



Village of Winnetka

Plan Commission Special Meeting

January 25, 2023 at 6:00 PM
Winnetka Village Hall - 510 Green Bay Road

AGENDA

- 1. Call to Order & Roll Call**
- 2. Approval of Minutes**
 - a. December 21, 2022, Regular Meeting Minutes
- 3. Public Comments**
- 4. Community Development Report**
- 5. Comprehensive Plan**
 - a. Review of Draft Comprehensive Plan
- 6. New Business**
 - a. Special Meeting Quorum Check - February 15, 2023
 - b. Next Regular Meeting Quorum Check - February 22, 2023
- 7. Adjournment**

NOTICE

Public comment is permitted on all agenda items at the meeting. If you wish to provide testimony or comments prior to the meeting, you may provide them one of two ways: (1) by sending an email to planning@winnetka.org; or by sending a letter to Community Development, Village of Winnetka, 510 Green Bay Road, Winnetka, IL 60093. All agenda materials are available at www.villageofwinnetka.org/agendacenter.

The Village of Winnetka, in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, requests that persons with disabilities, who require certain accommodations to allow them to observe and/or participate in this meeting or have questions about the accessibility of the meeting or facilities contact the Village ADA Coordinator at 510 Green Bay Road, Winnetka, Illinois 60093, (Telephone (847) 716-3543; T.D.D. (847) 501-6041).

**WINNETKA PLAN COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
DECEMBER 21, 2022**

Members Present:

Bridget Orsic, Chairperson
Jonathan Alt
Layla Danley
John Golan
Chris Foley
Liz Kunkle

Non-Voting Members Present:

Tina Dalman

Members Absent:

Mamie Case

Non-Voting Members Absent:

Matt Bradley

Village Staff:

David Schoon, Director of Community Development
Ann Klaassen, Assistant Director of Community Development

Call to Order & Roll Call:

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Orsic at 7:00 p.m. Ms. Klaassen took roll call of the Commission Members present.

Approval of Minutes – October 26, 2022 Regular Meeting Minutes

Chairperson Orsic asked for a motion to approve the October 26, 2022, meeting minutes. A motion was made by Ms. Danley, and seconded by Mr. Foley, to approve the October 26, 2022, meeting minutes. A vote was taken and the motion unanimously passed, 6 to 0:

AYES: Alt, Danley, Foley, Golan, Kunkle, Orsic

NAYS: None

Public Comments

No comments were made at this time.

Community Development Report

Mr. Schoon explained how the new audio equipment worked and provided the Commission with an update regarding 195 -205 Sheridan Road which was approved by the Village Council as well as 1303 Scott Avenue and 1311 Scott Avenue which will be presented to the Village Council at the January 17, 2023, meeting. He then stated the next special meeting would be held in January 2023, to meet with the consultants regarding the Comprehensive Plan.

New Applications:

a. **Case No. 22-26-SD: 484 and 488 Elder Lane - Plat of Consolidation:** An application submitted by Tim and Kimberly Junker seeking approval of a Final Plat of Subdivision to consolidate the two existing lots into a single lot of record. As part of the Final Plat approval, the application includes a request for approval of a variation to permit the existing residence at 484 Elder Lane to observe less than the minimum required side yard setback from the east property line, which is due to an increase

1 **in the minimum required side yard setback as a result of the proposed increase in total lot area and**
2 **increase in average lot width. The Village Council has final jurisdiction on this request.**

3 Ms. Klaassen described the proposed plat of subdivision and requested variation in connection with final
4 plat approval. She identified the properties' location, size and zoning classification noting the applicants
5 reside at 484 Elder Lane with the 488 Elder Lane residence to be demolished upon approval. Ms. Klaassen
6 stated the request was reviewed by the Village Water and Engineering Departments which confirmed no
7 easements are needed and the required signature blocks are on the plat of consolidation. She added the
8 applicants provided preliminary plans for the consolidated lot which include the construction of an
9 addition, detached garage and pool at 484 Elder Lane. Ms. Klaassen then described the driveway removal
10 and new circular driveway to be installed off Myrtle Street and identified the front and corner lot lines.
11 She also identified illustrations of the proposed improvements noting the proposed lot consolidation
12 complied with minimum lot depth and width standards, the consolidation would eliminate both
13 nonconforming lots and complied with the Comprehensive Plan. Ms. Klaassen informed the Commission
14 that the larger lot resulting from the consolidation would render the 484 Elder Lane residence
15 nonconforming in terms of its side yard setback.

16
17 Ms. Klaassen stated the Landmark Preservation Commission reviewed the demolition request in
18 December 2021 and approved the demolition without delay. She also stated that the ZBA considered the
19 side yard setback variation at its December 2022 meeting and recommended approval. Ms. Klaassen
20 stated following public comment and Commission discussion, a Commission Member may wish to make
21 a motion to recommend approval or denial with a draft motion provided on page no. 15 of the agenda
22 materials. She then asked if there were any questions. Ms. Klaassen then answered questions relating to
23 nonconforming side yard setback requirements.

24
25 Chairperson Orsic swore in those speaking to this matter. The architect Scott Javore confirmed the FAR
26 would be 1,200 square feet less when the lots are combined and described how the proposed addition
27 would step down resulting in a more open corner appearance. He then referred to the neighbor's
28 questions relating to the new driveway location which would be moved further north addressing the
29 neighbor's concern. A question was raised relating to the home's design and its appearance of the front
30 of the home. The architect responded there would be a second front on the home. No additional questions
31 were raised at this time.

32
33 Chairperson Orsic stated she is familiar with the property and the proposal would cure a number of
34 nonconformities with the resulting nonconformity to remain regardless. She also stated the driveway
35 removal would be an improvement for the home to the east. Chairperson Orsic then asked if there were
36 any other comments. Ms. Danley stated she is also familiar with the property and agreed with Chairperson
37 Orsic's comments. Mr. Alt also agreed with the comments made.

38
39 Chairperson Orsic then asked for a motion. Mr. Alt stated the proposed Junker subdivision final plat
40 consolidating the two existing lots known as 484 Elder Lane and 488 Elder Lane into a single lot of record
41 requiring a zoning variation for 484 Elder Lane to allow a minimum east side yard setback of 8.04 feet
42 whereas a minimum of 12 feet is required meets the subdivision code standards for approving such final
43 plat and the proposed subdivision is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan land use and single family
44 residential development and that based on these findings, the Commission recommends that the
45 proposed Junker subdivision be approved subject to final review and approval by the Village Attorney
46 prior to plat recordation. The motion was seconded by Mr. Golan. A vote was taken and the motion
47 unanimously passed, 6 to 0:

48 AYES: Alt, Danley, Foley, Golan, Kunkle, Orsic

1 NAYS: None

2
3 **New Business**

4 a. Special Meeting Quorum Check - January 18, 2023.

5 The Commission Members discussed their availability.

6
7 b. Next Regular Meeting Quorum Check - January 25, 2023.

8 The Commission Members discussed their availability.

9
10 **Adjournment:**

11 A motion to adjourn was made by Ms. Danley and seconded by Ms. Kunkle. A vote was taken and the
12 motion unanimously passed, 6 to 0:

13 AYES: Alt, Danley, Foley, Golan, Kunkle, Orsic

14 NAYS: None

15
16 The meeting was adjourned at 7:25 p.m.

17
18 Respectfully submitted,

19
20 Antionette Johnson

21 Recording Secretary



MEMORANDUM VILLAGE OF WINNETKA

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

TO: PLAN COMMISSION
FROM: DAVID SCHOON, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR
DATE: JANUARY 18, 2023
SUBJECT: WINNETKA FUTURES 2040 PLAN – DRAFT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

At the January 25, 2023, Plan Commission meeting, The Lakota Group and Village staff will review the Winnetka Futures 2040 Plan – Draft Comprehensive Plan (“Draft Plan”) with the Plan Commission. The draft plan is the culmination of the community’s work, which started in the Fall of 2019, and is now being presented to the Commission for its consideration.

COMMUNITY OPEN HOUSE

Since the Plan Commission met with the Village Council to review the Visioning document in July 2022, The Lakota Group and staff invited community members to participate in either an in-person or online community open house to provide their thoughts on the draft vision statements, goals, and initiatives. During September and October of last year, over 130 community members participated in the open houses and overwhelmingly found the draft vision statements, goals, and initiatives in line with their future vision for the community. That sentiment has been documented in the Draft Plan presented for the Commission’s consideration.

DRAFT PLAN

We present you with the Draft Plan, which we believe presents the future vision for Winnetka in a visually interesting and easy-to-navigate format. The Draft Plan tells the community’s story of where we want to be with not only text, but also with an array of graphs and charts, maps, visual graphics, and photos of the community and from elsewhere. The graphic-rich format is intended to help better convey where the community is today and where we want to be in the future. Commission members have already seen most of the Draft Plan’s content as most of it comes from either (1) the Existing Conditions Report (December 2020 and January 2021) or (2) the Commission’s visioning work during the first six months of 2022, which was then shared with the Council in July 2022. The Draft Plan takes some of the information from the Existing Conditions Report to provide background information to support the community-identified pillar vision statements, goals, and initiatives that are included in the Draft Plan. As you read the document, most of it should sound familiar to you.

However, some of what is included in the Draft Plan is new or has been put into a different form, such as the following:

- In **Chapter 1 – Introduction**, the *Winnetka Futures 2040 Overview* section summarizes the plan’s key purposes to support balancing change and building community.
- In **Chapter 2 – Land Use & Zoning**, most of its information has previously been shared with the Commission. It has been reorganized slightly to be more consistent with the Future Land Use

section of Chapter 3.

- In **Chapter 3 – Winnetka Futures**, the *Future Land Use* section discusses how through land use designations in the business districts and along portions of Green Bay Road we can accommodate land use changes to help create the future community we want. Also, within Chapter 3, we have included additional narratives and case studies with each pillar goal statement and with many of the pillar initiatives to elaborate on what is meant by each.
- Though this is the first time the Commission has seen **Chapter 4 – Implementation**, most of its content is not new as it is a list of the goals and initiatives that the Commission previously prepared. What is new for your review is the prioritization of the initiatives and the identification of partners to assist with the implementation of the initiatives. The Implementation Chapter is set up like an independent workbook that the Council, Plan Commission, and Village staff can use to guide and track the implementation of the Plan.

Working alongside the consulting team, the draft has been reviewed by Village staff, and various departments have been involved with finalizing the implementation section.

At the January 25, meeting, we look forward to hearing your thoughts regarding how the community's future vision has been presented in the Draft Plan.

Following the January Commission meeting, the current schedule for the Comprehensive Plan is as follows:

- Wednesday, February 15 Special Plan Commission Meeting – The Commission holds a public hearing and makes a formal recommendation regarding the draft plan to Village Council.
- Tuesday, March 14 Village Council Study Session – The Council reviews the recommendation of the Plan Commission. We envision this as a joint meeting with the Village Council.
- Tuesday, April 4 or 18 Regular Meeting – The Council adopts Comprehensive Plan.

If you have any questions regarding the Draft Plan, please reach out to me, and I will work with The Lakota Group on a response.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: Winnetka Futures 2040 Plan – Draft Comprehensive Plan (“Draft Plan”)



Winnetka Futures

2040 PLAN

2040 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

DRAFT - JANUARY 25, 2023 | PLAN COMMISSION MEETING

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS:

Thank you to the Plan Commission and Village Staff who guided this analysis:

Bridget Orsic
Liz Kunkle
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Tina Dalman

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CHAPTER 4: IMPLEMENTATION

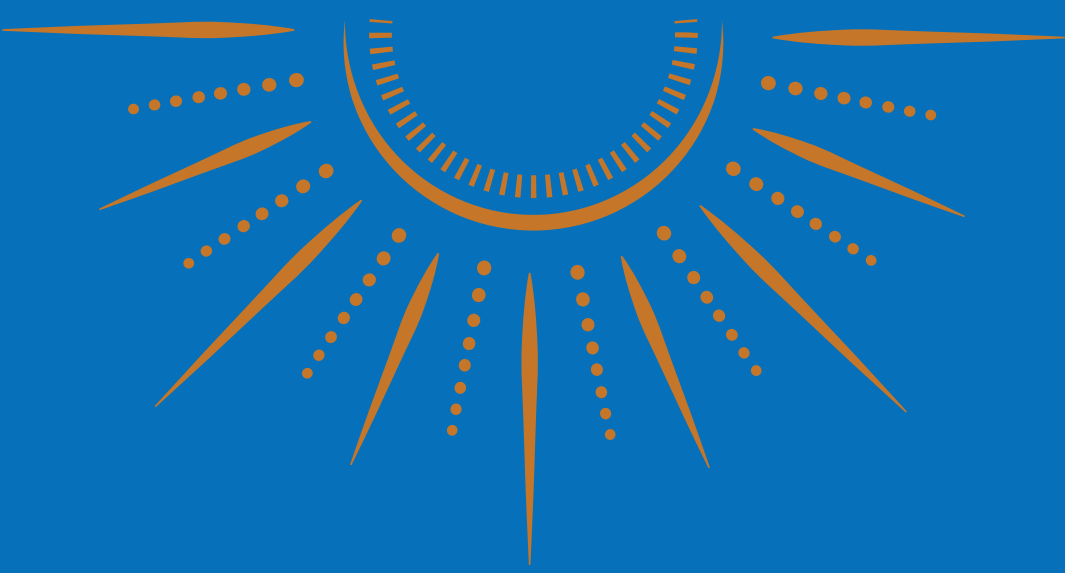
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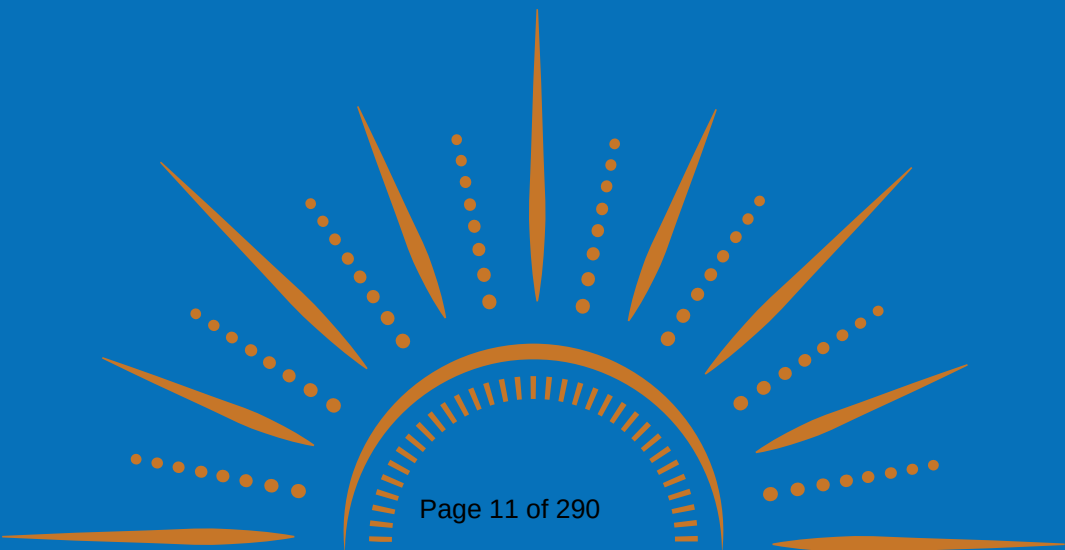
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PREPARED BY:





INTRODUCTION



Winnetka Futures 2040 Overview



ABOUT THE PLAN

In 2019, the Village of Winnetka embarked on the creation of a new Comprehensive Plan that describes a cohesive community vision and roadmap for Winnetka's future physical, economic, and social development over the next twenty years. Branded the **Winnetka Futures 2040 Plan**, this comprehensive plan's voice and vision is the result of considerable analysis and study of the community's existing conditions, which includes its traditional small-town heritage and design, quaint walkable neighborhoods, transit-supported business districts, unique economic climate, varied open-space resources, streets and infrastructure and civic and institutional partnerships. The plan is the result of extensive collaboration, participation and input from Winnetka residents and stakeholders, young and old, throughout the planning process.

As a plural, "**Winnetka Futures**" communicates the many alternative possibilities available to Winnetka by the year 2040 and will inform conversations about the future of the Village. How can we envision a future that meets the goals and aspirations of Winnetkans, regardless of their stage of life? This is what the Winnetka Futures 2040 Plan seeks to discover.

This Plan provides a high-level summary of existing conditions and focuses on the 2040 vision, goals, and initiatives. For a deeper dive on the analysis developed throughout this process, please visit www.villageofwinnetka.org/comprehensiveplan.



Hubbard Woods Park, Winnetka

BALANCING CHANGE & BUILDING COMMUNITY

In early 2020, as the planning team was nearing the completion of The Existing Conditions analysis portion of the Comprehensive Plan and an extensive and robust community engagement effort, the world experienced an unexpected event that changed the course of daily life and paused the Village's Comprehensive planning effort. The global pandemic interrupted our way of living, working, shopping, and engaging in recreation. The pandemic also presented an opportunity to focus intentionally on what makes and builds community.

While the comprehensive planning process was on a year -and-a-half hiatus before restarting in fall of 2021, Winnetkans had the opportunity to see their community through a different and more focused lens. Time at home with family forced the community to pay attention to the details we typically overlook, yet make this community so special. Daily walks allowed residents to experience the value of walkability as a part of our community health and wellness, and connectivity to our range of proximate services and resources. These walks allowed residents to see the qualities of community design, architecture and open space, and the downtown business districts as social centers.

The pandemic provided a platform for renewed focus on the qualities that make Winnetka unique. It also expedited a shift for young families that saw Winnetka as a place to raise their children: where community was present, where residents supported their local small businesses, neighborhoods gathered outdoors to support each other, open space and recreation pursuits were alive, and where a sense of community leadership, service and safety were present. These qualities attracted new, younger residents. Like generations before, Winnetkans gracefully managed this challenge.

This was the turning point at which leadership restarted the Winnetka Futures 2040 planning process. Unlike a typical comprehensive planning process, The Village elected to “reboot” the community engagement activities and allow the planning team to reconnect and reassess priorities in a post-pandemic Winnetka through community dialogue. New themes, ideas, and realizations prompted the planning team to develop the current Community Pillars through robust discussion with the Plan Commission that focused on stewarding realistic, achievable change that respects Winnetka's heritage.

Apart from building upon Winnetka's many strengths and assets, the Winnetka Futures 2040 Plan seeks to address specific challenges as the community navigates the next twenty years. Maintaining walkable neighborhoods and vibrant, sustainable, mixed-use business districts – all while navigating ever-changing retail and consumer trends – are a high priorities. The availability of a mix of housing options, and ensuring housing attainability (especially for empty-nesters, retirees, and young professionals) are also key concerns. Advancing housing policies and goals faces two challenges: the limited supply of land in Winnetka, and the need to balance local desires in maintaining Winnetka's small-town physical character with the prospect of new development.

Winnetka has also long been the home to progressive thinking and foresight. Continuing to enhance venues for arts and culture activities, reinvest in community services, plan for infrastructure and stormwater management, conserve traditional neighborhoods, and improve parks and public gathering spaces, as well as advance sustainable policies and procedures, are other significant planning priorities considered in the Winnetka Futures 2040 Plan.

In summary, this Comprehensive Plan serves several key purposes:

Future Vision. The Comprehensive Plan represents community consensus on The Village of Winnetka's desired long-term vision and serves as the key guiding planning document for the Village Council, Village staff, and other local partner agencies and organizations.

Land Use Framework. The Comprehensive Plan provides a clear and concise land use strategy that supports the highest and best use of properties, minimizes land use conflicts, and supports efficient and sustainable infrastructure, open space systems, mobility options, and economic viability. The land use framework must also be sustainable so that current and future generations of Winnetka can enjoy the Village's amenities, quality of life, and residential and business opportunities.

Public Investment Guide. The Comprehensive Plan should guide the Village Council in capital planning and municipal reinvestment in community facilities and other infrastructure initiatives. Additional investments may support business district management and enhancement efforts, urban design and placemaking initiatives, neighborhood conservation, education, arts and culture programs, and character preservation. The Comprehensive Plan should also be considered an essential tool in supporting the Village's pursuit of grant funding opportunities at the regional, state, and federal levels.

Private Investment Guide. The Comprehensive Plan is a key tool in communicating Village policy on new development and business opportunities. The Plan ensures clarity and predictability, fostering community stability, and economic viability for development projects and future investment in Winnetka.

Implementation Program. The Comprehensive Plan identifies and prioritizes key planning actions and strategies and identifies the roles and responsibilities of the Village, along other partners in implementation. The Plan also outlines other partnerships or funding sources which may play a role in the future.

Community Engagement Tool. The planning process provided an opportunity for Winnetkans, Village leadership, and other stakeholders to better understand and evaluate strengths and weaknesses, and to positively craft effective policies and strategies for addressing critical local planning issues. Regular updates of this plan, as well as the implementation of specific planning initiatives, can benefit from similar community engagement, discussion, and deliberation in the future.



Fred's Garage © The Lakota Group

Community Pillars

At the beginning of the Comprehensive Plan process, a set of key themes or “community pillars” were developed by the planning team, Village staff, and Plan Commission members. The community pillars were continually refined to focus on the many aspects of community planning and living in Winnetka. The pillars served as a guide throughout the remainder of the visioning and planning process. A summary of the key themes is listed on the following pages.



Moffat Mall looking West © The Lakota Group



PILLAR 1

**Quality Livable
Neighborhoods**



PILLAR 4

**Sustainability and
Climate Action**



PILLAR 2

**Vibrant
Business Districts**



PILLAR 5

**Educational
Excellence**



PILLAR 3

**Community Heritage &
Placemaking**



PILLAR 6

**Healthy and
Engaging Lifestyles**



PILLAR 7

Community Infrastructure, Services, & Technology



PILLAR 10

Operational Efficiencies & Regional Coordination



PILLAR 8

Mobility & Accessibility



PILLAR 9

Civic Engagement

FIND YOUR PILLAR

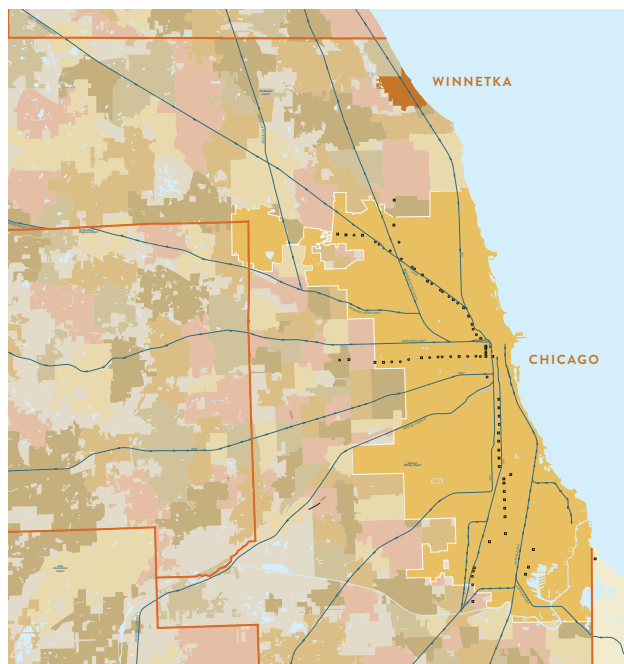
The community pillars focus on key areas that support Winnetka's quality of life. Provided in Chapter 3: Winnetka Futures, these pillars are derived from extensive analysis, community sentiment, and stakeholder input. Each of the ten community pillars, and their supporting goals, include a number of critical initiatives to ensure the overall vision is achievable.

While each community pillar has a dedicated section throughout Chapter 3, a summary of goals for each pillar can be found near the start of the chapter, following the Winnetka Futures 2040 comprehensive plan mission statement.

About Winnetka

REGIONAL SETTING

Winnetka is located in northeast Cook County and on the shores of Lake Michigan, approximately 17 miles from Chicago. It is home to more than 12,700 residents. The Village is located within a cluster of similar “traditional Village” communities (Glencoe, Kenilworth, and Wilmette), each exhibiting similar development patterns focused on older, walkable, traditional downtowns served by commuter rail. Interstate I-94, the “Edens,” runs along the Village’s western border and provides easy vehicular access to the City of Chicago and north to Milwaukee and beyond. Green Bay Road runs through the Village, parallel to the Union Pacific North (UPN) tracks, and connects Winnetka to neighboring communities. Three Metra stations – Indian Hill, Winnetka (Elm Street), and Hubbard Woods – connect the Village regionally to the City of Chicago and North Shore suburbs.



Regional Map of Winnetka

FIGURE 1: VILLAGE OF WINNETKA

LEGEND

-  Village of Winnetka
-  Water
-  Parcels
-  Open Space
-  Metra Station
-  Forest Preserve District



EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

- 1 Crow Island Elementary School
- 2 Greeley Elementary School
- 3 Hadley Institute for the Blind and Visually Impaired
- 4 Hubbard Woods Elementary School
- 5 New Trier High School Winnetka Campus
- 6 North Shore Country Day School
- 7 Sacred Heart School
- 8 Saints Faith Hope & Charity Elementary School
- 9 Skokie School
- 10 The Music Institute of Chicago
- 11 Washburne Junior High School



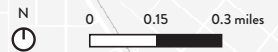
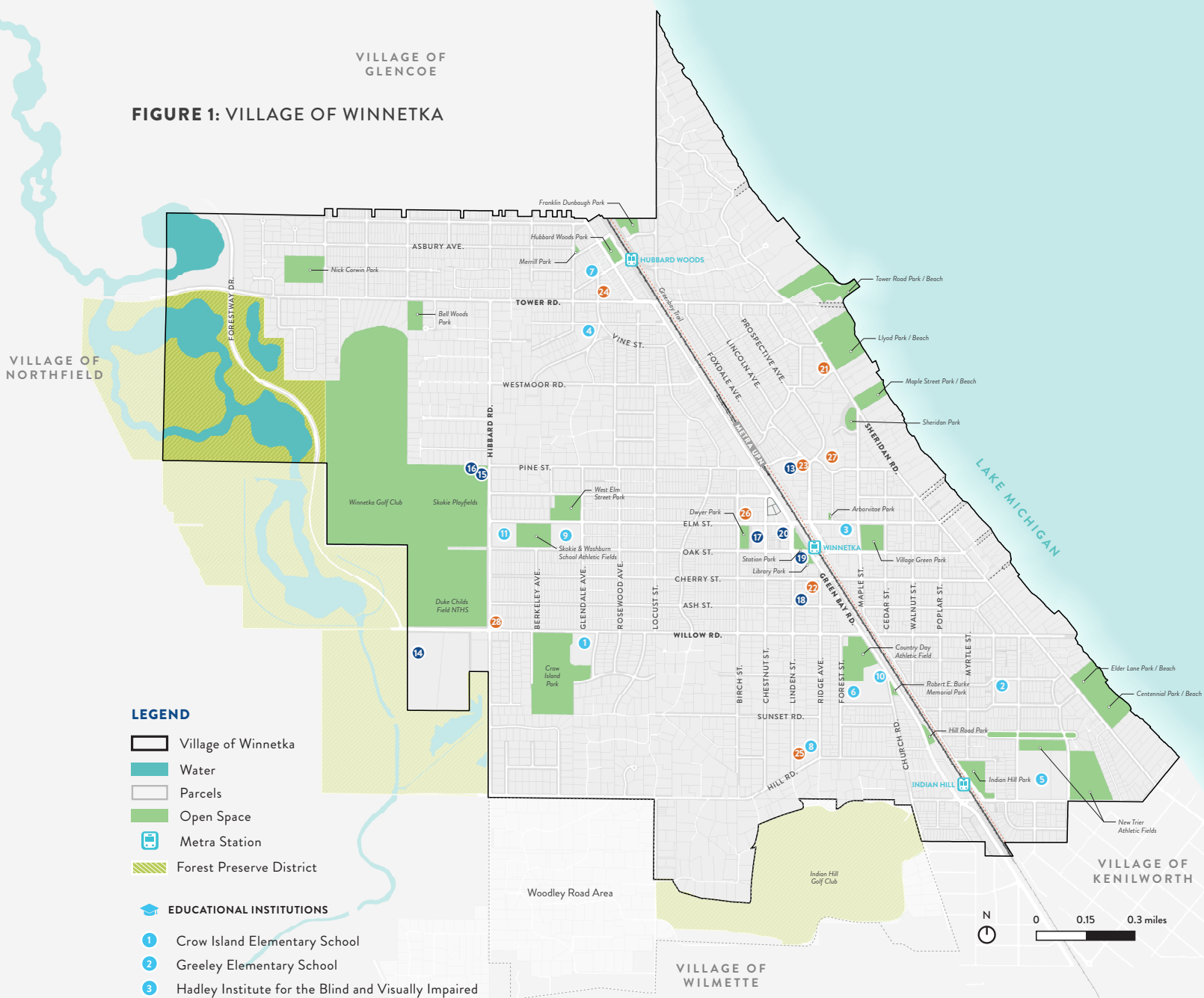
PUBLIC FACILITIES

- 13 Community House
- 14 Public Works Facility
- 15 Park District Maintenance Yard
- 16 Schmidt-Burnham Log House
- 17 United States Postal Office
- 18 Winnetka Historical Society
- 19 Winnetka Public Library
- 20 Winnetka Village Hall



PLACES OF WORSHIP

- 21 Christ Church Winnetka
- 22 Grace Presbyterian Church of North Shore
- 23 Lake Shore Unitarian Society
- 24 Sacred Heart Church
- 25 Saints Faith Hope & Charity
- 26 Winnetka Bible Church
- 27 Winnetka Congregational Church
- 28 Winnetka Presbyterian Church



HISTORY OF WINNETKA

Early years

In 1832, the Green Bay Trail was established as an official road from Fort Dearborn, Chicago, to Fort Howard, Wisconsin, and that trail was the basis of Winnetka's first business. Four years later, Erastus Patterson and his family arrived in Winnetka from Woodstock, Vermont, picked a site along what is now Sheridan Road, just east of the present Christ Church, and built a log tavern to provide food and shelter for travelers.

Transportation was central to how the Village was initially planned. Chicago pioneer Charles Peck and his friend Walter Gurnee (who happened to be president of the newly formed Chicago and Milwaukee Railroad) platted the original Village streets and building lots in 1854, just before the railroad started operations.

Charles Peck and his wife Sarah Peck are often called "the founders of Winnetka," and they had a lasting influence on the Village. Sarah, who named Winnetka after a Native American word thought to mean "Beautiful Land," organized Winnetka's first school in a home on the northwest corner of Elm Street and Sheridan Road. Charles Peck encouraged the planting of trees, donating the elm trees planted along Elm Street, and even creating a celebrated arboretum on his property. The Pecks also donated Winnetka's first significant public space, the Village Green, in 1869.



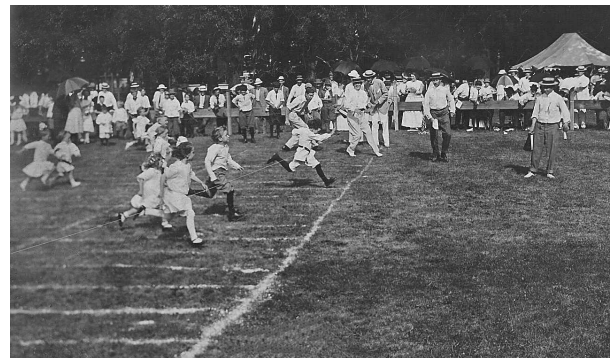
Prouty Building © Winnetka Historical Society

Winnetka's early residents, many from New England, were well-educated, highly religious, and reform-minded. Reflecting contemporary values and the influence of the temperance movement at nearby Northwestern University, the original Village charter, granted by the state in 1869, banned public consumption and sale of alcohol, a restriction that would impact the Village for more than a century. Village residents were, from the beginning, intent on creating a "very respectable school system," and education has long been a hallmark of the Village. In 1859, ten years prior to incorporation of the Village, the first public school was built with private funds and opened as District #2.

The Progressive Era

This Village character was reinforced during the Progressive Era, a period of widespread social activism and political reform across the nation that spanned the 1890s to the 1920s, and that coincided with a period of enormous population growth in the Village. While Winnetka had grown slowly compared to other north shore communities during its first decades (increasing from 584 residents in 1880 to 1,079 by 1890), between 1890 and 1920 it had increased almost six-fold, to 6,694 residents. In the words of the Winnetka Historical Society, these years marked "the transformation of a sleepy rural Village into a forward-looking modern suburb."

Social reform in Winnetka during the Progressive Era included dramatic changes in education, Village governance, and civic and social services. Progressive education began in Winnetka's public schools in 1919 with the hiring of Carleton Washburne and his "Winnetka Plan" of child-centered, experiential, service-based learning, which has become widely recognized across the country. North Shore Country Day School was founded the same year by a group of Winnetka families and was also heavily influenced by the progressive education movement. In the early 1900s, the first New Trier Township High School opened, a public high school that to this day has one of the finest reputations in the country. Other high-quality private schools with a deep history in the Village include Sacred Heart School and the School of Saints Faith, Hope and Charity.



Fourth of July Parade, © Winnetka Historical Society



Rail Tracks Grade Separation © Winnetka Historical Society

The Winnetka Community House has an essential place in the history of Winnetka. Inspired by Jane Addams' Hull House, it was an example of the "settlement house" movement in progressive-era Chicago. The Winnetka Community House addressed residents' needs, especially children. When the Community House opened in 1911, it included clubs, meeting rooms, and spaces for education and recreation. Adults were attracted by social activities, civic discussions, and sports. Community outreach, including English classes for immigrants and a community health nurse, was integral to early offerings.

The Village Council, back in 1917 appointed a 63-member Plan Commission to develop a plan for Winnetka's future. Adopted in 1921, the "Report of the Commission" was prepared by Edward H. Bennett of Chicago, a prominent figure in the field of town and city planning.



Plan for Winnetka by Edward H. Bennett, 1921

The Winnetka Caucus, a council that selects candidates for local elected office, was adopted in 1915. Every year, a fresh group of representatives forms the Winnetka Caucus Council, which seeks and slates candidates for the Village's publicly-elected boards, and adopts a platform of policies drawn from a Village-wide survey. These are approved at a meeting open to all Winnetka residents.

Village growth

As the Progressive Era drew to a close in the 1920s, Winnetka began to grow westward toward the Skokie River. The Village had expanded its boundaries over the years. Winnetka's Hubbard Woods area was originally established in 1857 as the Village of Lakeside. This new building boom

was made possible by the increasing use of the automobile, and, over time, by the Skokie River levee system, which allowed for development into what had been wet overbank swamp areas of the Skokie River.

Winnetka's population increased more than six-fold from 1,883 in 1900 to more than 12,000 in 1930. What was often open swampy land on the west side of the village was platted into smaller, more affordable lots.

The residential areas of the village continued to fill in over the coming decades. Large estates on the lakefront were subdivided, and a few non-street grid subdivisions were developed on the northern and southern edges of the village. The village became increasingly single-family, owner-occupied homes. In the 1970s, the village restricted the construction and occupancy of coach houses, for example. Existing apartments above storefronts were converted to office use and apartment buildings were converted to condos. Between 1980 and 2000, the village lost 260 of its rental units due to increased land value and more frequent residential tear-downs where smaller homes were increasingly replaced by larger homes.

By 1990, residential tear-downs in the largely built-out village were raising concerns about Village character. The Village began a survey of historic properties and considered a landmarks ordinance but stopped after opposition by a group of residents. Caucus platforms have periodically called for zoning changes to address the size and character of new construction. In 2004, a new state law concerning affordable housing led the village to study its housing stock and possible solutions. This was also stopped after opposition by the same resident group.

In 2005, the residents of the community voted to become a home-rule municipality, which has impacted the Village's ability to operate and self-govern. Over recent decades Winnetka has continued to maintain the same core values that would be recognizable to its early residents. As a family-oriented Village, children and their education remain a primary focus of Winnetka's community life. Parents volunteer to serve on the PTO, and dozens of volunteers support the Caucus and numerous other civic and charitable purposes.

Community Profile

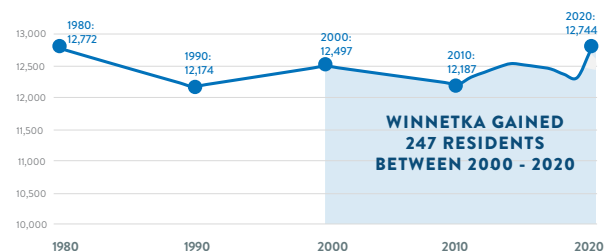
“Winnetka shows a low population growth, which can impact its commercial districts. Uses will come and go, but residences will remain. More senior housing and condos are major opportunities to draw more residents.

- COMMENT FROM COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

POPULATION CHANGE

Based on U.S. Census, the Village population has held relatively constant since 2000, increasing by only 247 residents from 2000 to 2020 (Figure 2¹). The 0.1% compound annual growth rate (CAGR) over that period for the Village is greater than the Cook County CAGR (-1.9%) and similar to the combined CAGR for local peer communities of Glencoe, Kenilworth, Northfield, and Wilmette (0.1%). The population has largely remained unchanged over the 40-year period from 1980 to 2020 (Figure 3).

FIGURE 2: POPULATION CHANGE



POPULATION	2000	2010	2020
Winnetka	12,497	12,187	12,744
Glencoe	8,777	8,723	8,849
Kenilworth	2,611	2,513	2,514
Northfield	5,632	5,431	5,751
Wilmette	27,673	27,087	28,170

1. Source: 2020 household count and average size based on ACS 2015-2019 5-Year Estimates, 1980, 1990, 2000, 2010, 2020 population count from U.S. Census, 1980, 1990, 2000, 2010 household count and average size from U.S. Census, SB Friedman

FIGURE 3: HOUSEHOLD CHANGE

HOUSEHOLDS	2000	2010	2020 ^[1]
Winnetka	4,191	4,102	4,220
Glencoe	3,079	3,013	3,195
Kenilworth	831	800	793
Northfield	2,226	2,193	2,367
Wilmette	10,043	9,742	10,097

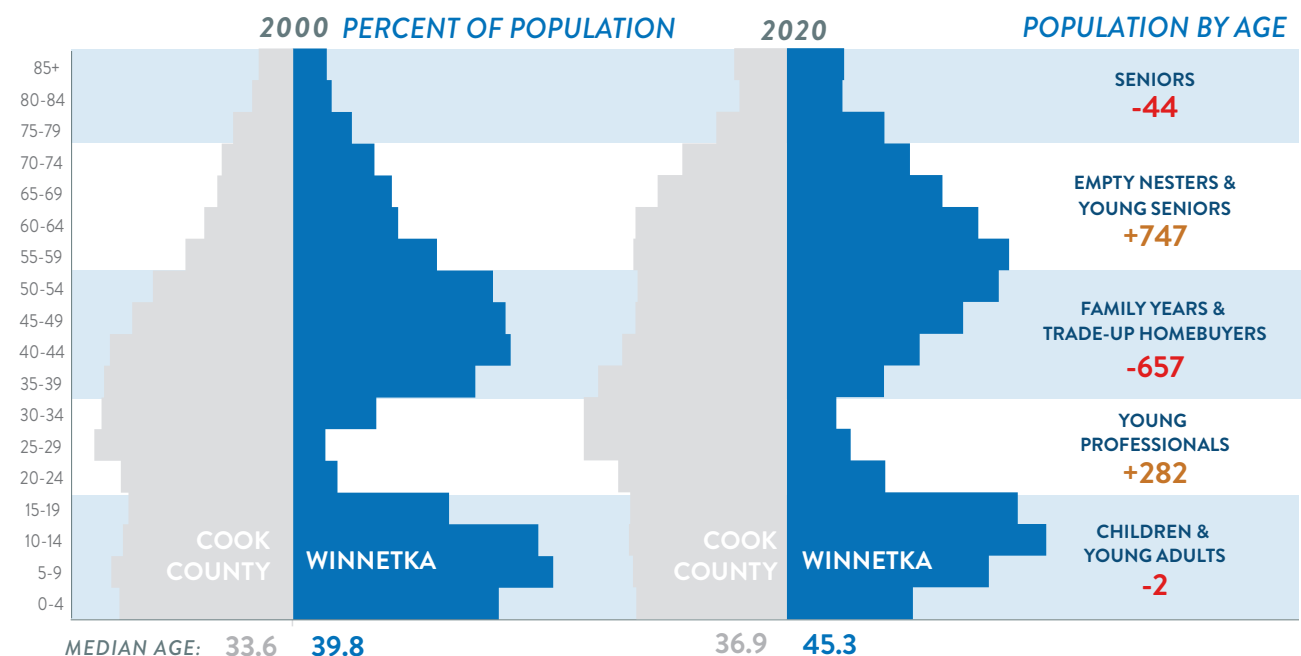


POPULATION COMPOSITION

Between 2000 and 2020, the Village's population has predominantly aged in place (Figure 4²).

While the distribution of population for Cook County overall is relatively consistent across all age cohorts, the population in Winnetka is predominantly people in their Family Years, Young Seniors, and Children & Young Adults. Over 34% of the Winnetka population is under age 20, as opposed to 24% in Cook County. Conversely, only 9% of the Village population is Young Professionals, as opposed to 23% in Cook County. Between 2000 and 2020, the average age of village residents increased from approximately 40 to 45 years old. During the same period, the number of residents in the Family Years cohort decreased by about 650 as they aged into the Empty Nesters & Young Seniors cohort. The Cook County population is aging to a lesser extent, with the median age increasing from 34 to 37 years old from 2000 to 2020.

FIGURE 4: POPULATION COMPOSITION



2. 2020 population composition estimates based on ACS 2015-2019 5-Year Estimates, 2000 population composition from U.S. Census, SB Friedman

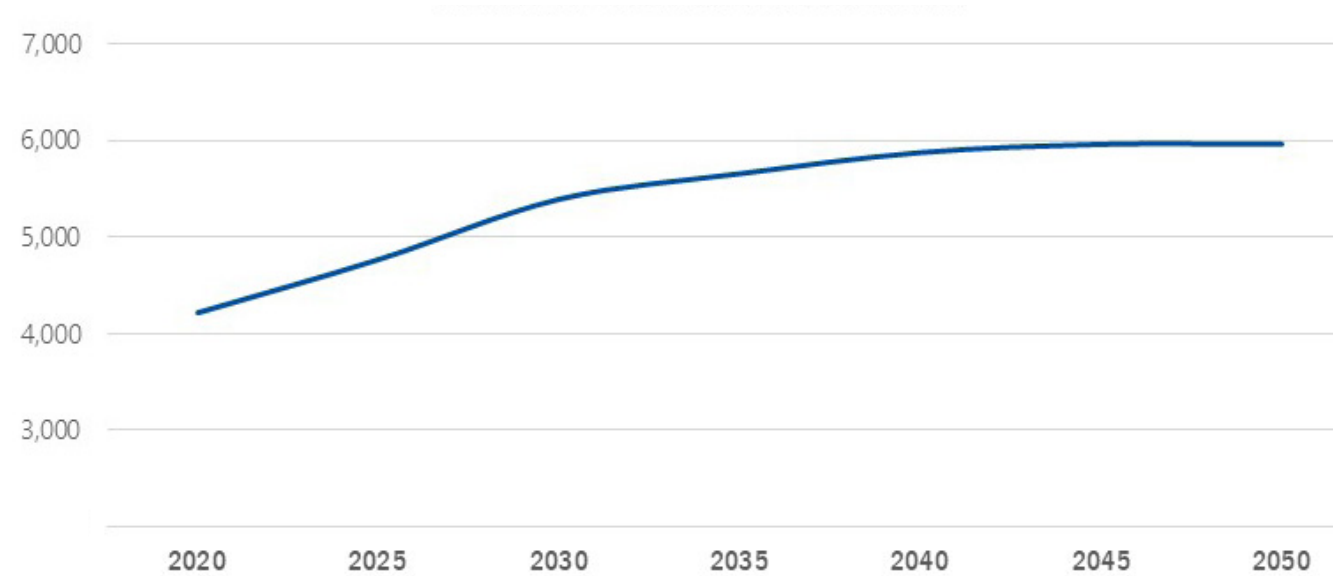
HOUSEHOLD PROJECTIONS

According to CMAP projections, the Village of Winnetka is expected to gain 1,749 households by 2050. This regional forecast attributed to Winnetka is based on a number of factors. As shown in Figure 5³, households are projected to increase from 4,220 to 5,969. The 1.2% projected CAGR for the village is greater than the Cook County CAGR (0.6%). A similar growth trend is projected for nearby peer communities.

CMAP bases its growth projections on a regional control total, allocated to municipalities based on land capacity, policy considerations, vacant or underutilized land, physical conditions, and transit-oriented development (TOD) potential. Since Winnetka has three train stations, its TOD potential is high.

Household change will largely be decided by the local villages, dependent on zoning, land capacity, community desirability, and developer interest. CMAP projections for the next 20 years reflect a substantially faster rate than recent historic growth from 2000 to 2020. Growth will be contingent upon infill development to accommodate additional households.

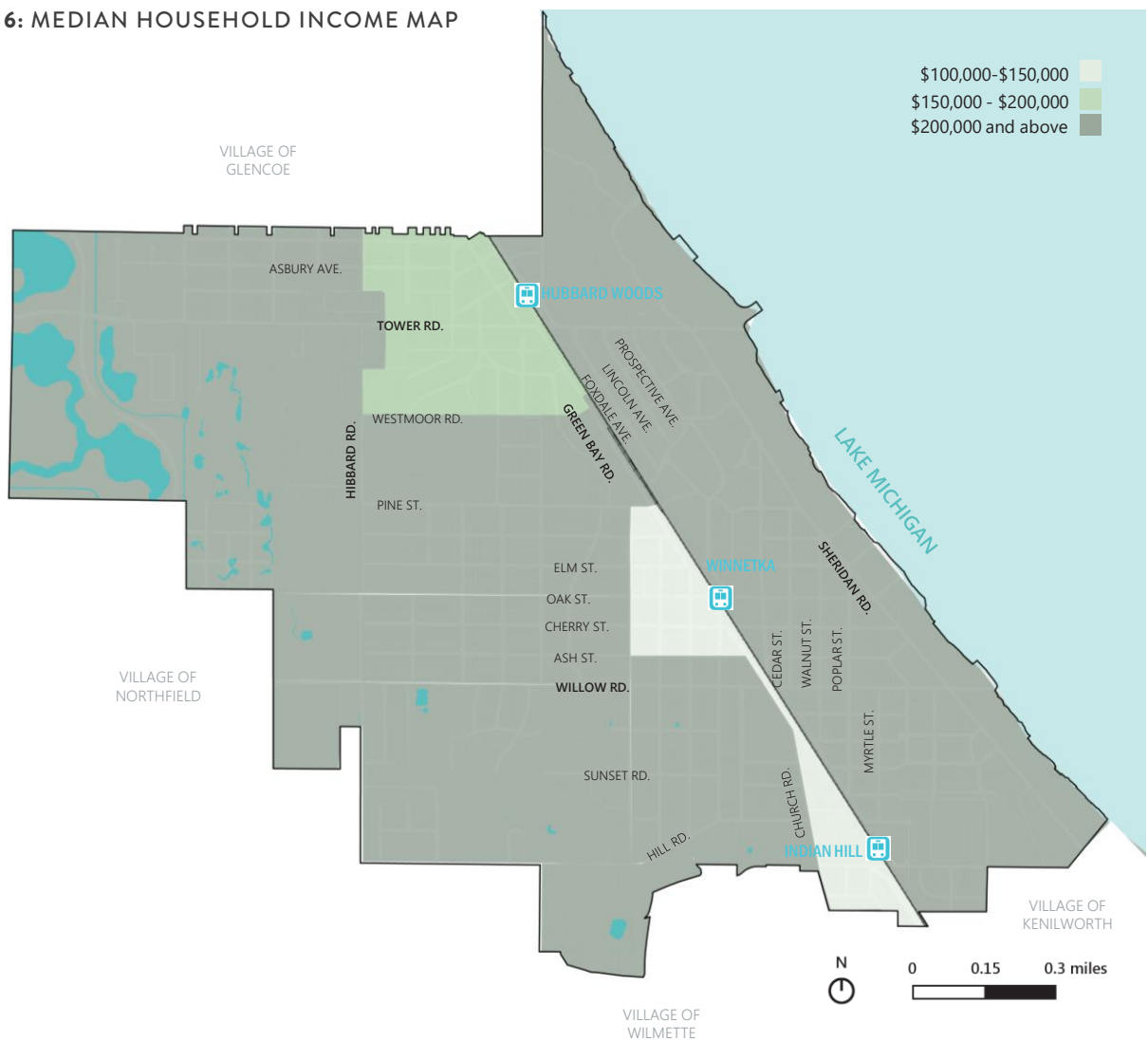
FIGURE 5: HOUSEHOLD PROJECTION



The Winnetka Community © The Lakota Group

3. Source: 2020 household estimate based on Census 2020 population and ACS 2015-2019 5-Year Estimates housing size, 2025-2050 projections based on CMAP ON TO 2050 Projections, SB Friedman

FIGURE 6: MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME MAP

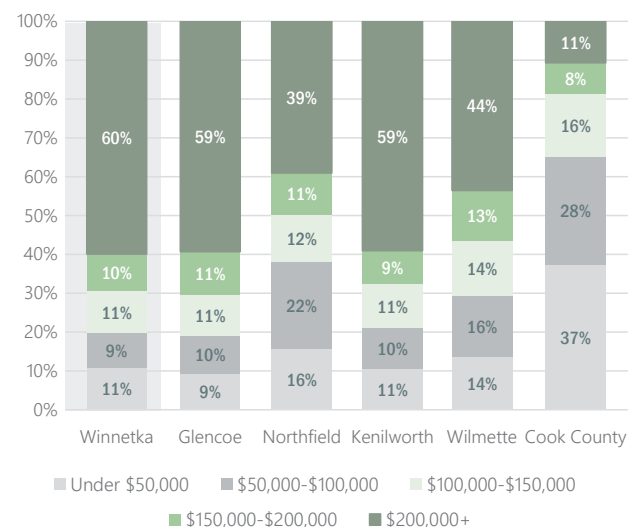


MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME

About 81% of Winnetka households have incomes over \$100,000.

The proportion of households in Winnetka with incomes over \$100,000 (81%) is significantly higher than the Cook County average but comparable to Glencoe and Kenilworth (Figure 7⁴). The Village's highest income households are concentrated in census block groups along Lake Michigan and its western border. Households with relatively more modest incomes are concentrated along Green Bay Road in the center of the Village, though no block group has a median income less than \$100,000.

FIGURE 7: MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME COMPARISON



4. Source: 2021 household income estimates from Esri 2021 Household Income Profiles, SB Friedman

VILLAGE EMPLOYMENT COMPOSITION

As of 2018, there were approximately 4,385 jobs located in the Village, an increase of 520 jobs from 2008. **The largest employment category in the Village is Educational Services**, due to the presence of New Trier High School, District 36, and other educational institutions. Other significant employment sector present in the Village includes Retail Trade, Accommodation, and Food Services.

There appears to have been an increase in retail jobs in the Village between 2008 and 2018 (Figure 8⁵). Jobs in the Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services category have declined by 6%, from 145 jobs in 2008 to 136 jobs in 2018.

Educational services employment in Winnetka accounts for a larger-than-typical share of the total employment (nearly half of all jobs), far exceeding the share of educational services jobs for both the state and nation. Retail jobs, the second largest local employment industry, grew faster in Winnetka (2.0% annually) than either Illinois (0.6%) or the nation (1.4%) from 2008 to 2018.

Between 2020 and 2040, CMAP projects steady growth in total Village employment, with a CAGR of 0.7%.

RESIDENT OCCUPATIONS

As of 2018, approximately 4,870 residents who live in Winnetka are employed. Of this total, approximately **17% are employed in Professional, Scientific and Technical Services**, and an additional 14% in Retail Trade, Accommodation and Food Services (Figure 9⁶). Other top industries include Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate (FIRE) (14%), Educational Services (10%), and Health Care and Social Assistance (9%).

Of the top industries where residents are employed, the Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services category has seen the highest growth rate. All other categories of resident occupations have seen high growth rates except Educational Services, which has remained largely unchanged since 2008.

In 2018, approximately 45% of Winnetka families reported having one wage earner. Another 46% report at least two household earners (dual-income). The remaining 9% of families' report having no wage-earners.

FIGURE 8: WINNETKA JOBS, TOP INDUSTRIES 2008-2018

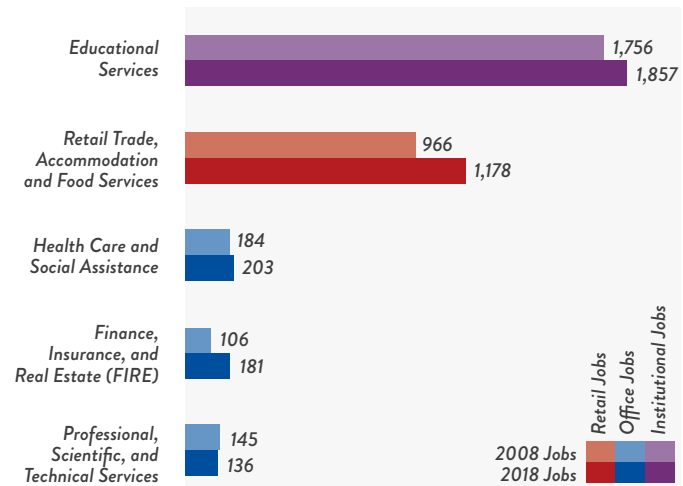
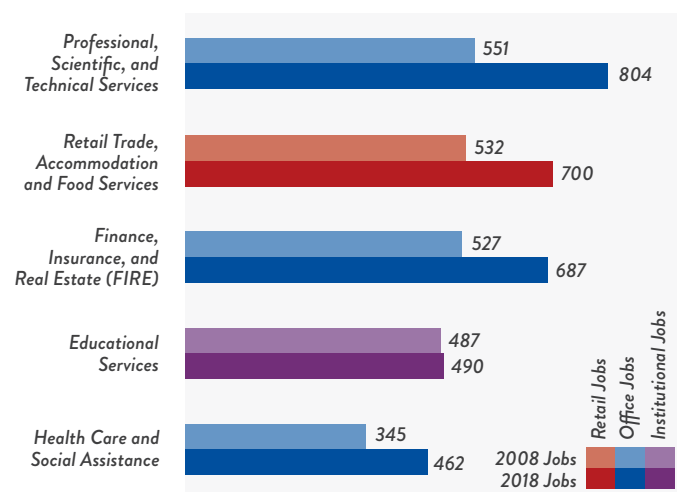


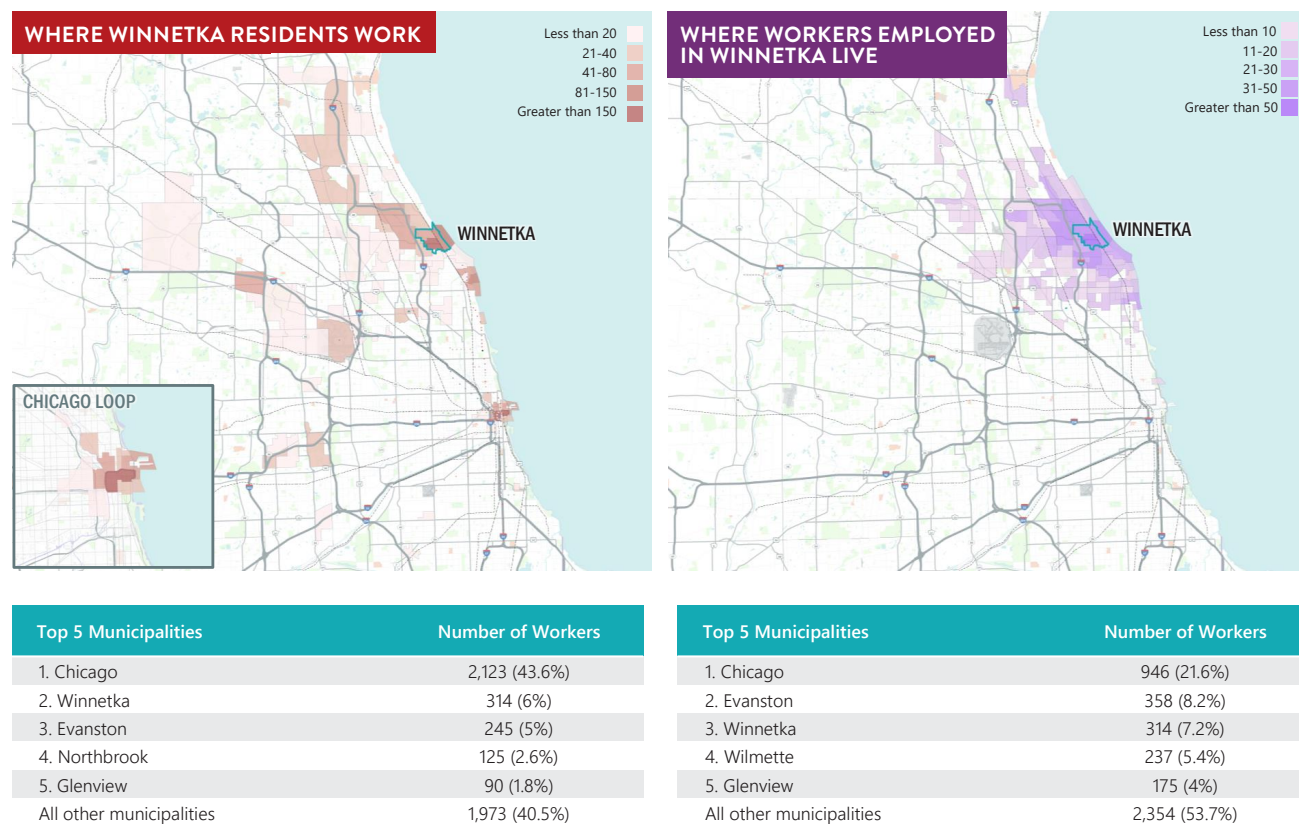
FIGURE 9: WINNETKA RESIDENTS: TOP INDUSTRIES 2008-2018



5. Source: Excludes Other Services and Public Administration employment categories. 2018 employment data from LEHD, 2020-2040 growth projections from CMAP ON TO 2050 Projections, SB Friedman

6. Source: ACS 2014-2018 5-Year Estimates, 2018 employment data from LEHD, SB Friedman

FIGURE 10: COMMUTING PATTERNS



COMMUTING PATTERNS

Among working residents of Winnetka, 2,123 (43.6%) commute into Chicago, primarily to the Loop and greater downtown area (Figure 10⁷). According to the Village, Winnetka maintained the highest percentage of residents using public transit to commute in the region prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Only 314 (6%) residents work in the Village. The remaining residents commute to adjacent municipalities and throughout the region.

Approximately 22% of workers employed within the Village commute into Winnetka from Chicago, mainly from north side neighborhoods. Only 7.2% of Winnetka workers also live in Winnetka. The top industry among workers commuting to Winnetka is Educational Services (42.4% of all commuters).

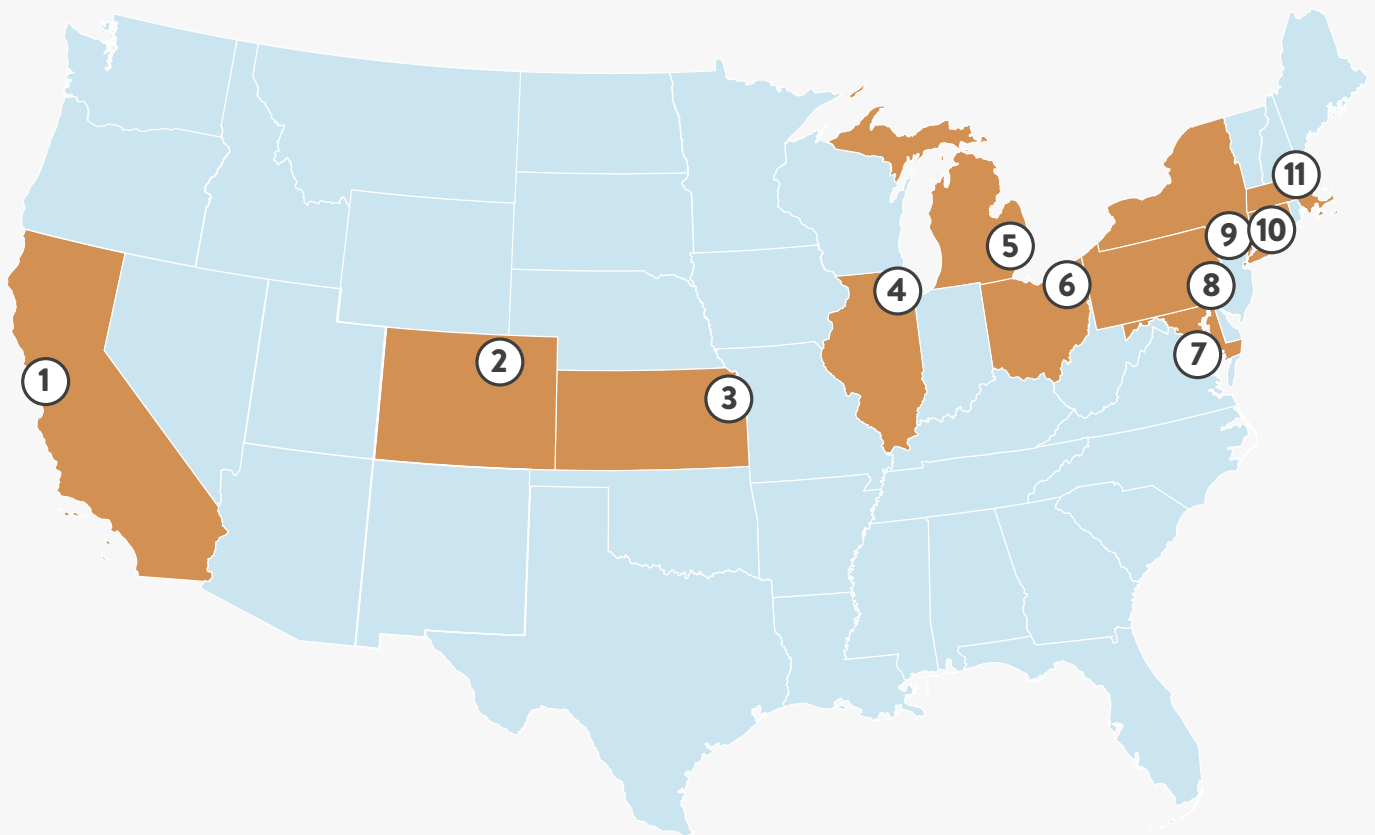
7. Source: 2018 employment data from LEHD, Village of Winnetka, SB Friedman

Comparable Communities

LOOKING OUTSIDE OF WINNETKA

Many communities throughout the United States are facing challenges similar to Winnetka—related to housing, development, a changing local economy, and the preservation of their character and community values. These communities are responding to changing demographics, climate instability, and rapid advancements in technology. A look at what other comparable communities are doing through their Comprehensive Plan helps provide insight, lessons learned, and success stories that Winnetka can use moving forward.

The following comparable communities were chosen based on similar demographic, economic, and geographic factors. A range of cities was chosen that represents a cross-section of the US geographically. All of these cities are considered affluent, first-tier, transit-supported suburbs close to major metropolitan cities. While each community may not compare directly to Winnetka on all fronts, there are enough similarities between them to justify analyzing their approaches to changing conditions.



WINNETKA, IL



Population	12,744
Median Income	\$216,875
Median Property Value	\$1,020,000

1 PIEDMONT, CA



Piedmont is a small semi-suburban city located near Oakland, California. It is mostly residential with a few small mixed-use areas, hillside parks, and creeks.

Population	11,270
Median Income	\$202,631
Median Property Value	\$1,720,000

2 CHERRY HILLS VILLAGE, CO



Cherry Hills Village is a residential community located south of Denver. It's one of the most affluent places in the US and part of the Cherry Creek School District, which many consider one of the best in Colorado.

