, provides direction for responsible and desirable redevelopment and reinvestment in the community, and supports a robust business climate.

Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee

To oversee the process, a Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee (CPAC) was formed, consisting of individuals with a wide range of interests and backgrounds, to work closely

with the community and planners. Their task was to facilitate development of a plan that captured the essence of the community's needs, desires and aspirations.

Plan Commission

In August of 2011, CPAC completed the draft of the Master Plan and passed it to the Plan Commission, whose task was to complete the Master Plan and make recommendation to the Highwood City Council. With a critical eye, members of the plan commission made revisions and built onto the CPAC document to reflect their seasoned perspectives and innate knowledge of Highwood.

Establishing a Roadmap

The Plan finds Highwood well positioned to benefit as the economic climate improves from the 2008-10 recession. The City welcomes both community and development investment in its business and residential neighborhoods. The Plan reflects the community's stated desire for that investment to meet high standards and outlines methods to achieve it. The Plan also suggests methods to alleviate the long-standing and most frequently sited problem the community faces: untended and neglected properties. There is not a portion of this plan that is any more important than achieving the community goal of ensuring that a neglected property can no longer adversely affect an entire neighborhood.

Shaping Our Future

The sections of the Comprehensive Plan highlight a number of key recommendations, these include the following:

Residential Areas

Highwood's residential areas should be safe and attractive with high-quality, well-maintained homes. Residential areas should consist primarily of single family homes. To that end, the conversion of multi-family and nonconforming uses to single-family structures should be encouraged. Conversely, more dense multi-family and mixed-use development should be encouraged in the downtown and immediately adjacent areas. This balanced approach will serve to strengthen the fabric of Highwood's residential neighborhoods and further enliven Downtown.

Commercial Areas

The City's commercial areas should have a range of goods and services to meet the daily needs of local residents, while working to further enhance its position as a regional shopping, dining and entertainment destination. Mixed-use development that incorporates residential units above retail should be encouraged in the downtown area. This will not only provide additional housing options for young professionals and "empty-nesters", it will further establish a more active destination environment.

Non-sales tax generating uses, such as service providers, should be located on the upper floors of commercial buildings to maximize opportunities for sales tax revenue on the ground floor.

Transportation

Safe circulation, parking and transportation should be at the forefront of future planning efforts to ensure that residents and visitors can effectively navigate the City by vehicle, bicycle or walking. This is important regardless of whether someone is in an active commercial area such as the downtown or a residential neighborhood. The plan advocates additional parking, dedicated areas for biking and the contiguous connection of sidewalks throughout the community.

Parks and Recreation

The Plan recognizes that the City's parks and recreational areas are tremendous assets for the entire community to enjoy, and should focus on recreational opportunities for individuals of all ages. Whether it's the pristine lakefront or neighborhood parks, all contribute to the quality of life for Highwood residents.

Community Facilities

The overview of the City's public and private community facilities summarizes their functions, current and future needs, and long-term facility usage. Possible future locations for City Hall, Public Works, Police, Fire, Parks and Recreation and the Library are considered. The potential purchase of the post office site and/or a twelve acre parcel at the Philip H. Sheridan Reserve Center, adjacent to Bartlett Ravine and the Town of Fort Sheridan, could accommodate municipal uses. The arts, community events, education, and a senior programming are also discussed.

Key Focus Areas

This section presents detailed recommendations for specific locations where significant opportunities exist to maximize benefits to the community and to achieve the goals outlined in the plan. Based on the objectives in the plan, strategies are recommended to revitalize these underutilized sites.

The four focus areas are:

Downtown – North (the area bounded by Sheridan Rd., Washington Ave., Webster Ave. and the railroad tracks);

Green Bay Road – North (between Washington Ave. and North Ave.); and,

Downtown Core (which includes portions of Sheridan Rd., Green Bay Rd., Highwood Ave. and Prairie Ave.).

Implementing the Plan

The Plan contains a detailed implementation section that outlines roles, responsibilities and timing of key plan recommendations. The Comprehensive Plan is an official document designed to guide the community. Establishing a proper foundation for success through zoning and building codes are the most important aspect required to achieve the recommendations identified in the plan.

- The City's **zoning ordinance and codes** provide the framework for enforcement and regulation. City officials need to ensure that zoning and codes adequately reflect the goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan, and that these codes are aggressively enforced. As codes are revised, the City should also establish firm timeframes within which non-conforming uses must comply with newly adopted regulations and the City's long-term vision.
- Continued **Intergovernmental coordination** with other agencies and jurisdictions is essential, particularly in relation to property surrounding the Sheridan Reserve Center.

As the City evolves and changes and redevelopment occurs, city officials will need to periodically review the Plan and make amendments as deemed necessary. Ongoing communication and collaboration between residents, property owners, business owners and City officials will help to further foster a sense of community. A community committed to the goals and vision presented in the Plan is the most essential element to success.

The Plan is Ours, the Time is Now

The Plan, as detailed in this document, is our community's collective vision. It celebrates Highwood's past, acknowledges its present-day challenges, and documents its aspirations. The Plan will only succeed if residents and business owners, both present and future, are willing to dedicate the time, effort, conviction and resiliency necessary for success. Highwood is no stranger to hard work, meeting challenges head-on and achieving great things. Working together the community can make the collective aspirations identified in this document a reality.

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Welcome sign at Prairie Avenue and Green Bay Road

INTRODUCTION

This report presents the Comprehensive Plan for the City of Highwood, Illinois. It sets forth long-range recommendations for the maintenance and enhancement of existing neighborhoods and commercial areas, and for desirable improvements, development and reinvestment within the City and its planning jurisdiction.

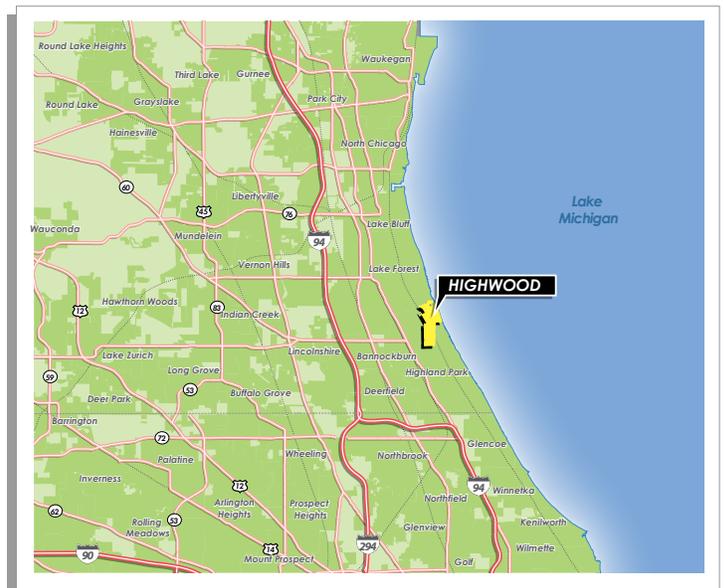
This final Comprehensive Plan document is the culmination of an eighteen-month planning program. The plan incorporates much of the material included in previous interim reports and memoranda prepared during the course of this study including the Synthesis Report on file with the City.

The City of Highwood

The City of Highwood is located in Lake County approximately 24 miles north of Downtown Chicago. It is bordered by the City of Highland Park, Lake County Forest Preserve land and unincorporated/federal land. Founded in 1868 by Chicago civic leader William Wallace Everts, the City of Highwood sits on the Skokie Ravine, which is the highest point between the City of Chicago and Milwaukee, Wisconsin. In 2007, Highwood became a home rule community.

According to Lake County, the City has a total area of 0.73 square miles. A location map for the City of Highwood is provided in **Figure 1: Community Setting**.

Figure 1. Community Setting



Comprehensive Plan Background

The City of Highwood's previous comprehensive plan was adopted in June 1996 with the integration of a Fort Sheridan Sub-area Plan two years later. While much changed in the time between the 1996 plan and the adoption of this plan, many of the issues highlighted in the previous plan are still relevant to this Comprehensive plan update. The 1996 Comprehensive Plan focused its recommendations on: 1) preserving single family residential neighborhoods, 2) enhancing the Downtown as a traditional mixed-use district, and 3) reintegrating the Town of Fort Sheridan neighborhood into the community.

While the previous comprehensive plan established a framework for addressing many issues which are still important today, the community has experienced significant growth and changes since 1996. The City commissioned this update of the Comprehensive Plan to ensure that the needs and values of Highwood's current population are reflected in the City's policies.

Purpose of the Comprehensive Plan

The Comprehensive Plan represents the City of Highwood's official policy guide for physical improvement and development. The Plan considers not only the immediate needs and concerns of the community, but also anticipates improvement and development 10 to 15 years into the future. The Comprehensive Plan is to be used by the City to help preserve and protect important existing features and resources, coordinate new growth and development, and maintain and enhance a strong and positive community image and identity.

The Plan is "comprehensive" in that it establishes long-range policies dealing with a variety of issues for all areas of the City. It encompasses land use; vehicular and pedestrian movements; access to parks and open space; and the provision of schools and other public facilities, among other issues. It addresses residential areas, commercial and business development, public and institutional lands, and the public rights-of-way.

The Comprehensive Plan establishes the "ground rules" for private improvement and development and provides guidelines by which the Plan Commission and City Council can review and evaluate private development proposals. The Comprehensive Plan also provides a guide for public improvements to help to ensure that local resources are used wisely and in a cost effective manner.

Finally, the Comprehensive Plan serves as a basis for updates to zoning and subdivision regulations, and provides direction and rationale for public improvements. All of these plan components are designed to advance the goals and objectives established by Highwood residents and businesses and to achieve the future envisioned by the Highwood community.

The Planning Process

The City of Highwood initiated the Comprehensive Planning process in October 2009 when it enlisted the help of Houseal Lavigne Associates (consultant) to assist in the preparation of a new plan. This Comprehensive Plan report is the result of a multi-phased planning program consisting of: (1) community outreach; (2) inventorying and analyzing existing conditions and identifying issues and concerns; (3) establishing an overall "vision" for the community and formulating goals and objectives; (4) preparing plans and policies for community-wide land use, transportation, community facilities, parks and open space; (5) preparing framework plans for key focus areas; and, (6) preparing the final plan and implementation recommendations.

The planning process was designed to produce a Comprehensive Plan that promotes responsible and desirable redevelopment and reinvestment in the community while addressing the needs of established neighborhoods and businesses.

Figure 2: Planning Process illustrates the process followed during the creation of this plan.

Figure 2. Planning Process



Community Outreach

The planning process provided several opportunities for public input to ensure that all of the City’s numerous sociocultural groups were given a venue for the discussion of common issues and concerns. Extensive community outreach throughout the planning process included multiple community workshops in both English and Spanish, a business workshop, key person interviews, on-line questionnaires, a visioning workshop, and on-going communication with the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Commission (CPAC).

A close working relationship was established between the Consultant, the City, and the CPAC. As a group of local residents and business owners deeply involved in the planning process, the CPAC served as a touchstone for the larger community. CPAC and Plan Commission members volunteered hundreds of hours of their time to ensure that the Comprehensive Plan will serve as a meaningful tool to implement the changes that the larger Highwood community desires to see.

When CPAC’s preliminary plan was complete the Highwood Plan Commission brought the Master Plan home. Plan Commission built upon the foundations of the document and further developed a vision for the future of the City of Highwood. The Highwood Plan Commission concluded the process by holding public meetings for final community outreach and adoption.

Input received from the various community outreach efforts was used in conjunction with an assessment of existing conditions to establish an informed vision of Highwood’s desired future and provide direction to the planning process. Summaries and detailed results from each outreach activity are provided in the Comprehensive Plan Synthesis Report on file at Highwood City Hall.

Organization of the Comprehensive Plan

The Comprehensive Plan is divided into the following 11 sections:

Section 1: Introduction - This section of the Plan provides an overview of the Plan's purpose and the process involved in its creation.

Section 2: A Vision for the Future - This section provides a narrative description of the future that the Highwood community desires to see. The community vision statement highlights improvements within Highwood that will occur in the 15 years following the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan

Section 3: Goals and Objectives - This section presents the Comprehensive Plan's goals and objectives, and specific actions that are needed to help the Highwood community achieve its desired future.

Section 4: Land Use Plan - The Land Use Plan establishes land use designations for all areas of the City, describing the location and type of each future land use in general terms.

Section 5: Residential Areas Plan - The Residential Areas Plan provides more specific recommendations and policies to guide future growth and reinvestment within the City's existing residential neighborhoods.

Section 6: Commercial Areas Plan - This section provides recommendations and policies specific to improving the City's commercial areas, namely Downtown Highwood and the Sheridan Road corridor.

Section 7: Community Facilities Plan - This section provides a detailed inventory of community facilities and presents policies and recommendations for municipal facilities, public utilities, schools, cultural facilities, and other community facilities and services.

Section 8: Parks and Open Space Plan - This section presents policies and recommendations for maintaining and enhancing the City's parks and recreation facilities and enhancing access to open space and natural areas including forest preserves, Lake Michigan, ravines, and other environmental features.

Section 9: Transportation Plan - The Transportation Plan presents policies and recommendations related to access, traffic circulation, parking, pedestrian and bicycle movement, and public transportation.

Section 10: Key Focus Area Plans - This section builds upon the generalized guidelines established in the community-wide plans in previous sections of the Comprehensive Plan. The key focus area plans provide more detailed and site specific improvements and recommendations related to a variety of issues including the role and function of an area; land use and development; and appearance and character.

Section 11: Implementation - This section presents specific actions including recommendations regarding development controls, priority improvement projects and redevelopment sites, and potential funding sources for implementing the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan.

Maps & Graphics

Highwood's new Comprehensive Plan emphasizes the use of illustrative full-color maps and graphics to document existing and desired community conditions and to highlight planning policies and recommendations.

The document is intended to be user friendly and illustrate planning recommendations in a clear and concise manner.



A VISION FOR THE FUTURE

Sheridan Road Businesses

The Vision Statement is the cumulative result of previous community outreach efforts and the Visioning Session held September 17, 2010 at Oak Terrace Elementary School. The Visioning Session was a workshop involving the planning consultant team, City staff, the CPAC, elected/appointed officials, and members of the community at large. Approximately 70 participants worked together to highlight issues and opportunities; define the long-term image and character of Highwood; and identify desirable future projects and improvements.

The Vision Statement incorporates the collective input of visioning session attendees. It describes the desired future state of the community and provides focus and direction for subsequent planning recommendations. It is a retrospective narrative that documents how the City of Highwood has changed in the 15 years since the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan. The Vision Statement serves as the foundation for the goals and objectives outlined in the following section as well as related City policies identified in the Community-Wide Plans and Key Focus Area Plans.

Vision Statement

Over more than a century, the City of Highwood has developed and maintained a unique character among North Shore communities. Its future will build on this strength of character.

Today, Highwood pulses with enthusiasm, commitment, passion, creativity and the community pride of its residents. Volunteerism feeds this secret of present day Highwood. The city offers endless opportunities for civic involvement and personal growth. Opportunities abound to stay close with family, old friends and to make new friends.

Historically, Highwood's 125 year link with the military base at Fort Sheridan fosters residents' innate sense of the sacrifice essential to Americans' freedom and their rights to pursue their dreams. Highwood accepts individuals from all walks of life and celebrates their accomplishments. It is a community that embraces diversity from jazz to opera, from conservative opinion to liberal views. It is a community of late night conversation and a healthy argument at a neighbor's table. People care about each other because every Highwood resident is part of the larger Highwood family. Highwood is a place where children are safe and grandparents are cared for. This city extends ongoing opportunities to be engaged with events such as the Pumpkin Fest, farmers markets and art fairs. In the future Highwood will continue to nurture this community spirit and become "the" community of choice to raise a family and build a full life.

Compared to neighboring communities, Highwood is considerably smaller in size, which could limit the City's opportunities. Yet its size creates an extraordinary ability to maintain its strengths, adapt to challenges, embrace opportunities and quickly solve problems. Many years ago, the composer of Fanfare for the Common Man, Aaron Copeland, spent an evening dining at one of Highwood's oldest family owned restaurants. This event is symbolic as to this day for one can walk Highwood's streets and sense in its air those inspirational crescendos that rise as a refrain to Highwood and its future development.

In the Future...

Today Highwood has a wide variety of lovely homes accommodating first time buyers, retirees and CEOs. Highwood's housing stock is neither cookie-cutter nor corporate. It reflects the unique character of Highwood. Many of Highwood's homes were built with loving care by the original owners. However, with only a few lots available for development, improving existing housing is vital to Highwood's future. As Highwood continues to develop, many older homes will be rehabilitated to meet the needs of new families. Other homes, no longer suitable for rehabilitation, will be replaced by new homes that complement the character and context of the neighborhoods. Highwood's evolution will continue by selectively encouraging less density and the elimination of commercial uses in the residential neighborhoods. Many of the single-family homes converted to multi-unit buildings that are scattered throughout these neighborhoods will be reverted back to single-family use or be replaced by new single-family homes.

The greatest opportunity for new residential expansion exists at the military properties along Patten Road north of the new Naval Housing and on Westover Road. Special care should be given this area to insure that roadway and neighborhood connections are made so that this new area feels as much a part of the heart of the community as everywhere else. The Navy housing along the west side of Patten Road is annexed to become part of the Highwood community. The tax dollars that the property produces, once incorporated into Highwood's boundaries, will be important to Highwood's future.

The business district in Highwood will continue to be a collection of local, family-run small businesses. Highwood will improve and capitalize on its business friendly atmosphere. This includes further greening and beautifying its pedestrian-friendly business district and promoting Highwood's special brand of customer service in which the shopkeepers are friends and support each others' success. The family-owned businesses that served Highwood so well in the past will help the business district thrive and prosper.

As Highwood evolves, the business district will expand fully into its currently defined commercial corridors. Remodeling and additions to existing buildings and the redevelopment of underutilized sites for retail, commercial and possibly civic uses will revitalize marginal commercial properties within these corridors. Also, structures that incorporate residential units above street level to compensate for the decrease in density in the residential districts will create a more vibrant downtown. Green Bay Road will have the same beautification and rebirth as the Sheridan Road Corridor. Both Green Bay Road and Sheridan Road will continue to attract extraordinary one of a kind businesses.

Everts Park will be incorporated into the community's center and truly become a town square and meeting place. The City will upgrade its municipal service facilities and consider opportunities to consolidate those facilities to maximize savings while providing convenient access for residents. Wherever possible, Highwood will embrace technological solutions and opportunities to enhance its competitive edge.

Highwood's amenities will evolve and improve. Sports and recreation have always been a vital part of the Highwood community. Currently, the limited park land is well used and programs are well attended. In the future, to meet the needs and wishes of every resident, recreational facilities, park land and programming will expand and range from new youth programs to activities for Highwood's growing senior population.

Rather than a wholesale restructuring of the community, the future of Highwood reflects steady, incremental improvements based on its strengths and community character. Over the next 15 years Highwood will evolve to become an enhanced version of Highwood today. Highwood will continue to be a family-oriented community, driven by small businesses. Proud of its heritage, Highwood will continue to welcome those who seek to participate in its bright future.



Recent development at Sheridan Road and Webster Avenue.

The future described in the Vision Statement can only be achieved through the implementation of specific guidelines and recommendations within the Comprehensive Plan. The goals and objectives contained in this section bridge the gap between vision and policy. They provide the basis for recommendations contained in the Community-wide plans and Key Focus Area Plans and form the basis for future action.

Each planning goal and corresponding objective has a unique purpose within the Comprehensive Plan.

- **Goals** describe desired outcomes toward which planning efforts should aspire to achieve.
- **Objectives** describe the specific actions that need to be undertaken to advance larger planning goals. Objectives provide more precise and measurable guidelines for planning efforts and future policy and action.

Goals and objectives express many ideas and concepts that cannot be shown on maps or depicted in other sections of the plan. Together with the Vision Statement, the goals and objectives paint a picture of what the community desires to accomplish with its Comprehensive Plan and other development tools and ordinances.

The goals and objectives presented here are based on:

Input from:

- The CPAC;
- Several community workshops;
- Key person interviews;
- On-line questionnaires;
- The Plan Commission;
- City staff; and
- The Visioning Session.

Goals and Objectives have been established for:

- Community Image & Identity;
- Residential Neighborhoods;
- Commercial & Mixed-Use Development;
- Transportation & Circulation;
- Parks, Recreation & Open Space;
- Community Facilities & Services;
- City Governance;
- Communication;
- Intergovernmental Coordination; and,
- Plan Implementation.

Community Image & Identity

Goal:

A positive image among community members and within the larger North Shore region that builds on Highwood's distinct character.

Objectives:

1. Enhance the physical appearance of local neighborhoods including homes, public rights-of-way, and parks and open space.
2. Maintain and enhance the Downtown's traditional character and pedestrian friendly atmosphere.
3. Maintain and enhance the City's reputation as a fine dining and entertainment destination.
4. Continue to upgrade major roadways with streetscaping including landscaping, signage, and pedestrian amenities.
5. Create attractive and prominent entry points into the community.
6. Maintain and enhance City-owned parks and create additional parks that contribute to quality of life in Highwood's residential areas.
7. Sponsor and promote community events throughout the year to foster a stronger sense of community, bring residents together from different neighborhoods and social and cultural groups, and attract visitors from outside of the community.
8. Encourage historic preservation.
9. Require high-quality materials, finishes and architecture, and resource efficient design and construction in the development, renovation, and expansion of structures throughout the City.
10. Collaborate with utility companies in an effort to screen, obscure or bury or otherwise camouflage utilities.

Residential Neighborhoods

Goal:

Safe, attractive neighborhoods with high-quality, well-maintained homes that provide a range of housing to the community's diverse population and attract new residents to Highwood.

Objectives:

1. Preserve sound existing housing through consistent, active code enforcement.
2. Encourage the conversion of non-conforming multi-family structures to single family homes.
3. Prohibit the addition of dwelling units to existing structures in violation of the City's Zoning Code.
4. Implementation of an amortization schedule to remove nonconforming residential uses and non-residential uses from the residential districts.
5. Implement buffering and screening requirements to protect residential areas from any potentially negative impacts of adjacent commercial uses.
6. Prohibit commercial parking activity in residential areas.
7. Require new development and redevelopment to reflect the scale and character of the surrounding neighborhood.
8. Promote residential development and redevelopment of a variety of low-density housing types.
9. Promote the development of senior housing to enable Highwood residents to age in place and remain in the community.

Commercial & Mixed-Use Development

Goal:

Healthy commercial areas with mixed uses providing housing in the downtown with a diverse range of goods and service providers that meet the daily needs of local residents. Such development shall also enhance the community's image as a regional shopping, dining and entertainment destination.

Objectives:

1. Strengthen the role and function of the downtown as the central focus of civic, community, and economic activity as well as a place in which to live.
2. Expand the range of retailers and offices in the downtown.
3. Improve parking, access, and circulation within the downtown.
4. Preserve and enhance the pedestrian oriented environment within the downtown.
5. Create a façade and property improvement program to assist businesses in addressing deferred maintenance and rehabilitating older commercial properties.
6. Encourage mixed-use development within the downtown with high-quality design, landscape and construction.
7. Require appropriate redevelopment of the Hotel Moraine site in conformance with existing zoning and no higher than the existing structure.
8. Encourage the redevelopment of vacant or underutilized properties. Improve the appearance and quality of commercial properties through consistent, active code enforcement.
9. Foster commercial property renovation and redevelopment through a consistent, flexible and thorough permitting process.
10. Work with the local business community in establishing a joint marketing strategy.
11. Establish an Economic Development Commission to foster the development and recruitment of new businesses and the retention and expansion of existing businesses.
12. Prohibit the development of additional non-taxing producing services including auto-service, contracting or other service related businesses requiring outdoor storage within the downtown.
13. Adopt and enforce an amortization schedule to remove industrial type uses from the downtown.
14. Prohibit additional strip center development within the downtown.
15. Implement additional streetscape enhancements along major roadways to improve upon and unify the appearance of commercial areas.
16. Establish land use and development controls that encourage higher density, mixed-use development within the downtown and prohibit single family and two-family homes within the downtown
17. Prohibit first floor residential uses on Green Bay Road, Waukegan Avenue and Sheridan Road corridors within the downtown.
18. Promote sales tax generating uses on the first floor on Green Bay Road, Waukegan Avenue and Sheridan Road corridors within the downtown.

Transportation & Circulation

Goal:

A balanced transportation network that provides for safe and efficient movement of vehicles and pedestrians.

Objectives:

1. Improve and maintain the condition of street surfaces on local roadways.
2. Enhance access along commercial corridors through the use of various tools such as shared access drives, shared parking facilities, and cross-access easements.
3. Address congestion and traffic safety concerns related to rail traffic passing through the downtown and the configuration of local roadways surrounding the Union Pacific Railroad right-of-way.
4. Complete the street grid within Highwood and connections to neighboring communities.
5. Improve the maintenance and expand the City's network of sidewalks to enable safe and convenient pedestrian movement throughout the City.
6. Improve directional and other signage indicating public parking to encourage the use of public parking facilities in the downtown.
7. Expand the availability of public parking throughout the downtown.

8. Require new developments to provide adequate parking.
9. Establish and enforce clear and concise policies regarding valet parking that ensure efficient use of parking facilities and minimize valet-related traffic congestion.
10. Work with the Regional Transportation Authority and Metra to improve and enhance the Highwood Metra station as a community asset and central component of the downtown.
11. Work with Metra to improve and enhance commuter train service and express train schedules.
12. Enhance pedestrian safety at rail crossings including the installation of pedestrian crossing gates where warranted.
13. Work with the Regional Transportation Authority and Pace to improve and enhance bus services within the community.
14. Establish bike routes throughout the downtown to improve vehicular, bicycle, and pedestrian safety.
15. Enhance the Robert McClory Bike Path with directional signage and improved maintenance.

3. Renovate and expand recreation facilities and programming to better meet the needs of the community, including services for the City's youth and seniors.
4. Increase the City's collaboration with the Highwood Bocce Courts to enhance its value as a community asset and public recreational amenity.
5. Work with local conservation groups to expand resident use of regional open space areas along the lakefront.
6. Develop the use of Everts Park as a public square with access from Green Bay Road.
7. Expand, upgrade and promote the use of pedestrian and bicycle paths, routes, and facilities to provide access to and connections between schools, parks, open space, shopping areas and other key activity areas in the City and neighboring communities.
8. Evaluate the feasibility of relocating the recreation center or improving the existing facility.
9. Expand and enhance Memorial Park (also known as Western Avenue Ball Park) for active recreational activities.
10. Require any development of the Hotel Moraine site to enhance the area of open space north of the site for use as a public park.
11. Require the Lake County Forest Preserve District to develop an operational golf course at the former Fort Sheridan Military Reservation as required by the deed of conveyance.
12. Cultivate cooperative working relationships with the Lake County Forest Preserve, Openlands and neighboring communities to enhance access to and use of open space and natural areas along the Lake Michigan shoreline by Highwood residents.
13. Develop cooperative agreements with other communities to provide recreational opportunities.

Parks, Recreation & Open Space

Goal:

Enhanced and expanded parks and recreation facilities to meet the needs of City residents for opportunities to experience the outdoors and to enhance the overall image and character of the community.

Objectives:

1. Identify opportunities for new park sites in older, developed neighborhoods within the City.
2. Explore the potential for the conversion of vacant lots and other underutilized parcels to parks and open space.

Community Facilities & Services

Goal:

Efficient and effective delivery of public services that enhance the City's desirability as a place in which to live, work, shop, and dine.

Objectives:

1. Coordinate with local public and private schools to maintain and enhance school sites and facilities throughout the City.
2. Maintain and promote the Public Library as an important community asset.
3. Work with other public agencies and service providers to seek appropriate locations that do not inhibit the growth and revenue generation of the downtown core to provide facilities and services for the community's youth and senior populations.
4. Conduct a comprehensive facility needs assessment to inform a cost-benefit analysis of the City's various public facilities and services (including the Recreation Center, Library, Public Works, City Hall, Fire Department and Police Department).
5. Enhance the City's infrastructure, including the water supply and distribution infrastructure as needed throughout the community.
6. Evaluate purchasing the property that currently makes up the portion of the Philip H. Sheridan Reserve Center north of 1st Avenue.
7. Investigate the feasibility of purchasing the US Post Office facility at 130 Highwood Avenue and other properties adjacent to Everts Park.
8. Promote the redevelopment of surplus or underutilized City-owned property to benefit the entire Highwood community.
9. Pursue sustainable design concepts for all new or renovated City facilities.
10. Increase efforts to identify alternative sources of financing, such as grants or loans, to fund a wide range of public projects.
11. Implement new technologies to promote efficiency and effective delivery of public services.
12. The City should develop a historic preservation commission to further the work that the Art Institute of Chicago did in the 1990's and create ordinances that safeguard Highwood's Historic heritage and buildings.





City Governance

Goal:

An efficient use of City resources and finances in the effective provision of community services.

Objectives:

1. Provide high quality and responsive City services.
2. Implement technology solutions in order to provide efficient provision of City services.
3. Enhance public outreach and communication between residents and the City and its departments.
4. Promote the coordination of infrastructure and utility construction projects between City departments and with other agencies to reduce costs through economies of scale, mitigate redundancies, and minimize disruptions to resident quality of life and business activities.
5. Provide adequate staffing of City departments and for the appropriate maintenance of City infrastructure, property, and facilities.
6. Encourage continued participation of the public as volunteers on the City's boards and commissions as to assist in the City's governance.
7. Ensure that professional advice and guidance is available to the City's elected officials, staff and volunteers on boards and commissions.
8. Continue to seek grants, loans and other sources of intergovernmental funding to assist with capital improvements and community services programming to minimize the financial impact on the City.
9. Maximize retail sales tax generating uses in commercial areas.
10. Ensure transparency related to City operations, including public finances and capital expenditures.
11. Optimize the use of the City's revenue by exploring opportunities for appropriate cost savings such as privatization, outsourcing or consolidation of City services both internally and with other communities.
12. Educate the public about the costs to provide a high level of City services.
13. Engage the public in determining the appropriate balance between cost of services and benefit of services.

14. Obtain expert advice from groups such as the Illinois Municipal League and other similar organizations regarding municipal matters.
15. Reduce costs of City services by coordination with other jurisdictions and smart use of new technology.
16. Provide access to quality advice from staff or consultants on topics coming before the boards and commissions.
17. Revive inactive City boards and commissions to utilize the talents of local volunteers
18. Create a ground breaking, innovative, unique model to deliver City services in the 21st century.
19. Provide regular training to the City's elected officials, staff, boards, and commissions to stay current with changing legislation and municipal best practices.

Communication

Goal:

An open and productive dialogue between the City and local residents, business and property owners, community service providers, and other partner agencies.

Objectives:

1. Continue to support community involvement and participation in City affairs and activities.
2. Actively encourage resident participation in notifying the City of potential code violations.
3. Expand community outreach efforts for large capital projects, including additional opportunities for public review and comment such as open houses or online tools to solicit input and feedback.
4. Improve customer service levels at all points of contact with residents.
5. Continue to regularly update and publish information through the City's multiple communications platforms.
6. Encourage communication and collaboration among public and private service providers to provide the most efficient and cost effective services possible.

Intergovernmental Coordination

Goal:

Coordinate with key federal and state elected officials and state, regional, and local agencies to ensure continuity and consistency of overall planning and development activities.

Objectives:

1. Maintain a positive channel of communication with agencies such as Metra, Pace, Regional Transportation Authority, Union Pacific Railroad, Lake County, and others for better coordination regarding projects on their properties or within their jurisdiction.
2. Work with the Highwood Chamber of Commerce, Lake County Partners, and other economic development organizations to promote and market the City of Highwood, retain existing businesses, and attract new businesses.
3. Maintain and enhance the City's relationship with the Army Reserve regarding on-going operations and redevelopment of the Philip H. Sheridan Reserve Center.
4. Maintain and enhance the City's relationship with the Navy and the operator of the Navy personnel housing along Patten Road.
5. Build strong relationships and keep open lines of communication with county, state and federal elected officials and other local municipal elected officials.
6. Require all parties to complete the Fort Sheridan Master Plan as originally adopted. This includes but is not limited to:
 - Annexation of areas pursuant to the Intergovernmental Boundary Agreement;
 - The Highwood/Highland Park Intergovernmental Planning Agreement of 1996; and,
 - The Highwood/Highland Park Intergovernmental Disconnection Agreement of 1998.
 - Completion of the Lake County Forest Preserve District golf course

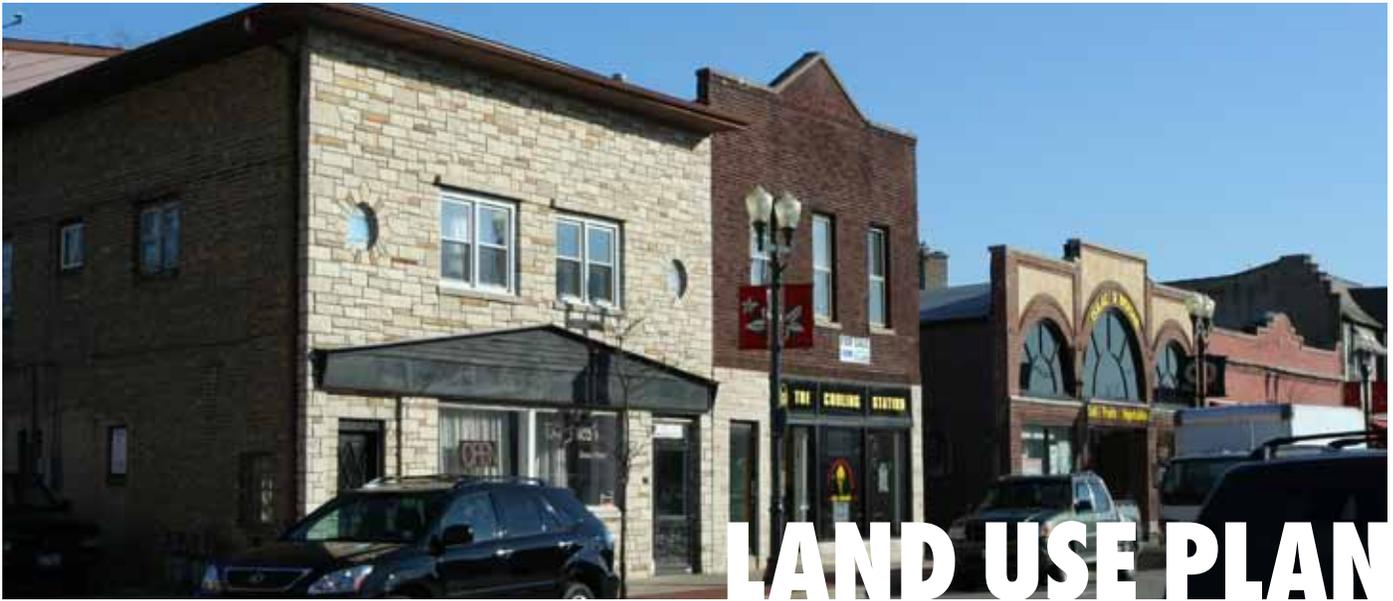
Plan Implementation

Goal:

Effective implementation of the Comprehensive Plan, including regular efforts to monitor progress and update City policies.

Objectives:

1. Revise the Zoning ordinance, Subdivision ordinance, as well as other land use and development regulations to ensure compliance with Comprehensive Plan recommendations.
2. Develop a process for the regular review and update of the Comprehensive Plan and zoning ordinance to appropriately meet the changing needs of the community.
3. Create a user's guide to zoning, development and signage to facilitate compliance of new commercial development and redevelopment with City regulations.
4. Enforce and update signage regulations that allow for adequate business identification, legibility, and visibility while respecting the scale and character of surrounding development and minimizing visual clutter as needed.
5. Update the City's landscape requirements to enhance landscaping and open space in downtown and along the major streets.
6. Establish and maintain a five-year action agenda regarding Comprehensive Plan implementation to prioritize objectives, list accomplishments of proceeding years, and establish a City Capital Improvements Program.
7. Dedicate existing financial resources and/or identify new funding sources to implement the Comprehensive Plan.
8. Review the Comprehensive Plan on a regular basis and amend as needed, based on input and involvement of the City Council, Plan Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals, various other commission and committees, local organizations, and individuals.
9. Once adopted, ensure that the City Council, staff, boards and commissions abide by the Comprehensive Plan.
10. Identify and engage agencies and organizations willing to share in the responsibility for active implementation of the Plan.
11. Utilize the comprehensive plan as a basis for review of subdivision, zoning, and land use applications.
12. Supplement the goals and objectives with other necessary documents such as a visual preference guide.
13. All zoning and subdivision changes should reference **Section 4: Land Use Plan** of the Comprehensive Plan for feasibility and congruency.



Sheridan Road businesses between Walker and Highwood Avenues

LAND USE PLAN

The Land Use Plan is a community-wide guide for future land use and development that identifies which areas should be dedicated to residential, commercial, public and semi-public, and parks and open space uses. The Land Use Plan also provides the framework within which all land uses are interconnected and integrated with one another.

The Land Use Plan is an extension of the Comprehensive Plan vision, goals and objectives, building and improving upon the City's established patterns of land use and development. The Land Use Plan promotes a sustainable and holistic approach to growth and development that protects and enhances existing neighborhoods, strengthens commercial areas, and enhances the City's various community facilities.

A General Guide

The Land Use Plan is a general guide to growth and development within the City. The Land Use Plan provides a foundation for further decision-making and does not represent a site development plan. While it is a detailed document that provides specific guidance on land use decisions, it is also flexible, allowing for individual negotiations and the consideration of creative approaches to development that are consistent with the overall policies and guidelines in the Comprehensive Plan.

The Land Use Plan is an expression of City policy established in the Comprehensive Plan and reflects the City of Highwood's intentions regarding the type, intensity, and location of future land use. The Land Use Plan identifies three residential uses, two commercial uses, parks and open space, and institutional and public uses.

Residential Uses

The Land Use Plan establishes three (3) residential land uses: Single-family Residential, Two-family Residential, and Multi-family Residential. **Section 5: Residential Areas Plan** provides an expanded discussion of these uses along with detailed policies.

Single-family Residential

The City of Highwood has several established single-family neighborhoods including the recently developed Town of Fort Sheridan area. The Plan provides policies intended to preserve existing single-family housing stock and protect residential areas from the negative impacts of uncontrolled conversion of single-family structures into duplex and multi-family dwellings, while enhancing these areas through improved code enforcement and investments in public infrastructure.

Two-family Residential

Many of Highwood's homes consist of two-family residences. Two-family residences help provide a wide range of housing options within Highwood and are a valued component of the local housing stock. The creation of additional two-family residences should be encouraged in select areas; however the widespread conversion of single-family homes to two-family structures should be prohibited.

Multi-family Residential

Multi-family residential development, which comprises all residences in buildings with three units or more, is scattered throughout the City's single-family neighborhoods. Significant multi-family developments include portions of the Town of Fort Sheridan development and the Fort Sheridan Place (formerly North Shore Estates) apartment complex. The multi-family residential land use provides a wider variety of housing options to Highwood residents. Multi-family housing can function as a transitional land use between single-family residential areas and adjacent commercial and industrial areas.

Public / Semi-Public

The Land Use Plan designates public and semi-public areas occupied by government facilities, community service providers, public and private institutional users, and utility providers. The large RPX property in the northern portion of the Sheridan Reserve Center is also designated for public/semi-public use. **Section 7: Community Facilities Plan** provides an expanded discussion of these areas and the RPX property, along with detailed policies.

Commercial Uses

The Land Use Plan establishes two (2) commercial land uses: Mixed-use/Downtown Core and Corridor Commercial. **Section 6: Commercial Areas Plan** provides an expanded discussion of these uses along with detailed policies.

Mixed-Use / Downtown Core

Downtown Highwood is the historic heart of the City and should continue to be characterized by a mix of restaurants, residences, office users, retailers and service providers in a unique pedestrian-oriented environment. Highwood has established itself as a regional destination for fine dining and entertainment and it should further enhance and expand its offerings as a destination. In addition, Highwood's commercial areas should be improved to better meet the needs of local residents. Pedestrian mobility and safety should continue to be enhanced and vehicular circulation and parking issues should be addressed. Multi-family residential uses should also be encouraged within Downtown Highwood.

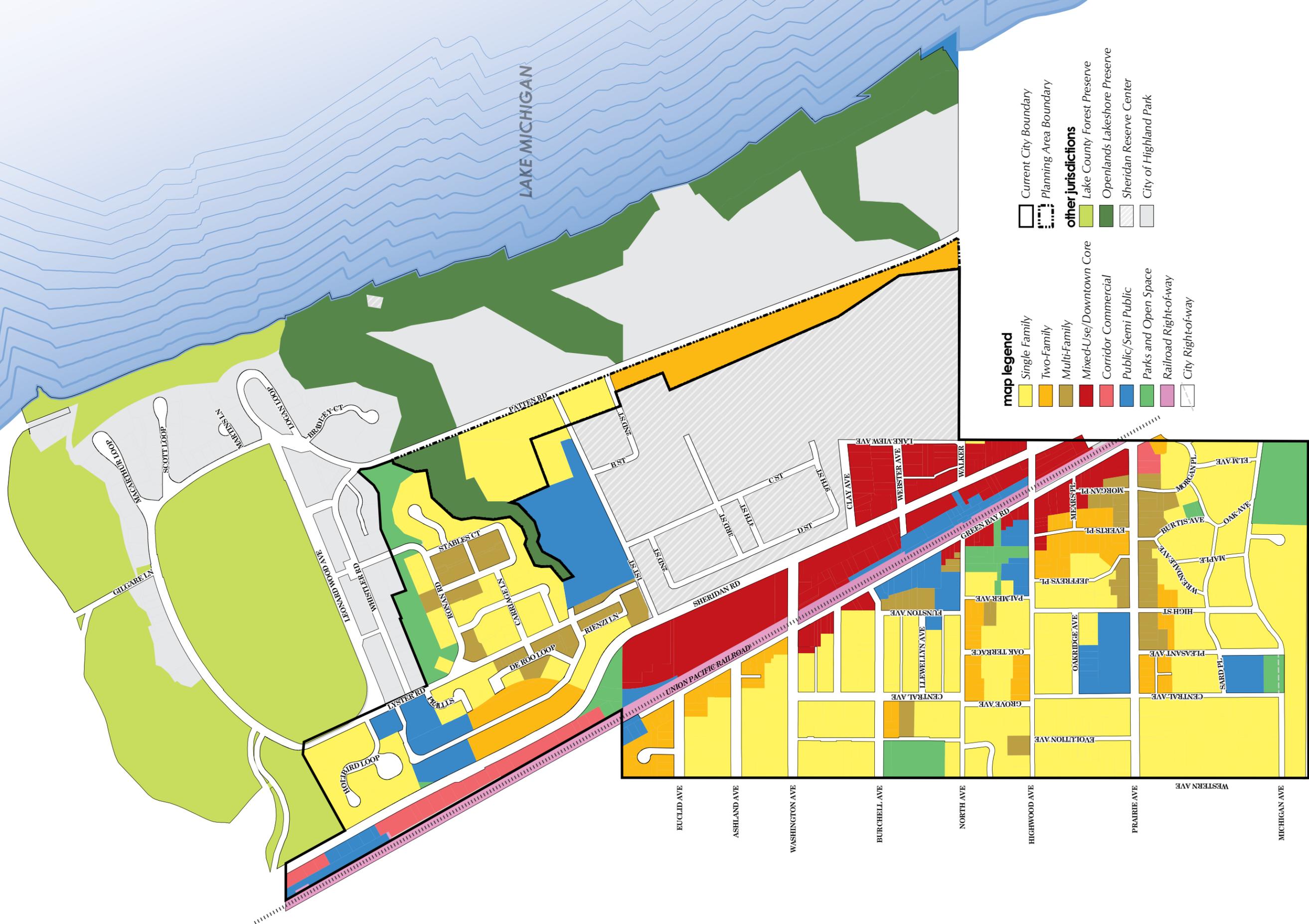
Corridor Commercial

Corridor commercial uses generally consist of strip retail centers with a built form and function that is distinct from the traditional development of Downtown Highwood. These uses are located along Highwood's higher traffic corridors and provide a wide range of retailers and service providers to the community, making efficient use of the shallow lot depths created by the adjacent Union Pacific rail right-of-way and residential uses. Highwood's corridor commercial areas form the City's northernmost gateway along Sheridan Road and the southernmost gateway on the corner of Prairie and Green Bay Road. Corridor commercial uses typically comprise auto-oriented development that prioritizes vehicular access and circulation over the needs of pedestrians. Corridor commercial uses should be enhanced to improve circulation, access, pedestrian safety, and aesthetic improvements such as uniform signage and landscaping plans.

Parks & Open Space

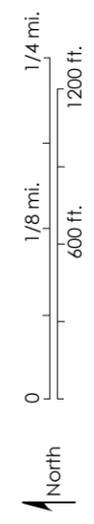
This land use comprises areas to be maintained as parks, recreation sites, or open space, including both public and private facilities. **Section 8: Parks and Open Space Plan** includes a detailed discussion of these areas and identifies policies regarding the preservation, maintenance and expansion of existing parks and open space, the creation of new parks and open space areas, and enhancing local access to and use of open space along the lakefront.

LAND USE PLAN



map legend

- Single Family
 - Two-Family
 - Multi-Family
 - Mixed-Use/Downtown Core
 - Corridor Commercial
 - Public/Semi Public
 - Parks and Open Space
 - Railroad Right-of-way
 - City Right-of-way
- other jurisdictions**
- Lake County Forest Preserve
 - Openlands Lakeshore Preserve
 - Sheridan Reserve Center
 - City of Highland Park
- Current City Boundary
 Planning Area Boundary



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Homes along Michigan Avenue

First platted in 1868, followed by the development of Fort Sheridan in 1887, Highwood developed as a community with a mix of single-family, two-family and multi-family residences to the east of the Sheridan Road corridor. The City's older neighborhoods are characterized by small parcel sizes and short blocks, creating a unique built environment throughout Highwood that helps foster a sense of community. The Highwood portion of the recent Town of Fort Sheridan development mirrors the larger city's distinctive development pattern and mix of housing.

The Residential Areas Plan builds on the Land Use Plan which identifies three (3) residential land uses: Single-family Residential, Two-family Residential, and Multi-family Residential. This section addresses some of the most significant issues facing the community's residential areas and includes general policies for both uses. The location of each residential land use is illustrated in **Figure 4: Residential Areas Plan**.

GOAL:

Foster safe, attractive neighborhoods with high-quality, well-maintained homes through:

- Consistent code enforcement;
- The elimination of non-residential uses and non-conforming residences from residential districts;
- The conversion of non-conforming uses to the desired type and scale of residential development; and,
- Updated development standards that encourage design reflecting the character of the neighborhood.

Single-family Residential

While many recognize local restaurants and taverns as a unique feature of the city, Highwood's compact single-family neighborhoods are equally unique within the region and add to the community's character and sense of identity. Single-family residential areas should be preserved and enhanced through reinvestment, improved property maintenance, consistent enforcement of codes and policies, and prohibition of the conversion of single-family homes to multi-family residences.

Multi-family Conversion

While Highwood's oldest residential areas were established near the turn of the 20th century, in more recent times, many single-family homes have been converted to duplex and multi-unit buildings. Some of these conversions appear to have occurred in violation of the City's land use and development regulations and policies.

The community's wide range of housing types is a unique asset. While a mix of housing is to be encouraged within the city, uncontrolled multi-family development can have a negative impact on the community.

In addition to rapidly changing the character of traditionally single family neighborhoods, the conversion of single-family homes to two-family and multi-family residences can also create stress on infrastructure and resources intended to support a smaller population. The City should prohibit the conversion of single-family homes to multi-family residences and only permit two-family and multi-family development in designated areas as outlined in the Land Use Plan.

Single family home in southern Highwood



Two-family Residential

A significant portion of the City of Highwood housing stock is made up two-family residences. This land use includes two-unit structures, as well as single family homes with accessory dwelling units. Two-family residences provide direct access to each unit and generally lack common interior spaces such as lobbies or shared hallways.

While many of the two-family residences in Highwood were constructed as two-family structures, there are also a several single-family homes that have been converted to two-family structures. Townhomes have been constructed as part of the Town of Fort Sheridan development.

Two-family home to the northwest of Downtown Highwood



Multi-family Residential

Multi-family residential development is made up of a variety of housing types. The majority of multi-family residential development in the City of Highwood takes the form of small buildings with fewer than 10 units. The community's largest multi-family development is Fort Sheridan Place which was recently renovated. Rowhomes and condominiums in the Town of Fort Sheridan development also provide additional options in the multi-family market.

Downtown Highwood

Many of the structures in Downtown Highwood are mixed-use, two-story buildings with office or residential uses located above ground floor retail or restaurant space. Reinvestment and redevelopment within the downtown area should incorporate the traditional built form and mix of uses in the community's historic core. Multi-family residential development should also be encouraged as a component of mixed-use development in Downtown Highwood.

Policies related specifically to Downtown Highwood are also discussed in **Section 6: Commercial Areas Plan**.

Multi-family building on Clay Avenue



Housing Affordability

Attracting Younger Families and Active Professional Adults

The community has expressed a desire to continue to attract new, younger households and would benefit by attracting additional active professional adults to the City of Highwood. The City should encourage the development of a range of housing options to widen the market for potential first-time homebuyers and for adult professional who are looking to downsize.

Housing Diversity

Highwood residents and businesses desire to preserve Highwood as an affordable place to live and work within the affluent North Shore region. The variety of two-family and multi-family, rental and owner-occupied residences within Highwood help provide a range of housing options and should continue to be valued as a unique asset.

The City should continue to encourage diversity of unit types, sizes, and price points within Highwood's housing stock. This will ensure that those working within the community can continue to call it home as well.

It is in the City's best interest to encourage the development or redevelopment of medium and upper end housing to increase the property tax base.

Active Independent Senior Housing

The City should encourage the development of senior housing to accommodate the City's growing population of older households, enabling current Highwood residents to 'age in place' and remain in the community through all stages of life. The Residential Areas Plan does not identify specific locations for senior housing, as this type of housing can take on a variety of forms such as multi-family residential and assisted- and extended-care facilities.

Senior housing should be provided in convenient locations within proximity to transit, goods, and services. Areas within or near Downtown Highwood should be considered ideal for senior housing. Highwood is a walkable community which should further facilitate the development of senior housing.

Image & Identity

While Highwood is recognized as a destination for its restaurants and entertainment, residents desire Highwood to be better recognized as a community in which to live and raise a family.

Property Maintenance

Input from the community indicates that the poor physical appearance of some portions of the local housing stock have impacted visitors' perceptions of the larger community. As indicated by the community, portions of Highwood's older residential neighborhoods suffer from issues of overcrowding, poor condition, deferred maintenance, and landlord absenteeism. The City should take action to improve the physical appearance of its residential neighborhoods and enhance the image of the City of Highwood within the region.