Population	6,442
Median Income	\$238,750
Median Property Value	\$1,270,000

3 MISSION HILLS, KS



Mission Hills is a small residential community located south of Kansas City. It was designed based on the garden city concept including elegant homes, European-inspired landscaping and public art, and green spaces.

Population	3,489
Median Income	\$250,000
Median Property Value	\$978,500

4 HINSDALE, IL



Hinsdale is a community with a rolling, wooded topography. It has a small downtown which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and also has three stations on the Metra Burlington Northern Line.

Population	17,395
Median Income	\$171,453
Median Property Value	\$875,900

5 GROSSE POINTE, MI



Grosse Pointe is a mature, waterfront city located on Lake St. Clair and adjacent to Detroit. It is a small community which originally served as a summer escape for residents of Detroit.

Population	5,118
Median Income	\$95,887
Median Property Value	\$325,500

6 SHAKER HEIGHTS, OH



Shaker Heights is an inner-ring streetcar suburb of Cleveland known for its attractive housing and landscape. The primarily-residential community has a light rail line running through it with direct access to Cleveland.

Population	29,439
Median Income	\$82,830
Median Property Value	\$218,500

7 BETHESDA, MD



Bethesda is just northwest of Washington, D.C. in southern Maryland. Bethesda is larger than Winnetka and does not compare from a building scale/form perspective, but it provides interesting policies in regard to sustainability.

Population	63,195
Median Income	\$154,559
Median Property Value	\$877,300

8 RADNOR, PA



Radnor is township about twelve miles northwest of Philadelphia. It is located along a commuter rail line that became home to sprawling country estates, housing some of Philadelphia's wealthiest families.

Population	33,228
Median Income	\$114,063
Median Property Value	\$651,600

9 SCARSDALE, NY



Scarsdale is an affluent, historic, first-tier suburb of New York City with a history of educational excellence. Its Tudor-style Village Center is divided by a train line and contains a village-owned development parcel.

Population	17,865
Median Income	\$250,001
Median Property Value	\$1,340,000

10 GREENWICH, CT



Greenwich is consistently ranked one of the safest, wealthiest, and best places to live in the US. It is considered the hedge fund capital of the US. It has a historic, charming downtown, and six miles of coastline.

Population	13,399
Median Income	\$94,309
Median Property Value	\$972,300

11 WELLESLEY, MA



Wellesley is a first-tier suburb to Boston. It is affluent, very historic, and has a long history of educational excellence. It's considered one of the best places to live in Massachusetts.

Population	29,550
Median Income	\$176,852
Median Property Value	\$1,040,000



Community Outreach

“The relationships in this community are very important and creating spaces that provide people the opportunity to come together is always key.

- COMMENT FROM COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

Public input in the planning process is critical, as a successful plan must reflect the values and aspirations of those who live, work, operate businesses, and own property within the Winnetka community. In addition to hearing from community members through a community open house and pop-up event, residents and business owners were engaged in thoughtful conversations about the future of the Village. While input received throughout the process to date is included within each section, an overview of the engagement process is summarized below.

COMMUNICATIONS

Informing the public that a comprehensive planning process had begun was the first step in effective engagement. In partnership with the Village, the Winnetka Futures process leveraged the following tools:

Brand & Website

A custom project brand was designed to provide visual consistency throughout the planning process. The graphic is positive and forward-looking, while also connecting to the Village seal. The brand served as a starting point for all project communications—including an interactive project website that described the overall planning process as well as provided members of the public an opportunity to post comments and ideas. Project updates, draft plans, workshop materials, and plan drawings were all hosted on the website.

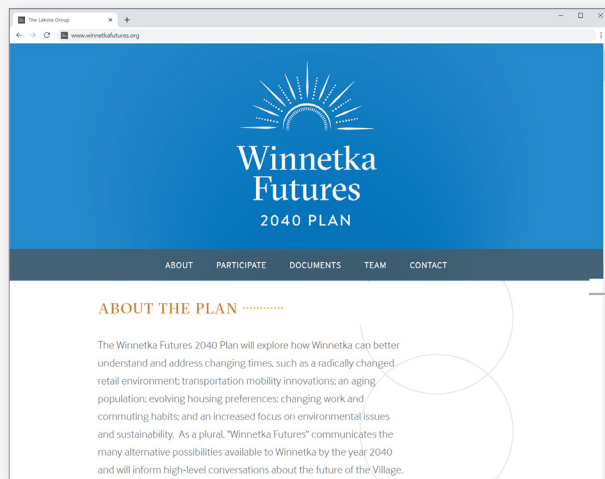
Social Media & Email

Given Winnetka’s active Facebook and Instagram presence, the planning team worked with the Village Communications Manager to develop social media content to share news about the project and gain community insight. In addition, those residents interested in the process signed up for email updates through the website.

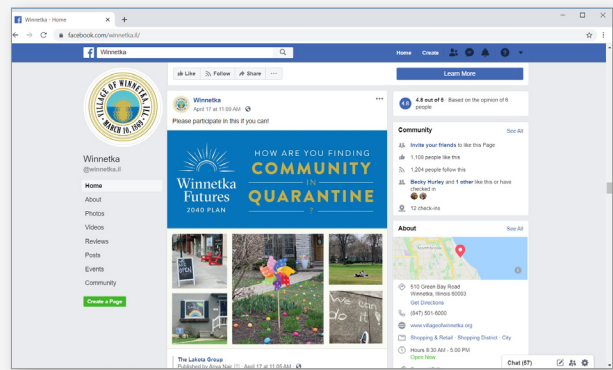


Winnetka Futures

2040 PLAN



Project Brand and Website—www.WinnetkaFutures.org



Social Media Content and Emails to Subscribers

COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

Focus Groups

To inform the baseline issues and opportunities in Winnetka and gain a deeper understanding of the key themes the plan hopes to address, a series of focus groups were conducted with local residents and stakeholders. Over 900 individuals were contacted to participate and 25 different focus groups were held. Focus groups (typically 4 to 12 community members) were organized by: category or position of participants, “persona” (meaning tenure or life-stage), and commission or board members. *Summaries of the key themes from each focus group are provided as sidebars within the relevant section of the document.*

Traditional Focus Groups

Traditional focus groups included sessions with business owners, property owners, real estate brokers, developers,

transportation agencies, educators, arts and culture organizations, religious and service organizations, high school students, educators, park district staff, and staff from surrounding municipalities.

“Persona” Focus Groups

A set of focus groups were organized by persona, meaning general life stage or length of residency. These included young people, recent transplants, multi-generational families, mid-life families, empty-nesters, and long-time residents. The timing of these conversations was scheduled to maximize participation from residents in each group.

Commissions & Boards

Conversations with many of the Village’s key boards and commissions were scheduled, including the Plan Commission (which served as the Steering Committee for the project), Zoning Board of Appeals, Environmental and Forestry Commission, Design Review Board, and the Landmark Preservation Commission.

Stakeholder Interviews

In addition to the focus groups, a number of key individuals were identified for one-on-one interviews due to their history and experience working on various Village initiatives. These interviews focused on providing additional background on Village conditions, as well as providing connections to additional residents whose voices would be helpful as part of focus groups, Jefferson Dinners, or general public input.

Jefferson Dinners

Three “Jefferson Dinners” were hosted to provide a more communal and informal way for residents to gather and discuss community issues. These dinners were “an evening of food and shared conversation with a purpose,” an idea that originated from Thomas Jefferson’s dinners at Monticello. The intent of a Jefferson Dinners was to build community and partnership around a shared interest or theme, and to re-embrace the generative power of divergent opinion in democracy.

Each dinner hosted 8-14 guests and focused on one question: how do we build community? The conversation was moderated to ensure that the entire table participated in a single conversation and kept contributions balanced and flowing. The guests at the dinners were selected to represent the profiles described above, giving the process access to a diverse cross-section of the Winnetka community. Following the dinner, all guests were invited to serve as “Project Connectors”—ambassadors for the project who can leverage their social networks to bring a wide range of people into the process.



Jefferson Dinners hosted at Avli and Minos in Winnetka

COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

JEFFERSON DINNERS

In 2020, the first Jefferson Dinner was held at Avli on Tuesday, February 25, and the second was held at Mino’s Italian on Thursday, February 27. In 2021, a Jefferson Dinner was held at Spirit Elephant on Tuesday October 26. While the topic for each dinner was the question of building community, different themes emerged based on the thoughts of the Winnetkans around each table.

Education

A common theme of the first dinner was education and its influence on the family cycle in Winnetka. Families move to Winnetka because of its excellent schools. Education brings people together and creates community and friendships which extend to sports fields, summer camps, and park district programs. Extracurricular activities extend togetherness, connecting families and friends. But what happens when children grow up and move on? Historically, families have also moved on, as the cost of living in Winnetka is hard to justify for many without school-aged children. The group contemplated the challenge of maintaining friendships and social connections through the family cycle and the importance of housing choices, community services, public spaces, and connecting with retirees and empty-nesters to keep them in the community.

Social Gathering

Conversation during the second dinner focused on the social aspect of life in Winnetka. Many participants shared cherished memories of neighborhood block parties, potlucks, social gatherings, family events, volunteering, soccer Saturdays, and other opportunities to meet neighbors and connect on a more personal level. The participants were happy to share these experiences but questioned why these events seem to happen less frequently and what the Village could do to create these experiences. The group realized this not just for their own sake but for children growing up in Winnetka, whose ties to the village may be weakened when they go to college or move for another reason. Social gathering in neighborhoods, parks, and downtown area is an important aspect of life in Winnetka for everyone – adults, families, kids, and seniors. Maintaining and strengthening these social ties is what many residents consider an important quality of life in Winnetka.

A Forward Community

The third Jefferson Dinner focused on how Winnetka needs to adapt following the events of the 2020-2021 part of the COVID-19 pandemic. Overall, participants focused on outdoor activities, like walking and biking; and community gathering spaces, such as Peet’s Coffee, that allowed them to grow closer to their friends and neighbors over the last year and a half. Many participants focused on enjoying their quality of life, including trying new restaurants and experiences, and look forward to more dining options in Winnetka. Working from home, to many, was considered a trend that will stick. The group mentioned that working from home and at co-working spaces will allow current and future residents to spend more time in Winnetka.

Farmers Market Pop-Up Event

After the planning process was relaunched in September 2021, a pop-up event was hosted at the Winnetka Farmers Market on Saturday, September 25th. The Winnetka Futures 2040 Comprehensive Plan was reintroduced to the community, explaining the revised process and timeline. The information provided at the Farmers Market focused on the plan's key themes.

Summaries of the key themes from the Community Open House and conversations held at the Farmers Market are provided as sidebars within the relevant section of the document.



Farmers Market Pop-Up Event

Community Open House #1

On October 20, 2021, a Community Open House was hosted to better understand and address the changing times and the impact on the community, such as radically changed retail environment, transportation and mobility, aging population, evolving housing preferences, increased focus on environmental issues and sustainability, and changing work and commuting habits.

Held at the Winnetka Community House, the Community Open House featured informative and interactive stations. Different persona groups were identified through colored dots and stickers, to clearly understand community preferences based on age groups.

Approximately 80 participants attended, with **Family Years & Trade Up Homebuyers** (ages 35 - 54) and **Empty Nesters & Young Seniors** (ages 55-74) as the predominant age groups present.



Community Open House #1 hosted at the Winnetka Community House

Plan Commission Working Sessions

During the Visioning Phase of the Winnetka Futures 2040 Comprehensive Plan, and following the completion of the existing conditions report in January 2022, the Plan Commission held a series of working sessions that were open to the Winnetka community.

Beginning in January 2022 and over a six-month period, the Plan Commission held eight meetings, during which it created an overall vision statement for the community and individual mission statements for the ten community pillars. Based upon those mission statements, the Commission then identified goals for each community pillar and initiatives to achieve those goals. The creation of the vision statements, goals, and initiatives were based on

earlier community input gathered during the first phase of the comprehensive plan, staff input, Commission members' ideas and thoughts, as well as public input that was received during these working sessions. An additional joint working session was held on July 12, 2022 with the Village Council and Plan Commission to continue vetting the vision of the **Winnetka Futures 2040 Plan**.

Community Open House #2

On September 22, 2022, the second Community Open House was held at the Winnetka Community House to discuss community pillars, the proposed vision statements, and subsequent goals.

Approximately 35 participants attended, with **Family Years & Trade Up Homebuyers** (ages 35 - 54) and **Empty Nesters & Young Seniors** (ages 55-74) as the predominant age groups present. A number of Winnetka's **Children & Young Adults** (ages 19 and under) were also present and shared their priorities for the comprehensive plan.



Community Open House #2 hosted at the Winnetka Community House

Virtual Community Open House

Following the in-person Community Workshop, a virtual Open House was made available for Winnetkans to share their thoughts, at their own convenience. More than 100 residents took part in this engagement opportunity and provided feedback, which was later used to fine-tune the plan. Participants were asked to rank vision statements and goals, as well as prioritize which Community Pillars merit the most attention. Results of the in-person and virtual open houses can be found in Chapter 3, within each pillar.

COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

Demographic Breakdown in 2040

Older persona groups projected that Winnetka's demographic composition in 2040 will focus on a younger population, and specifically younger families. Younger persona groups projected that in 2040, Winnetka will grow older with more empty nesters and increased wealth. Moving away from Winnetka's uniform culture was mentioned as a growing factor over the next 20 years, along with an increase in multi-generational households.

Winnetka's Strengths

The village's greatest strengths, as identified by the majority of persona groups, were access to the lakefront, quality schools, and access to parks and open space. Empty nesters and young seniors emphasized walkability as one of Winnetka's strengths, and conversations with this persona group showed that walking was one of the ways they find community. Overall safety, as well as proximity to Chicago, also ranked highly.

Winnetka's Challenges

The greatest challenges as identified by the majority of responses were vacant storefronts, lack of diversity, and lack of housing choices. Flooding issues and resistance to change also ranked highly.

Winnetka's Reputation

Responses varied when participants were asked about Winnetka's reputation. Empty nesters and young seniors described Winnetka as affluent, exclusive, picture-perfect, and a dream come true. Younger persona groups also described the village as affluent and a community with great schools. They also mentioned that Winnetka is out-of-touch and is stuck in the past, with regard to community development. Some Winnetkans, according to stakeholders, prefer minimal over major change. Supporting examples include additional mixed-use housing in the commercial districts, which can add to Winnetka's livelihood and prosperity.

Winnetka's Trajectory

Most responses described Winnetka as 'stable' or 'improving', with a heavy emphasis from empty nesters and young seniors. Business owners participating mentioned that the village is improving.

WINNETKA'S PERSONAS

Early in the planning process, a number of “persona” groups were developed to capture different demographic segments of Winnetka’s population. Focus groups were organized around these persona groups to share a broad range of experiences of living in Winnetka. An outline of the various persona groups is included below, and conversations with these groups are summarized on the following pages.



YOUNG PEOPLE WHO GREW UP HERE



YOUNG FAMILIES/RECENT TRANSPLANTS



FAMILY YEARS



LONG TIME RESIDENTS



MULTI-GENERATIONAL CONVERSATIONS

YOUNG PEOPLE WHO GREW UP IN WINNETKA

Several young adults who grew up in Winnetka joined us for a conference call on February 12, 2020 and again on October 14, 2021 for a focus group discussion. Key themes from these discussions are summarized below.

Walkability

An important part of the experience of growing up in Winnetka is the ability to walk to school, walk or bike to friends’ houses, and feel independent. **The freedom to walk around and explore is an asset for the community:** raising kids in cities doesn’t necessarily offer that experience with the same sense of safety and security. As adults, entertainment and retail within walking distance is key. This preference toward walkability makes the idea of a suburban townhome near a business district an attractive option. While young adults want to own, they would prefer more options to choose from than just single-family homes.

Diversity & Affordability

While growing up in Winnetka was idyllic, as they enter parenthood **the lack of diversity is a concern—both racial and socio-economic diversity.** This concern relates to the stated desire for more diversity in schools, offering children the opportunity to experience peers from diverse backgrounds and cultures. New construction in Winnetka is exacerbating this issue, pushing out any semblance of “affordable” housing. The available housing stock in Winnetka is accessible to a very narrow demographic. While there is a feeling of a “culture of modesty,” living in Winnetka is not economically feasible for most young adults.

Local Competition

Most of those potentially moving to Winnetka have decided to live on the North Shore, so they are choosing between five communities. The housing stock among North Shore communities is similar, and the schools are all great, so **the business districts are what make one place stand out over another.** Stores closing early was a concern. Accessibility to Metra is an asset, though it is also available in other North Shore communities. Restaurants and entertainment uses are more attractive than retail businesses—places where you can bring a baby and a dog and hang out for a few hours. The new restaurant openings are seen as positive.

The Village must build a sense of place that is different from the surrounding communities. The Library and Park District, along with local events and community spaces, are other ways to stand out. While Winnetka must find ways to set itself apart, its neighboring communities are also an asset as locations worth exploring.

YOUNG FAMILIES/RECENT TRANSPLANTS

A few adults with young families who recently moved to Winnetka joined the planning team on February 13, 2020 and again on October 13, 2021 for a focus group discussion. Key themes that came out of these discussions are summarized below:

Traditions Hold True

Ultimately, **younger people move to Winnetka for their kids**. They want the educational opportunities the Village provides, as well as the sense of independence and freedom kids can have in the suburbs. While most young families looked at communities across the North Shore, Winnetka attracted them with its charm, big trees, lakefront, open space, and sense of safety for kids.

The **sense of community** drew young families to Winnetka, though it was hard to find at first—particularly during the winter. Once these families found one person or place to connect with—whether it was an active community member or a local school—they were able to form bonds more widely in the community. The Library and the Community House are great places to meet people and entertain the kids.

Though times have changed, many traditions still hold true. Residents mentioned bringing over treats to new neighbors and introducing themselves. Young women are still involved in volunteer boards, though they largely congregate on boards where there are other young people. Despite the assumption that all young families have two working parents, the residents we spoke with all indicated that the women in their household were not working and wouldn't return to work until their kids were through kindergarten. This is due in part to the difficulty of finding adequate daycare options. There was an overall concern for **lack of daycare** options.

Room for Improvement

While Winnetka has much to offer, the **lack of diversity** was a real concern for young families. These families are also seeking vital commercial areas and often shop, visit restaurants, and go to church in Wilmette to satisfy this preference. Some participants mentioned that Winnetka is designed for a “**stay-at-home lifestyle**” and more things to do along the lakefront are needed.

While residents eventually found community in Winnetka, **improved communications** would make things easier. A combined newsletter that incorporated updates from the Village, Library, Park District and schools would be great.

Housing options are also a challenge in Winnetka: young residents are interested in new condo developments that their parents could move into and be closer to their grandkids. Residents questioned how long they would stay in Winnetka once their children have completed high school or college. If they did stay, they would **want alternative housing options**.

FAMILY YEARS

A group of residents with school-age kids who have lived in Winnetka for a number of years came together on February 10, 2020 and again on October 13, 2021 for a focus group discussion. Key themes that came out of these discussions are summarized below:

Education

All of the attendees noted that the main reason that they moved to Winnetka was for the **progressive education** offered here. While many young adults and Millennials move to Winnetka because of family ties or convenient train access, the high-quality schools rank as the most important factor in their decision.

Community Character

The character of the community is also a draw—not only is the village very safe, the open space, lakefront, and parks are top-notch. However, the lack of racial diversity was a concern for many. Some participants discussed their choice to educate their children in Winnetka, but participate in after-school and summer activities in Evanston or Chicago to **give them a wider perspective**. Residents find community right outside their doorstep, with friendly neighbors eager to engage while walking their dogs or hanging out on their front porch. The schools are a source of community, as many parents meet friends through the school and their children. The bluffs and beaches are a source of pride, as are the Winnetka Music Fest and Wednesdays in the Woods evening concerts. More events like these **help to bring the community together**.

Downtown

Winnetka's Downtown areas are a point of concern for residents, with many preferring to visit Glencoe or Highland Park due to the **greater variety of restaurants and business offerings**. The empty storefronts are a deal breaker for many young families considering Winnetka, and there is a sense that the businesses that are operating only stay afloat because they are owned by Winnetka residents. Bringing more density to the Downtown would help Winnetka compete with neighboring communities, bring more foot traffic, and offer a greater diversity in housing stock so that the Village can cater to a variety of age groups.

Change

Generational change and national politics have brought tension to community discourse. **Winnetka is seen as progressive, but also resistant to change**. While residents on both sides of the spectrum believe that their ideas and thoughts are in the best interest of the Village, many believe that the older generation has too much say and stagnates any new development. Inclusive community engagement is key to bring a balance of opinions into the conversation. A **range of housing options and costs** was also mentioned as a catalyst for positive change.

LONG-TIME RESIDENTS

A group of long-time Winnetka residents came together on February 13, 2020 and again on October 14, 2021 for a focus group discussion. Key themes that came out of these discussions are summarized below:

Change

Physically, long-time residents feel that there hasn't been very much change in Winnetka. Historically, the community invested in big, forward-thinking changes, like depressing the train tracks. Today, **"everyone is so afraid of change, so afraid of community backlash, there is no way to build consensus."** The post office site is seen as a wasted opportunity for investment in downtown. The number of failed projects in Winnetka only adds to a growing sense of impatience. The property known as One Winnetka was mentioned, along with a concern if there was **an underlying factor discouraging investment** in the community.

As demographics change, community participation needs to shift. Long-time residents have been extremely civically involved but find it **hard to get younger residents engaged**. Younger families are seen as having a different perspective on Winnetka: often both parents are working, and their kids are busy with activities, so managing schedules becomes even more of a chore.

Community For All Ages

There are many places in Winnetka where long-time residents say they find community—the Bookstall, Peet's, Ellen's, Grand Foods, etc.—as well as institutions and events that bring people together, like the Community House and the Rummage Sale. If younger residents aren't involved in boards and don't see friends while running errands (because they have everything delivered), then the ways people find community must change. Young people want walkability, to come downtown and be able to walk between various restaurant options. **The downtown area must do better to address these changing needs.**

Changes in housing in the Village were also discussed. Long-time residents are concerned that their kids can't afford to live here, that all of the starter homes are gone. The Village needs **more housing options**: townhomes, for instance, would be attractive to various demographics. As it stands, the Village is not "age-in-place" friendly—options for single-floor ranch homes, condos and senior living are few. The limited housing stock leads to a population that is only suitable for a very narrow demographic—both in terms of age and socioeconomic standing. The majority of the long term residents in the group did not see themselves living Winnetka 15 years from now.

More recently, some residents felt there have been positive signs of change, including times residents got out and walked/biked around the Village more, the park district updated programming, and neighbors focused inward to create community.

MULTI-GENERATIONAL FAMILIES

A group of residents who had multiple generations of family living in Winnetka met on February 13, 2020 and again on October 13, 2021 for a focus group discussion. Key themes that came out of these discussions are summarized below:

"It's hard to leave when my kids and grandkids are here."

Family Ties

Many young families move back to Winnetka because they have family here, and many seniors stay in Winnetka because their families are here. Despite the **desire to stay close to family**, older residents noted wanting to move into a townhome or condo to reduce the burden of housework and save money. Given the lack of options in Winnetka, they would likely look in surrounding communities. Though older residents hope to downsize, they are also concerned about selling their homes, given the "turn-key" preferences of many buyers. While there are many young folks who grew up in Winnetka and choose to move back to raise a family, many of their friends don't have that option because it is too expensive. The question was asked, **"How do we allow all generations of a family to stay in the Village?"**

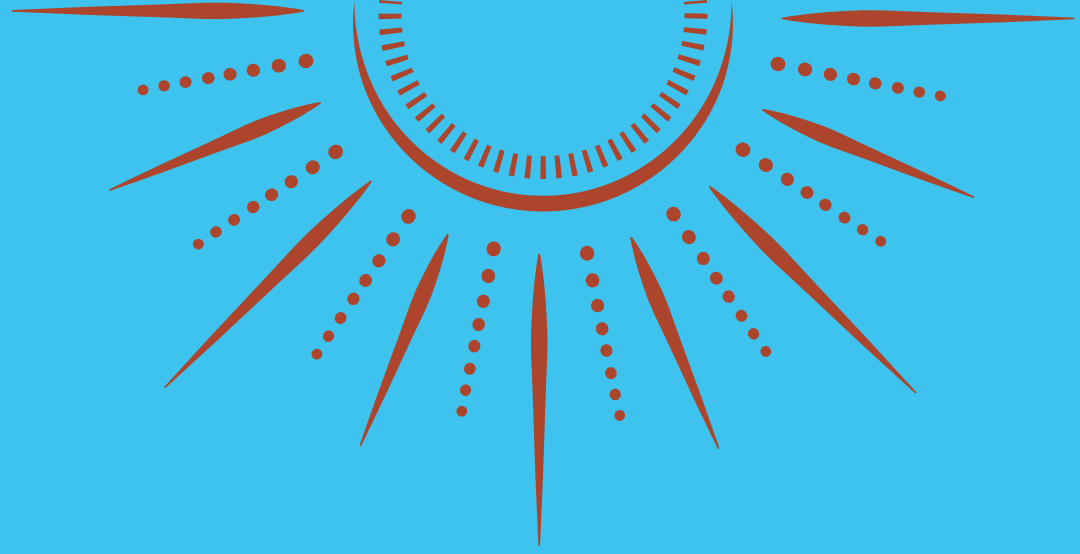
Local Businesses

For long-time residents and people who grew up in Winnetka, the businesses closures create a sense of loss. These residents remember the places they biked to for a slushie when they were kids, and met up for French fries when they were teenagers, and are concerned that those places, or new places like that, aren't in Winnetka anymore. While the old stalwarts of the downtown districts are missed, the **changing retail market** doesn't escape them: Costco, Target, and Amazon Prime delivery are all frequently used by their families.

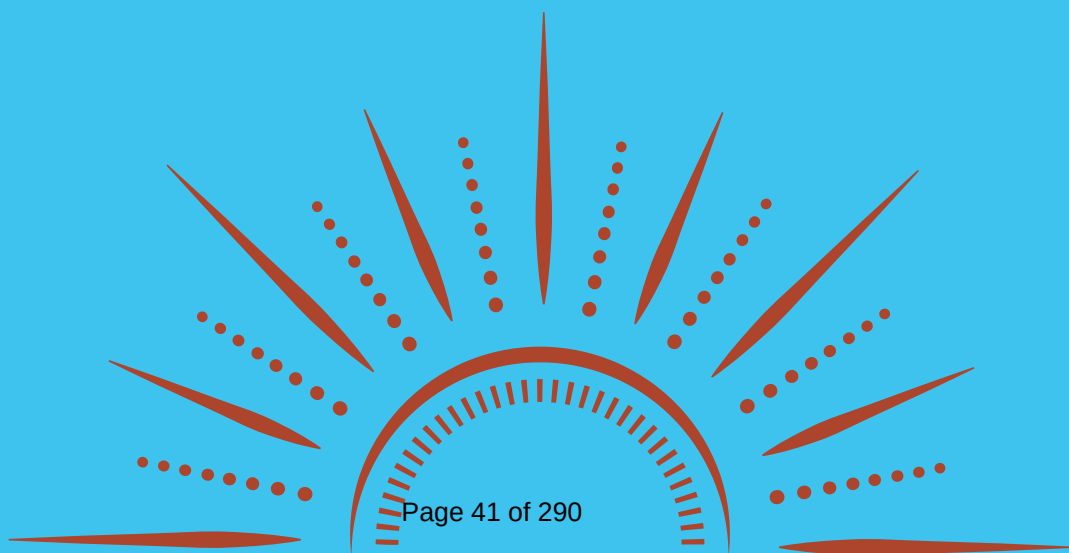
A Community of Neighborhoods

Residents spoke of connecting with their neighbors most often in the streets and sidewalks surrounding their homes, walking the dog or hanging outside while the kids play. The schools are the places that really bring people together; unless you have school-age kids, it can feel very isolating to be in the Village during the day. While long-time residents noted that there are many more restaurants than there used to be, expanding upon this restaurant base would create a more vibrant community scene. **The strength of the village is the neighborhood-focus**—the lakefront and five beaches, neighborhood schools, and neighborhood business districts. Winnetka should see that characteristic as its brand and tell that story: "Feed the neighborhoods. People are hungry for it."





LAND USE & ZONING



Existing Land Use



Winnetka's land use pattern is composed of distinct residential neighborhoods, memorable parks and open space areas, commercial districts, institutions, and Village-owned properties. Three Metra stations are equidistantly located along Green Bay Road, resulting in three unique business districts: Hubbard Woods, Downtown/Elm Street, and Indian Hill. A combination of commercial retail uses, services, restaurants, and some mixed-use developments are concentrated around the three business districts, providing residents with different retail, entertainment, and service opportunities within walking distance from most residential areas. Within the Village's western boundaries, the forest preserve provides a significant amount of open space. Winnetka is largely built-out, with limited sites for future residential development, especially for additional detached single-family. Redevelopment opportunities exist for higher density, mixed-use, or multi-family development in pockets around the commercial districts and along the Green Bay Road corridor.

RESIDENTIAL

Winnetka's residential areas comprise 1,508 acres—60.1% of the community's total land area—representing the community's most significant land use. Winnetka's residential areas are classified into two categories: single-family residential and multi-family residential uses.

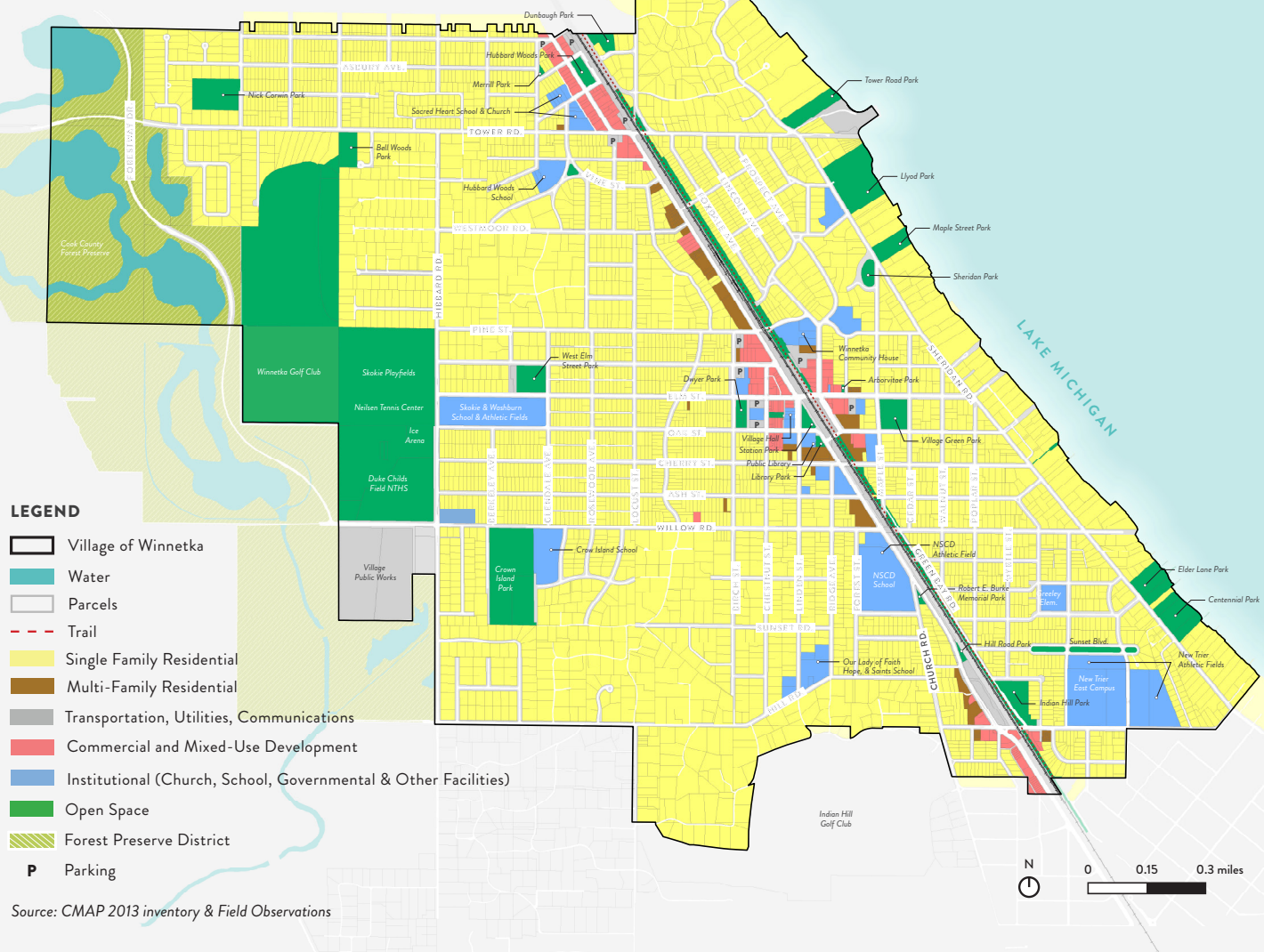
Single Family Detached

Of the 1,508 acres of residential areas, more than 96% is single-family housing. Single-family residential is distributed throughout the Village, with the largest number of homes located west of Green Bay Road. While the Village is known for its Tudor architecture, single-family homes in Winnetka vary in style, including Georgian Revival, Colonial Revival, Gothic Revival, Queen Anne, International style, and other eclectic styles. The Village has

“ People here are hungry for community.

- COMMENT FROM COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

FIGURE 11: EXISTING LAND USE



experienced a significant amount of residential teardown activity, especially smaller, older, two story and ranch homes on larger lots. Winnetka's neighborhoods each exhibit their own unique character, with variations in lot size, street width, alleys, and other factors which provide strong neighborhood identity and a sense of community for the Village. Newer single-family homes in the Village are almost all the result of teardowns. Such teardown/infill construction is spread throughout the Village, but most noticeable in the *Tree Streets* over the past 20 years. The sizes of single-family homes in Winnetka vary greatly, from small lots to large estates. Several more contemporary subdivisions located south and west in the Village feature larger lots and greater setbacks.

SINGLE FAMILY DETACHED



Multi-Family Attached (Townhomes)

Multi-family attached residences are those that share a common wall with at least one other dwelling. Townhomes, duplexes, and rowhomes are types of attached multi-family homes found in other communities. In Winnetka, multi-family attached developments are exclusively townhome-style development. There are 111 attached multi-family townhomes in the Village, dispersed among 17 different locations. Townhome developments are located on the periphery of each commercial zoning district, as well as along the Green Bay Road corridor, and comprise about 3% of the Village's residential housing stock.



Multi-Family Housing (Condominium And Apartment Buildings)

Multi-family housing includes condominiums, apartments, and similar units, ranging from apartments in vintage, turn-of-the-century downtown buildings to more recently-constructed condominium developments. Multi-family housing comprises approximately 0.7% of the total community land use and 1% of the total residential land use in Winnetka. Thirty-two percent of multifamily housing units are occupied by renters, 68% by owners. These uses are located within each of the Village's business districts and on the periphery of the business districts, serving as a transitional land use buffer between commercial and detached single-family uses. Multi-family housing is also located along Green Bay Road as a transitional land use buffer along the higher-traffic corridor.



COMMERCIAL & MIXED-USE

Commercial and mixed-use land uses in Winnetka makes up 39.4 acres, representing 1.6% of the community's total land area. All of Winnetka's commercial land use areas allow mixed use developments, generally consisting of commercial uses on the ground floor and residential uses and additional commercial uses up above. Commercial and mixed-use land uses are concentrated in the three business districts: Hubbard Woods, Downtown/Elm Street, and Indian Hill.

Both the Downtown Elm Street and Hubbard Woods business districts are noteworthy for their traditional mixed-use architecture and walkable pedestrian scale. Within the Elm Street and Hubbard Woods business districts, commercial land uses consist primarily of smaller ground-floor retail space in mixed-use buildings, and feature several restaurants, coffee shops, home furnishing stores, health and personal care stores, specialty stores, and small independent retailers. The Elm Street district benefits from the presence of a larger auto-oriented commercial center on the northern edge of the district, which is home to one of the Village's two independent grocery stores. In recent years, the districts have exhibited vacancies and opportunities for new businesses.

The Indian Hill business district differs in character from Elm Street and Hubbard Woods, consisting of smaller scale one and two-story buildings. With higher traffic volumes on Green Bay Road, the Indian Hill district is more auto-oriented in nature, with multiple businesses providing private, off-street parking. There are some instances of commercial development located outside of the Village's commercial districts, including older "legacy" commercial uses along Willow Road and Green Bay Road.



OPEN SPACE

Parks and open space constitute 16.8% of the community's total land area, one of the most prominent land uses in Winnetka and a defining element in the Village's character. Open space includes parks and natural areas managed by the Village, Winnetka Park District, and the Forest Preserve of Cook County. A large portion of the community's open space is found in the west and northwest parts of the Village, including the Forest Preserve's Skokie Lagoons and Skokie Playfield. Smaller parks and open spaces, including athletic fields, are spread throughout the Village, such as Hubbard Woods Park, Village Green Park, Crow Island Park, and North Shore Country Day Athletic Field. Natural areas, bluffs, and beaches along Lake Michigan are other type of open space that Winnetka enjoys. The Village, working in partnership with the Winnetka Park District and Forest Preserve, has a wealth of opportunities to build on this legacy by improving resident access to its abundant open spaces and natural areas.

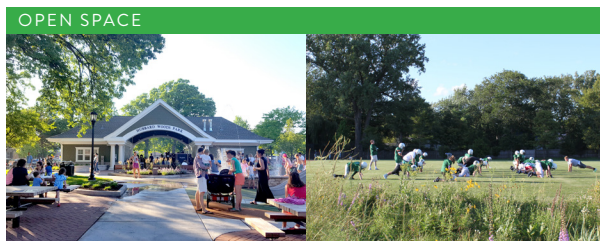
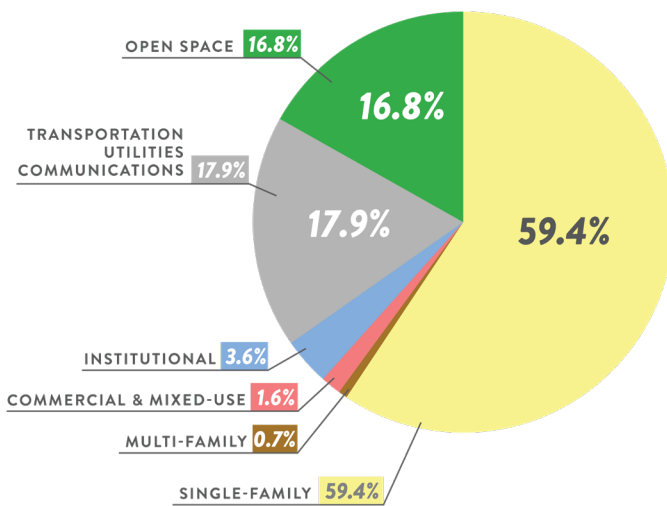


FIGURE 12: VILLAGE LAND USE



INSTITUTIONAL

Institutional land uses comprise 3.6% of the community's total land area. These uses include such uses as churches, public schools, Village facilities, such as the Village Hall, Winnetka Public Safety Building, and the Winnetka branch of the Winnetka-Northfield Public Library, southeast of Oak Street, as well as other uses such as the Community House. With eleven school campuses, this category makes up almost 92 acres of the Village's footprint—more than three times the commercial areas. Institutional uses are dispersed throughout the Village, with the majority located in southwest Winnetka.



TRANSPORTATION, UTILITIES, COMMUNICATIONS

Other land uses in Winnetka are comprised of rights-of-way, including roadways, the Metra rail tracks, and utility easements. This land use category also includes the facilities that support roadways and utilities, such as the Village's Public Works Yard, Water Plant, and Electric Plant sites. These land uses make up 16.1% of the community's total land use.



Zoning Analysis

“Any use that gets people walking around, eating ice cream and going into shops is ideal.”

- COMMENT FROM COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

The Village Zoning Code includes ten zoning districts and two overlay districts. The ten zoning districts are comprised of five single-family residential districts, two multi-family residential districts, two commercial districts, and one light industrial district. The light industrial district is very small and only applies to an isolated area on the periphery of the Hubbard Woods district, including an auto repair facility, and the Village-owned parking lot. The two overlay districts include the C2 Commercial Overlay and an overlay district for wireless telecommunications facilities.

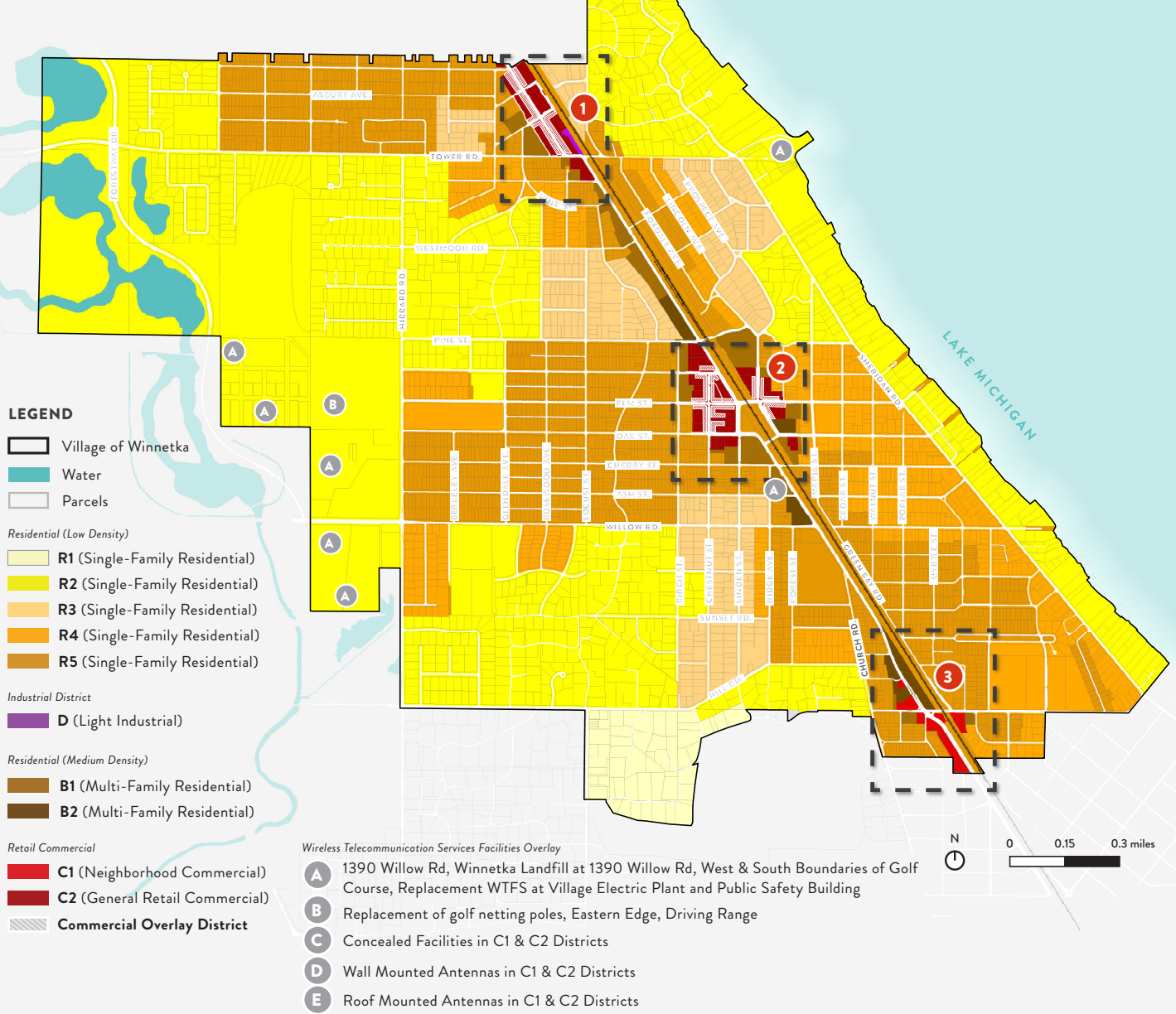
RESIDENTIAL DISTRICTS

Single Family

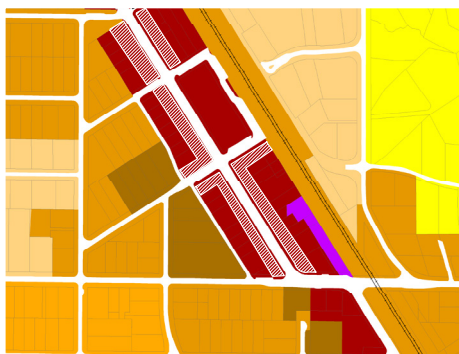
Single-family residential districts (R-1 to R-5) comprise the largest portion of the Village’s land use, and the largest zoning district in the entire Village. Five single-family residential districts exist and they vary primarily by lot size. Each of the five single-family districts have unique zoning requirements, such as varying building height limits that differ based on the designation and are customized to reflect both established neighborhood character as well as desired scale of new development.

The Village’s first zoning ordinance, adopted in 1922, established only two single-family zoning districts, essentially “small lots” (current equivalent to the R-5 zoning district) and larger “estate” lots (now the R-2 district). The Village amended its zoning regulations in 1961 and 1989 to add additional single-family residential districts (R-3 and R-4) and more accurately reflect established bulk and scale character in some areas. In addition, the Village adopted the R-1 district in the 1980’s in conjunction with the annexation petition filed by the owners of property adjacent to Indian Hill Country Club, with the R-1 district calibrated to reflect the larger lot sizes in that area (typically 1 acre or more).

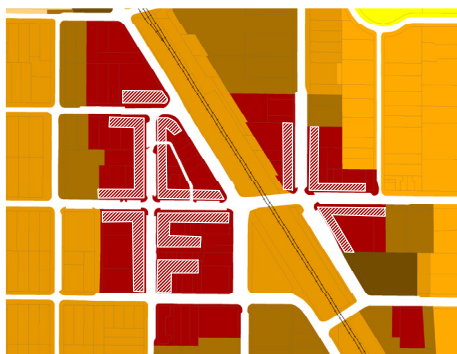
FIGURE 13: ZONING



1 HUBBARD WOODS BUSINESS DISTRICT



2 EAST/WEST ELM STREET BUSINESS DISTRICT



3 INDIAN HILL BUSINESS DISTRICT



The variation in lot size requirements between the largest lot area (R-1), and the smallest lot area (R-5) varies greatly, ranging from a minimum of 48,000 square feet in the R-1 district to a minimum of 8,400 square feet in the R-5 district. The R-2 district is the largest of the single-family districts in terms of area of the Village covered, requiring larger lot sizes of 24,000 square feet. The regulations that apply to the residential districts are more advanced in terms of level of detail, with a series of controls aimed at keeping the mass and scale of new infill houses in character with adjacent homes. Regulations aimed at assuring contextual infill include (a) varying height standards by zoning district, (b) limits on street-facing garages, and (c) incentives for traditional building details such as open front porches and detached garages.

Multi Family

The two multi-family districts (B-1 and B-2) are in select locations along Green Bay Road and on the periphery of each of the Village's business districts. The only significant difference between these two districts' regulatory structure is in residential density, or residential units per acre allowed. The B-1 is intended to provide for a lower density of development of 18 to 24 units per acre, while the B2 allows up to 30 units per acre. Building height in both the B-1 and B-2 districts is currently limited to two and one-half stories, or thirty-five feet.

The regulations in both the B-1 and B-2 district are less advanced than single family residential regulations, reflective of the Village's extensive work to address character of single-family development. Existing multi-family zoning regulations do not provide advanced guidance to shape the character of such developments and thus do little to facilitate additional multi-family development in the Village.

Given land and construction costs, the B-1 and B-2 zoning regulations could be updated to provide more differentiation between the two districts, as well as to provide more direct guidance and clarity to facilitate desired design, development height, bulk, and massing. Projects proposed for parcels over 10,000 square feet are subject to review as a Planned Development, creating a process for developers whose projects do not fit with the standards of these districts to customize a development within the context and goals of the adjacent land use character.

COMMERCIAL DISTRICTS

The Village has two commercial zoning districts, the C-1 Neighborhood Commercial District, and the C-2 General Retail District. The two districts are similar in their regulatory approach with a few noteworthy distinctions.

The C-1 Neighborhood Commercial District encompasses the Indian Hill business district, with district boundaries primarily following Green Bay Road, a four-lane arterial road. Commercial parcels along Green Bay Road are located on only one side of Green Bay Road; commercial lots also back up to single-family residential parcels to the west, separated by an alley that is primarily commercial in nature.

Due to the fact that the C-1 District abuts single-family parcels, the District allows a relatively shorter building height of two and one-half stories (compared to three or four stories in the C-2 District).

Also owing to its proximity to single-family residential uses, the C-1 District requires evaluation through the Special Use Permit process for certain higher intensity uses such as grocery stores, auto sales, fitness studios, real estate offices, and financial institutions.

The C-1 District is distinctive in that it allows, by right, certain uses which are subject to closer scrutiny in the C-2 District, allowing non-retail uses such as professional offices (insurance sales, legal firms, etc.) to occupy ground-floor storefront space. In 2015, following receipt of a report commissioned from the Urban Land Institute's Chicago chapter, the Village amended the C-1 and C-2 District's standards to adjust certain development standards related to heights, upper-story setbacks, residential parking requirements, and lot coverages, among others.

The C-2 Commercial Overlay District applies additional zoning control to defined portions of the Elm Street and Hubbard Woods districts with the purpose of concentrating retail and restaurant uses on ground-floor street frontages to support an active, pedestrian-oriented retail streetscape character. The overlay includes provisions focused on attracting retail and restaurant uses and providing a Special Use Permit review process for other potentially incompatible uses, such as general office/service uses. Following recommendations from the 2016 Downtown Master Plan, the Commercial Overlay District was amended in 2019 by the Village to clarify and expand use definitions and expand or consolidate the uses allowed in the overlay. Though the Village amended the Commercial Overlay District to expedite the special use permit

process, reduce its boundaries, and allow additional uses by right, feedback from the small business owner and property owner focus groups continued to identify the Commercial Overlay District as limiting in terms of uses allowed by right. The approval process can still be challenging, time-consuming, and costly. Given the changing retail dynamic and additional personal service, office, or educational uses that also can activate street frontage, the Village may consider future amendments to the overlay in terms of uses that should be allowed by right. This is especially true in the Hubbard Woods area, where the businesses branded the area as a “Design and Dine District.” To facilitate these marketing goals, the Village may consider design-related businesses as permitted by right.

The D-1 Light Industrial District is used to designate a small area of approximately one-half acre in the Hubbard Woods Business District and includes a Village-owned parking lot parcel and a three-story commercial building that includes an auto repair business. Given the size of the district, existing land use patterns, and development trends, the Village may consider eliminating the D-1 district and rezoning the area consistent with adjacent C-2 Commercial zoning.

OTHER DISTRICTS AND ZONING REGULATIONS

Wireless Telecommunication Services Facilities Overlay (WTSF)

This overlay district provides detailed requirements for the location and siting of telecommunications antennas and related equipment and facilities, as well as the approval process and standards for installation. It provides for the location of these facilities in a few select areas within the Village. The locations are generally between Hibbard Road and Forestway Drive, the Village electric plant, and the public safety building.

Planned Developments

The previous Planned Development regulations, adopted in 2005, provided a special procedure for new development projects that depart from the strict application of the specific zoning requirements of the district in which they are located. However, this process was limited in its application, as only two projects had gone through the process. Both projects were located on the southeast corner of Lincoln Avenue and Elm Street, commonly referred to as the “One Winnetka” site.

In 2019, the Planned Development regulations were updated to amend the procedures and standards for consideration of planned development applications. The most significant of the changes included the creation of a Planned Development Commission to streamline review and approval of these projects. This commission combines members of the Zoning Board of Appeals and Plan Commission so that projects do not need to be reviewed by each body independently, thus reducing the approval process timeline. Another change was the addition of the concept plan review to allow the Village Council an opportunity to comment on a proposed project prior to the applicant going through the formal planned development application process.

Variations

The Variations chapter of the Village code allows the approving body to vary the strict application of zoning regulations if a project meets a set of standards that are in harmony with the general purpose and intent of its applicable district. The regulations allow for a different approval body, depending on the magnitude of the variation. Variations considered minor can be approved at the staff level; standard variations are approved by the Zoning Board of Appeals, while major variations require review by the Zoning Board of Appeals and approval by the Village Council.

Special Uses

The Village has two types of special uses: those land uses that are considered special uses in the Commercial Overlay District, and those special uses in all other zoning districts. Special uses within the Commercial Overlay District must be reviewed by the Plan Commission and then approved by Village Council. Special uses outside of the Commercial Overlay District require review by both the Plan Commission and the Zoning Board of Appeals, and then must be approved by Village Council. (It should be noted any commercial, multi-family, or institutional use that proposes exterior changes, including signage, must also have those changes reviewed and approved by the Design Review Board.) The benefits and limitations of requiring two land use advisory bodies review of special uses located outside of the Commercial Overlay District should be considered.

Institutional Uses

Institutional uses include government-related uses such as the post office, Village facilities, the library, religious facilities, public parks, public and private schools, and other public uses. Currently, institutional and park uses are allowed as a special use in the various single-family residential, multi-family residential, and commercial districts. However, these uses must comply with the underlying zoning standards for these districts which were originally designed for the other land uses. Because of this, institutional uses wishing to expand, or seeking numerous and significant variations, may lead to neighbor concerns solely based upon the request for variations and not solely the impact of the proposed improvements. The Village may wish to consider the creation of separate zoning standards for institutional uses or creating one or two institutional zoning districts.

SUMMARY

Overall, the existing zoning regulations in Winnetka are typical in comparison to similar cities and towns. However, the Village has been proactive in amending the regulations to address single-family residential infill, teardowns, activation of pedestrian retail streets, implementing a Planned Development process, and streamlining the variation process. Additional amendments, such as updates to the B1 and B2 multi-family zoning districts, and code amendments recommended in the Downtown Master Plan, provide other opportunities to clarify standards, modernize zoning, streamline processes, and make the zoning ordinance more user and business-friendly.



Green Bay Road, Winnetka

VILLAGE CODE REVIEW

Various Village commissions, boards, and councils are responsible for the review of zoning variations and amendments, subdivision regulations, and other development relief. Many special use permits, variations, alterations, and appeals require public notice, either as a sign, a newspaper notice, a mail notice or publication on the Village website. Streamlining the review and notice requirements is something that may be considered to reduce the burden on applicants and the public.

ARCHITECTURE AND DESIGN REVIEW

In 2001, the Village adopted Design Guidelines to establish a series of design principles covering new development and alterations to existing buildings within the Village's commercial and multi-family residential areas. These Design Guidelines are applied to each case by the Design Review Board, with support provided by Community Development Department staff. Design review applies to new development and building improvements, including signage, to commercial, multi-family and institutional uses. Given over 20 years has passed since their adoption, it may be time to review and update these guidelines.



Winnetka Ave Bridge





*WINNETKA
FUTURES*



Overview



A starting point for the Winnetka Futures 2040 Comprehensive Plan is the Vision Statement. During the planning process, Winnetkans, interested stakeholders, and local leadership worked hand-in-hand to identify a unified direction for the Village, supported by community aspirations and values.

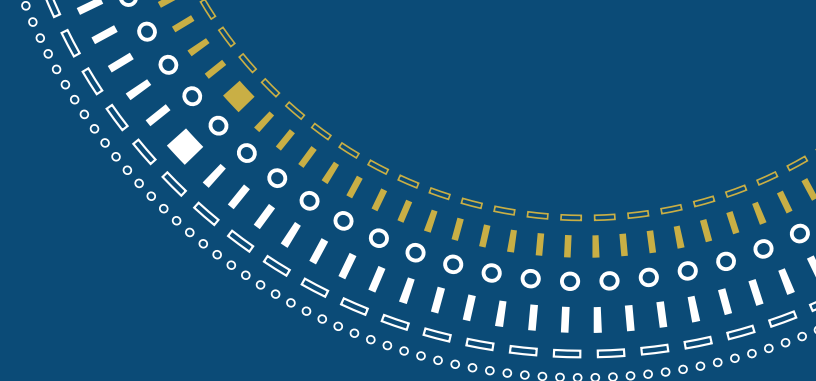
The vision statement, which follows on the next page, provides the foundation and basis for the recommended community pillar vision statements, goals, and specific initiatives that will guide local decision-making and implementation of this Plan.

The Winnetka Futures vision and community-led goals allow for a creative approach to an ever-changing future and guarantees a prosperous tomorrow that is greatly supported by yesterday’s successes.

Below are a few keywords that frequently came up during all community conversations and were a major focus point in the proposed 2040 vision:

Authenticity
Educational Excellence
HERITAGE
COMMUNITY OF NEIGHBORHOODS
COMMUNITY
LAKEFRONT COMMUNITY

“Winnetka is a Beautiful Land and a treasured North Shore lakefront Village.



Winnetka Futures 2040 Vision

Winnetka, the “Beautiful Land,” is a treasured North Shore lakefront Village with easy access to the Chicago metropolitan center. Our community is committed to the stewardship of all its natural resources, its built environment, and to its family-friendly heritage of:

- Primary and secondary school educational excellence.***
- Vibrant and walkable core areas for commerce and community gathering.***
- Active and engaged multi-generational citizenry.***
- Housing for all stages of one’s life.***
- Pedestrian-friendly, safe, and tree-lined neighborhoods.***

WINNETKA IS INDEED A BEAUTIFUL LAND

Blessed with a strategic location, excellent schools, business districts within walking distance of quality livable neighborhoods, and a rich tradition of civic involvement, it has, in many ways, very good bones. Fortunately, Winnetka has more than a prosperous past, a compelling history, and community tradition. It also has a reputation for innovation and bold ambition: the adoption of one of the nation's earliest comprehensive plans, the 1921 Bennett Plan.

Proud tradition and bold ambition. This a very fortunate combination for Winnetka, as the Village faces the many changes and challenges of the 21st century. Like other traditional business districts, Winnetka's brick-and-mortar retail has been hurt by shopping centers and big-box stores, and more recently by the growth of online sales. Commuting patterns were disrupted by the pandemic and are still in a state of uncertainty given the new capability for many to work from home. Environmental issues, which until recent years rarely appeared in comprehensive plans, have become critical to the Village and the world beyond. Increased housing costs and a reduction in the types of housing stock have narrowed the range of residents who live here, in terms of age, socio-economics, and other diverse characteristics. Fewer seniors can find downsize housing in the Village resulting in older generations moving out of the Village. Two-income families, busy juggling childcare and variable working hours or locations, often have a different relationship with their schools and community institutions compared to earlier generations. Winnetka's built environment and policies need to better respond to evolving work and family structures, ensuring that residents feel welcomed and can participate in the social fabric. Empowering local leadership to tackle such issues systematically, over years, and across different Village administrations is key. **Winnetka needs a plan.**

Today, Winnetka has the opportunity to help the village succeed and prosper as a livable, sustainable community in the decades ahead. As observed in the 1921 Bennett Plan, Winnetka today may once again, through thoughtful planning, see "common sense applied to the common interests."

This Winnetka Futures 2040 Plan advances just such a vision of a sustainable, prosperous, and vital community that retains its essential heritage and character while enhancing its neighborhoods, downtowns, and corridors. One-hundred-and-one years after the Bennet Plan, the Village embraces the community's proud tradition while planning for a bright future energized by innovation and bold ambition.

PLAN ORGANIZATION

Winnetka Futures 2040 Plan is supported by ten community pillars, a series of goals, and targeted initiatives that ensure this vision can become a reality. Achieving all pillar mission statements, goals, and initiatives will require active and ongoing collaboration between the Village of Winnetka, its residents, and local and regional partners.

VISION STATEMENT - Defines the long-term vision for the Winnetka community and sets the expectation that the Village is striving towards.



COMMUNITY PILLARS - Organize the 2040 Plan into ten topical categories to carry forward the goals and initiatives.



GOALS - Paint the picture of what the Village will support over the next twenty years. Goals within each community pillar can be best defined as principal statements of aim.



INITIATIVES - Propose strategies and action steps to help advance the goals defined in the plan.

The next few pages list the community pillars along with their vision statements. Additional information per community pillar, along with its goals and a defined set of initiatives, can be found throughout this plan.



PILLAR 1:

Quality Livable Neighborhoods

Vision Statement: A community of connected neighborhoods with safe, pedestrian-oriented streets, tree-lined parkways, and a variety of well-maintained housing offerings to meet the needs of all of its residents and create a unique and powerful sense of place.

PILLAR 2:

Vibrant Business Districts

Vision Statement: A community with a strong commitment to supporting and enhancing its unique, walkable, mixed-use business districts, which serve both as the community's commercial and social centers.

PILLAR 3:

Community Heritage & Placemaking

Vision Statement: Winnetka's authentic heritage can be found in its walkable streets, its rich tapestry of commercial and residential architecture, and in its cultural activities.

PILLAR 4:

Sustainability and Climate Action

Vision Statement: A forward-looking community with a strong heritage of innovation and commitment to stewardship of its natural resources and built environment.

PILLAR 5:

Educational Excellence

Vision Statement: A community with a strong heritage rooted in education that acknowledges the whole child, fosters creativity and confidence, inspires lifelong learning, and develops civic responsibility.

PILLAR 6:

Healthy & Engaging Lifestyles

Vision Statement: A unique lakefront community that values a variety of carefully-managed and well-connected parks and open spaces and that treasures unlimited access to recreational opportunities and cultural pursuits to help residents achieve a balanced and fulfilled lifestyle.

PILLAR 7:

Community Infrastructure, Services, & Technology

***Vision Statement:** A forward-thinking tradition of delivering exceptional and efficient public services and infrastructure systems to meet the current and future needs of the community.*

PILLAR 8:

Mobility & Accessibility

***Vision Statement:** A progressive community with forethought in developing safe and efficient local and regional mobility connections for all through public transportation, regional trails, and pedestrian and bike-friendly neighborhood street networks.*

PILLAR 9:

Civic Engagement

***Vision Statement:** A community heritage founded on the fundamental principle of fostering beneficial public dialogue through active community engagement and volunteerism.*

PILLAR 10:

Operational Efficiencies & Regional Coordination

***Vision Statement:** A community with a strong heritage of thought-leadership, supporting and enhancing our local and regional intergovernmental relationships to ensure efficient, prudent community management through data-supported planning, organizational synergies, and effective communication.*



Evening Concert at Hubbard Woods © Winnetka Park District

Future Land Use

“ There is a need to add more housing units in Winnetka that would allow us to attract young professionals and young families.