Historic Preservation

The City of Highwood has homes within its borders that are on the National Register of Historic Homes as well as other homes throughout the community that have historic importance to the State of Illinois and the Highwood Community. The City should develop a historic preservation commission to further the work that the Art Institute of Chicago did in the 1990's and create ordinances that safeguard Highwood's Historic heritage and buildings.

Growth

Highwood is a landlocked community with limited opportunities for growth or expansion. Federally-owned property along Patten Road and Westover Road represent the greatest opportunity for new residential development. However, the City must annex the area next to Patten Rd. as provided in the wording of the intergovernmental agreement.

While these areas will likely remain residential in use, no detailed plans are known. The City should maintain and enhance its relationship with the Navy and the operator of the Navy personnel housing along Patten Road. Moreover, the City should work with future developers to ensure that roadway and neighborhood connections are made and new development is incorporated into the larger community. However, the city must annex the area on the westerly portion of Pattern road as was provided in the intergovernmental agreement between Highland Park and Highwood.

While this area will likely remain residential in use, no details are known and a subarea plan for this area should be developed.

Code Enforcement

Residents have indicated that the City's enforcement of existing development controls and ordinances related to property maintenance and appearance is inadequate, inconsistent, and often ignored by property owners. The City needs to develop a uniform approach to code enforcement and follow-up to ensure that all property reviews are performed efficiently and regulations are thoroughly enforced.

The City should also evaluate its existing ordinances to ensure that sufficient guidelines are provided regarding residential property maintenance and appearance. Local residents should also be encouraged to help with code enforcement by reporting potential violations to the City.

Non-Residential Uses & Non-Conforming Residences

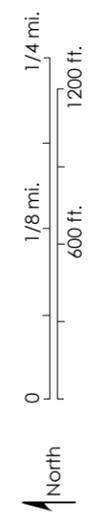
As an established community, nearly every parcel in the City of Highwood has been developed. As development has occurred, City ordinances regulating development and the level of enforcement of those regulations have varied considerably. As such, there are several properties throughout the community that no longer conform with underlying land use and development regulations and do not reflect the desired vision of the community. The City should adopt and enforce an amortization schedule to phase out non-residential and non-conforming uses within residential districts.

City Personnel

If staff and/or resources are insufficient to implement these recommendations, the City should identify additional funding to support those departments in charge of code enforcement, namely the building and zoning department. **Section 11: Implementation** identifies various tools and potential funding sources that the City could utilize toward this effort.

The issues of property maintenance and code enforcement are also addressed in **Section 5: Commercial Areas Plan**.

RESIDENTIAL AREAS PLAN



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Northeast corner of Sheridan Road and Highwood Avenue

The Commercial Areas Plan promotes reinvestment and redevelopment within Downtown Highwood and enhancements to commercial areas along the city's commercial corridors. Highwood's existing reputation as a destination for fine dining and entertainment should be enhanced, while expanding retail offerings to better accommodate the day-to-day needs of local residents and minimizing conflicts with surrounding residential neighborhoods.

The Commercial Areas Plan is an extension of the Land Use Plan which identifies two (2) commercial land uses: Mixed-Use/Downtown Core and Corridor Commercial. The Commercial Areas Plan presents policies for both of these commercial land uses and illustrates their location in **Figure 5: Commercial Areas Plan**.

GOAL:

Expand the City's tax base and strengthen Downtown Highwood as a hub of civic and commercial activity through:

- The elimination of non-sales tax contributing uses from ground floor locations;
- The integration of public gathering places and civic uses;
- Higher density, residential development; and,
- Enhanced code enforcement and property maintenance.

Mixed-Use/Downtown Core

Downtown Highwood is known throughout the North Shore for its unique combination of restaurants and entertainment venues. The downtown area is also unique for its pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use environment and compact built form. Reinvestment and redevelopment within Downtown Highwood should complement existing development and enhance the distinctive character of the area. Development should be mixed-use, oriented toward the street, and continue the street-wall established by adjacent or nearby development. Along the roads adjacent to Everts Park and along the railroad tracks, buildings should have dual orientation.

Detailed recommendations for Downtown Highwood are also provided in **Section 10: Key Focus Area Plans**.

Mix of Uses

Downtown Highwood should continue to be enhanced as a dynamic, safe, and attractive environment within which to live, shop, dine, and work. Synergies should develop in a mixed-use environment wherein local residents and office workers provide retailers and service providers with an extended customer base while reducing the need to drive and promoting a sense of place.

Mixed-use, compact development should be encouraged within Downtown Highwood to enhance the vibrancy of this unique commercial area. Uses within Mixed-Use/Downtown Core areas should include ground floor retail, dining, and entertainment with professional office and multi-family residential uses located on the upper floors of buildings.

Scale & Character

Development in Downtown Highwood should complement the built form, scale, and character of existing commercial development while respecting the surrounding residential neighborhoods they serve. The Mixed-Use/Downtown Core area development should be human-scaled and pedestrian friendly and all buildings should be architecturally attractive and add value to the adjacent properties.

Encouraging Density

Using appropriate design standards, Downtown Highwood can accommodate higher density development that still respects the character of existing development and proximity to residential areas.

The City should reassess its zoning standards regarding building height, and buildable area such as lot coverage, floor area ratio and setback requirements. Revisions to parking requirements and shared parking should also be considered. The majority of the Downtown falls within the B-1 zoning district, however so do the majority of the commercial properties located outside of the Downtown. New standards intended to be specific to the downtown area should be established through a new zoning district or utilizing a zoning overlay district that augments B-1 requirements in a targeted manner.

Bank of Highwood building



Range of Business Types

Residents indicated a need for additional general merchandise stores. While Highwood's many restaurants and entertainment venues represent a unique community asset, there is significant demand for additional retailers serving daily needs. The City should encourage the establishment of general merchandise retailers to expand the range of goods and services provided in Downtown Highwood. While there may not be adequate market support for some large scale retailers, there may be niche opportunities for smaller stores such as a hardware store or specialty grocer.

Hotel Moraine Site

The currently vacant Hotel Moraine site has significant potential for redevelopment given the property's large size and prominent location along the Sheridan Road commercial corridor to the north of Downtown Highwood.

Community Vision

The community desires to see this site redeveloped as a new hotel and banquet center that will generate sales tax and hotel tax revenue. Some, but not all of the key issues regarding the Hotel Moraine site include:

- This site is one of the most important parts of the city.
- Because of the visual condition of the building, the site has had an impact on the businesses, apartments and homes that surround the property.
- Because the property has been devoid of a business the city has lost sales tax and hotel tax to significant degrees.
- Because the property has had the property assessed at a substantially diminished value the city has lost substantial property tax. Residents have had to make up the difference in their property tax.
- The Hotel Moraine is should be considered a blighted area as the building has been vacant for nearly seven years and suffers from disrepair. The site has had a negative impact on the city for many years.

- The area should be sales/ hotel tax income generating.
- The property is an entrance to our community and the appearance of the building should be a compliment to the architectural style of the community
- It is and has been an eyesore to the community for many years.
- If it is possible the area should be considered a blight site to the community and a strategy should be considered to push the property to move forward.
- This property is a good area for a TIF to enable the city to push development in a way that most financially benefits the community.
- Redevelopment should take into consideration many issues, including, as an example, the following items: substantial parking enhancements, gateway features, streetscape elements, sidewalk connectors, green space development, and traffic elements.
- This is a highly visible property on the cities main thoroughfare and is important to the viability of the city's image.
- Any development should not exceed the current height of the existing Hotel Moraine building.
- Residential use is not recommended.

Encouraging Redevelopment

There are several preliminary steps the City can take to encourage desired redevelopment of the Hotel Moraine site. The City should:

- Utilize community input received during the comprehensive planning process as the basis for an official, unified vision for the Hotel Moraine site.
- Work with current property owners to develop a preliminary development concept for the site that honors the community's vision while maximizing potential redevelopment opportunities.
- Reach out to a local economic development organization to examine the potential to revitalize hotel uses at the Hotel Moraine site.
- Establish monetary and/or procedural incentives, such as tax increment finance (TIF).
- Work with current property owners and local economic development corporations to market the site for redevelopment.

Hotel Moraine site



Corridor Commercial

The portion of the Sheridan Road corridor to the north of 1st Avenue is the location of some of Highwood's most recent commercial development. This area has emerged as an auto-oriented commercial corridor, with several strip centers providing a wide range of retailers and service providers to the community. Similar uses can also be found on the southwest corner of Prairie Avenue and Green Bay Road.

Circulation & Access

Corridor Commercial development along Sheridan Road makes efficient use of the shallow lot depths created by the adjacent Union Pacific rail right-of-way to the west. However, shallow lot depths have also limited internal circulation and created the need for multiple access points to each commercial property. A significant concentration of access points can be problematic with regards to both vehicular and pedestrian safety and traffic flow.

Corridor Commercial uses should be enhanced to improve circulation, access and pedestrian safety. The City should work with property owners to improve access management within Corridor Commercial areas by reducing the number of access points and curb cuts, and facilitating cross-easement access and shared parking agreements.

Sheridan Road (looking north)



Code Enforcement

Members of the Highwood business community have highlighted vacant commercial buildings and poorly maintained properties as the most significant threats to existing businesses. While some in the business community say that overall vacancy is not a significant issue, there are several prominent properties that have been vacant for an extended length of time, are poorly maintained, and/or create a negative impression despite the success of nearby businesses.

Enforcement of existing codes and ordinances should be enhanced to ensure that commercial properties are well-maintained and do not detract from the larger business community. The City needs to develop a uniform approach to code enforcement and follow-up to ensure that all property reviews are performed efficiently and regulations are thoroughly enforced. The City should also assess its existing ordinances to ensure that sufficient guidelines are provided regarding commercial property maintenance and appearance.

Non-Commercial Uses

As in the City's residential districts, there are several commercial properties that no longer conform with underlying land use and development regulations and fail to contribute positively to the community's desired vision. The City should adopt and enforce an amortization schedule to phase out non-commercial uses, as well as non-conforming commercial properties within the City's commercial districts.

Development Handbook

To streamline the development process, the City should establish a user's guide to zoning and development that simplifies the building code and lessens the chance of misinterpretation of existing regulations between property owners and City staff. In creating this user's guide, the City should also perform a comprehensive review of all development regulations and permitting processes.

COMMERCIAL AREAS PLAN

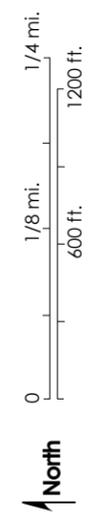
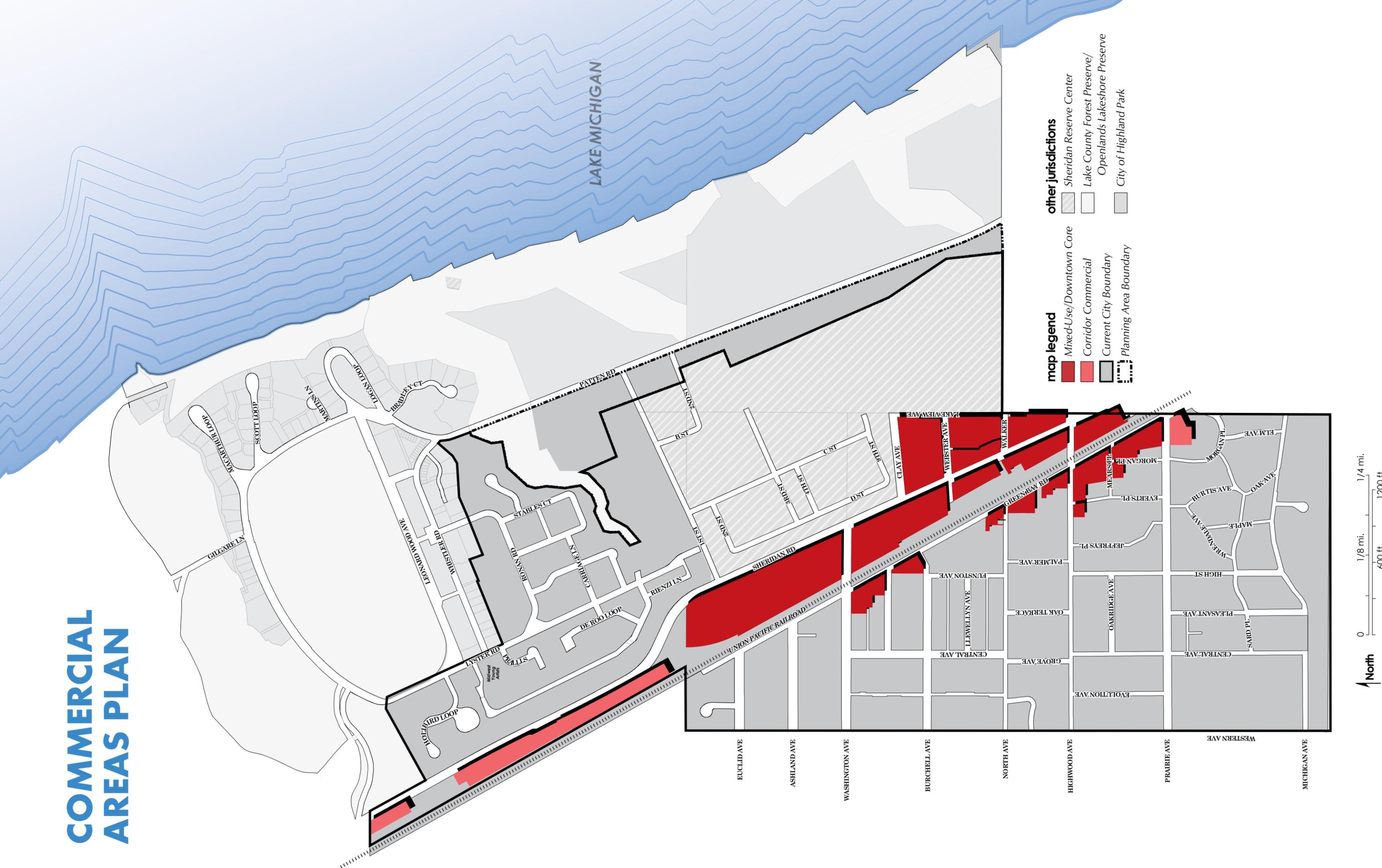


Image & Identity

Highwood wishes to maintain its sense of community pride and positive image throughout the larger region. Maintenance of the physical appearance of properties within the commercial area of the city is a priority. The poor physical appearance of some properties within the commercial areas of the City is having a negative impact on the local community's sense of pride as well as Highwood's image within the larger region. Proper code enforcement, revisions to the development process, targeted physical enhancements to public areas, and marketing should all be utilized in improving Highwood's image.

Streetscape Enhancements

Streetscape improvements made through the use of the Downtown Highwood Tax Increment Finance (TIF) district represent a significant improvement to the appearance of the downtown area and its function as a pedestrian-friendly destination. The City should continue to make streetscape enhancements elsewhere in the Downtown TIF district including along the Green Bay Road corridor to the north of Highwood Avenue and along Prairie Avenue, the City's major entry point from the west.

The City should coordinate streetscaping efforts with adjacent property owners. Streetscape improvements should include the installation of street trees, pedestrian and vehicular scaled lighting, improved sidewalks and pedestrian cross-walks, banners, plantings, street furniture, and other pedestrian amenities. These improvements should complement existing streetscape improvements along Sheridan Road and incorporate the right-of-way improvements recommended in **Section 10: Key Focus Area Plans**.

Gateway Sign at Prairie Avenue and Green Bay Road



Commercial Screening & Buffering

There are several areas throughout Highwood where restaurants and commercial and entertainment uses sit adjacent to residential properties. The use of horizontal and vertical buffering and screening, including berms, fencing, and landscaping, should be promoted to protect residential neighborhoods from abutting commercial uses.

The City should identify areas where residential and commercial area adjacency is problematic and examine different programs to implement buffering and screening techniques. The City's landscape ordinance could be revised to require enhanced screening and to ensure compliance within a set time frame. Desired future land use should also be considered when evaluating the need and extent of screening and buffering.

Marketing & Promotion

The community has identified the need for a stronger Highwood 'brand' to better unify the marketing efforts of local businesses. The City recently contracted a public relations consultant and has begun a public relations campaign to improve the image of Highwood as a shopping and dining destination and as a place to live and work. The City should bolster its own marketing efforts by reaching out to local businesses. For example, the City could host a workshop to identify the marketing elements desired by the local business community and potential tools for linking businesses to a larger city-wide promotional campaign.

Bench at the Highwood Metra station



Gateway Opportunities

Gateway features are cost effective and targeted tools the City should utilize in its marketing efforts. Gateway features should be installed at entry points into the City along primary roadways. Enhancements should include high quality signage, landscaping, lighting and other improvements that announce entry into Highwood and improve the City's image to visitors. Wayfinding elements should also be included to direct visitors to primary destinations in the community.

Gateway features should be installed along the City's periphery at Green Bay Road near Prairie Avenue, Sheridan Road near Old Elm Road, Prairie Avenue near Western Avenue, Walker Avenue near Lake View Avenue, and Waukegan Avenue to the south of Highwood Avenue as it enters Downtown Highwood. Some gateway signage has already been installed by the City and these improvements should be complemented by additional signage, landscape and hardscape elements to make the gateway feature more pronounced to passing vehicles and pedestrians.

Signage

Commercial signage should allow for adequate business identification, legibility, and visibility while respecting the scale and character of surrounding development and minimizing visual clutter. Input received from the Highwood business community indicates that the City's existing signage ordinance is inconsistently enforced.

The City should review and revise its existing signage regulations within the Zoning Ordinance and Appearance Review Code based on input from the business community and local residents. For example, the business community has indicated a desire for more permissive temporary signage regulations, such as sandwich boards. A revised ordinance should establish context sensitive regulations and utilize illustrative examples and tables to outline clear and concise guidelines.

The City has an appearance review commission that should be supported and supplied with the resources they need to successfully do their job. The appearance ordinance should be reviewed from time to time and input should be taken from the community, both business and residents to address needed changes. A visual preference survey should be conducted with the community to identify the direction the community prefers as an addition to the comprehensive plan.

Visual Preference Survey

The City should commission a visual preference survey to solicit input from Highwood residents and businesses regarding the desired type and character of development desired within the community's commercial areas.

Railroad Right-of-way Advertising

There are several advertising signs located along the railroad right-of-way near the Highwood Metra station. The City does not support or desire the use of advertising signs in this area.

Economic Development Commission

There are dozens of tools and strategies the City can utilize in its efforts to encourage reinvestment and redevelopment within its commercial areas. The City should establish an Economic Development Commission (EDC) to prioritize economic development opportunities and evaluate strategies to foster redevelopment, recruit new businesses, and retain, enhance and expand existing businesses.

Façade & Site Improvement Program

The deferred maintenance and aging appearance of some commercial properties has been identified as a significant issue facing Highwood. The City and the EDC should establish a façade and site improvement program to assist local businesses and property owners in investing in the aesthetics of their properties and storefronts. A dedicated funding source for such a program will also need to be identified.

Additional potential funding sources and strategies are provided in **Section 11: Implementation**. Specific economic development strategies must be tailored to the needs of the community and should be developed after seeking further input from the local business community.

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Highwood City Hall

Highwood residences and businesses are served by a variety of community facilities and service providers. These services include police, fire and emergency response, water, streets and sanitation, City administration, public and private schools, public library, and others. The City should continue to work with its various departments as well as other community facility providers to ensure that they can continue to provide for local residents and businesses with high quality and reliable services.

The Community Facilities Plan provides an overview of the City's community facilities and summarizes the current and future needs and long-range recommendations.

City of Highwood Facilities

City Hall

Highwood City Hall, located at 17 Highwood Avenue, is the primary administrative location for several City departments including City administration and the building and zoning, and police departments.

Potential Redevelopment

While various City department officials have not indicated a need to relocate or expand, input from residents and the business community received during the planning process have indicated a desire to see the City Hall moved and the current site redeveloped.

The site is well situated within Downtown Highwood and commercial redevelopment could serve as a physical link between the Sheridan Road and Green Bay Road corridors. The site's location along the rail corridor also limits the potential for negative impacts of new commercial uses on Highwood's residential properties. Residents have indicated that a new City Hall facility could also be used to improve the image of the City as a whole. The City should consider the current City Hall site as a potential redevelopment opportunity and identify the costs and benefits of relocating its facilities elsewhere in the future.

This Community Facilities Plan recommends that, should the City Hall be moved, it be relocated to a multi-purpose municipal center in the area adjacent to the Highwood Fire Department, Highwood Recreation Center and a future community center on the north. Additional discussion on this topic is contained in **Section 10: Key Focus Area Plans**.

Water Department

The Highwood Water Department operates a surface water plant at the east end of Walker Avenue along Lake Michigan. In addition to supplying water to the City of Highwood, the plant supplies water to portions of Highland Park and the nearby operations at the Sheridan Reserve Center. Representatives from the City indicated that there were no anticipated issues in continuing to provide service to the Sheridan Reserve Center following its planned redevelopment and subsequent expansion of its daytime population.

Water Plant

The City should continue to take steps to ensure that water plant capacity is sufficient to supply Highwood's current needs and into the future with access to clean, potable water. The water plant is a vital part of the community. To protect this critical facility, the City should continue its efforts to stabilize and prevent erosion around the water plant.

Public Works

The primary role of the Public Works department is the maintenance of the City's streets and public rights-of-way. The Public Works department may need to relocate some of its existing facilities in the near future.

Bank Lane Facility

The department of public works has a facility located on Bank Lane to the south of Washington Avenue. Officials from the department indicated that there have been discussions regarding relocating this facility to allow for the sale of the property for redevelopment in combination with the adjacent property to the north.

Should the Public Works department decide to relocate its Bank Lane facilities, the City should work with the adjacent property owner to create a single contiguous site for comprehensive redevelopment. Additional discussion on the public works Bank Lane facility is contained in **Section 10: Key Focus Area Plans**.

Green Bay Road

This Community Facilities Plan recommends that, should the public works facility be relocated, it be accommodated in the area at the northern terminus of Green Bay Road. The area is relatively isolated, thus minimizing potential land use conflicts and is underutilized as it is currently the location of a multi-family building adjoined by vacant parcels to the north and south. Should the City pursue relocation of the public works facility to this area, proper screening and buffering should be provided to mitigate potential negative impacts on neighboring residential properties. The City could vacate a portion of Green Bay Road to increase the size of the site and accommodate the additional screening components.

Water Supply

Comments from fire department officials indicate that water supply and distribution systems are in need of updating in the City's older residential areas. The City should conduct an analysis of these systems in problematic areas identified by the fire department. Pending the results of this analysis, the City should coordinate efforts of the fire and water departments to upgrade water supply and distribution systems where necessary. The public works department should also be involved in this effort to coordinate any needed improvements to local streets and sidewalks.

Lake Michigan Access

The City should seek opportunities to establish its own lake-front access point for its residents.

Highwood Water Plant



Parks & Recreation Department

Highwood has a full-time recreation department with facilities that include a large gym, community center, lighted ball field, and three parks. The Parks and Recreation Department offers the community a variety of programs and recreational opportunities year-round. Detailed discussion and recommendations regarding the Parks and Recreation Department and the parks and facilities it operates are contained in **Section 8: Parks and Open Space Plan**.

Police Department

The Highwood Police Department provides residents with a full-time force and a Police Chief. The Highwood Police Department currently operates out of the Highwood City Hall building at 17 Highwood Avenue. The police department has no need to expand its operations.

Joint Police and Fire Department Facility

This Community Facilities Plan recommends that, should the City Hall be relocated, the Police Department would be relocated to a multi-purpose municipal center in the area adjacent to the Highwood Fire Department and that a joint facility would be developed to house both departments. The development of a joint facility would reduce potential construction and long-term maintenance costs and improve emergency response times.

Residential Areas

Highwood residents have indicated a desire for increased policing efforts within Highwood's residential neighborhoods. Community input indicated that this issue was related to a lack of communication between residents and police department officials. To ensure that local problem areas are being sufficiently policed, formal lines of communication should be established between Aldermen, the police department, and residents to ensure that local problem areas are being sufficiently policed.

Highwood Fire Department

The Highwood Fire Department provides residents with full-time fire fighters and a Fire Chief. The City currently has a fire insurance rating of 4 which is reported to be similar to surrounding communities. The fire department has no plans to renovate the existing facility at 428 Green Bay Road or build any new facilities.

Joint Police and Fire Department Facility

As stated previously, should the City Hall facility that houses the Police Department be relocated, a joint facility for both the Fire Department and the Police Department should be developed. A joint facility would be an efficient and cost-effective approach when compared to renovating or constructing two separate facilities.

Combining Services with Adjacent Communities

As with a joint facility to be shared among City departments, there may also be cost saving opportunities in establishing shared facilities and services with adjacent municipalities and taxing districts. The City should further explore and study the potential costs and benefits of doing this where appropriate.

Highwood Fire Department on Green Bay Road



Highwood Public Library

The Highwood Library is a valuable asset to the community and can continue to be a resource with continued growth and development.

Facility Needs

Library representatives indicated that residents within the library's service area are utilizing newer, larger library facilities in neighboring communities. The limited use of the full library property, needed renovations and a limited budget, encumber the library's abilities to meet requests for operating hours, additional programming, and expanded technology.

The City should support the Library's efforts to upgrade the service delivery, materials, technology, programming and community meeting space. The City should consider the Library's needs as it examines potential redevelopment or significant properties within Downtown Highwood.

Library Parking

While library parking is generally sufficient during the day, evening parking has emerged as an issue as library officials have begun to explore extending hours and holding evening events. Library patrons must compete for parking with patrons of nearby restaurants and other local businesses.