- COMMENT FROM COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

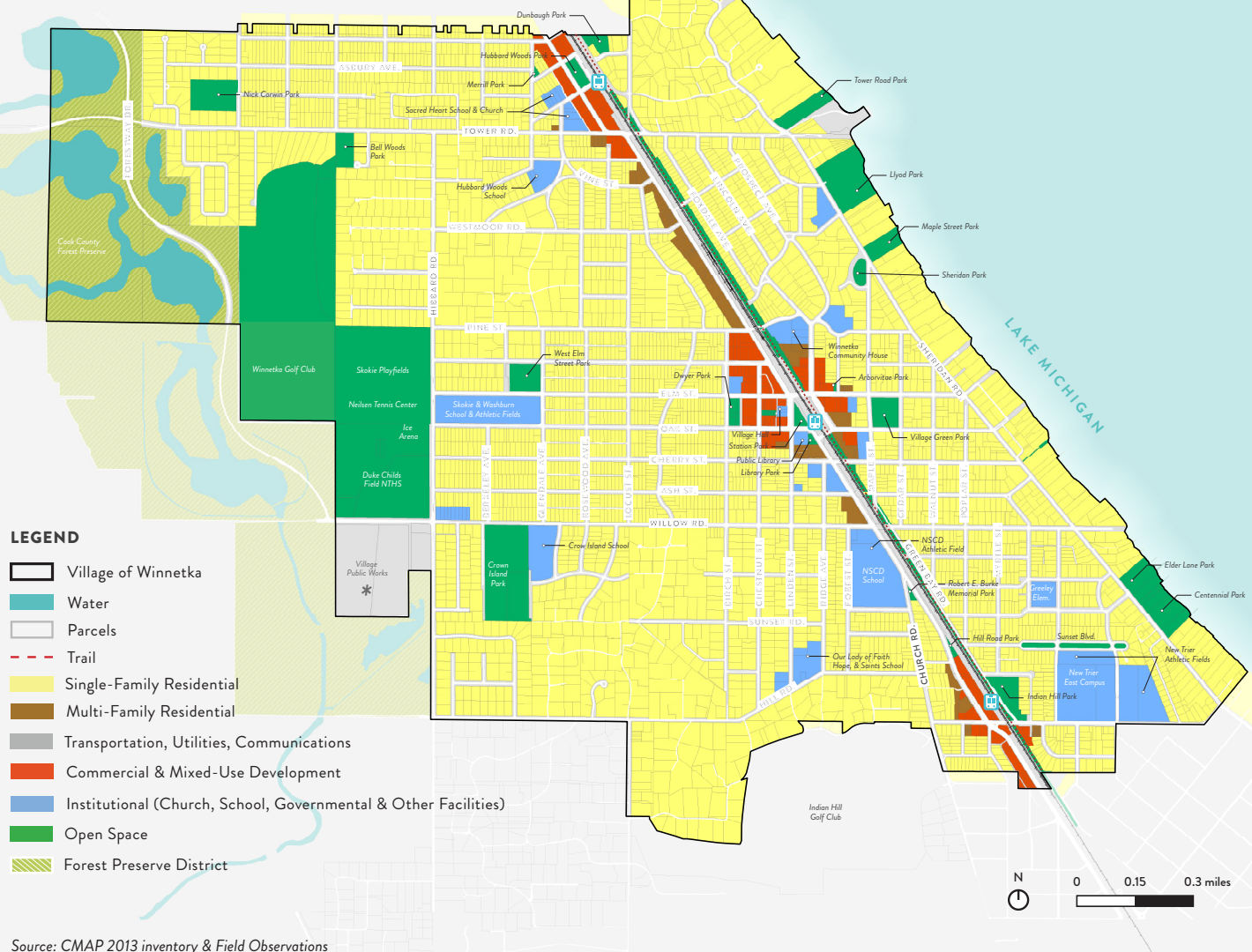
OVERVIEW

Winnetka has a mature, traditional community land use fabric characterized by a variety of walkable and connected single-family residential neighborhoods, three distinct business district personalities served by a variety of local and regional transit options and adjacent multifamily housing choices, and a well-balanced system of parks, public plazas and natural open space systems. Within the fabric of each neighborhood lies walkable civic uses, public and private schools, and religious and community institutions. Winnetka has maintained a traditional land use character that meets the fundamental principles of community planning and placemaking.

Achieving Winnetka’s planning goals requires a well-conceived and carefully managed approach to community land use while constantly monitoring changing market trends, development opportunities, and resident and stakeholder aspirations and preferences for Winnetka’s future.

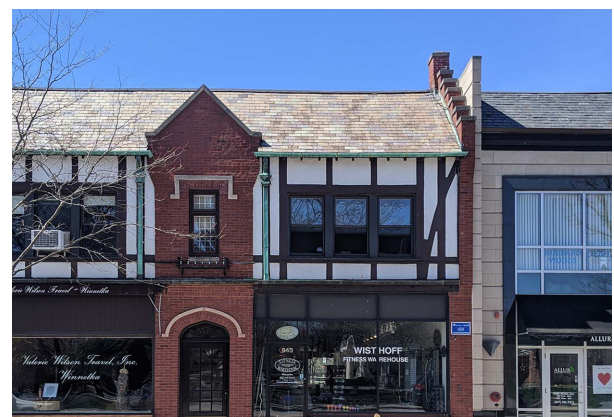
The central purpose of the Future Land Use Strategy is to assist the community – elected and appointed officials, Village staff, businesses, investors, and residents – in making informed decisions regarding future land use change and development activity. The future land use strategy also emphasizes the preservation, conservation, and enhancement of the Village’s business districts and surrounding traditional neighborhood blocks. The strategy considers diversification of uses in the Village’s business districts and along the Green Bay Road corridor to take advantage of new redevelopment opportunities and provide new retail, mixed-use and multi-family housing choices.

FIGURE 14: FUTURE LAND USE



The Future Land Use Strategy is described in more detail in subsequent Pillar sections of this plan and as identified in the future land use matrix on the following page.

The Strategy should generally be used as a guide for future land use decision-making. It should be regularly updated when circumstances, market conditions, or opportunities warrant a change in planning direction in any area of the Village. Any changes to the Future Land Use map should be consistent with the larger community vision and goals of this adopted Comprehensive Plan.



Hubbard Woods - 948 Green Bay Rd, Winnetka

The Future Land Use Strategy identifies six distinct classifications, including residential, commercial and mixed-use, open space, institutional, and a catchall for transportation and communication, and utilities facilities. The main highlight of this Future Land Use map is a clarification of what had been identified on the previous comprehensive plan land use map as Commercial land use classification, when it was actually a classification for Commercial & Mixed-Use Development. This classification supersedes the Village’s previous comprehensive plan commercial classification and focuses on the three Winnetka business districts. Commercial & Mixed-Use, as noted in the graphic matrix (Figure 15), is intended to provide clarity and support for a variety of stand alone or vertically integrated commercial, multifamily, office, public spaces, and institutional redevelopment opportunities.



Hubbard Woods - 948 Green Bay Rd, Winnetka

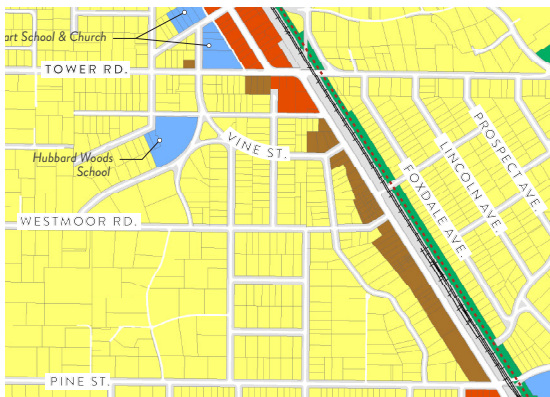
FIGURE 15: FUTURE LAND USE MATRIX

SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL	Single Family Detached Lot
	Single Family Accessory Dwelling Unit
MULTI-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL	Multi Family Residential
	Multi Family Attached Townhomes
TRANSPORTATION, UTILITIES, COMMUNICATIONS	Transportation Corridors (Streets / Rail / Paths)
	Village or Private Communication Facilities / Utilities
	Public Street Right-of-Way
	Public Works Campus
	Public Utilities
	Water Plant / Power Generator
COMMERCIAL & MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT	
Multi-story Retail-Residential-Office	
Integrated or Freestanding Parking Facility	
One-Story Retail/Food & Beverage/ Entertainment/Office & Service	
INSTITUTIONAL	
Religious Institutions	
Public & Private School Campuses	
Governmental & Other Public Facilities	
Public Safety Facilities / Campus	
OPEN SPACE	
Public Park & Recreation Facilities	
Pocket Parks / Plazas	
Cook County Forest Preserve Lands	

FUTURE LAND USE COMPARISON

As a result of the previous comprehensive plan update, the Village of Winnetka currently has a future land use map, last updated in 1999. The Winnetka Futures 2040 Future Land Use Strategy, shown in Figure 14, features minimal changes compared to the current future land use map. Below is a list of updates that the Winnetka Futures 2040 Comprehensive Plan is proposing, in comparison to the current future land use:

- » The current future land use map had an office designation, which has been eliminated.
- » The intersection of Tower Road and Green Bay Road now features multi-family residential.
- » The addition of one parcel of multi-family residential designation along Green Bay Road, between Chatfield Road and Vine Street.
- » Immediately south of the Community House, along the west side of Lincoln Avenue, now features multi-family residential designation.
- » Along Green Bay Road, between Chatfield Road and Pine Street, now features a full stretch of multi-family designation, which includes multi-family buildings and townhomes. The current future land use map shows two-thirds of that stretch as townhome residential, and one third multi-family residential.
- » Public/Semi-Public and Transportation/Utilities have been reorganized to Institutional uses & Transportation/Communications/Utilities uses.
- » Areas previously designated as public parking are now designated with a land use category, which anticipates the inclusion of public parking.



Proposed Future Land Use Changes along Green Bay Road, between Tower Road and Pine Street

GREEN BAY ROAD CORRIDOR

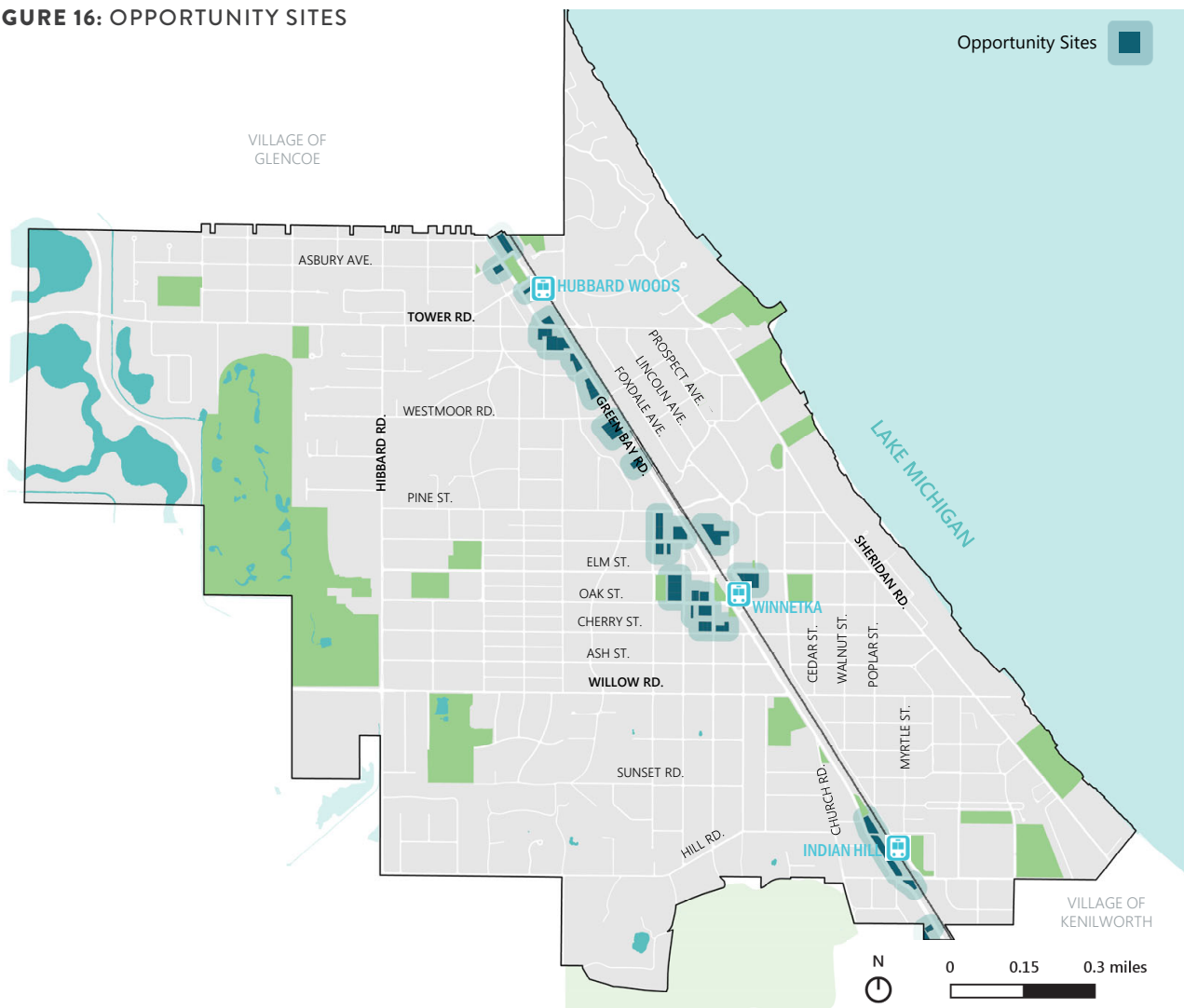
The Future Land Use Strategy and map seek to preserve, conserve, and enhance Winnetka's urban fabric and allow for well-managed land use change. This Plan focuses on managing land use pattern changes, development forms, and use intensities over the next 20 years. The Plan pays particular attention to the Green Bay Road corridor, which includes East and West Elm, Hubbard Woods, and Indian Hill business districts.

The Green Bay Road corridor is a connecting spine linking Winnetka's residential neighborhoods, schools, recreational facilities, transit, and, perhaps most importantly, its business districts. While no land use change is envisioned for Winnetka's single-family neighborhoods, civic and institutional uses, or open spaces, the new mixed-use and expanded multi-family designations are shown to provide flexibility as the Village manages future change. Additional details for the mixed use strategy are provided in the Plan chapters on Vibrant Business Districts, Quality Livable Neighborhoods, Community Heritage and Placemaking, and Mobility and Access.



564 Green Bay Road, Winnetka

FIGURE 16: OPPORTUNITY SITES



OPPORTUNITY SITES

The Village has identified development opportunity sites based on properties that are underutilized, have significant vacancies, or are likely to see a change in use over the next 20 years. Opportunity sites are strategically identified within the three downtown clusters and along Green Bay Road. Altogether, 19.4 acres of land have been identified as opportunity sites, representing 1% of the Village's total parcel area.

Green Bay Road Corridor and Business District Opportunity Sites

Long-term community planning should support understanding of, and manage expectations for, changes in land use. This Comprehensive Plan has identified public and private sites within business districts and along the Green Bay Road corridor susceptible to future change. The Plan's

pillars, goals, and initiatives describe how the Village can effectively communicate and manage that change to meet community planning and development goals.

The Opportunity Sites map and narrative identifies public and private sites in the Village and provides future land use direction for the areas highlighted above. Several concept diagrams and site-development capacity studies help communicate desired development goals and alignment with the policies established in this Comprehensive Plan. These diagrams do not reflect an approved development plan, proposal or variations to any regulatory allowances.

Green Bay Corridor Future Land Use Pattern

Green Bay Road is a north-south gateway to Winnetka and the spine that connects the Village's three unique business districts. Between the business districts are mixed land uses on the west side of Green Bay Road and the Metra-Union Pacific North rail line on its east. The current land use

pattern north of the Elm Street district is characterized by multi-family residential, including condominiums, apartments, and townhomes. Small pockets of active commercial, office, and single-family lots remain to the northern end of this portion of the corridor. South of the Elm Street business district, the land use character is predominantly a mix of municipal services, multi-family residential, institutional, and single-family.

Green Bay Road North of Pine and South of Chafield Road

Portions of the corridor north of Pine Street and south of Chatfield Road have experienced land use changes in recent years. Several areas may provide future multi-family development opportunities, such as townhomes, apartments, and residential condominiums. These additions would support community connectivity and diversify the available housing options near the business districts and public transit offerings. (See Opportunity Sites map).

Green Bay Road South of Cherry and North of Hill Terrace

As noted above, existing land uses in this portion of the Green Bay Road include such uses as: municipal services (Winnetka Police and Fire Stations), multi-family (Hedge Row Condominiums and Chimney's Condominiums), institutional (North Shore Country Day School), and single-family detached homes. No future land use changes or potential development opportunity sites are envisioned in this portion of the corridor.



Graeter's Ice Cream on Green Bay Road, Winnetka

Hubbard Woods Business District

There are several sites in the Hubbard Woods business district shown on the Opportunity Sites map. These represent both private and public opportunities for redevelopment that could occur, for the most part, around the north gateway of the district, from the Green Bay Road intersection with Merrill Street, or at the southern gateway intersection of Tower and Green Bay Roads. The land use on these opportunity sites is identified as mixed-use on the Future Land Use map. This classification allows for creative development accommodating first floor retail/commercial with upper floor multi-family residential or commercial. Importantly, this classification supports community planning goals of strengthening and promoting walkable vibrant business districts and sustainable, transit-supportive, livable neighborhoods.

Conceptual development scenarios are illustrated in the next few pages, and others are discussed in the Village's Downtown Master Plan (published in 2016). The Downtown Master Plan shows desired land use character, form, and compliance with community expectations and regulatory standards.

East and West Elm Street Business District

There are several development opportunity sites in both the East and West Elm Street Business Districts as illustrated in the Opportunity Sites map. These sites represent both private and public opportunities for redevelopment that occur in both the East and West Elm Street Business Districts. The districts are unique in that they straddle the Green Bay Road corridor. All redevelopment opportunities should seek to support improved pedestrian and public space connectivity and design continuity between these two transit-supportive districts.

The Future Land Use Strategy identifies opportunity sites in these two (East and West Elm) districts as primarily a mixed-use land use classification. This classification allows for creative solutions for development that accommodates first floor retail/commercial with upper floor opportunities to support multi-family residential or commercial uses. More importantly, this classification supports community planning goals of strengthening and promoting walkable vibrant business districts and sustainable and transit-supportive, livable neighborhoods.

The Future Land Use Plan also suggests a new multi-family land use designation for the Village-owned surface parking lot behind the Winnetka Community House and adjacent

to the Metra/UP rail line and Green Bay Trail. This site is located off a main commercial district street frontage, and as such has limited visibility and potential to support a truly mixed-use land use designation. The 2016 Downtown Master Plan and this comprehensive plan suggest that this Village-owned property could realize and support additional multi-family residential development integrated with necessary public parking. This land use classification and conceptual strategies support many of the community planning policies, most notably: Vibrant Business Districts, efficient mobility options and livable neighborhoods.

Indian Hill Business District

The Indian Hill Business District has a completely different “personality” along Winnetka’s Green Bay Road corridor. It serves as the community’s southern gateway and is predominantly a small commercial/service hub or district supported by its proximity to Metra’s Indian Hill train station, New Trier East High School and adjacent multi-family residential. This hub is defined by the intersection of Green Bay Road and Winnetka Avenue, which has active uses predominantly on the west side of Green Bay Road.

There are only a few development opportunity sites in the Indian Hill Business District as illustrated on the Opportunity Sites map. These sites represent both private and public opportunities for redevelopment that for the most part occur to the east portions of Green Bay Road both north and south of the Winnetka Avenue intersection. Like other key opportunity sites, these are identified as mixed-use on the Future Land Use map. This classification allows for commercial, and retail uses on the ground floor and opportunities on upper floors for multi-family residential use or additional commercial space. This classification also supports community planning goals of strengthening and promoting walkable, vibrant business districts, and sustainable and transit-supportive, livable neighborhoods.

One of the opportunity sites identified for potential reuse includes the Village and Metra surface parking lots at the Northeast corner of the intersection. Consideration should be given to any proposals to ensure they accommodate the need for public, commuter, and student parking demand. A new specialty drink and food use is currently under development at the Village-owned surface parking lot at the southeast corner of this intersection. This development is a great example of public involvement leveraging, directing, and facilitating development and a desired land use direction to support its community planning goals, maximize public benefit, and ensure successful outcomes.

Green Bay Road and Business Districts - Managing Community Character and Urban Design

The potential development opportunity sites along north Green Bay Road and within Hubbard Woods, East and West Elm Street, and Indian Hill Business Districts present unique site and urban design challenges due to a range of lot sizes and depths. Attention must be paid to the right balance of use, design, product type, scale, form, and landscape buffer along individual opportunity site transition areas adjacent to single-family homes. To that end, it may be more appropriate to encourage townhomes adjacent to, or across the street from, single-family homes, in order to achieve the desired transition between more active mixed-use developments and single-family homes north, south, east, and west of the business districts. In addition to traditional townhomes, designing mixed-use buildings with the residential entry facing the adjacent single-family homes should also be encouraged. The Village has done and will continue to do an effective job of evaluating proposals and working with property owners, designers, builders, and developers on mitigating these important land use relationships.

On and off-street parking requirements for new development and improvements in the public realm along the Green Bay Road streetscape should balance community planning goals and policies with market expectations for this walkable, transit-supportive environment. Village-owned parking facilities as part of any future development opportunity must consider creative planning solutions and effective parking management strategies for appropriate replacement of critical public parking that supports local business.

It will be important for the Village to leverage its opportunity sites along Green Bay Road, as well as in all business districts, with adjacent private ownership to create creative pathways for efficient and meaningful downtown development. The Village should utilize its development tools and planning process to maximize public benefit and successful outcomes.



Green Bay Road, Winnetka

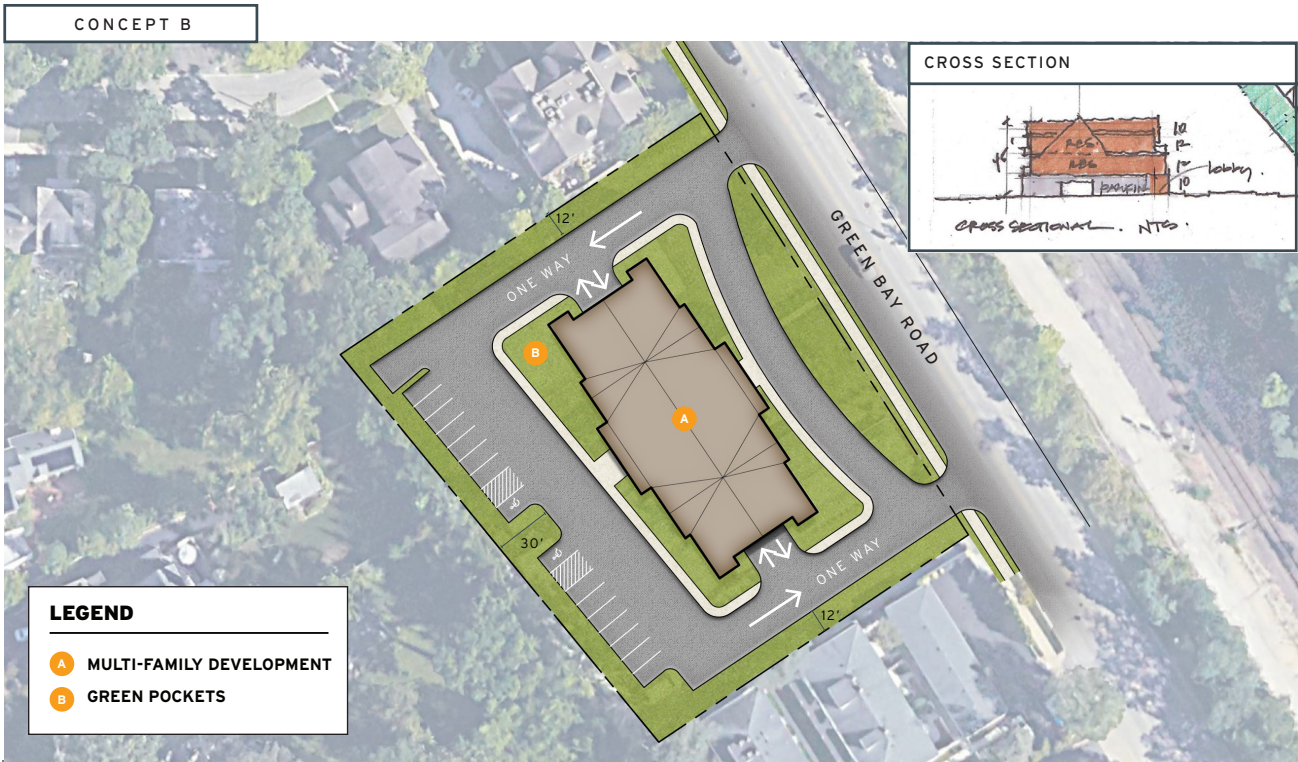


La Taquiza, Winnetka

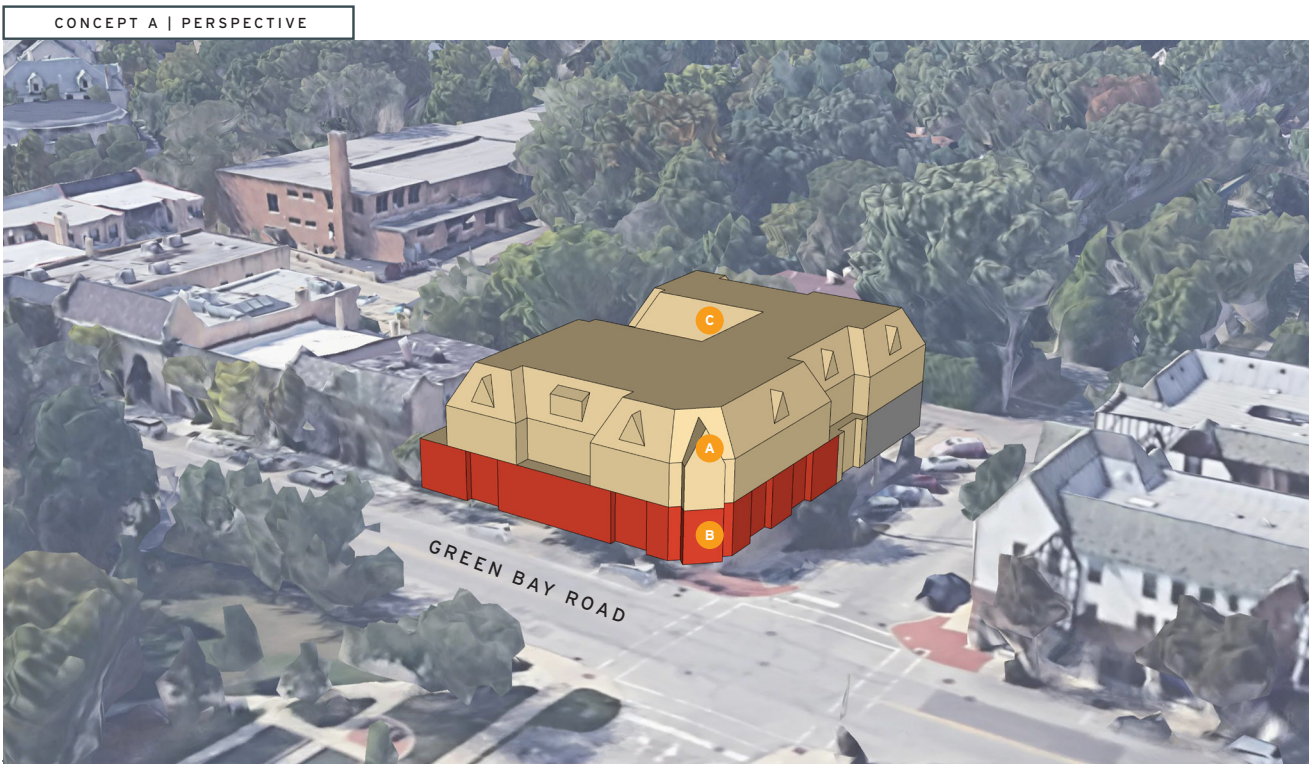
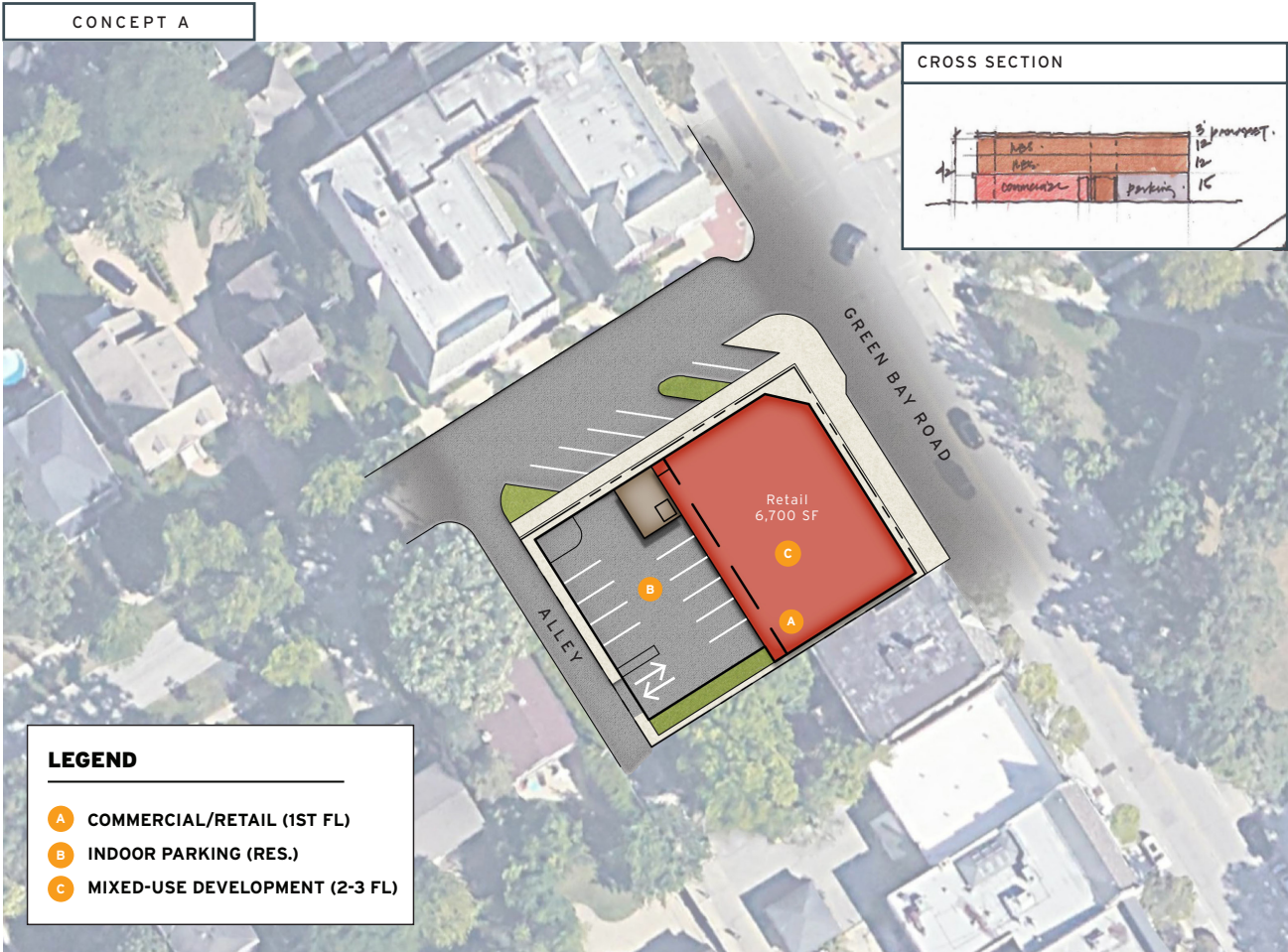
Conceptual Plans for Opportunity Sites

The concepts shown on the following opportunity sites are not meant to design a particular site. The goal is to illustrate how redevelopment of the sites in the identified area could take place.

1. West Side of Green Bay Road, Generally Between Pine Street and Westmoor Road



2. Green Bay Road - Hubbard Woods





PILLAR 1

**Quality Livable
Neighborhoods**



PILLAR 4

**Sustainability and
Climate Action**



PILLAR 2

**Vibrant
Business Districts**



PILLAR 5

**Educational
Excellence**



PILLAR 3

**Community Heritage &
Placemaking**



PILLAR 6

**Healthy and
Engaging Lifestyles**



PILLAR 7

Community Infrastructure, Services, & Technology



PILLAR 10

Operational Efficiencies & Regional Coordination



PILLAR 8

Mobility & Accessibility



PILLAR 9

Civic Engagement



The Winnetka Public Schools

PILLAR 1

Quality Livable Neighborhoods

VISION STATEMENT

“A community of connected neighborhoods with safe, pedestrian-oriented streets, tree-lined parkways, and a variety of well-maintained housing offerings to meet the needs of all of its residents and create a unique and powerful sense of place.”



PILLAR 1:

Quality Livable Neighborhoods

Vision Statement: A community of connected neighborhoods with safe, pedestrian-oriented streets, tree-lined parkways, and a variety of well-maintained housing offerings to meet the needs of all of its residents and create a unique and powerful sense of place

Goal 1.1: The Village will encourage renovation of existing homes and construction of new homes to be contextually consistent with existing single-family housing in its neighborhood.
Goal 1.2: The Village will continue to explore housing diversity and address the housing gap to provide a supply that supports changing demographic needs and ensures a variety of product types, options, and costs available to seniors, empty nesters, families, and young residents.
Goal 1.3: The Village will maintain and enhance the walkable and bicycle-friendly nature of the community’s neighborhoods.
Goal 1.4: The Village will continue to ensure that institutional uses such as schools, churches, the Public Library, and Park District parks and facilities are compatible with the residential neighborhoods in which they are located.
Goal 1.5: The Village will continue to support its policies and residents’ efforts that maintain and enhance inviting, neighborly, and sustainable outdoor spaces in our residential neighborhoods and the public parkway.
Goal 1.6: The Village will encourage multi-family unit development near and in the downtown commercial districts.

Winnetka Futures 2040 Plan includes ten Community Pillars. The following section describes Winnetka’s vision for *Pillar 1: Quality Livable Neighborhoods*. A summary of the existing conditions analysis, along with community input received over the course of the process are shared in the next few pages. Following that is a list of actionable initiatives for each of the goals listed above.

Housing Assessment

“ We need to promote smaller homes for empty nesters and first-time homebuyers.

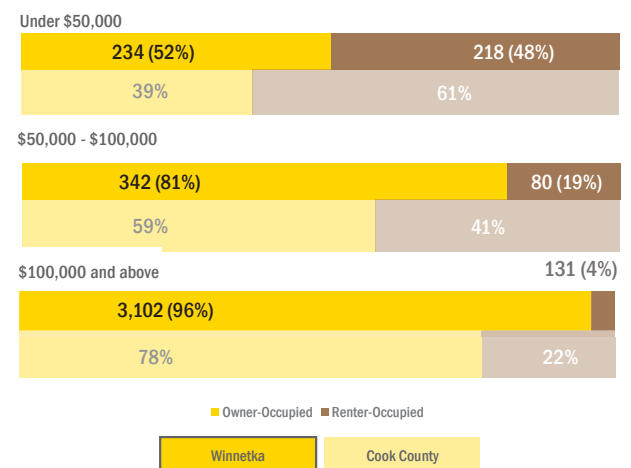
- COMMENT FROM COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

HOUSING TENURE BY INCOME

The owner-occupied rate among households in Winnetka (90%) is significantly higher across all income brackets compared to Cook County (57%) (Figure 17¹). The owner-occupied rate increases in the Village as household income increases, as is typical.

Even among Winnetka households with incomes below \$50,000, only 48% rent, compared to 61% of households in this income bracket across Cook County. Ninety-six percent of households with incomes at or above \$100,000 live in owner-occupied housing, compared to 78% county-wide. There are very few high-income renters within the Village (only 131 households, or 4% of households with incomes at or above \$100,000).

FIGURE 17: HOUSING TENURE BY HOUSEHOLD INCOME



1. Source: 2019 tenure estimates from ACS 2015-2019 5-Year Estimates, SB Friedman



Single-family home, Winnetka

FIGURE 18: HOUSING UNIT INVENTORY

	Acres	Units	Units/Acre	Land Area % of Total
Single-Family Homes	1,373	3,792	3	96%
Townhomes ^[1]	6	101	16	0.4%
Multifamily ^[1]	12	390	33	1%
Mixed-Use Multifamily ^{[1][2]}	7	N/A	N/A	0.5%
Auxiliary Residential Parcels ^[3]	33	N/A	N/A	2%
TOTAL [4]	1,432	4,283		

HOUSING UNIT INVENTORY

Single-family homes account for approximately 96% of the residential land area within the Village (Figure 18). The single-family home area accounts for approximately 3,800 homes, with an average of 3 units per acre.

There are approximately 101 townhomes, or single-family attached homes, in the Village. These account for 6 acres of land area (0.4% of total).

Multifamily residential includes apartments and condominiums, which account for about 2% of the overall land area, but over 11% of the total units in the Village. There are approximately 400 multifamily units in the Village located in entirely residential buildings.

The residential composition in the Village appears to have remained largely stable since 2000.

1. Includes for-sale and rental

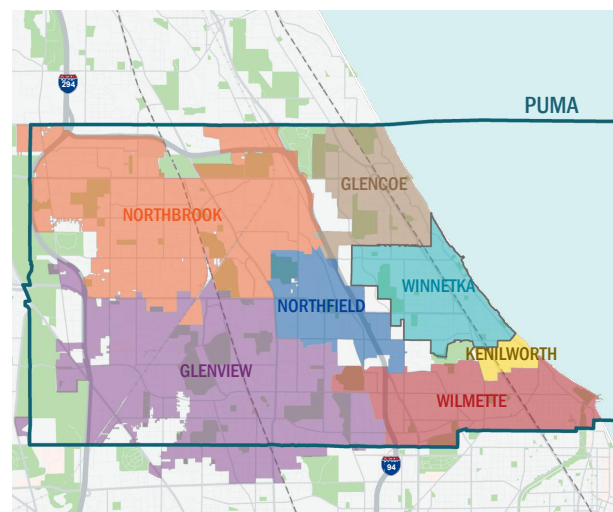
2. Includes mixed-use parcels (residential + commercial)

3. Includes PINs classified as garages, minor improvements, and vacant land under common residential ownership by Cook County Assessor

4. Total unit count excludes mixed-use multifamily

Source: 2020 Cook County Assessor Office, SB Friedman

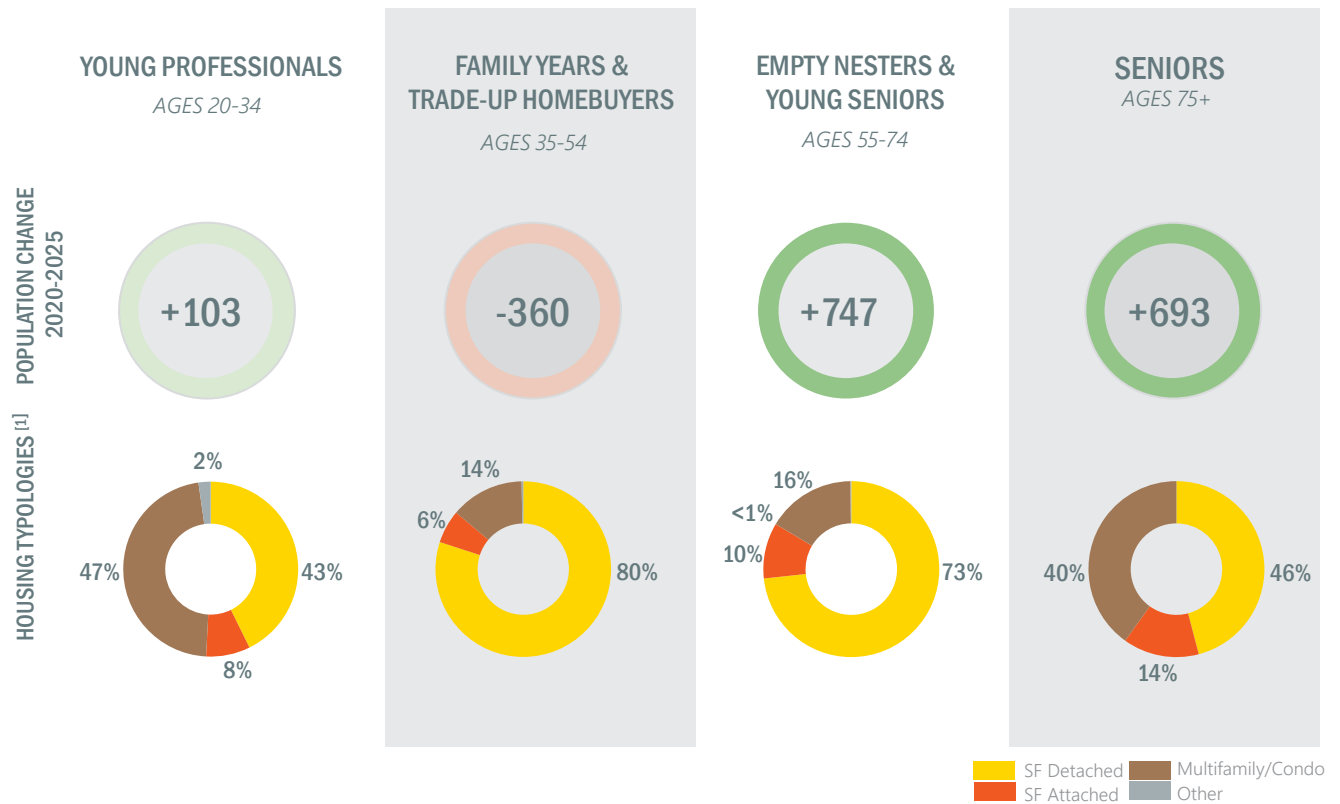
FIGURE 19: COOK COUNTY NORTHEAST PUBLIC USE MICRODATA AREAS (PUMA): NORTHFIELD & NEW TRIER TOWNSHIPS



RESIDENTIAL PREFERENCE ANALYSIS AREA

SB Friedman analyzed U.S. Census Public Use Microdata Areas (PUMAs), which provides detailed data on resident housing characteristics, such as housing choice and mobility rates by age, income, and employment type for defined geographies. Winnetka is within the Cook County Northeast PUMA (the “Analysis Area”), which includes Winnetka, Glenview, Kenilworth, Wilmette, Northbrook, Northfield, and Glenview.

FIGURE 20: HOUSING CHOICE



HOUSING CHOICE

Housing choice varies significantly by age cohort. Recent data for the Analysis Area¹, which includes seven area communities, indicates Young Professionals and Seniors are more likely to prefer attached single-family (e.g., townhome) and multifamily housing compared to households ages 35-74, which predominantly occupy single-family detached housing (Figure 20).

Winnetka's population is expected to see growth in the Young Professionals and Seniors cohorts over the next five years.

The projected growth in those populations indicates greater demand for townhome and multifamily housing typologies. In addition, shifting societal preferences, including increased demand for walkability, and increased interest in rental housing as a viable lifestyle choice, provide additional support for the such housing.

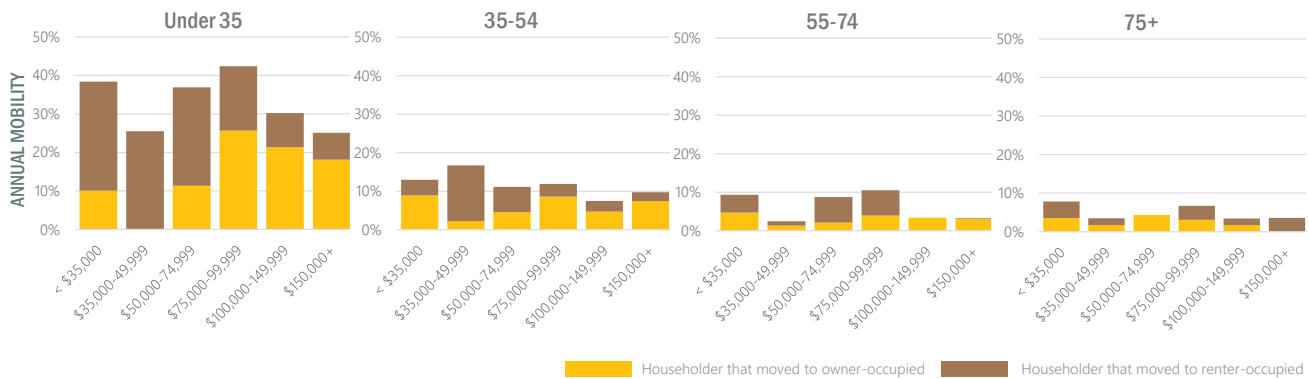


Single-family home, Winnetka

1. PUMA includes the municipalities of Winnetka, Glencoe, Kenilworth, Wilmette, Glenview, Northfield and Northbrook

Source: 2020-2025 population estimates based on Census 2020 population, ACS 2015-2019 5-Year Estimates age and sex, CMAP ON TO 2050 Projections and ESRI 2021 Age by Sex Report, housing choice data based on PUMS analysis of Census American Community Survey 2013-2017 Data, SB Friedman

FIGURE 21: ANNUAL MOBILITY – PERCENTAGE OF HOUSEHOLDS WHO MOVED BY AGE AND INCOME



HOUSING MOBILITY AND PRODUCT CHOICE

Households are more likely to move at younger ages and in lower income brackets, based upon 2017 data from the seven-community PUMA Analysis Area (Figure 21¹). Households under the age of 35 move at the highest rate, with over 40% of households under 35 with annual incomes of \$75,000-100,000 moving annually. Mobility rates decline significantly for households over the age of 35, reflecting the increased stability of owner-occupied housing. The high rate of households under 35 moving to owner-occupied housing, followed by a sharp drop in mobility, suggests most households in the PUMA purchase long-term homes in their Young Professional years. Households in the 55-74 age cohort with incomes less than \$75,000 tend to move to renter-occupied housing at a higher rate compared households in that age cohort with higher incomes. However, while a relatively low number of such households move in any given year, a significant percentage of households ages 55+ with incomes greater than \$75,000 move into rental units, especially among the 75+ age cohort.

Household mobility is constrained by availability of housing. Lower mobility rates for households ages 75+ is likely, in part, due to the unavailability of alternative housing options for seniors to consider. More aging households might choose to downsize if a greater diversity of local housing options were available.



Single-family home, Winnetka

1. Source: 2017 mobility data from PUMS analysis of Census American Community Survey 2013-2017 Data, SB Friedman

HOUSING AND DEMOLITION PERMITS

Before the 2008 recession, the Village issued an average of 42 permits for single-family home construction annually (Figure 22²). Since the recession, annual permitting activity has been about half of the pre-recession average. There have only been three multifamily permits in the Village since 2000, accounting for a combined 26 units. New development permits have been issued at nearly the same pace as demolitions within the Village, suggesting almost all new construction is replacement of existing homes. Over the 20-year period, there were 690 demolition permits but only 620 new single-family home permits and 26 multifamily units permitted. The higher number of demolition permits suggests a net loss of housing units since 2000, likely due to the consolidation of smaller homes into larger lots. Lot consolidation has occurred in a wide range of areas, ranging from smaller 50 foot-wide lots to larger lakefront parcels.

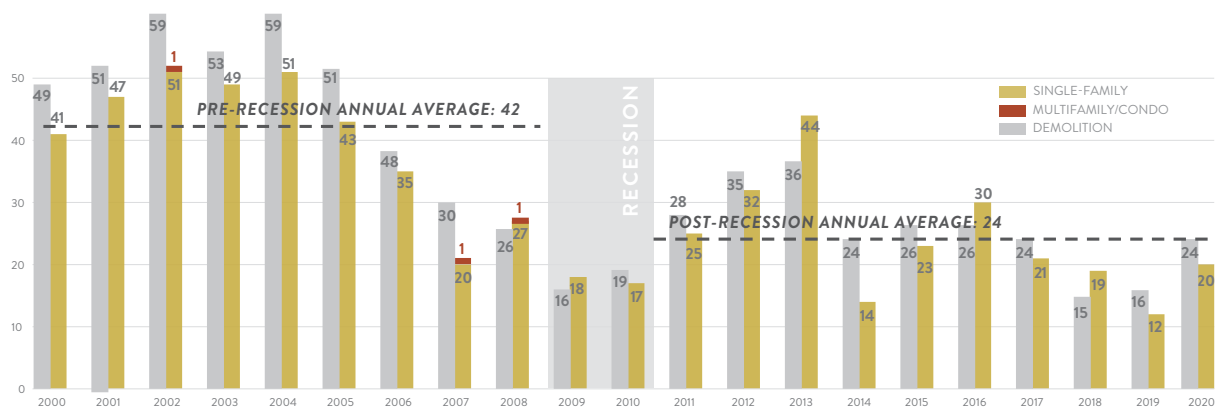


Single-family home, Winnetka



Single-family home, Winnetka

FIGURE 22: WINNETKA HOUSING PERMITS & DEMOLITIONS BY YEAR



2. Multifamily permits: 2002: 518 Winnetka Ave (10 condo units); 2007: 718 Green Bay Rd (13 condo units); 2008: 934 Westmoor Ave (3 townhomes)
Source: 2000-2020 permit data from Village of Winnetka, SB Friedman

SENIOR HOUSING

There is a substantial amount of age-restricted senior housing near the Village, but none in Winnetka. Demand for senior housing is rapidly growing as the nation's population ages. Seniors typically desire to move into a facility near their prior residence and their existing social connections, typically no more than a 15-minute drive from where they currently live. Senior housing units can be broadly classified into either Independent Living or Assisted Living units, which have a different degree of programming, care, and on-site nursing staff. Nursing and memory care units provide continuous medical care.

While there are no senior housing properties within Winnetka or the neighboring communities of Glencoe, Kenilworth, or Northfield, there are about 1,696 senior housing units within a 10-minute drive time and about 5,332 housing units within a 15-minute drive. One property, the Atria Highland Park assisted living facility, is currently under construction with 86 units geared to the luxury market.

Existing supply and demand can be evaluated by comparing a geography's senior housing participation rate, which is calculated by dividing the supply of senior housing units by the population cohort that is likely to occupy senior housing. This cohort most likely to live in age-restricted housing is typically defined as households over the age of 75 with household incomes of at least \$60,000.

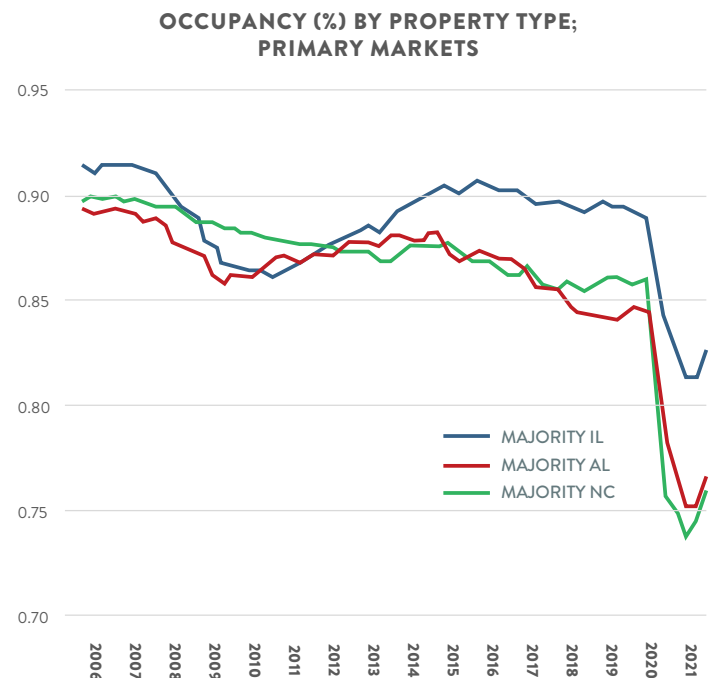
In the Village of Winnetka, there are approximately 460 households within the senior housing cohort population. Through 2025, this cohort in the Village is expected to grow by 260 households, and additional growth is expected across all local peer communities. Currently, 26% of the cohort region-wide lives in senior housing, suggesting there will be additional demand for senior housing in and near Winnetka in coming years. Participation rates are constrained by inventory, given the Village does not have any dedicated senior housing. If development of new senior housing were to occur unconstrained, the participation rate would likely stabilize near the regional average.

SENIOR HOUSING TRENDS

Prior to the pandemic, the senior housing market had been experiencing growth nationally as the population aged. Occupancy levels across all three major senior housing segments – Independent Living (IL), Assisted Living (AL) and Nursing Care (NC) – had been relatively high in the years since the 2008 recession, averaging between 85-90% (Figure 43).

The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic led to severe drops in occupancy for all three senior housing property types, with each experiencing occupancy rate decreases of near or greater than 10%. Recent data from the first three quarters of 2021 has pointed towards a rebound for the senior housing market, as occupancy rates for each sector have increased by 2-3%.

While the long-term impacts of the pandemic on the senior housing market are unclear, aging demographics in the region will lead to continued senior housing demand.



Source: NICMAP Market Fundamentals 2021

KEY DEMAND CONSIDERATIONS



POPULATION GROWTH

Winnetka's population is projected to increase in the future, with growth projected in households ages 75+ and a decline of families as the population ages.

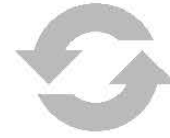
To absorb this growth, the Village would need to offer more housing. Housing should be diverse, as Seniors and Young Professionals tend to have a higher preference for attached and multi-family housing.



SALE PRICES AND RENTS

Median sale prices for owner-occupied homes have increased slowly over the past ten years. The majority of older properties require significant improvements, while renovated homes have become substantially more expensive.

Average rents for Village multi-family rental properties have increased steadily since 2010.



VACANCY RATE

Among the multi-family rental properties in the Village, the vacancy rate has risen steadily since 2014 and is approaching 10%. This may suggest either an overall decline in demand for multi-family product in Winnetka, or a Winnetka rental product which does not compare favorably to alternative communities based on other factors, such building age, tenant amenities, cost per square foot, etc. Interviews have suggested that the Village lacks other amenities in the commercial district sought by many young professionals, who typically view rental properties the most positively.



SPATIAL GROWTH TRENDS

Multi-family housing collocates with existing population, employment, and activity centers, as well as along transportation corridors.

Winnetka's three Metra stations anchor walkable, urban downtown areas that are conducive to attached or multi-family housing typologies.



DAYS ON THE MARKET

For-sale product in Winnetka is slower to transact than the regional average as a whole, suggesting lower demand compared to other areas in the region. Sales performance has steadily improved over the past 3 years.

Attached housing units have sold the fastest in the Village in recent years.

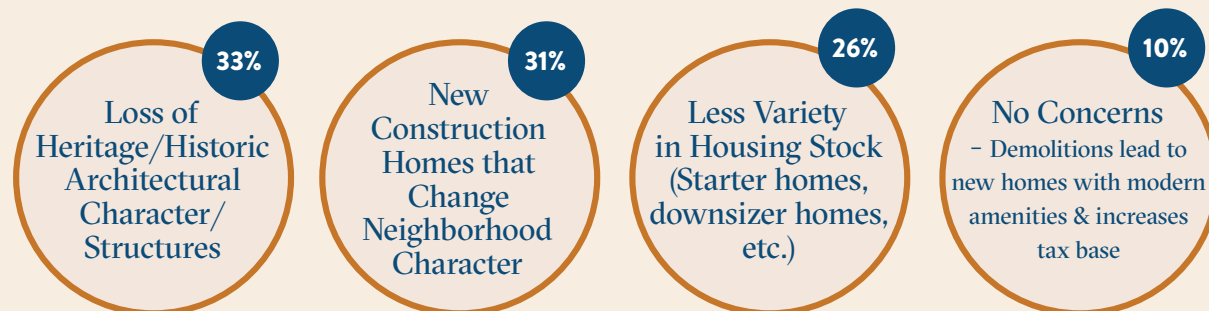
What types of housing products would you like to see more of?

Single-family attached was the most popular choice with 68% of the total responses. Multi-family/condo received 23% and single-family detached received 10% of the total responses. One of the options that was given to participants was “I like Winnetka’s current housing mix” - this option did not receive any votes. The majority of the votes were from empty nesters and young seniors (ages 55 - 74).



What issues concern you most regarding demolition?

Responses to this question indicate that the community was mainly concerned about losing Winnetka’s heritage (33%) as well as changing neighborhood character (31%). A small portion of the participants (10%) were not concerned about the effects of demolition: those participants mainly represented community members ages 35 - 54.



How important is the redevelopment of key sites to the vitality of commercial districts?

Approximately 95% of the total responses ranked the importance of redeveloping key sites as very important or important. During conversations, the community acknowledges the need to vitalize commercial areas with developments that bring life to Winnetka’s core. Community members ages 55 and above provided the most feedback for this question.

What sites are considered top priority redevelopments for you?

The majority of responses referenced the site located on the southeast corner of Elm Street and Lincoln Avenue (the parcel of land known as One Winnetka), followed by the post office site. Other responses included the redevelopment of some of the four-story mixed-use buildings in the commercial districts, including Hubbard Woods and East Elm Street, although no specific sites were called out. A few participants also mentioned the need to redevelop all publicly-owned sites. There were numerous responses to this question from all demographic groups, however, the majority of them were from empty nesters and young seniors (ages 55 to 74).

REALTORS, DEVELOPERS & DESIGNERS

A group of realtors, residential developers and architects gathered on February 12, 2020 and again on October 13, 2021 for a focus group discussion. Key themes that came out of these discussions are summarized below:

Demographic Change

Participants noted there has been a change in the demographic profile of the Village over the last two decades that has had an impact on the community. Baby boomers and empty nesters talk about moving out of the Village and fear that their friends will leave, but are often still here because they are deeply rooted in civic engagement or volunteer activities. The younger generation moving to Winnetka has a higher economic profile than was once common and is generally less involved in local government or volunteer opportunities. There is also more competition to attract millennials: surrounding communities also have great schools, thriving events, and often have more vibrant downtowns that add to a sense of belonging, and Chicago is now a more appealing option for young families than it once was. New residents that do come to Winnetka are coming for the schools and are considered to have a short-term outlook; they are “renting the school system.” New businesses, such as a brewpub, were also mentioned as a way to evolve and attract millennials.

Density & Variety

Participants indicated the Village could absorb higher levels of density than it currently does without changing the Village character. Increased density would bring in more activity and make the Village livelier. It was noted by participants that higher density infill could be viable in several locations. The Village has made progress in this regard by updating commercial district zoning standards, however additional amendments may be warranted, particularly for multiple family residential zoning standards. There is also a lack of variety in the building stock: small duplexes, bungalows, and other smaller homes are frequently torn down. Some participants noted that townhomes and apartments are in demand, as are accessory dwelling units (ADUs). Participants also noted the lack of senior housing in Winnetka. Given that walkability is a draw for seniors, a downtown location could be a good fit.

Clarity

Developers expressed a weariness to development in Winnetka—both the community members and the commissions are seen as a hurdle, and land prices in the community are a challenge. To move past these apprehensions, more clarity is desired. Developers want to understand exactly what type of building the Village will accept in order to move forward given what has been perceived as a complex approval process. There is an impression that there is no motivation to think creatively and build innovative developments in Winnetka. The recent changes to make the development process less cumbersome through the development of the Planned Development Commission are positive, but participants wanted to see more clarity throughout the Village permitting and approval process.

CONCLUSIONS

Growth of households will be determined by overall supply increases and creating diverse housing options.

- » Single-family detached homes remain the overwhelmingly prevalent housing typology within Winnetka. Recent permitting activity suggests that many single-family permits have been issued for teardowns and substantial rehabs, rather than ground-up new construction on undeveloped lots. The teardown activity is concentrated in a few of the older, more established neighborhoods that previously had more modest house sizes and values. The redevelopment of these homes into larger rehabs may be reducing the amount of relatively affordable single-family detached homes in the Village.
- » While there is a limited supply of attached townhomes in the Village compared to detached housing, attached units sold more quickly, on average, than detached single-family homes. They are also more affordable. The development community is particularly interested in townhome development opportunities.
- » There has been no multifamily development in the Village of Winnetka in the last decade. To absorb the projected CMAP household growth in Young Professionals and Empty Nesters, the Village should focus on diversifying housing options, particularly given rising demand for attached and multifamily housing. Providing a diversity of housing alternatives will be key to attracting new residents to the Village and providing alternatives for current residents to downsize and remain within the community.
- » Given the aging population of Winnetka and other North Shore communities, there may be sufficient demand for age-restricted senior housing. There is currently no senior housing in Winnetka or adjacent Glencoe, Kenilworth or Northfield, but a significant amount of housing in nearby communities, including Glenview, Northbrook, Highland Park, Wilmette, Skokie, and Evanston. Seniors who wish to downsize into an age-restricted product cannot currently remain within the Village, but must move to another community to find housing that meets their needs. A senior housing development within the Village could allow for greater opportunities for multi-generational living for Winnetka’s residents.

Comparable Communities: Housing

A look at what Winnetka’s comparable communities are doing to expand housing options in their community.

WELLESLEY, MA

BIG IDEA:
Alternative Housing

Wellesley promotes alternative housing such as “**mansion-style condos,**” **small-lot cottage communities, multi-family units, and community land trusts** to hold land for more affordable housing. Implementation actions include up-zoning office parks to allow for mixed-use, and allowing higher density multi-family housing.



FIGURE 23: PEER COMMUNITY RESIDENTIAL MIX COMPARISON¹

	Single Family Detached	Townhomes, Multifamily, and Other
WINNETKA	96%	4%
WELLESLEY	80%	20%
GREENWICH	70%	30%
SCARSDALE	90%	10%
PIEDMONT	98%	2%

1. Winnetka data from Figure 23, peer community

COMMUNITY OPEN HOUSE RESULTS

What big ideas are suitable for Winnetka to expand housing options?

The most common responses included senior housing, empty-nester housing, as well as finding ways to close the housing gaps. Other responses included Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs), mixed-use housing, and smaller single-family homes, that are more suitable for first-time home buyers. While community members ages 55 and above provided the most feedback for this question, young professionals and young families (ages 20 to 35) focused their thoughts on smaller homes.

GREENWICH, CT

BIG IDEA:

Workforce Housing

Greenwich incentivizes moderate income or workforce housing for town employees and other middle income residents by reducing parking requirements and increasing the floor area ratio to allow for higher-density housing. They recognize that “infill development” of new housing on vacant or underutilized land is the most common means to satisfy demand.



PIEDMONT, CA

BIG IDEA:

Inclusivity

Although Piedmont is largely built out, they encourage additional housing options in their commercial districts as second or third floor units above commercial uses (**Mixed-Use**), permitting **accessory dwelling units (ADUs)**, and emphasizing the need for **city and school district employee housing**. They also promote inclusivity for their special needs population and seniors through universal design.

Quality Livable Neighborhoods

***Vision Statement:** A community of connected neighborhoods with safe, pedestrian-oriented streets, tree-lined parkways, and a variety of well-maintained housing offerings to meet the needs of all of its residents and create a unique and powerful sense of place*

GOAL 1.1

The Village will encourage renovation of existing homes and construction of new homes to be contextually consistent with existing single-family housing in its neighborhood.

The built form is a language of its own and tells a neighborhood's story in a way nothing else can. By encouraging homeowners to restore existing homes and guiding new construction to reflect existing forms in the area, neighborhoods can maintain a shared language and communicate a unified feel and personality.

Initiative 1.1.1

Review Village building codes, zoning regulations, permitting processes, Village utility requirements, and other policies to ensure they do not present obstacles for residents wishing to renovate their existing homes, or encourage demolition of existing homes leading to new construction.

The Village is in the best position to review the body of regulations impacting homeowners as they explore opportunities to improve their houses. Permitting processes should be clear, transparent, and easy to navigate, making necessary permitting and reviews for renovation projects as straightforward as possible.

Initiative 1.1.2

Encourage renovation of existing homes to reduce environmental impacts of new construction and to maintain housing diversity for such segments of the community as young families and empty nesters.

The greenest building is the one already built. Construction and demolition debris is a significant contributor to landfills, and any effort to avoid demolition of existing houses is a meaningful step toward a more sustainable community. Further, older homes that become candidates for demolition are often of a size and value that may serve different segments of the population very well. Removing houses by demolition means entry-level home buyers, or those aging into a different housing product, have fewer options to choose from in the community.



Lloyd House, "Wayside" © Winnetka Historical Society



Max Epstein House, "Edgecliffe" © Winnetka Historical Society

Initiative 1.1.3

Consider conducting an architectural survey to identify important Winnetka architectural and historic resources and other contributing elements to its heritage and character.

An architectural resource survey distills historic and architectural information into a single document, allowing residents, staff, and Village leaders to learn about and appreciate the historic assets in the Village. Identifying these resources and learning about them is the first step towards encouraging preservation and helping Winnetka maintain its local heritage.

Initiative 1.1.4

Evaluate and provide information on traditional tools and programs that support the preservation of historic and architecturally significant homes. This may include providing web-based information on local landmarks (maps and photographs), the Illinois Historic Residence Assessment Freeze program, and general educational material on historic preservation and building renovations.