The City should work with the Highwood Public Library to identify parking solutions that balance the needs of library patrons with those of local businesses. Additional discussion of parking issues can be found in **Section 9: Transportation Plan**.

Highwood Public Library



Senior Programming

The city has a significant and growing senior population that is increasingly in need of services. As with the youth population, seniors in Highwood have expressed the desire for more targeted recreation programming and socializing opportunities. The City should solicit specific input from the senior community regarding the need to establish Senior Programming within the community and identify what issues and assistance aging residents within Highwood require. Potential may exist to coordinate development of Senior Programming with the expansion of the Highwood Recreation Center and development of a Youth Center and to work with other government agencies to expand opportunities and agencies.

Post Office

The U.S. Postal Service (USPS) is an important service provider within the community, operating a full-service office along Highwood Avenue adjacent to Everts Park. The USPS recently halted its efforts to sell the current facility and find an alternative location within Highwood. While the U.S. Post Office will remain at its current location for the foreseeable future, the potential for relocation still remains over the long term. As such, the existing Post Office facility may be a key opportunity site for redevelopment.

As indicated in the Land Use Plan, given its proximity to other community service providers and Everts Park, the U.S. Post Office site may be a good location for other community facilities. In partnership with the USPS, the City should assess the costs and benefits of purchasing the site to accommodate the relocation of facilities such as City Hall or police department, or the expansion of facilities.

The area's central location and adjacency to Everts Park and Downtown Highwood also make it well suited for multi-family development. Should the City's various community facilities be accommodated at alternative sites, two story multi-family or commercial development would be the preferred land use for this area.

Schools

The City has no jurisdiction over local school districts; however it is important that the City maintain communication regarding their existing needs and plans for expansion. Identifying and understanding the needs of the schools puts the City in a better position to assist in meeting the needs of Highwood residents.

Students from Highwood attend Northwood Junior High (grades 6-8) in the North Shore School District #112 and Highland Park High School in Township High School District #113. Both of these schools are located in Highland Park.

Oak Terrace Public School (grades 1-5), St. James Private Elementary School (Catholic K-8), and the Midwest Young Artists music school, are the only school facilities located within the City of Highwood.

The City should support the continued operation and improvement of these facilities, provided that improvements or expansions do not negatively impact residential neighborhoods, and cooperate with the various organizations to maintain high quality school sites and facilities.

Oak Terrace Elementary

Oak Terrace Elementary School is located at 240 Prairie. Enrollment has increased over the past five school years, however enrollment projections indicate that this trend will reverse itself and enrollment will decline over the next five years.

The current school facility was constructed in 2000 and, with the exception of some maintenance and landscaping projects, there are currently no plans to renovate or expand the building in the future.

Oak Terrace Elementary School



Community

The Oak Terrace Elementary School is unique in that it offers a dual English/Spanish language program. Community input received throughout the planning process indicates that there is a mutual desire for a stronger sense of community between the City's Latino and non-Latino groups. The school's dual language program has the potential to create a better sense of community among Highwood's youth.

The City should work with the school district and Oak Terrace School officials to promote the school and the benefits of the dual language program to the broader region.

Recreation

The City should encourage the school district to continue to expand open space in the area surrounding the school for playing fields.

High Street

The High Street and Prairie Avenue intersection adjacent to the school has been identified as an intersection needing further study. The City should assess the safety and efficiency benefits of making High Street a one-way street and make necessary improvements based on the result of that assessment.

St. James Catholic School

St. James Private Elementary School is located at 140 North Avenue. School officials stated that enrollment is expected to increase over the next five years, although this observation is not based on any formal projections.

Facility Needs

School officials indicated that their current facility, located at 140 N Highwood, is under capacity and in need of some improvement. There are currently plans to renovate the existing St. James School facility including tuck pointing, classroom improvements, and plumbing and electrical upgrades.

The Arts

Highwood is home to a growing population of artists with several unique cultural assets including the world-renown Rotblatt-Amrany Studios and Midwest Young Artists school. The City can play an important role in fostering appreciation of the arts and encouraging the expansion of the number of artists residing and doing business in Highwood. The City should work with local groups to support art-friendly programs and provide events to showcase the work of local artists. The arts should be promoted to the fullest advantage and incorporated into the community. The development of tax-generating live-work housing, where appropriate, should also be encouraged.

Midwest Young Artists

The Midwest Young Artists (MYA) is a nonprofit music school with eight youth orchestras, more than 60 chamber music ensembles, four choral groups, an all-inclusive jazz program, a wind symphony, an early childhood education program, and classes in music theory and composition.

Regional Attraction

The school had a 2009-2010 enrollment of 900 students, nine of which were from Highwood and 33 of whom were from Highland Park. The MYA has students from throughout the greater Chicago area and southeast Wisconsin, and school officials estimated that it attracts 600 families to the City of Highwood from throughout the region on a weekly basis during the school year. The City should continue to support the efforts of the MYA and include the music school as a regional attraction within its marketing and promotional efforts for the larger community.

Facility Needs

The MYA moved to the former Army Stockade building in the Town of Fort Sheridan development in June of 2000. The building has been renovated to provide rehearsal space and a state-of-the-art recording studio. School officials indicated a need to expand the current building to the west in the area occupied by the parking lot. This expansion would require additional parking off-site.

The lots to the west of the MYA are vacant, but as a nonprofit organization, purchasing additional land for expansion represents a significant obstacle. This land is currently listed for-sale and is being marketed as a component of the Town of Fort Sheridan development. Plans for the 4-acre parcel call for 15 single-family homes. The City should work with the MYA and current property owners to assess the potential for expansion into this area.

Midwest Young Artists Music School



COMMUNITY FACILITIES PLAN



map legend

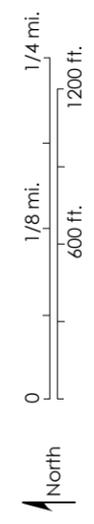
- Municipal / Civic
- Public Works
- Library
- School Facilities
- Healthcare
- Metra Parking
- M Metra Station
- Other Land Use
- Current City Boundary
- Planning Area Boundary

other jurisdictions

- Sheridan Reserve Center
- Lake County Forest Preserve/ Openlands Lakeshore Preserve
- City of Highland Park

Community Facilities

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Rotblatt-Amrany Studio 2. Midwest Young Artists 3. RPX Property 4. Public Works* 5. Water Tower 6. Multi-purpose Municipal Center* 7. Joint Public Safety Facility* | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. St. James Catholic School 9. U.S. Post Office 10. Public Library 11. Oak Terrace Elementary School 12. Highland Park Nursing & Rehab Center 13. Water Plant |
|--|---|
- * Indicates potential future facility



Sheridan Reserve Center

Army Reserve Officials have indicated that a development concept is currently being evaluated to consolidate and redevelop the Philip H. Sheridan Reserve Center complex. Plans entail the replacement of existing WWII-era structures with more modern facilities that combine the function of existing facilities, which are scattered throughout the site, into larger, more efficient structures. Completion of the proposed development concept is estimated to take between 10 and 15 years. Following redevelopment, the day-time population of the complex would increase by approximately 10 percent.

Cooperation

The Army Reserve has sought input from the City regarding architecture and appearance of new facilities and improvements to the reserve complex. Officials from the Army Reserve have indicated that they have been pleased with the outcome of this cooperative approach to design and will continue to seek the City's input regarding the design of future facilities on the reserve complex.

Despite efforts on behalf of the Army Reserve, communication with the City has been inconsistent and Highwood residents and businesses feel uninformed of current operations and future plans at the Sheridan Reserve Center. The City should establish more formalized and regular communication with the Army Reserve to ensure that City officials and the larger Highwood community have accurate knowledge of activities at the Sheridan Reserve Center.

Public Works Facility

The Public Works department currently leases a building, approximately 10,000 square feet in size, at D Street and 1st Avenue in the Sheridan Reserve Center. Current plans for redevelopment of the reserve center indicate that this building would be demolished. The City should examine alternative locations for the public works operations that are currently located at the Sheridan Reserve Center facility. The public works department should also include operations at the Sheridan Reserve facility in relocation plans for the Bank Lane facility.

Real Property Exchange

As a component of larger planning efforts at the reserve complex, the Army Reserve is considering entering the approximately 11 to 12 acre area located to the north of 1st Avenue into a real property exchange (RPX). Under the RPX process, the Department of Defense may convey property to municipalities (or others) in exchange for a facility or facilities (existing and/or to be constructed).

City officials have expressed interest in this property and the site may be a good location for a recreation center, public works, or other community facilities should they be relocated. Should the City choose to purchase this property, it will have a corresponding influence on land use and development elsewhere in Highwood. A parcel of this size could accommodate a wide range of community facilities and civic uses such as new parks and recreation amenities, a community center, public works, or public safety facilities.

Many of the community facility recommendations contained in this chapter are contingent upon the redevelopment of the RPX property. Where appropriate, the Plan provides flexibility with regard to future development at sites that are potentially suitable for either public use or another type of development. The RPX property is shown as a public use within the Land Use Plan to highlight the potential that this area possesses.

Environmental Remediation

The property is located adjacent to the Bartlett Ravine and the Highwood portion of the Town of Fort Sheridan development. A portion of the site is currently occupied by a landfill. The City should evaluate the costs and benefits of acquiring this property and decide whether to pursue purchase of the site through the RPX process. Such an evaluation should include potential costs of environmental remediation of the portion of the site currently occupied by a land fill should cleanup be required.

Sense of Community

Development of positive community connections was expressed throughout the comprehensive plan process. Sense of community was a topic of concern and a common thread through all community outreach efforts for the Comprehensive Plan. The issue of sense of community appears to encompass social, cultural, and physical divides within the community. Disconnects exist between several groups of the community including renters and homeowners, established groups and relative new comers, and vary in the neighborhoods of Highwood. While the Comprehensive Plan cannot fully address this significant social issue, it is hoped that the Comprehensive Plan and the related planning process will help facilitate future discussion within and among Highwood's many groups.

Community Events

Community events represent one of the most significant contributions the City can make toward fostering a better sense of community within Highwood. In addition to organizing regular special events, the City can also create an environment wherein more localized, community-building events can take place.

Special Events

The City currently has a group, the Mayor's Committee for Special Events, which is responsible for all of the City's special events and related programs including parades, fests, tastes, community fairs and any other matters which affect the cultural growth of the city. The mission of this committee is to make Highwood a destination. This mission should be amended to include discussion of enhancing a sense of community within Highwood. In addition to promoting the City within the region, the expertise of the Special Events committee could also be applied to bringing neighborhoods and groups together.

Business Community

While special events build awareness of Downtown Highwood's offerings, community input has indicated that some businesses and restaurants may be negatively impacted if these events deter existing customers from visiting. The City should reach out to the Chamber of Commerce and the local business community to assess how community events like Highwood Days can be improved to better benefit local retailers and restaurants.

Communication

Residents and members of the local business community indicated that the City's communication efforts need improvement. The City's ability to reach out to all residents has a direct influence on local sense of community. The City should continue to work to improve its communication with residents and local businesses including the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan. Additional discussion of this issue can be found in **Section 11: Implementation**.

Community Service Providers Promotion

The City's various community facilities and service providers attract visitors to Highwood and enhance local quality of life. In addition to ensuring that these departments, agencies, and organizations have necessary facilities and resources, the City should also work with these groups to market and promote their services. For example, the City's website could be used as a marketing tool to post information, provide links to other community service provider websites, and host community message/event boards. The City could also utilize regular mailings, such as the vehicle city sticker application form, as a means of providing lower cost advertising for various community service providers and groups.

Sustainable Development

The construction of new community facilities and the renovation and expansion of existing facilities will provide the City with the opportunity to promote the use of sustainable development practices. The City and partner agencies are in the position to lead by example, by using public buildings to showcase "best management practices" and green building techniques such as the use of pervious pavers and rain gardens, energy saving construction, and the integration of renewable energy sources.

In addition to providing local project examples, the City should also examine existing codes and evaluate how building standards can be improved to require more sustainable development practices.

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Fiore Family Park

PARKS & OPEN SPACE PLAN

Young families are attracted to communities with programming for children. Highwood residents are provided access to parks, recreation facilities and open space through the City of Highwood's Parks and Recreation Department and adjacent and nearby portions of the Lake County Forest Preserve and Openlands Lakeshore Preserve. Additionally, the City of Highwood is a member of the Northern Suburban Special Recreation Association (NSSRA). Overall, the City's park and recreation offerings improve the City's image, character, and quality of life while preserving and enhancing sensitive natural features.

The City's Parks and Recreation Department should continue to provide high quality facilities and programming. The City should also urge the Lake County Forest Preserve to build the agreed to old course and work with Openlands and other open space conservation groups to preserve, enhance, and provide public access to nearby ravines, areas of open space, and the Lake Michigan shoreline.

Parks & Recreation Department

The City of Highwood maintains a recreation center and three public parks: Everts Parks, Charles and Josephine Fiore Family Park, and Memorial Park (Western Avenue Ball Park).

NRPA Standards

The National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA), of which Highwood is a member, recommends a standard of 10 acres of open space for every 1,000 residents. In addition to the Highwood Recreation Center, the Highwood Parks and Recreation Department currently manages an estimated 5 acres of park space in three parks. Highwood should strive to take into consideration those properties.

Given the compact nature of development in Highwood's established residential areas, the community should consider its proximity to significant regional open space areas to achieve the NRPA standard of 10 acres per 1,000 residents. This standard represents a goal to which to aspire and highlights the general need to continue efforts to expand park space and facilities within the community.

Underserved Areas

The City should continue to identify and prioritize opportunities to purchase land in underserved areas of the community that are in greatest need of new park space.

Charles & Josephine Fiore Family Park is an excellent example of how a neighborhood park can be created in an established residential area to provide needed access to parks and recreation. This half-acre park, which opened to the public in 2004, has a playground and is located on the northeast corner of the intersection of Burtis and Oak Avenues.

Land Acquisition

Ideally, residents within Highwood should be located within ¼-mile of neighborhood parks. The City should pursue the strategic purchase of underutilized properties in these areas to accommodate small, neighborhood park and playground locations.

Preliminary observations indicate that the residential neighborhood located to the north of Washington Avenue could benefit from an additional neighborhood park. The nearest park space is located at Memorial Park which is between Burchell and North Avenues.

Similarly, the residential areas to the south of Prairie Avenue could likely benefit from additional park space. Fiore Family Park represents the only park space in this portion of Highwood. The City owns land between Central and Pleasant Avenue toward the north of Michigan Avenue. This property should be developed as a neighborhood park with walking trails and other passive recreational amenities.

The area of open space to the north of the Hotel Moraine site should also be improved as a public park when that site is redeveloped.

Memorial Park

Memorial Park, also known as Western Avenue Ball Park, located on Western Avenue between Burchell and North Avenues, hosts baseball and softball programs during the spring and also has a playground.

Off-street Parking

The City should continue to examine the potential acquisition of adjacent property to the north to accommodate an off-street parking lot. Additional street lighting should also be installed to improve security at the park.

Everts Park

Everts Park, located in the heart of downtown Highwood, was named after the founder of the City. A playground and memorial benches and trees are located in the park to celebrate and remember people who built and sustained the community. Residents have identified this park as an asset to the community and the City should continue to utilize this park as a venue for community events including summer concerts.

Connecting to Downtown Highwood

If Everts Park is to continue to evolve in its role as a town square and central gathering place for the community, it must be better connected to Downtown Highwood and the retail and pedestrian activities the area generates. The City should examine opportunities to expand the park to the east and establish a formal entrance from Green Bay Road. For example, the City could purchase property along Green Bay Road, adjacent to either the park or library property, or negotiate an easement with current property owners.

US Post Office site

The U.S. Post Office facility located adjacent to Everts Park will remain at its current location for the foreseeable future, but may be relocated in the long term. This property could represent a significant redevelopment opportunity given its central location within Highwood. Should the U.S. Post Office property be redeveloped, by the City or another entity, the City should ensure that redevelopment of the larger site does not negatively impact the role and function of Everts Park as a community asset.

Water Tower Park

The area by the City of Highwood water tower, is an unimproved community open space, which should be developed for park and recreational uses upon redevelopment of the surrounding area, *i.e.* the Hotel Moraine.

Highwood Recreation Center

The Recreation Center offers several youth programs including baseball, basketball, martial arts, and Tot Time. The City should continue to consider the acquisition of the vacant property next to the Recreation Center on the north (a former restaurant). The site's adjacency to the Recreation Center creates the potential for the expansion of the recreation facilities and programming offered therein. Given the site's proximity to other City services, including the Library, City administrative office, and Fire Department, the site may also be a good location for the relocation or expansion of these and other City services in the future.

PARKS AND OPEN SPACE PLAN



Youth Center

Residents as well as representatives of schools in Highwood have indicated a desire for additional recreation opportunities for children and teenagers (e.g. soccer fields, basketball courts, etc.) as well as targeted programming. The City should work with local groups, including Oak Terrace Elementary, and nearby Northwood Junior High School, to study the need for additional youth and young adult programming within the community. Should the City determine that there is sufficient demand for expanded programming and facilities, it should continue to work with local groups to expand the Recreation Center and/or establish a Youth Center.

Soccer Facility

A former landfill site exists located to the west of Patten Road between Clay Street and Johnston Drive. This property is unused or underused by the Army Reserve and the City should approach the Army Reserve about the potential remediation of the landfill to accommodate soccer fields. Currently Everts park, which is not intended for active recreation, is utilized in the summer on a daily basis by residents for soccer.

Open Space

Highwood residents have access to large areas of open space through the Lake County Forest Preserve and Openlands initiative.

Lake County Forest Preserve

The City of Highwood borders the Fort Sheridan portion of the Lake County Forest Preserve, a 250-acre area with several trails, two ravines, lakefront access and large areas of open space. This area, which forms the northern border of the Town of Fort Sheridan development, is required by covenant to be a public golf course. The City should work with Lake County Forest Preserve to continue to enhance local access to open space and natural areas.

The City should also continue its involvement in the Fort Sheridan Master Plan Advisory Committee to ensure that Highwood residents have access to a public golf course and trail amenities that preserve the area's sensitive natural features. The City should exert its influence with the County to ensure that the golf course is constructed at the earliest opportunity.

1994 Golf Course Plan approved by Fort Sheridan Joint Planning Committee.



Openlands

The Openlands Lakeshore Preserve makes up the majority of Lake Michigan shoreline between Walker Avenue and the Lake County Forest Preserve border to the north. In this area, Openlands has restored three areas of ravine habitat and other environmentally sensitive areas. The City should continue to support the efforts of Openlands and other conservation groups seeking to protect and provide public access to the lakefront and associated sensitive natural areas.

Bartlett Ravine

The Bartlett Ravine, which borders the Highwood portion of the Town of Fort Sheridan development, is the main entrance into the Lakeshore Preserve area. As the gateway to an open space asset of regional importance, the City should work with Openlands to provide enhancements that better leverage the area's potential to draw visitors from outside the community. Additional parking, pedestrian amenities and signage could make the Bartlett Ravine entrance more accessible and inviting to users. Given this area's adjacency to the RPX property, these improvements could also be coordinated with redevelopment of that property.

Lakefront Access

The Lake Michigan lakefront is an invaluable natural amenity and many residents have indicated a desire to establish better connections to this nearby asset. The City of Highwood currently has no direct lakefront access, with the exception of the parcel occupied by the Highwood Water Plant on Walker Avenue.

The Fort Sheridan portion of the Lake County Forest Preserve features a 1.3-mile paved trail with a lakefront overlook and access to .75 miles of Lake Michigan shoreline. The Openlands Lakeshore Preserve also provides access to Lake Michigan shoreline. Swimming is prohibited along both the Lake County Forest Preserve and Openlands portions of the lakefront.

Coordination

The City should work with local conservation groups including the Lake County Forest Preserve and Openlands to improve resident access to the lakefront. Potential actions the City could take include providing wayfinding signage and improving trails and walkways connecting to lakefront access points, such as the Bartlett Ravine. The City should also include information in its Park and Recreation communications to better educate residents as to how they can access the Lake Michigan shoreline.

Lake Michigan Access

In addition to working with other groups, the City should seek opportunities to establish its own lakefront access point for its residents.

Bocce Courts

The Highwood Bocce Courts, a private organization, recently renewed its 50 year lease for the City-owned property at 440 Bank Lane on which it operates. The membership-based organization is a community asset in its dual function as both a social organization and recreation facility. As a recognized amenity, the City should work with the Bocce Courts to promote its facilities as a community asset.

Trails and Bike Paths

Additional pedestrian and bicycle linkages should be created to improve access and enhance the use of the City's parks and open space. The City should identify funding sources, such as grants, to create new sidewalks and bike paths and add distance markers to public sidewalks and pathways. Additional information on trails and bike paths is located in **Section 9: Transportation Plan**.

Robert McClory Bike Path

In Highwood and neighboring Highland Park, bicyclists utilizing the Robert McClory Bike Path must ride through parking lots or use on-street connections. As detailed in the Transportation Plan, the City should consider marking an alternate route for the bike path that circulates riders through Downtown Highwood.

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Highwood Metra Station

The Transportation Plan addresses the function of the local roadway network, bike and pedestrian facilities, and public transportation. Highwood offers a number of transportation options to its residents, employees, and visitors via access to Metra commuter rail and a Pace bus route as well as close proximity to Interstate 94. The community is walkable and characteristics of the roadway system encourage bicycling activity. While the Transportation Plan provides Community-wide recommendations, particular attention is paid to Downtown Highwood.

Roadway System

Arterial Streets

Traditionally arterial roads move traffic within and through a city. Due to Highwood's development pattern, there are no true arterial roads. Several of the City's streets do have some of the characteristics of arterial streets. These include Prairie Avenue, Waukegan Avenue/Sheridan Road and Green Bay Road. In addition Highwood Avenue provides the primary connection between Sheridan and Green Bay Roads, forming an at-grade railroad crossing over Metra's Union Pacific North Line.

Maintenance

The City should continue to budget for the proper maintenance of all roadways under its jurisdiction, particularly arterial roadways with high traffic volumes. All arterial roadways in Highwood are maintained, by and under the jurisdiction of the City of Highwood. The City should undertake an analysis to determine the pavement condition of its roadways and ensure that they are well maintained, especially those with high traffic usage.

Collector Streets

Collector streets are intended to serve the local population, collecting and moving traffic from the local streets to arterial streets and facilitating the efficient flow of vehicles. Collector streets in the City of Highwood include Highwood Avenue, North Avenue, Walker Avenue, and Western Avenue. Western Avenue is in need of maintenance and possible resurfacing and should be improved by the City in coordination with the adjoining City of Highland Park.

Local Streets

All streets that are not arterial and collector streets are classified as local streets. Local streets are designed to accommodate local traffic and are narrower than other types of streets to promote safe speeds through areas such as residential neighborhoods. The City should ensure necessary resources are made available to maintain all local streets in good condition.

Alleys

There are multiple alleys in Highwood that are city owned and should be maintained. Alleys have been problematic and their lack of proper maintenance can have a negative impact on property values, quality of life and the neighborhood. Steps should be taken to improve and maintain the alleyways and provide street lighting and signage.

Union Pacific Railroad

The Union Pacific railroad tracks at Highwood Avenue/Green Bay Road have created safety concerns related to poor sight distance and the volume of vehicles turning onto Highwood Avenue from Green Bay and Sheridan Roads. Rail traffic also frequently causes congestion in Downtown Highwood as cars queue up along Highwood and Washington Avenues to cross the tracks. The City should work with Union Pacific Railroad and Metra to make improvements to Highwood Avenue to minimize rail-related safety concern and congestion.

Traffic Signal

A traffic signal at the intersection of Green Bay Road and Highwood Avenue may improve the safety of the intersection. A traffic signal warrant analysis should be conducted at the intersection. The City would recommend a traffic flow study. The study should examine the traffic flow patterns of commercial property at Sheridan Road and RR. tracks at Highwood Avenue north of city hall into train station parking lot.

In light of the current traffic and the projected growth of the Army Reserve base, a traffic signal should also be considered at the intersection of First Street and Sheridan Road to provide vehicular and pedestrian safety. The City should approach the Army Reserve for a contribution for the costs of construction of that traffic signal.

Metra Train passing through Highwood



Public Transportation

Metra

The Highwood and Fort Sheridan Metra stations are significant community assets that connect local residents to employment opportunities elsewhere in the North Shore and the greater Chicago area. Metra also provides visitors with convenient public transportation to Highwood from throughout the region. The City should promote its Metra stations as a community asset and should work with Metra to improve transit services to local residents. Land use and development surrounding the Downtown Highwood Metra station should be more dense and compact than other areas of the City so as to take full advantage of access to transit.

Pace

Pace provides bus service for the City of Highwood via Route 472, which provides public transportation between Highwood and Downtown Highland Park and Green Bay Road and Sheridan Road/Waukegan Avenue. The route has stops at Highland Park High School, Fort Sheridan Metra Station, Highwood Metra Station, and Highland Park Metra Station.

The City should work Pace to explore the enhancement and expansion of transit service within Highwood. Regular communication should be maintained and Pace should be notified and/or consulted as development occurs to ascertain the potential need for or impact on bus service.

Parking

Parking is a critical transportation issue in Downtown Highwood. The businesses and restaurants in Highwood depend on patrons from throughout the region, which results in increased traffic volume and demand for parking. Both the restaurants and their patrons desire parking to be as convenient as possible.