Initiative 1.1.5

Consider creating a document that provides guidance for the scale and form of new single-family residential construction envisioned in Winnetka's various neighborhoods to encourage development that is complementary to and compatible with existing homes. Guidance may include window forms, building setbacks and height, architectural styling, and building materials.

The Village of Winnetka is a special place in a beautiful setting with high-quality architecture and strong community identity. Residents value its physical character, small-town charm, and tree-lined streets. Design guidelines for residential construction could provide a tool to encourage achieving compatible development within the Village's neighborhoods while accommodating high-quality, innovative design.



Winnetka Single-family Home

Initiative 1.1.6

Strengthen and maintain the rich and diverse character of the Village's neighborhoods and sense of identity by highlighting each neighborhood's unique elements that contribute positively to the Village.

Initiative 1.1.7

Consider updating the Village's subdivision regulations to make the process clearer and to simplify the process for minor subdivisions, such as simple lot line adjustments or plats of consolidation.

Under the Village's existing subdivision regulations, the creation of any new lot or any change or rearrangement in the boundaries of an existing lot requires approval as a "land subdivision." This requires review and approval by the Village's Plan Commission and/or the Village Board. A best practice adopted by many local governments allows Village Council to directly approve certain small subdivisions and plats of consolidations and a staff-level administrative approval for lot line adjustments.

Initiative 1.1.8

For those R-5 District zoning areas of the community that have lots that are predominately 50 feet wide, consider revising the R-5 zoning standards to reduce the minimum lot width from 60 feet back to 50 feet.

This would allow many smaller lots, especially in the tree-street neighborhoods, to be once again conforming in terms of lot size.

GOAL 1.2

*The Village will continue to **explore housing diversity and address the housing gap** to provide a supply that supports changing demographic needs and ensures a variety of product types, options, and costs available to seniors, empty nesters, families, and young residents.*

Winnetka residents have different housing needs at different stages of life. Young professionals need an apartment or starter home within their price range, families need room to grow, and aging residents need opportunities to downsize and remain in the community. If housing options are not available for these cohorts, the Village risks losing them and the energy, experience, and resources they offer to wherever they call home.

Initiative 1.2.1

Evaluate existing single-family zoning districts to identify areas where additional housing units may be appropriate. This may be accomplished through rezoning along arterial streets, at major intersections, or near institutional uses. Low-density, multi-family residential districts would allow land uses including townhomes, apartments, and condominiums.

Winnetka is well-known for beautiful single-family neighborhoods. However, as existing residents grow older and the Village seeks to attract new residents, it is essential to have a diverse housing stock available to provide alternatives to single family homes. Townhomes, apartments, and condominiums provide a range of housing opportunities for residents seeking to downsize or meet other housing needs. If current zoning districts do not allow for this diversity in housing, then amending the zoning map in key locations may be a consideration.



Townhome character images

Initiative 1.2.2

Explore a multi-year pilot Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) program to encourage infill housing options, such as in-law apartments, carriage houses, etc.

The Village's current zoning ordinance allows Accessory Dwelling Units in residential zoning districts, but only in accessory buildings constructed before March 2012 and only if the building was designed as a dwelling unit or occupied as a dwelling unit before March 2012. A more expansive and accommodating ADU program could provide additional housing opportunities for residents of various income levels, ages and lifestyles; and help ensure that aging residents can remain in their homes and neighborhoods while obtaining extra income, security, companionship, and assistance. ADUs take a variety of different forms in communities. These include coach houses, backyard houses, apartments above garages, and basement units.



Accessory Dwelling Unit © LAHD Pilot Program

Initiative 1.2.3

Continue to update the Village's affordable housing plan and strategies when required by Illinois State Law.

As needed, the Village will prepare affordable plan updates and reports required by Illinois State Law. These updates and reports serve as an opportunity to identify and address pressing housing needs, such as the deconversion of multifamily homes into larger single-family detached homes and increasing demand for senior housing.

Initiative 1.2.4

Consider amending the Village's subdivision and zoning regulations to allow alternative site designs or alternative forms of housing, such as "cluster single-family cottage housing."

Cluster cottage housing (AKA "cottage courts" or "bungalow courts") refers to a group of 4 to 8 small, detached houses arranged around a shared courtyard or open space visible from the street.



Cluster housing © Opticos Design

Initiative 1.2.5

Evaluate areas of the community that may be appropriate for independent senior housing and/or assisted living facilities, and ensure zoning regulations allow for effective development.

Senior housing is often best located in walkable, mixed-use locations that provide residents easy access to community amenities. Given the limited availability of land in the Village, it will be important to identify which sites, ideally near transit stations, are best suited for senior housing. Characteristics of target sites include those which are publicly owned, currently vacant, and/or presently low-density commercial.



Artis Senior Living, Wilmette

GOAL 1.3

*The Village will maintain and **enhance the walkable and bicycle-friendly nature of the community's neighborhoods.***

Parked cars and closed garage doors do not bring energy and vitality to neighborhoods. It's the residents outside walking and talking, the pets tugging on leashes, and kids on bicycles that add life to a residential neighborhood. The Village must remain committed to maintaining the public infrastructure that allows this interaction of residents in their neighborhoods.

Initiative 1.3.1

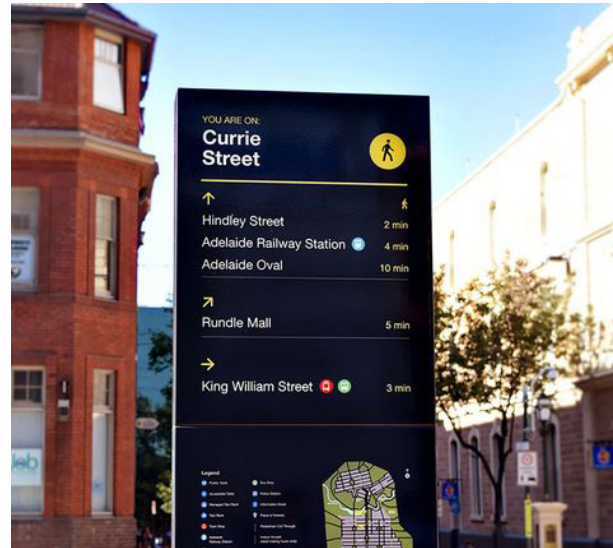
Establish a sidewalk infill program that identifies public and private streets where sidewalks are missing or incomplete, and survey residents to evaluate levels of interest in completing sidewalk connections. Prioritize sidewalk installation based on survey results and proximity to parks, schools, and transit nodes.

Completing gaps in sidewalk networks can lead to easier ways to travel around the community by foot; however, filling in such gaps must take into consideration the desire of those residents who live within that particular neighborhood. Any infill program should take that into consideration.

Initiative 1.3.2

Identify dedicated walking routes through wayfinding signage, using the community's sidewalk and pathway network to facilitate increased pedestrian mobility throughout the Village.

A lack of familiarity and wayfinding signage are key barriers to using non-motorized transportation routes, whether they are sidewalks, trails, or bike paths. Residents are more likely to use the Village's pedestrian and bicycle pathways if they are easy to identify, with clear routes and destinations. Wayfinding signs can identify loop routes for exercise or walking paths to downtown shopping destinations.



Directional Signage

Initiative 1.3.3

To ensure that Village streets remain safe for pedestrians and bicyclists, consider expanding the Village's existing stop-sign request process to include neighborhood requests for other types of traffic-calming techniques on public streets.

A process is in place allowing residents to request stop signs at specific intersections in Winnetka. Expanding this program to allow residents to request other types of traffic calming strategies, like speed bumps or additional warning signs, has the opportunity to increase safety for non-motorized traffic on Village streets and in residential neighborhoods.

GOAL 1.4

The Village will **continue to ensure that institutional uses** such as schools, churches, the Public Library, and Park District parks and facilities **are compatible with the residential neighborhoods** in which they are located.

Diverse land uses within residential neighborhoods add vitality, interest, and variety to the local fabric. Consideration must be given to compatibility to ensure non-residential uses do not conflict with the residential nature of the surrounding area. This can be as simple as acknowledging an adjacent land use that is not residential in character will likely remain so for many years, or revisiting a property’s zoning designation, or simply maintaining open lines of communication with neighboring property owners.

Initiative 1.4.1

Consider establishing a specific zoning district for institutional uses or specific zoning standards for such uses within existing residential districts. This would allow more appropriate zoning standards for these uses.

Under the Village’s existing zoning ordinance, uses such as schools, places of worship, and parks are listed as allowed uses in residential and business zoning districts. Establishing one or more civic/institutional districts would result in

a more transparent zoning map and allow for greater customization of zoning standards to address the different building and siting requirements of these types of uses.

Initiative 1.4.2

Continue regular conversations with local institutions to understand their future needs and how to address those needs in a particular neighborhood.



The Skokie School

GOAL 1.5

The Village will continue to support its policies and residents' efforts that maintain and enhance inviting, neighborly, and sustainable outdoor spaces in our residential neighborhoods and the public parkway.

The outdoor aspects of a residential lot are what gives a neighborhood its character, whether it is the tree canopy overhead, the type of plant materials that fill a yard, the accessory structures and activities that occupy the outdoor spaces, or how the structures and yard are maintained. Given changing approaches to landscaping yards and outdoor activity areas, such as outdoor kitchens, the Village needs to pursue a holistic approach to how private outdoor spaces may be used and be maintained. This in turn helps entire neighborhoods remain attractive and inviting.

Initiative 1.5.1

Continue to enhance Village policies and requirements that support the protection, maintenance, and enhancement of the community's tree canopy on private property and the public parkway, which is one of the main features that gives Winnetka its unique sense of place.

Winnetka has been designated a Tree City USA since 1991 and recognizes the beauty of trees and how they contribute to making the Village a special place. Many trees are on private property and their care and maintenance outside the Village's direct control. It will be important to continue providing resources for residents to learn about tree care and foster their appreciation and commitment to maintaining healthy trees.



Tree Canopy East Winnetka

Initiative 1.5.2

Consider establishing landscape design guidelines that allow residents to establish native or ecologically-beneficial plantings in addition to lawns on private property and within the public parkway.



Home Habitat Native Planting

Initiative 1.5.3

Continue to encourage the removal of invasive plant species, such as buckthorn, throughout the community. Information on identifying invasive species and best practices for their removal should be made available through a variety of channels.

Initiative 1.5.4

Given changing technology and changing use of residential yard space, consider establishing performance standards to address increasing complaints regarding outdoor lighting and equipment noise, such as generators, air conditioning condensers, pool equipment, and wall and landscape lighting.

Enjoyment of the outdoors can be fragile and easily interrupted by bright lights or excessive noise. Performance standards in a municipal code can help address local concerns by establishing guidelines residents need to follow. Lighting standards regulate exposed luminaires, glare, and light spillage. Noise standards regulate volume, hours for outdoor activities, and generator noise. Land use regulations can limit the location and scale of accessory uses like hockey rinks, sport courts, and swimming pools.



Soft Outdoor Lighting

Initiative 1.5.5

Review the Village's regulations regarding the design and placement of permanent accessory structures (e.g., sheds, play equipment, treehouses, outdoor kitchens, etc.) as well as temporary accessory structures (e.g., storage pods, boats, RVs, ice rinks, etc.) to determine if the regulations continue to meet the needs of homeowners while maintaining the character of the neighborhood and minimizing the impact on adjacent properties.

Homeowners deserve to enjoy their property, but consideration must be given to reduce negative impacts on surrounding properties. A reliable set of regulations can protect residents from worst-case scenarios and establish a baseline of expectations about what can and cannot be done in residential neighborhoods.



Outdoor kitchen



Outdoor play equipment

Initiative 1.5.6

Review the Village's fence regulations, such as the ability to construct a 6.5-foot tall fence, or a chain-link fence, in a required front yard setback anywhere throughout the Village, to determine if the regulations are still appropriate.

Initiative 1.5.7

Continue to consider Dark Sky options that reduce light pollution when replacing or upgrading existing streetlights.

GOAL 1.6

The Village will encourage multi-family unit development near and in the downtown commercial districts.

Residential density is a key driver of vibrancy, economic development, and activity in a downtown commercial environment. When residents are out after work to eat, shop, and walk around, it gives businesses a reason to locate downtown and cater to them. When there is activity and energy, momentum grows and fosters an emotional investment on the part of property owners, residents, and businesses. Good things happen, and it starts with housing opportunities in and around the downtown commercial districts.

Initiative 1.6.1

Consider major revisions to both multi-family zoning districts that will lead to the development of townhomes and other multi-family building products with massing, scale, roof form, and vertical rhythm consistent with the predominant single-family nature of the community.

The Village should clearly articulate design guidelines for multi-family development that align with existing community character. Winnetka has a unique identity that should be maintained, particularly in the downtown nodes. However, multi-family development concepts can and should receive entitlements if consistent with the community character. Many communities have discovered that townhouses, “house-scale” multi-unit buildings, and other forms of so-called “missing middle” housing can be seamlessly integrated near single-family neighborhoods. Providing the development community with additional clarity on the preferred building design will attract investment and align with community objectives to diversify the housing stock.



Multi-family Character Image

Initiative 1.6.2

Encourage the retention and rehabilitation of rental apartments above commercial storefronts rather than conversion to offices space or other non-residential use.

Retention of second-floor residential spaces has been a challenge within Winnetka for the past decade. Due to the vibrancy of ground floor commercial, many property owners find the revenue associated with the ground floor storefronts to be sufficient. However, encouraging second-story rental apartments in highly-walkable nodes in the downtowns will provide additional housing for young professionals, seniors and others who seek to live in the Village but cannot attain detached housing.



538 Chestnut St.

Initiative 1.6.3

Incentivize the conversion of upper-story office space and non-residential space to residential use. Examples of incentives might include reduced or waived building permit fees for conversions, and administrative design review for exterior modifications.

Initiative 1.6.4

Discourage other alterations of mixed-use buildings that compromise residential occupancy. This includes eliminating required building components or systems, such as means of access, mechanical systems, etc.

Initiative 1.6.5

Allow the creation of live/work uses in the downtown commercial districts.

As of November 2022, the Chicago metro area continued to report peak office weekday occupancy of only 56%. In the post-pandemic era, where people are working from home more than ever before, it is increasingly important to provide live/work spaces close to where the workforce lives. Winnetka has historically been a bedroom community. Since many residents no longer commute to job centers daily, the Village has the opportunity to provide creative working spaces closer to home.



Live Work Space © David Delgado/Bloomberg/Getty Images



Single-family Home, Winnetka

PILLAR 2

Vibrant Business Districts

VISION STATEMENT

“A community with a strong commitment to supporting and enhancing its unique, walkable, mixed-use business districts, which serve both as the community’s commercial cores and its social centers.”



PILLAR 2:

Vibrant Business Districts

Vision Statement: A community with a strong commitment to supporting and enhancing its unique, walkable, mixed-use business districts, which serve both as the community’s commercial and social centers.

Goal 2.1: The Village will continue to provide a future vision for its commercial districts.
Goal 2.2: The Village will provide zoning and development regulations and processes that allow land uses offering the products, services, and housing opportunities that residents desire. Such uses should be permitted in the most timely manner, while also ensuring compatibility with goals of the district in which they would locate.
Goal 2.3: The Village will encourage the highest-quality design, materials, and maintenance for building exteriors, landscaping, and signage in the commercial districts and along the Green Bay Road corridor.
Goal 2.4: The Village will provide a business environment focused on retaining successful existing businesses, attracting businesses to the community that meet a market need, and assisting start-up business through local permitting and licensing processes.
Goal 2.5: The Village will partner with others to provide public infrastructure to support vibrant business districts.
Goal 2.6: The Village will partner with the Chamber of Commerce, Winnetka merchant groups, and other community organizations to promote and market Winnetka businesses and community events, and to let the region know of the community as a niche retail, dining, and event destination.

Winnetka Futures 2040 Plan includes ten Community Pillars. The following section describes Winnetka’s vision for *Pillar 2: Vibrant Business Districts*. A summary of the existing conditions analysis, along with community input received over the course of the process are shared in the next few pages. Following that is a list of actionable initiatives for each of the goals listed above.

Retail Assessment



“ You’re either growing your business, or going out of business.

- COMMENT FROM COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

NATIONAL TRENDS

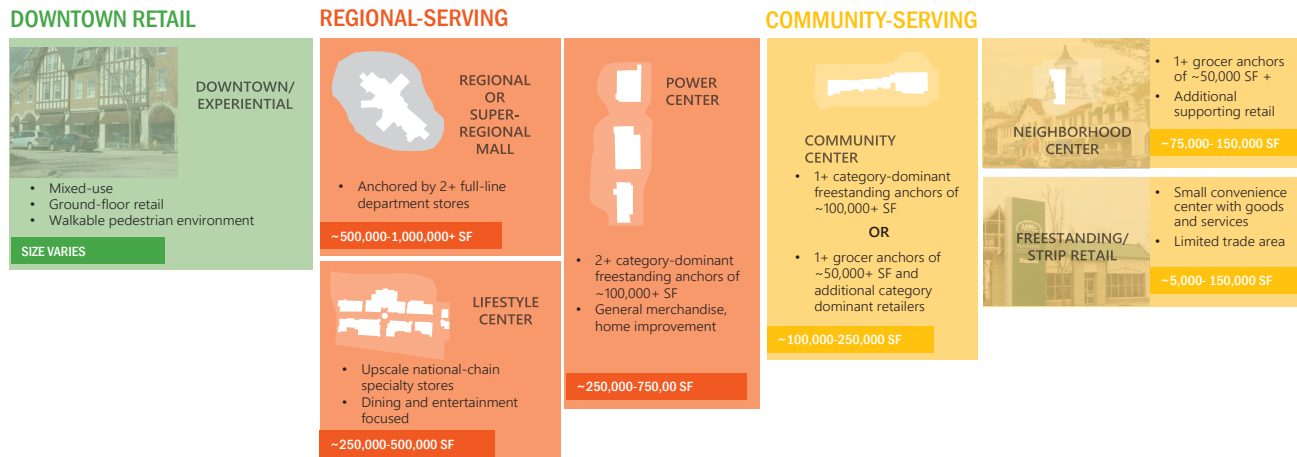
Winnetka’s retail clusters compete with nearby downtowns and auto-oriented retail clusters.

Retail clusters can be categorized into three major typologies: Downtown Retail, Regional-Serving, and Community-Serving (Figure 24). Typologies differ based on scale, number and type of anchors, and size of trade area. Hubbard Woods and Elm Street can be categorized as Downtown Retail, while the Indian Hill retail cluster more closely aligns with Freestanding/Strip Retail. Retail in the Village competes with other nearby downtowns, such as Wilmette, and nearby auto-oriented retail clusters including Plaza del Lago, Edens Plaza, Northfield, and the Old Orchard Mall.

Village retail is well-positioned to accommodate the rise of experiential retail.

A rapidly-shifting retail landscape is altering traditional drivers-of-retail demand. As e-commerce continues to grow, many traditional and big box retailers are downsizing their store footprints. Concurrently, there has been significant new demand for value- and convenience-oriented retailers, which have continued to expand throughout the country. A “clicks-to-bricks” trend among some retailers that were formerly online-only has seen the establishment of a brick-and-mortar presence. Furthermore, the growth of experiential and food-and-beverage destination retail is driving demand. Value and convenience-oriented retailers are not well-suited for Winnetka. However, the shift toward experiential retail, and food and beverage, provides an opportunity for Winnetka’s retail nodes to expand current offerings.

FIGURE 24: RETAIL TYPOLOGIES



The pandemic accelerated trends already underway in the retail landscape, most prominently fast-tracking the shift towards e-commerce nationally. However, Winnetka retailers have been resilient. Experiential retail and food and beverage operators developed creative service-delivery models to continue operations.

Many Winnetka retailers also offer unique experiences that can't be replicated through e-commerce. Despite a challenging retail environment nationally, the Village reported a net increase of 21 new or expanded storefronts from March 2020 to November 2021. Many new retailers can be characterized as local, non-chain retailers unique to Winnetka. The largest share of opening retailers were restaurants, some of which attract both local and regional patrons.

IMPACT OF E-COMMERCE AND OMNI-CHANNEL

A shift toward online shopping is slowing brick-and-mortar retail development.

While the rise of e-commerce (Figure 25 and Figure 26¹) has reduced overall demand for retail square footage over time, it is also changing the way retailers use brick-and-mortar space. E-commerce has given rise to the growth of omni-channel retail, where retailers rent space as a showroom or as a fulfillment center to complete in-store pickups and returns.

The rise of e-commerce and omni-channel retail may threaten some of Winnetka's retail establishments.

Winnetka currently has a significant number of clothing and miscellaneous retail stores, categories which have among the highest annual rates of e-commerce growth.

FIGURE 25: E-COMMERCE AS A PERCENT OF TOTAL SALES NATIONALLY

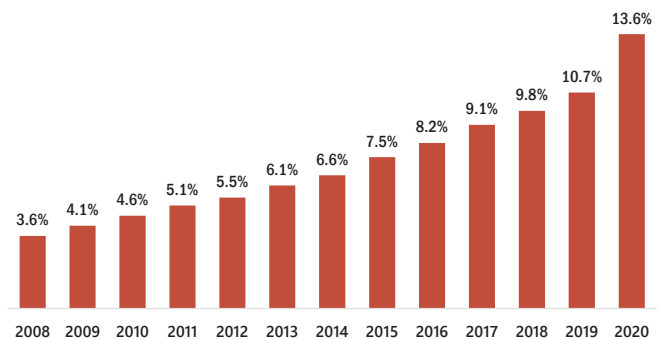


FIGURE 26: E-COMMERCE AVERAGE ANNUAL GROWTH RATE: TOP RETAIL CATEGORIES (NATIONAL)



1. Source: CNBC; US BLS; Estimated Quarterly U.S. Retail Sales (Not Adjusted): Total and E-commerce. Estimates are based on data from the Monthly Retail Trade Survey and administrative records for fourth quarter of each year.

FIGURE 27: RETAIL SUPPLY



VILLAGE RETAIL TRENDS

Since 2009, retail rents in the Village have ranged from \$25-40 per square foot on average (triple net) (Figure 28¹). Historically, Hubbard Woods commanded the highest rents in the Village; however **Elm Street retail rents have surpassed Hubbard Woods since 2017**. Elm Street has also consistently had the lowest vacancy rate (Figure 29²).

Indian Hill has the smallest inventory, significantly higher vacancy, and lower rents than the other two clusters.

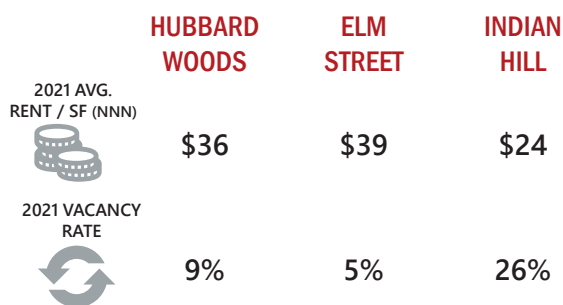


FIGURE 28: AVERAGE ANNUAL RENT

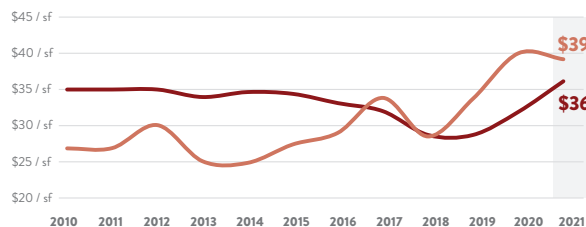
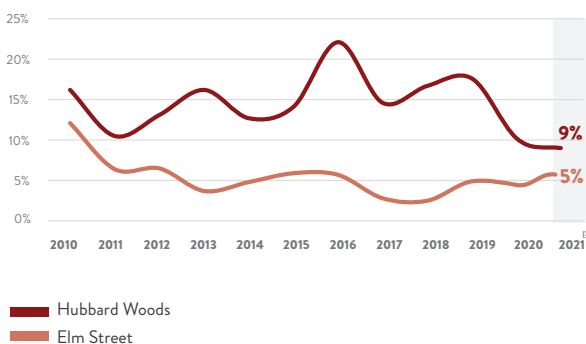


FIGURE 29: AVERAGE VACANCY RATE



1. Indian Hill historic data not available. Source: CoStar (data downloaded on 1/29/2020), SB Friedman, Winnetka Q4 2019 Retail Report.

2. Current vacancy rates as indicated in Winnetka Q3 2021 Retail Report. Historic data is reported by CoStar and Winnetka Retail Reports Q2 2020 – Q3 2021

COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

BUSINESS OWNERS

A small group of Winnetka business owners gathered on February 12, 2020 and again on October 14, 2021 for a focus group discussion. Key themes that came out of those discussions are summarized below:

Vibrancy

Business owners feel that surrounding community business districts are more vibrant than Winnetka. New businesses are choosing Wilmette, as it feels more urban. Participants felt Wilmette, Glencoe and Highland Park all have a 'vibe' that Winnetka is missing. Winnetka needs to find its niche and become a destination. Current businesses with niche markets in Winnetka are expanding, while some of the older businesses are struggling to compete with online shopping. Local businesses have found they cannot survive on Winnetka residents alone: they require shoppers from outside of the Village to be sustainable. Mino's and Spirit Elephant are examples of restaurants in Winnetka that serve as regional destinations, attracting customers from a broader area. Business owners also felt supporting more pop-up shops in vacant storefronts could help add to that vibrancy, as would encouraging more nightlife.

Development

New development in the business districts could bring much needed vibrancy to the area and bring more people into the downtown. The success of One Winnetka or development of the post office site would have benefited local businesses, bringing more foot traffic to the area and indicating that the Village is able to attract substantial new investment. Additional residential development in the downtown would help support the business districts: new units and greater diversity of housing stock will allow for a broader range of residents and shoppers to add vibrancy to the business districts.

Connectivity

Participants recognized the three separate business districts in the Village have their own issues, but suggested that making them feel more cohesive would be beneficial. Green Bay Road is the spine that connects these districts: business owners felt more could be done to seamlessly connect these districts and make it more walkable and inviting. Neighboring communities have accomplished this through a transfer of ownership from IDOT (Illinois Department of Transportation), a tactic the Village has considered.

Policy

Business owners have the perception that the Village does not make it easy for businesses to thrive, particularly given the changing retail environment. There is also concern over lack of business representation related to improvements in the business districts. Multiple participants mentioned special use permit fees as inhibitive to attracting new businesses, particularly those without existing connections to the Village. There is a need for more flexibility in the zoning code, allowing more flexibility in storefront designs and parking standards. Policy tools that could combat rising rent levels for businesses are also of interest. One suggestion was to fine landlords for properties kept vacant for an extended period of time, thereby encouraging owners to rent the spaces. There was a consensus that perception and development regulations need to change.

RETAIL ENVIRONMENT

The questions below were asked at the October 20, 2021 Community Open House.

How often do you visit the Village's three commercial districts?

- » **Elm Street / Downtown** - The majority of participants indicated that they visit downtown Winnetka weekly. Some indicated that they visit daily and others, monthly. The feedback was mainly provided by empty nesters and young seniors (ages 55 - 74).
- » **Hubbard Woods** - Similarly, the majority of participants indicated that they visit Hubbard Woods weekly. Some indicated that they visit daily. The feedback was mainly provided by empty nesters and young seniors (ages 55 - 74).
- » **Indian Hill** - Participants representing empty nesters and young seniors (ages 55 - 74) indicated that they almost never visit Indian Hill. A few young families (ages 20 - 35) indicated that they visit Indian Hill weekly.

What brings you to Winnetka's commercial districts?

While responses varied, the main reason that participants visit the commercial districts was the local businesses. Restaurants, coffee shops, grocery stores, banks, post office visits, book stores, and doctor office visits were all popular responses. Participants ages 35 to 75 provided the most feedback.

What types of stores, restaurants, or services would bring you to Winnetka's commercial district more often?

A wide range of options were provided by participants, with a hardware store being the most popular vote. Other options included a deli, entertainment, local bar/pub, food court, drug store, and bakery. The largest demographic group that provided feedback was empty nesters and young seniors (ages 55 - 74), followed by family years (ages 35 - 54). A large chain supermarket was mentioned by young professionals and young families (ages 20 - 34).

What discourages you from visiting Winnetka's commercial district more often?

There were limited responses to this question, but parking and parking time limits were mentioned in four of the six responses. A lack of variety and limited options were also mentioned. Empty nesters and young seniors (ages 55 - 74) provided the most feedback.



Spirit Elephant, Winnetka



Pomeroy, Winnetka

RECENT IMPROVEMENTS

The aging retail inventory in the Village requires varying levels of improvement to remain viable as tenants turn over. Recent retail improvements¹ in Winnetka include the 2009 development of 910 Green Bay Road, a retail/office building in the Hubbard Woods cluster, which is currently occupied by several retailers. In 2017, a former gas station within the Elm Street cluster was rehabbed into Fred's Garage restaurant.

Over the past two years, multiple storefronts have changed over to new concepts or ownership. While most retail turnover in the Village has seen similar retail typologies opening in the closed storefronts, there have been several cases of storefronts transforming to other typologies. 921 Green Bay Road, for example, transformed from an antique mall to a popular cafe/event space.

The Village has seen a number of new restaurants open in recent years. In addition to Fred's Garage, other new restaurants include Mino's, 501 Local, Jimoto, Towne & Oak, Tocco, Pomeroy, Soupicurean, Hometown Coffee & Juice, La Taquiza, Spirit Elephant, and Guanajuato Mexican Restaurant.

The Village has seen the expansion of a number of high-end women's clothing stores, including neapolitan, Valentina, and Bunny & Babe, to name a few.

The limited availability of privately-owned vacant land limits the overall development opportunities in the Village. Recent changes to the retail landscape demonstrate how creative solutions are often necessary to repurpose existing space, attract new users, or develop new retail space.

50+

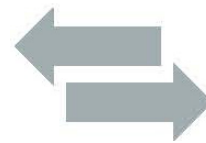
**Businesses opened since January of 2020.
Additional businesses have relocated or
expanded as well.**

KEY DEMAND CONSIDERATIONS



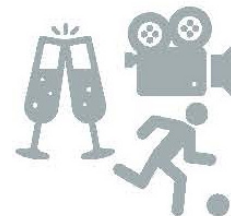
POPULATION AND EMPLOYMENT INCREASE

Local population and employment growth drive baseline demand for additional retail square footage. Increases in Village employees and population (per CMAP projections), and in residents using Metra to commute to downtown Chicago, could drive additional demand for downtown retail centers.



SALES LEAKAGES

Retail tenants in Winnetka compete with other retail supply in nearby peer communities. Winnetka has an opportunity to capture dollars currently being spent in other Village downtowns and nearby shopping centers which may have a more diverse retail mix.



EXPERIENCE-ORIENTED RETAIL GROWTH

The growth in experience-oriented retail, such as entertainment and food and beverage retailers, drive growth for new retail space. These experience-oriented retail tenants often have different space needs compared to traditional retailers (e.g. a walkable, urban setting).

1. Chicago Tribune, CoStar (downloaded 9/29/2021), SB Friedman, Winnetka



Good Grapes, Winnetka



La Taquiza, Winnetka



Bratschi, Winnetka



Bunny & Babe, Winnetka



North Shore Fine Gardening and Plant Perfect Design, Winnetka

Comparable Communities: Downtowns

A look at what Winnetka's comparable communities are doing to activate their downtown districts.

SCARSDALE, NY

BIG IDEA: Pedestrian Focus

To activate street life, Scarsdale requires pedestrian arcades to be included in new developments. They also permit and promote sidewalk cafes/outdoor dining for all restaurants.

Their Village Center has a core retail zone, similar to Winnetka's Overlay District, which allows retail, cultural uses, and restaurants by right.



COMMUNITY OPEN HOUSE RESULTS

What big ideas are suitable for Winnetka to activate its commercial districts?

While responses varied to this question, there was an overwhelming focus on activating the streetscape and providing more gathering spaces, such as plazas, sidewalk cafes, public spaces, music or entertainment venues, and movie theaters. Other responses included downtown mixed-use developments that would provide a hybrid of housing, retail, experiences, and public spaces, among other active uses. All persona groups engaged with this topic, yet empty nester and young seniors (ages 55 - 74) provided the most feedback, followed by family years (ages 35 - 55) and young families (ages 20 - 34).

BETHESDA, MD

BIG IDEA:

Housing + Public Spaces

Bethesda's strategy to activate its downtown focuses on **bringing density and public life to the district**. They promote a diversified mix of housing options in their downtown through mixed-use and multi-unit residential development, and encourage streets to be designed as social spaces for gatherings, events, and recreation.



RADNOR, PA

BIG IDEA:

Town Commons

Radnor's strategy focuses on **creating a town commons** and promenade on specific underutilized, township-controlled downtown parcels. They also promote **second and third floor units** for residential uses, and have eliminated parking requirements for downtown residential uses.



Vibrant Business Districts

***Vision Statement:** A community with a strong commitment to supporting and enhancing its unique, walkable, mixed-use business districts, which serve both as the community’s commercial and social centers.*

GOAL 2.1

The Village will continue to provide a future vision for the Village’s commercial districts.

Long-term success for Winnetka’s commercial districts requires strong leadership: a clear vision of progress and the steps needed to get there. The Village has shown leadership over the years by establishing a vision in the 2016 Downtown Master Plan and dedicating resources to help achieve it. It can continue to do so with the initiatives below that provide a path toward vibrant, resilient, and sustainable commercial districts.

Initiative 2.1.1

Continue to implement the action plan outlined in the 2016 Downtown Master Plan.

The 2016 Downtown Master Plan included a prioritized list of recommendations specific to economic development, transportation and infrastructure, urban design, and land use and zoning. The Village has already begun advancing several of the strategies (e.g., streetscape improvements, expanded outdoor dining) and should continue implementing additional strategies (e.g., targeted business attraction efforts).

Initiative 2.1.2

Regularly review and update the Downtown Master Plan to adjust to changing market conditions and community needs.

While many of the goals in Downtown Master Plan are relevant today, the market has substantially changed within the Village since its approval. In particular, commercial zones and public places are far more vibrant, a result of significant investments in the public realm in 2020. The Plan should be regularly revisited to ensure Village actions continue to align with market conditions and community objectives.

Initiative 2.1.3

Given the train stations serving the Indian Hill, Elm Street, and Hubbard Woods business districts and the PACE bus line that runs along the Green Bay Road corridor, consider Transit Oriented Development (TOD) principles when planning, developing regulations, and making infrastructure improvements in the business districts.

This may include additional bicycle parking, reduced vehicle parking requirements, pedestrian and walkability improvements, and appropriate multifamily residential density.



Multi-family Development Character

GOAL 2.2

*The Village will **provide zoning and development regulations** and processes that allow land uses offering the products, services, and housing opportunities that residents desire. Such uses should be permitted in the most timely manner, while also ensuring compatibility with goals of the district in which they would locate.*

Zoning regulations can guide and shape the character of a commercial district, but they must acknowledge economic realities, evolving consumer needs, and the ongoing need for investment and improvement. The initiatives below can help the Village craft regulations that will maintain the distinct character of commercial districts while allowing flexibility and resiliency in responding to changes.

Initiative 2.2.1

*Given that each of Winnetka's three business districts may have its own market niche, **consider establishing unique zoning regulations and, in particular, allowed land uses for the Hubbard Woods and Elm Street business districts, as was done with the C-1 Neighborhood Commercial District in the Indian Hill Business District.** This may occur through the creation of new zoning districts or through amendments to the existing C-1 District, the C-2 General Retail Commercial District, or the Commercial Overlay District.*

The three commercial districts in the Village are each distinct from one another. The fragmented nature of the districts from each other, which could be perceived as a weakness, also presents the opportunity to create distinct zones with their own sense of place while collectively consistent with the character of development in Winnetka.



Hubbard Woods © The Lakota Group

Initiative 2.2.2

*When considering changes to the commercial zoning districts, **study which land uses should be allowed in each district and consider adding a catch-all category such as “Commercial Uses Not Otherwise Regulated” as a special use** to allow consideration of new land uses not currently contemplated within the Zoning Code.*

Initiative 2.2.3

Consider amending the Zoning Code to only require review by the Plan Commission and approval by Village Council for those special uses located in the C-1 Neighborhood District and the C-2 General Retail Commercial District, similar to what is now required for special uses in the Commercial Overlay District.

Prolonged reviews during the entitlement process can reduce developer interest, particularly when municipal reviews are perceived as unpredictable. The Village currently allows for expedited reviews for special uses within the Commercial Overlay District. Expanding expedited review to incorporate additional uses consistent with community objectives would attract additional investment that might not otherwise be realized.

Initiative 2.2.4

Review regulations for pop-up or short-term land uses. This might include streamlining occupancy permit reviews or sign permit applications and review processes.

Existing land use and zoning regulations can inadvertently create barriers for pop-up users and events. Recognizing this, the city of Norfolk, Virginia, has experimented with granting pop-up users zoning “grace periods” during which they are allowed to divert from certain zoning restrictions. In the city of Chicago, landlords (referred to as “hosts”) and pop-up businesses go through separate permitting processes. A pop-up business’s permit is not tied to a location, allowing them to shift among permitted host locations.

Initiative 2.2.5

Encourage multi-family development in and around the commercial districts to serve a diverse range of residents and to provide additional housing opportunities near commercial activity and the train stations.

Multi-family development has the greatest feasibility near the existing train stations and commercial districts. The Village currently maintains an inventory of available buildings on a public-facing website. This list of properties could be expanded to include target redevelopment sites or vacant land appropriate for multifamily development. The Village can also increase awareness of development opportunities through outreach to the development community and including information on the Village website.

GOAL 2.3

The Village will encourage the highest-quality design, materials, and maintenance for building exteriors, landscaping, and signage in the commercial districts and along the Green Bay Road corridor.

The built environment in Winnetka’s commercial districts projects the care, investment, and support for these areas within the Village. Design guidelines ensure a level of quality in new construction, and an architectural review process evaluates projects for consistency with the Village’s design standards and architectural character. However, there must also be some flexibility that allows new, fresh ideas to enliven commercial districts with variety and creativity. The initiatives below provide ideas and examples for the Village to encourage high-quality design in the commercial districts.

Initiative 2.3.1

Update the 2003 Design Guidelines to allow for alternative architectural designs, including contemporary styles, that complement existing traditional building designs. The updated guidelines should be presented in a more user-friendly format than the earlier guidelines.

Design guidelines and the Design Review process are in place to ensure new development is consistent with the Village’s unique character and overall design aesthetic. While design consistency is crucial, allowing room for flexibility and design creativity that supports complementary alternative designs can bring new energy into the built environment. The Village’s Design Guidelines are often the first exposure

that developers and architects have to Winnetka’s overall character and design review culture. Guidelines can be supportive of modern-day architecture, while at the same time respectful of the Village’s existing urban fabric.

Initiative 2.3.2

Update the Sign Code regulations to ensure they adequately address current sign technology and the needs of Winnetka businesses and institutions, while maintaining the pedestrian-focused community character of these areas that residents have come to expect.

Signs represent a key intersection between governmental regulations and the quality of the built environment.

Commercial districts depend on signs to communicate essential information. However, poor regulation or outdated or overly-strict codes can be ineffective and lead to visual clutter. Signs codes must regularly be reviewed and updated to ensure they meet the needs of the business community in a way that respects the Village's aesthetic and allows the use of new and evolving technology in appropriate ways.



Winnetka Signage © The Lakota Group

Initiative 2.3.3

Updates to the Design Guidelines and Sign Code should consider changes that would allow the administrative approval of certain exterior building, landscaping, and signage improvements. Updates should provide for variations to these standards that facilitate, when appropriate, creative and compatible designs.

Initiative 2.3.4

Conduct an architectural survey of the buildings in the Village's commercial districts to identify historic and architecturally significant buildings; review the Village's development processes to identify obstacles to the preservation of such buildings.

Residents and property owners can become accustomed to having architecturally significant buildings around them and lose perspective on the value they bring to the community. An architectural survey will document these buildings and allow for increased appreciation and preservation of significant buildings in the commercial districts.

Initiative 2.3.5

Provide information and access to financial incentives, such as the Cook County Class L temporary property assessment reduction and the Federal rehabilitation tax credit, for the preservation and restoration of historic commercial buildings.

The Cook County Class L property tax incentive encourages the preservation and rehabilitation of landmark commercial, industrial, and income-producing, or not-for-profit, buildings. Owners can have their property assessment levels reduced for a 12-year period, provided they invest at least half of the value of the landmark building in a rehabilitation project approved by the County. This incentive is attractive to developers contemplating rehabilitation of historic properties in the Village downtown nodes.

Initiative 2.3.6

Given the age of Winnetka's commercial building stock, consider the role enhanced code enforcement could have in preserving commercial districts and promoting investment in the rehabilitation of older commercial and mixed-use structures.

Code enforcement can either be proactive or reactive. Proactive code enforcement – using systematic and planned inspections rather than responding to complaints – can prompt property owners to improve the quality of buildings they would otherwise allow to remain underutilized. Winnetka has a limited number of commercial properties. It is essential that property owners maintain storefronts and residential units in older buildings rather than let them deteriorate. Code enforcement can be a tool for upkeep.



Lincoln Avenue, Winnetka

GOAL 2.4

The Village will provide a business environment focusing on retaining successful existing businesses, attracting businesses to the community that meet a market need, and assisting start-up businesses through local permitting and licensing processes.

Like cultivating a garden, healthy commercial districts and local economies require ongoing care and attention. Starting a new business is hard, and navigating the local approval process can be daunting for new business owners. The Village is in the best position to guide applicants through these processes as efficiently as possible. It is also important to listen to existing businesses, be aware of the issues and concerns they face, and determine how the Village may be able to respond. Taken together, these efforts contribute toward healthy and vibrant commercial areas.

Initiative 2.4.1

Continue to employ a full-time economic development coordinator to lead the Village's business retention and attraction efforts as well as its promotion and marketing activities.

In 2017, the Village created a full-time economic development coordinator position. The position engages in business recruitment, retention, and expansion efforts, as well as in business promotions, marketing, and targeted events. Continued investment in economic development staff allows for dedicated efforts towards realizing economic development objectives.

Initiative 2.4.2

Work with commercial property owners and the real estate brokerage community to identify target tenants for commercial districts that advance strategic marketing initiatives.

Winnetka is home to many residents actively working in real estate professionally. Leveraging these talents to engage with real estate brokers, developers, property owners, and others will provide the Village with better insights as to what future opportunities may exist within the commercial districts. The Village can engage on an ad-hoc basis or set up a more formal advisory committee that would inform strategic marketing initiatives to be championed by staff.

Initiative 2.4.3

Explore how to leverage the Village's current retail market strengths of high-end apparel stores, home goods stores, interior design businesses, and dining establishments to attract complementary and compatible businesses.

Since the pandemic, the community has become a north shore destination for high-end apparel, home goods, dining, and more. To increase awareness of Village strengths and attract additional complementary and compatible tenants, economic development staff should attend retailer conferences to engage specific tenants the Village would like to pursue. Outreach allows Winnetka to provide information on existing demographics, available properties, and current business anchors. The Village could also proactively reach out to major restauranters within the Chicagoland area.



Bedside Manor LTD. © Village of Winnetka

Initiative 2.4.4

Consider developing targeted financial incentives that encourage investment in buildings, assist in the retention of businesses and in the attraction of new businesses.

The Village can develop targeted financial incentives to encourage investment in specific properties and overcome hurdles related to rehabbing older buildings. Incentives may include business permit fee waivers, provision of small business grants to cover building rehabilitation expenses, expedited review of required zoning approvals, or free/reduced-cost design assistance to prospective users.

Initiative 2.4.5

Explore regulatory tools that disincentivize long-term commercial vacancies and consider implementation of such tools.

Over 100 municipalities in Illinois use a vacant building ordinance (VBO) to address residential and commercial vacancies. VBOs often require that property owners register vacant buildings with the municipality and provide contact information for the responsible party. In some municipalities, owners must pay a registration fee which may motivate them to activate spaces. Property owners are often required to maintain, secure, and insure vacant properties in addition to preparing plans to either demolish the property or return it to productive use.

Initiative 2.4.6

Advocate for changing Cook County Assessor's Office commercial vacancy assessment practices, which tend to inadvertently encourage long-term vacancy.

The Cook County Assessor's Office (CCAO) has a statutory obligation to assess properties at market value. Vacancy reduces the net operating income, and therefore assessed value, of properties. However, there are concerns that this approach incentivizes building owners to leave properties or leasable spaces vacant. The CCAO attempts to control excessive vacancy by requiring evidence of a good-faith effort to lease the property. Within the Village, properties known to be intentionally vacant continue to receive a vacancy adjustment to assessed value. The Village should advocate for a more stringent review of vacancy appeals at the CCAO to limit intentional vacancy.

Initiative 2.4.7

When appropriate, consider streamlining special approval and permitting processes so it is easy and convenient for prospective businesses to follow the requirements.

Some of the Village's entitlement processes are currently perceived as lengthy and unpredictable. Complex and time-consuming entitlement review periods are often a deterrent to businesses and developers. Potential strategies to streamline the special approvals and permitting processes could include reducing the submittal requirements, committing to a concise timeline for municipal review, and streamlining public comment periods.



Elm Street, Winnetka

GOAL 2.5

The Village will partner with others to provide public infrastructure to support vibrant business districts.

As custodians of the public realm, the Village is in the best position to ensure its use benefits the commercial districts as much as possible. This can be as straightforward as ensuring public utilities are provided in a consistent and reliable manner. It can also be more complex, like facilitating the shared use of public open space for events and building community. Whatever the means, it is essential to understand the impact that public infrastructure has in the business districts and the power it has to effect positive change.

Initiative 2.5.1

Continue the Village's streetscape improvement efforts that are occurring in the Elm Street Business District by implementing similar, but district-appropriate, improvements in the Hubbard Woods and Indian Hill business districts and along the Green Bay Road corridor.

Initiative 2.5.2

Establish a clear requirement that new developments in the business districts are responsible for streetscape improvements consistent with those for the business district in which it is located.

Initiative 2.5.3

Invest in the utility infrastructure needed to provide reliable services and to allow for future redevelopment.

Initiative 2.5.4

Provide community gathering and event spaces unique to the needs of each of the three business districts.

Through the use of Village-owned property, Winnetka has the opportunity to create public gathering spaces, such as the Village's recent efforts to partner with a cafe to create a small public gathering space in the Indian Hill Business District. In addition, the Village can create larger public gathering spaces for the community as a whole, such as the recently-discussed plaza on the Post Office

site in the Elm Street Business District. Other ideas include evaluating opportunities to repurpose parking spaces, boulevards, and sidewalks. These could be used for temporary seating areas, parklets, pop-up art fairs or markets, food truck serving areas, or myriad of other public events.

Initiative 2.5.5

Continue to support Pace's and Metra's efforts to provide commuter bus and rail service. These enable access for employees of and visitors to Winnetka businesses.

Initiative 2.5.6

To ensure the Village's commercial districts maintain their traditional design and pedestrian-friendly streetscapes, establish a clear policy delineating the Village's role and the private sector's role in providing parking for commercial uses and multi-family residential uses in the Village's business districts.

Part of this effort could include evaluating alternative zoning code parking requirements, such as reductions based on proximity to transit, a fee-in-lieu program, or reductions to off-street parking requirements for the provision of car-sharing facilities and bicycles.

GOAL 2.6

*The Village will **partner with the Chamber of Commerce, Winnetka merchant groups, and other community organizations to promote and market Winnetka businesses and community events** and to let the region know of the community as a niche retail, dining, and event destination.*

Winnetka will need to start conversations and get people talking about the Village. Groups like the Chamber of Commerce have networks that can jump-start efforts to get the word out. Collaboration with merchant groups and other organizations can help create messaging campaigns that capture different viewpoints, market niches, and areas of focus. Partnerships and collaborations will build on shared creativity, energy, and enthusiasm to let the region know what Winnetka has to offer.

Initiative 2.6.1

Develop and implement a branding campaign that promotes and markets Winnetka businesses and increases awareness of Winnetka retailers to potential customers in surrounding communities and the region.

The Village presently lacks a brand that outwardly communicates the Village's economic objectives to prospective property owners, developers, or businesses. The Village can increase awareness of development opportunities by conducting a Village branding exercise which can then be used on the Village website or any additional marketing materials.

Initiative 2.6.2

Promote and market the existing fashion and design districts as well as dining opportunities within the Village.

To continue to grow and solidify the Village's status as a North Shore shopping and dining destination, the Village should encourage restaurants and retailers to continue to participate in area events, such as the North Shore Restaurant Month, which will increase visibility and exposure to potential customers in neighboring communities. The Village should also continue to invest in events which showcase its unique retailers.

Initiative 2.6.3

Continue existing efforts to build relationships and communication with local businesses and entrepreneurs to identify needs and opportunities (e.g., businesses retention visits, regular business community surveys).

Regular communication and relationship-building between the Village and local business owners is beneficial to both parties. Business owners can provide valuable and timely on-the-ground information to the Village. This can be accomplished through regular meetings or surveys. The Village significantly expanded outreach to the business community in 2020 to support struggling small businesses. Continued, frequent touchpoints with businesses will help identify challenges and solutions early moving forward.



BloOuts Winnetka © Village of Winnetka

Initiative 2.6.4

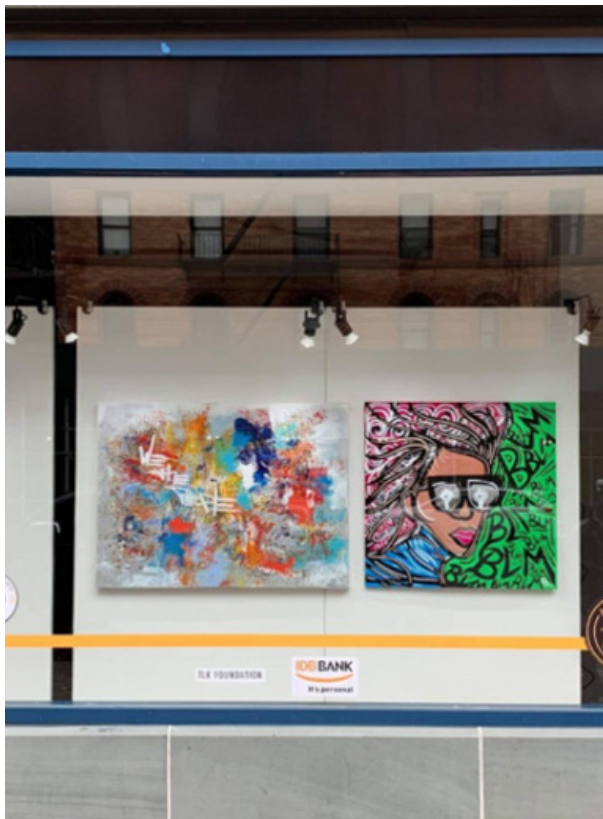
Explore the creation of more small business nights to activate commercial zones and increase awareness of local retailers to those diners that come to the area in the evening.

Winnetka has historically hosted various creative events designed to build awareness of small businesses. Existing events, including the Small Business Saturday Scavenger Hunt and Night Out on Elm, are opportunities for residents to explore small businesses they may not otherwise visit. Such events are often hosted in partnership with the Chamber of Commerce and are a benefit to both existing retailers and also attractive to prospective businesses.

Initiative 2.6.5

Explore the creation of a program to activate vacant storefront windows.

Such a program could include existing businesses decorating nearby vacant storefront windows, or collaborations with art organizations and local schools to produce materials to place in empty windows.



Activated Vacant Storefront

Initiative 2.6.6

Encourage temporary and permanent street and sidewalk installations and activities that foster social interactivity, such as small musical performance groups on street corners or installations of interactive public art.



Pop-up Shop Activation



Plaza Space

Initiative 2.6.7

Continue to partner with others to promote business and community events, such as the Winnetka Music Festival, the Winnetka Farmers Market, and Art in the Village, which provide vibrancy and a sense of community.



PILLAR 3

Community Heritage & Placemaking

VISION STATEMENT

“Winnetka’s authentic heritage can be found in its walkable streets, its rich tapestry of commercial and residential architecture, and in its cultural activities.”



PILLAR 3:

Community Heritage & Placemaking

Vision Statement: Winnetka's authentic heritage can be found in its walkable streets, its rich tapestry of commercial and residential architecture, and in its cultural activities.

Goal 3.1: The Village will adopt and utilize tools that support Winnetka’s rich physical heritage, which is reflected in its history, architecture, neighborhood character, open space, and natural resources.
Goal 3.2: The Village will create and maintain new educational tools, publications, and programs that inform residents, developers, and commercial property owners about the benefits of contributing to the community’s heritage.
Goal 3.3: The Village will identify policies, code amendments, and regulatory mechanisms that encourage context-sensitive design and building conservation solutions to maintain Winnetka’s authentic commercial, institutional, and multi-family residential community character and sense of place.
Goal 3.4: The Village will encourage the enhancement of its public spaces, streetscapes, plazas, alleys, and corridors through creative, cost-effective placemaking and public art initiatives. These will enhance social gatherings, events, and recreation for residents of all ages and abilities.
Goal 3.5: The Village will be prudent in its investment and management of public placemaking initiatives, seeking a sustainable, long-term view in the selection of high-quality materials, product durability, product lifecycle, and maintenance responsibility.
Goal 3.6: The Village will continue to support community-wide arts and cultural efforts by providing welcoming spaces to support active participation, promotion, and programming efforts.

Winnetka Futures 2040 Plan includes ten Community Pillars. The following section describes Winnetka’s vision for *Pillar 3: Community Heritage & Placemaking*. A summary of the existing conditions analysis, along with community input received over the course of the process are shared in the next few pages. Following that is a list of actionable initiatives for each of the goals listed above.

Community Spaces

Community spaces are areas in Winnetka where residents gather, connect, socialize, and pursue shared interests or activities. These spaces could include a community center, community garden, outdoor plaza, or local business such as a coffee shop or restaurant. These spaces help build community and establish or strengthen connections between residents.

WINNETKA COMMUNITY HOUSE

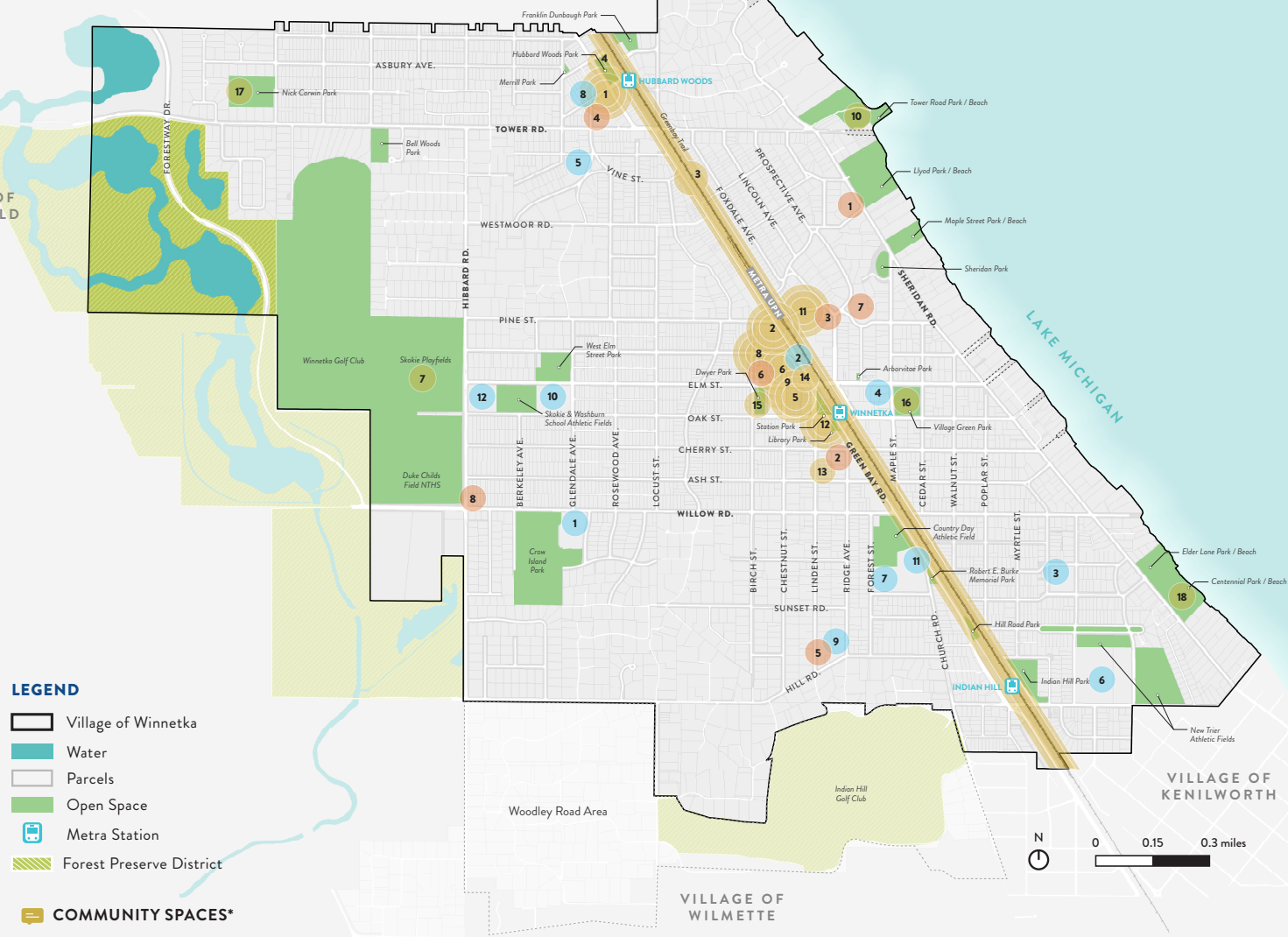
Doubtless the most significant and unique community space in the Village is the Winnetka Community House (“WCH”). This 3-acre community center was originally built in 1911 and has been expanded several times.

About a decade ago, the Winnetka Community House put an addition on the rear (west) side of the building, adjacent to its Historic Garden. In the addition is the Garden Room, which seats 250 people theater style, and on the second floor is a 2,500 sq. ft. meeting hall that can be sectioned off into four separate meeting rooms.



Winnetka Community House © Enjoy Illinois

FIGURE 30: COMMUNITY SPACES



*Community Spaces identified based on conversations with Winnetka residents



Theater production at Matz Hall in the Community House

In the older section of the WCH is Room 101, a large room with a high ceiling that accommodates up to 175 people in “theatre style” or 125 seated at tables and chairs. Room 101 is well used for lunches and events, guest speakers, Rotary Club, Historical Society, and other organizations. Theater and dance productions are held year-round in historic Matz Hall, a 3,000 square foot theatre space with seating for up to 364 guests and a large stage with high-tech capabilities. It is used by groups like Children’s Theatre of Winnetka and Village Follies. Matz Hall is a fairly flexible space: with moveable seats and a flat, open floorplan, it also hosts events, such as the annual Chamber of Commerce Recognition luncheon. Meeting rooms are upstairs, as well as the North Shore Art League’s space. The small gymnasium hosts a youth basketball program and has spectator seating in a small balcony.

The WCH offers a wide range of programs for children in art, dance, education, music, fine arts, and athletics. Adult programming is more limited, with a focus on dog obedience and fitness center classes. Other significant charitable uses of the WCH include: the Winnetka Congregational Church rummage sale, which takes place through most of the building and which the deed covenants oblige WCH to host; and the Antiques + Modernism Show, which is an important fundraising event for the WCH, with dealers from across the country selling high-quality home furnishings and accessories, artwork, clothing, and jewelry.

The WCH rents spaces for events and meetings. Historically, local organizations were able to use meeting space at little or no cost, but financial constraints have caused the WCH to increase fees. Some organizations, such as the Volunteer Center, report moving their events to other facilities such as the Kenilworth Club, in order to save costs.

In 2018 the WCH tore down the free-standing building it owned on the adjoining land to the south and cleared it for parking. Lack of parking has been a longstanding issue for users of WCH programs.

COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

RECREATION, ARTS, & CULTURE

Local recreation, arts and culture representatives met with our team on February 12, 2020 and again in October 2021 for a discussion about Winnetka’s future. Key themes that came out of that discussion are summarized below.

Engagement Through The Ages

There is a change of demographics in the community, but the desire to be connected to community and to have an engaging lifestyle is relevant to all. Young families moving to Winnetka often give up the more dynamic lifestyle the city of Chicago offers to be in a better school district. At the same time, empty nesters and seniors who have been in the Village for decades still want to feel relevant and part of an active community scene. Events like Winnetka Music Festival bring a vibrant sense of community connection in a way that relates to all ages. To stay relevant, arts and recreation programs must evolve with the changing times.

A Place to Connect

The Community House is a hub of activity for people to explore and pursue their best self. It is a place where people can connect. The relationships in this community are very important and spaces like the Community House provide a place for people to come together. The challenge for the Village is to create more vital engagement areas, not necessarily vital commercial areas. Building a sense of community through makers space, yoga, dance studios, etc., will activate Winnetka more than retail can. There is a need for a signature building or element to attract people — something recognizable that will become a destination to attract people from across the North Shore, like the Writers Theatre in Glencoe, the Robert Crowne Center in Evanston, or even the Deerpath Inn in Lake Forest. An existing underutilized place for people to connect is the Green Bay Trail. More could be done to activate the trail, market it, and program it. There is potential for more multi-jurisdictional collaboration to make that happen.

Collaboration

Collaboration is key to bring more vitality to Winnetka’s community life: there are a wealth of organizations in Winnetka and across the north shore doing good work, and the more they work together, the better. Existing successful collaborations exist: the Historical Society partners with the Botanical Gardens as well as the Landmark Preservation Commission to put on events. There are many excellent facility-bound programs within District 36, New Trier, and the Music Institute, for example. How could we get those excellent programs out into the community? New Trier could have performances at the Community House or in public spaces on a Saturday afternoon—or other, similar ways for students to engage more with the community and with the arts.

Winnetka Community House Tenants

The WCH also rents space to some tenants important to the community:

The North Shore Art League

The North Shore Art League (NSAL) has been in the WCH since its founding in 1924. NSAL is a nonprofit organization that offers art classes for adults and children. Located on the second floor of the Community House, NSAL classes are held in an historic, professional art studio featuring skylights, a large stone fireplace, and a well-equipped print room facility.

The Winnetka Club

Since its beginning in 1908, The Winnetka Club has been an integral part of the civic and philanthropic life of the North Shore community. When it lost its original club building a few years ago, it moved into the WCH. Its philanthropic efforts support annual scholarships for graduating high school seniors who live in New Trier Township, as well as many other philanthropic endeavors throughout the North Shore and greater Chicago communities.

The WYO

The Winnetka Youth Organization, known as “The WYO” by those who frequent the space, is a nonprofit teen drop-in center. Established in 1969, the WYO is the only youth organization of its kind in Winnetka. Each year, the WYO provides services to up to 1,000 adolescents from the community. The mission of the WYO is to foster individual development in North Shore junior high and high school youth by providing adult-to-youth mentoring, youth services, and opportunities for leadership, citizenship and education within a safe, informal environment.

Winnetka Community Nursery School

A nationally accredited preschool for children ages 3–5, WCNS was founded during the Second World War to care for children whose mothers wished to take part in the war effort. Since 1972, it has been located in its own space in what was then the newly-built west wing of the WCH. In 1961, the full-day program was replaced with a morning-only program due to limited demand, only to be reopened in 1975 to meet the changing needs of the community. WCNS today offers a morning program with indoor and outdoor activities and an extended day program for children ages 3 – 6.

COMMUNITY OPEN HOUSE RESULTS

ARTS & CULTURE

Where else does Winnetka celebrate arts and culture?

There were limited responses to this question, all of which provided by empty nesters and young seniors (ages 55 to 74). Responses included the New Trier Jazzfest, library, and Winnetka chapel.

Would you like to see additional arts and culture initiatives taken in Winnetka?

Public Art

The majority of participants highly ranked full wall murals and partial wall murals. There were mixed responses to art sculptures, interactive art, and mosaic installation. A majority of responses disliked large-scale installations. The majority of responses were from empty nesters, young seniors, and family years (ages 35 to 54) participants.

Gathering and Performance Spaces

The majority of participants liked the initiatives that focused on gathering spaces, including an outdoor cinema, an outdoor shaded amphitheater, outdoor multi-use spaces, small private entertaining spaces, professional theaters, and public plazas.



Public Art, Winnetka



Sidewalk Art in Winnetka



You Are Beautiful Mural in Winnetka



Holiday Event in Winnetka



Winnetka Music Festival



Wedding at the Winnetka Community House

Community Heritage & Placemaking

***Vision Statement:** Winnetka's authentic heritage can be found in its walkable streets, its rich tapestry of commercial and residential architecture, and in its cultural activities.*

GOAL 3.1

The Village will adopt and utilize tools that support Winnetka's rich physical heritage, which is reflected in its history, architecture, neighborhood character, open space, and natural resources.

The Village plays a vital role in ensuring Winnetka's heritage continues to be manifested in its physical form. This can be achieved through a variety of tools and incentives.

Initiative 3.1.1

Engage in initiatives identified in Pillar 1, Quality Livable Neighborhoods, that will encourage renovation of existing homes and construction of new homes that strengthen and maintain the rich and diverse character of the Village's residential neighborhoods.

Initiative 3.1.2

Continue efforts to maintain and enhance the tree canopy on public and private lands throughout the community.

Trees and urban forestry can improve community health, improve water and air quality, and promote disaster resiliency. While municipalities across the nation have employed a variety of incentives and tools to improve and sustain urban forests, one long-time staple has been to gift residents free trees to plant in their yards.



Tree Canopy Providing Shade - Winnetka © The Lakota Group

VERMONT, IL

CASE STUDY:
Urban & Community Forestry Program

The city of Vermont provides tree stormwater credits, as well as impervious-area reduction credits. These credits can benefit homeowners through reduced water bills or stormwater fees. Communities can benefit from such implemented credits and incentives for tree canopy development and protection.

Initiative 3.1.3

Build upon Winnetka's history of major public works initiatives, which have reshaped the community in the past. These have included lowering the railroad grade, enhancing the Skokie Lagoons, and the purchase and conversion of the former Chicago North Shore and Milwaukee railroad to establish the Green Bay Trail.

Initiative 3.1.4

Consider allowing the use of open space and parkway lands for pollinator gardens, community gardens, and native plants.

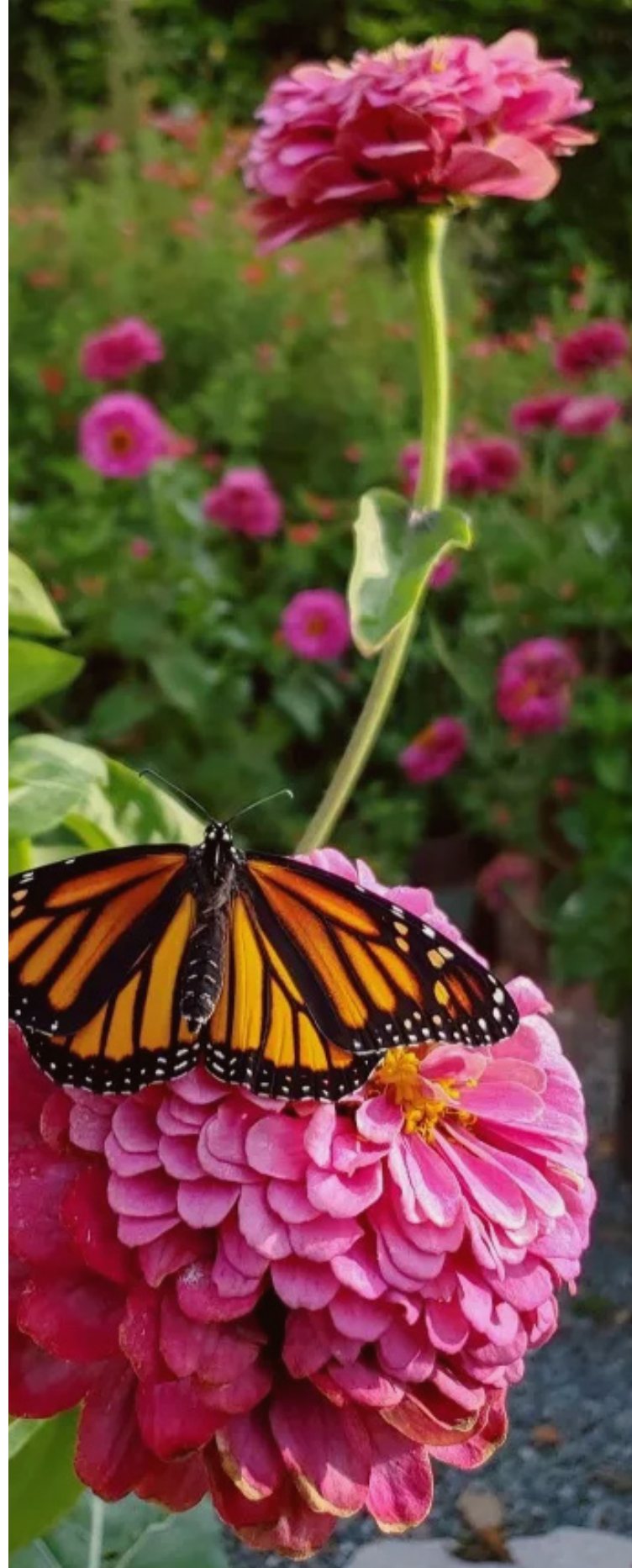
Pollinator species can greatly benefit from small-scale open spaces and parkways that connect larger habitat patches. Manicured lawns often pose a challenge for species like hummingbirds, bees, and butterflies. Pollinator pathways are meant to ensure prosperity of pollinators in developed areas with fragmented landscapes.

RIVER FOREST, IL

CASE STUDY:

Parkway Pollinator Gardens

In partnership with PlanItGreen, the ComEd Green Region Grant Program, and Openlands, the Village of River Forest offers 27,000 square feet of native gardens, including 36 Parkway Pollinator Gardens, along its Lake Street. Aside from its inherent value of supporting pollinators, this initiative is dedicated to educating residents about fertilization and habitat management. Another aspect of the Parkway for Pollinators Initiative asks residents to pledge to the Healthy Lawn, Healthy Family Campaign, requiring residents not to use synthetic chemicals on their lawns and gardens, and implementing sustainable lawn care practices.



Butterfly Garden

GOAL 3.2

The Village will create and maintain new educational tools, publications, and programs that inform residents, developers, and commercial property owners about the benefits of contributing to the community's heritage.

Infill development and rebuilds are inevitable in a thriving community like Winnetka. Providing guidance on what makes this community unique would be one of many steppingstones that can ensure compatible developments and the preservation of community character. While Winnetka as a community possesses an overall uniform character, it is key to distinguish between the different character areas within the Village.

Initiative 3.2.1

Provide summary information and links to federal and state financial incentives, such as the State of Illinois Property Tax Assessment Freeze or federal and state historic tax credits, so that Winnetka property owners are aware of programs to offset costs to restore qualifying historic structures.

Rewarding owners for sensitively reinvesting in qualifying historic buildings is recognized as an important strategy on the federal and state levels, and in many communities on a local level as well. Providing commercial property owners and homeowners a list of potential resources and incentives can promote historic preservation and help retain community character.

Initiative 3.2.2

Provide information to Winnetka property owners concerning non-financial tools and resources available to assist with preservation of historic and architecturally significant structures.



HIGHLAND PARK, IL

CASE STUDY:

Supporting Local Preservation

The Village of Highland Park, along with other Illinois communities including Winnetka, has been leveraging state and federal incentives to support local preservation efforts. The Mary Adams House, a Frank Lloyd Wright design of 1905, used a property tax assessment freeze incentive for the renovation. The tax incentive is made available through Illinois's Property Tax Assessment Freeze for Historic Residences program, administered by the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency (IHPA). The owner of a locally landmarked or National Register-listed historic home can get the assessed valuation of the property frozen for eight years in the year a qualified renovation on the home takes place.

Initiative 3.2.3

Publish information regarding potentially historic and architecturally significant buildings so as to educate property owners and developers of the Village's potentially significant buildings and structures.

Local preservation planning can be strengthened with continued efforts to identify and document important historic resources. Survey and inventory initiatives can provide crucial information on historic context, and can help identify properties, buildings, and structures that are or may be eligible for preservation. Making these databases publicly available can build interest in preservation and encourage community members and property owners to maintain Winnetka's unique character.



William McJunkin House © Wikipedia

GOAL 3.3

The Village will identify policies, code amendments, and regulatory mechanisms that encourage context-sensitive design and building conservation solutions to maintain Winnetka's authentic commercial, institutional, and multi-family residential community character and sense of place.

Successful context-sensitive design is a holistic approach to planning, design, and engineering that is typically implemented through zoning and development ordinances that manage certain components of urban design. While maintaining Winnetka's authenticity is the primary purpose of such practices, ensuring flexibility is key to avoiding homogeneity.

Initiative 3.3.1

Update existing commercial design guidelines to address current design issues, concerns, and contexts more adequately.



ILLINOIS COMMUNITIES

CASE STUDY:

Commercial Design Guidelines

Various municipalities in Illinois have continued to update their design guidelines to promote high-quality non-residential building design and ensure enhanced quality of life. These guidelines often address aspects of building massing as influenced by surrounding context, pedestrian friendliness, visual attractiveness, and sustainable design techniques and technologies that minimize environmental impacts.

Initiative 3.3.2

Review sign regulations to ensure they adequately address current sign technology and the needs of Winnetka institutions and the business community while maintaining the pedestrian-focused community character that residents have come to expect.



Signage on Storefronts, Winnetka

GOAL 3.4

The Village will encourage the enhancement of its public spaces, streetscapes, plazas, alleys, and corridors through creative, cost-effective placemaking and public art initiatives to enhance social gatherings, events, and recreation for residents of all ages and abilities.

Active and outdoor gathering spaces have been a priority for many Winnetkans, allowing people to meet others, spend time together, and make memories. Open spaces can be further amplified through placemaking initiatives and public art that add comfort, safety, attractiveness, and liveliness. Aside from its inherent value, placemaking can help “bind” commercial streets into socially-cohesive places that narrate a neighborhood’s history and heritage.

Initiative 3.4.1

Continue to implement the Village’s Downtown Master Plan and Downtown Master Streetscape and Signage Plan. Streetscape improvements (like those completed in the Elm Street Business District) can further enhance the Hubbard Woods and Indian Hill Business Districts, offering upgrades to mobility and to public gathering and event spaces.



Downtown Winnetka Streetscape Improvements

Initiative 3.4.2

Pursue Green Bay Road improvements that increase and contribute to placemaking throughout the Village.

Green Bay Road, one of Winnetka’s major north-south connector streets, is heavily-focused on automotive transportation, does not cater to pedestrians, and lacks overall character. With efforts in mind to consider a road diet that can bring alternative modes of transportation to Green Bay Road, the Village should leverage this opportunity to introduce placemaking initiatives. Such initiatives could include murals, public art, pocket parks, plazas, linear parks, decorative medians, and branded pedestrian crossings and intersections, as well as temporary art activations that can bring life to the corridor.

Initiative 3.4.3

In cooperation with the Park District, pursue Green Bay Trail improvements that enhance its usability through improved access and signage. Enhance trail landscaping through upgrades to the natural systems.

Initiative 3.4.4

Maintain a vibrant dining experience throughout the Village's commercial areas by encouraging more outdoor dining opportunities. Establish a Village-wide policy for such temporary uses on public sidewalks, public streets, parking lots, and in public parks.



CASE STUDY: Outdoor Dining

VENTURA, CA

In order to create more outdoor dining space, downtown Ventura, California, closed its main street to vehicular traffic at the start of the pandemic and has maintained the closure. In order to bring more design consistency and greater safety to restaurant parklets, the city previously developed model templates that restaurants could use to create semi-permanent structures. Today, the city is writing design guidelines for its outdoor dining program, and the road closure will be maintained until June of 2024, with additional studies underway to evaluate the potential for a permanent street closure and creation of a pedestrian mall.



Initiative 3.4.5

Activate streets and open spaces with temporary and permanent uses that can be catalysts for future investment and growth. Strategies include pop-up businesses, art fairs, recreational activities, cultural celebrations, and civic functions.

Pop-up businesses and activations have gained popularity over the last two years, with more small businesses exploring ways to expand and realizing the benefits of face-to-face customer relationships. While some pop-up shops become permanent fixtures, others rely on large or seasonal events that typically drive traffic and sales, such as the Chicago Christkindlemarket holiday pop-up shops

Initiative 3.4.6

Create gateways at Village entrances that integrate elements such as signage, wayfinding, landscaping, and building forms unique to Winnetka.



Winnetka Signage

Initiative 3.4.7

Benchmark and measure the outcomes of public investment in placemaking initiatives. Examples include the visibility of cultural groups or businesses in the community, the activation of underutilized public spaces around the Village, a reduction in vacant storefronts over a period of time, or visitor and foot traffic increases in the commercial districts.

GOAL 3.5

The Village will be prudent in its investment and management of public placemaking initiatives, seeking a sustainable, long-term view in the selection of high-quality materials, product durability, product lifecycle, and maintenance responsibility.

Initiative 3.5.1

Use decorative streetlights and other outdoor lighting as effective placemaking tools along Green Bay Road, the Green Bay Trail, and other high-traffic commercial areas.



Decorative Trail Lights © Dazuma

GOAL 3.6

The Village will continue to support community-wide arts and cultural efforts by providing welcoming spaces to support active participation, promotion, and programming efforts.

Initiative 3.6.1

Identify and create additional gathering spaces in the community, whether public, non-profit, or private, for cultural and entertainment events such as live performances and concerts.

The community is interested in additional gathering spaces for entertainment and cultural events to complement the performance spaces in the Community House or the small gathering and performance space at Hubbard Woods Park. A larger and more permanent outdoor space for live concerts and performances, as well small private indoor spaces would complement the existing venues in the community.

Initiative 3.6.2

Partner with Winnetka institutions and businesses to integrate public art and art spaces throughout the Village and continue to support Winnetka as an arts and cultural destination.



Winnetka Music Festival



Public Plaza Concept Explored for Post Office Site

PILLAR 4

Sustainability & Climate Action

VISION STATEMENT

“A forward-looking community with a strong heritage of innovation and commitment to stewardship of its natural resources and built environment.”



PILLAR 4:

Sustainability and Climate Action

Vision Statement: A forward-looking community with a strong heritage of innovation and commitment to stewardship of its natural resources and built environment.

- | |
|---|
| <p>Goal 4.1: The Village will establish a community framework for Sustainability and consider appropriate public resources to guide, manage, and educate the residents on the value of a Sustainability & Climate Action Plan.</p> |
| <p>Goal 4.2: The Village will continue to develop local and regional partnerships with other organizations to leverage and share information on sustainable initiatives, shared resources, technical assistance, and tools for broader community engagement.</p> |
| <p>Goal 4.3: The Village will implement initiatives throughout this Comprehensive Plan that reflect sustainability as a core value in Winnetka.</p> |

Winnetka Futures 2040 Plan includes ten Community Pillars. The following section describes Winnetka’s vision for *Pillar 4: Sustainability & Climate Action*. A summary of the existing conditions analysis, along with community input received over the course of the process are shared in the next few pages. Following that is a list of actionable initiatives for each of the goals listed above.

Environmental and Forestry Commission

“*Let’s be bold! Winnetka has the opportunity to lead the region’s sustainability efforts. Go Green Winnetka is a citizen run advocacy group working to prioritize climate action initiatives in Winnetka. Benchmarks, metrics, and key performance indicators are necessary.*

- ENVIRONMENTAL FORESTRY COMMISSION

The Environmental and Forestry Commission (EFC) assists the Village Council to facilitate the community’s discussion of and actions to take regarding sustainability. The EFC has a specific mission to raise public awareness of environmental issues and best practices, and to encourage changes in public policy on matters that relate to the environment. The EFC takes a proactive role on sustainability matters and sees education as one of the best methods to gain public support for policies and programs. One of the highlights of the EFC is its ‘Green Awards’ program. The purpose of the program is to recognize properties and households within Winnetka that demonstrate exceptional commitment to sustainable practices in eight award categories.



Young Families in Winnetka

ENVIRONMENTAL & FORESTRY COMMISSION

The planning team met with the Environmental & Forestry Commission on February 12, 2020 and again on November 10, 2021 to discuss how the 2040 plan will address sustainability and climate action. Go Green Winnetka representatives were also in attendance at both meetings and their thoughts are included. Key themes that came out of those discussions are summarized below.

Climate Action

Our ecosystem is changing rapidly, and we should be ahead of the game. The Greenest Regions Compact (GRC2) is the foundation of much of the Commission's thinking—it is a pledge that the Village has taken with other communities to reduce our carbon footprint, encompassing four goals, ten categories and 100+ strategies. These different categories should be woven into the Comprehensive Plan's categories. Sustainability and Climate Action should have its own chapter, and serve as an overarching goal that can be woven into all chapters. While the 2040 Plan is not a Climate Action Plan, there should be actionable items for the Commission and the Village to move forward on.

While the GRC2 includes a wide variety of climate action categories, improvements in energy consumption of buildings, bike infrastructure, and waste management and composting are of particular interest to members of the Commission. Younger members of the Commission partake in "guerilla sustainability," picking up neighbors hard-to-recycle waste and bringing it to public works. Improved route signage or digital wayfinding in the form of an online map are short term initiatives that could encourage more people to ride their bikes. The LEED, Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, certification of buildings is also an interest of the Commission.

Organization & Efficacy

The Commission hopes to improve communication channels between themselves and the Park District. The Commission would like the Council to consider amending the municipal code to expand its responsibilities from forestry to a more comprehensive approach, including environmental initiatives, sustainability, and climate actions. The Commission is staffed through the Public Works Department and not Planning, which is not typical and not ideal in the eyes of the Commission. Changing the name of the Commission to Climate Commission and expanding its scope and authority would give the Commission increased ability to recommend policy and implement its goals.

Be Bold Winnetka

Very few communities have sustainability and climate action plans, but Winnetka has the opportunity to lead the region on this front. Go Green Winnetka is a citizen run advocacy group working to prioritize climate action initiatives in Winnetka. Its ability to organize volunteers and build public support for initiatives is critical for real progress. Involving children in the conversation is also key—schools can be partners, not just in education around sustainability, but in initiatives such as removing invasive species/encouraging native species along the Green Bay Trail. Benchmarks, metrics, and key performance indicators are necessary for climate objectives to be implemented. The development of a climate action plan should be a key recommendation from the 2040 plan.



Winnetka Open Spaces

Greenest Region Compact (GRC2)

“Local composting is a low-hanging fruit compared to other sustainability improvements. Other initiatives to consider include implementing a green building code, solar arrays, emissions tracking, and a Village-wide climate action plan.

- OPEN HOUSE PARTICIPANT

CLIMATE FRAMEWORK

In 2017, over seventy member municipalities of the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus adopted the “Greenest Region Compact 2” or GRC2 Framework, which seeks a vibrant, sustainable future for their communities and for the greater Chicago region. The Compact addresses ten topics: climate, economic development, energy, land, leadership, mobility, municipal operations, sustainable communities, water, and waste & recycling; and, provides goals, objectives and actions for each. The GRC2 was adopted in Winnetka by municipal resolution on April 3, 2018. The Village and its Environmental Forestry Commission are committed to advancing the GRC2 goals, and they have outlined short and long-term goals within the climate framework for the Village to pursue. A high level summary of these goals within the climate framework is provided below.



Climate

Undertake efforts to reduce Greenhouse Gases (GHGs), develop resiliency to climate change impacts, and engage the Village community in climate change mitigation and adaptation.



Land

Encourage strategic development that incorporates sustainability principles, conserve, restore and enhance natural features and ecosystems, and ensure accessibility to and use of parks and other outdoor space.



Mobility

Support diverse, safe, and efficient transportation that uses resources wisely.



Winnetka Beachfront



Sustainable Communities

Cultivate community values and principles that are welcoming, inclusive, and equitable, and that promote a sustainable identity for the Village.



Water

Use and distribute water efficiently, equitably, and sustainably, protect and improve water quality, and optimize the use of natural and built systems to manage stormwater.



Energy

Adopt policies that promote energy efficiency, reduce energy usage and use of renewables, and engage the Village community in clean energy practices.



Leadership

Collaborate to achieve a more sustainable Village and region.



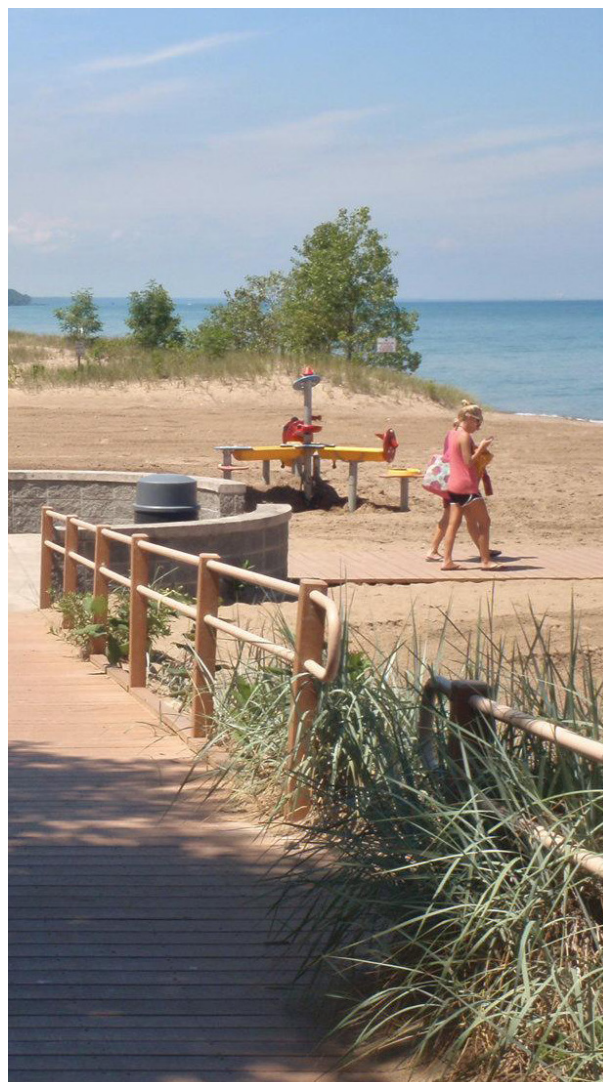
Municipal Operations

Set an example by demonstrating sustainable values and practices, operate a safe and efficient fleet, and collect and manage data to advance sustainability.



Waste & Recycling

Support policies and actions that contribute to sustainable material management and increased recycling.



Tower Beach © Winnetka Park District

CLIMATE ACTION

Based largely on the goals and objectives of the GRC2, the EFC is working on recommendations for actions, strategies, and goals to be considered for inclusion in a new Sustainability and Climate Action Plan for Winnetka. The EFC recommendations can be divided between short term actions and long-term actions. Short term actions are considered over the next 1-5-year time horizon, and long-term actions are considered over the 10-20 years time horizon. The short term recommendations take a proactive approach, combined with an educational framework to help Village residents become more aware of municipal actions and to garner broad support for longer term sustainability and climate initiatives. The long-term goals developed by the EFC include more significant actions that can be implemented over a longer time period and may need funding mechanisms or capital improvements. They also include quantitative actions to reduce consumption and other measurable performance standards.

2021 Climate Action Plan (CAP)

The Metropolitan Mayor Caucus (MMC) launched the 2021 Climate Action Plan for the Chicago Region (“CAP”) with support from the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP). On February 15, 2022, at the recommendation of the EFC, the Village Council adopted a resolution endorsing and supporting the goals of the Climate Action Plan. The Climate Action Plan for the Chicago Region is a multi-jurisdictional approach to addressing the climate crisis, and it is tailored for action at the municipal level. The MMC plans to work with members to undertake these strategies allowing communities to collectively address the complexities of the climate crisis and proactively work to improve our environment.

SUSTAINABILITY THROUGH PLANNING

In addition to the EFC recommendations for short term and long-term actions, sustainability and environmental stewardship can also be achieved by commonly-known planning and land use strategies. There are a variety of measures and policy directives the Village can pursue that result in the reduced consumption of resources and promote sustainable land use. These “hidden” measures of sustainability are already happening but are further recognized and promoted in this Comprehensive Plan.

Multi Family Housing



There is power in numbers. Multi-family housing is inherently better for the environment than single-family detached housing. Construction of multi-family housing uses less energy, and use of infrastructure and utilities is more efficient.

Reuse of Existing Buildings



The greenest building is one that is already built—it holds “embodied energy” from the transport and production of its building materials, as well as the energy used to assemble the building. Preservation of existing buildings promotes the reuse of buildings on developed land, maximizing the use of existing materials and infrastructure, and reducing waste and consumption, making preservation and sustainability natural partners.

Mixed Land Use Areas



A mix of uses is an essential ingredient in the recipe of sustainability. Mixed-use development places the things we need every day in close proximity to each other, with housing, retail, and office uses located in the same building.

COMMUNITY OPEN HOUSE RESULTS

Which of the climate framework objectives mentioned below do you believe should be a high priority for the Village to implement?

Participants ranked the climate framework initiatives as follows:





Comparable Communities: Sustainability

A look at how Winnetka's comparable communities are taking action on climate change.

GREENWICH, CT

BIG IDEA: Conservation Commission

Greenwich has earned the highest sustainability ranking available from Sustainable CT (a statewide initiative) due in part to their Conservation Commission, which was formed to specifically study **advancements in energy efficiency and carbon emissions.**



PIEDMONT, CA

BIG IDEA: Climate Action Plan

In addition to their Comprehensive Plan, Piedmont's Climate Action Plan includes **detailed actions and metrics to reduce and track greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.** The plan acknowledges that sustainability goes beyond environmental concerns and touches many social, economic, and public health issues.





COMMUNITY OPEN HOUSE RESULTS

What big ideas do you have in regard to taking action on climate change in Winnetka?

Local composting was the most popular vote and participants anecdotally mentioned that this initiative is considered a low-hanging fruit compared to the other sustainability improvements mentioned. Other initiatives mentioned include implementing a green building code, solar arrays, emissions tracking, and a Village-wide climate action plan. One participant mentioned that it would be “**interesting to share with residents how their energy use compares to other Winnetkans on average.**”

Sustainability and Climate Action

***Vision Statement:** A forward-looking community with a strong heritage of innovation and commitment to stewardship of its natural resources and built environment.*

GOAL 4.1

The Village will establish a community framework for Sustainability and consider appropriate public resources to guide, manage, and educate the residents on the value of a Sustainability & Climate Action Plan.

As a local government body, the Village is able to lead by example. Utilizing existing tools for outreach and communication, the Village can keep the community engaged as the Climate Action Plan continues to develop. In addition to creating a framework, the Village should leverage grants and funding mechanisms and seek financial support for sustainability initiatives.

Initiative 4.1.1

Continue to develop a Sustainability & Climate Action Plan that will address the following areas in terms of sustainability: Economic Development, Energy, Land, Leadership, Mobility, Municipal Operations, Sustainable Communities, Waste & Recycling, and Water.

The “Greenest Region Compact 2” or GRC2 Framework, which is a regional agreement adopted by Winnetka in 2018, focused on the broad range of sustainability topics mentioned above. Over seventy municipalities have signed the compact and agreed to support forward-thinking goals. The Metropolitan Mayors Caucus finalized the Climate Action Plan for the Chicago Region in 2021; it provides strategies for combating climate change at the municipal level. A Sustainability & Climate Action Plan incorporating elements from these documents would bring Winnetka in line with other community partners in the region.

Initiative 4.1.2

Identify grant funding to support the efforts identified in the Sustainability & Climate Action Plan.

Financial support will be an essential part of continued success for the Climate Action Plan. Actively pursuing grants from regional, State, and Federal agencies will increase Village resources and ensure dedicated funds are allocated towards a greener future.

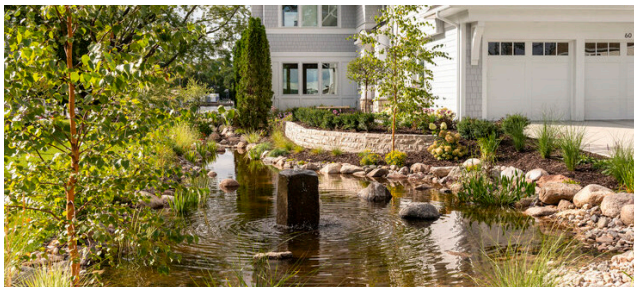
Initiative 4.1.3

Evaluate what will be the appropriate staffing for community sustainability initiatives. Support may include dedicated staff resources, on-call consultant, or a sustainability team as a shared responsibility.

Initiative 4.1.4

Implement sustainable practices within residential neighborhoods to the extent possible.

With 61.7% of Winnetka’s land use being residential, it is important to educated residents about the various initiatives they can take to advance sustainability. Small changes can result in large impacts, especially when implemented on a neighborhood scale. Examples of such initiatives include native plantings, butterfly gardens, rain gardens, rain barrels, and the use of sustainable pet products. Distributing native plant seedlings, providing resources for rain barrels, and educational material about biodiversity are additional steps.



Rain Garden in a residential area

GOAL 4.2

The Village will continue to develop local and regional partnerships with other organizations to leverage and share information on sustainable initiatives, shared resources, technical assistance, and tools for broader community engagement.

Communities around the nation, including Winnetka, are increasingly tackling sustainability challenges and increasing awareness and resilience as climate change and disaster risks continue to rise. Building sustainable communities is a collective and collaborative effort that requires advocacy, education, and other actionable initiatives to boost prosperity and resiliency within the North Shore.

Initiative 4.2.1

Continue to evaluate and support, to the extent that is realistically achievable by the Winnetka community, the goals of regional sustainability plans such as the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus' Greenest Region Compact 2 and the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus 2021 Climate Action Plan for the Chicago Region.

"We're in this together" is the mindset that can help bridge efforts, build support, and generate momentum for climate action initiatives. Utilizing the GRC2 and supporting the Climate Action Plan for the Chicago Region not only ensures Winnetka is implementing best practices in sustainability, it also supports an alliance of communities demonstrating commitment to actionable sustainability.

Initiative 4.2.2

Partner with local school districts, the Winnetka Park District, and other local agencies to address sustainability initiatives, such as reducing greenhouse gas emissions, reducing stormwater runoff, increasing recycling, and the like.

Initiative 4.2.3

Partner with the Winnetka-Northfield-Glencoe Chamber of Commerce and other Winnetka business organizations to assist businesses with finding technical and financial resources to assist them with operating their businesses in a more sustainable manner.

"Shopping with a Purpose" is one of many ways consumers are showing their values by paying more attention to social and environmental aspects. Prioritizing eco-friendly products, considering environmental measures in daily operations, using recyclable materials, and reducing the use of plastic, among other 'green' initiatives, are important to young professionals and families with forward-looking mindsets. Providing Winnetka businesses with technical or financial assistance can result in a positive impact and allow them to contribute meaningfully to the Village's mission. Examples can include supporting businesses in collectively pooling resources and sustainability funds, advertising campaigns and other promotional materials through Village media outlets, and buying into a green energy source that might otherwise be unattainable.



Reusable Bags © New York Post - Oscar Wong

GOAL 4.3

Implement initiatives throughout this Comprehensive Plan that reflect sustainability as a core value in the Village of Winnetka.

Throughout this community-led process, Winnetkans have made clear that sustainability is a core value that can be advanced in a variety of fashions, both directly and indirectly. While the Comprehensive Plan includes a dedicated Sustainability and Climate Action section, additional initiatives can be found in the majority of the ten Community Pillars. Examples include alternative modes of transportation, preservation of historic buildings, protection of natural resources, and the use of advanced technologies. To learn more, refer to the sustainability summaries found below for some of the community pillars.

“The greenest building is the one already built.” Initiatives in Pillar 1 recommend policies that support efforts to encourage the renovation of existing homes in lieu of demolishing houses and building new. Additionally, initiatives recommend ongoing review of regulations to remove potential obstacles that renovation and restoration projects may encounter.

Pillar 1 also recommended initiatives that include the establishment of safe and connected non-motorized transportation routes through Winnetka’s neighborhoods, so as to encourage residents to walk and bike, leaving vehicles at home and reducing carbon-based travel. Illustrative of this, initiatives under Pillar 1 recommend completing gaps in sidewalk connectivity and identifying travel routes to encourage their use.

PILLAR 1 QUALITY LIVABLE NEIGHBORHOODS

The vision for Winnetka’s commercial core reflects the community’s culture of sustainability and positive climate action by encouraging dense mixed-use development and facilitating non-motorized transportation. Recognizing that Metra train stations are a key part of the Village’s business districts, goals in Pillar 2 recommend incorporating Transit Oriented Development (TOD) principals when making strategic decisions that impact the commercial areas. Other initiatives encourage building connections to the train stations to increase mobility and foster them as a driver of local economic activity. Goals in Pillar 2 also recognize that local regulations play an important role. Amendments to the Zoning Code can promote non-motorized transportation by reducing off-street parking requirements and facilitating bicycle parking and storage.

PILLAR 2 VIBRANT BUSINESS DISTRICTS

PILLAR 1 PILLAR 2 PILLAR 3 **PILLAR 4** PILLAR 5 PILLAR 6 PILLAR 7 PILLAR 8 PILLAR 9 PILLAR 10

Appreciating Winnetka's historic homes and local heritage reflects the Village's commitment to positive environmental action while maintaining a local spirit and identity. Helping establish a sense of place through creative placemaking and public art initiatives gives residents pride in the community, which manifests itself in maintenance, preservation, and care for the built environment.

Goals in Pillar 3 aim to increase native vegetation and encourage pollinator gardens in public parkway lands, where possible and in the appropriate setting. This increases the resiliency and biodiversity in the local ecosystem, increasing sustainability and adaptability to change.

PILLAR 3 COMMUNITY HERITAGE & PLACEMAKING

Fostering a culture of learning and student engagement furthers the Village's commitment to sustainability by helping youth appreciate their role in positive climate action. Activities to cultivate civic engagement in Goal 1 in Pillar 5 illustrate how actions at the local level can have real impacts. Ensuring paths to school are safe encourages biking and walking, normalizing non-motorized transportation for daily trips. The focus of Goal 2 is finding opportunities to share resources and facilities that support education. Sharing assets means not building or buying new ones, decreasing consumption and use of new materials for construction.

PILLAR 5 EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE

Winnetka residents enjoy unparalleled access to parks and open spaces. Enjoyment of these outdoor facilities and natural resources allows users to explore and experience the natural world, creating a relationship that fosters conservation. Goals in Pillar 6 ensure the Village's parks and natural areas will be preserved and maintained through partnerships with sister agencies and continuous, innovative programming will keep people engaged.

PILLAR 6 HEALTHY & ENGAGING LIFESTYLES



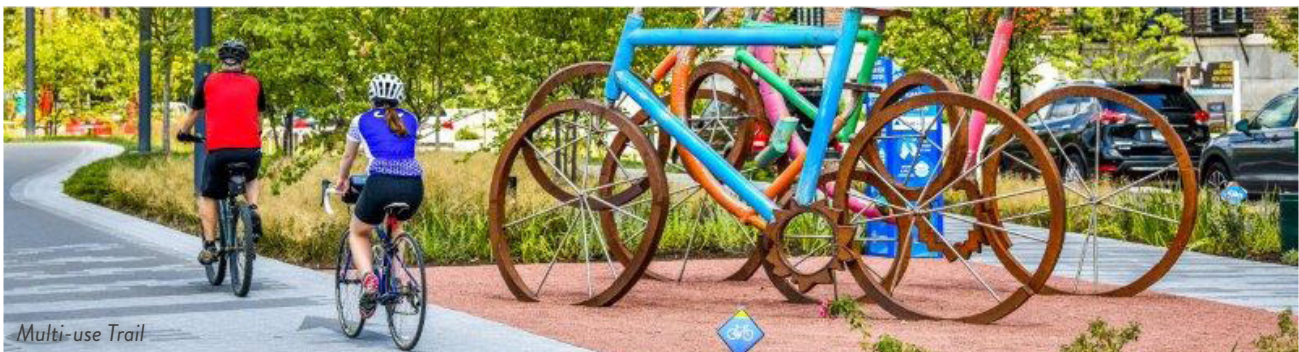
Winnetka Bluffs

The Village of Winnetka leads by example. Utilizing best practices in delivering exceptional public services demonstrates a commitment to effective resource management, financial responsibility, and a culture of sustainability. Community infrastructure includes stormwater management: initiatives within Pillar 7 encourage the use of rain barrels, rain gardens, and permeable paving systems. These represent best practices and are effective in reducing the impact of stormwater runoff on the lakefront, ravines, and bluffs. Other initiatives include replacement of lead water pipes, which promotes the health of Village residents and reduces the amount of toxins in the water supply and larger ecosystem.

PILLAR 7 **COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE, SERVICES, & TECHNOLOGY**

Initiatives under Pillar 8 facilitate improved access to the Green Bay Trail, encourage the continued use of public transportation, and acknowledge the importance of non-motorized transportation throughout the Village. Residents and visitors are more likely to ride bicycles to the business districts if safe, dependable bike parking is available, and Pillar 8 recommends increased bicycle parking to support this. Goals in Pillar 8 include improvements to the Green Bay Trail, such as increased lighting and sustainable landscaping with native plant species, that will improve its utilization and positively impact the environment.

PILLAR 8 **MOBILITY & ACCESSIBILITY**





PILLAR 5

Educational Excellence

VISION STATEMENT

“A community with a strong heritage rooted in education that acknowledges the whole child, fosters creativity and confidence, inspires lifelong learning, and develops civic responsibility.”



PILLAR 5:

Educational Excellence

***Vision Statement:** A community with a strong heritage rooted in education that acknowledges the whole child, fosters creativity and confidence, inspires lifelong learning, and develops civic responsibility.*

- Goal 5.1:** Recognizing that educational excellence is one of the primary reasons residents choose Winnetka, the Village will support the community’s public school districts, private schools, and other educational organizations by fostering a culture of student engagement and lifelong learning, as well as supporting the health and safety of students.
- Goal 5.2:** The Village will seek to collaborate with education-focused organizations to find synergies and efficiencies by sharing facilities, resources, and other assets.
- Goal 5.3:** The Village will create a child-friendly environment that supports safety and independence.

Winnetka Futures 2040 Plan includes ten Community Pillars. The following section describes Winnetka’s vision for **Pillar 5: Educational Excellence**. A summary of the existing conditions analysis, along with community input received over the course of the process are shared in the next few pages. Following that is a list of actionable initiatives for each of the goals listed above.

Winnetka Schools & Community Spaces

“In 20 years, students hope Winnetka will be more ethnically and socioeconomically diverse and feel less like a bubble. Students would like to see more investments in sustainability, and greater use of the Village’s public spaces and beaches.

- SUMMARY OF COMMENTS FROM WINNETKA SOPHOMORES

WINNETKA SCHOOL SPACES

As Winnetka’s neighborhood public schools are within walking distance of most Village residents, and because of the Village’s strong emphasis on education, school grounds themselves are an important place where parents and children gather and find community. Parents and children gather at drop-off and pick-up times (most children get rides to school rather than walk). They come together for special events such as Spring Sing, the Halloween ghost walk, fundraisers, and end of school celebrations. Parents frequently volunteer in the elementary schools, working in the gardens, serving as room parents, and helping in classrooms. There are naturally fewer opportunities for parental involvement at the upper elementary school grades, and this is especially true at the high school level. Still, the public and private schools are likely the most important place where Winnetkans volunteer. The following is a brief description of the schools in Winnetka:

New Trier Township High School District 203:

New Trier High School serves approximately 4,000 students in grades 9-12 between its two campuses. The district draws from five Villages (Winnetka, Glencoe, Wilmette, Northfield, and Kenilworth). The New Trier West campus houses freshman and is located in Northfield. New Trier East houses sophomores through seniors and is located in Winnetka.

HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

A group of sophomores and juniors at New Trier High School joined us on February 13, 2020 for a focus group discussion. Key themes that came out of that discussion are summarized below.

Strengths

Most students agree that their parents moved to Winnetka because of the schools. They love the walkability of the neighborhoods, being close to friends, and having independence while still feeling safe. The ability to bike around their neighborhoods was important when they were younger, though there are some areas that need more sidewalks. Technology in education was considered a strength, as well as a burden, at times. Students appreciate the resources they are provided, including laptops or iPads that are loaded with prepaid apps to help them, including meditation apps. Some find the online simulations they are required to do in their classes to be counterproductive to just being taught the material, while others find them very helpful.

Community

Students enjoy the close-knit sense of community. Many mention next door neighbors with whom they are so close, they feel like family. Neighborhood block parties bring people together, even as the demographics start to shift to younger families. The Community House was an important place for them when they were younger, offering everything from ballet and tap dance to acting and basketball—it was the place to be. Running into friends happens most often at Starbucks, Peet's, Graeter's Ice Cream, and the library. During the summer, the Fourth of July parade and fireworks brings together residents of all ages, but come August, their sense of community revolves around their school.

Improvements

Students were interested in seeing more activities along Winnetka's beaches, like a beach sports league that would give them more reason to go to the beach during the summer. The restaurant and retail options in the Village are not ideal for young people: they are generally too expensive or upscale for students, leading many students go to Wilmette for restaurant options or to Old Orchard for retail.

In 20 years, students hope Winnetka will be more ethnically and socioeconomically diverse and feel less like a bubble. Students would like to see more investments in sustainability and greater use of the Village's public spaces and beaches. While most were interested in moving back to Winnetka when they were older and had kids of their own, they hoped there would be more housing options, including condos and townhomes. Students hope Winnetka residents can embrace a larger conversation about mental health, as it is something that high school students and older residents alike struggle with but don't often talk about.

Winnetka Public Schools:



Carleton Washburne School

Winnetka Public Schools/District 36 is a high-performing elementary school district rooted in the philosophy of progressive education and serving approximately 1,663 students in grades K-8. It is one of five elementary districts that feed into New Trier High School. District 36 has maintained a longstanding commitment to the neighborhood schools concept, with three elementary schools serving grades K-4 located throughout the Village. All students attend the Skokie School for grades 5-6 and Carleton Washburne School for grades 7-8. The full list of Winnetka elementary public schools is as follows:

- » **Greeley School**
- » **Hubbard Woods School**
- » **Crow Island School**
- » **The Skokie School**
- » **Carleton Washburne School**

Winnetka Private Schools



North Shore County Day School

There are a number of exceptional private schools in Winnetka, including:

- » **North Shore Country Day School**—North Shore Country Day School is a selective, 100-year old private K-12 school located on a 16-acre campus

at Green Bay Road and Church Road in Winnetka. Rooted in progressive education, it serves 540 students from numerous communities.

- » **Sacred Heart School**—A Catholic grade school that serves approximately 200 students from nursery school to 8th grade and is located just west of the Hubbard Woods business district on Gage Street.
- » **The School of Saints Faith, Hope, and Charity**—A parochial, Catholic grade school and part of the Archdiocese of Chicago, FHC educates children in the formative years of 3-year-old Pre-Kindergarten through eighth grade.

WINNETKA-NORTHFIELD PUBLIC LIBRARY SPACES

The Winnetka-Northfield Public Library has its main library building on Green Bay Road across from the Winnetka Metra station. Recently renovated, the interior includes a large children's section, a public reading area in the adult section, a community room that opens up to the outdoors, and The Studio, a maker space that offers adult, teen, and youth classes. The Studio features the latest technology and equipment, such as 3D printers, Adobe Creative Cloud software, and a laser engraver, as well as classic art mediums like paint and canvas to inspire and educate a community of artistic makers and creators. Library staff support an additional branch of the library in downtown Northfield.



Young Family in Winnetka

COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

EDUCATORS

Representatives from Winnetka Public Schools, North Shore Country Day School (NSCD), Harkness House for Children, and Winnetka Community Nursery gathered on February 13, 2020 and on October 11, 2021 for focus group discussions. Key themes are summarized below.

Coordination

Local schools have found working with the Village to make changes to their sites to be a burdensome process, one which they hope can be streamlined so that updates to existing spaces do not require such a high level of scrutiny. Another way the Village and Park District could help area educators is by providing a list of preferred vendors and contractors. While important coordination and sharing between schools takes place, for instance, NSCD rents turf fields at the Skokie Playfields, there are more opportunities for this to occur. Creating an inventory of assets from willing organizations, or conducting a twice-yearly meeting of board chairs/executive directors among the taxing bodies and not for profits, would help entities use resources more efficiently.

Technology

Given Winnetka's lack of racial and socioeconomic diversity, technology is a strong tool for teachers to expand student's world view. As schools continue to adopt new technology, there are opportunities for the Village to become more technologically advanced as well. Creating a Village-wide WiFi network and storage cloud are ideas popular on the east coast and in Europe. Investing in fiber-optic infrastructure (or getting on a pilot program) would help the schools as well as residents, who work from home. Renewable energy is another area where the Village could get ahead: Winnetka could be a hub of energy generation, with solar panels on all schools and new housing. Sustainability initiatives should partner with schools to let kids get involved.

Growth & Changing Needs

As lifestyle preferences change, the Village must adapt. Young families want safe sidewalk networks, child-friendly communities, vibrant walkable downtowns, and homes that have been remodeled. They also want to see more diversity of all kinds, intentional design of public spaces, and engagement with civic leaders to instill independence in children. The Village could limit demolitions by streamlining the rehabilitation process. Investing in cultural institutions is another way Winnetka could set itself apart: there are so many bits and pieces of arts and culture activity in Winnetka, but not a full-fledged scene. The price of Winnetka's housing stock can hinder diversity, as well as the ability of local teachers to live in the community. In surrounding communities, such as Highland Park and Wilmette, organizations like Community Partners for Affordable Housing (CPAH) buy single-family homes and then lease them. These houses could be reserved for local teachers, firefighters, and police officers. Despite the desire to grow the population with more housing choices, the Winnetka Public Schools noted that they are close to capacity in the elementary schools, even with recent redistricting.

Educational Excellence

A community with a strong heritage rooted in education that acknowledges the whole child, fosters creativity and confidence, inspires lifelong learning, and develops civic responsibility.

GOAL 5.1

*Recognizing that educational excellence is one of the primary reasons residents choose Winnetka, the Village will **support the community’s public school districts, private schools, and other educational organizations** by fostering a culture of student engagement and lifelong learning, as well as supporting the health and safety of students.*

Winnetka’s schools and schoolchildren and are directly impacted by the physical, regulatory, and cultural context of the overall community. The ways that the Village communicates the value of education to Winnetkans, addresses land use or other permitting issues arising on school properties, fosters education and engagement among students, and supports health and safety at the schools, make a difference.

Initiative 5.1.1

Consider amendments to the zoning ordinance to provide additional clarity regarding pre-kindergarten and daycare institutions to better support the establishment and operation of early childhood education in the Village. This could include changing certain special uses to permitted uses.

Parents of young children often report difficulty finding adequate pre-K and daycare for their young children, even in Winnetka. In a community dedicated to educational excellence, a lack of early childhood education is problematic. The Village should consider amending its zoning ordinance to provide additional support for educational institutions, where possible.



Daycare Space

Initiative 5.1.2

Help foster civic responsibility among students by exploring with local schools the creation of a program to educate students regarding local government. This could include partnering with local schools to develop a local government curriculum by which Village staff members would visit classrooms to talk about their work and Village governance, or establishing a one-day program where students visit Village facilities to learn about local government.

Fostering civic responsibility among students at a young age has a wealth of benefits. This approach generally supports core educational goals and explicitly advances progressive education: educating citizens for a democracy. Students can better learn how to be productive members of a community and potentially become civic volunteers themselves one day. As children bring home lessons they’ve learned about local government, they spread the culture of civic engagement and productive dialogue.

Initiative 5.1.3

Communicate the importance of Winnetka's heritage of educational excellence in Village publications.

Having Winnetka's educational heritage echoed in Village-wide publications helps underscore its importance to decision-makers and to the community at large, especially to new residents.

Initiative 5.1.4

Continue to provide high-quality police and fire assistance for safety training and education for staff and students that is consistent with State legislation and national best practices.

Schools often depend on safety training and education provided by the Village's police and fire personnel. In today's environment of public safety, it is imperative for the Village to continually provide and refine all types of school safety training efforts and increase awareness, as necessary.

GOAL 5.2

The Village will seek to collaborate with education-focused organizations to find synergies and efficiencies by sharing facilities, resources, and other assets.

Community-academic partnerships can increase the success and overall impact of all organizations involved. With the shared interest of continuing to provide excellence in educational offerings to all ages, organizations can adapt synergy-promoting models that sustain open dialogue, collaboration, and engagement.

Initiative 5.2.1

Collaborate, where possible, with public school districts to find synergies and cost savings, as well as to identify grants and other funding sources. Identify similar opportunities for collaboration with other educational and institutional organizations.

In a world of limited resources, it is important for the Village and its schools to collaborate where possible to reduce costs and find funding sources.



Winnetka School District 36

Initiative 5.2.2

Consider creating specific zoning amendments or a district for institutional uses to reduce procedural burdens which may occur when school facilities need to comply with zoning standards designed for single-family homes.

Due to the lack of an institutional zoning district in Winnetka, schools and other institutions are typically nestled within residential zoning districts. Project permitting that would be fairly routine in an institutional zoning district (minor additions or the redesign of playgrounds) are challenging within the context of a residential district. Zoning commissioners have expressed their frustration at having to weigh the impact of minor additions to an already obvious high nonconformity, and the schools report frustration at having to make the case that their school building fits the criteria designed for a single-family home. The Village should consider whether adopting institutional zoning, rather than continuing to place schools and other institutions in single-family districts, would be beneficial.

Initiative 5.2.3

As part of the Village's efforts to encourage community involvement, collaborate with schools on ways seniors and non-parents could help meet the need for school volunteers.

School administrators report that young parents are less likely to volunteer compared to past decades. However, seniors generally have more time to spare and may feel disconnected from schools that were once at the center

of their family's life. Filling the gap of much-needed volunteers at schools would foster civic engagement, bridge generational divides, and potentially save taxpayer money.

Initiative 5.2.3

Collaborate with other best-in-class school districts and villages on ways to partner to create strong, more cohesive communities.

GOAL 5.3

The Village will create a child-friendly environment that supports safety and independence.

Physical spaces are often designed for the average person and tend to overlook the community's youngest members: the children. Winnetka understands the value of having children be as its core focus, fostering a safe environment and further encouraging a sense of independence.

Initiative 5.3.1

Encourage student independence and physical activity by providing safe, attractive, and welcoming pedestrian, bicycle, and public transit access to schools and throughout the Village.

Winnetka is fortunate to have neighborhood schools located in walkable areas. Encouraging students to walk or bike to school would reduce traffic congestion, increase pedestrian safety, reduce car emissions, improve student health, and foster a student's sense of independence. While this is arguably a cultural and behavioral shift in mindset, it certainly requires critical physical improvements to foster a pedestrian and cyclist-focused environment. The Village should provide adequate bike paths, bridge gaps in the sidewalk network, provide children-appropriate signage, improve lighting where needed, and better-regulate busy crosswalks, especially those around schools.

CHERRY HILLS, CO

CASE STUDY:

Safe Routes to School

Cherry Hills School District applied for and received a \$30,000 two-year "Safe Routes to School" grant from the Colorado Department of Transportation. The district sought to both increase the number of students using active transportation and to partner with parents to educate students about traffic safety. Parents were encouraged to help organize a "walking school bus," where groups of students meet at a specific location and walk with an adult to school.



Initiative 5.3.2

Consider educational interpretive signs and exhibits, interactive public art, and technology-enhanced educational information in the public realm to foster learning, creative problem-solving, and environmental awareness.

Improving the public realm with educational information and public art emphasizes the importance of lifelong learning, welcomes children (as well as other Winnetkans) into public spaces and public realms, and creates “civic infrastructure” – physical places where community-building happens.



© The Winnetka Public Schools

PILLAR 6

Healthy & Engaging Lifestyles

VISION STATEMENT

“A unique lakefront community that values a variety of carefully-managed and well-connected parks and open spaces, and that treasures unlimited access to recreational opportunities and cultural pursuits, helping residents achieve a balanced and fulfilled lifestyle.”



PILLAR 6:

Healthy & Engaging Lifestyles

Vision Statement: *A unique lakefront community that values a variety of carefully-managed and well-connected parks and open spaces, and that treasures unlimited access to recreational opportunities and cultural pursuits, helping residents achieve a balanced and fulfilled lifestyle.*

Goal 6.1: The Village will promote and encourage partnerships with other units of government and agencies to conserve, restore, and enhance natural features and ecosystems, to ensure accessibility to natural areas, parks, and other open or public spaces, and to support recreational facilities and programs that support the health of residents of all ages and abilities.

Goal 6.2: The Village will support and promote community institutions and other units of government in the advancement of programs and facilities that provide life-long educational opportunities that broaden all Winnetka residents' understanding of the world in which we live.

Goal 6.3: The Village will support community-wide arts and cultural efforts that provide enrichment to community members through active participation, promotion, and programming efforts with other businesses, community institutions, and arts entities.

Goal 6.4: The Village will support health and wellness through innovative and diversified recreational, learning, and cultural opportunities in its public parks, plazas, trails, and open spaces.

Winnetka Futures 2040 Plan includes ten Community Pillars. The following section describes Winnetka's vision for **Pillar 6: Healthy & Engaging Lifestyles**. A summary of the existing conditions analysis, along with community input received over the course of the process are shared in the next few pages. Following that is a list of actionable initiatives for each of the goals listed above.

Parks, Open Space, Bluffs, & Lakefront

“Winnetka's parks and open space were definitely one of the reasons we chose this community to settle down in.

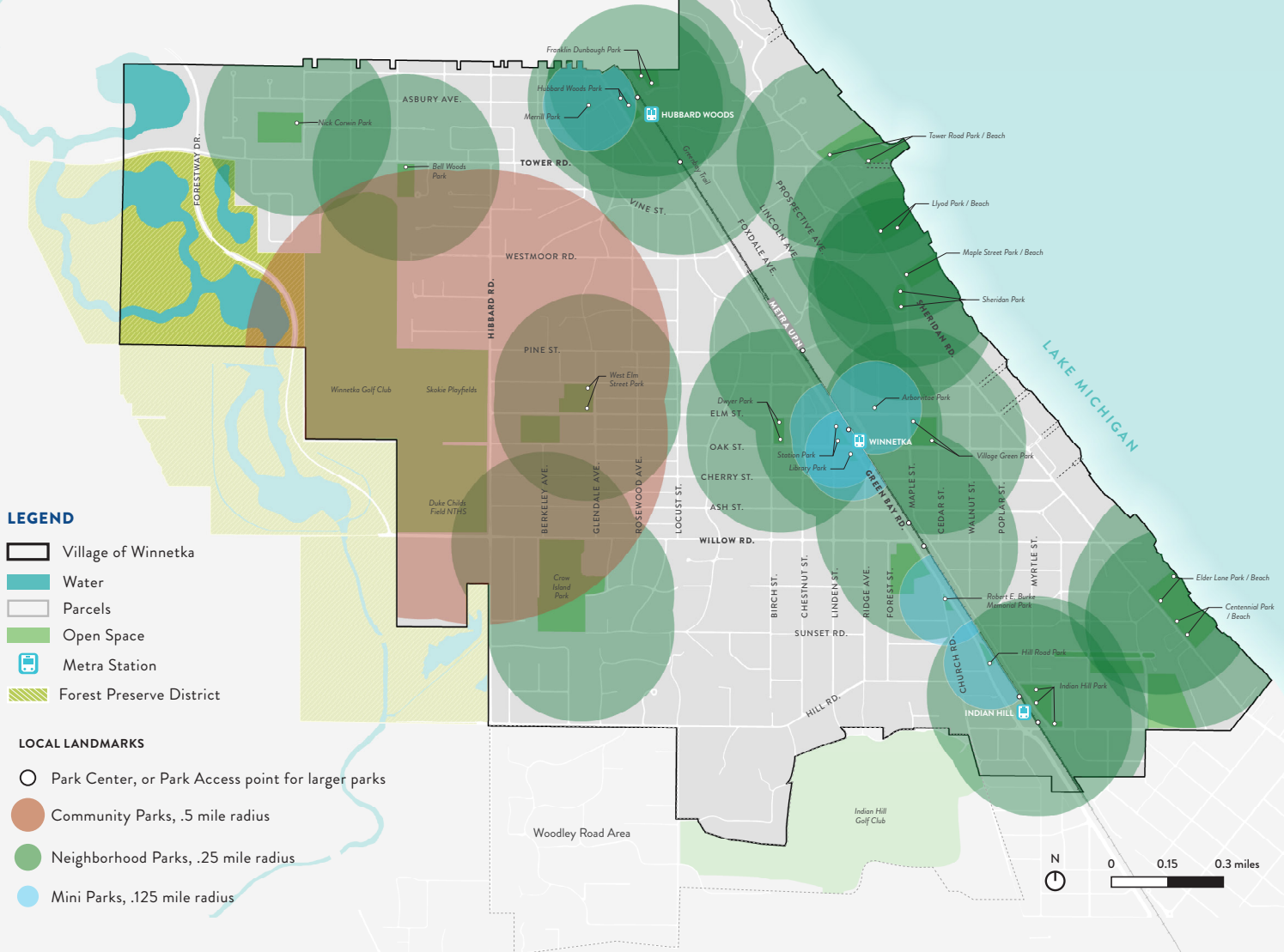
- COMMENT FROM STAKEHOLDER LISTENING SESSION

Winnetka has always been a community that values its parks and open spaces and residents often cite the abundance of these resources as one of its most attractive features. Winnetka's open spaces are well-planned and spread throughout the community. The Village has approximately 388 acres of parks and open space, which comprises roughly 16 percent of Winnetka's total land use. The open space acreage includes parks, forest preserve lands, beaches and bluff areas, and recreational areas. However, open space goes beyond parks; a comprehensive approach must be taken to ensure adequate open space resources and preservation of the natural environment. Open space for parks and recreation, resource conservation, public health and safety, and character-defining features should all be considered. Winnetka's open spaces are highlighted in Figure 31.

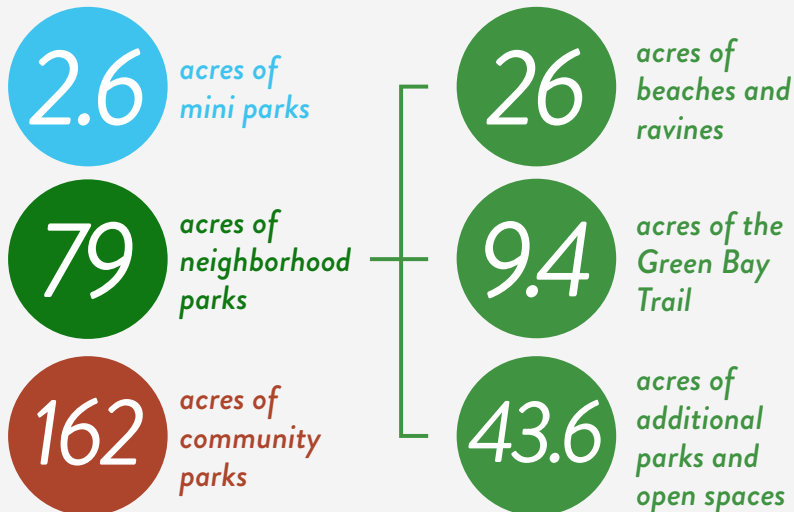


Dwyer Park © Winnetka Park District

FIGURE 31: PARKS LEVEL OF SERVICE



WINNETKA PARK DISTRICT INVENTORY INCLUDES PARKS, BEACHES AND BLUFF AREAS, AND RECREATIONAL AREAS.



205 acres
ACTIVE RECREATION - includes programmable parks that offer special facilities, courses, fields, or equipment.

38 acres
PASSIVE RECREATION - includes simple parks or environmentally-sensitive open spaces - typically not programmed.

COMMUNITY OPEN SPACE

Public parks and open spaces in Winnetka are managed by two agencies: the Winnetka Park District and Forest Preserves of Cook County. The combined park and open space acreage for both agencies in Winnetka is 372.25 acres. The Winnetka Park District is the largest provider, operating more than 25 parks and open spaces. These fall into one of three categories:



Mini Parks

Mini Parks are small-scale open spaces that meet a variety of needs, including: small event spaces; play areas for children; and spaces for relaxing, meeting friends, taking lunch breaks, etc. *Examples include: Merrill Park, Station Park, Hill Road Park, Happ Road Park, etc.*



Neighborhood Parks

Neighborhood Parks are generally designed for informal active and passive recreation and community gathering. Elements include playgrounds, picnic areas, sports fields, and trail systems. *Examples include: Centennial Park, Elder Lane Park, Hubbard Woods Park, Lloyd Park, etc.*



Community Parks

Community Parks are larger parks that focus on meeting regional and community-wide recreation needs. They host athletic teams and affiliate programs on courts and fields. Skokie Playfield is the only Community Park in the Winnetka Park District's boundary.

LAKEFRONT BEACHES, PARKS, AND BLUFFS

Winnetka's lakefront is one of its most prized assets. Although most of the lakefront is lined with single-family homes and large private estates, there are ample opportunities for public access. To ensure the long-term preservation and enhancement of the lakefront, the Winnetka Park District developed and adopted the Winnetka Waterfront 2030 Master Plan in 2016. The plan provides a sustainable strategy for the preservation, protection, restoration, and enhancement of Winnetka's lakefront for both Winnetka residents and a broad range of Lake Michigan user groups. This plan is meant to serve as a conceptual guide for future projects designed to preserve and enhance Winnetka's lakefront beaches and parks, strengthen resiliency measures, and guard against bluff and shoreline erosion.

Tower Road Park and Beach

Tower Road Park and Beach anchors the Park District's lakefront on the north. It will continue to serve as the primary swimming beach and the northern hub for the Park District's boardwalk/fitness trail course.



Winnetka Beach

SHORELINE STABILIZATION

Due to current fluctuating record-high water levels, high wave action, and other environmental factors, shorelines along Lake Michigan are experiencing erosion and significant destruction at unprecedented rates. Some shorelines are eroding at a rate of 17 feet per year. Winnetka's lakefront, both publicly and privately owned, has been negatively impacted by shoreline erosion.

Bluffs of Winnetka

The bluffs of Winnetka's lakefront are an iconic natural land form recognized early on as a symbol of the community. Winnetka's prior comprehensive plans have noted the

need to protect and enhance its natural features and environmental resources, including the bluffs. The Lake Michigan bluffs and the ravines leading to the lake are important features of the Village, providing pleasant wooded areas and affording beautiful views of the lake. Bluffs and ravines are fragile ecological resources that should be properly managed. Building too close to the edge of a bluff or ravine can weaken it, possibly leading to collapse and affecting neighboring properties. Failure to maintain proper plantings on the slope can lead to erosion. Lake Michigan bluffs, if not properly protected from waves and high water, can be severely eroded by the lake.

The Park District has taken efforts at monitoring and restoring its parkland. As with shoreline erosion, bluff erosion is a major concern across Lake Michigan.

SPECIAL USE FACILITIES

Residents find community in many different Winnetka Park District (WPD) spaces and programs. For example, the **A.C. Nielsen Tennis Center**, a Winnetka Park District facility features eight indoor and 12 outdoor courts (five lighted), a nursery, complete pro shop, and shower/locker room facilities. Group and private lessons are available for all ages and abilities, as are permanent court time rentals. Community meetings and public engagement gatherings are often held in the WPD's Community Room, located near the WPD offices in the relatively new addition to the Nielsen Tennis Center, and in the Tennis Lounge, with its fireplace and living room-style furniture.