On-Street Parking

There is a considerable amount of on-street parking in Downtown Highwood and during the day it is very easy to locate on-street parking. The use of on street parking by valet services should be prohibited with valet operators utilizing designated commercial areas for customer drop off. Demand for on-street parking peaks in the evenings, particularly weekends, when Downtown restaurants are at their busiest. While on-street parking spaces are typically available within a short walk of Downtown Highwood, some people would prefer not to park and walk, particularly during inclement weather. Restaurants have turned to valet parking as a means of creating convenient parking for their patrons.

The City should work with Downtown businesses to expand use of underutilized on-street parking. The City should negotiate the shared use of private parking lots that are not used during evening hours.

East side of Green Bay Road



Off-Street Parking

The off-street parking supply in Downtown Highwood consists of a mix of public and private parking lots. The two largest off-street parking lots in the study area are the Highwood Metra parking lot (public) and the Walgreen's/US Bank parking lot (private). Similar to the on-street parking, the off-street parking supply far exceeds the demand during the day with most parking lots remaining relatively empty during the day.

During evenings, especially Friday and Saturday evenings, use of off-street lots increases and a number of the public parking lots in Downtown Highwood are at capacity. Private lots, such as the Walgreen's lot, sit empty during these peak hours as they can only be used by customers.

The City should encourage the owners of private parking areas to make their facilities accessible in off-peak hours for parking uses such as valet parking, or use by the general public.

2005 Parking Study

The City conducted a parking study in 2005 and should continue to implement the recommendations in the study as the findings are still valid.

Further, the City should encourage the Chamber of Commerce to make members and other businesses aware of lost business stemming from their employees parking in prime spaces.

Library Parking

As the Library extends its hours later into the evening and holds evening events, it will generate greater parking demand. In order to accommodate this demand, the Library must explore opportunities to share parking with other land uses. The parking lot that serves the Post Office to the west of the Library is one possibility because its peak parking demand occurs during the day and does not require all of its spaces during the evening.

Valet Operations

A number of restaurants in Highwood utilize valet services. No valet zones are designated with municipal signage and restaurants typically utilize the parking space directly in front of their facility for valet.

Valet services make parking very convenient for customers and minimize traffic congestion related to customers driving around the looking for parking. Valet services, if properly regulated, will result in a more efficient use of the parking supply.

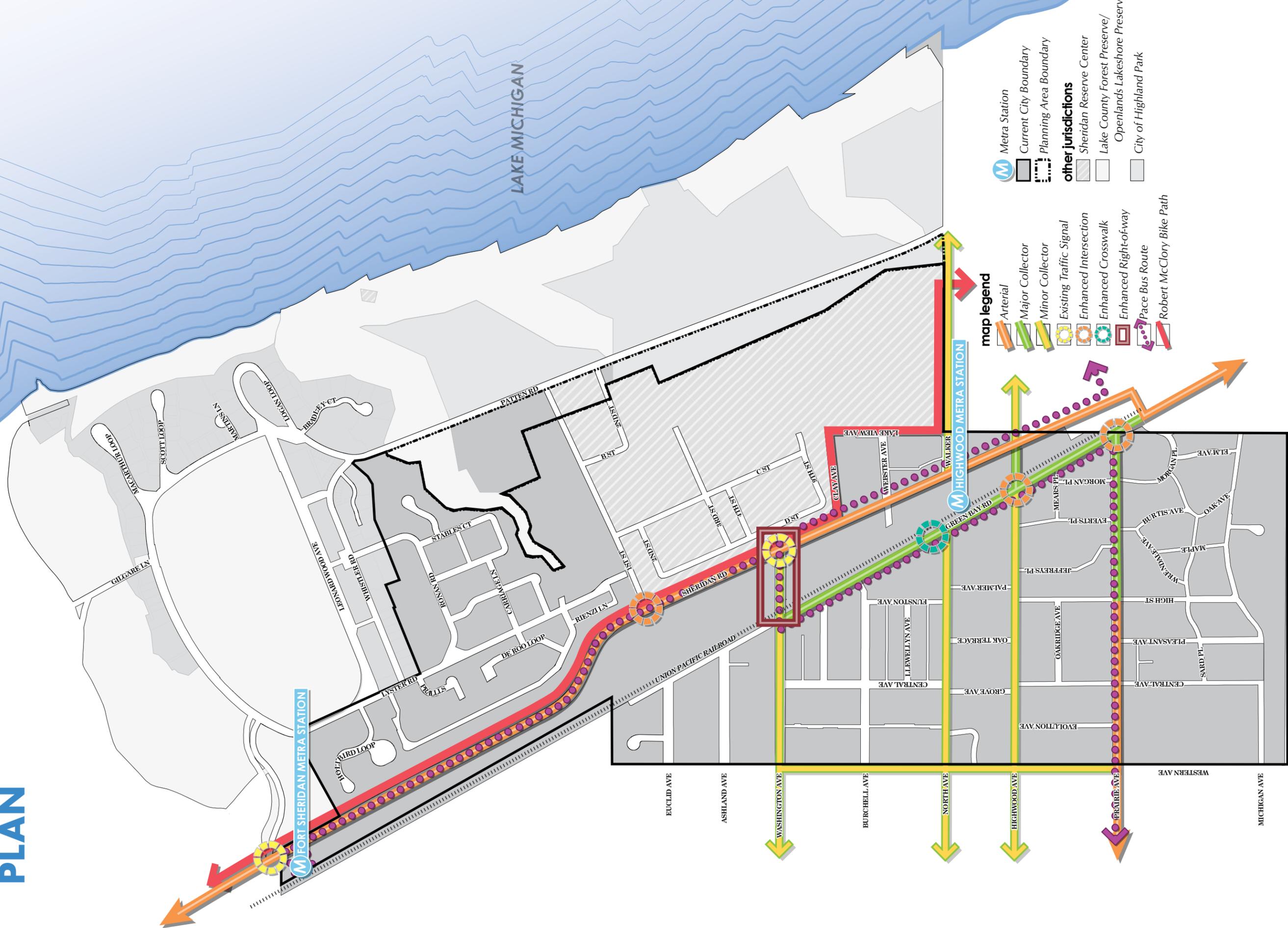
Formal Regulations

Use of on-street parking by valet services should be prohibited with valet operators using designated off-street lots. Valet operators should also utilize designated areas for customer drop-off that minimize the number of on-street spaces used to host valet operators. The City should encourage valet operators to use lots further from the core of Downtown. This will free up more parking for patrons that want to park and walk to their destination. The City should encourage the Chamber of Commerce to engage a single valet operator which must be licensed by the City.

Loading Zone Study

The City should also conduct a valet loading zone study to improve the existing valet operations on Sheridan Road and Green Bay Road. The study should focus on consolidating loading zones and improving circulation patterns of valet operations.

TRANSPORTATION PLAN



Bicycle Safety & Mobility

The city should conduct a bike transportation study in order to develop viable plan for City of Highwood.

Robert McClory Bike Path

The Robert McClory Bike Path should continue to be promoted as a regional asset connecting Highwood residents to communities throughout the North Shore.

The City should consider an alternate route for the bike path that circulates riders through downtown. This would encourage bicyclists to patronize Downtown shops, as well as improve bicycle access to the Highwood Metra station. The City should encourage residents using Metra to incorporate bicycling into their commute by adding bicycle parking to the station, preferably indoor, sheltered parking. Wayfinding signage should also be installed as the path enters Highwood to direct riders to community destinations.

The Robert McClory Bike Path should continue to function as the primary pedestrian and bicycle pathway along Sheridan Road to the north of Clay Street. Sidewalks should also continue to be maintained along the western side of this roadway to provide convenient access to Sheridan Road businesses.

Pedestrian Circulation

The City of Highwood is a very walkable community as a result of its dense network of roadways, sidewalks, and short blocks. Downtown Highwood is also a pedestrian-friendly environment, particularly on Sheridan Road which has wide sidewalks, bumpouts at a number of intersections, landscaping, pedestrian lighting, and extended lengths of consistent streetwall. The term streetwall refers to the wall created by a continuous row of buildings, side-by-side, that are all located at or near the sidewalk.

Safety & Mobility

Part of the reason that Downtown Highwood possesses such a comfortable pedestrian environment is the presence of amenities such as wide sidewalks, landscaping, and bumpouts. The City should expand these amenities to other feasible locations such as the portion of Washington Avenue located between Sheridan and Green Bay Roads in the downtown.

There are two aisles of diagonal parking on the north side of Washington Avenue as well as an aisle on the south side. The 'middle' aisle of parking should be converted to parallel parking to provide space for enhancements such as landscaping or a wider sidewalk. A detailed illustration of the recommended cross section is included in **Section 10: Key Focus Area Plans**.

Connectivity

The pedestrian experience in Downtown is generally very comfortable, due to the presence of amenities such as numerous wide sidewalks and bumpouts. There are areas, however, in which pedestrian facilities can be improved. The City should continue to improve their sidewalk network to provide full connectivity throughout the community.

Crosswalks

The City should also ensure that crosswalk striping is in place at all locations where pedestrians are expected to cross the street. Curb cuts should also be in place to accommodate persons with disabilities. A crosswalk should also be installed across Green Bay Road at North Avenue for passengers going to or coming from the Pace bus shelter.

Union Pacific Railroad

Pedestrian connectivity between the east and west portions of Downtown Highwood is limited by the Union Pacific Railroad right-of-way. While an additional at-grade pedestrian crossing at the northern end of the Highwood Metra station platform is desired, engineering and safety concerns may make this improbable. The City should work with the Union Pacific Railroad and Metra to enhance east-west pedestrian connectivity in this area.

Improvements such as formal landscaping and wayfinding signage should be installed to encourage the use of the existing at-grade pedestrian crossing on the south end of the platform. These improvements could also be coordinated with the development of an entrance to Everts Park from Green Bay Road, creating a mid-block crosswalk that aligns with the new entrance.

Bank Lane

Pedestrian connectivity could also be improved on Bank Lane, east of the Union Pacific Railroad right-of-way, as Bank Lane lacks sidewalks almost completely. While many of the buildings adjacent to Bank Lane front on Sheridan Road, some have entrances on Bank Lane, and it should accommodate pedestrian activity.



Sheridan Road businesses, north of Walker Avenue

This section presents detailed recommendations for four 'key focus areas' within Highwood. Key Focus Area Plans build on the general guidelines established in the Community-wide Plans section, and provide more detailed, site specific recommendations for these integral components of the City.

The Key Focus Area Plans identify the issues and opportunities within each area and the strategies to address those issues and build on existing opportunities. Vacant or underutilized sites, referred to as opportunity sites, that need to be better incorporated into future development and revitalization efforts are also identified within each area.

The City's various land use and development regulations, including the zoning code, should be updated to reflect the recommendations of the Key Focus Area Plans and the Comprehensive Plan as a whole.

Key Focus Area Selection

The final selection of four key focus areas was the combined result of community input, an understanding of existing conditions and development influences within Highwood, and insight from the CPAC, Commission, City staff, and Highwood Plan Commission.

The four key focus areas include:

- **Downtown Highwood - North:** The Bank Lane-Washington Avenue Corridors;
- **Green Bay Road - North:** The Green Bay Road corridor between North and Washington Avenues;
- **Downtown Highwood - Core:** The central and southern portions of Downtown Highwood from Prairie to Webster Avenues.

Downtown Highwood - North

The northern portion of Downtown Highwood is composed of the block bound by Sheridan Road on the east, Washington Avenue on the north, and Bank Lane on the south and west.

The majority of **Sheridan Road** businesses along the block between Webster and Washington Avenues sit across from the Sheridan Reserve property, resulting in a one-sided commercial corridor.

The frontage along Sheridan consists of a sidewalk immediately adjacent the roadway, with overhead utilities and minimal landscaping bordered by parallel parking spaces that run the length of the block.

This portion of Sheridan Road is the location of Skokie Valley Laundry, Highwood's only industrial user and largest employer, as well as a former motel which is now vacant. These two uses, in combination with several parking lots and access drives, serve to break up the streetwall in the central and northern portions of the block. Aside from two larger parcels, the majority of parcels along this portion of Sheridan are long and narrow with some buildings measuring only approximately 20 feet in width.

Washington Avenue marks the northern extent of Downtown Highwood. The north side of this short corridor is formed by the Pool Plaza shopping center while the south side is occupied by three, two-story mixed use buildings with office space or residential units located above ground floor office and retail space. The buildings on the south side of Washington Avenue form a consistent streetwall along the sidewalk and are similar in architecture and form to traditional development along Sheridan and Green Bay Roads in Downtown Highwood. Conversely, Pool Plaza is a strip center that most closely resembles commercial development along the Sheridan Road corridor to the north.

The **Bank Lane** corridor is the location of a unique mix of retailers, office users, and service providers that benefit from a location in Downtown Highwood, but do not require high traffic volumes and frontage along Sheridan or Green Bay Roads. Railroad right-of-way forms the western half of the corridor which is bound by Washington Avenue on the north and Webster Avenue on the south.



Vision

Sheridan Road properties should be repositioned to better contribute to the physical character of Downtown Highwood as an active, pedestrian friendly destination. Piecemeal redevelopment may not be possible given the narrow width of several Sheridan Road parcels and interrelated nature of Bank Lane and Sheridan Road properties. The strategic assemblage of properties along both Sheridan Road and Bank Lane should be pursued to facilitate comprehensive redevelopment of the block with denser, mixed-use development.

Key Issues & Opportunities

- Non-commercial uses including Skokie Valley Laundry and a vacant motel, as well as auto-oriented retail development, have a negative impact on the character of Downtown Highwood. These uses result in **limited pedestrian activity** and create a **disconnect between the downtown core** and businesses located near Washington Avenue.
- Two sidewalks, three rows of angled parking, and three driving lanes combine to create a distance of nearly 100 feet between the streetwall on the south side of Washington Avenue and the Pool Plaza storefronts to the north. This significant distance creates a large **void of activity** and lacks a **sense of enclosure** needed to foster a pedestrian-friendly and inviting environment.
- The diverse mix of commercial uses and architecture along Bank Lane has resulted in a **disjointed corridor appearance** that is dissimilar to the other areas of Downtown Highwood and more closely resembles a light industrial corridor.
- Bank Lane has a **dual function** as a primary frontage for several businesses as well as a service/loading area for businesses along Sheridan Road.

Strategies

Commercial Uses

- Commercial development should continue to be the predominant land use within this area. Vertical mixed-use development with ground floor commercial use is to be encouraged along Washington Avenue and Sheridan Road.
- Properties with Bank Lane frontage should be redeveloped with adjacent Sheridan Road and Washington Avenue properties.

Parking Enhancements

- New development fronting Washington Avenue or Sheridan Road will require additional off-street parking. Parking should be supplied in the rear with vehicular access from Bank Lane and pedestrian access directly from Washington Avenue or Sheridan Road via pedestrian walkways.
- The Union Pacific Railroad right-of-way along Bank Lane is currently being used by some businesses for parking. The City should review opportunities to enhance parking in this area to optimize and increase parking opportunities for these businesses and Downtown Highwood in general.
- The redevelopment of auto-oriented properties is preferred, however where such development persists, parking lots and related access drives should be enhanced to improve the pedestrian environment. Off-street parking lots should be enhanced with island and perimeter landscaping, curbed perimeters, and clearly marked pedestrian pathways.

Streetscaping

- Streetscape elements should be installed in this area to complement existing streetscaping along Sheridan Road including streetlights, street trees, brick paving and banners. This will establish a visual link between the remainder of Downtown.
- The City should work with property owners and utility providers to bury overhead utilities as redevelopment occurs.
- Landscaping and fencing should be installed along the Union Pacific right-of-way to screen the railroad tracks from the view of Bank Lane commercial and residential development. This will also help establish a sense of enclosure within the one-sided corridor.

Gateway Feature

- A gateway feature should be installed at the intersection of Washington Avenue and Sheridan Road. This gateway feature should announce entry into Downtown Highwood using a combination of signage, lighting and landscaping. Wayfinding signage directing visitors to community destinations such as the Metra station, the Bank Lane corridor, and the Green Bay Road corridor should also be considered.

Sheridan Road streetscaping



Opportunity Sites

Site 1 Opportunity Site 1 comprises two large parcels located on the southeast corner of Bank Lane and Washington Avenue.

Bank Lane & Washington Avenue

This property, which is currently vacant, is improved with a small, one-story building and a large surface parking lot. A two- to three-story building fronting Washington Avenue would serve as an end cap to the Washington Avenue commercial area, adding to a sense of place within Downtown Highwood. The structure would also maintain the streetwall established by buildings to the east and enhance the sense of enclosure that is currently limited by the wide Washington Avenue right-of-way and adjacent parking rows for the Pool Plaza strip center.

Uses at the new Bank Lane structure could include ground floor retail or office with residential units or office space located on the upper floor(s).

The property is located adjacent to the City’s public works facility and, should the City decide to relocate this facility, the two adjacent properties could be combined into a larger contiguous site for comprehensive redevelopment.

Public Works Facility

The City of Highwood has a public works garage and salt storage facility on this property. Officials from the Public Works Department are considering relocating this facility to allow for the sale and redevelopment of the property in combination with the adjacent vacant property to the north. Redevelopment should seek to capitalize on the site’s downtown location with one- to three-story commercial development. If developed as a component of larger development with frontage on Washington Avenue, the site’s size and Washington Avenue frontage would permit mixed-use development with residential uses located above ground floor commercial development.

Site 2 Sheridan Road at Clay Avenue

This area is the current location of Skokie Valley Laundry & Cleaners and represents the only industrial use within Downtown Highwood. The 1.5-story building encompasses a significant portion of the block and extends from Sheridan Road nearly to Bank Lane. Redevelopment of this property could allow for denser, mixed-use development of three stories in height fronting Sheridan Road. The site’s frontage along Bank Lane would also allow for rear access parking.

Replacing an industrial use with commercial and/or residential uses would greatly enhance activity within the northern portion of Downtown Highwood.

Site 3 Sheridan Road near Webster Avenue

The area to the north of Webster Avenue is the location of a former motel that is currently vacant. This property was cited as an example of poor property maintenance and appearance by residents and members of the business community. The 5,800 square foot property is improved with a single-story, ‘U’-shaped building. It is located between two, two-story commercial buildings whose users include a bridal boutique, yoga studio, and offices for home care services providers.

If the property is redeveloped, a two- to three-story building with commercial uses on the ground floor would maintain the streetwall and built form established by adjacent buildings. Until reuse or redevelopment occurs, the property should be well-maintained and kept in good condition.

Washington Avenue

- Streetscaping elements, including landscaping and low to moderate opacity fencing, should be installed along the northern Washington Avenue sidewalk to help fill the gap between storefronts on the north and south sides of the street.
- The City should consider widening the sidewalk and installing planters in the parkway area along the north side of Washington Avenue. This would help provide a better sense of enclosure and safety for pedestrians. Additional right-of-way could be used for these streetscape treatments if angled parking along Washington Avenue were to be replaced by parallel parking.

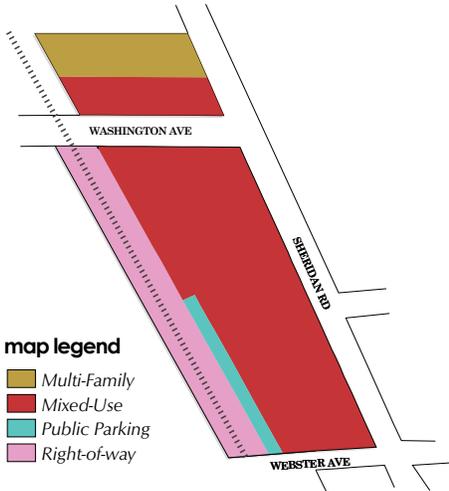
Cross Section Element	Key	Description
Public Parking Aisle	A	The angled parking aisle should be converted to a parallel parking to provide room for other right-of-way improvements.
Parkway	B	The parkway should be enhanced with low level landscaping and attractive lighting at both a vehicular and pedestrian scale.
Walkway	C	The existing walkway should be realigned to accommodate landscaping on either side.
Perimeter Landscaping	D	The perimeter of the parking lot should be landscaped with low level vegetation and ornamental trees to screen parking areas and create a sense of enclosure for pedestrians.

DOWNTOWN - NORTH

map legend

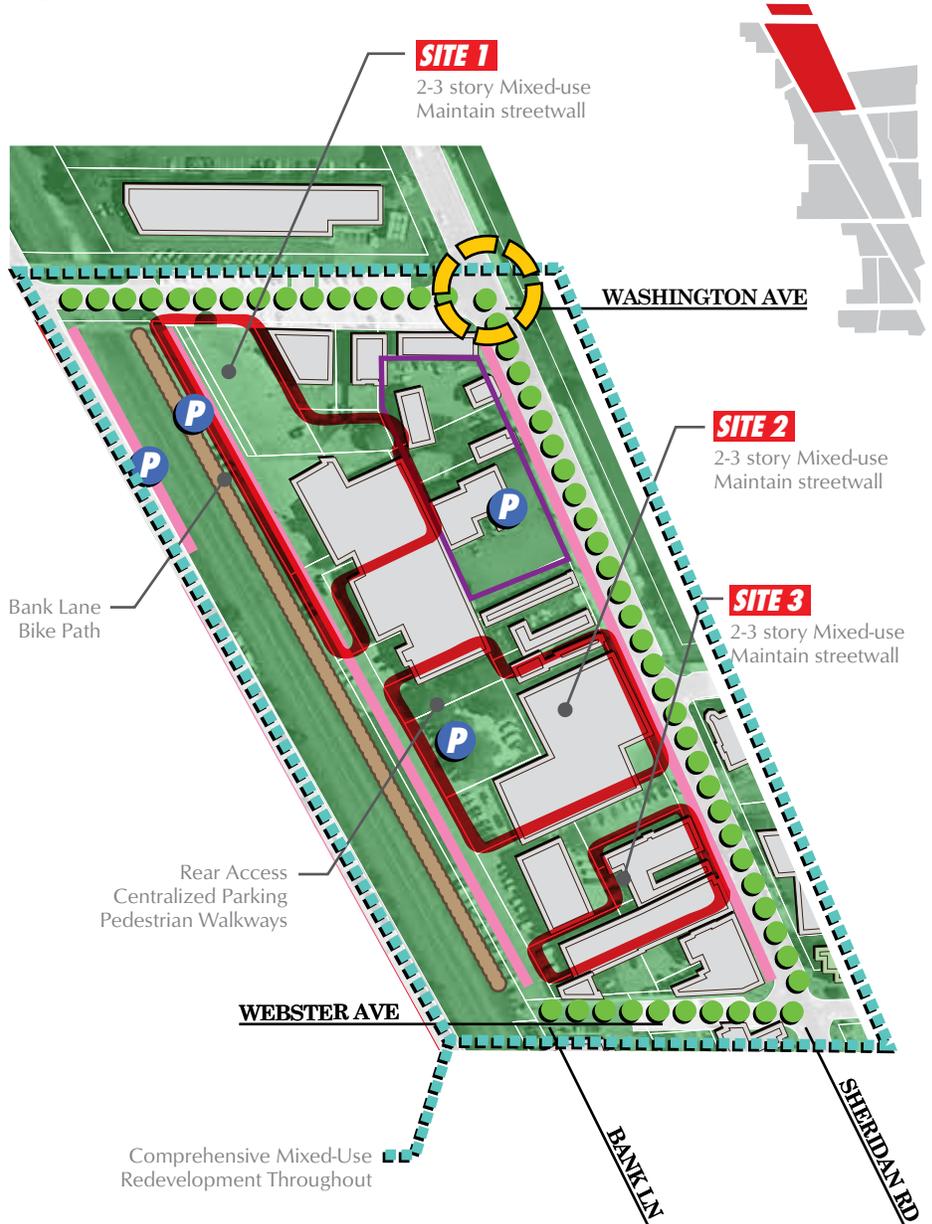
-  Screen railroad right-of-way from adjacent residential and commercial properties.
-  Enhance Washington Avenue, Bank Lane and the west side of Sheridan Road with **streetscape improvements** similar to those along Sheridan Road.
-  Bury **overhead utilities** as development occurs.
-  **Redevelop auto-oriented uses** to reflect the character of the downtown.
-  **Improve surface parking areas** with landscaped perimeters and pedestrian enhancements and improve parking areas along **Union Pacific right-of-way**.
-  Provide a **gateway treatment** that denotes entry into the downtown.
-  **Key Opportunity Sites** are highlighted, but it is important to note that surrounding parcels may be assembled to create a larger scale development where appropriate and feasible.

LAND USE PLAN

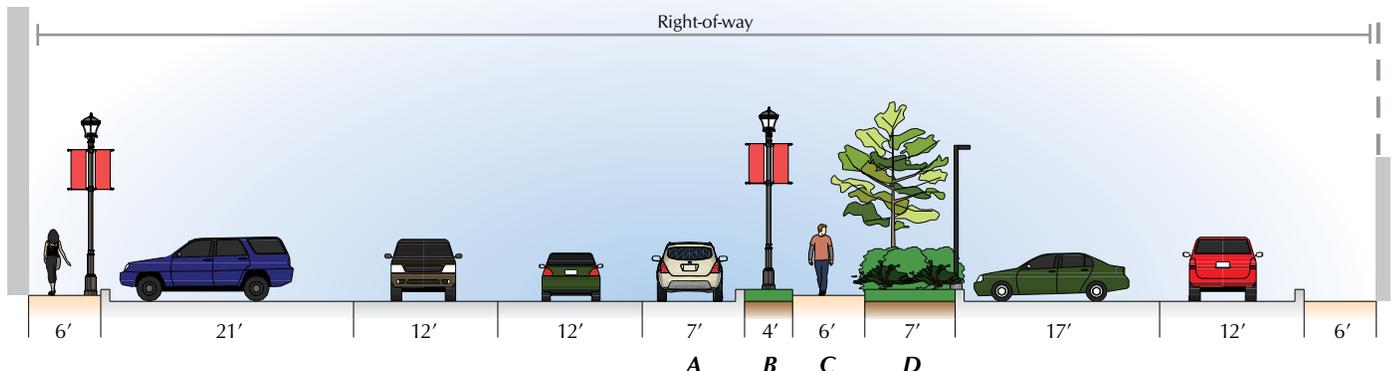


map legend

-  Multi-Family
-  Mixed-Use
-  Public Parking
-  Right-of-way



Proposed Washington Avenue right-of-way improvements.



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Green Bay Road – North

Green Bay Road has long been defined as the western edge of Downtown Highwood by the local community. However recent vacancies of prominent commercial sites to the north of North Avenue have had an impact on the corridor as a commercial destination.

Vision

While existing, thriving commercial uses should remain, this area has tremendous potential for redevelopment if properly assembled. The northern Green Bay Road corridor could benefit from commercial and multi-family redevelopment and the creation of a multi-purpose municipal center.

Multi-purpose Municipal Center

There are several community facilities including City Hall that may be relocated in an effort to facilitate redevelopment in Downtown Highwood. Civic uses within the city should be relocated to a multi-purpose municipal center along Green Bay Road. Doing so will allow for the more efficient use of city resources and increase activity within this aging commercial corridor.

Large Scale, Mixed-Use Development

Should the City pursue redevelopment of the RPX property, the Recreation Center and/or the fire station may be relocated there. If this occurs, City-owned properties in this area could be assembled with neighboring underutilized properties to create a significant opportunity site for commercial or mixed-use redevelopment.

Key Issues & Opportunities

- The Green Bay Road corridor is **physically disjointed** from the portion of Downtown Highwood located to the east of the Union Pacific railroad. There is currently a nearly 600-yard gap between the nearest pedestrian crossing to the south of the Metra Station and the Washington Avenue crossing.
- Commercial uses along the northern portion of Green Bay Road are **interspersed by multi-family residential development**. While there are some businesses in operation in this area, there are also some significant properties that are currently vacant.
- The corridor is within **close proximity to several community** assets and service providers including the Highwood public Library, the Highwood Recreation Center, and Highwood Fire Department, as well as Everts Park. Opportunity sites along Green Bay Road may represent good locations to accommodate the expansion or relocation of these and other community facilities.



Strategies

Pedestrian Connections

- A pedestrian crossing should be established across Green Bay Road, connecting the at-grade crossing located on the south end of the Metra station platform to a new eastern entrance to Everts Park. The crosswalk and Metra crossing should be enhanced with landscaping and signage to encourage pedestrian flow between Green Bay Road and Sheridan Road and enhance access to community facilities to be located within the area.

Parking

- Parking for some businesses is currently located along Union Pacific railroad right-of-way. The City should ensure that proper easements have been secured to legally allow for parking in these areas. In areas where parking cannot be accommodated, the City should consider placing parallel parking along the Green Bay Road right-of-way.
- Off-street parking lots should be enhanced with island and perimeter landscaping, curbed perimeters, and clearly marked pedestrian pathways.

Streetscaping

- Streetscaping elements should be installed to strengthen the connection between commercial development to the south of North Avenue and remaining commercial uses to the north. Streetscaping enhancements should complement existing streetscaping along Green Bay and Sheridan Roads and include sidewalk replacement, landscaping, banner signs, and other common elements found elsewhere in Downtown Highwood.
- The City should work with property owners and utility providers to bury overhead or ground level utilities as redevelopment occurs.

Screening

- Commercial parking and service areas should be screened from the view of adjacent and nearby residential properties using a combination of landscaping, fencing and other screening techniques.

Redevelopment

- A mix of uses should continue to be encouraged along the Green Bay Road corridor. Aging commercial, multi-family structures, and single family attached should be replaced by mixed-use buildings and multi-family development such as rowhomes or condominiums.

Opportunity Sites

Site 1 Green Bay Road south of Burchell Avenue

This area is the location of a vacant, former one-story restaurant and sits adjacent to the Highwood Recreation Center. This significant opportunity site represents a good location for civic uses given its proximity to several City service providers including the library, recreation center, and fire department. Pending a cost-benefit analysis, this site could be comprehensively redeveloped in coordination with the adjacent Recreation Center property to establish a multi-purpose municipal center with multiple interrelated community service providers' facilities.

Civic Uses

- The Highwood Recreation Center is a valuable community asset and the City's Parks and Recreation Department desires to expand this facility to the adjacent vacant parcel to the north.
- The Highwood Public Library, located nearby along Highwood Avenue and should be considered as a possible component of any comprehensive redevelopment plans along Green Bay Road.
- Should the existing City Hall facilities be relocated, this location would be appropriate given its central location within Highwood and the potential for co-location with other City services.
- The Highwood Fire Department has no plans to expand or renovate, but is adjacent to the Recreation Center property on the south. Any adjacent redevelopment activity should ensure the unhindered function of fire department facilities and operations. Redevelopment could also potentially incorporate the development of a joint fire/police public safety facility.

Mixed-use Development

- If the City does not use this site for Civic uses, this site should be developed with commercial or mixed-use development. While the recreation center and vacant restaurant properties represent significant opportunities in themselves, when combined with adjacent residential parcels along Burchell and Funston Avenues and the Green Bay Road and North Avenue opportu-

nity site (site 2) the site expands to approximately 3.5 acres. Given proximity to successful commercial uses to the south and its large size, this opportunity site may possess some of the best potential for redevelopment within the City.

Funston Avenue Residential

- Redevelopment of properties fronting Funston Avenue for two-family residential use should be promoted. High quality two-family housing with sufficient setbacks should respect the character of the surrounding neighborhood and serve as a transition from non-residential uses fronting Green Bay Road and the single family neighborhood to the west. Parking for residential units should be provided in the rear.
- It is in the City's best interest to encourage development or redevelopment of medium and upper end housing to increase the property tax base.

Site 2 Green Bay Road & North Avenue

There are several small scale commercial and residential properties located on the northwest corner of Green Bay Road and North Avenue that could be assembled to form a larger opportunity for redevelopment. The current mix of one and two story buildings could be replaced by more intense commercial or mixed-use development. Given the site's proximity to Everts Park and other civic uses, residential development should be encouraged on the upper floors.

Site 3 Green Bay Road at Washington Avenue to Sheridan Avenue

The opportunities for properties to be assembled at these sites is tremendous. The properties extend from Sheridan Avenue to Washington Avenue. The possible uses could be retail, offices, restaurants or high quality multifamily residential. This area abuts residential neighborhoods to the west and consideration should be made to transition the commercial areas appropriately. The creation of a multi-purpose municipal center to the south of Burchell Avenue may enhance the viability of this property for retail or dining. It is in the City's best interest to encourage development or redevelopment of medium and upper end housing to increase the property tax base.

Vacant restaurant along Green Bay Road, north of the Recreation Center, now owned by the City of Highwood.

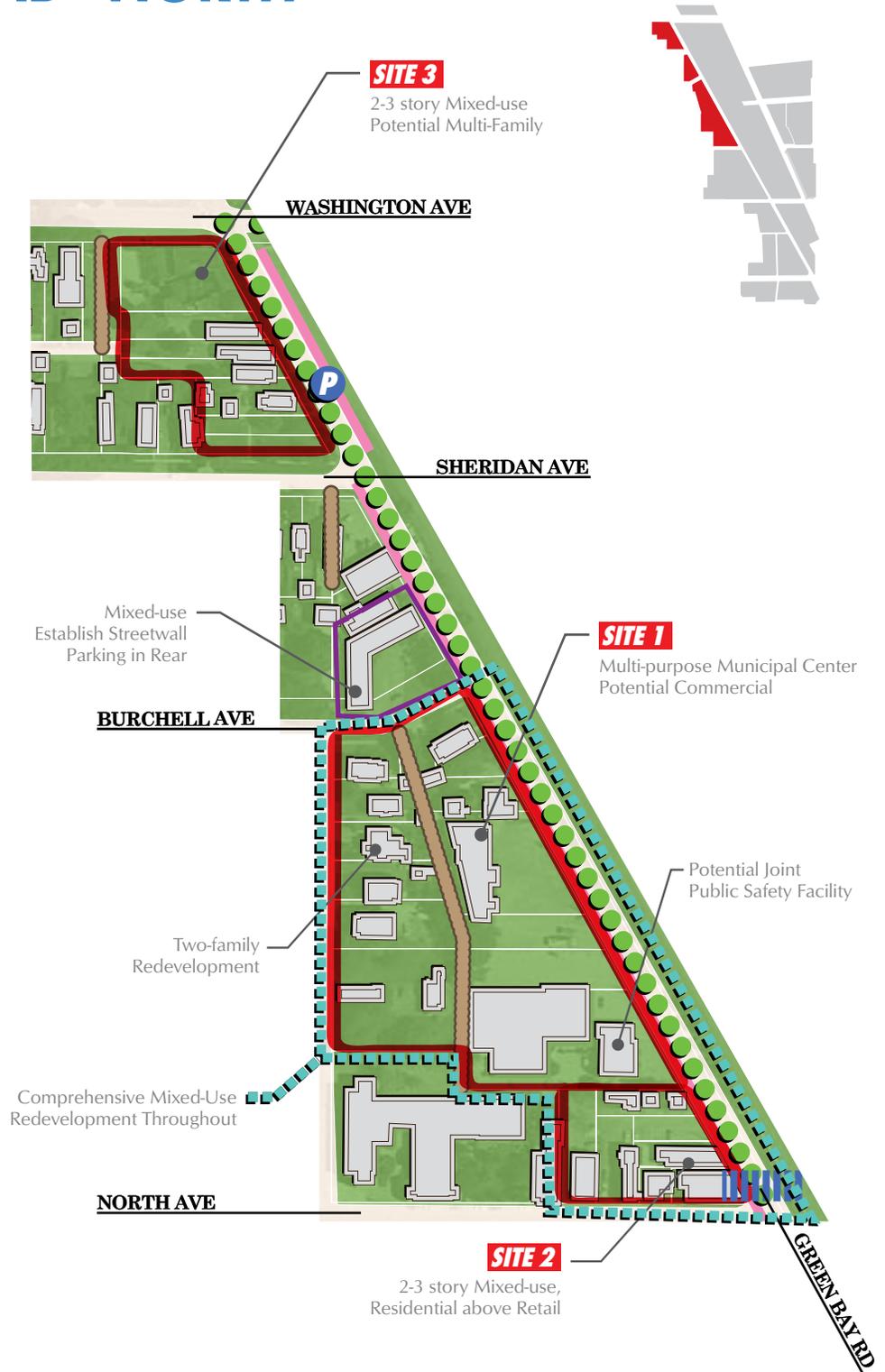
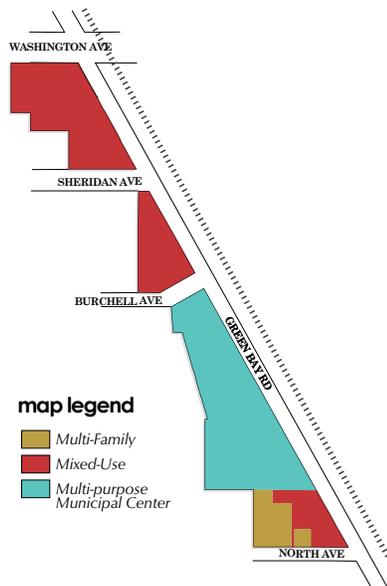


GREEN BAY ROAD - NORTH

map legend

-  Enhance north Green Bay Road with **streetscape** improvements similar to those along Sheridan Road.
-  Bury **overhead utilities** as development occurs.
-  **Screen commercial service and loading areas** from adjacent residential properties.
-  **Redevelop auto-oriented uses** to reflect the character of the downtown.
-  **Improve parking areas** along the Union Pacific right-of-way.
-  Establish a formal **pedestrian crossing** at North Avenue to connect to the Pace bus shelter on the east side of Green Bay Road.
-  **Key Opportunity Sites** are highlighted, but it is important to note that surrounding parcels may be assembled to create a larger scale development where appropriate and feasible.

LAND USE PLAN



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Downtown Highwood - Core

The Sheridan Road, Green Bay Road and Highwood Avenue corridors form the core of Downtown Highwood. New development and enhancements to Downtown Highwood should build on the area's established character and incorporate the traditional built form and mix of uses of the community's historic city center.



Vision

The City should continue to enhance the appearance and function of the Sheridan Road and Green Bay Road corridors so as to remain competitive. Moreover, the City should strive to maintain its reputation as a dining destination and capitalize on the momentum that its existing fine dining restaurants have established within the region.

Mixed-Use Development

Mixed-use development should be encouraged throughout Downtown Highwood. Ground floor space should continue to be dedicated primarily to retail and restaurant uses while office space and residential uses should be located on upper floors.

Increasing population in a downtown increases the use of a downtown business district. Apartments and owner occupied condominiums should become an increasingly important component of future land use and development in Highwood's downtown.

Key Opportunities

- **Everts Park** is a community asset located in close proximity to Downtown Highwood. The should be directly accessed from adjacent properties with a clear view by community members and downtown visitors.
- The current site of **City Hall** and adjacent underutilized properties may represent an opportunity for redevelopment. The property is located strategically between the Sheridan Road and Green Bay Road portions of Downtown Highwood.
- Downtown Highwood has several areas devoted to **surface parking**. Parking is needed to accommodate patrons of downtown businesses. Enhancement of these areas will better contribute to the physical appearance of Downtown Highwood.
- **Traditional, mixed-use development** adds to the character of Downtown Highwood and should be preserved.

- Several **auto-service related businesses** have frontage along the Downtown's primary roadways. While these businesses provided needed and valued services, their appearance can have a negative impact on the overall image of the area and are not seen as a desired use in the downtown core
- The city should encourage the **upkeep and enhancement** of vacant or underutilized properties within downtown Highwood.

Strategies

Everts Park

Everts Park can be accessed via North and Highwood Avenues, but is not accessible or visible from Green Bay Road. The lack of frontage along Green Bay Road has prevented Everts Park from emerging as a focus of activity within the Green Bay Road corridor as outlined in the City's previous Comprehensive Plan.

A physical link should be established between Everts Park and Green Bay Road to better connect the park to Downtown Highwood and enhance its utility as a community asset and attraction for visitors. The City should identify opportunities for the strategic purchase of an adjacent lot with Green Bay Road frontage.

Businesses along all sides of the park should be encouraged to dual face their buildings into the park. The City should utilize the public easement along the east side of the park to allow those businesses to create patios, for access or to create views of the park.

Streetscaping

Streetscape enhancements should be used to establish a visual link between the Green Bay Road and Sheridan Road portions of the downtown. The streetscaping program in Downtown Highwood should be extended along Green Bay Road north of Highwood Avenue.

Wayfinding Signage

Wayfinding signage should be installed at key intersections throughout the Downtown Core area such as Highwood Avenue and Sheridan Road. Signage could direct visitors to community destinations such as the Metra station, City Hall, and other commercial areas. A business directory could also be provided.

Gateway Feature

The existing gateway sign at Prairie Avenue and Green Bay Road should be better maintained with regular maintenance and enhanced with lighting, hardscape elements, and other features that make the gateway feature more pronounced.

Gateway Feature

The existing gateway sign at Prairie Avenue and Green Bay Road should be better maintained with regular maintenance and enhanced with lighting, hardscape elements, and other features that make the gateway feature more pronounced.

Screening

Screening and landscaping should be used to enhance off-street surface parking lots throughout Downtown Highwood. All parking lots should include perimeter landscaping and/or fencing that minimize visibility of cars from the roadway. In addition to perimeter screening, shade trees, landscape islands, decorative ground cover, and other landscape elements should be required for the interior areas of all parking lots. Where a landscaped perimeter cannot be provided, hardscaping such as a low masonry wall or decorative wrought iron fencing should be utilized.

Auto-Service Uses

There is an auto-service center located at North Avenue with primary access from Green Bay Road. Auto-service uses require that numerous cars be stored on site. This existing business should be enhanced with fencing and landscaping to better screen its operations from view. Expansion or redevelopment of this property should prohibit continued use as an auto-service center.

Opportunity Sites

Site 1 Sheridan Road at Webster Avenue

The area to the southwest of the intersection of Sheridan Road and Webster Avenue is occupied by a single story restaurant that sits on the corner of Sheridan Road and Bank Lane, and a larger commercial property with two buildings.

The larger commercial property comprises a two-story commercial building that sits adjacent to the Sheridan Road right-of-way, and a single story strip center that is setback approximately 60 feet. With significant Sheridan road frontage and adjacency to the Metra station parking lot, this property is located in a prominent location within the downtown.

While the southern portion of this property could benefit from façade and signage improvements, the built form of the two-story structure fits in well with the surrounding Downtown Highwood. The northern portion of this property, however, should be redeveloped to re-establish the streetwall along Sheridan Road and position parking in the rear. Redevelopment could also facilitate higher intensity of use by replacing a single-story structure with a two-story structure.

Site 2 Sheridan Road at Walker Avenue

The area to the southeast of the intersection of Sheridan Road and Walker Avenue is occupied by a vacant lot and single

story commercial building. A two-story, multi-family building with no parking is to the east.

A new two- to three-story, mixed-use building with commercial uses on the ground floor and fronting Sheridan Road would contribute positively to the character of Downtown Highwood. Underutilized properties and city-owned properties could be assembled to create a larger redevelopment opportunity. New development should be sensitive to the needs of nearby residences.

Site 3 U.S. Post Office

The U.S. Post Office will remain in operation at this location over the near term. Recently, however the USPS considered relocating this facility elsewhere; therefore the long term use of this site may change. Should the USPS relocate to another site in Highwood, this site could be used to accommodate another civic use or redeveloped for multi-family development. Regardless of use, new development should be not more than two to three stories in height and respect the scale and character of adjacent residential properties. Redevelopment should also be sensitive to the site's adjacency to Everts Park.

Site 4 City Hall

City Hall is located on the portion of Highwood Avenue that links Sheridan and Green Bay Roads. This key east-west link is perhaps the most heavily utilized route in Downtown Highwood and the larger city. The City should consider relocating its City Hall and Police Department facilities to a location elsewhere within central Highwood to make the site available for development. Given its prominent downtown location, mixed-use development with commercial use on the lower floors and office or residential units above would be preferable. The Veterans Memorial is expected to remain if the City Hall site is redeveloped.

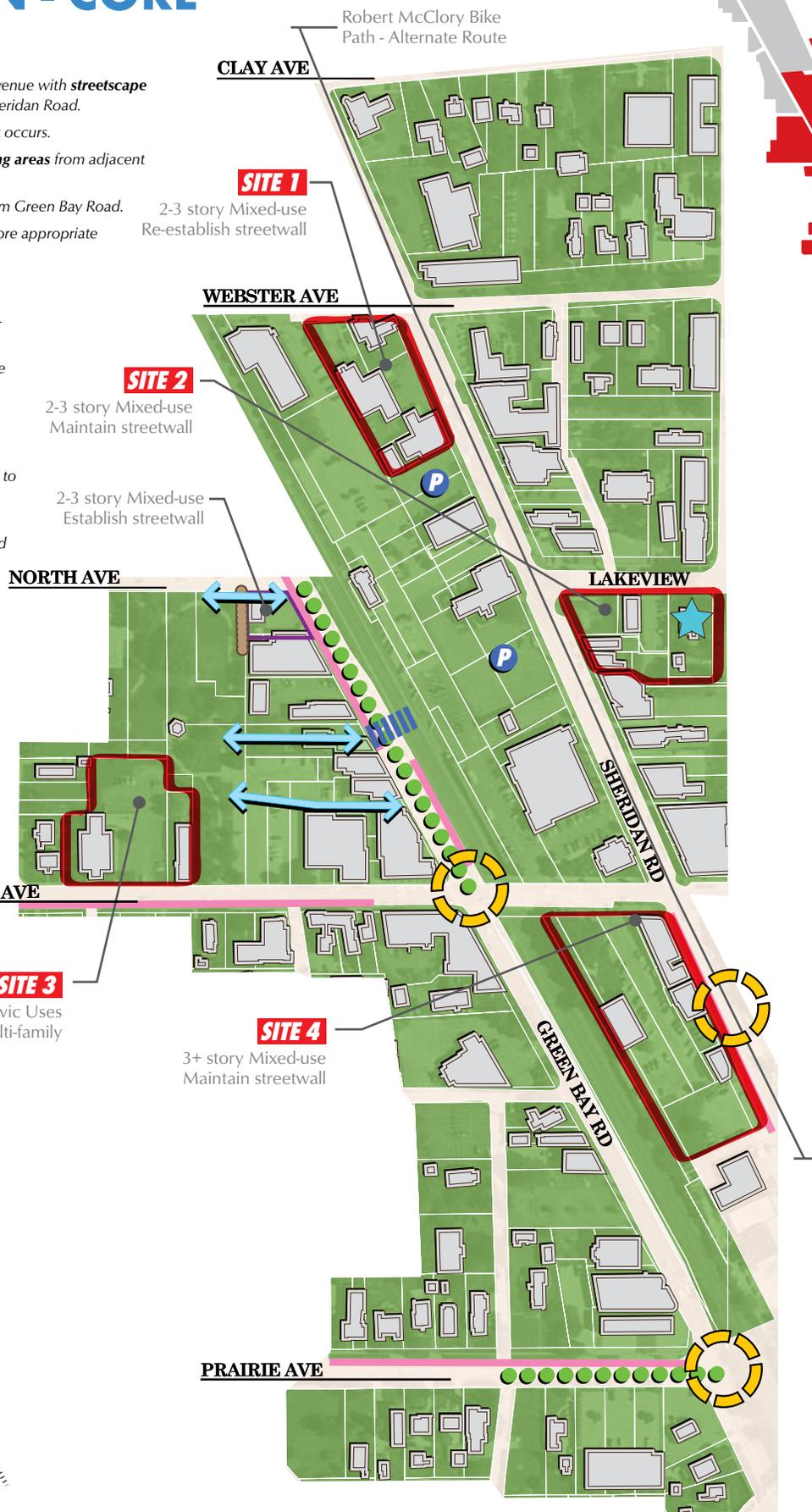
The City of Highwood currently shares a portion of the adjacent parking area with the owner of the neighboring property to the east. This parking area serves as the primary access point for City Hall and provides access to the rear parking lot owned by the City. The City Hall site is also adjacent a vacant parcel located to the south which fronts Waukegan Avenue. If this site were consolidated with the City Hall property, future development could utilize both Highwood and Waukegan Avenues for access.

The City Hall site is made up of two parcels totaling 31,277 square feet in area. The parcel to the south along Waukegan Avenue is 12,146 square feet. The combined area of the redevelopment site would be approximately 43,423 square feet, or nearly an acre. Consolidation of these two properties, and potentially the property to the east, would allow for a larger, more comprehensive and flexible redevelopment.

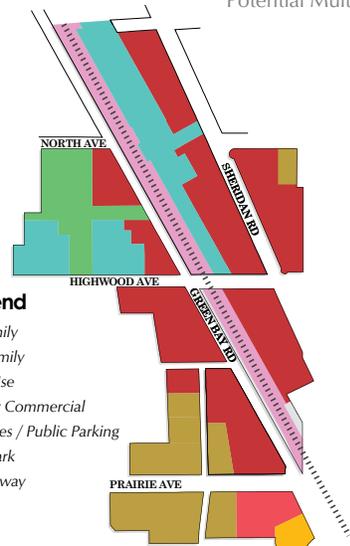
DOWNTOWN - CORE

map legend

-  Enhance Green Bay Road and Prairie Avenue with **streetscape** improvements similar to those along Sheridan Road.
-  Bury **overhead utilities** as development occurs.
-  **Screen commercial service and loading areas** from adjacent residential properties.
-  Provide direct **access to Everts Park** from Green Bay Road.
-  **Relocate auto-service businesses** to more appropriate portions of the city.
-  **Improve surface parking areas** with landscaped perimeters and islands, screening elements, and other enhancements to the pedestrian environment.
-  Provide **gateway treatments** that denote entry into the downtown as well as wayfinding signage to direct visitors.
-  Establish a formal **pedestrian crossing** across Green Bay Road, connecting the south end of the Metra station platform to a new Everts Park entrance.
-  7 Walker is of **historic importance** to Highwood and should be preserved and enhanced.
-  **Key Opportunity Sites** are highlighted, but it is important to note that surrounding parcels may be assembled to create a larger scale development where appropriate and feasible.



LAND USE PLAN



map legend

-  Two-Family
-  Multi-Family
-  Mixed-Use
-  Corridor Commercial
-  Civic Uses / Public Parking
-  Everts Park
-  Right-of-way

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Green Bay Road businesses north of Prairie Avenue

The Comprehensive Plan will guide development and reinvestment within Highwood over the next 15 years. The Comprehensive Plan is the result of a collaborative effort between the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee, the Highwood Plan Commission, City staff, City Council, and the larger Highwood community.

This section outlines the actions the City should take to ensure the implementation of plan recommendations, including:

1. Adopt and use the updated Comprehensive Plan on a day-to-day basis;
2. Review and update the Zoning Ordinance and other development controls;
3. Review and update the Capital Investment Program (CIP) in conjunction with the development of a Comprehensive Plan Action Agenda;
4. Update the Comprehensive Plan on a regular basis;
5. Promote cooperation and participation among various partner agencies and organizations and enhance public communication;
6. Pursue responsible growth and annexation; and,
7. Establish an Economic Development Commission (EDC) to explore and prioritize possible funding sources and implementation techniques.