Additional special use facilities in Winnetka include:

- » The **Winnetka paddle tennis facility**
- » The **Park District's Winnetka Golf Club**
- » The indoor **Winnetka Ice Arena**
- » The **Skokie Playfields**.

PARKLAND LEVEL-OF-SERVICE ANALYSIS

Level-of-Service (LOS) analyses evaluate how well parks and amenities serve the current needs of the community. Benchmarks for park and recreation agencies by the National Parks and Recreation Association (NRPA) measure the total acreage needs of communities. LOS is assessed through multiple avenues: acreage, distribution, and amenities.

Acreage

Acreage LOS is the calculation of the recommended minimum land required to support recreation activities and facilities for a given population. NRPA's population ratio method (10 acres / 1,000 population) focuses on the direct relationship between recreation space acreage and people served. A community with a population of about 12,000 should have about 120 acres of total park and open space, per the NRPA's ratio. With 372 acres of parks and open space, Winnetka is well-served and has over three times the minimum LOS recommendations.



*acres of parks and
open space in Winnetka*

Distribution Level-of-Service

Distribution Level-of-Service (DLOS) Analysis studies the geographic distribution of parks and evaluates how equitably these sites are placed throughout the community. This may reveal that some areas are under-served or that the district is serving its residents and should shift its efforts towards maintaining and updating existing sites. The LOS of Winnetka's parks is highlighted in Figure 31.

Mini park service areas (blue discs) and neighborhood park service areas (green discs) are adjacent to or truncated by Green Bay Road, a major barrier. Conversely, the community park service area (red disc) is not interrupted. The overlapping service area discs create a gradient ranging from light to dark, illustrating to which degree residents are served. Residents who fall within a dark area are served by multiple parks and their amenities.

Overall Park Distribution Analysis

Given that Winnetka exceeds the recommended acreage for parks and open space, typical service area metrics have been altered to show potential gaps in service. The overall park service area map shows a 0.125-mile, a 0.25-mile and 0.5-mile service area radius around the existing mini parks, neighborhood parks, and community parks, respectively. Residents living east of the Green Bay Trail are highly served by neighborhood parks. The Green Bay Trail, categorized as a neighborhood park, has an uninterrupted service area that extends west of the trail. To the west, Skokie Playfield, Winnetka's only community park, is the main recreation space, along with several neighborhood parks.

Overall, the vast majority—90%—of Winnetka residents have access to a mini, neighborhood, or community park within zero to 0.5 mile of where they live.



of Winnetka residents live within a 10 minute walking distance from a neighborhood park.



Winnetka Lakefront

Recreation Programs

In addition to parks, the WPD provides residents and surrounding communities with numerous annual recreation and leisure programs that include fitness, sports, creative arts, education, social activities, and special events. The District's offerings cater to all generations, including young adults and seniors. WPD has robust programming for children, including a variety of summer camps, special events, and sports.

WPD provides a variety of adult recreation programming, including golf, ice skating, paddle tennis, and tennis. WPD also offers a variety of fitness programs, including fitness bootcamp, High Intensity Training (HIT), and yoga.

The North Shore Senior Center (NSSC) in Northfield is the primary senior center available to Winnetka seniors. NSSC provides a variety of services and programs to Winnetka seniors, including a range of fitness and recreation courses and classes. Recreation classes are offered in tennis, exercise and dance, health and wellness education, and personal fitness.

COMMUNITY OPEN HOUSE RESULTS

What big ideas do you have for park and open space do you think are suitable for Winnetka?

There were numerous responses to this question from all demographic groups. Dog park and dog beach were among the more popular responses. The need to improve the Green Bay Trail and park bathrooms was mentioned. Participants also mentioned a desire for additional open space at the post office site, as well as additional amenities, such as an expanded marina and food options or restaurants along the beaches and lake front.

RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS

The spiritual health needs of Winnetka residents are met by the following religious institutions:

- » Christ Church, an Episcopal church
- » Congregation Hakafa, a Reform Jewish congregation
- » Grace Presbyterian Church
- » Lake Shore Unitarian Society
- » Sacred Church/Divine Mercy Parish, a Catholic church
- » Saint Faith, Hope & Charity Church, a Catholic church
- » Winnetka Bible Church
- » Winnetka Congregational Church, an independent congregation-led Christian church.
- » Winnetka Presbyterian Church



Winnetka Presbyterian Church

OTHER COMMUNITY SPACES

Winnetkans gather in other non-public spaces as well. Residents often mention running into friends when at the grocery store (Grand Foods especially, but also Lakeside Foods). They also congregate at Winnetka's various coffee shops, including Peet's, Starbucks, and the recently-opened Hometown Coffee and Juice. One non-public space that serves an important community function is The Book Stall. This private locally-owned bookstore is a natural gathering space partly due to its connection to Peet's Coffee. The Book Stall's knowledgeable employees (several of whom are former schoolteachers) provide a high level of service to adults and children alike. The store hosts numerous lectures by visiting authors, book clubs, and even a regular comedy series.



Hometown Coffee and Juice © Patch



Healthy & Engaging Lifestyles

***Vision Statement:** A unique lakefront community that values a variety of carefully-managed and well-connected parks and open spaces, and that treasures unlimited access to recreational opportunities and cultural pursuits, helping residents achieve a balanced and fulfilled lifestyle.*

GOAL 6.1

The Village will promote and encourage partnerships with other units of government and agencies to conserve, restore, and enhance natural features and ecosystems, to ensure accessibility to natural areas, parks, and other open or public spaces, and to support recreational facilities and programs that support the health of residents of all ages and abilities.

Public park and open spaces, facilities, and program offerings are provided by several agencies in the Village of Winnetka. While all these agencies provide open space and recreation opportunities, they do so in varying capacities. Providing access to a variety of open spaces through agency collaboration is key to increasing quality of life and mental health benefits for current and future Winnetkans. While the 372 acres of open space exceed the minimum level-of-service analysis, the Village should continue to consider ways to collaborate with other providers as opportunities arise.

Initiative 6.1.1

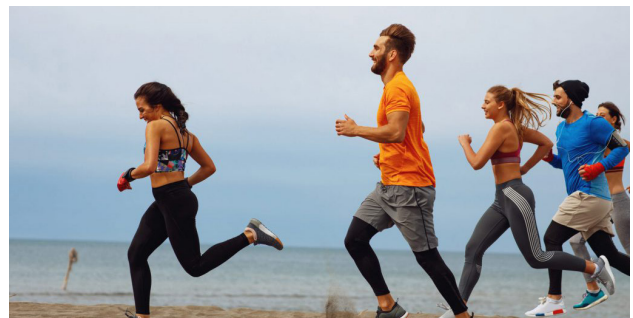
Continue to collaborate with the Park District, local school districts, Forest Preserves of Cook County, and others to create opportunities that enhance accessibility to the open spaces of Winnetka.

Consider eliminating barriers to access by completing and expanding paths in parks, connecting segments of existing trails, and providing opportunities for improved pedestrian crossings and connection points, among other approaches.

Initiative 6.1.2

Continue to collaborate with the Park District, School District, Library District, Community House of Winnetka, and other community institutions to offer programs that maintain active and thriving Village recreation programs, offering a variety of sports, exercise, arts and crafts, cultural, life skills, educational, social, and leisure programs for residents of all ages and abilities.

The ongoing success of programming that caters to a multitude of generations in Winnetka will require continued and improved collaboration between public and private recreation providers. This will allow the Village to rapidly respond to the growing and ever-changing needs of the community and its niche users. As the community continues to develop its recreation offerings and expand programming, agreements with affiliate organizations, whether formal or informal, can better track resources, offerings, and scheduling of indoor and outdoor spaces.



Adult Triathlon Prep © Winnetka Park District

Initiative 6.1.3

Coordinate the sharing of information with the Park District, nonprofit service providers, private leagues, and the school districts so that the public is made aware of the full range of recreational opportunities.

In an active community such as Winnetka, there is always a plethora of events, programs, and recreational opportunities across multiple agencies. Providing a unified calendar of events that is administered by all agencies, (e.g., through a crowdsourcing platform), is one way to improve accessibility to a larger group of residents.

Initiative 6.1.4

Ensure that local regulations do not discourage businesses and nonprofits from providing private recreational and physical fitness training facilities in the community.

Initiative 6.1.5

Regularly share information with other local governments regarding grant opportunities to fund enhancements to the natural environment, public parks and open spaces, and public recreational facilities and programs.

GOAL 6.2

The Village will support and promote community institutions and other units of government in the advancement of programs and facilities that provide life-long educational opportunities, helping to broaden all Winnetka residents' understanding of the world in which we live.

Understanding the world that we live in broadens our perspective and provides residents of all ages, and particularly the next generations of Winnetkans, the ability to recognize interdependence and position themselves as global citizens.

Initiative 6.2.1

Support the efforts of community institutions such as the Winnetka-Northfield Public Library, Oakton Community College, and the Winnetka Youth Organization to create programs that provide lifelong learning opportunities about Winnetka and the world.

The ability for Winnetkans to broaden their awareness will continue to enforce a positive attitude to lifelong learning through access to digital and non-digital educational resources and services. For residents of all stages of life, this means continued access to learning opportunities. For the organizations providing learning opportunities, this encourages strengthening their capacity to advance educational curricula, and addressing barriers that limit collaboration and partnerships.

Initiative 6.2.2

Ensure that local regulations and processes do not discourage businesses and nonprofits from providing supplemental educational opportunities for Winnetka parents and their children.



Educational Programs © Winnetka Library

GOAL 6.3

*The Village will **support community-wide arts and cultural efforts** that provide cultural enrichment to community members through active participation, promotion, and programming efforts with businesses, community institutions, and arts entities.*

Identifying opportunities to enrich Winnetka's prosperity and well-being through accessible arts and culture initiatives has the potential to better interconnect the community. A stronger sense of place can be achieved through genuine and unique expressions of the Village's identity. This goal aims to engage the local arts community and cultural organizations in enhancing community vibrancy and building support for transformative placemaking energy.

Initiative 6.3.1

Collaborate with businesses and community organizations, such as the North Shore Art League, to create programs that encourage participation in arts and culture.

Arts and culture programs are often a reflection of a community's identity, influences, and traditions. Expanding and growing Winnetka's art programs would positively impact residents of all ages, as well as provide local artists and not-for-profit organizations the opportunity to be more impactful. Creative arts and culture programs go beyond the visual and performing arts to include applied arts, such as fashion and interior design; literary arts, such as poetry and novels; and culinary arts, such as dining, baking, and wine and beer making.



Winnetka Club - Fashion Show

Initiative 6.3.2

Consider creating a cultural arts advisory board to collaborate with local businesses and organizations, facilitate the programming of additional cultural and arts activities, and consider the installation of public art around the Village. Public art could include temporary installations in public buildings, sculptures in public open space, or school projects displayed in public places.

CASE STUDY:

Arts + Culture Advisory Board

Arts + Culture Advisory Board in Charlotte, NC, created in January 2021, strengthens policies and strategies to stabilize the arts and culture sector in the city. Aside from identifying opportunities for collaboration among artists, locals, organizations, and other partners, the advisory board is focused on increasing annual investment in arts and culture and securing sustainable funding resources for a variety of initiatives. An arts and culture board can further grow the arts ecosystem and respond to community needs and opportunities.

Initiative 6.3.3

Develop a program by which residents may provide dedications in memory of, or to honor, Winnetka residents and business owners.



CHICAGO, IL

CASE STUDY:

Dedication Program

The Chicago Park District developed a tree dedication program, The Green Deed Tree, that allows residents to have a tree planted in the park of their choice, providing lasting recognition of the significant people and occasions in their lives. A small donation covers the tree planting, which is secured for a minimum of two years from the date of planting.

GOAL 6.4

The Village will support health and wellness through innovative and diversified recreational, learning, and cultural opportunities in its public parks, plazas, trails, and open spaces.

Winnetka is well-known for its one-of-a-kind green spaces and lakefront beaches. Through increased access, varied amenities, and program offerings, the Village and its community partners can continue to provide opportunities for physical activity to support Winnetkans' health and wellness. In addition to physical health, parks, trails, and open spaces also enhance quality of life and improve mental health by providing access to and connections with nature, which have been vital to communities, particularly during the pandemic.

Initiative 6.4.1

Support and promote health and wellness for all residents through a safe, connected, and accessible pedestrian and bicycle network, and by offering resources for recreation.

Initiative 6.4.2

Continue to encourage information-sharing with local bodies of government and other public and nonprofit organizations regarding open space and recreation to foster the sharing of resources, ideas, and concerns, so as to lead to new solutions or efficiencies.



Outdoor Yoga

Initiative 6.4.3

Improve existing, or create new, non-motorized linkages among recreation and open space facilities for Village residents, businesses, and schools, and among the facilities themselves. Ensure that adequate linkages to regional trail systems are also in place.



WINNETKA, IL

CASE STUDY: Green Bay Trail

The Green Bay Trail runs along the east side of Chicago's Metra Union Pacific North commuter rail line almost entirely along the route of the former Chicago, North Shore & Milwaukee interurban electric railroad. Improvements to the 2.4 miles of this paved trail, encompassed within the boundary of the Village, would strengthen and support community health and wellness, mobility and connectedness, safety and security, business district vitality, and preservation of open space and natural systems. A master planning process is currently underway to evaluate the trail's usage, appearance, and design for potential upgrades and enhancements, through a community-led study.

© The Winnetka Public Schools



Initiative 6.4.4

Support the efforts of the Park District and other community organizations to expand and/or modify Winnetka's recreational programming to fill gaps in services.

Initiative 6.4.5

Partner with the local school districts and other community organizations to enhance local programs that support the social and emotional health of our youth, and that support innovative learning.



© Chicago Tribune

WINNETKA, IL

CASE STUDY: Social Emotional Learning

Winnetka District 36 established SEL (Social Emotional Learning) as a key goal and started implementation during the 2019-20 school year. In coordination with CASEL (Collaborative, Academic and Social Emotional Learning) New Trier High School is planning professional development on a Township-wide initiative to support SEL in all school communities which started in June of 2020. This direction ensures that students have improved academic performances, better attitudes and behaviors, and reduced emotional and social withdrawals. For teachers, it will improve patience and empathy, encourage healthy communication, create safe learning environments, and reduce burnouts.



PILLAR 7

Community Infrastructure, Services, & Technology

VISION STATEMENT

“A forward-thinking tradition of delivering exceptional and efficient public services and infrastructure systems to meet the current and future needs of the community.”



PILLAR 7:

Community Infrastructure, Services, & Technology

Vision Statement: *A forward-thinking tradition of delivering exceptional and efficient public services and infrastructure systems to meet the current and future needs of the community.*

Goal 7.1: The Village will ensure infrastructure systems and services are evaluated, updated, and modernized to meet the needs of current and future residents.

Goal 7.2: The Village will continue to update the community stormwater management systems, implementing both constructed and green infrastructure solutions, to alleviate flood risk and improve stormwater runoff quality.

Goal 7.3: The Village will provide a reliable and safe potable water source through cost-effective intake, treatment, and distribution of Lake Michigan's water resource.

Goal 7.4: The Village will provide a reliable and cost-effective sanitary sewer system in conformance with the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago's Watershed Management Ordinance (WMO).

Goal 7.5: The Village will continue to operate and maintain a cost-effective, efficient, and reliable electrical distribution system.

Goal 7.6: The Village will regularly assess, maintain, and improve Village roadways, parking facilities, accessibility, sidewalks, station areas, and bike facilities.

Goal 7.7: The Village will identify and support the incorporation of new technologies to assist infrastructure and public safety systems efficiencies, cost effectiveness, and advanced community communications.

Winnetka Futures 2040 Plan includes ten Community Pillars. The following section describes Winnetka's vision for **Pillar 7: Community Infrastructure, Services, and Technology**. A summary of the existing conditions analysis along with community input received over the course of the process are shared in the next few pages. Following that is a list of actionable initiatives for each of the goals listed above.

Infrastructure & Utilities

STORMWATER MANAGEMENT & FLOOD MITIGATION

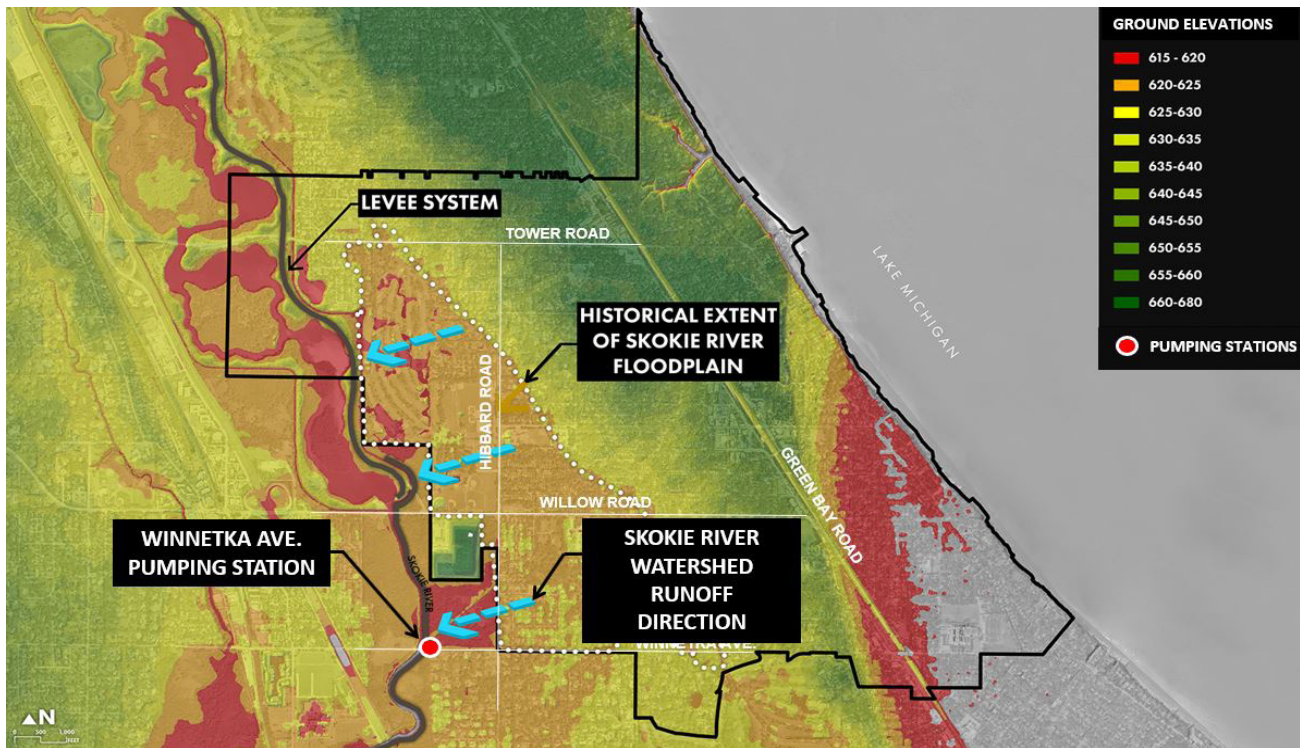
Stormwater management and flood control issues moved to the forefront of attention for the Village of Winnetka since the Village experienced the remnants of Hurricane Ike in September 2008. In response to this storm event, the Village performed a series of stormwater studies and identified a number of potential improvements intended to address frequent flooding in several areas of the Village. Since 2008, the Village has completed some of the stormwater improvement projects but also suffered through two more historical rain events in July 2011 and April 2013, further emphasizing the need for the Village to maintain its pursuit of stormwater and flood control improvements.

The Village of Winnetka is a fully developed community largely served by two major watersheds.

- » The Lake Michigan watershed generally conveys runoff east of Green Bay Road toward Lake Michigan.
- » The Skokie River watershed generally conveys runoff west of Green Bay Road toward the Skokie River, as illustrated in Figure 32.

Each of these two major watersheds has a mapped flood plain. The Lake Michigan flood plain generally covers the lake shore and does not encumber any significant structures. The Skokie River flood plain generally covers the south and southwest side of Winnetka and encumbers hundreds of structures and properties.

FIGURE 32: SKOKIE RIVER WATERSHED



However, most flooding that occurs in Winnetka is not directly related to river flooding or elevated lake levels. In the 1930s, a levee system was built between Winnetka and the Skokie River with the intent of protecting Winnetka from river flooding. Since that time, development behind the levee continued without much consideration for stormwater conveyance and almost no stormwater detention. This resulted in an existing storm sewer system that is under capacity and unable to handle significant rainfall events.

In the case of the Skokie River watershed west of Green Bay Road, runoff from the watershed is trapped behind the levee system and dependent on undersized storm sewers and pumping of stormwater over the levee. In the Lake Michigan watershed east of Green Bay Road, stormwater gets trapped in various local depressional areas that do not have sufficient storm sewer capacity to drain to Lake Michigan.

The Village has performed a series of surveys, site investigations, and flood risk reduction assessments to determine areas of the Village susceptible to significant roadway, private property, and structure flooding. From those studies, the Village has proceeded with several stormwater improvement projects

A number of additional stormwater improvement projects were recommended in the prior stormwater management and flood mitigation studies:

- » The Western and Southwestern Winnetka Stormwater Management Vision is a series of conveyance and storage projects identified through the Stormwater Alternatives Study to serve the West and Southwest Winnetka Area and the Provident Area. The Village is currently in the process of implementing these projects. Since the adoption of this Vision in 2016, the Village completed intergovernmental agreements with Winnetka Park District, New Trier High School District, Winnetka School District 36, and the Forest Preserve of Cook County necessary to begin implementation of these improvements, illustrated in Figure 33. Implementation of these projects is anticipated over the next two to five years, including the following key projects, which are required to provide the level of stormwater and flood protection intended under the Western and Southwestern Winnetka Stormwater Management Plan:
 - Winnetka Park District 18-Hole and Par-3 Golf Course surface storage projects.

Legend

- Proposed Storm Sewer (Phase I)
- Proposed Storm Sewer (Phase II)
- Proposed Ditching (Phase II)
- Proposed Storm Sewer (Phase III)
- Proposed Storm Sewer (Phase IV)
- FEMA 100yr Floodplain

18 Hole Golf Course Surface Storage Volume = 36.5 ac-ft

Little Duke Underground Storage Volume = 6.54 ac-ft

Par 3 Surface Storage Volume = 21.8 ac-ft

Phase I Improvements Completed in Conjunction with Phase II

Map showing streets: HOLLY LN, TRAPP LN, WESTMOOR TRL, HACKBERRY LN, CHATFIELD RD, LAUREL AVE, WESTMOOR RD, DINSMORE RD, ROSEWOOD AVE, STARR RD, PINE ST, WALDEN RD, LOCUST ST, VINE ST, SUPER AVE, ELORADO, LINCOLN AVE, PROSPECT AVE, FORDALE AVE, SUMMIT ST, GREENWAY, ANNADOWN, HUMBOLDT AVE, ALLEY, ELM ST, CHERRY ST, OAK ST, PROVIDENT AVE, ASH ST, BIRCH ST, CHESTNUT ST, MOUNT PLEASANT RD, SUNSET RD, ALLES RD, HARDING RD, LAGOON DR, LAYROBE AVE, LOCKWOOD AVE, ELDON LN, TERESA AVE, EBERSLEY DR, FRONTIER, HARDY, W, E, S, N, 200, 400, 600 Feet.

- This improvement would serve the Winnetka Avenue Underpass Area. This project is not currently planned for implementation but will be considered in future infrastructure improvement programming.
- » Cherry Street Outlet project includes new 36-inch to 72-inch storm sewer on Oak, Cherry, and Poplar Streets, conveying flow across Sheridan Road to a water quality structure, and outlet to Lake Michigan. This improvement would serve the Cherry Street Area. This project is not currently planned for implementation but will be considered in future infrastructure improvement programming.

WATER

Winnetka's location on Lake Michigan is crucial to supplying a reliable source of drinking water to its residents. The revenue generated by the water utility is necessary to sustain a high level of service to the residents, conduct operations of the system, sustain equipment and materials in a preventative manner, and replace components of the water system as failures occur. The Village's water system has operated as a public water supply for decades and continues to operate under these conditions.

The Village has the capability of drawing water from about 1,200 feet and 3,000 feet from the shoreline through intake pipes from Lake Michigan, giving it a protected inlet to the water system. The water treatment plant, constructed in 1922 and expanded in 1932, provides the necessary treatment for operators to meet both State and Federal Drinking Water Regulations on a consistent basis. The facility is permitted by the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency for a production capacity up to 16 million gallons per day, which is sufficient for drinking water supply, day-to-day water use, property and landscape sprinkling, and fire flow protection.

The water produced by the water treatment facility is pumped into a 71.5 mile network of pipes for distribution to residents, businesses, and institutions within the Village. The Village also serves unincorporated Indian Hill, the Woodley Road Area, and Longmeadow Road. The Village has identified that more than 58-percent of the distribution system is more than 100 years old. Planning efforts in 2017 set a goal starting by 2025 to annually replace 1% of the water distribution system.

In 2021, the Governor signed into law the Lead Service Line Replacement and Notification Act, which requires municipalities to develop and maintain a complete material inventory of private lead service lines to homes, businesses, and institutions and to implement a comprehensive plan for the replacement of those lines. Based upon the Village's current inventory of service lines, approximately one-third of the 4,493 services are lead services (1,287 full lead services; 173 partial lead services). Under the Act, the Village would have until the mid-2040s to replace the service lines.

ELECTRIC SERVICES

The Village of Winnetka provides electric services to its residents, businesses, and institutions. The Village last expanded its generating capacity to 30,000 kW in 1978. That generating capacity is now just one component of a triple-redundant electricity supply system, with the Village-owned Northfield Substation and ComEd's Northbrook Substation being the other two components. Under normal situations, the Village's generation capacity is always available as needed to replace imported power from the two substations and is called to generate power, on average, 31 days per year under contractual arrangements.

The electric distribution system has also grown to provide reliable and redundant electricity supply circuits to all parts of the Village. The system consists of three distribution load centers throughout the Village, interconnected with underground cabling such that each load center may be served from redundant paths. From these distribution load centers, electricity to all parts of the Village is continued via a combination of overhead and underground circuits. The Village's recent policies state that all new electric lines should be buried underground.

Since March 1, 1991, electricity to meet all of Winnetka's power and energy requirements has been provided pursuant to contracts between the Village and the Illinois Municipal Electric Agency (IMEA). IMEA's primary function is to provide wholesale electricity to its members, which they, in turn, resell at retail. IMEA also sells power to other qualified municipal utilities like Winnetka. The IMEA was created to achieve "economies and efficiencies not possible for municipalities acting alone."



Winnetka Power Plant © Village of Winnetka

Is there a need to improve utilities? How can that be achieved?

Overall, participants' feedback was that the Village provides excellent utility services, generally. There were a variety of responses to this question from all demographic groups, with empty nester and young seniors providing the most feedback. Participants mentioned the desire for Winnetka to be a leader in sustainable and renewable energy systems, working with nearby communities to collaborate on new water systems, public wifi, and improvements to the stormwater system.

“ *Encourage alternative energy options and solar panels.* ”

- COMMENT FROM COMMUNITY OPEN HOUSE

“ *We should work with neighboring communities to collaborate on systems.* ”

- COMMENT FROM COMMUNITY OPEN HOUSE

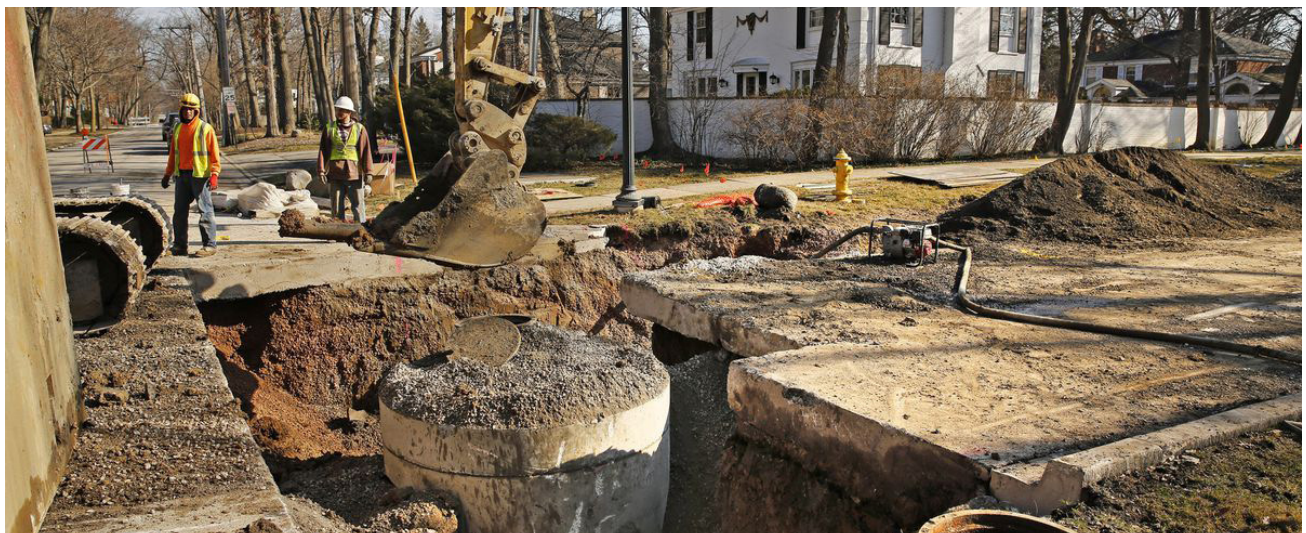
“ *Winnetka should strive to embrace renewable energy!* ”

- COMMENT FROM COMMUNITY OPEN HOUSE

SANITARY SEWER

The Village of Winnetka owns, operates, and maintains a sanitary sewer system serving the community and conveying wastewater to a network of intercepting sewers operated by the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD). These intercepting sewers, in turn, convey wastewater to the MWRD's North Side Treatment Plant located near Howard Street and McCormick Boulevard in Skokie. There, it is treated and discharged to the North Shore Channel and, ultimately, to the North Branch of the Chicago River. Thus, the Village provides wastewater conveyance services, but does not provide any wastewater treatment services.

Over the years the Village has experienced a number of large rainfall events resulting in significant surface flooding and backups in the sanitary sewer system resulting in basement flooding. The Village has performed a survey of all residents to determine the extent of flooding and basement backups. The Village has completed studies to identify locations of infiltration and inflow (I/I) into the sanitary sewer system and determine means for reducing I/I. The Village has completed all high priority projects identified by the studies and has implemented an annual sewer televising and cleaning program and continues its sewer lining program.



Storm sewer rehabilitation in Winnetka

Community Infrastructure, Services, & Technology

Vision Statement: *A forward-thinking tradition of delivering exceptional and efficient public services and infrastructure systems to meet the current and future needs of the community.*

GOAL 7.1

The Village will ensure infrastructure systems and services are evaluated, updated, and modernized to meet the needs of current and future residents.

Reliable and sustainable public infrastructure is foundational for Winnetka to deliver services that support its reputation as a superior community to live in and run a business. Infrastructure investment is also a significant part of a Village's budget, requiring forward-thinking management and utilization of budget.

Initiative 7.1.1

Continue to annually update the Village's Five-Year Capital Improvement Program based upon ongoing condition assessments. The CIP will be used to guide funding, scheduling, and implementation of improvements to Village-managed utility infrastructure systems, which include stormwater management, potable water, sanitary sewer system, electric service, and transportation infrastructure.

To maintain a high level of service and to provide an adequate, reliable supply at all times to meet the Village's increasing demands for utility infrastructure systems, long-range financial and capital improvement planning is critical. Plans for major capital improvements can take years to prepare in advance of the need. This seemingly long lead time is required to design or manufacture the capital improvement prior to installation or construction. This planning is a guide for efficient utilization of resources and is revised each year to satisfactorily meet the actual growth in demand for service.

Initiative 7.1.2

Continue to monitor state, federal, and other funding options for improvements to essential public works services and infrastructure.

The Village of Winnetka can leverage funding sources, such as the Green Infrastructure Grant Opportunities (GIGO) provided by Illinois Environmental Protection Agency, and other grant funding sources, to continue advancing infrastructure initiatives. GIGO launched in 2021 and is projected to award a total of \$5 million yearly, covering up to 75% of total project costs. Such projects may include treatment and flow control of water, creation of detention ponds, and floodplain reconnection, among others.



Retention Pond

Initiative 7.1.3

Encourage Village infrastructure programming, project design, and purchasing policies to further the Village's sustainability objectives.

While the topic of sustainability continues to gain attention across a variety of fields, it is sometimes a challenge to implement when it comes to utilities and infrastructure. Considering renewable energy, and particularly solar power—the nation's fastest growing power source—would help build capacity over the next decades. Green stormwater infrastructure, which treats stormwater as a resource rather than as waste, is another key area to continue exploring.

Initiative 7.1.4

Where feasible and economical, adopt energy efficiency measures, purchase alternative-fuel vehicles and equipment, and procure or install renewable energy resources for Village-owned facilities or properties.

GOAL 7.2

The Village will continue to update the community stormwater management systems, implementing both constructed and green infrastructure solutions, to alleviate flood risk and improve stormwater runoff quality.

The Village has expended significant effort over the past decade to identify stormwater and flood risks in the community. From this effort, the Village established robust plans to update stormwater management systems and alleviate such risks at their source. Winnetka should maintain the momentum and commitment to provide residents and businesses with confidence that they are protected from stormwater and flood impacts. This includes continued investment, reassessment and updating of plans, and public recognition of Village accomplishments.

Initiative 7.2.1

Continue implementation of the Stormwater Management Plan for West and Southwest Winnetka, and develop a Stormwater Management Plan for Eastern Winnetka.

Initiative 7.2.2

Evaluate the effectiveness of existing floodplain and stormwater management regulations for development, consider modifications to improve effectiveness, and create incentives to require or encourage stormwater management best practices. These include rain barrels, permeable pavement, rain gardens, natural landscaping, and bioswales and bio-retention basins.

Winnetka can offer a variety of incentives to continue encouraging existing and future development to follow stormwater best practices, reducing runoffs from private property, and alleviating burdens on the Village's stormwater system. Stormwater fee discounts are the most common incentive, which can often be retrofitted to existing properties. For infill development or new construction, development incentives such as expedited permitting, decreased fees, impermeable lot coverage zoning bonuses, and other benefits, can encourage developers to consider green infrastructure.

Initiative 7.2.3

Continue to strive to improve water quality in our natural systems of lakefront, bluffs, rivers, creeks, ponds, channels, and wetlands through the creation of measurable water quality standards, water quality testing, and establishment of local construction standards that minimize the impact of construction site stormwater run-off.



Winnetka Lakefront

GOAL 7.3

The Village will provide a reliable and safe potable water source through cost-effective intake, treatment, and distribution of Lake Michigan’s water resource.

The Village’s current potable water supply system is one of its most important assets. Many northeastern Illinois communities are dealing with water supply concerns, cost increases, and regulatory changes. The fact that Winnetka maintains its own water source allows the Village to steer its own water supply future and not be dependent on others. With that advantage comes a need to keep the system current and reliable.

Initiative 7.3.1

Perform a condition/risk assessment of Water Treatment Plant equipment and facilities to identify and prioritize short and long-term facility needs.

The water treatment plant, constructed in 1922 and expanded in 1932, has been regularly maintained and upgraded by the Village. While more recent improvements have been extensive, involving the replacement of a high lift pump, chlorine scrubber, and the dehumidification of the pipe gallery, an overall condition/risk assessment is encouraged. Evaluating maintenance and performance history through observed conditions will result in near and long-term recommendations for rehabilitation and replacement projects and respective cost estimates.

Initiative 7.3.2

Determine viability and appropriateness of an elevated tank to sustain pressures in the distribution system.

Initiative 7.3.3

Update the water distribution system study with condition/risk assessment information and continue a prioritized replacement of water mains.

Initiative 7.3.4

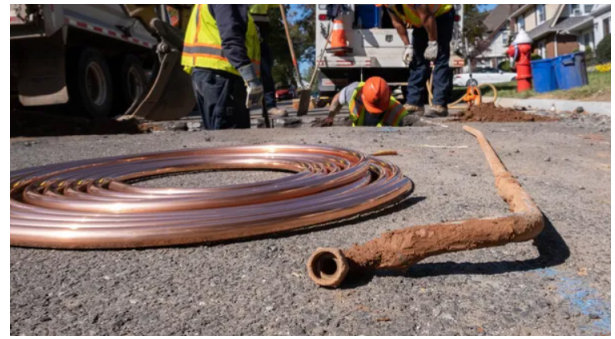
Implement water efficiency measures in Village operations and encourage residents and businesses to identify and mitigate water losses, through Village programs such as the installation of Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI), or “smart meters”.

AMI (Advanced Metering Infrastructure) is a system that allows the collection of detailed metering information throughout a utility’s service industry. AMIs can communicate energy and water usage in an automated fashion and in real time. This system is also defined as “A metering system that records customer consumption hourly or more frequently and that provides for daily or more frequent transmittal of measurements over a communication network to a central collection point.”

Initiative 7.3.5

Replace lead service lines per State requirements to minimize lead exposure in drinking water.

The Village has recently adopted a policy to guide the replacement of lead services lines in the community, which includes a program to offer limited financial assistance to property owners for the replacement of lead service lines.



Replacing Lead Pipes © Chris Trento / Suez

GOAL 7.4

The Village will provide a reliable and cost-effective sanitary sewer system in conformance with the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago's Watershed Management Ordinance (WMO).

The Village maintains its own sanitary sewerage collection and conveyance system, but that system is tributary to the Metropolitan Water and Reclamation District of Greater Chicago's (MWRDGC) system, meaning that the Village is subject to their requirements. Fortunately, the goal of both the Village and MWRDGC are to maintain a "leak-free" sanitary sewer system. The Village's efforts to meet this common goal will lead to reduced sewer backups and impacts to private property, as well as reduced annual operation and maintenance costs.

Initiative 7.4.1

Continue to monitor the integrity and functionality of the sanitary sewer system to extend system life and enhance service delivery, through televising, smoke testing, manhole rehabilitation, and relining program.



Smoke Testing © Pipe Spy

Initiative 7.4.2

Continue implementation of a long-term management program for reducing inflow and infiltration into the sanitary sewer system due to sanitary sewer system deficiencies and non-sanitary connections.

The long-term management plan should be based on the Watershed Management Ordinance and include inventory and mapping of reported sanitary sewer backups for correlating to sewer functionality and improvement prioritization.

GOAL 7.5

The Village will continue to operate and maintain a cost-effective, efficient, and reliable electrical distribution system.

The Village's electrical distribution system is another very important asset that allows the Village to steer its own electrical service future. With this system, Winnetka needs to ensure an adequate power supply and balance the cost to operate and maintain the electric distribution system.

Initiative 7-5.1

Review and set Village direction regarding upcoming IMEA agreement expiration and the fiscal impact of reinvesting in an aging electrical generation system.

The IMEA (Illinois Municipal Electric Agency) contract extends through September 20, 2035. Prior to that time, the Village will need to determine how it wishes to proceed in terms of the provision of electricity to residents, businesses, and institutions.

Initiative 7-5.2

Continue to improve electric supply reliability by expanding the current electrical infrastructure replacement program, incorporating more looped circuits into the distribution system, burying overhead electric lines when feasible, and converting existing underground transformer vaults to pad mount transformers.

The reliability of the electric system has long been considered one of the Village's greatest assets. This is, in a large part, because of the redundancy that has been designed into the systems by maintaining three independent supply sources, "looping" the electric distribution lines, and using high quality materials when installing new lines. While the Village is well equipped to handle electric issues and prevent service outages, other areas of improvement can ensure a sustained level of dependability on the electric infrastructure in Winnetka.

Initiative 7-5.3

Continue conversations with AT&T, or its successors, regarding its joint ownership of utility poles with the Village in order to develop a plan

and strategies to bury existing overhead utilities. Continue to require all new utilities (phone, cable, and electric) be installed underground.

The distribution lines are a mix of underground and overhead lines. Most of the poles used for overhead distribution lines are owned and maintained jointly with AT&T. Thus, if the Village were to convert any power distribution lines to underground, AT&T would also need to agree to bury their lines before the poles are removed. The Village code requires all new utilities to be underground.

Initiative 7-5.4

Implement the installation of Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI), or "smart meters," to improve the operation of the electric distribution system and create the ability to provide customers with additional information for the management of their energy consumption.

Initiative 7-5.5

To complement the Village's installation of energy-efficient LED street lighting, work with IDOT to install LED lighting on state-owned roadways, and with residents for LED installation on private streets.



LED Streetlights © World Bank

GOAL 7.6

The Village will regularly assess, maintain, and improve Village roadways, parking facilities, accessibility, sidewalks, station areas, and bike facilities.

The Village maintains a robust annual roadway maintenance program and is very proactive in partnering with other agencies like the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) in securing funding for adequate and efficient roadway conditions. The Village also recognizes the need to support pedestrian and bicycle transportation more significantly in order to promote overall quality of life and to maintain a flavorful street character in the Village.

Initiative 7.6.1

Continue to perform a roadway inventory and condition assessment of all Village roadways on a regular cycle. Identify and prioritize required roadway maintenance and improvement needs to guide funding, scheduling, and implementation of improvements to Village roadways.

Initiative 7.6.2

Update the Village-wide accessibility plan and consider new accessibility initiatives, based upon legal requirements and best practices.



Accessible Curb Ramp - West Elm © Village of Winnetka

Initiative 7.6.3

Implement traffic safety and pedestrian crossing improvements at signalized intersections along the Green Bay Road corridor, in collaboration with IDOT, as part of ongoing road repair or new streetscape and utility projects.



Pedestrian Crossing Sign, Winnetka

Initiative 7.6.4

Invest in projects that further a network of on and off-street bike improvements to enhance east-west connections to the Green Bay Trail, as well as other destinations such as the Skokie Lagoons, schools, train stations, and the lakefront.

GOAL 7.7

The Village will identify and support the incorporation of new technologies to assist infrastructure and public safety systems efficiencies, cost effectiveness, and advanced community communications.

An increasingly important aspect of the Village's infrastructure services is communication. With increasing implementation of 5G broadband technology, the Village has an opportunity to enhance connectivity for all its infrastructure systems as well as for residents and businesses in Winnetka. Connectivity of the Village to its residents, businesses, and institutions is a hallmark of a top-tier community.

Initiative 7.7.1

Collaboratively work with telecommunication service providers to ensure Winnetka residents, businesses, and institutions have access to the most robust and reliable broadband and wireless telecommunication services infrastructure.

There are six primary Internet service providers, including AT&T and Comcast Xfinity, operating in Winnetka for residential and business use that offer wireless broadband and internet. All internet service in Winnetka is considered broadband and provided by cable, satellite or DSL service.

Looking ahead, the Village should continue to ensure that all households and business have access to reliable and efficient broadband internet service. The Village intends to support the availability and speed of broadband internet through upgraded fiber-optic or 5G service when it is available, and to continue to adapt to changes in emerging technical infrastructure and services. The Village may also consider offering free wi-fi service and enhanced broadband capacity in public places such as parks, plazas, and public buildings, offering it's own application ("app"), or other cloud-based service platforms as a benefit to Winnetka's residents and businesses.



Free Wi-fi at Selective Parks © Grand Rapids, MI



PILLAR 8

Mobility & Accessibility

VISION STATEMENT

“A progressive community with forethought in developing safe and efficient local and regional mobility connections for all through public transportation, regional trails and pedestrian and bike friendly neighborhood street networks.”



PILLAR 8:

Mobility & Accessibility

Vision Statement: A progressive community with forethought in developing safe and efficient local and regional mobility connections for all through public transportation, regional trails and pedestrian and bike friendly neighborhood street networks.

Goal 8.1: The Village will work to redefine Green Bay Road as an attractive, safe, walkable, and bikeable corridor through the community that connects the three business districts, as well as educational and community institutions.
Goal 8.2: The Village will continue to improve access to and from the Green Bay Trail to enhance this regional asset as a form of recreation and active transportation for trips through the Village.
Goal 8.3: The Village will enhance bicycle and pedestrian connectivity, safety, and comfort throughout Winnetka with a focus on east-west bicycle routes and pedestrian connections to key destinations.
Goal 8.4: The Village will continue to support quality transit service and encourage increased ridership.
Goal 8.5: The Village will manage its parking assets to support the success of its business districts while balancing parking location and supply with the needs of the distinctive walkable and transit-oriented character that is uniquely Winnetka.
Goal 8.6: The Village will support the progress of transportation through the exploration of new mobility services.

Winnetka Futures 2040 Plan includes ten Community Pillars. The following section describes Winnetka’s vision for **Pillar 8: Mobility & Accessibility**. A summary of the existing conditions analysis along with community input received over the course of the process are shared in the next few pages. Following that is a list of actionable initiatives for each of the goals listed above.

Transportation

“The different transportation modes, including walking, should interlink, and such integration would help enhance and enrich the entire mobility experience.”

- COMMENT FROM COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

MOBILITY

Investment in street improvements and non-motorized transportation options are critical components of this Plan. A complete system of bicycle and pedestrian facilities is needed to provide a safe, cohesive network for people walking, biking, and accessing transit throughout the Village. The Village must improve mobility while also addressing safety issues, improving environmental and health outcomes, and fostering a climate for economic development, all in an equitable way.

METRA

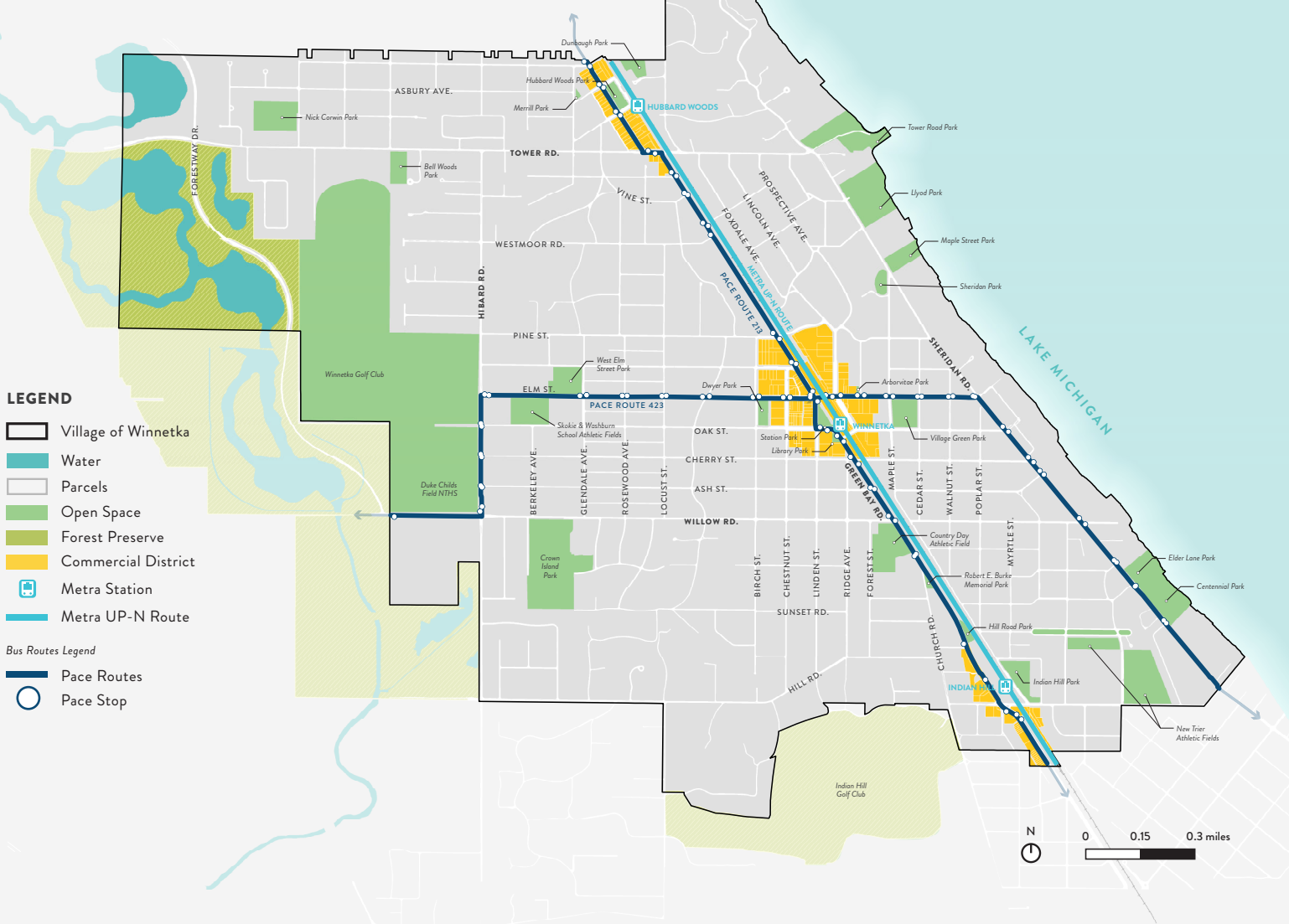
Winnetka is a unique community with superb Metra access along the Union Pacific/North Line (UP-N). Residents benefit from three stations, one in each of the business districts, providing these denser areas with high-quality transit.

The downtown Winnetka station is the most popular for riders and offers typical commuters more Metra trains per day than Hubbard Woods or Indian Hill. A typical trip from Winnetka to Ogilvie Transportation Center in downtown Chicago takes approximately 35 minutes.



Access to elevators at Winnetka Metra Station.

FIGURE 34: COMMUTER TRAIN & BUS ROUTES



PACE

Winnetka is served by Pace routes (213 and 423) that provide residents, students, and employees a means of traveling within Winnetka and surrounding areas, as outlined on the Commuter Train and Bus Routes map.

Ridership information indicates the following stops have the highest concentration of people getting on and off the bus:

- » Near Indian Hill Metra
 - Green Bay Road / Winnetka Avenue
 - 93 Green Bay

- » Near Winnetka Metra Station
 - Green Bay Road / Linden Street (Winnetka Public Library)
 - Green Bay Road / Elm Street
 - Oak Street / Green Bay Road/ Linden Street (Winnetka Public Library)
 - Elm/ Winnetka Metra Station
- » Near Hubbard Woods
 - Green Bay Road / Scott Avenue

TRANSPORTATION PROFESSIONALS

A group of local and regional transportation providers gathered on February 13, 2020 for a focus group discussion. Key themes that came out of that discussion are summarized below:

Transit Investment

Various transit investments are planned in Winnetka. Metra has begun the design phase for Hubbard Woods Station improvements. The goal of the project is to stabilize the bridge, update stairs, provide accessible access to the train stop, and to rehabilitate the depot building. This project will also include adding a tenant space in the train depot.

Capital improvements to this station and others have been on hold for years as Metra worked to implement an unfunded federal mandate to incorporate Positive Train Control (PTC) technology. With the PTC system almost finalized and the passage of a state capital funding bill, Metra is now able to address its six million dollar backlog of projects. While the agency must balance needs, efforts to put amenities back into stations are improvements that people can see. Metra's long-term vision is to increase service—getting people into downtown Chicago, reverse commutes, and suburb-to-suburb travel. In order to better serve the community and region through express service, a third rail set is needed on the UP-N line.

Pace routes traveling through Winnetka benefit from relatively high ridership levels, due in large part to access to New Trier High School.

There are eight North Shore Pace routes that are in the process of being restructured, including route 423, which is being split into two routes. This planning effort should not result in reduced service for Winnetka.

Green Bay Trail + Pedestrian Access

The Village owns the Green Bay Trail right-of-way and leases it to the Park District. The Park District maintains the flat part of the trail and the Village maintains the slopes. The Village and Park District is currently conducting a planning study to look at improvements along the trail. The current level of maintenance is minimal, and while the grade separation project which established the Green Bay Trail is great for users of the trail, the change in elevation makes ADA access and connectivity to the business districts difficult.

Winnetka's Metra stations have strong ridership: there are more than 700 boardings/day at the Winnetka station, and of those riders, more than 50% arrive to Metra on bike or on foot. Building transit-oriented development near Winnetka's stations would increase the number of riders within walking distance of Metra. Stakeholders expressed a desire for a pedestrian crossing at Spruce Street. Metra indicated that while the UP is looking to reduce crossings, a pedestrian bridge would be a safer but more expensive option.

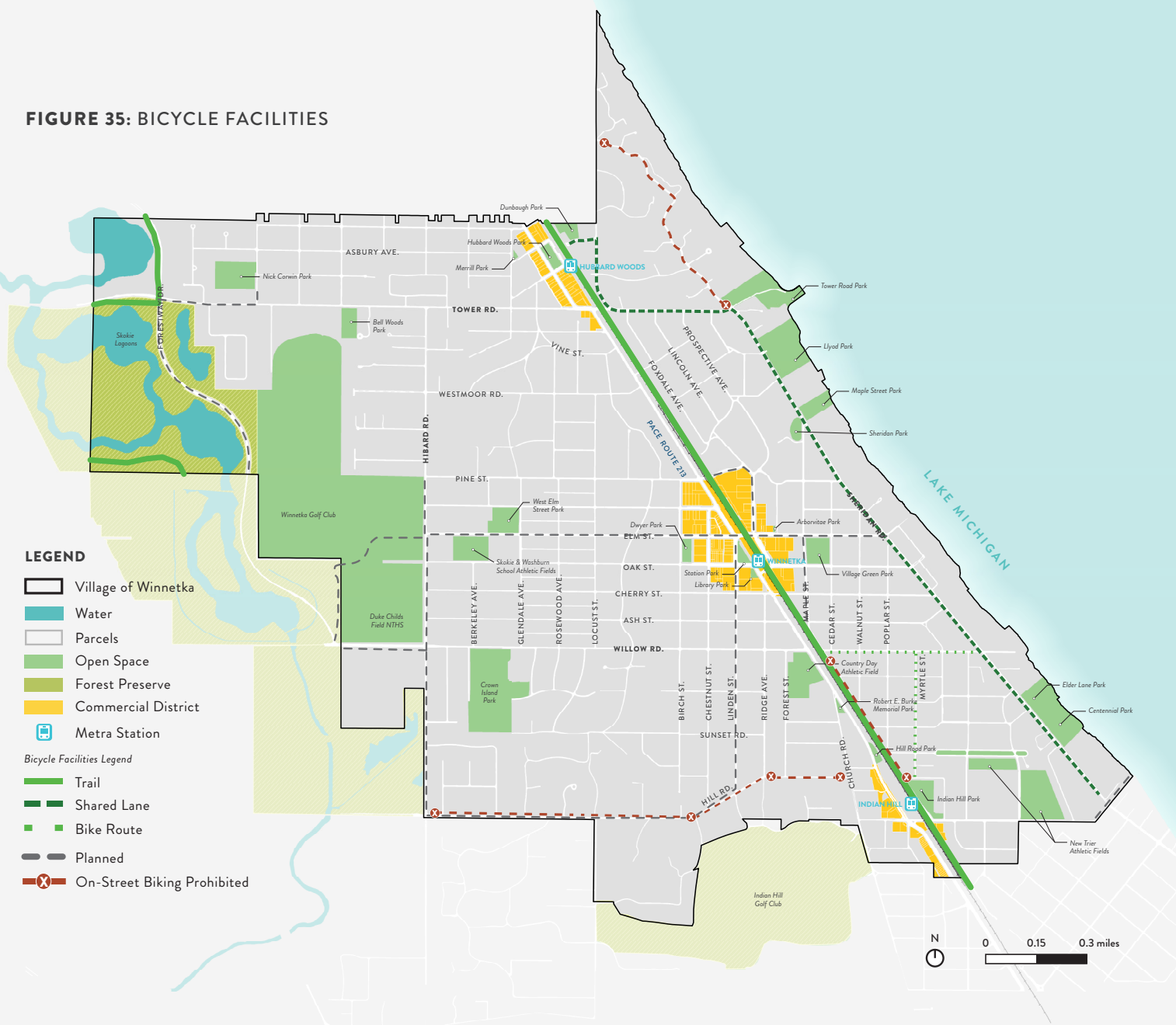
COMMUNITY OPEN HOUSE RESULTS

What types of transit improvements would you like to see in Winnetka?

The majority of responses were in favor of improving transit through bus shelters, covered bike parking, Metra Café, live arrival/departure screens, and improved accessibility. None of the participants disliked the proposed improvements and a few were neutral. Other improvements suggested by participants included a bike share system, renovating Indian Hill Metra Station, as well as additional bike parking.



FIGURE 35: BICYCLE FACILITIES



BICYCLING & TRAIL CONNECTIONS

Bicycle infrastructure is a critical part of creating a friendly and comfortable environment for non-vehicular users, and with a number of trails and multi-use pathways throughout Winnetka, the Village is well-positioned to establish bicycle connections to the greater region. Figure 35 highlights existing bike infrastructure through Winnetka, and it shows the planned routes identified in the 2015 Winnetka Bikeway Master Plan prepared by the Winnetka Park District, which calls for a network of on and off-street bike facilities. These will enhance east-west connections to the Green Bay Trail, as well as other key destinations, including the Skokie Lagoons and Winnetka's Lakefront.

The map denotes the Willow Road corridor, east of Green Bay Road, as a regional priority bike corridor through Winnetka, identified in the Northwest Municipal Conference Multimodal Plan. The map also shows where biking is prohibited:

- » Wilson Street between Hill Road and Willow Road near Evergreen Lane
- » Hill Road between Church Road and Hibbard Road
- » Sheridan Road between Tower Road and Scott Avenue

GREEN BAY TRAIL

The Green Bay Trail runs parallel to the UP-N Metra Line and lies directly adjacent to Winnetka's business districts, presenting a significant opportunity to attract families and other riders to eat, shop, and play in the Village. The need for directional signage to and from the Green Bay Trail, particularly wayfinding to and from the business districts located just off the trail, is well-documented in previous planning efforts, such as the 2016 Downtown Master Plan.

There are numerous access points to the trail, as highlighted in Figure 36. However, because of the grade differentials from street level, many access points present issues for those on bike or those requiring handicapped access:

- » Wilson Avenue and Winnetka Avenue (stairs, non-ADA)
- » Indian Hill Metra Station (stairs, non-ADA)*
- » Wilson Avenue and Willow Road (ramp, ADA)
- » Wilson Avenue and Maple Street (level path, ADA)
- » Winnetka Metra Station (stairs, non-ADA)*
- » Pine Street (sloped path, non-ADA)
- » Tower Road (sloped path, non-ADA)
- » Hubbard Woods Metra Station (stairs, non-ADA)*

** While it is possible to access the Green Bay Trail from stairways at each Metra station, it requires traversing a Metra commuter platform and thus is not its intended use.*



Entrance from Green Bay Trail to downtown business district indistinguishable.

BIKE PARKING

Bicycle parking plays an important role in the bicycle network and presents an opportunity to attract cyclists from the surrounding trails to shop, eat, and spend time in Winnetka. High-capacity bike parking is particularly important near parks, schools and commercial areas. According to the 2015 Winnetka Bikeway Master Plan, prepared by the Winnetka Park District, the need for adequate bicycle parking is not being met in the following areas:

- » Hubbard Woods Metra/Business District
- » Elm Street Metra/Business District
- » Indian Hill Metra/Business District
- » Majority of parks
- » Local Schools

Bike parking at Metra Stations is currently limited to traditional racks.

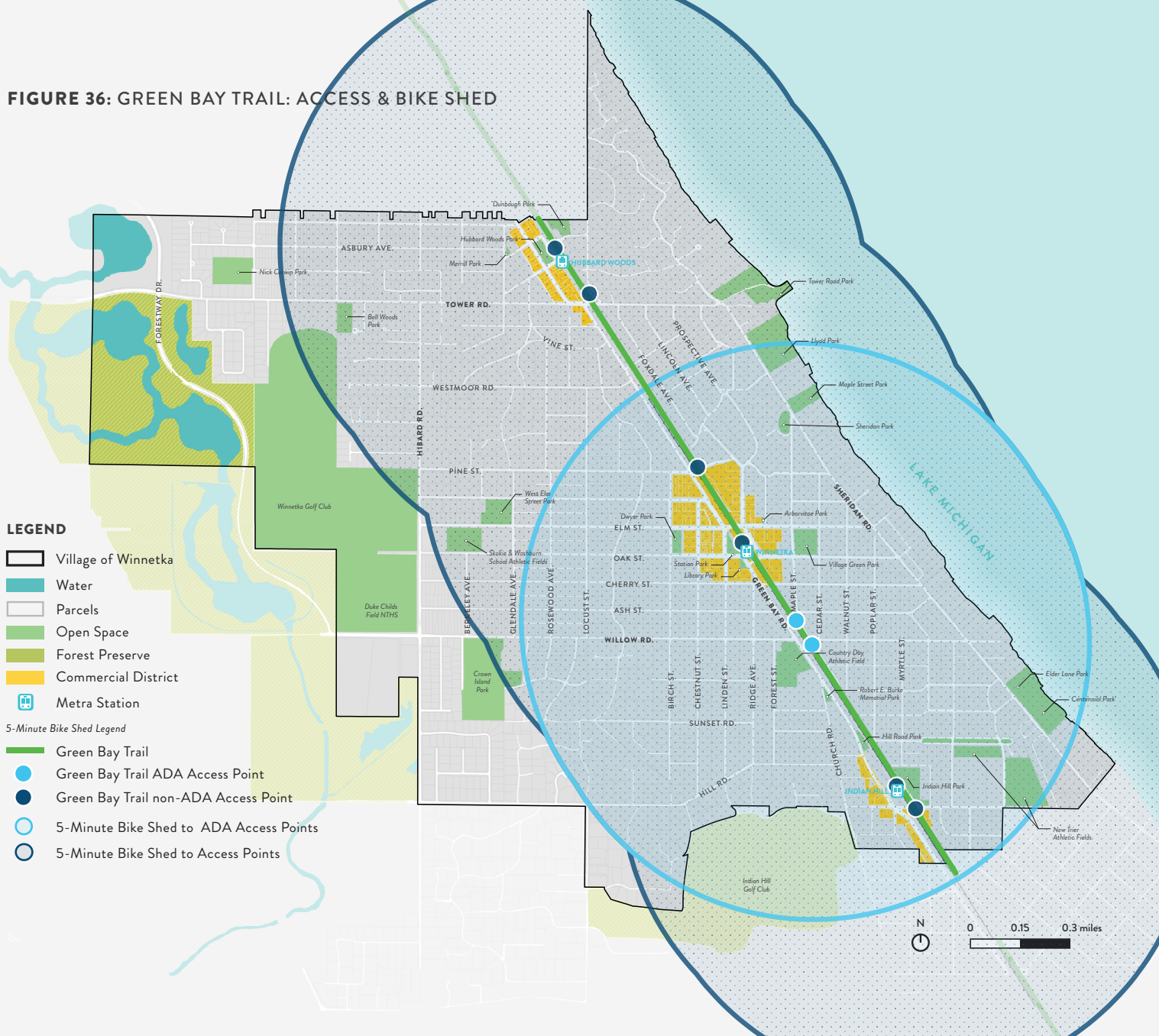


Bike parking nearly full at Indian Hill Metra Station



Bike parking at Winnetka Metra Station

FIGURE 36: GREEN BAY TRAIL: ACCESS & BIKE SHED



COMMUNITY OPEN HOUSE RESULTS

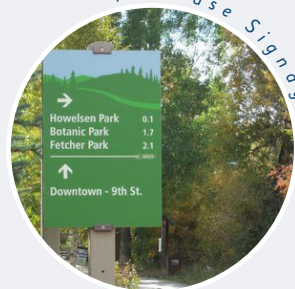
What types of improvements would you like on the Green Bay Trail?

Most of the identified improvements, including planting native landscape species, increasing signage and access, and improving surfacing were popular choices. Painting the bridges or underpasses was not as highly favored and some disliked the concept. Other ideas included adding trail lighting, providing more kid-friendly design, separating lanes for bikers/walkers, and adding maps and educational signage. The majority of responses were from empty nesters and young seniors (ages 55 to 74).