1. Adopt and Use the Plan on a Day-to-Day Basis

As indicated at the outset of this plan, the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan marks the end of the planning process. However, this event also marks the beginning of the planning document's life as a tool for the implementation of the community's long term vision.

It is vital that the City Council adopt the Comprehensive Plan as Highwood's official policy guide for improvement and development. Once adopted, the Comprehensive Plan should be used on a regular basis by City staff, boards, and commissions.

The policies set forth in the Comprehensive Plan touch on a wide range of topics. As such, City staff and officials should familiarize themselves with the Comprehensive Plan and utilize it as a resource, in concert with the City's other regulatory documents, wherever possible. The Comprehensive Plan should be used to review and evaluate all proposals for improvement and development within the community in the years ahead.

2. Review of Development Regulations

The City's zoning ordinance establishes the types of uses allowed on specific properties and prescribes the overall character and intensity of development to be permitted. Zoning is one of the most powerful tools in implementing planning policy including the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan.

Adoption of the new Comprehensive Plan should be followed by a review and update of the City's zoning ordinance, subdivision regulations, landscape requirements, and various related codes, ordinances, and other development controls. Policies regarding land use and the quality, character and intensity of new development established in the Comprehensive Plan should be used to revise existing zoning and development regulations by all land use boards and commissions.

To better reflect the unique needs and aspirations of the Highwood community, all development controls should be structured to be consistent with the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan. Revisions to land use and development regulations should be performed by the respective boards, commissions and departments responsible for their administration. It is likely that the outside expertise of a consultant will be needed to ensure that updated regulations utilize best practices and that contemporary tools are incorporated appropriately.

3. Capital Improvements Program

Another tool for implementing the Comprehensive Plan is a Capital Improvements Program (CIP). It establishes schedules, priorities, and funding sources for all public improvement projects within a five-year period.

Creating and updating the CIP typically involves scheduling the implementation of a range of specific projects related to the Comprehensive Plan, particularly the restoration and upgrading of existing utilities, infrastructure and facilities. Relocation, renovation and expansion of the City Hall, Public Works, Recreation Center and Library facilities should also be included in the CIP after a cost benefit analysis has been conducted.

As with most municipalities, financial resources in Highwood will always be limited and public dollars must be spent efficiently. The Capital Improvements Program should be created to allow the City of Highwood to provide the most desirable public improvements while staying within budget constraints.

Annual Review

A CIP is essential to the coordinated and efficient implementation of Comprehensive Plan and should be reviewed annually. The costs and benefits of proposed improvements should always be examined and used to establish priorities. The annual review of the CIP should seek and examine both near term projects and long term needs and opportunities.

Community Facilities Needs Assessment

The potential enhancement and relocation of community facilities should be taken into consideration when formulating the CIP. These improvement will play a significant role in the City's future by expanding amenities available to local residents, enhancing efficiencies in the delivery of City services and creating opportunities for new development.

The current locations of several different community facilities are likely to experience change over the life of this Comprehensive Plan including the existing City Hall, Public Works, Recreation Center, and Public Library facilities. As such, the City should conduct a comprehensive facility needs assessment to determine which of the City's various public facilities and services could benefit from relocation or expansion.

This assessment should estimate the costs of delivering services under current conditions and project costs of delivering services under various potential future scenarios including the relocation, combination, or expansion of facilities. Costs should then be compared to the anticipated public benefit of each scenario.

In considering future costs and benefits, the community facilities assessment should consider the following at a minimum:

- A municipal center.
- A recreation center including youth/senior services.
- Highwood Public Library.
- City Hall.
- Public Works Bank Lane facility.
- Potential redevelopment of City Hall and Bank Lane sites.
- Potential purchase and redevelopment of US Post Office facility and other properties adjacent to Everts Park.

As community facilities are relocated, the City should promote redevelopment of surplus or underutilized properties it owns to benefit the entire Highwood community. New or renovated City-owned facilities as well as the redevelopment of City-owned properties that are purchased for private development, should utilize sustainable design that is energy-efficient and minimizes or mitigates negative impacts on the environment.

Action Agenda

In conjunction with the Capital Improvements Program, the City should prepare an implementation “action agenda” which highlights the improvement and development projects and activities to be undertaken during the next three to five years.

For example, the “action agenda” might consist of:

1. A detailed description of the projects and activities to be undertaken;
2. The priority of each project or activity;
3. An indication of the public and private sector responsibilities for initiating and participating in each activity; and
4. A suggestion of the funding sources and assistance programs that might potentially be available for implementing each project or activity.

The Action Matrix contained at the end of this section can be used as a starting point for the City’s first official action agenda.

4. Regular Updates

The Comprehensive Plan is not a static document and should be revised and updated accordingly should community attitudes change or new issues arise which are beyond the scope of the current plan.

Although a proposal to amend the Comprehensive Plan can be brought forth by petition at any time, the City should regularly undertake a systematic review of the plan. This review should coincide with the preparation of the City’s budget and Capital Improvement Program. In this manner, recommendations or changes relating to capital improvements or other programs can be considered as part of the commitments for the upcoming fiscal year.

Routine examination of the Plan will help ensure that the planning program remains relevant to community needs and aspirations.

The City should:

1. Maintain a progress report listing achievements and developments related to the Comprehensive Plan that have occurred over the last three to five years;
2. In concert with the Action Agenda, maintain a list of Comprehensive Plan related goals and projects to occur over the next three to five years.
3. Provide an electronic file of the Comprehensive Plan on the City’s website;

4. Make copies of the Plan document available for public review and purchase at the City Hall;
5. Provide assistance to the public in explaining the Comprehensive Plan and its relationship to private and public development projects and other proposals, as appropriate;
6. Assist the Plan Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals, and City Council in the day-to-day administration, interpretation, and application of the Plan;
7. Maintain a list of current possible amendments, issues or needs which may be subject to change, addition or deletion from the Comprehensive Plan;
8. Coordinate with, and assist the Plan Commission and City Council in the Plan amendment process; and,
9. Provide City committees with access to legal and professional services.

5. City Governance

Ultimately, the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan will rely on the actions of the City’s various boards and commissions as well as individual staff, elected and appointed officials and Highwood residents. While the City’s Municipal Code has established the regulatory framework, the City Council, boards, commissions and volunteer positions it has created require the voice of local citizens. Active leadership and motivated citizen participation are required to truly realize community goals and objectives. The Comprehensive Plan builds on the City’s regulatory foundation and sets the stage for further public participation/involvement in governing the future of the City of Highwood.

Community Outreach

The City should identify regular opportunities to solicit continued input from the Highwood community as it pursues implementation of the Comprehensive Plan. City Officials should continue to reach out to Highwood residents and businesses on matters having an impact on their quality of life and economic vitality. As demonstrated by the Comprehensive Planning process, community workshops are an example of a simple and effective means of involving the public and ensuring that City action is in the best interest of the community.

Boards & Commissions

Community outreach efforts can also be used to seek out volunteers for the City's boards and commissions. There are currently several boards and commissions that are inactive or have vacancies, such as the Zoning Board of Appeals, Plan Commission, Appearance Review Board, and Recreation Board, that could benefit from the tremendous amount of local talent willing to serve.

Administration

The City should also establish a program for keeping new and existing members abreast of the latest tools to do their jobs effectively and provide the leadership in planning and development that the community needs. For example, outside consultants could be hired to conduct an annual seminar or "boot camp" on city governance.

City Staff

In addition, in recent years the City has had considerable turnover in administration and operated for long periods without a City Administrator. Stability and consistency in this position will provide for a point of contact not only for administrative decisions, but for residents, business owners, developers and others.

Educating the Public

Implementing the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan will require the support and extensive participation of the community. The City should take steps to ensure that local residents, businesses, and property owners are familiar with the over arching vision and primary recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan.

In addition to making the Comprehensive Plan readily available to residents, the City should prepare a summary of the Comprehensive Plan and distribute it widely throughout the community.

The City should also consider tools and techniques to improve the ability of staff and officials to more quickly and accurately respond to questions and concerns regarding planning and development. For example, as recommended in **Section 6: Commercial Areas Plan**, the City should create a user's guide to zoning and development that simplifies the City's building code and various land use and development regulations.

Cooperation

The City of Highwood should assume the leadership role in implementing the new Comprehensive Plan. In addition to carrying out the administrative actions and many of the public improvement projects called for in the Plan, the City may choose to administer a variety of programs available to local residents, businesses and property owners.

Successful implementation of the Comprehensive Plan will rely heavily on a strong partnership between the City, other public agencies, neighborhood groups and organizations, the local business community, and the private sector.

Intergovernmental Relations

The City of Highwood should work effectively with neighboring communities including Highland Park and Lake Forest to ensure that all existing agreements (i.e. annexation and boundary agreements) are fully implemented. Further, the City should work with neighboring communities to ensure that new agreements are negotiated in the future in order to meet the community's needs.

Of critical importance is continued intergovernmental relations with the County, to fully implement the county's commitments to develop a golf course facility and other amenities on the former Fort Sheridan property acquired from the United States Government. At the time the County took title to the property there was a fully functioning 18 hole golf course. This property was acquired by the county based on their commitment to improve, develop and maintain a golf course and directly due to the combined efforts of Highwood, Highland Park and Lake Forest. Further, the county sponsored a referendum to secure funds necessary for the construction of the golf course at Fort Sheridan.

Therefore, the City should designate a City staff member or elected official to serve as a liaison to the county and should attend all meetings with the County Board and/or Forest Preserve related to the golf course. Further, the City should pursue all avenues to see that the county fulfills its commitment to construct a golf course. The construction of the golf course would be an important amenity and economic development tool for the Highwood community.

The City should be the leader in promoting the cooperation and collaboration needed to implement the new Comprehensive Plan. The City's partners should include:

- **Other governmental and service districts**, such as Philip H. Sheridan Reserve Center, North Shore School District #112, Township High School District #113, Moraine Township, Lake County, Openlands, private utility companies, and the Lake County Forest Preserve, etc;
- The **real estate and development community** should be encouraged to undertake improvements and redevelopment that conform to the Comprehensive Plan and enhance the overall quality and character of the community; and,
- The **Highwood Community**, as all residents and neighborhood groups should be encouraged to participate in the long-term implementation of the plan, and all should be given the opportunity to voice their opinions on improvement and development decisions within the community.

6. Growth and Annexation

Highwood is a landlocked community with limited opportunities for growth or expansion. However, two government owned properties are to be annexed into the City of Highwood in the future, providing opportunities for the expansion and relocation of community facilities as well and/or new residential development.

Annexation

The City has several agreements in place with neighboring communities and entities regarding growth and annexation. All parties should be required to adhere to the:

- Fort Sheridan Intergovernmental Boundary Agreement;
- Highwood/Highland Park Intergovernmental Planning Agreement of 1996; and,
- Highwood/Highland Park Intergovernmental Disconnection Agreement of 1998.

Sheridan Reserve Center

Fort Sheridan has played an important role in the history of Highwood. As the Army Reserve pursues its plans for redevelopment and modernization, the Sheridan Reserve Center will continue to influence the future of Highwood. The Army Reserve is currently considering conveying a nearly 12-acre site to the City through the Real Property Exchange (RPX) process. The City of Highwood should evaluate the potential purchase of this property, located north of 1st Avenue, with respect to the City's community facility needs as determined by a comprehensive Community Facilities Needs Assessment. The potential need for and cost of environmental remediation should be evaluated when considering future use of the site.

Cooperation and Coordination

Regardless of the City's decision regarding the RPX property, the City should work to foster a working relationship with the Army Reserve regarding on-going operations and redevelopment of the Philip H. Sheridan Reserve Center. The City should formally identify a member of staff or an elected official to serve as a liaison to the Sheridan Reserve Center. Duties of this position should include regular attendance at planning and development meetings hosted at the complex as well as regular communication with the City Council and Plan Commission regarding redevelopment of the Center, the RPX process, and other events having a potential impact on the larger Highwood community.

Military Property

The US Navy owns approximately 185 acres in the area bound by the Sheridan Reserve complex, Walker Avenue, the Town of Fort Sheridan development, and Lake Michigan. The City of Highwood should pursue annexation of the military property which includes the northern portion as far south as Second Avenue as well as the area between the current City boundary and Patten Road, pursuant to the terms of the Intergovernmental Boundary Agreement with the City of Highland Park.

While the US Navy has constructed several hundred units of housing in this area, the portion to the north of McKibbin Street remains vacant. The City should enhance its relationship with the Navy and the operator of the Navy personnel housing along Patten Road to ensure that future development can be integrated into the larger community. As with the Sheridan Reserve Complex, the City will benefit from establishing a formal relationship with the local Navy representatives in identifying a local City staff member or elected official to serve as a liaison.

7. Economic Development Commission

The following section contains descriptions of several tools and strategies available to the City as it strives to enhance quality of life and encourage reinvestment and redevelopment throughout the community. While the Comprehensive Plan provides a foundation upon which to build, further analysis is required to more fully evaluate and prioritize economic development opportunities. The City should establish an Economic Development Commission to more closely examine strategies to foster redevelopment, recruit new businesses, and retain, enhance and expand existing businesses.

General Funding Sources

While many of the projects and improvements called for in the Comprehensive Plan can be implemented through administrative or policy decisions and funded through conventional municipal programs, other projects may require special technical and/or financial assistance.

The City and the newly formed EDC should continue to explore and consider the wide range of local, state and federal resources and programs that may be available to assist in the implementation of planning recommendations.

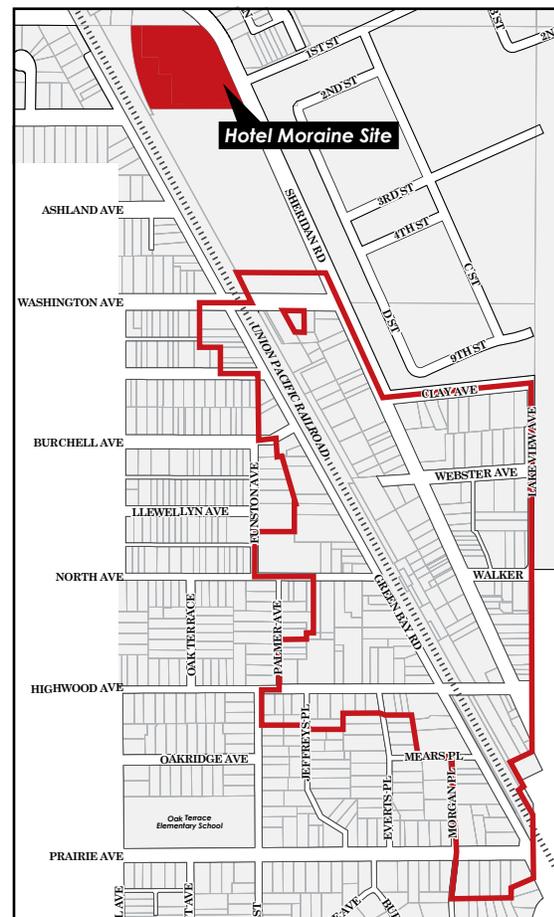
The City of Highwood is somewhat unique amongst its Lake County neighbors. In most cities and villages, the municipal portion of a resident's tax bill applies solely to city services only. Entities such as the library, parks/recreation and in some cases fire protection are separate taxing bodies with their own tax levy and tax rate. In Highwood, however, each of these is funded through the municipal tax levy.

Tax Increment Finance

The City of Highwood established a tax increment finance (TIF) district for the downtown area in 2002 which is due to expire in 2025. The TIF district is roughly bound by Washington Avenue to the north, Sheridan Road to the east, Prairie Avenue to the south, and Green Bay Road to the west, and includes over 100 properties. The City has used the Downtown TIF district to fund infrastructure improvements throughout the downtown including streetscape enhancements along Sheridan and Green Bay Roads. In addition to continued enhancements to public rights-of-way and other areas, the City could also use TIF funds to promote improvements to privately-owned properties and structures.

As shown below, the current TIF boundaries encompass the Downtown Highwood area. The City should consider the benefits of expanding the TIF district to incorporate the Hotel Moraine site to the north. Doing so would enable the City to provide incentives to facilitate development of this significant property.

Downtown TIF District



Business Development Districts (BDD)

A Business Development District (BDD) would allow the City to levy up to an additional 1% retailers occupation tax, 1% hotel tax, and 1% sales tax within a designated district. Similar to a TIF district, a BDD has a maximum life of 23 years. BDD legislation also permits municipalities to utilize tax revenue growth that has been generated by BDD properties to fund improvements in the district.

As designated in Division 74.3 of the Municipal Code of the State of Illinois, a municipality may designate, after public hearings, an area as a Business District. Business district designation also empowers a municipality to carry out a business district development or redevelopment plan through the following actions:

- Approve development and redevelopment proposals.
- 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 federal and state government, for business district development and redevelopment.
- Borrow funds for the purpose of business district development and redevelopment, and issue general obligation or revenue bonds, subject to applicable statutory limitations.
- Sell, lease, trade or improve such real property as may be acquired in connection with business district development and redevelopment plans.
- Business district planning activities.
- 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 an agent for the municipality for the purposes of business district development and redevelopment.

BDD funds can be used for infrastructure improvements, public improvements, site acquisition, and land assemblage. Given the limited amount of funds that a BDD is capable of generating, compared to a TIF district, BDD is best suited for funding small scale improvements and property maintenance programs.

Special Service Area (SSA)

A Special Service Area (SSA) could provide another means of funding improvements and programs within Downtown Highwood. In an SSA, a small percentage is added to the property tax of the properties within the defined service area. The revenue received from this targeted increase is channeled back into projects and programs benefiting those properties. An SSA can be rejected if 51% of the property owners and electors within a designated area object. SSA's are particularly useful in areas with a concentration of businesses such as a downtown or corridor.

SSA funded projects can include such things as district marketing and advertising assistance, promotional activities and special events, streetscape and signage improvements, and property maintenance services. SSA's can also be used to fund various incentives and tools such as small business loan funds or façade improvement programs discussed previously.

Home Rule Revenue Opportunities

In light of recent pronouncements by the State of Illinois that they are considering cutting funding sources available to local governments, the City of Highwood should prioritize an analysis of opportunities to generate revenue through Home Rule powers and enact necessary ordinances. The continued use of Home Rule powers may be essential to Highwood's ability to raise revenues in order to provide for needed municipal services.

Property Taxes

As a last resort, in order to pay for necessary services, Highwood officials should consider the possibility of increasing the local municipal tax rate. Doing so would provide additional resources to implement many of the recommendations contained in the Comprehensive Plan. For example, the City would likely need to increase staffing to more effectively enforce existing and proposed codes related to property maintenance and overcrowding.

When considering the breadth of services that it covers, the municipal portion of property taxes within Highwood is low. Further, the aggregated tax rate of 5.831% is among the lowest of all incorporated tax code areas in Lake County.

Incentives

There are several incentive programs and strategies that the City may choose to utilize in encouraging desirable development throughout the community. These programs can be used to not only attract new development to Highwood, but also facilitate the retention and expansion of existing businesses.

The following discussion of business assistance and incentives is not intended to be exhaustive, but rather highlight those programs that are believed to be most applicable to the City of Highwood and its economic development goals. Additional incentives and strategies exist including several programs offered by the State of Illinois. Further research should be undertaken as economic development opportunities materialize.

These tools are available to Illinois communities, but will require careful consideration and analysis on behalf of the City of Highwood on a case by case basis.

Sales Tax Rebate

A sales tax rebate is a tool typically used by municipalities to incentivize businesses to locate to a site or area. The rebate is offered as a percentage of the annual sales tax revenue generated by the establishment and is often tied to benchmarks such that as sales volume increases, so too does the proportion of the rebate. Sales tax rebate percentages can range from 1% to 100% and are dependent on the goals and objectives of the local municipality. Sales tax rebates have proven effective in attracting new businesses and encouraging redevelopment and renovation. Home rule communities like Highwood also have the authority to issue bonds based on sales tax revenue.

Tax Abatement

A property tax abatement is a versatile tool that can be applied to address a wide range of community issues. Property tax abatements are typically used as an incentive to attract business and revitalize the local economy. In the State of Illinois, municipalities and other taxing districts can abate any portion of the tax that they individually levy on a property. The period of tax abatement on a given property can be no longer than 10 years and the total combined sum of abated taxes for all taxing districts cannot exceed \$4 million over that period. A taxing district can administer the abatement by one of two methods: 1) lowering the tax rate; or 2) initiating a property tax freeze where the property is taxed based on a pre-development assessed value.

In some circumstances municipalities can also petition the County to lower a property's assessment. For example, a commercial property could be assessed at a percentage equivalent to that of a residential property. This is an effective means of lowering a property tax bill, however, it should be noted that this method impacts all taxing districts and not just the district making the request.

Façade Improvement Program

A façade improvement program provides financial and technical assistance to owners that invest in the aesthetics of their property. Such a program is targeted at existing buildings and businesses in areas that may be dated in appearance.

Façade improvement programs typically operate as a matching grant or as a rebate program payable once construction is complete. Costs eligible for reimbursement, such as improved signage, windows, painting, shutters and awnings, stairs and porches, walls, and cornices; can be defined by the City and based on specific goals and objectives. Some façade improvement programs allow individual businesses within larger developments to apply for a grant with written consent from the property owner.

A façade improvement program could be used to improve existing retail or restaurant space and enhance the overall appearance of Highwood's commercial areas. While façade improvement funds would have limited direct impact in attracting new development to Highwood, such a program would benefit existing retailers and could improve the overall health of the community's businesses. This in turn can serve to make the City more attractive to new businesses and investment.

Business Assistance Program

A business assistance grant program can be utilized to attract targeted retail businesses and assist existing businesses located within a particular area. As with a façade improvement program, business assistance funds are typically offered in the form of a matching grant that pays for a defined percentage of eligible expenditures. The expenditures are typically limited to build-out costs, signage, moving expenses, and physical improvements to a property necessary to accommodate a new business or the expansion of an existing business.

Priority can be given to businesses that complement the community's vision for its commercial areas and current retail needs. The size of the grant available can also be tied to the overall impact the proposed project could have on the local area. For example, the grant could be varied based on the anticipated sales tax to be generated by the project.

Grant monies could be used to lessen the cost burden of relocating or expanding in Highwood. A business assistance program would likely have the most influence in attracting small and medium-sized retail tenants and restaurants.

Commercial Loan/"Gap" Financing Program

Securing funding for development can be a long and complicated process and it has become increasingly common for projects to rely on multiple funding sources to come to fruition. Economic instability in the larger marketplace can further reduce the amount of risk conventional lenders are willing to assume with a given project and thus further limit financing options. Municipalities, counties and other public economic development entities have played an increasing role in providing "gap" financing to make up for shortfalls in financing provided by other financial institutions.

Through partnerships between Highwood and local lending institutions, commercial loan/"gap" financing programs could be established to lessen the risk to conventional lenders while providing more favorable loan terms to businesses looking to relocate or expand in the community. Such loan programs typically stipulate that the program cannot be the primary lender of the project. Loan terms may range, but are typically either a short term loan to cover immediate capital needs before sufficient long term financing can be secured, or a secondary loan that coincides with the life of the primary loan. Regardless, the goal is to encourage and facilitate development by providing a project with a blended financial package that is below market rate.

Such programs are typically capitalized by money from the municipality and lines of credit extended to partner financial institutions and guaranteed by the municipality. Loans terms vary depending on the goals of the project (e.g. startup capital, job creation, business modernization, etc.) and size of the loan principal.

Restaurant Assistance Program

A restaurant assistance program is similar to a business assistance program, but specifically targeted at restaurants seeking to locate within a community. As with any grant program, the City can define exactly what types of businesses qualify for funding. For example, the assistance program could be limited to full-service restaurants only, by specifying a minimum threshold for the percent of gross income derived from sales made for on-site consumption.

Such funds could be intended to assist with renovating existing space to accommodate restaurant use or in the construction of a new restaurant and are typically limited to improvements to real property (i.e. kitchen equipment is ineligible). Funds are typically offered as a matching grant with a requirement that the business remain open for a minimum number of years. A lien is typically placed on the subject property which is then reduced by a proportionate amount for every year of operation and forgiven after completion of a minimum period of operation.

It should be emphasized that this program would be utilized to enhance Highwood's reputation as a dining destination and in no way intended to create competition for existing restaurant uses.

Commercial Site Improvement Grant

There are some commercial properties within Highwood that are in need of maintenance and enhancement to better contribute to the surrounding commercial area. A site improvement grant could be utilized to revitalize existing commercial development and ensure complementary site design and amenities between new and old.

For example, the City could offer a grant program for properties located along an important commercial corridor such as Sheridan Road. Property owners could be reimbursed for a portion of project costs related to improving the appearance of the property or building, providing updated signage, and improving access and circulation for both pedestrians and automobiles. A tiered grant ceiling could be established depending on the location of the subject property, thus promoting reinvestment in targeted areas.

Other Funding Sources

There are also several funding sources available to municipalities seeking to enhance local transportation infrastructure and parks and open space offerings.

Transportation Funding

On August 10, 2005, the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) was passed. Over the past six years, SAFETEA-LU has allowed State and local transportation decision makers more flexibility for solving transportation problems in their communities and provided several grant programs to Illinois municipalities.

The future of SAFETEA-LU, and ultimately those programs covered by the Act, is unknown at this time (May 2011). While it is technically still in effect, it has been extended only to October 2011. Whether it is further extended or renewed is yet to be decided. However, typically when federal programs of this nature are not extended and expire, new programs are implemented. The City should continue to keep informed as to the status of these programs and any new funding sources that may be introduced in the near future.

The following programs are covered under SAFETEA-LU in its current structure. Since the possibility for renewal remains, they are included in this section for informational purposes.

- **Safe Routes to School**

The SRTS program has provided funding for various infrastructure-related projects including the planning, design, and construction of infrastructure-related projects that will substantially improve the ability of students to walk and bicycle to school, including:

- ▶ Sidewalk improvements;
- ▶ Traffic calming and speed reduction improvements;
- ▶ Pedestrian and bicycle crossing improvements;
- ▶ On-street bicycle facilities;
- ▶ Off-street bicycle and pedestrian facilities;
- ▶ Secure bicycle parking facilities; and,
- ▶ Traffic diversion improvements in the vicinity of schools.

While sidewalks are provided on both sides of Prairie Avenue leading to Oak Terrace Elementary, there are several local streets with sidewalks limited to one side of the street or completely absent. Several of the sidewalks leading to the school are also in poor condition. The City could utilize this type of funding to expand sidewalks leading to the school and replace degraded segments.

- **Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program (ITEP)**
The Illinois Department of Transportation administers the ITEP and has funded projects including bicycle/pedestrian facilities, streetscaping, landscaping, historic preservation and projects that control or remove outdoor advertising. In the past, federal reimbursement has been 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.

The City may be able to use this type of funding to make improvements in the area surrounding its two Metra stations such as new or expanded sidewalks and crosswalks and bike infrastructure. The neighboring community of Lake Forest used ITEP funds to rehabilitate its Metra station and improve bike and pedestrian paths.

- **Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ)**

The CMAQ program focuses on projects that provide solutions to regional congestion and air quality problems. Eligible project types have included transit improvements, commuter parking lots, traffic flow improvements, bicycle/pedestrian projects and projects that result in emissions reductions. In the past, these projects have been federally funded at 80 percent of project costs.

The Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) has been the administrator of CMAQ funds for the northeastern Illinois region. CMAP has supported a wide range of projects through the CMAQ program including improvements to bicycle facilities, commuter parking, transit facilities, intersections, sidewalk improvements, and signal timing. Funds have also been used to make transportation improvements to eliminate bottlenecks and limit diesel emissions, and create promotional campaigns to enhance use of transit and bicycles.

The City of Highwood could fund a variety of projects through this type of grant such as bike lane improvements along Sheridan Road and intersection improvements related to the Union Pacific Railroad crossings.

- **Surface Transportation Program (STP)**

In the past, these funds have been allocated to coordinating regional councils to be used for all roadway and roadway related items. Projects in this funding category have required a local sponsor and have been selected based on, among other factors, a ranking scale that takes into account the regional benefits provided by the project among other factors.

The Lake County Council of Mayors has been the administrator of STP funds for Lake County. The Council's STP funds have been available for the following categories: Air Quality; Arterial Maintenance; Bridge; Bikepath Enhancement; Local Assistance Maintenance; Multi-Modal; Safety; and Traffic Flow.

As with CMAQ funds, the City could potentially apply these types of funds to a wide variety of improvements. The requirements of the STP would restrict improvements to Western Avenue and Washington Avenue (which are classified as Urban Collectors) and Sheridan Road, Walker Avenue and Prairie Avenue (which are classified as Minor Arterials). For example, the City could apply under the Local Assistance Maintenance category to resurface segments of these roadways that are in poor condition.

Parks and Open Space Funding Illinois Department of Natural Resources

The City's Parks and Recreation Department should identify projects where a cooperative pursuit of parks and open space grants may be beneficial. The Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) administers seven grants-in-aid programs to help municipalities and other local agencies provide a number of public outdoor recreation areas and facilities. The programs operate on a cost reimbursement basis to local agencies (government or not-for-profit organization) and are awarded on an annual basis. Local governments can receive one grant per program per year, with no restrictions on the number of local governments that can be funded for a given location.

IDNR grants are organized into three major categories: Open Space Lands Acquisition and Development (OSLAD)/Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF); Boat Access Area Development (BAAD); and Illinois Trails Grant Programs. While the BAAD and Trails Grant Programs may still be utilized, the OSLAD program may be most applicable to achieving the City's goal of expanding parks and open space available to Highwood residents.

OSLAD

The OSLAD program awards up to fifty percent of project costs up to a maximum of \$750,000 for acquisition and \$400,000 for development/renovation of such recreation facilities as tot lots and playgrounds, community and regional parks, outdoor nature interpretive areas, park roads and paths, and waterfront improvements.

- **Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)**

Land and Water Conservation Fund grants are available to cities, counties and school districts to be used for outdoor recreation projects. Projects require a fifty percent match. All funded projects are taken under perpetuity by the National Park Service and must only be used for outdoor recreational purposes. Development and renovation projects must be maintained for a period of 25 years or the life of the manufactured goods. LWCF grants are managed by the IDNR and the application process is identical to the OSLAD application process.

The City, for example, could utilize OSLAD or LWCF funds to purchase underutilized land for local parks in its established neighborhoods, facilitate expansion of the Highwood Recreation Center, or enhance the Western Avenue Ball Park facilities.

Recreational Trails Program (RTP)

Another program is the federal Recreational Trails Program (RTP), which was created through the National Recreational Trail Fund Act (NRTFA) as part of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA) and reauthorized by the SAFETEA-LU. By law, 30% of each States' RTP funding must be earmarked for motorized trail projects, 30% for non-motorized trail projects and the remaining 40% for multi-use (diversified) motorized and non-motorized trails or a combination of either. The RTP program can provide up to 80% federal funding on approved projects and requires a minimum 20% non-federal funding match.

The IDNR administers RTP funds and stipulates that funds can be utilized for trail construction and rehabilitation; restoration of areas adjacent to trails damaged by unauthorized trail uses; construction of trail-related support facilities and amenities; and acquisition from willing sellers of trail corridors through easements or fee simple title.

The City of Highwood, in partnership with OpenLands, could utilize RTP funds to improve access to trails along the Lake Michigan shoreline. For example, the trailhead located near the intersection of Westover and Lyster Roads could be enhanced with signage, pedestrian amenities and an expanded parking lot. Improving access to this asset could attract visitors from throughout the region to not only OpenLands, but Highwood as well.

Action Matrix

The following Action Matrix presents a summary of action statements from the Comprehensive Plan. This matrix identifies potentially responsible entities, including City of Highwood departments and partner organizations, and assigns a priority level to each item. Page references have also been provided to allow for easy reference to original text within the document and provide context to the recommendation.

Responsible Entities & Partner Organizations

With regard to citing those entities responsible for implementation, it should be noted that is anticipated that, from a policy standpoint, the Mayor and City Council will be involved in the majority of these actions. Where a City Department should be involved, that department has been listed. Where general administrative leadership is needed, the City of Highwood has been listed. Action items, such as recommended technical studies and analyses, that would likely benefit from outside expertise have also been highlighted.

Time Frame

Each action item has been assigned a value of ‘S’, ‘M’, or ‘L’ which indicates the time frame within which that item should be achieved. These values are defined as follows:

- ‘S’ = Short Term (1-2 years)
- ‘M’ = Mid-Term (3-5 years)
- ‘L’ = Long Term (5+ years)
- ‘O’ = On Going (Requires immediate action and continued attention throughout the life of the plan)

Where projects are likely to span several years, a time frame range (e.g. S-M) has been provided. Those action items that represent those requiring immediate action with an on-going effort or long term policy stance, such as encouraging density within Downtown Highwood, have been assigned a value of ‘O’.

Residential Areas

Action	Time Frame	Responsible Entities & Partner Organizations	Page Ref.
Maintain and enhance relationship with the Navy and the operator of the Navy personnel housing along Patten Road.	O	City of Highwood; U.S. Navy	22
Evaluate existing ordinances to ensure that sufficient guidelines are provided regarding residential property maintenance and appearance.	O	Building and Zoning; Plan Commission/ ZBA; Property Owners; Local Residents	22
Prohibit the conversion of single-family homes to multi-family residences.	S	Building and Zoning; Plan Commission/ ZBA	20
Adopt and enforce an amortization schedule to phase out non-residential and nonconforming uses within residential districts.	S	City of Highwood	22
Identify additional funding to support those departments in charge of code enforcement.	S	City of Highwood; Building and Zoning	22
Revise zoning map to reflect residential land use designations of the Comprehensive Land Use Plan.	S	City of Highwood; Plan Commission	22
Explore the creation of a property maintenance program for residents and make funds available to assist with improvements to housing structures.	S	City of Highwood; Building and Zoning; Moraine Township	22
Develop a detailed subarea plan for the Federally-owned property along Patten Road and Westover Road.	S	Building and Zoning; Property Owners; Local Residents	22
Develop a uniform approach to code enforcement and follow-up to ensure efficiency and enforcement.	S-M	City of Highwood; U.S. Navy; Local Residents	22

Commercial Areas

Action	Time Frame	Responsible Entities & Partner Organizations	Page Ref.
Accommodate higher density development in Downtown Highwood by revising zoning standards regarding building height and buildable area and revise parking requirements and shared parking regulations.	O	Building and Zoning; Plan Commission/ ZBA; Property Owners; Local Residents	26
Continue to make streetscape enhancements in the Downtown TIF district, while coordinating streetscaping efforts with adjacent property owners.	O	City of Highwood; Property Owners	28
Establish an Economic Development Commission (EDC) to prioritize economic development opportunities and evaluate strategies to foster redevelopment, recruit new businesses, and retain, enhance and expand existing businesses. ¹	S	City of Highwood; Businesses; Local Residents	30
New standards specific to the downtown area should be established through a new zoning district or utilizing a zoning overlay district that augments B-1 requirements in a targeted manner.	S	Building and Zoning; Plan Commission/ ZBA; Property Owners; Local Residents	26
Develop a uniform approach to code enforcement and follow-up to ensure efficiency and enforcement.	S	Building and Zoning	27
Assess existing ordinances to ensure that sufficient guidelines are provided regarding commercial property maintenance and appearance.	S	City of Highwood; Commercial Property Owners; Building and Zoning	27
Adopt and enforce an amortization schedule to phase out non-commercial uses and non-conforming commercial properties, within commercial districts.	S	City of Highwood	27
Identify areas where residential and commercial area adjacency is problematic and implement buffering and screening techniques.	S	City of Highwood	30
Review and revise existing signage regulations within the Zoning Ordinance and Appearance Review Code based on input from residents and businesses.	S	Plan Commission; ARC; Businesses; Local Residents	30
Expand the Downtown Highwood TIF District to include the Hotel Moraine site and establish incentives to facilitate development.	S	City of Highwood; EDC; Outside Expertise	27
Reach out to economic development organizations to examine the potential to revitalize hotel uses at the Hotel Moraine site and market the site for redevelopment.	S	City of Highwood; EDC; Lake County Partners	27
Establish an official, unified vision for the Hotel Moraine site and work with the property owners to develop a preliminary development concept for the site that honors the community's vision while maximizing potential redevelopment opportunities.	M	City of Highwood; Development Community; Property Owners; Local Residents	27
Establish a user's guide to zoning and development that simplifies the building code and lessens the chance of misinterpretation of existing regulations between property owners and City staff.	M	Building and Zoning; Property Owners	28
Install gateway features at entry points along primary roadways, including enhancements that announce entry and wayfinding elements.	M	City of Highwood	28
Establish a façade and site improvement program.	M-L	EDC; Businesses; Property Owners	30

NOTES:

¹ The EDC does not yet exist as a commission and its formation is important as first step toward guiding economic development within Highwood. As such its creation is the first action provided under the Commercial Areas category. The EDC is listed as a responsible entity where appropriate.

Community Facilities

Action	Time Frame	Responsible Entities & Partner Organizations	Page Ref.
Consider the Library’s needs as the City examines potential redevelopment or significant properties within Downtown Highwood.	O	City of Highwood; Highwood Public Library	34
Support art-friendly programs and events including City sponsored events.	O	City of Highwood; Local Artists; Businesses; Local Residents; Development Community	36
Establish formal lines of communication between Aldermen, neighborhood organizations, and the Police Department to ensure that local problem areas are being sufficiently policed.	S	Police Department; City Council; Neighborhood Organizations	33
Solicit specific input from the senior community regarding the need for a Senior Center as well as issues and assistance.	S	City of Highwood; Parks and Recreation; Senior Residents; Moraine Township	34
Maintain communication with local schools regarding anticipated facilities needs and plans for expansion.	S	City of Highwood; Oak Terrace Elementary School; St. James Catholic School; North Shore School District #112	35
Work with the Midwest Young Artists (MYA) and current property owners to assess the potential for expansion into the lots to the west of the MYA.	S	City of Highwood; Midwest Young Artists; Property Owners	36
Establish more formalized and regular communication with the Army Reserve to ensure that City officials and the larger community have accurate knowledge of activities at the Sheridan Reserve Center.	S	City of Highwood; Army Reserve	38
Evaluate the costs and benefits of acquiring the RPX property, including potential costs of environmental remediation of the portion of the site currently occupied by a land fill.	S	City of Highwood; Property Owners	38
Reach out to the Chamber of Commerce and local businesses to assess how community events can be improved to benefit local retailers and restaurants.	S-M	City of Highwood; Businesses; Chamber of Commerce; EDC	39
Assess the costs and benefits of purchasing the U.S. Post Office site to accommodate the relocation of government facilities or the expansion of facilities.	S-M	City of Highwood; USPS	34
Examine existing codes and evaluate how building standards can be improved to require more sustainable development practices.	S-M	City of Highwood; Building and Zoning; Community Facility Providers; Local Residents; Businesses; Development Community	39
Assess the safety and efficiency benefits of making High Street a one-way street.	M	City of Highwood; Public Works; Oak Terrace Elementary School; Outside Expertise	35
Include the MYA music school as a regional attraction within marketing and promotional efforts for the larger community.	M	City of Highwood; Midwest Young Artists	36
Examine alternative locations for the public works operations that are currently located at the Sheridan Reserve Center facility.	M	City of Highwood; Public Works	38
Use the City’s website as a marketing tool for local community facility providers while utilizing regular mailings as an avenue for advertising.	M	City of Highwood	39
Consider the current City Hall site as a potential redevelopment opportunity and identify the costs and benefits of relocating its facilities in the future.	M-L	City of Highwood	32

Community Facilities

Action	Time Frame	Responsible Entities & Partner Organizations	Page Ref.
Assess the costs and benefits of creating a joint public safety facility housing both the Fire Department and Police Department.	M-L	City of Highwood; Police Department; Fire Department; Outside Expertise	33
Identify parking solutions that balance the needs of library patrons and local businesses.	M-L	City of Highwood; Highwood Public Library; Businesses; Outside Expertise	34
Work with the Oak Terrace school district and officials to promote the school and the benefits of the dual language program.	M-L	City of Highwood; Oak Terrace Elementary School; North Shore School District #112	35
Conduct an analysis of water supply and distribution systems in problematic areas identified by the fire department; upgrade water supply and distribution systems where necessary.	L	Fire Department; Water Department; Public Works; Outside Expertise	33
Encourage the school district to continue to expand open space for playing fields.	L	Parks and Recreation; Oak Terrace Elementary School; North Shore School District #112	35

Parks and Open Space

Action	Time Frame	Responsible Entities & Partner Organizations	Page Ref.
Continue involvement in the Fort Sheridan Master Plan Advisory Committee and work with the Lake County Forest Preserve to ensure that residents have access to a public golf course and trail amenities that preserve the area's sensitive natural features.	S	City of Highwood; Fort Sheridan Master Plan Advisory Committee; Lake County Forest Preserve; Local Residents; City of Highland Park	44
Continue to consider the acquisition of the vacant property next to the Recreation Center on the north.	S	City of Highwood; Parks and Recreation; Property Owners	44
Continue to identify and prioritize opportunities to purchase land in underserved areas of the community that are in greatest need of new park space.	S-M	City of Highwood; Parks and Recreation; Property Owners; Local Residents	42
Continue to examine the potential acquisition of adjacent property to the north of Memorial Park to accommodate an off-street parking lot.	S-M	City of Highwood; Parks and Recreation; Public Works; Property Owners	42
Work with the Bocce Courts to promote its facilities as a community asset.	S-M	City of Highwood; Highwood Bocce Courts; Local Residents	45
Expand Everts Park to the east to create an entrance along Green Bay Road.	M-L	City of Highwood; Local Residents; Property Owners; Parks and Recreation	42
Develop the area adjacent to the City of Highwood water tower for park and recreational uses upon redevelopment of the surrounding area.	M-L	Parks and Recreation; Property Owners	42
Work with local groups to study the need for additional youth and young adult programming within the community.	M-L	City of Highwood; Oak Terrace Elementary School; Northwood Junior High School; Parks and Recreation	44
Work with Lake County Forest Preserve to continue to enhance local access to open space and natural areas.	M-L	City of Highwood; Lake County Forest Preserve	44
Enhance the Bartlett Ravine entrance to the Openlands Lakeshore Preserve, potentially in conjunction with the redevelopment of the RPX property.	M-L	City of Highwood; Openlands	44

Transportation

Action	Time Frame	Responsible Entities & Partner Organizations	Page Ref.
Continue to implement the recommendations of the Downtown Highwood Parking Study in 2005.	O	City of Highwood	49
Regulate the riding of bicycles on sidewalks to ensure pedestrian safety.	S	City of Highwood; Businesses; Local Residents; Police Department	50
Encourage residents using Metra to incorporate bicycling into their commute by adding bicycle parking and wayfinding signage to the station.	S	City of Highwood; Metra	52
Install a crosswalk across Green Bay Road at North Avenue for passengers going to/coming from the Pace bus shelter.	S	City of Highwood; Public Works; Pace	52
Work with the Union Pacific Railroad and Metra to enhance east-west pedestrian connectivity, including additional signage and enhancements to existing at-grade pedestrian crossings.	S	City of Highwood; Union Pacific Railroad; Metra	52
Encourage valet operators to use lots further from the core of Downtown and encourage the Chamber of Commerce to engage a single valet operator who must be licensed.	S	City of Highwood; Chamber of Commerce; Businesses; Valet Operators; EDC	50
Encourage the owners of private parking areas to make their facilities accessible in off-peak hours for parking uses (e.g. valet) or use by the general public.	S	City of Highwood; Property Owners	49
Pursue grant funding for bicycle path development and crossings.	S-M	City of Highwood; Public Works; Metra	50
Work with local businesses to provide bicycle racks or designate bicycle parking areas.	S-M	City of Highwood; Chamber of Commerce; Businesses; Local Residents	50
Undertake an analysis to determine the pavement condition of roadways and ensure they are well maintained, especially those with high traffic usage.	S-M	Public Works	47
Western Avenue, which is in need of maintenance and possible resurfacing, should be improved in coordination with the adjoining City of Highland Park.	S-M	Public Works; City of Highland Park	47
Examine the need for a traffic signal at the intersection of Green Bay Road and Highwood Avenue and consider restricting the US Bank/Walgreens access drive on Highwood Avenue to outbound traffic movements only.	S-M	Public Works; Union Pacific Railroad; Metra; Property Owners; Outside Expertise	48
Conduct a valet loading zone study to improve the existing valet operations on Sheridan Road and Green Bay Road, focusing on consolidating loading zones and improving circulation patterns of valet operations.	S-M	City of Highwood; Outside Expertise; Businesses; Chamber of Commerce	50
Outside of Downtown Highwood, install dedicated, on-street bike lanes and other bicycle safety measures along Prairie and Highwood Avenues.	S-M	City of Highwood; Public Works; Property Owners	50
Consider marking an alternate route for the Robert McClory Bike Path that circulates riders through Downtown Highwood via Washington Avenue and Bank Lane.	M-L	City of Highwood; Property Owners; Union Pacific Railroad	45
Consider a traffic signal at the intersection of First Street and Sheridan Road to provide vehicular and approach the Army Reserve for a contribution for the costs of construction of that traffic signal.	M-L	Public Works; U.S. Army; Outside Expertise	48
Work with the Highwood Public Library to explore opportunities to share parking with other land uses, including the U. S. Post Office.	M-L	City of Highwood; USPS; Highwood Public Library	49
Expand amenities (wide sidewalks, landscaping, etc.) like those in Downtown Highwood to other feasible locations such as the portion of Washington Avenue located between Sheridan and Green Bay Roads.	M-L	City of Highwood; Businesses; Property Owners; Public Works	52
As changes in land use and development occur, work with Pace to explore the enhancement and expansion of transit service with regular communication and notification to ascertain the potential need for or impact on bus service.	L	City of Highwood; Pace; Local Residents	48

Key Focus Areas

Action	Time Frame	Responsible Entities & Partner Organizations	Page Ref.
Downtown Highwood - North			
Consider coordinating with the owner(s) of the property to the north of the Public Works Department's Bank Lane facility to facilitate the comprehensive redevelopment of both properties.	O	City of Highwood; Public Works; Property Owners	56
Install a gateway feature at the intersection of Washington Avenue and Sheridan Road, potentially including wayfinding signage.	S	City of Highwood	55
Enforce the landscaping requirements of the Appearance Code requiring parking lot landscaping such as perimeter landscaping, curbed perimeters, landscaped islands and clearly marked pedestrian pathways.	S	City of Highwood; Businesses; Local Residents; Property Owners	56
Enforce the landscaping requirements of the Appearance Code requiring appropriate landscaping and screening of parking, loading and service areas.	S	City of Highwood; Businesses; Local Residents; Property Owners	56
Install streetscape elements along Washington Avenue, Webster Avenue, and Sheridan Road that match existing streetscaping along Sheridan Road to the south of Webster Avenue.	S-M	Public Works; Property Owners; City of Highwood	55
Landscaping and fencing should be installed along the Union Pacific right-of-way to help establish a sense of enclosure within the one-sided corridor.	S-M	City of Highwood; Union Pacific Railroad	55
Consider establishing angle parking, widening the sidewalk and installing planters in the parkway area along the north side of Washington Avenue.	S-M	City of Highwood; Public Works; Property Owners	56
Work with property owners and utility providers to bury overhead utilities as redevelopment occurs.	M	City of Highwood; Property Owners; Utility Providers	55
Green Bay Road - North			
Work with property owners and utility providers to bury overhead utilities as redevelopment occurs.	M	City of Highwood; Property Owners; Utility Providers	58
Ensure that proper easements have been secured to legally allow for parking along Union Pacific railroad right-of-way.	M	City of Highwood; Union Pacific Railroad	58
Evaluate the use of parallel parking along Green Bay Road right-of-way in areas where parking cannot be legally accommodated along Union Pacific right-of-way.	M	City of Highwood; Union Pacific Railroad	58
Streetscaping elements should be installed to strengthen the connection between commercial development to the south of North Avenue and remaining commercial uses to the north.	M	City of Highwood; Public Works	58
A pedestrian crossing should be established across Green Bay Road, connecting the at-grade crossing located on the south end of the Metra station platform to a new eastern entrance to Everts Park; the crosswalk and Metra crossing should be enhanced with landscaping and signage.	M	City of Highwood; Metra; Union Pacific Railroad	58
Downtown Highwood - Core			
Wayfinding signage should be installed at key intersections throughout the Downtown Core area such as Highwood Avenue and Sheridan Road, potentially including a business directory.	S	City of Highwood; Public Works; Chamber of Commerce	64
The existing gateway sign at Prairie Avenue and Green Bay Road should be better maintained with regular maintenance and enhancement.	S	City of Highwood; Public Works	64
The streetscaping program in Downtown Highwood should be extended along Green Bay Road north of Highwood Avenue.	S-M	City of Highwood; Public Works	64
Should the USPS relocate to another site in Highwood, the City should assess the site's potential to accommodate another civic use.	M-L	City of Highwood; USPS; Property Owners	66

Implementation

Action	Time Frame	Responsible Entities & Partner Organizations	Page Ref.
In conjunction with the CIP, prepare an implementation “action agenda” which highlights the improvement and development projects and activities to be undertaken during the next three to five years.	O	City of Highwood	69
Research funding sources available to municipalities seeking to enhance local transportation infrastructure and parks and open space offerings.	O	City of Highwood; EDC	76
City staff and officials should familiarize themselves with the Comprehensive Plan and utilize it as a resource, in concert with the City’s other regulatory documents, wherever possible.	O	City of Highwood	67
Use the Comprehensive Plan to review and evaluate all proposals for improvement and development within the community in the years ahead.	O	City of Highwood	67
Conduct a comprehensive facility needs assessment to determine which of the City’s various public facilities and services could benefit from relocation or expansion.	O	City of Highwood; Outside Expertise	68
Review and update the Comprehensive Plan to reflect community attitudes and address new issues that arise which are beyond the scope of the current plan.	O	City of Highwood	69
Establish a program for keeping new and existing members abreast of the latest tools to do their jobs effectively and provide the leadership in planning and development that the community needs.	O	City of Highwood	70
Evaluate the purchase of the RPX property with respect to the City’s community facility needs as determined by a comprehensive Community Facilities Needs Assessment, including need for and cost of environmental remediation.	O	City of Highwood; Army Reserve	71
Foster a working relationship with the Army Reserve regarding on-going operations and redevelopment of the Philip H. Sheridan Reserve Center and formally identify a member of staff or an elected official to serve as a liaison.	O	City of Highwood; Army Reserve	71
Create a Capital Improvements Program (CIP), to be reviewed annually, that establishes schedules, priorities, and funding sources for all public improvement projects within a five-year period.	S	City of Highwood	68
Pursue annexation of the military property pursuant to the terms of the Intergovernmental Boundary Agreement with the City of Highland Park.	S	City of Highwood; U.S. Navy; City of Highland Park	71
Research incentive programs and strategies the City may choose to utilize in encouraging desirable development throughout the community.	S-M	City of Highwood; EDC; Businesses; Development Community	74