Native Landscaping



Increase Signage





Sidewalk Network



One of Winnetka’s points of pride is its quaint, walkable environment. The Village has a largely complete and well-maintained sidewalk network though there are some notable exceptions, such as the east side of Green Bay Road, which is problematic for the areas around many schools, access to Pace, and use for street parking. However, the Village currently has a sidewalk request policy in place for residents to request additional sections of sidewalks in areas that do not have them.

Residential sidewalks are generally well-buffered from traffic by parkways/landscaping, and sidewalks in the business districts are wider and buffered from traffic by on-street parking. Sidewalks in the Elm Street Business District that are 12 to 14 feet provide enough space for outdoor café seating areas, while still affording clearance for passing pedestrians, groups, wheelchairs and strollers. Recent streetscape projects in the Elm Street district improve pedestrian movements with widened sidewalk areas and curb extensions. Sidewalks in Hubbard Woods that are 8 or 10 feet wide constrain pedestrian movements to only a few feet, since the space also accommodates street tree pits, sidewalk signs, benches, and the door zone.

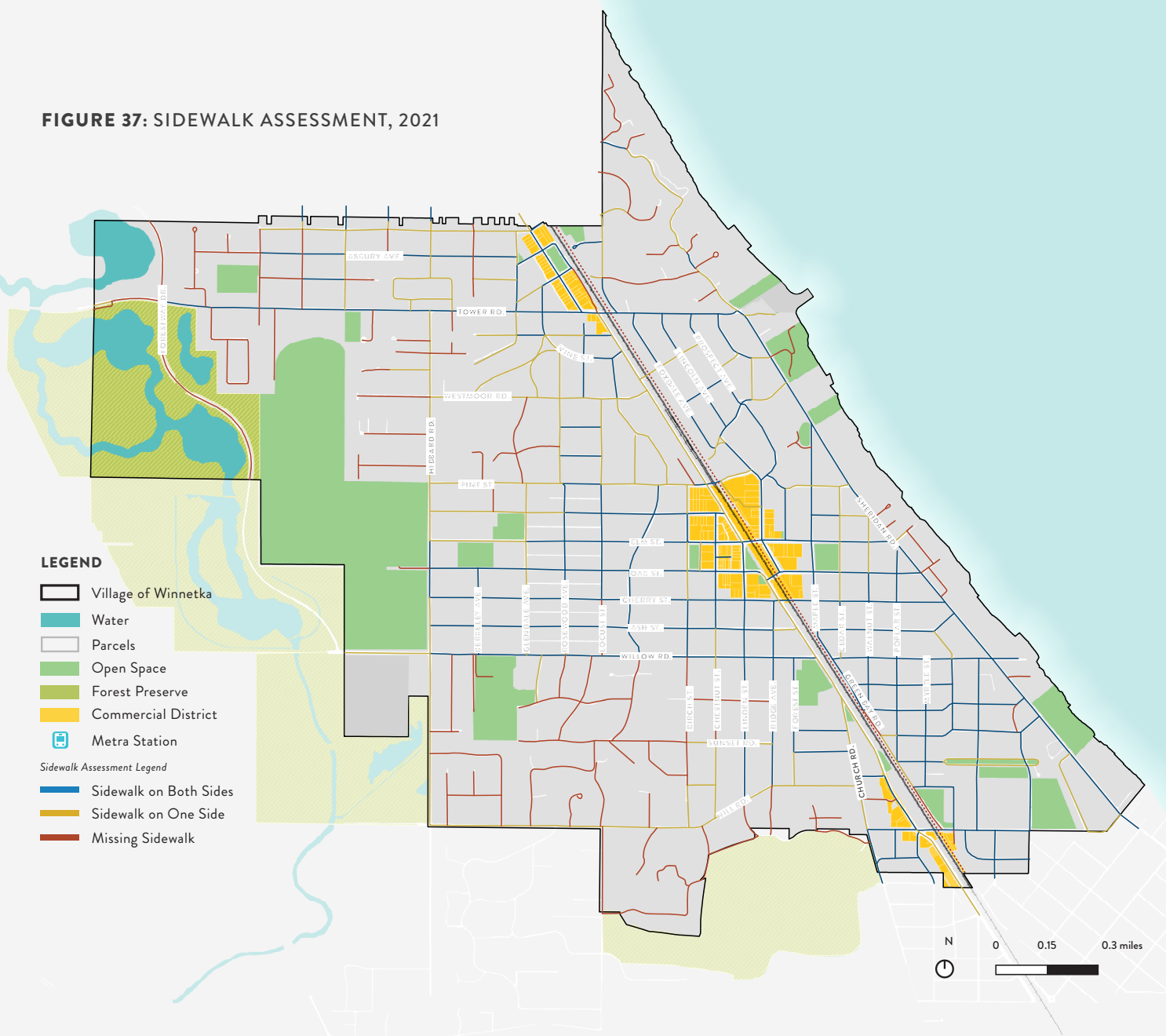
Streets within Winnetka were surveyed as part of the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) Regional Sidewalk Inventory. They are categorized as Sidewalk on Both Sides, Sidewalk on One Side, and Missing (on both sides). Figure 37 shows Winnetka’s sidewalk network, which is quantified in Table 1: Summation of Sidewalk Inventory.

TABLE 1: SUMMATION OF SIDEWALK INVENTORY

	CENTERLINE MILES
SIDEWALK ON BOTH SIDES	27.8
SIDEWALK ON ONE SIDE	17.8
MISSING	17.6

Source: CMAP Regional Sidewalk Inventory

FIGURE 37: SIDEWALK ASSESSMENT, 2021



Constrained sidewalk area in Hubbard Woods.

COMMUNITY OPEN HOUSE RESULTS

Where would you prioritize filling Winnetka's sidewalk gaps?

The majority of responses (80%) indicated the need to prioritize filling sidewalk gaps near parks, schools, and transit, as well as in neighborhoods with significant stretches of missing sidewalks. Approximately 20% of the total responses mentioned that sidewalks should not be a priority for the Village. The majority of responses were from empty nesters and young seniors (ages 55 to 74).

Mobility & Accessibility

***Vision Statement:** A progressive community with forethought in developing safe and efficient local and regional mobility connections for all through public transportation, regional trails and pedestrian and bike friendly neighborhood street networks.*

GOAL 8.1

The Village will work to redefine Green Bay Road as an attractive, safe, walkable, and bikeable corridor through the community that connects the three business districts, as well as educational and community institutions.

Green Bay Road is the most prominent corridor through the Village of Winnetka and the spine that connects the three business districts. It is also a wide road that can create a barrier, along with the railroad tracks. Improving safety along Green Bay Road and making it more comfortable for people walking and biking will enable this corridor to add to the character of the Village and act as an asset rather than a barrier.

Initiative 8.1.1

Conduct a corridor study with a traffic analysis to examine ways to enhance the visual character, walkability, and safety of Green Bay Road. It should support the full range of users including, walkers, bicyclists, and transit riders, as well as the variable land uses along the corridor.

Initiative 8.1.2

Coordinate with the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) to discuss the community vision for Green Bay Road and determine the feasibility of a streetscape or corridor improvement project. This process can determine the need for a jurisdictional transfer, based on needs and available resources for implementation.

As IDOT has jurisdiction over Green Bay Road, any proposed changes to the street must be coordinated with the state agency. Transferring the jurisdiction of the street would give the Village of Winnetka more control over design decisions, but would also transfer the cost and maintenance responsibilities to the Village.

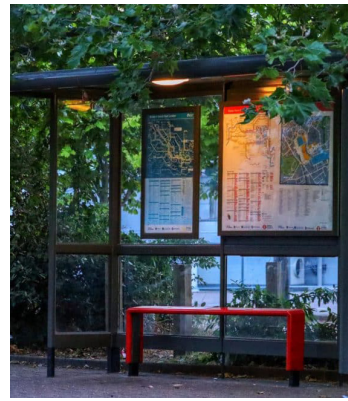


Streetscape Character

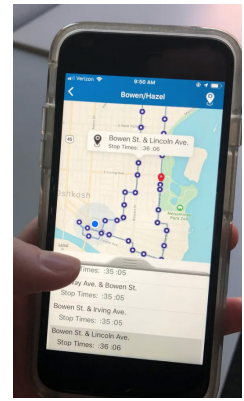
Initiative 8.1.3

Prioritize bus stop amenities, including shelters, benches, real-time bus arrival information, and bike parking along Green Bay Road to improve access to local businesses and facilitate transit use.

Adding amenities to bus stops will enhance the visibility of the transit service and make the transit experience more pleasurable. Improving transit makes it easier for people who choose not to drive or cannot drive, including those too young to drive, people with disabilities, and the aging population who may no longer drive.



Covered Bus Shelter



Trip Planner

GOAL 8.2

The Village will continue to improve access to and from the Green Bay Trail to enhance this regional asset as a form of recreation and active transportation for trips through the Village.

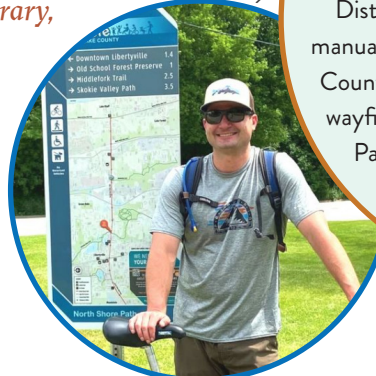
The Green Bay Trail runs the length of the Village adjacent to the Metra tracks and continues for miles in either direction. In many places, the trail is not at street grade, and many of the access points are inconspicuous and/or not easily accessible. Improving access to this asset will improve the quality of life for Winnetka residents. Similarly, improving access from the trail to local businesses will support the economic health of the Village's business districts.

Initiative 8.2.1

Add directional wayfinding signs identifying entry points to and from the Green Bay Trail to promote additional usage and recognition. In addition, identify community assets along the trail route, such as restaurants and coffee shops, as well as institutions, such as schools, library, and Village Hall.



© Lake County



LAKE COUNTY, IL

CASE STUDY: Trail Wayfinding

Lake County Division of Transportation, along with the Lake County Forest Preserve District, recently published a wayfinding manual for trail access. In the case study, the County shares how it rebranded and tested wayfinding designs along the North Shore Path and improved upon the designs after reviewing findings.

Initiative 8.2.2

Upgrade access points to meet ADA standards to ensure access is available to all users, including those with limited mobility. When necessary, coordinate improvements with Metra and the Union Pacific Railroad.

Meeting ADA standards at all access points will make the trail easier to reach for all users, not only those with limited mobility.

Initiative 8.2.3

Continue to expand bike parking throughout the business districts to invite and encourage trail users to access local businesses.

Establishing convenient bike parking within the business districts signals to bicyclists that they are welcome to shop and dine. Formal bike parking also helps to manage the public realm and discourages people leaving bikes within pedestrian spaces or locking them to unintentional parking facilities, such as poles and fences.

Initiative 8.2.4

Consider retrofitting existing access stairs with a bike ramp to increase access points for cyclists.

Adding a ramp to an existing stair is a simple retrofit that makes accessing the trail much easier for cyclists. Rather than lifting their bike to carry it up or down the stairs, they can nest their wheel in a groove and push the bike.

Initiative 8.2.5

Evaluate lighting along the Green Bay Trail and add lighting as necessary to improve aesthetics, increase user safety, and promote evening and all-season usage.



Lower-level Path Lighting

Initiative 8.2.6

Consider sustainable landscaping improvements along the Green Bay Trail. This could include replacing non-native vegetation with native plantings, installing rain gardens, or other sustainable practices.

Sustaining the Green Bay Trail's various vegetative areas can provide a more enjoyable experience to all users and continue to promote this trail as a natural habitat in the Village of Winnetka. Employing a variety of sustainability best practices to the trail will primarily depend on its various landscape characteristics. Certain stretches of the trail feature bluffs with invasive vegetation and dense tree canopies, while other areas remain bare with exposed eroded soils. Invasive species can be harmful and lead to interruptions or significant decreases in the overall biodiversity of the trail, competing with native organisms. Carefully managing and maintaining the trail's landscape character can include biological controls, along other methods that target invasive species.



Green Bay Trail Dense Tree Canopy

Initiative 8.2.7

Consider a program for pop-up vendor opportunities along the trail as an amenity to trail users.



Pop-up Store Along A Trail

PILLAR 1	PILLAR 2	PILLAR 3	PILLAR 4	PILLAR 5	PILLAR 6	PILLAR 7	PILLAR 8	PILLAR 9	PILLAR 10
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GOAL 8.3

The Village will enhance bicycle and pedestrian connectivity, safety, and comfort throughout Winnetka with a focus on east-west bicycle routes and pedestrian connections to key destinations.

Enhancing bicycle and pedestrian connectivity throughout the Village will encourage people to take short trips by biking or walking, which promotes personal health, improves air quality, and enhances safety on the streets. Improved connectivity also provides better options for those who choose not to drive or cannot get around by car.

Initiative 8.3.1

*As identified in the Quality Livable Neighborhoods pillar, **establish a sidewalk infill program that prioritizes sidewalk connections along school routes, along parks that border a road, to/from transit stops, and to/from commercial districts.***

Adding sidewalks has been shown to have a significant, positive impact on pedestrian safety. As identified in the Educational Excellence Pillar, encouraging students to walk to school also reduces traffic, encourages physical health, and empowers children to be more independent and engaged in the community. Focusing sidewalk infill at schools, parks, transit stops, and commercial districts will enhance safety at locations likely to attract the most pedestrian activity.

Initiative 8.3.2

Designate walking and biking routes for each school, and partner with relevant school organizations to adopt the US Department of Transportation's Safe Routes to School program.

While many students already walk and bike to school, a formal Safe Routes to School program can help raise awareness and further promote this practice among other community members.



Biking Routes for Students

Initiative 8.3.3

Develop a policy to mark high-visibility crossings in key locations, including those adjacent to schools and along school walking routes, at transit stops, throughout the business districts, at park access points, and at other prominent destinations.

Street crossings are the most vulnerable locations along a pedestrian's route (provided there are sidewalks along the route). High-visibility crosswalk markings help draw drivers' attention to these locations and the possibility of pedestrians crossing. Street crossings near schools should be designed with children in mind.

EVANSTON, IL

CASE STUDY:

Safe Routes to Schools

District 65 provides "Safe Routes to Schools" maps for each of its elementary and middle schools. Additionally, the City of Evanston has received grant funding (2022) to improve sidewalks near District 65 schools and along the school routes.



© Heidi Randhava

Initiative 8.3.4

Identify east-west and north-south family-friendly bike routes and determine the appropriate design to encourage bicycle use and slow vehicle speeds, maintaining a comfortable and safe environment for bicyclists of all ages and abilities.

Routes should be selected based on good continuity, connections to key destinations, and popularity among the community for biking. Family-friendly routes should have slow vehicle speeds and low vehicle volumes and should be prominently marked as bicycle routes through signing and pavement markings. If necessary, reduced speed limits and traffic calming measures should be implemented along these routes to maintain a comfortable environment for families of all ages to bike along.

Initiative 8.3.5

As identified in the Healthy and Engaging Lifestyles pillar, cooperate with the Village of Northfield and Forest Preserves of Cook County to enhance pedestrian and bicycle routes to and through the Forest Preserve District as an enhanced east-west connection between the two communities, and as an effort to greater capitalize on this regional recreational asset.



Young Winnetkan's on Bicycles

Initiative 8.3.6

Identify preferred routes for on-street bicycle travel throughout the Village and designate the routes through signs and markings. Reconsider existing restrictions to bicycle travel on local streets such as Hill Road, and remove restrictive signs where possible. Enhance safety measures, such as painted markings on the pavement, to increase the viability of using bikes to travel throughout the Village.

Initiative 8.3.7

Continue to ensure that all future infrastructure in public rights-of-way is in full compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. This supports users of all ages and ranges of mobility by upgrading transportation infrastructure, particularly the pedestrian realm.

Initiative 8.3.8

As also identified in the Quality Livable Neighborhood Pillar, **consider establishing a neighborhood traffic calming program.** This could include neighborhood-wide traffic studies to review the existing use of intersection traffic control, and to identify appropriate strategies to reduce traffic speeds and volumes on local streets.

DOWNERS GROVE, IL

CASE STUDY: Traffic Calming Program

The Village has an application-based traffic calming program where residents and their neighbors can request a study on a case-by-case basis for various physical and operational traffic calming solutions. In addition, the Village divides the community into neighborhood areas, and annually budgets for a consultant-led neighborhood-wide traffic study covering one area per year.

GOAL 8.4

The Village will continue to support quality transit service and encourage increased ridership.

The regional rail service provided by Metra, with three stations within the Village, is an asset to residents and one of the Village's draws to attract new residents. The rail stations and riders also support the three business districts that developed around them. Supporting transit service and ridership helps support the economic health of the Village.

Initiative 8.4.1

Improve the experience of accessing Metra by upgrading and concentrating amenities at the three stations, such as upgraded and sheltered bicycle parking.

SCHAUMBURG, IL

CASE STUDY: Bike Lockers

The Village offers 40 free bicycle lockers available to lease and 48 covered bike parking spaces at the Schaumburg Metra Station. The lockers require a signed lease agreement and \$60 deposit, refunded at the end of the lease. With the guidance of the Village's Bikeways Advisory Committee, the Village has over 1,000 bike parking and locker spaces.



ARLINGTON HEIGHTS, IL

CASE STUDY: Bike Parking

The Village of Arlington Heights protects bicycles from elements at the downtown Arlington Heights Metra Station by providing covered bike parking. The shelter also serves as a space for solar panels that produce power for its lighting. Additionally, the solar panels produce approximately 2,100 kWh of metered electricity.



Initiative 8.4.2

Recognizing the role transit plays in achieving community goals like health, equity, and sustainability, ensure zoning regulations support and encourage development around transit stops, generating pedestrian traffic that mutually benefits local businesses, transit users, and transit agencies.

GOAL 8.5

The Village will manage its parking assets to support the success of its business districts while balancing parking location and supply with the needs of the distinctive walkable and transit-oriented character that is uniquely Winnetka.

Having sufficient parking is critical to the success of a business district. However, parking can also take up valuable land that could be better used for development or streetscape amenities. Therefore, balancing the amount of parking provided and matching it with appropriate regulations and management are tools that can support a vibrant, walkable commercial district.

Initiative 8.5.1

Continue to prioritize walking and biking as viable and attractive options for getting each business district to reduce demand for parking.

This can be achieved through streetscape improvements, intersection crossing enhancements, additional bike parking, and improved connections to the Green Bay Trail.

Initiative 8.5.2

Manage existing parking resources efficiently: Provide wayfinding systems that make it more convenient to find parking; improve regulatory signage to simplify the parking experience.

As was implemented with the Elm Street Business District streetscape project, continue to install parking wayfinding signage in other business districts.

Initiative 8.5.3

Continue the Village policy of providing the bulk of customer and employee parking spaces in each business district to maintain a consistent shared pool of publicly-available parking. Regularly conduct parking studies to evaluate utilization of public parking facilities and to determine if the parking supply is adequate for various users (customers, employees, commuters, and district residents).

Rather than requiring each property to provide parking for its tenants and customers, the provision of shared public parking in a downtown setting allows the sharing of parking

based upon different users' time of day demand for parking. This leads to a more efficient use of land and continues to promote downtown as a walk-to destination.

Initiative 8.5.4

Review and make any necessary adjustments to the Village's parking requirements for commercial and multi-family residential uses. Consider establishing an off-street parking maximum ordinance for new development in the Village, as well as minimum bicycle parking requirements, particularly within the business districts adjacent to transit.

HINSDALE, IL

CASE STUDY:

Parking Management

The 'Village of Hinsdale Innovative Parking Management Plan' reviews the Village's downtown business community and offers implementation strategies to help improve the parking experience for customers, optimizing parking options for downtown employees, and planning for long-term management of parking resources.



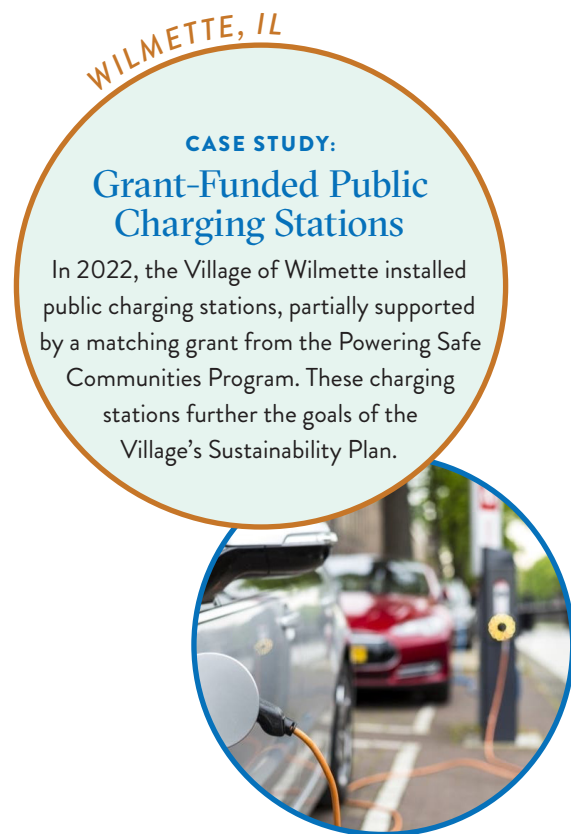
GOAL 8.6

The Village will support the progress of transportation through the exploration of new mobility services.

The transportation landscape is continually evolving with the introduction of new micromobility transportation options, such as e-scooters, and the proliferation of electric vehicles. Embracing these recent advancements, as well as those that are yet to come, is important to stay on the cutting edge and provide residents and visitors with the appropriate infrastructure to take advantage of these modes. Being proactive about new mobility options allows the Village to channel their use and direct how and where the Village would like to see them employed.

Initiative 8.6.1

Anticipate increased demand for electric vehicle charging and plan to increase the number of charging stations in public parking lots. Encourage private development to include charging facilities in new off-street parking areas.



Initiative 8.6.2

Through a review of peer communities, **explore additional sustainable transportation policy options related to electric vehicles, and electric-assist bicycles and scooters (e-bikes and e-scooters)**. Study the viability of bikeshare as a way to expand Green Bay Trail access in partnership with other communities along the Green Bay Road corridor.



e-bikes © Divvy & Lyft



e-scooters © Spin

PILLAR 9

Civic Engagement

VISION STATEMENT

“A community heritage founded on the fundamental principle of fostering beneficial public dialogue through active community engagement and volunteerism.”



PILLAR 9:

Civic Engagement

Vision Statement: *A community heritage founded on the fundamental principle of fostering beneficial public dialogue through active community engagement and volunteerism.*

Goal 9.1: The Village will nurture a culture among community residents that is welcoming, inclusive, and equitable, and that promotes diverse perspectives and cultivates community engagement.

Goal 9.2: The Village will foster and promote ample opportunities for robust community dialogue to support and enhance community in Winnetka.

Goal 9.3: The Village will continue to develop and improve strategies for active recruitment, engagement, and retention of a diverse and multigenerational cohort of volunteers.

Goal 9.4: The Village will continue to cooperate with those organizations utilized by Village residents to enhance civic involvement including various clubs, organizations, leagues, and the caucus system.

Winnetka Futures 2040 Plan includes ten Community Pillars. The following section describes Winnetka’s vision for ***Pillar 9: Civic Engagement***. A summary of the existing conditions analysis along with community input received over the course of the process are shared in the next few pages. Following that is a list of actionable initiatives for each of the goals listed above.

Civic Engagement

THE WINNETKA COMMUNITY

Winnetka is a community with a remarkable history of citizen engagement, volunteerism, and civic leadership. Numerous local charitable and public service organizations benefit from countless volunteer hours contributed by hundreds of residents. The schools in Winnetka have been successful in no small part due to civic and parental support and engagement. The Winnetka Caucus, a town hall-type of non-partisan self-government adopted in 1915, has brought thousands of residents over the years into a close conversation with local governmental bodies. For example, each year, a fresh group of citizen representatives seeks and slates trustee candidates and adopts platforms of policies for the Village Council as well as for the school, library, and park district boards. Finally, every year, dozens of residents serve as trustees or commissioners on those key public boards. All, of course, without compensation.

Over the years, however, Winnetka, like communities nationwide, has seen its level of civic engagement and volunteerism decline. It has become more difficult for local organizations to find residents – particularly younger generations – willing and able to volunteer their time. Many of the organizations in Winnetka that have relied on the Village’s historically deep pool of charitable volunteers have had to drop programs, scale back services, rely on a shrinking number of aging volunteers or close their doors entirely.

A similar issue with volunteerism is seen on the civic front. In addition to the Village Council, Winnetka has ten boards and commissions requiring over 50 volunteers, combined. Joining such boards requires tremendous commitment



over a period of years, and though often rewarding, can also be challenging. In some cases, it seems that the same longtime civic volunteers serve again and again.

Although the public's expectation of having a voice in decision-making continues to increase, the Village and other governmental bodies find it harder to bring the public into meaningful public engagement efforts until there is controversy afoot. Traditional in-person public meetings and open houses tend to bring in the same people and same voices, and groups such as newer residents, younger families, residents with disabilities, and renters are under-represented. Satisfaction with the formalized processes of public engagement has waned, and with fewer people engaged in public matters the quality of public input and debate can suffer. With this decline in civic involvement comes a decline in public awareness of what public bodies do, and how residents can engage in Village public processes.

While non-traditional methods of public engagement (virtual attendance at meetings, use of digital tools, etc) have become more broadly accepted by residents in recent years due in part to the pandemic and an influx in younger residents, more needs to be done.

When it comes to fostering beneficial public dialogue, active community engagement, and volunteerism in Winnetka, innovation, exploration, and evaluation are going to be essential.



Winnetka Caucus at Good Grapes - November 2018



Winnetka Historical Society - Log House Jubilee



#Winnetka Christmas Sign

Civic Engagement

***Vision Statement:** A community heritage founded on the fundamental principle of fostering beneficial public dialogue through active community engagement and volunteerism.*

GOAL 9.1

The Village will nurture a culture among community residents that is welcoming, inclusive, and equitable, and that promotes diverse perspectives and cultivates community engagement.

Good public decision-making requires a healthy two-way dialog between the Village and its residents. With the benefit of diverse perspectives from residents of all ages, backgrounds, and interests, Winnetka can make better-informed decisions. With good community engagement, the public gets the opportunity to not only weigh in, but also learn more deeply about the issues, the decision-makers, and the decision-making process. With a culture of healthy and respectful public dialogue, residents feel more comfortable engaging in public issues and may be encouraged to volunteer.

Initiative 9.1.1

Orientation for new Council, board, or commission members will include training on how the Village provides a welcoming and inclusive way in which all members of the public may participate in Village public processes.

Every member of a Village council, board, or commission helps set the tone for public engagement in Winnetka. How should residents be invited to engage at public meetings, recognizing that these meetings are “meetings in the public, not of the public”? How does the board or commission comply with the legal requirements around open meetings and public engagement? The orientation of each new member should include the reasons for welcoming and inclusive public engagement and provide additional clarification on similar topics. The Village should continually ensure best practices in this area, work toward more uniform public participation practices, and clearly communicate those practices with the public.

Initiative 9.1.2

Utilize active businesses and business groups to cultivate engagement among their customers and connect with different segments of the population.

Winnetka’s many active businesses and business groups can help build a culture of civic engagement. As an example, every year the Chamber of Commerce recognizes outstanding area residents, community leaders, business members, and volunteers at its annual Recognition Lunch, while the Winnetka Historical Society has held events recognizing supporters of the schools. Businesses and business owners located in Winnetka can bring expertise ranging from real estate development to childcare and can share opportunities for civic engagement of interest to their customers.



Ribbon Cutting © Winnetka Northfield Glencoe Chamber of Commerce

GOAL 9.2

The Village will foster and promote ample opportunities for robust community dialogue to support and enhance community in Winnetka.

It is no longer enough to depend on a monthly meeting of a public body, or an occasional open house, as the sole opportunity to capture community dialogue. Depending on such limited traditional opportunities alone would result in meager public input and frustrated residents denouncing a lack of transparency. Equally, public servants often point out the number of hours spent in public meetings with few or no residents in attendance, despite dutifully-posted agendas. The Village has embraced both traditional and digital civic engagement opportunities, increased its presence on social media, and has helped improve overall content, making information more user-friendly and visually attractive. Further tools can be deployed to evolve and better provide a range of opportunities for public engagement.

Initiative 9.2.1

Continue to support the effective use of digital civic engagement and traditional tools, including social media, to encourage residents of all ages and abilities to interact with the Village.

In the past, older residents seemed to eschew digital civic engagement methods, but in recent years they have embraced virtual platforms and have become more connected to social media. At the same time, digital tools and platforms have been critical to reaching those traditionally less connected, such as younger, disabled, and newer residents, as well as renters. While all digital tools can improve service overall, it will be critical to have a better understanding and intentionality of which tools to use depending on the target audience.



Village of Winnetka Twitter Page

Initiative 9.2.2

Continuously explore new technology that provides additional ways for the public to engage in public meetings and to provide input on agenda items and Village sponsored projects before they become final.

Public policy issues and public meeting agendas can sometimes seem dry or hard to understand for those unfamiliar with local government. Encouraging residents to become aware of and participate in the public engagement process will lead to better public input and healthier dialogue. New technology holds the promise of capturing more information from a broader range of residents, especially earlier in the process.

Initiative 9.2.3

Continue to make a high priority of posting online user-friendly information on Village finances, fiscal transparency, and projects.

Aside from building an increased sense of trust with residents and having the ability to transparently connect with the community, the Village can provide public education resources to better inform how government processes work, from budgets to zoning and development decisions.

GOAL 9.3

The Village will continue to develop and improve strategies for active recruitment, engagement, and retention of a diverse and multigenerational cohort of volunteers.

The Village cannot operate without dozens of thoughtful residents willing to dedicate many hours of work. New potential volunteers representing a wide range of ages, experience, expertise, and interests must be continuously identified, recruited, engaged, and ultimately retained. This will require increased efforts in finding and attracting talent, identifying issues that discourage or act as barriers to service, and helping volunteers achieve satisfaction and success through training and support.

Initiative 9.3.1

Explore creating a means by which to recruit and grow the field of volunteers and future board and commission members for the community and Village.

The Village President is responsible for appointing most of Winnetka's board and commission members. However, identifying and nurturing a field of volunteers cannot be the job of one person alone. Creating a means to recruit and grow a field of volunteers, not only for Village positions but also for other positions in the community, would broaden the field of potential candidates and help create a network of people who are capable of representing community needs.

Initiative 9.3.2

Pursue a variety of methods to attract volunteers such as holding open houses, creating a citizens' academy, collaborating with groups such as the Community House, and reaching out to younger generations.

Aside from recruiting future board and commission volunteers, the Village should ensure that volunteerism on all fronts is encouraged. Building a strong foundation of volunteers that can lend a hand in a variety of areas, accentuates a sense of place and empowerment. Every Winnetkan is unique in their own ways and can bring something different to the table, based on their experience, knowledge, and interests. Pursuing a variety of more publicly-accessible methods to attract and train volunteers could expand the field of potential civic leaders and engage community organizations as partners in this important work.

CASE STUDY:

Volunteer Homepage

The Village of Scarsdale has a Volunteer Homepage on its website, as well as a webpage devoted to seeking volunteers for each of its boards and commissions. This resource provides information on the selection process, an overview of board and commission responsibilities, as well as the frequency of meetings and expected level of involvement.

CASE STUDY:

Volunteer Benefits

In an attempt to grow volunteerism throughout the Town, Greenwich takes a different approach that is more focused on the volunteers' capabilities. Rather than asking for volunteers for a particular board, this approach allows residents to identify volunteer opportunities they might enjoy given their interests, skillsets, and experiences. This approach is not focused solely on Boards and Commissions, and includes a wide variety of volunteer opportunities, including firefighters. "Volunteer Benefits: Can help you gain valuable work experience, make use of your skills and knowledge, and meet new friends. Time commitment is flexible; you choose your days and hours!"



Winnetka Farmers Market

Initiative 9.3.3

Use the Village's website to advertise the satisfactions and benefits volunteers receive from civic engagement.

Experienced volunteers know the many benefits of their civic engagement. Such benefits need to be communicated, and the patriotic act of civic engagement deserves to be celebrated.

Initiative 9.3.4

Provide training to volunteers and employees to improve their data and information literacy and how they interact with the Village.

Sorting, understanding, and interpreting data and information has never been harder, by virtue of the technologically advanced world we live in. The Village can provide an important service to volunteers and staff, and subsequently to residents, by improving data and information literacy and how to interact with the Village.

Initiative 9.3.5

Identify obstacles and factors deterring residents from serving on Village boards and commissions. Provide comprehensive and detailed training to Village board and commission members and all commissioners.

Attracting and retaining residents to serve on Village boards and commissions depends on understanding the obstacles and factors deterring such service. Is the board or commission mandate clear and are their duties meaningful? Is the work of the board or commission done as efficiently as possible, with appropriate staff support? Are meetings well-run and are materials clear and helpful? Do those serving on the boards and commissions understand the

scope and responsibilities of their position, as imposed by law and best practices? Continuous improvement and attention to best practices, deep listening to the needs of potential and current volunteers, and comprehensive and detailed training of those serving on boards and commissions, can result in positive engagement.



Crow Island School Signage & Wayfinding

GOAL 9.4

The Village will continue to cooperate with those organizations utilized by Village residents to enhance civic involvement including various clubs, organizations, leagues, and the caucus system.

Winnetkans are lucky to have a deep roster of clubs, organizations, leagues, and even a caucus system dedicated to serving the community and its residents. Many of these organizations are recognizing that time and money can be saved through managed collaboration: sharing information on issues, partnering on events, or sharing meeting spaces.

Organizations devoted to environmental stewardship, the Green Bay Trail, public gardens, bicycle routes, or the health of the Hubbard Woods downtown district, for example, share information about issues important to their members and invite engagement with the Village on those topics.

The League of Women Voters studies current issues and encourages people to vote, an essential element of civic participation.

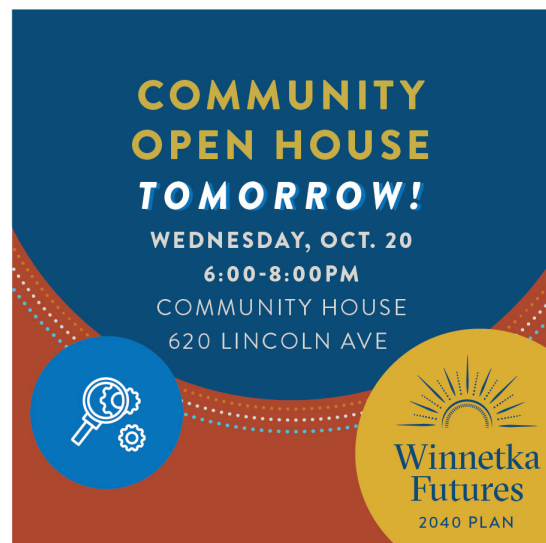
The Winnetka Caucus, a century-old town hall-type system, reaches out to every resident for input on both current issues and potential candidates for the Village council and other boards in the community.

The Village recognizes that these organizations are not public bodies and do not have a public decision-making role. Still, each of these organizations is a conduit that residents use to engage with the Village. Continuing to cooperate with these organizations is important.

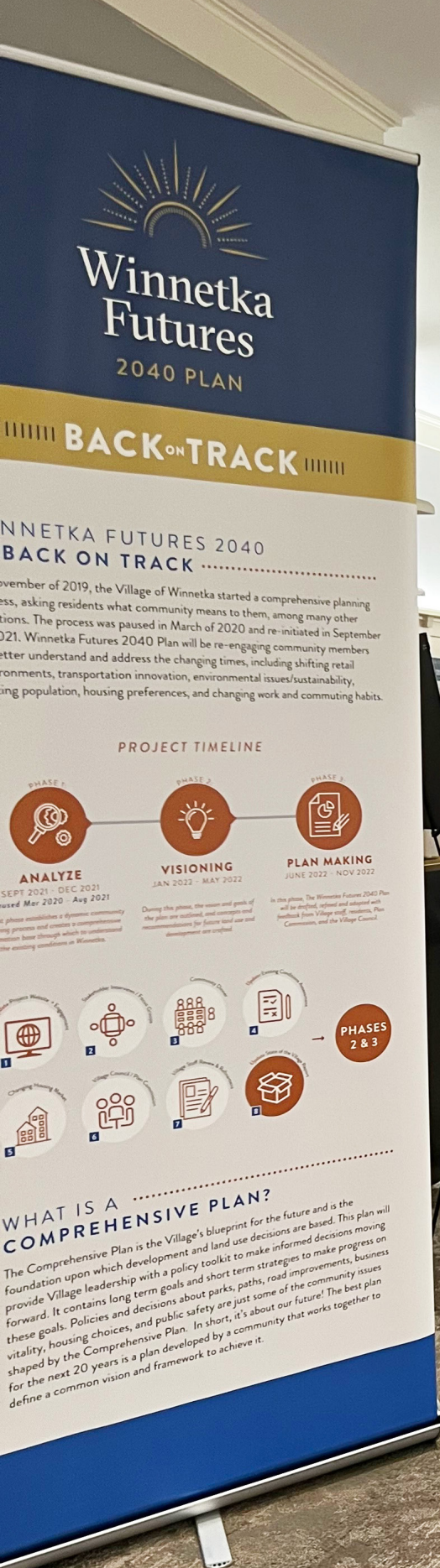
Initiative 9.4.1

Inform Winnetka residents of community organizations that provide services, and engage the organizations in Village-sponsored projects.

Winnetka can use its “megaphone” in the community, including the Village website, newsletter, and social media presence, among other platforms, to share information with residents when community organizations provide opportunities for engagement concerning Village-sponsored projects.



Winnetka Futures Community Open House Social Media



Winnetka Futures
2040 PLAN

BACK ON TRACK

WINNETKA FUTURES 2040 BACK ON TRACK

November of 2019, the Village of Winnetka started a comprehensive planning process, asking residents what community means to them, among many other questions. The process was paused in March of 2020 and re-initiated in September 2021. Winnetka Futures 2040 Plan will be re-engaging community members to better understand and address the changing times, including shifting retail environments, transportation innovation, environmental issues/sustainability, aging population, housing preferences, and changing work and commuting habits.

PROJECT TIMELINE

PHASE 1
ANALYZE
SEPT 2021 - DEC 2021
This phase establishes a dynamic community vision process and creates a comprehensive vision base through which to understand the existing conditions in Winnetka.

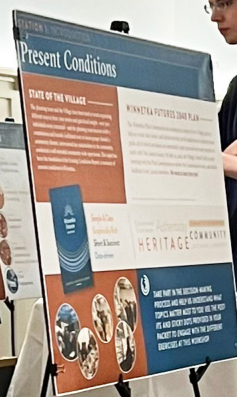
PHASE 2
VISIONING
JAN 2022 - MAY 2022
During this phase, the vision and goals of the plan are outlined, and conceptual and recommendations for future land use and development are created.

PHASE 3
PLAN MAKING
JUNE 2022 - NOV 2022
In this phase, the Winnetka Futures 2040 Plan will be drafted, refined and adopted with feedback from Village staff, residents, Plan Commission, and the Village Council.

PHASES 2 & 3

WHAT IS A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN?

The Comprehensive Plan is the Village's blueprint for the future and is the foundation upon which development and land use decisions are based. This plan will provide Village leadership with a policy toolkit to make informed decisions moving forward. It contains long term goals and short term strategies to make progress on these goals. Policies and decisions about parks, paths, road improvements, business vitality, housing choices, and public safety are just some of the community issues shaped by the Comprehensive Plan. In short, it's about our future! The best plan for the next 20 years is a plan developed by a community that works together to define a common vision and framework to achieve it.



Present Conditions

STATE OF THE VILLAGE
The Village of Winnetka is a diverse and vibrant community with a rich history and a bright future. The Village is currently in a period of rapid change, with many challenges and opportunities ahead. The Village Council is committed to addressing these challenges and opportunities through the Winnetka Futures 2040 Plan.

WINNETKA FUTURES 2040 PLAN
The Winnetka Futures 2040 Plan is a comprehensive plan that will guide the Village's development and land use decisions for the next 20 years. The plan will be drafted, refined and adopted with feedback from Village staff, residents, Plan Commission, and the Village Council.

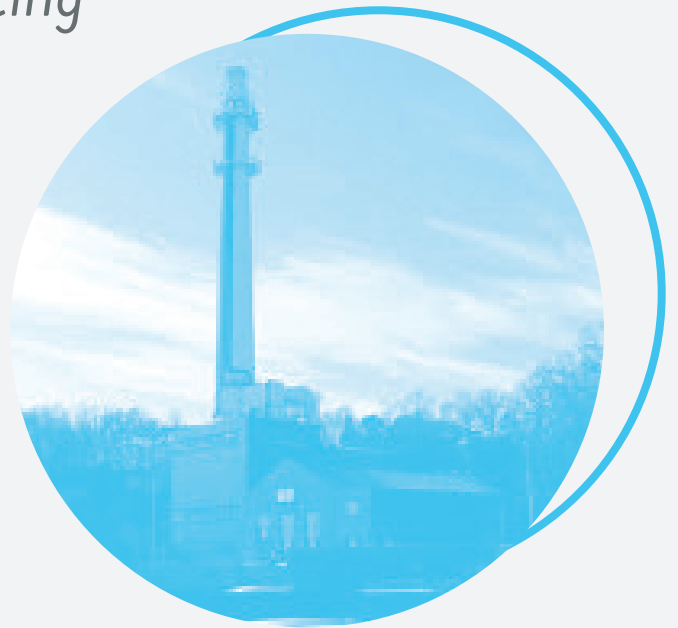
HERITAGE & COMMUNITY
The Village of Winnetka is a diverse and vibrant community with a rich history and a bright future. The Village is currently in a period of rapid change, with many challenges and opportunities ahead. The Village Council is committed to addressing these challenges and opportunities through the Winnetka Futures 2040 Plan.

PILLAR 10

Operational Efficiencies & Regional Coordination

VISION STATEMENT

“A community with a strong heritage of thought-leadership supporting and enhancing our intergovernmental relationships to ensure efficient, prudent community management through data-supported planning, organizational synergies, and effective communication.”



PILLAR 10:

Operational Efficiencies & Regional Coordination

Vision Statement: A community with a strong heritage of thought-leadership supporting and enhancing our intergovernmental relationships to ensure efficient, prudent community management through data-supported planning, organizational synergies, and effective communication.

Goal 10.1: The Village will manage an efficient and effective public review and entitlement process that provides clarity and predictability to both public and private reinvestment in the community.

Goal 10.2: Whenever operationally efficient and fiscally effective, the Village will deliver exceptional public services through shared intergovernmental or regional cooperation and synergies.

Goal 10.3: The Village governance and management will effectively evaluate, educate, and communicate current and changing community issues with its residents, businesses, and institutions.

Winnetka Futures 2040 Plan includes ten Community Pillars. The following section describes Winnetka’s vision for **Pillar 10: Operational Efficiencies & Regional Coordination**. A summary of the existing conditions analysis along with community input received over the course of the process are shared in the next few pages. Following that is a list of actionable initiatives for each of the goals listed above.

Village Boards & Commissions



BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

Plan Commission

The Plan Commission (PC) meets once a month and is made up of nine member residents who serve three-year terms. The members are appointed by the Village President, with concurrence of the Trustees. One member is chosen from each of the following other public bodies to serve: the Zoning Board of Appeals, Environmental and Forestry Commission, and Landmark Preservation Commission. The remaining six members are chosen at-large among the Village's residents. A Village Council member also serves as an ex officio member. The PC is primarily responsible for:

- » Matters related to the implementation or amendment of the Comprehensive Plan.
- » Conducting annual reviews and making recommendations to Village Council about progress, project improvements and related implementation actions from the Comprehensive Plan.
- » Considering land subdivisions as provided in the subdivision ordinance.
- » Advising on applications for special use permits and wireless telecommunications facilities.
- » Working with Village Council to implement the overall vision for the Village.

The Plan Commission was the main steering committee for, and guided the development of, this plan.

“We must protect the things that we value while keeping an open mind into the future.”

- COMMENT FROM COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

Design Review Board

The Design Review Board (DRB) is a seven-member, Village-appointed body that meets monthly and is responsible for making decisions and recommendations on the architectural design and style of new commercial, multi-family, and institutional buildings, or proposed alterations or additions to such buildings. The DRB uses the Village's 2001 Commercial Area Design Guidelines as guidance in evaluating such projects. In addition to applying the Winnetka Design Guidelines, it has specific authority over:

- » Design in connection with applications for building and sign permits.
- » Making recommendations to Village Council on design-related matters.
- » Adopting and publishing standards and criteria for the review of external architectural features (i.e. Design Guidelines).
- » Developing appropriate measures to improve the appearance of public buildings and public property.
- » Review of proposed public improvements and make recommendations as to the architectural or aesthetic aspects of such plans and specifications.
- » Consulting on matters affecting the appearance of the Village.
- » Formulating plans, measures, and guidelines for improvement to the appearance of privately-owned real estate in the Village and, with the approval of Village Council, consulting with the owners or occupants of such real estate to improve appearance through voluntary cooperation.

COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

The planning team met with the Design Review Board on February 13, 2020 and again on October 12, 2021 for a focus group discussion. The conversation centered around ways to streamline the design review process and challenge the community to think outside the box. Key themes that came out of that discussion are summarized below:

Process

Signage and awnings represent the largest number of reviews that the DRB sees. The Board believes that it should not have to review signs or awnings that comply with code and design guidelines, and that much of what they review could be done administratively, outside of façade renovations. The Board felt that its review of Planned Development projects should come earlier in the review process in order for the review process to be effective. Generally, the 2001 Design Guidelines are considered somewhat antiquated and in need of an update. In addition, the Village Sign Code should be re-evaluated in conjunction with a review of the Design Guidelines, particularly internally illuminated sign standards. They hope that this comprehensive planning process can recommend some changes and identify a direction for updating the Design Guidelines to move toward.

Beyond Tudor

The current design guidelines were written from a very limited viewpoint, which influences how the board can act. While Tudor is the architectural style that defines Winnetka's business districts, many question if that is all that Winnetka can be. Forcing the Tudor style on new developments instead of promoting high quality and authentic designs results in new developments that lack in architectural integrity. The charm and character of Winnetka are why many chose this community above others. Being overly prescriptive in style holds the Village back from developing in an authentic, high-quality manner that maintains that charm but also allows for creativity.

Think Big

This plan should challenge those within the Village to think big. There is an increasing age divide in the community that must be central to this conversation. This divide disrupts the idea of what a traditional downtown is, and questions how important retail is in that equation. Winnetka's downtown should serve as a source of energy and vitality for the community and build in flexibility to make it relevant to all age groups. The attraction of urban centers for young people is due to the "failed vision of the gated suburban experiment." To stay relevant, the Village must adapt to a more urban vision, while staying true to its core values of excellence and authenticity.

Landmarks Preservation Commission

The Landmark Preservation Commission consists of seven members and is responsible for overseeing the recognition and designation of historic resources in the Village. The Commission is primarily responsible for identifying and evaluating potential landmarks in the Village based on specific criteria, educating Village residents about current and potential Village landmarks, designating properties for landmark status, and maintaining an inventory of landmark properties. In addition, the Commission is responsible for reviewing applications for demolition permits, and making determinations on whether a Historic and Architectural Impact Study (HAIS) should be conducted and if a demolition delay should be issued to provide time to find a way to save a building the Commission has found to be significant.

Zoning Board Of Appeals

The Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) meets once a month and is made up of seven member-residents who serve five-year terms. The members are appointed by the Village President and Trustees. The ZBA is primarily responsible for:

- » Conducting public hearings on zoning variation requests and preparing findings of facts based on the project record, as well as decisions and advisory authority related to variations considered by other bodies.
- » Conducting public hearings on all special use permit requests outside of the Commercial Overlay District.
- » Making decisions and interpretation on administrative appeals from any Village Zoning Ordinance decision.
- » Acting as the Building and Zoning Board of Appeals related to decisions considering building permit approval, building materials and methods, and the application of the model building codes adopted by the Village.

Planned Development Commission

The Planned Development Commission (PDC) meets as needed to review planned development applications. The Commission has nine members consisting of members from the Plan Commission and the ZBA. The members are appointed by the President with the consent of the Trustees. The PDC is primarily responsible for:

- » Conducting public hearings and make recommendations to the Village Council on applications for planned developments and associated plats of subdivision.
- » Consulting and cooperating with the Village Council and other Village commissions, boards, and departments on matters related to planned developments within the Village.
- » Periodically reviewing and making recommendations regarding amendments to Zoning Ordinance related to planned developments.

Environmental And Forestry Commission

The Environmental and Forestry Commission meets once a month and is made up of nine member-residents, including a student and Village Council representative. Although they are responsible for the overall environmental stewardship and tree resources in Winnetka, they have taken on a greater role to promote sustainability and sponsor specific initiatives aimed at resource conservation, raising public awareness of environmental issues and best practices, and recommending sustainable actions in public policy. The commission is also responsible for hearing appeals under the Village's Tree Preservation Ordinance.

A summary of the stakeholder meeting held with the Environmental and Forestry Commission can be found in Pillar 5: Sustainability and Climate Action.



Lloyd Beach © The Lakota Group

LANDMARK PRESERVATION COMMISSION

The planning team met with the Landmark Preservation Commission on February 3, 2020 and October 4, 2021 to discuss local preservation issues. The key discussion themes are summarized below:

Demolitions + Community Character

There is a concern about the loss of neighborhood character in Winnetka due to the demolition of older homes and the construction of new, larger homes. Teardowns and new construction can have a dramatic impact in traditional neighborhoods. Despite concerns about Winnetka's changing character, property rights advocates still have a strong voice in the community. There is ongoing tension between residents who appreciate Winnetka's historic character and developers who want to maximize value.

Historic Resources Survey Program

The Village lacks a survey program that identifies historic resources that could be future local landmarks or subject to demolition delay requirements. The Commission also struggles with a lack of information and documentation on its historic resources, and it relies on information provided by the Historical Society, which is not always complete. The failure to complete the 1987 survey due to community opposition makes the Commission and Village leaders reticent to attempt another survey.

Housing Affordability

The large number of demolitions has significantly changed neighborhoods and has an impact on housing affordability as Winnetka loses its smaller homes, bungalows, and ranch homes to demolition. The loss of these homes also impacts the ability for seniors to age in place.

Education

The Commission believes that educating property owners about the benefits of historic preservation is a key issue and priority. The 2019 Community Caucus Survey indicated that 60 percent of residents favor historic preservation. Despite this, there is misunderstanding in the community about what landmark designation means. The common misunderstanding is that the Commission has the authority to preserve landmarks in perpetuity. Educational efforts started with the Winnetka Historical Commission brochure.

Sustainability

Promoting historic preservation as a means for achieving community sustainability goals can be a powerful message to younger generations who are already seeking walkability and authenticity in the places they live and work in.

ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

The planning team met with the Zoning Board of Appeals on February 3, 2020 and again on October 11, 2021 to discuss zoning and community character issues. Key themes that came out of that discussion are summarized below:

Flexibility

Demolitions in Winnetka are too frequent and too extensive. When building demolitions occur, sites are often stripped of existing trees and vegetation. The Village needs standards/requirements for preservation and use of native vegetation. The zoning ordinance should incentivize people toward rehabilitation over demolition and allow more flexibility. Different standards and procedures for review of existing buildings could better accommodate and promote rehab and reuse. Allowing secondary suites (i.e., ADUs within the principal residential structure) could also help to provide greater flexibility in housing options. The ZBA hears many cases that involve "cleaning up" existing nonconformities. These existing non-conformities could be handled at the staff level to reduce the burden on applicants.

Ordinance Application

Of the eight variance criteria in the zoning ordinance, "reasonable return" is the most challenging to apply. Residents often come before the ZBA with a perception that the Winnetka market will only accept a certain standard (primary bedroom, two-and-a-half bath, double garage, etc.), and that standard is needed to receive a reasonable return. The "uniqueness" criteria is also difficult to apply fairly and consistently, as it is not clear what constitutes uniqueness.

In Winnetka, a variance can be requested for anything, unlike in other communities where residents must select from a list of items on which they can ask for a variance. This can create an unnecessary amount of variance applications. The most common concerns heard by the ZBA (voiced by those in opposition to applications) include stormwater impacts, privacy of neighbors, and architectural character.

An overly-strict application of rules for non-conforming uses, particularly as they relate to institutional uses in residential zones, was also noted as a concern. More certainty in the process and less subjectivity or discretion were mentioned as benefit to homeowners.

Education

Education is key in streamlining the application processes. Many residents don't understand zoning and make requests that are not reasonable/permisible from a zoning standpoint. Residents sometimes don't understand that every lot (because of size, configuration or zoning) is not entitled to the same size house and level of amenities. Better communication materials are needed to clearly convey to the average resident what is or is not allowed.

Operational Efficiencies & Regional Coordination

Vision Statement: *A community with a strong heritage of thought-leadership supporting and enhancing our intergovernmental relationships to ensure efficient, prudent community management through data-supported planning, organizational synergies, and effective communication.*

GOAL 10.1

The Village will manage an efficient and effective public review and entitlement process that provides clarity and predictability to both public and private reinvestment in the community.

A commitment to maintaining a regulatory structure that is straightforward and easy to understand helps the Village remain approachable to outside investment and development. Clear communication and a transparent organizational structure enables trust, and allows various parties an understanding of where they stand and whom to speak with as questions arise.

Initiative 10.1.1

Engage the Village Council, Zoning Board of Appeals, Plan Commission, and Village at-large to evaluate changes to the zoning and subdivision regulations and processes. This will ensure clarity for residential and commercial applicants, as well as for the impacted residents and businesses.

Zoning regulations can have a profound impact on the built environment and the daily lives of Winnetkans. Such regulations should be easy to understand and up-to-date with best practices that address evolving needs in the community. Establishing an annual or semi-annual discussion with Village decision-makers and community leaders can help ensure the zoning code remains a living document.

Initiative 10.1.2

Engage the Design Review Board to evaluate streamlining and modifying the multi-family, commercial and institutional design guidelines and the accompanying review process, while still ensuring that compatible design is achieved.

Maintaining a strong, consistent Village aesthetic is a challenge. Establishing a local character and context lends itself to maintaining a sense of branding and identity. At the same time, it can limit creativity and be viewed as stifling local development and slowing a review process.



Design Guidelines Illustration

Initiative 10.1.3

Engage all respective boards, commissions, and Village staff to consider changes to streamline development regulations and processes, while still ensuring that desired development is achieved and the public review process is transparent and consistent.

GOAL 10.2

Whenever operationally efficient and fiscally effective, the Village will deliver exceptional public services through shared intergovernmental or regional cooperation and synergies.

The North Shore region is fortunate to have vibrant school districts, park districts, and other public or private organizations that support community needs. Winnetka can be a leader in identifying and coordinating opportunities to work collaboratively in providing civic, recreational, and cultural services for Village residents.

Initiative 10.2.1

Continue to maintain a single, integrated, five-year capital improvement program (CIP) for all Village facilities, equipment, and infrastructure, identifying how each project helps achieve the mission and goals of the Comprehensive Plan.

Initiative 10.2.2

Continue the practice of communication among local taxing jurisdictions (New Trier High School District, School District 36, Park District, and Library), to inform and coordinate on infrastructure and facility improvements.

Initiative 10.2.3

Create and continue to maintain a Village Facilities Master Plan.

Initiative 10.2.4

Continue to coordinate the utility infrastructure Capital Improvement Program with the Village's Roadway Improvement Program for efficient and effective programming of dependent initiatives.

Initiative 10.2.5

Evaluate opportunities to approach municipal operations with effective sustainability measures, addressing current and future climate concerns.



THE VILLAGE OF
Winnetka

ANNUAL BUDGET
CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN



2023

510 Green Bay Road
Winnetka, IL 60093
847-501-6000
www.villageofwinnetka.org



Five Year Capital Improvements Plan © Village of Winnetka

GOAL 10.3

*The Village governance and management will effectively **evaluate, educate, and communicate** current and **changing community issues** with its residents, businesses, and institutions.*

Proactive communication and outreach are invaluable tools to welcoming and engaging organizations in the community, as well as keeping residents and stakeholders up to date on Village issues. Different media can be used where most appropriate, and information and messages can be tailored to the business community, neighborhood groups, special interest groups, or service organizations.

Initiative 10.3.1

*When appropriate, **engage community service organizations, such as the Winnetka Historical Society, local gardening clubs, and service clubs, among others, in local issues.***

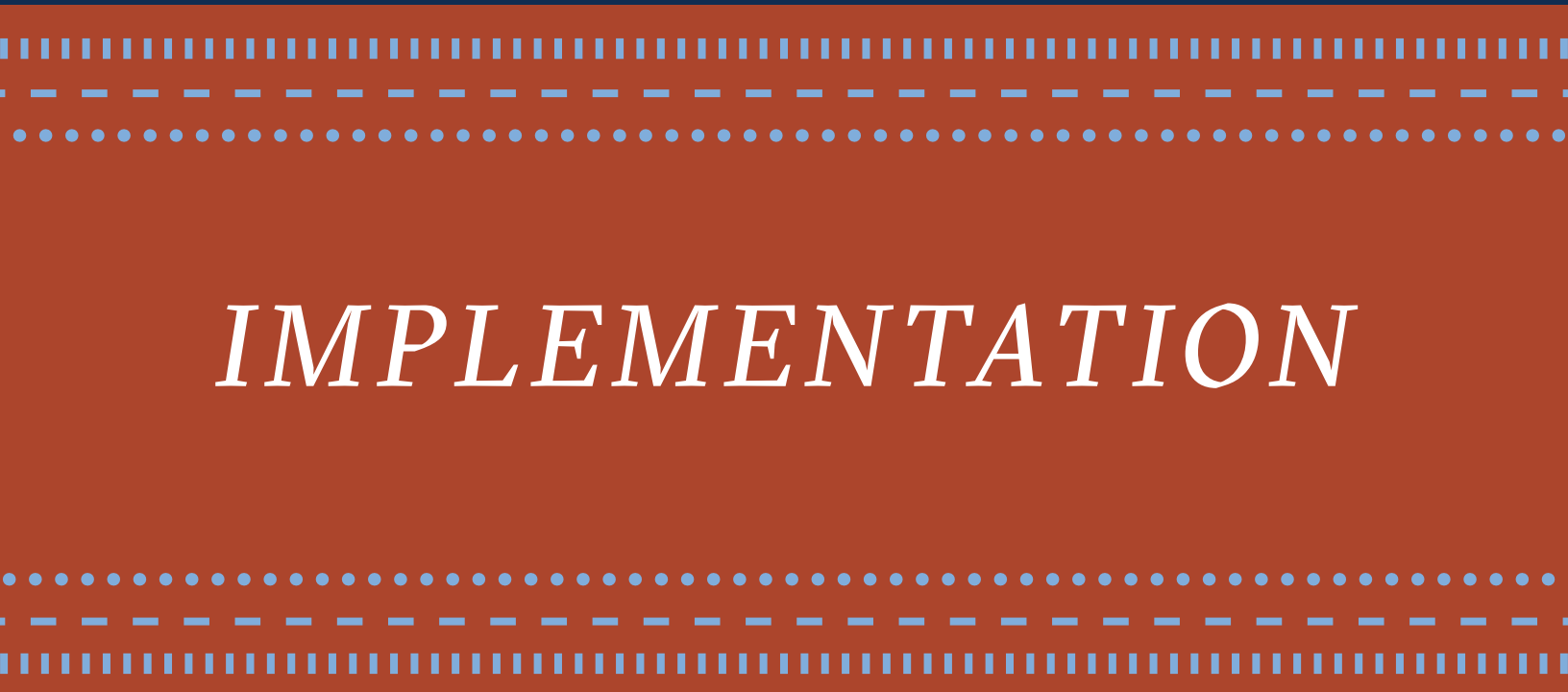
Initiative 10.3.2

Seek the use of innovative technology to communicate with residents in real time, such as community sign boards.

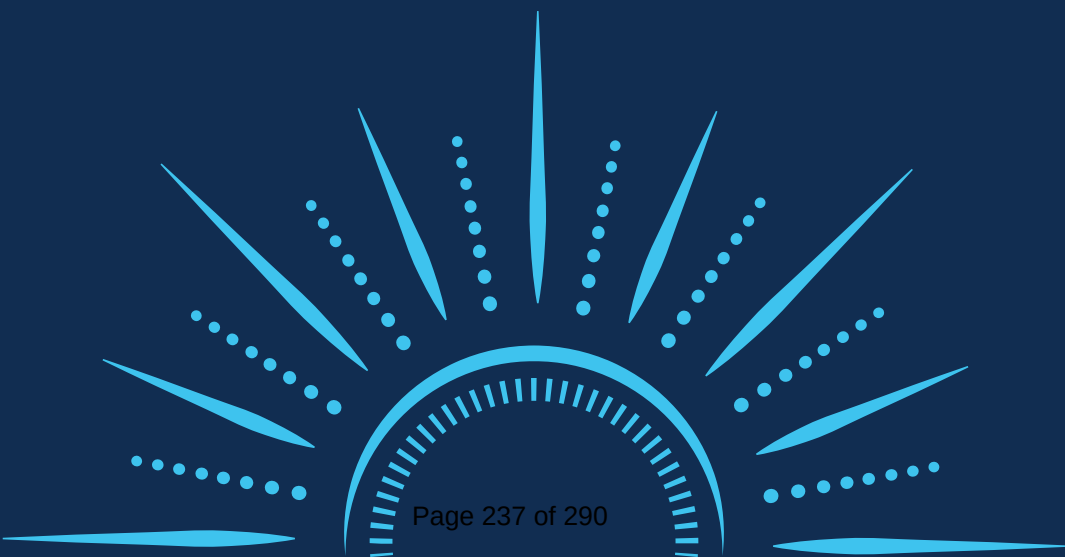
Temporary sign boards can be an ideal method of sharing important information with the public, more often. Additional tools to help keep the community in the loop on all Winnetka-related topics is a mobile application. The application can share daily updates on community happenings, such as performances at the community theater, farmers' market dates, Commission and Village Board meeting dates, events at the public library, and more.



City Mock Up Phone Application



IMPLEMENTATION



Implementation



OVERVIEW

Winnetka Futures 2040 is a guiding document that builds on past successes and defines how Winnetka residents and stakeholders envision the Village continuing to thrive and build capacity to respond to community needs. This Comprehensive Plan shares a collection of initiatives that support local action to realistically achieve the variety of community-led goals, defined within each Pillar. While this Plan defines the Winnetka Futures 2040 vision, it is also a dynamic document that shall be revisited regularly and updated as new opportunities arise and resources are made available. This will allow the Village to monitor progress and assess whether the goals and initiatives still reflect community aspirations.

The implementation matrix summarizes the Winnetka Futures 2040 goals and initiatives, categorized under the ten Community Pillars. This chart also establishes a **priority level** (low, medium, high) for each initiative, defined by local leadership and supported by community conversations. The priority level also identifies the **time frame for implementation** — High priority (within 3 years), Medium priority (3 to 10 years), and Low priority (10+ years). Ensuring this Plan is impactful for Winnetkans requires on-going stewardship and collaboration between local and regional **implementation partners**, including entities such as Village departments, Winnetka Park District, Winnetka School District 36, the Illinois Department of Transportation, Winnetka-Northfield-Glencoe Chamber of Commerce, among others listed below. While implementation partners are identified in the matrix, it is key for the Village to continue advancing initiatives and provide support for partners as implementation progresses.



Downtown Winnetka

IMPLEMENTATION PARTNERS

The implementation of the Winnetka Futures 2040 Plan will depend on the constant collaboration of local and regional partners, including the different departments within the Village of Winnetka. Below is a list of implementation partners that will be referenced in the matrix.

Village of Winnetka (VOW)

The Village of Winnetka president and trustees, along with its various departments are integral partners in advancing initiatives over the next 20 years. The Village of Winnetka (VOW), as mentioned in the matrix, references the **Village Council and Village staff**.

Boards & Commissions (B&C)

The Village of Winnetka boards and commissions have been and continue to be critical partners in advancing the 2040 vision. Below is a list of Winnetka's boards and commissions:

- » **Plan Commission (PC)** — Responsible for making recommendations to the Village Council about a variety of development-related matters, as well as monitors land subdivisions and special use permits.

The Plan Commission has been the guiding committee for the development of the 2040 Plan, and the Commission shall continue the responsibility of working alongside the Village Council in monitoring progress and amendments to the Comprehensive Plan.

- » **Planned Development Commission (PDC)** — Responsible for making recommendations to the Village Council and other commissions on applications for planned developments and associated plats of subdivision.
- » **Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA)** — Responsible for zoning variations, special use permits outside the commercial areas, decisions and interpretation on administrative appeals, and decisions considering building permits, building materials, and more.
- » **Design Review Board (DRB)** — Responsible for overall Village appearance, administers the Winnetka Design Guidelines, and makes recommendations to Council on design-related matters.
- » **Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC)** — Responsible for identifying and evaluating potential landmarks in the Village based on specific criteria, reviews applications for landmark designation and makes recommendations to the Village Council maintaining an inventory of landmark properties, and reviewing applications for demolition permits.
- » **Environmental Forestry Commission (EFC)** — Responsible for the overall environmental stewardship and tree resources, as well as promoting sustainability and resource conservation.

Winnetka Park District (WPD)

The Park District covers 27 parks, five beaches, and other special amenities, providing program offerings year long, including athletics and sport programs.

Winnetka School District 36 (WSD36)

Winnetka School District 36 is a elementary school district that serves approximately 1,663 students in grades K-8. District 36 schools include Greeley School, Hubbard Woods School, Crow Island School, The Skokie School, Carleton Washburne School.

Forest Preserves Department of Cook County (FPDCC)

A large portion of northeast Winnetka is Cook County Forest Preserve land. FPDCC's mission is to restore and manage lands to protect and preserve public open space and the natural environment, along with providing recreational and educational opportunities.

New Trier Township High School District 203 (NTSD203)

New Trier Township serves approximately 4,000 students in grades 9-12 between the two campuses, covering Glencoe, Kenilworth, Wilmette, Winnetka, and portions of Glenview and Northfield. One of New Trier's campuses is in Winnetka and the other in Northfield.

Winnetka Private Schools (WPRS)

There are a number of exceptional private schools in Winnetka, including North Shore Country Day School, Sacred Heart School, and The School of Saints Faith, Hope, and Charity.

Winnetka Caucus (WC)

The Caucus Council sponsors town meetings, runs the Annual Survey, slates candidates, and writes the platforms by which the Village boards are guided.

Winnetka Northfield Public Library (WPL)

The Winnetka-Northfield Public Library District is a community resource for the advancement of knowledge, and a provider of innovative and informative cultural enrichment for all ages.

North Shore Art League (NSAL)

The North Shore Art League is a non-profit organization dedicated to enriching the human spirit and life of its community through art education and exhibitions.

Winnetka-Northfield-Glencoe Chamber of Commerce (WNGCC)

The Winnetka Northfield Glencoe Chamber of Commerce is an association of businesses, services, governmental agencies, schools, and organizations, working to promote the betterment of its communities.

Winnetka Community House (WCH)

One of Winnetka's most active nonprofit organizations, the Winnetka Community House enriches the lives of north shore residents by providing educational, cultural, social and recreational opportunities for people of all ages.

Winnetka Historical Society (WHS)

Winnetka Historical Society honors and preserves Winnetka's heritage, gathers and shares the artifacts and stories of its past, and fosters meaningful connections among Winnetkans and the broader community.

Go Green Winnetka (GGW)

Go Green Winnetka is an all-volunteer group, advocating for environmental stewardship and sustainability in Winnetka, and a member of the larger regional network of Go Green groups, through Go Green Illinois.

Friends of The Green Bay Trail (FTGBT)

Friends of the Green Bay Trail is a volunteer-managed non-profit organization that raises awareness and funding sources to improve the stretch of the trail from Glencoe to Winnetka.

Cook County (CC)

One of the largest counties in the nation, Cook County is home to over 130 municipalities, including the Village of Winnetka. Regional coordination efforts pertaining to planning, development, and transportation will require collaborations with Cook County.

Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT)

With a mission to strengthen, maintain, and expand the Illinois transportation system, IDOT is a national leader in interconnectivity and multi-modal transportation visions. Mobility and connectivity improvements, including future planning, design, and construction, to roadways under IDOT's jurisdiction will require continued planning and coordination.

Private Developers and Investors (PDI)

Developing and investing in potential development opportunity sites, as outlined in the Future Land Use section, as well as any future sites, would require private and public collaboration.

Religious & Service Organizations (RSO)

- » Christ Church
- » Congregation Hakafa
- » Grace Presbyterian Church
- » Lake Shore Unitarian Society
- » Sacred Church/Divine Mercy Parish
- » Saint Faith, Hope & Charity Church
- » Winnetka Bible Church
- » Winnetka Congregational Church
- » Winnetka Presbyterian Church

Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA)

Coordinating future water system improvements with and obtain permitting through the IEPA for the Village's water system projects would be key.

Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD)

The Village currently has a necessary relationship with MWRD who provides sanitary wastewater collection and treatment service to the Village.

Additional Partners/Organizations

- » Business Owners (BO)
- » Counseling Center of the North Shore (CCNS)
- » Hadley Institute for The Blind (HITB)
- » Metra (Metra)
- » Metropolitan Mayors Caucus (MMC)
- » Metropolitan Water Reclamation District (MWRD)
- » Music Institute of Chicago (MIC)
- » North Shore Senior Center (NSSC)
- » Pace (Pace)
- » Philanthropic Organizations (PO)
- » Property Owners (POW)
- » The Alliance for Early Childhood (AEC)
- » The Volunteer Center (TVC)
- » The Winnetka Club (TWC)
- » Winnetka Youth Organization (WYO)



Night Out in West Elm, Winnetka

ABBREVIATED LIST OF PARTNERS

- » **AEC** - The Alliance of Early Childhood
- » **B&C** - Village of Winnetka Boards & Commissions
- » **BO** - Business Owners
- » **CC** - Cook County
- » **CCNS** - Counseling Center of the North Shore
- » **DRB** - Design Review Board
- » **EFC** - Environmental Forestry Commission
- » **FPDCC** - Forest Preserve Department of Cook County
- » **FTGBT** - Friends of the Green Bay Trail
- » **GGW** - Go Green Winnetka
- » **HITB** - Hadley Institute for The Blind
- » **IDOT** - Illinois Department of Transportation
- » **LPC** - Landmarks Preservation Commission
- » **Metra** - Metra
- » **MIC** - Music Institute of Chicago
- » **MMC** - Metropolitan Mayors Caucus
- » **MWRD** - Metropolitan Water Reclamation District
- » **NSAL** - North Shore Art League
- » **NSSC** - North Shore Senior Center
- » **NTSD203** - New Trier Township High School District 203
- » **Pace** - Pace
- » **PC** - Plan Commission
- » **PDC** - Planned Development Commission
- » **PDI** - Private Developers and Investors
- » **PO** - Philanthropic Organizations
- » **POW** - Property Owners
- » **PTO** - Winnetka District 36 Central Teacher Organization
- » **RSO** - Religious and Service Organizations
- » **TVC** - The Volunteer Center
- » **TWC** - The Winnetka Club
- » **VOW** - Village of Winnetka
- » **WC** - Winnetka Caucus
- » **WCH** - Winnetka Community House
- » **WHS** - Winnetka Historical Society
- » **WNGCC** - Winnetka-Northfield-Glencoe Chamber of Commerce
- » **WPD** - Winnetka Park District
- » **WPL** - Winnetka Northfield Public Library
- » **WPRS** - Winnetka Private Schools
- » **WSD36** - Winnetka School District 36
- » **WYO** - Winnetka Youth Organization
- » **ZBA** - Zoning Board of Appeals



501 Local, Winnetka

PILLAR 1:

Quality Livable Neighborhoods

Vision Statement: A community of connected neighborhoods with safe, pedestrian-oriented streets, tree-lined parkways, and a variety of well-maintained housing offerings to meet the needs of all of its residents and create a unique and powerful sense of place.

GOAL
1.1

The Village will encourage renovation of existing homes and construction of new homes to be contextually consistent with existing single-family housing in its neighborhood.

INITIATIVE	IMPLEMENTATION PARTNER	LEVEL OF PRIORITY
Initiative 1.1.1: Review Village building codes, zoning regulations, permitting processes, Village utility requirements, and other policies to ensure they do not present obstacles for residents wishing to renovate their existing homes, and they do not encourage demolition of existing homes leading to new construction.	VOW	MEDIUM
Initiative 1.1.2: Encourage renovation of existing homes to reduce environmental impacts of new construction and to maintain housing diversity for such segments of the community as young families and empty nesters.	LPC, VOW, WHS	HIGH On-Going
Initiative 1.1.3: Consider conducting an architectural survey to identify important Winnetka architectural and historic resources and other physical contributions to its heritage and character.	LPC, VOW	MEDIUM
Initiative 1.1.4: Evaluate and provide information on traditional tools and programs that support the preservation of historic and architecturally significant homes.	LPC, VOW	HIGH
Initiative 1.1.5: Consider creating a document that provides guidance for the scale and form of new single-family residential construction envisioned in Winnetka's various neighborhoods to encourage development that is complementary to and compatible with existing homes. Guidance may include window forms, building setbacks and height, architectural styling, and building materials.	DRB, VOW	HIGH On-Going
Initiative 1.1.6: Strengthen and maintain the rich and diverse character of the Village's neighborhoods and sense of identity by highlighting each neighborhood's unique elements that contribute positively to the Village.	LPC	LOW

LEVEL OF PRIORITY & CORRESPONDING TIME FRAME FOR IMPLEMENTATION

HIGH (less than 3 yrs) - **MEDIUM** (3 to 10 yrs) - **LOW** (10 + yrs)

Initiative 1.1.7: Consider updating the Village's subdivision regulations to make the process clearer and to simplify the process for minor subdivisions, such as simple lot line adjustments or plats of consolidation.	VOW, PC	HIGH
Initiative 1.1.8: For those R-5 District zoning areas of the community that have lots that are predominately 50 feet wide, consider revising the R-5 zoning standards to reduce the minimum lot width from 60 feet back to 50 feet.	VOW, PC	MEDIUM

GOAL 1.2

The Village will continue to explore housing diversity and address the housing gap to provide a supply that supports changing demographic needs and ensures a variety of product types, options, and costs available to seniors, empty nesters, families, and young residents.

INITIATIVE	IMPLEMENTATION PARTNER	LEVEL OF PRIORITY
Initiative 1.2.1: Evaluate existing single-family zoning districts to identify areas where additional housing units may be appropriate through rezoning along arterial streets, at major intersections, or near institutional uses to a low-density multi-family residential district which allows land uses including townhomes, apartments, and condominiums.	VOW	LOW
Initiative 1.2.2: Explore a multi-year pilot Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) program to encourage infill housing options, such as in-law apartments, carriage houses, etc.	VOW	MEDIUM
Initiative 1.2.3: Continue to update the Village's affordable housing plan and strategies when required by Illinois State Law.	VOW	HIGH On-Going
Initiative 1.2.4: Consider amending the Village's subdivision and zoning regulations to allow for more unique site designs that may allow for alternative forms of housing such as "cluster single-family cottage housing".	VOW, PC	HIGH
Initiative 1.2.5: Evaluate areas of the community that may be appropriate for independent senior housing and / or assisted living facilities, and ensure zoning regulations allow effective development of the land use.	VOW	MEDIUM

LEVEL OF PRIORITY & CORRESPONDING TIME FRAME FOR IMPLEMENTATION

HIGH (less than 3 yrs) - **MEDIUM** (3 to 10 yrs) - **LOW** (10 + yrs)

GOAL
1.3

The Village will maintain and enhance the walkable and bicycle-friendly nature of the community's neighborhoods.

INITIATIVE	IMPLEMENTATION PARTNER	LEVEL OF PRIORITY
Initiative 1.3.1: Establish a sidewalk infill program that identifies public and private streets where sidewalks are missing or incomplete, and survey residents to evaluate levels of interest in completing sidewalk connections. Prioritize sidewalk installation based on survey results and proximity to parks, schools, and transit nodes.	VOW, PC, WPD, NTSD203, WSD36, WPRS	MEDIUM
Initiative 1.3.2: Identify dedicated walking routes, through wayfinding signage, that utilize the community's sidewalk and pathway network to facilitate increased pedestrian mobility throughout the Village.	VOW, PC, GGW	LOW
Initiative 1.3.3: To ensure that Village streets remain safe for pedestrians and bicyclists, consider expanding the Village's existing stop sign request process to include neighborhood requests for other types of traffic-calming techniques on public streets.	VOW	MEDIUM On-Going

GOAL
1.4

The Village will continue to ensure that institutional uses such as schools, churches, the Public Library, and Park District parks and facilities are compatible with the residential neighborhoods in which they are located.

Initiative 1.4.1: Consider establishing a specific zoning district for institutional uses or establishing specific zoning standards for such uses within existing residential zoning districts to create more appropriate zoning standards for these uses.	VOW, PC	HIGH
Initiative 1.4.2: Continue regular conversations with local institutions to understand their future needs and how to address those needs in a particular neighborhood.	WSD36, NTSD203, WPRS, RSO, PO	MEDIUM On-Going

LEVEL OF PRIORITY & CORRESPONDING TIME FRAME FOR IMPLEMENTATION

HIGH (less than 3 yrs) - **MEDIUM** (3 to 10 yrs) - **LOW** (10 + yrs)

**GOAL
1.5**

The Village will continue to support its policies and residents' efforts that maintain and enhance inviting, neighborly, and sustainable outdoor spaces in our residential neighborhoods and the public parkway.

INITIATIVE	IMPLEMENTATION PARTNER	LEVEL OF PRIORITY
Initiative 1.5.1: Continue to enhance Village policies and requirements that support the protection, maintenance, and enhancement of the community's tree canopy on private property and the public parkway, which is one of the main features that gives Winnetka its unique sense of place.	VOW, PO, EFC	MEDIUM On-Going
Initiative 1.5.2: Consider establishing landscape design guidelines that allow residents to establish native or ecologically beneficial plantings in addition to lawns on private property and within the public parkway.	VOW, EFC, GGW	MEDIUM On-Going
Initiative 1.5.3: Continue to encourage the removal of invasive plant species, such as buckthorn, throughout the community. Information on identifying invasive species and best practices for their removal should be made available through a variety of channels.	VOW, PO, EFC, FTGBT	LOW On-Going
Initiative 1.5.4: Given changing technology and changing use of residential yard space, consider establishing performance standards to address increasing complaints regarding outdoor lighting and equipment noise, such as generators, A/C condensers, pool equipment, and wall and landscape lighting.	VOW	HIGH
Initiative 1.5.5: Review the Village's regulations regarding the design and placement of permanent accessory structures (e.g., sheds, play equipment, treehouses, outdoor kitchens, etc.) as well as temporary accessory structures (e.g., storage pods, boats, RVs, ice rinks, etc.) to determine if the regulations continue to meet the needs of homeowners while maintaining the character of the neighborhood and minimizing the impact on neighboring properties.	VOW	HIGH
Initiative 1.5.6: Review the Village's fence regulations, such as the ability to construct a 6.5' tall fence or a chain link fence in a required front yard setback anywhere throughout the Village, to determine if the regulations are still appropriate.	VOW, PC	HIGH
Initiative 1.5.7: Continue to consider Dark Sky options that reduce light pollution when replacing or upgrading existing streetlights.	VOW, PC	LOW On-Going

LEVEL OF PRIORITY & CORRESPONDING TIME FRAME FOR IMPLEMENTATION

HIGH (less than 3 yrs) - **MEDIUM** (3 to 10 yrs) - **LOW** (10 + yrs)

**GOAL
1.6**

The Village will encourage multifamily unit development near and in the downtown commercial districts.

INITIATIVE	IMPLEMENTATION PARTNER	LEVEL OF PRIORITY
Initiative 1.6.1: Consider major revisions to both multi-family zoning districts that will lead to the development of townhomes and other multi-family building products with massing, scale, roof form, and vertical rhythm consistent with the predominate single-family nature of the community.	VOW, PC, DRB	HIGH
Initiative 1.6.2: Encourage the retention and rehabilitation of rental apartments above commercial storefronts rather than conversion to offices space or other non-residential use.	VOW, POW	MEDIUM On-Going
Initiative 1.6.3: Incentivize the conversion of upper-story office space / non-residential space to residential use. Examples of incentives might include reduced or waived building permit fees for conversions and administrative design review for exterior modifications.	VOW, POW	MEDIUM
Initiative 1.6.4: Discourage other alterations of mixed-use buildings that compromise residential occupancy (elimination of required building components or systems, such as means of access, mechanical systems, etc.).	VOW, DRB	MEDIUM On-Going
Initiative 1.6.5: Allow the creation of live/work uses in the downtown commercial districts.	VOW	LOW



Lincoln Ave, Winnetka

LEVEL OF PRIORITY & CORRESPONDING TIME FRAME FOR IMPLEMENTATION

HIGH (less than 3 yrs) - **MEDIUM** (3 to 10 yrs) - **LOW** (10 + yrs)

PILLAR 2:

Vibrant Commercial Districts

Vision Statement: A community with a strong commitment to supporting and enhancing its unique, walkable mixed-use business districts, which serve both as the community's commercial cores and its social centers.

GOAL 2.1

The Village will continue to provide a future vision for the Village's commercial districts.

INITIATIVE	IMPLEMENTATION PARTNER	LEVEL OF PRIORITY
Initiative 2.1.1: Continue to implement the action plan outlined in the 2016 Downtown Master Plan.	VOW	HIGH On-Going
Initiative 2.1.2: Regularly review and update the Downtown Master Plan to adjust to changing market conditions and community needs.	VOW	MEDIUM
Initiative 2.1.3: Given the train stations serving the Indian Hill, Elm Street, and Hubbard Woods business districts and the PACE bus line that runs along the Green Bay Road corridor, consider Transit Oriented Development (TOD) principles when planning, developing regulations, and making infrastructure improvements in the business districts.	VOW, IDOT	HIGH



Graeter's Ice Cream, Winnetka

LEVEL OF PRIORITY & CORRESPONDING TIME FRAME FOR IMPLEMENTATION

HIGH (less than 3 yrs) - **MEDIUM** (3 to 10 yrs) - **LOW** (10 + yrs)

GOAL
2.2

The Village will provide zoning and development regulations and processes that allow land uses offering the products, services, and housing opportunities that residents desire. Such uses should be permitted in the most timely manner, while also ensuring compatibility with goals of the district in which they would locate.

INITIATIVE	IMPLEMENTATION PARTNER	LEVEL OF PRIORITY
Initiative 2.2.1: <i>Given that each of Winnetka's three business districts may have its own unique market niche it could serve, consider establishing unique zoning regulations, in particular, allowed land uses, for the Hubbard Woods and Elm Street business districts, as was done with the C-1 Neighborhood Commercial District in the Indian Hill Business District.</i>	VOW, PC	HIGH
Initiative 2.2.2: <i>When considering changes to the commercial zoning districts, study which land uses should be allowed in each district and consider adding a catch-all category such as "Commercial Uses Not Otherwise Regulated" as a special use to allow consideration of new land uses not currently contemplated within the Zoning Code.</i>	VOW	HIGH
Initiative 2.2.3: <i>Consider amending the Zoning Code to only require review by the Plan Commission and approval by Village Council for those special uses located in the C-1 Neighborhood District and the C-2 General Retail Commercial District, similar to what is now required for special uses in the Commercial Overlay District.</i>	VOW	HIGH
Initiative 2.2.4: <i>Review regulations for pop-up or short-term land uses. This might include streamlining occupancy permit reviews or sign permit applications and review processes.</i>	VOW	MEDIUM
Initiative 2.2.5: <i>Encourage multi-family development in and around the commercial districts to serve a diverse range of residents and to provide additional housing opportunities near commercial activity and the train stations.</i>	VOW, POW	HIGH <i>On-Going</i>

LEVEL OF PRIORITY & CORRESPONDING TIME FRAME FOR IMPLEMENTATION

HIGH (less than 3 yrs) - **MEDIUM** (3 to 10 yrs) - **LOW** (10 + yrs)

GOAL
2.3

The Village will encourage the highest-quality design, materials, and maintenance for building exteriors, landscaping, and signage in the commercial districts and along the Green Bay Road corridor.

INITIATIVE	IMPLEMENTATION PARTNER	LEVEL OF PRIORITY
Initiative 2.3.1: Update the 2003 Design Guidelines to allow for alternative architectural designs and styles that complement existing traditional building designs and allow creative, contemporary styling. The updated guidelines should be presented in a more user-friendly format.	VOW, DRB, PC	HIGH
Initiative 2.3.2: Update the Sign Code regulations to ensure they adequately address current sign technology and the needs of Winnetka businesses and institutions while maintaining the pedestrian-focused community character of these areas that residents have come to expect.	VOW, DRB, PC, WNGCC	HIGH
Initiative 2.3.3: Updates to the Design Guidelines and Sign Code should consider changes that would allow the administrative approval of certain exterior building, landscaping, and signage improvements, as well as changes that provide for variations to these standards that facilitate, when appropriate, creative and compatible designs.	VOW	HIGH
Initiative 2.3.4: Conduct an architectural survey of the buildings in the Village's commercial districts to identify historic and architecturally significant buildings and review the Village's development processes to identify obstacles to the preservation of such buildings.	VOW, LPC, WHS	MEDIUM
Initiative 2.3.5: Provide information and access to financial incentives, such as the Cook County Class L temporary property assessment reduction and the Federal rehabilitation tax credits, for the preservation and restoration of historic commercial buildings.	VOW	MEDIUM On-Going
Initiative 2.3.6: Given the age of Winnetka's commercial building stock, consider the role enhanced code enforcement could have in preserving commercial districts and promoting investment in the rehabilitation of older commercial and mixed-use structures.	VOW	MEDIUM On-Going

LEVEL OF PRIORITY & CORRESPONDING TIME FRAME FOR IMPLEMENTATION

HIGH (less than 3 yrs) - **MEDIUM** (3 to 10 yrs) - **LOW** (10 + yrs)

GOAL
2.4

The Village will provide a business environment focusing on retaining successful existing businesses, attracting businesses to the community that meet a market need, and assisting start-up businesses through local permitting and licensing processes.

INITIATIVE	IMPLEMENTATION PARTNER	LEVEL OF PRIORITY
Initiative 2.4.1: Continue to employ a full-time economic development coordinator to lead the Village's business retention and attraction efforts as well as promotion and marketing activities.	VOW	HIGH On-Going
Initiative 2.4.2: Work with commercial property owners and the real estate brokerage community to identify target tenants for commercial districts that advance strategic marketing initiatives.	VOW, POW, Brokers	HIGH
Initiative 2.4.3: Explore how to leverage the Village's current retail market strengths of high-end apparel stores, home good stores, interior design businesses, and dining establishments to attract complementary and compatible businesses.	VOW, BO, WNGCC	MEDIUM On-Going
Initiative 2.4.4: Consider developing targeted financial incentives that encourage investment in buildings to assist with the retention of businesses and to attract new businesses.	VOW	LOW
Initiative 2.4.5: Explore regulatory tools that disincentivize long-term commercial vacancies and consider implementation of such tools.	VOW	MEDIUM
Initiative 2.4.6: Advocate for changing Cook County Assessor's Office commercial vacancy assessment practices that tend to inadvertently encourage long-term vacancy.	VOW, CC	LOW
Initiative 2.4.7: When appropriate, consider streamlining special approval and permitting processes so it is easy and convenient for prospective businesses to follow the requirements.	VOW	HIGH

LEVEL OF PRIORITY & CORRESPONDING TIME FRAME FOR IMPLEMENTATION

HIGH (less than 3 yrs) - **MEDIUM** (3 to 10 yrs) - **LOW** (10 + yrs)

GOAL
2.5

The Village will partner with others to provide public infrastructure to support vibrant business districts.

INITIATIVE	IMPLEMENTATION PARTNER	LEVEL OF PRIORITY
Initiative 2.5.1: Continue the Village's streetscape improvement efforts that are occurring in the Elm Street Business District by implementing similar, but district-appropriate improvements in the Hubbard Woods and Indian Hill business districts and along the Green Bay Road corridor.	VOW	HIGH On-Going
Initiative 2.5.2: Establish a clear requirement that new developments in the business districts are responsible for streetscape improvements consistent with those for the business district in which it is located.	VOW	HIGH
Initiative 2.5.3: Invest in the utility infrastructure needed to provide reliable services and to allow for future redevelopment.	VOW	MEDIUM On-Going
Initiative 2.5.4: Provide community gathering spaces unique to the needs of each of the three business districts to serve as gathering and event spaces.	VOW	HIGH
Initiative 2.5.5: Continue to support Pace's and Metra's efforts to provide commuter bus and rail service to provide access for employees and visitors of Winnetka businesses.	PACE, METRA	MEDIUM On-Going
Initiative 2.5.6: To ensure the Village's commercial districts maintain their traditional design and pedestrian-friendly streetscapes, establish a clear policy delineating the Village's role and the private sector's role for providing parking for commercial uses and multi-family residential uses in the Village's business districts.	VOW, PC	HIGH



Winnetka Village Hall

LEVEL OF PRIORITY & CORRESPONDING TIME FRAME FOR IMPLEMENTATION

HIGH (less than 3 yrs) - **MEDIUM** (3 to 10 yrs) - **LOW** (10 + yrs)

GOAL
2.6

The Village will partner with the Chamber of Commerce, Winnetka merchant groups, and other community organizations to promote and market Winnetka businesses and community events and to let the region know of the community as a niche retail, dining, and event destination.

INITIATIVE	IMPLEMENTATION PARTNER	LEVEL OF PRIORITY
Initiative 2.6.1: Develop and implement a branding campaign that promotes and markets Winnetka businesses to increase the awareness of Winnetka retailers to potential customers in surrounding communities and the region.	VOW, BO, WNGCC	MEDIUM
Initiative 2.6.2: Promote and market the existing fashion and design districts as well as dining opportunities within the Village.	VOW, BO	MEDIUM On-Going
Initiative 2.6.3: Continue existing efforts to build relationships and communication with local businesses and entrepreneurs to identify needs and opportunities (e.g., businesses retention visits, regular business community surveys).	VOW, BO	HIGH On-Going
Initiative 2.6.4: Explore the creation of more small business nights to activate commercial zones and increase awareness of local retailers to those diners that come to the area in the evening.	VOW, BO, WNGCC	LOW On-Going
Initiative 2.6.5: Explore the creation of a program to activate vacant storefront windows.	WNGCC, WYO, NSAL	LOW
Initiative 2.6.6: Encourage temporary and permanent street and sidewalk installations and activities that foster social interactivity, such as small musical performance groups on street corners or installations of interactive public art, as well as marked walking routes.	VOW, NTSD203, WSD36, WPRS, NSAL	MEDIUM
Initiative 2.6.7: Continue to partner with others to promote business and community events, such as the Winnetka Music Festival, the Winnetka Farmers Market, and Art in the Village, which provide vibrancy and a sense of community.	VOW, WNGCC, NSAL, BO, WCH	HIGH On-Going

LEVEL OF PRIORITY & CORRESPONDING TIME FRAME FOR IMPLEMENTATION

HIGH (less than 3 yrs) - **MEDIUM** (3 to 10 yrs) - **LOW** (10 + yrs)

PILLAR 3:

Community Heritage & Placemaking

Vision Statement: Winnetka's authentic heritage can be found in its walkable streets, its rich tapestry of commercial and residential architecture, and in its cultural activities.

GOAL 3.1

The Village will adopt and utilize tools that support Winnetka's rich physical heritage, which is reflected in its history, architecture, neighborhood character, open space, and natural resources.

INITIATIVE	IMPLEMENTATION PARTNER	LEVEL OF PRIORITY
Initiative 3.1.1: Engage in initiatives identified in Pillar 1, Quality Livable Neighborhoods, that will encourage renovation of existing homes and construction of new homes that strengthen and maintain the rich and diverse character of the Village's residential neighborhoods.	VOW, LPC	MEDIUM
Initiative 3.1.2: Continue efforts to maintain and enhance the tree canopy on public and private lands throughout the community.	VOW, EFC, PO, GGW	MEDIUM On-Going
Initiative 3.1.3: Build upon Winnetka's history of major public works initiatives, which have reshaped the community in the past, including lowering the railroad grade, enhancing the Skokie Lagoons, and the purchase and conversion of the former Chicago North Shore and Milwaukee railroad to establish the Green Bay Trail.	VOW	LOW
Initiative 3.1.4: Consider allowing the use of open space and parkway lands for pollinator gardens, community gardens, and native plants.	VOW, EFC	LOW

GOAL 3.2

The Village will create and maintain new educational tools, publications, and programs that inform residents, developers, and commercial property owners about the benefits of contributing to the community's heritage.

Initiative 3.2.1: Provide summary information and links to federal and state financial incentives, such as the State of Illinois Property Tax Assessment Freeze or federal and state historic tax credits, so that Winnetka property owners are aware of programs to offset costs to restore qualifying historic structures.	VOW, LPC, WHS	MEDIUM
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LEVEL OF PRIORITY & CORRESPONDING TIME FRAME FOR IMPLEMENTATION

HIGH (less than 3 yrs) - **MEDIUM** (3 to 10 yrs) - **LOW** (10 + yrs)

Initiative 3.2.2: <i>Provide information to Winnetka property owners concerning non-financial tools and resources available to assist with preservation of historic and architecturally significant structures.</i>	VOW, LPC, WHS	MEDIUM
Initiative 3.2.3: <i>Publish information regarding potentially historic and architecturally significant buildings so as to educate property owners and developers of the Village's potentially significant buildings and structures.</i>	VOW, LPC, WHS, Illinois State Historic Office	HIGH

GOAL 3.3

The Village will identify policies, code amendments, and regulatory mechanisms that encourage context-sensitive design and building conservation solutions to maintain Winnetka's authentic commercial, institutional, and multi-family residential community character and sense of place.

INITIATIVE	IMPLEMENTATION PARTNER	LEVEL OF PRIORITY
Initiative 3.3.1: <i>Update existing commercial design guidelines to address current design issues, concerns, and contexts more adequately.</i>	VOW, DRB	HIGH
Initiative 3.3.2: <i>Review sign regulations to ensure they adequately address current sign technology and the needs of Winnetka institutions and the business community while maintaining the pedestrian-focused community character of these areas that residents have come to expect.</i>	VOW, DRB	HIGH

GOAL 3.4

The Village will encourage the enhancement of its public spaces, streetscapes, plazas, alleys, and corridors through creative, cost-effective placemaking and public art initiatives to enhance social gatherings, events, and recreation for residents of all ages and abilities.

Initiative 3.4.1: <i>Continue to implement the Village's Downtown Master Plan and Downtown Master Streetscape and Signage Plan by constructing streetscape improvements, similar to those in the Elm Street Business District, in the Hubbard Woods and Indian Hill business districts so that these commercial streets are for both mobility and public spaces for gathering, events and socializing.</i>	VOW, BO, WNGCC	HIGH
Initiative 3.4.2: <i>Pursue Green Bay Road improvements that increase and contribute to placemaking throughout the Village.</i>	VOW	HIGH
Initiative 3.4.3: <i>In cooperation with the Park District, pursue Green Bay Trail improvements that enhance its usability, through improved access and signage. Enhance trail landscaping through upgrades to the natural systems.</i>	VOW, WPD, FTGBT	HIGH

LEVEL OF PRIORITY & CORRESPONDING TIME FRAME FOR IMPLEMENTATION

HIGH (less than 3 yrs) - **MEDIUM** (3 to 10 yrs) - **LOW** (10 + yrs)

Initiative 3.4.4: <i>Maintain a vibrant dining experience throughout the Village's commercial areas by encouraging more outdoor dining opportunities. Establish a Village-wide policy for such temporary uses on public sidewalks, public streets, parking lots, and in public parks.</i>	VOW, BO	MEDIUM
Initiative 3.4.5: <i>Activate streets and open spaces with temporary and permanent uses that can be catalysts for future investment and growth. Strategies include pop-up businesses, art fairs, recreational activities, cultural celebrations, and civic functions.</i>	VOW, WNGCC, BO, PO, NSAL	MEDIUM
Initiative 3.4.6: <i>Create gateways at Village entrances that integrate elements such as signage, wayfinding, landscaping, and building forms unique to Winnetka.</i>	VOW	HIGH <i>On-Going</i>
Initiative 3.4.7: <i>Benchmark and measure the outcomes of public investment in placemaking initiatives.</i>	VOW	HIGH

GOAL
3.5

The Village will be prudent in its investment and management of public placemaking initiatives, seeking a sustainable, long-term view in the selection of high-quality materials, product durability, product lifecycle, and maintenance responsibility.

INITIATIVE	IMPLEMENTATION PARTNER	LEVEL OF PRIORITY
Initiative 3.5.1: <i>Use decorative streetlights and other outdoor lighting as effective placemaking tools along Green Bay Road, the Green Bay Trail, and other high-traffic commercial areas.</i>	VOW, BO	HIGH

GOAL
3.6

The Village will continue to support community-wide arts and cultural efforts by providing welcoming spaces to support active participation, promotion, and programming efforts.

INITIATIVE	IMPLEMENTATION PARTNER	LEVEL OF PRIORITY
Initiative 3.6.1: <i>Identify and create additional gathering spaces in the community, whether public, non-profit, or private, for cultural and entertainment events, such as live performances and concerts.</i>	VOW, NSAL, WCH, WPD, BO	HIGH
Initiative 3.6.2: <i>Partner with Winnetka institutions and businesses to integrate public art and art spaces throughout the Village and continue to support Winnetka as an arts and cultural destination.</i>	VOW, BO, WCH, NSAL, PO	MEDIUM

LEVEL OF PRIORITY & CORRESPONDING TIME FRAME FOR IMPLEMENTATION

HIGH (less than 3 yrs) - **MEDIUM** (3 to 10 yrs) - **LOW** (10 + yrs)

PILLAR 4:

Sustainability & Climate Action

Vision Statement: A forward-looking community with a strong heritage of innovation and commitment to stewardship of its natural resources and built environment.

GOAL 4.1

The Village will establish a community framework for Sustainability and consider appropriate public resources to guide, manage and educate the residents on the value of a Sustainability & Climate Action Plan.

INITIATIVE	IMPLEMENTATION PARTNER	LEVEL OF PRIORITY
Initiative 4.1.1: Continue to develop a Sustainability & Climate Action Plan that will address the following areas in terms of sustainability: Climate, Economic Development, Energy, Land, Leadership, Mobility, Municipal Operations, Sustainable Communities, Waste & Recycling, and Water.	VOW, EFC	HIGH On-Going
Initiative 4.1.2: Identify grant funding to support the efforts identified in the Sustainability & Climate Action Plan.	VOW, EFC, IDNR	MEDIUM On-Going
Initiative 4.1.3: Evaluate what will be the appropriate staffing for community sustainability initiatives either through dedicated staff resources, on-call consultant, or a sustainability team as a shared responsibility.	VOW, EFC	MEDIUM
Initiative 4.1.4: Implement sustainable practices within residential neighborhoods to the extent possible.	VOW, EFC	MEDIUM On-Going



Winnetka Streetscape

LEVEL OF PRIORITY & CORRESPONDING TIME FRAME FOR IMPLEMENTATION

HIGH (less than 3 yrs) - **MEDIUM** (3 to 10 yrs) - **LOW** (10 + yrs)

**GOAL
4.2**

The Village will continue to develop local and regional partnerships with other organizations to leverage and share information on sustainable initiatives, shared resources, technical assistance, and tools for broader community engagement.

INITIATIVE	IMPLEMENTATION PARTNER	LEVEL OF PRIORITY
Initiative 4.2.1: Continue to evaluate and support, to the extent that is realistically achievable by the Winnetka community, the goals of regional sustainability plans such as the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus' Greenest Region Compact 2 and the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus 2021 Climate Action Plan for the Chicago Region.	VOW, MMC	MEDIUM On-Going
Initiative 4.2.2: Partner with local school districts, the Winnetka Park District, and other local agencies to address sustainability initiatives, such as reducing greenhouse gas emissions, reducing stormwater runoff, increasing recycling, and the like.	VOW, EFC, WSD36, NTSD203, WPD, FPDCC	MEDIUM
Initiative 4.2.3: Partner with the Winnetka-Northfield-Glencoe Chamber of Commerce and other Winnetka business organizations to assist businesses with finding technical and financial resources to assist them with operating their businesses in a more sustainable manner.	VOW, EFC, WNGCC, BO	MEDIUM



Winnetka Nature Programming

LEVEL OF PRIORITY & CORRESPONDING TIME FRAME FOR IMPLEMENTATION

HIGH (less than 3 yrs) - **MEDIUM** (3 to 10 yrs) - **LOW** (10 + yrs)

PILLAR 5:

Educational Excellence

Vision Statement: A community with a strong heritage rooted in education that acknowledges the whole child, fosters creativity and confidence, inspires lifelong learning, and develops civic responsibility.

GOAL
5.1

Recognizing that educational excellence is one of the primary reasons residents choose Winnetka, the Village will support the community's public school districts, private schools, and other educational organizations by fostering a culture of student engagement and lifelong learning, as well as supporting the health and safety of students.

INITIATIVE	IMPLEMENTATION PARTNER	LEVEL OF PRIORITY
Initiative 5.1.1: Consider amendments to the zoning ordinance to provide additional clarity regarding pre-kindergarten and daycare institutions to better support the establishment and operation of early childhood education in the Village. This could include changing certain special uses to permitted uses.	VOW, ZBA, PC	MEDIUM
Initiative 5.1.2: Help foster civic responsibility among students by exploring with local schools the creation of a program to educate students regarding local government, such as partnering with local schools to develop a local government curriculum by which Village staff members would visit classrooms to talk about various areas of local government or establish a one-day program where students of a certain grade visit Village facilities to learn about local government.	VOW, B&C, WSD36, NTSD203, WPRS	MEDIUM
Initiative 5.1.3: Communicate the importance of Winnetka's heritage of educational excellence in Village publications.	VOW, WHS, WSD36, WPRS, NTSD203	MEDIUM
Initiative 5.1.4: Continue to provide high-quality police and fire assistance for safety training and education for staff and students that is consistent with State legislation and national best practices.	VOW, WSD36, NTSD203, WPRS	HIGH On-Going

LEVEL OF PRIORITY & CORRESPONDING TIME FRAME FOR IMPLEMENTATION

HIGH (less than 3 yrs) - **MEDIUM** (3 to 10 yrs) - **LOW** (10 + yrs)

**GOAL
5.2**

The Village will seek to collaborate with education-focused organizations to find synergies and efficiencies by sharing facilities, resources, and other assets.

INITIATIVE	IMPLEMENTATION PARTNER	LEVEL OF PRIORITY
Initiative 5.2.1: <i>Collaborate where possible, with public school districts to find synergies and cost savings, as well as identify grants and other funding sources. Identify similar opportunities for collaboration with other educational and institutional organizations.</i>	VOW, WSD36, NTSD203, WPRS	HIGH On-Going
Initiative 5.2.2: <i>Consider creating specific zoning amendments or a district for institutional uses to reduce procedural burdens caused by school facilities needing to comply with zoning standards designed for single-family homes.</i>	VOW, ZBA, PC	HIGH
Initiative 5.2.3: <i>As part of the Village's efforts to encourage community involvement, collaborate with schools on ways seniors and other non-parents could help meet the need for school volunteers.</i>	VOW, WSD36, PTO, NTSD203, WPRS, NSSC, AEC, TVC	LOW
Initiative 5.2.4: <i>Collaborate with other best-in-class school districts and villages on ways to partner together to create strong, more cohesive communities.</i>	VOW, WSD36, NTSD203, WPRS	LOW

**GOAL
5.3**

The Village will create a child-friendly environment that supports safety and independence.

Initiative 5.3.1: <i>Encourage student independence and physical activity by providing safe, attractive, and welcoming pedestrian, bicycle, and public transit access to schools and throughout the Village.</i>	VOW, WSD36, NTSD203, WPRS, GGW, HITB, BO, EFC	MEDIUM
Initiative 5.3.2: <i>Consider educational interpretive signs and exhibits, interactive public art, and technology-enhanced educational information in the public realm to foster learning, creative problem-solving, and environmental awareness.</i>	WSD36, NTSD203, WPRS, NSAL, WHS, PO	LOW

LEVEL OF PRIORITY & CORRESPONDING TIME FRAME FOR IMPLEMENTATION

HIGH (less than 3 yrs) - **MEDIUM** (3 to 10 yrs) - **LOW** (10 + yrs)

PILLAR 6:

Healthy & Engaging Lifestyles

Vision Statement: A unique lakefront community that values a variety of carefully-managed and well-connected parks and open spaces, and that treasures unlimited access to recreational opportunities and cultural pursuits, helping residents achieve a balanced and fulfilled lifestyle.

GOAL 6.1

The Village will promote and encourage partnerships with other units of government and agencies to conserve, restore, and enhance natural features and ecosystems, to ensure accessibility to natural areas, parks, and other open or public spaces, and to support recreational facilities and programs that support the health of residents of all ages and abilities.

INITIATIVE	IMPLEMENTATION PARTNER	LEVEL OF PRIORITY
Initiative 6.1.1: Continue to collaborate with the Park District, local school districts, Forest Preserves of Cook County, and others to create opportunities that enhance accessibility to the open spaces of Winnetka.	VOW, WPD, WSD36, FPDCC, NTSD203, FTGBT	MEDIUM On-Going
Initiative 6.1.2: Continue to collaborate with the Park District, School District, Library District, Community House of Winnetka, and other community institutions to offer programs that maintain active and thriving Village recreation programs, offering a variety of sports, exercise, arts and crafts, cultural, life skills, educational, social, and leisure programs for residents of all ages and abilities.	VOW, WPD, WSD36, WCH, NTSD203, WPL	MEDIUM On-Going
Initiative 6.1.3: Coordinate the sharing of information with the Park District, nonprofit service providers, private leagues, and the school districts so that the public is made aware of the full range of recreational opportunities.	VOW, WPD, WSD36, WCH, NTSD203, WPL, WPD	MEDIUM
Initiative 6.1.4: Ensure that local regulations do not discourage businesses and nonprofits from providing private recreational and physical fitness training facilities in the community.	VOW	MEDIUM
Initiative 6.1.5: Regularly share information with other local governments regarding grant opportunities to fund enhancements to the natural environment, public parks and open spaces, and public recreational facilities and programs.	VOW, WPD	MEDIUM

LEVEL OF PRIORITY & CORRESPONDING TIME FRAME FOR IMPLEMENTATION

HIGH (less than 3 yrs) - **MEDIUM** (3 to 10 yrs) - **LOW** (10 + yrs)

**GOAL
6.2**

The Village will support and promote community institutions and other units of government in the advancement of programs and facilities that provide life-long educational opportunities, helping to broaden all Winnetka residents' understanding of the world in which we live.

INITIATIVE	IMPLEMENTATION PARTNER	LEVEL OF PRIORITY
Initiative 6.2.1: <i>Support the efforts of community institutions such as the Winnetka-Northfield Public Library, Oakton Community College, and the Winnetka Youth Organization to create programs that provide lifelong learning opportunities about Winnetka and the world.</i>	VOW, WPL, WYO	MEDIUM On-Going
Initiative 6.2.2: <i>Ensure that local regulations and processes do not discourage businesses and nonprofits from providing supplemental educational opportunities for Winnetka parents and their children.</i>	VOW	HIGH

**GOAL
6.3**

The Village will support community-wide arts and cultural efforts that provide cultural enrichment to community members through active participation, promotion, and programming efforts with businesses, community institutions, and arts entities.

Initiative 6.3.1: <i>Collaborate with businesses and community organizations, such as the North Shore Art League, to create programs that encourage participation in arts and culture.</i>	NSAL, WYO, WCH, BO	MEDIUM
Initiative 6.3.2: <i>Consider creating a cultural arts advisory board to collaborate with local businesses and organizations, facilitate the programming of additional cultural and arts activities, and consider the installation of public art around the Village. Public art could include temporary installations in public buildings, sculptures in public open space, or school projects displayed in public places.</i>	VOW, B&C, BO, NSAL, WPL, WPD	MEDIUM
Initiative 6.3.3: <i>Develop a program by which residents may provide dedications in memory of, or to honor, Winnetka residents and business owners.</i>	VOW	LOW

LEVEL OF PRIORITY & CORRESPONDING TIME FRAME FOR IMPLEMENTATION

HIGH (less than 3 yrs) - **MEDIUM** (3 to 10 yrs) - **LOW** (10 + yrs)

**GOAL
6.4**

The Village will support health and wellness through innovative and diversified recreational, learning, and cultural opportunities in its public parks, plazas, trails, and open spaces.

INITIATIVE	IMPLEMENTATION PARTNER	LEVEL OF PRIORITY
Initiative 6.4.1: Support and promote health and wellness for all residents through a safe, connected, and accessible pedestrian and bicycle network, and by offering resources for recreation.	VOW, WPD, FTGBT	MEDIUM
Initiative 6.4.2: Continue to encourage information-sharing with local bodies of government and other public and nonprofit organizations regarding open space and recreation to foster the sharing of resources, ideas, and concerns, so as to lead to new solutions or efficiencies.	VOW, WPD, WCH, FTGBT	MEDIUM On-Going
Initiative 6.4.3: Improve existing, or create new, non-motorized linkages among recreation and open space facilities for Village residents, businesses, and schools, and among the facilities themselves. Ensure that adequate linkages to regional trail systems are also in place.	VOW, WPD, FTGBT	HIGH
Initiative 6.4.4: Support the efforts of the Park District and other community organizations to expand and/or modify Winnetka's recreational programming to fill gaps in services.	WPD, WCH, BO	HIGH
Initiative 6.4.5: Partner with the local school districts and other community organizations to enhance local programs that support the social and emotional health of our youth, and that support innovative learning.	NTSD203, WSD36, WCH, WPD, CCNS, WPRS	MEDIUM



Dwyer Park, Winnetka

LEVEL OF PRIORITY & CORRESPONDING TIME FRAME FOR IMPLEMENTATION

HIGH (less than 3 yrs) - **MEDIUM** (3 to 10 yrs) - **LOW** (10 + yrs)

PILLAR 7:

Community Infrastructure, Services, & Technology

Vision Statement: A forward-thinking tradition of delivering exceptional and efficient public services and infrastructure systems to meet the current and future needs of the community.

GOAL
7.1

The Village will adopt and utilize tools that support Winnetka's rich physical heritage, which is reflected in its history, architecture, neighborhood character, open space, and natural resources.

INITIATIVE	IMPLEMENTATION PARTNER	LEVEL OF PRIORITY
Initiative 7.1.1: Continue to annually update the Village's Five-Year Capital Improvement Program based upon ongoing condition assessments. The CIP will be used to guide funding, scheduling, and implementation of improvements to Village-managed utility infrastructure systems, which include stormwater management, potable water, sanitary sewer system, electric service, and transportation infrastructure.	VOW	HIGH On-Going
Initiative 7.1.2: Continue to monitor state, federal, and other funding options for improvements to essential public works services and infrastructure.	VOW	HIGH On-Going
Initiative 7.1.3: Encourage Village infrastructure programming, project design, and purchasing policies to further the Village's sustainability objectives.	VOW	HIGH
Initiative 7.1.4: Where feasible and economical, adopt energy efficiency measures, purchase alternative-fuel vehicles and equipment, and procure or install renewable energy resources for Village-owned facilities or properties.	VOW	MEDIUM

GOAL
7.2

The Village will continue to update the community stormwater management systems, implementing both constructed and green infrastructure solutions, to alleviate flood risk and improve stormwater runoff quality.

Initiative 7.2.1: Continue implementation of the Stormwater Management Plan for West and Southwest Winnetka, and develop a Stormwater Management Plan for Eastern Winnetka.	VOW	HIGH
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LEVEL OF PRIORITY & CORRESPONDING TIME FRAME FOR IMPLEMENTATION

HIGH (less than 3 yrs) - **MEDIUM** (3 to 10 yrs) - **LOW** (10 + yrs)

Initiative 7.2.2: Evaluate the effectiveness of existing floodplain and stormwater management regulations for development, consider modifications to improve effectiveness, and create incentives to require or encourage stormwater management best practices. These include rain barrels, permeable pavement, rain gardens, natural landscaping, and bioswales and bio-retention basins.	VOW	MEDIUM
Initiative 7.2.3: Continue to strive to improve water quality in our natural systems of lakefront, bluffs, rivers, creeks, ponds, channels, and wetlands through the creation of measurable water quality standards, water quality testing, and establishment of local construction standards that minimize the impact of construction site stormwater run-off.	VOW	MEDIUM

GOAL
7.3

The Village will provide a reliable and safe potable water source through cost-effective intake, treatment, and distribution of Lake Michigan's water resource.

INITIATIVE	IMPLEMENTATION PARTNER	LEVEL OF PRIORITY
Initiative 7.3.1: Perform a condition/risk assessment of Water Treatment Plant equipment and facilities to identify and prioritize short and long-term facility needs.	VOW	LOW
Initiative 7.3.2: Determine viability and appropriateness of an elevated tank to sustain pressures in the distribution system.	VOW	MEDIUM
Initiative 7.3.3: Update the water distribution system study with condition/risk assessment information and continue a prioritized replacement of water mains.	VOW	HIGH On-Going
Initiative 7.3.4: Implement water efficiency measures in Village operations and encourage residents and businesses to identify and mitigate water losses, through Village programs such as the installation of Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI), or "smart meters".	VOW	LOW On-Going
Initiative 7.3.5: Replace lead service lines per State requirements to minimize lead exposure in drinking water.	VOW	HIGH On-Going

LEVEL OF PRIORITY & CORRESPONDING TIME FRAME FOR IMPLEMENTATION

HIGH (less than 3 yrs) - **MEDIUM** (3 to 10 yrs) - **LOW** (10 + yrs)

GOAL
7.4

The Village will provide a reliable and cost-effective sanitary sewer system in conformance with the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago's Watershed Management Ordinance (WMO).

INITIATIVE	IMPLEMENTATION PARTNER	LEVEL OF PRIORITY
Initiative 7.4.1: Continue to monitor the integrity and functionality of the sanitary sewer system to extend system life and enhance service delivery, through televising, smoke testing, manhole rehabilitation, and relining program.	VOW, MWRD	HIGH On-Going
Initiative 7.4.2: Continue implementation of a long-term management program for reducing inflow and infiltration into the sanitary sewer system due to sanitary sewer system deficiencies and non-sanitary connections.	VOW, MWRD	HIGH On-Going

GOAL
7.5

The Village will continue to operate and maintain a cost-effective, efficient, and reliable electrical distribution system.

Initiative 7.5.1: Review and set Village direction regarding upcoming IMEA agreement expiration and the fiscal impact of reinvesting in an aging electrical generation system.	VOW	HIGH
Initiative 7.5.2: Continue to improve electric supply reliability by expanding the current electrical infrastructure replacement program, incorporating more looped circuits into the distribution system, burying overhead electric lines when feasible, and converting existing underground transformer vaults to pad mount transformers.	VOW	MEDIUM On-Going
Initiative 7.5.3: Continue conversations with AT&T, or its successors, regarding its joint ownership of utility poles with the Village in order to develop a plan and strategies to bury existing overhead utilities. Continue to require all new utilities (phone, cable, and electric) be installed underground.	VOW	MEDIUM On-Going
Initiative 7.5.4: Implement the installation of Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI), or "smart meters," to improve the operation of the electric distribution system and create the ability to provide customers with additional information for the management of their energy consumption.	VOW	MEDIUM
Initiative 7.5.5: To complement the Village's installation of energy- efficient LED street lighting, work with IDOT to install LED lighting on state-owned roadways, and with residents for LED installation on private streets.	VOW, IDOT	MEDIUM

LEVEL OF PRIORITY & CORRESPONDING TIME FRAME FOR IMPLEMENTATION

HIGH (less than 3 yrs) - **MEDIUM** (3 to 10 yrs) - **LOW** (10 + yrs)

**GOAL
7.6**

The Village will regularly assess, maintain, and improve Village roadways, parking facilities, accessibility, sidewalks, station areas, and bike facilities.

INITIATIVE	IMPLEMENTATION PARTNER	LEVEL OF PRIORITY
Initiative 7.6.1: Continue to perform a roadway inventory and condition assessment of all Village roadways on a regular cycle. Identify and prioritize required roadway maintenance and improvement needs to guide funding, scheduling, and implementation of improvements to Village roadways.	VOW	HIGH
Initiative 7.6.2: Update the Village-wide accessibility plan and consider new accessibility initiatives, based upon legal requirements and best practices.	VOW	MEDIUM
Initiative 7.6.3: Implement traffic safety and pedestrian crossing improvements at signalized intersections along the Green Bay Road corridor, in collaboration with IDOT, as part of ongoing road repair or new streetscape and utility projects.	VOW, IDOT	HIGH
Initiative 7.6.4: Invest in projects that further a network of on and off-street bike improvements to enhance east-west connections to the Green Bay Trail, as well as other destinations such as the Skokie Lagoons, schools, train stations, and the lakefront.	VOW	MEDIUM

**GOAL
7.7**

The Village will identify and support the incorporation of new technologies to assist infrastructure and public safety systems efficiencies, cost effectiveness, and advanced community communications.

Initiative 7.7.1: Collaboratively work with telecommunication service providers to ensure Winnetka residents, businesses, and institutions have access to the most robust and reliable broadband and wireless telecommunication services infrastructure.	VOW	MEDIUM
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LEVEL OF PRIORITY & CORRESPONDING TIME FRAME FOR IMPLEMENTATION

HIGH (less than 3 yrs) - **MEDIUM** (3 to 10 yrs) - **LOW** (10 + yrs)

PILLAR 8:

Mobility & Accessibility

Vision Statement: A progressive community with forethought in developing safe and efficient local and regional mobility connections for all through public transportation, regional trails and pedestrian and bike friendly neighborhood street networks.

GOAL 8.1

The Village will work to redefine Green Bay Road as an attractive, safe, walkable, and bikeable corridor through the community that connects the three business districts, as well as educational and community institutions.

INITIATIVE	IMPLEMENTATION PARTNER	LEVEL OF PRIORITY
Initiative 8.1.1: Conduct a corridor study with a traffic analysis to examine ways to enhance the visual character, walkability, and safety of Green Bay Road. It should support the full range of users including, walkers, bicyclists, and transit riders, as well as the variable land uses along the corridor.	VOW, Village of Kenilworth, Village of Glencoe	MEDIUM
Initiative 8.1.2: Coordinate with the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) to discuss the community vision for Green Bay Road and determine the feasibility of a streetscape or corridor improvement project. This process can determine the need for a jurisdictional transfer, based on needs and available resources for implementation.	VOW, IDOT	HIGH
Initiative 8.1.3: Prioritize bus stop amenities, including shelters, benches, real-time bus arrival information, and bike parking along Green Bay Road to improve access to local businesses and facilitate transit use.	VOW, Pace	LOW

GOAL 8.2

The Village will continue to improve access to and from the Green Bay Trail to enhance this regional asset as a form of recreation and active transportation for trips through the Village.

Initiative 8.2.1: Add directional wayfinding signs identifying entry points to and from the Green Bay Trail to promote additional usage and recognition. In addition, identify community assets along the trail route, such as restaurants and coffee shops, as well as institutions, such as schools, library, and Village Hall.	VOW, WPD, FTGBT	MEDIUM
Initiative 8.2.2: Upgrade access points to meet ADA standards to ensure access is available to all users, including those with limited mobility. When necessary, coordinate improvements with Metra and the Union Pacific Railroad.	VOW, Metra	HIGH

LEVEL OF PRIORITY & CORRESPONDING TIME FRAME FOR IMPLEMENTATION

HIGH (less than 3 yrs) - **MEDIUM** (3 to 10 yrs) - **LOW** (10 + yrs)

Initiative 8.2.3: Continue to expand bike parking throughout the business districts to invite and encourage trail users to access local businesses.	VOW, BO, POW	MEDIUM
Initiative 8.2.4: Consider retrofitting existing access stairs with a bike ramp to increase access points for cyclists.	VOW, WPD	MEDIUM
Initiative 8.2.5: Evaluate lighting along the Green Bay Trail and add lighting as necessary to improve aesthetics, increase user safety, and promote evening and all-season usage.	VOW, WPD, FTGBT	HIGH
Initiative 8.2.6: Consider sustainable landscaping improvements along the Green Bay Trail. This could include replacing non-native vegetation with native plantings, installing rain gardens, or other sustainable practices.	VOW, WPD	HIGH
Initiative 8.2.7: Consider a program for pop-up vendor opportunities along the trail as an amenity to trail users.	VOW, WPD, FTGBT	LOW

**GOAL
8.3**

The Village will enhance bicycle and pedestrian connectivity, safety, and comfort throughout Winnetka with a focus on east-west bicycle routes and pedestrian connections to key destinations.

INITIATIVE	IMPLEMENTATION PARTNER	LEVEL OF PRIORITY
Initiative 8.3.1: As identified in the Quality Livable Neighborhoods pillar, establish a sidewalk infill program that prioritizes sidewalk connections along school routes, along parks that border a road, to/from transit stops, and to/from commercial districts.	VOW	MEDIUM
Initiative 8.3.2: Designate walking and biking routes for each school, and partner with relevant school organizations to adopt the US Department of Transportation's Safe Routes to School program.	VOW, NTSD203, WSD36	HIGH
Initiative 8.3.3: Develop a policy to mark high-visibility crossings in key locations, including those adjacent to schools and along school walking routes, at transit stops, throughout the business districts, at park access points, and at other prominent destinations.	VOW	HIGH
Initiative 8.3.4: Identify east-west and north-south family-friendly bike routes and determine the appropriate design to encourage bicycle use and slow vehicle speeds, maintaining a comfortable and safe environment for bicyclists of all ages and abilities.	VOW	MEDIUM

LEVEL OF PRIORITY & CORRESPONDING TIME FRAME FOR IMPLEMENTATION

HIGH (less than 3 yrs) - **MEDIUM** (3 to 10 yrs) - **LOW** (10 + yrs)

Initiative 8.3.5: <i>Develop a policy to mark high-visibility crossings in key locations, including those adjacent to schools and along school walking routes, at transit stops, throughout the business districts, at park access points, and at other prominent destinations.</i>	VOW, FPDCC, Village of Northfield	MEDIUM
Initiative 8.3.6: <i>Identify preferred routes for on-street bicycle travel throughout the Village and designate the routes through signs and markings. Reconsider existing restrictions to bicycle travel on local streets such as Hill Road, and remove restrictive signs where possible. Enhance safety measures, such as painted markings on the pavement, to increase the viability of using bikes to travel throughout the Village.</i>	VOW	MEDIUM
Initiative 8.3.7: <i>Continue to ensure that all future infrastructure in public rights-of-way is in full compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. This supports users of all ages and ranges of mobility by upgrading transportation infrastructure, particularly the pedestrian realm.</i>	VOW, CMAP	HIGH
Initiative 8.3.8: <i>As also identified in the Quality Livable Neighborhood Pillar, consider establishing a neighborhood traffic calming program. This could include neighborhood-wide traffic studies to review the existing use of intersection traffic control, and to identify appropriate strategies to reduce traffic speeds and volumes on local streets.</i>	VOW, POW	MEDIUM On-Going

GOAL 8.4

The Village will continue to support quality transit service and encourage increased ridership.

INITIATIVE	IMPLEMENTATION PARTNER	LEVEL OF PRIORITY
Initiative 8.4.1: <i>Improve the experience of accessing Metra by upgrading and concentrating amenities at the three stations, such as upgraded and sheltered bicycle parking.</i>	VOW, Metra	MEDIUM
Initiative 8.4.2: <i>Recognizing the role transit plays in achieving community goals like health, equity, and sustainability, ensure zoning regulations support and encourage development around transit stops, generating pedestrian traffic that mutually benefits local businesses, transit users, and transit agencies.</i>	VOW	MEDIUM

LEVEL OF PRIORITY & CORRESPONDING TIME FRAME FOR IMPLEMENTATION

HIGH (less than 3 yrs) - **MEDIUM** (3 to 10 yrs) - **LOW** (10 + yrs)

GOAL
8.5

The Village will manage its parking assets to support the success of its business districts while balancing parking location and supply with the needs of the distinctive walkable and transit-oriented character that is uniquely Winnetka.

INITIATIVE	IMPLEMENTATION PARTNER	LEVEL OF PRIORITY
Initiative 8.5.1: Continue to prioritize walking and biking as viable and attractive options for getting each business district to reduce demand for parking.	VOW	HIGH
Initiative 8.5.2: Manage existing parking resources efficiently: Provide wayfinding systems that make it more convenient to find parking; improve regulatory signage to simplify the parking experience.	VOW	MEDIUM
Initiative 8.5.3: Continue the Village policy of providing the bulk of customer and employee parking spaces in each business district to maintain a consistent shared pool of publicly-available parking. Regularly conduct parking studies to evaluate utilization of public parking facilities and to determine if the parking supply is adequate for various users (customers, employees, commuters, and district residents).	VOW	HIGH
Initiative 8.5.4: Review and make any necessary adjustments to the Village's parking requirements for commercial and multi-family residential uses. Consider establishing an off-street parking maximum ordinance for new development in the Village, as well as minimum bicycle parking requirements, particularly within the business districts adjacent to transit.	VOW, BO, POW	MEDIUM

GOAL
8.6

The Village will support the progress of transportation through the exploration of new mobility services.

Initiative 8.6.1: Anticipate increased demand for electric vehicle charging and plan to increase the number of charging stations in public parking lots. Encourage private development to include charging facilities in new off-street parking areas.	VOW, PO	MEDIUM On-Going
Initiative 8.6.2: Through a review of peer communities, explore additional sustainable transportation policy options related to electric vehicles, and electric-assist bicycles and scooters (e-bikes and e-scooters). Study the viability of bikeshare as a way to expand Green Bay Trail access in partnership with other communities along the Green Bay Road corridor.	VOW	MEDIUM

LEVEL OF PRIORITY & CORRESPONDING TIME FRAME FOR IMPLEMENTATION

HIGH (less than 3 yrs) - **MEDIUM** (3 to 10 yrs) - **LOW** (10 + yrs)

PILLAR 9:

Civic Engagement

Vision Statement: A community heritage founded on the fundamental principle of fostering beneficial public dialogue through active community engagement and volunteerism.

**GOAL
9.1**

The Village will nurture a culture among community residents that is welcoming, inclusive, and equitable, and that promotes diverse perspectives and cultivates community engagement.

INITIATIVE	IMPLEMENTATION PARTNER	LEVEL OF PRIORITY
Initiative 9.1.1: Orientation for new Council, board, or commission members will include training on how the Village provides a welcoming and inclusive way in which all members of the public may participate in Village public processes.	VOW, B&C	HIGH
Initiative 9.1.2: Utilize active businesses and business groups to cultivate engagement among their customers and connect with different segments of the population.	WNGCC, WHS, WCH, Rotary Club, NSSC, BO	MEDIUM

**GOAL
9.2**

The Village will foster and promote ample opportunities for robust community dialogue to support and enhance community in Winnetka.

Initiative 9.2.1: Continue to support the effective use of digital civic engagement and traditional tools, including social media, to encourage residents of all ages and abilities to interact with the Village.	VOW, B&C	MEDIUM On-Going
Initiative 9.2.2: Continuously explore new technology that provides additional ways for the public to engage in public meetings and to provide input on agenda items and Village sponsored projects before they become final.	VOW, B&C	MEDIUM On-Going
Initiative 9.2.3: Continue to make a high priority of posting online user-friendly information on Village finances, fiscal transparency, and projects.	VOW, B&C	MEDIUM On-Going

LEVEL OF PRIORITY & CORRESPONDING TIME FRAME FOR IMPLEMENTATION

HIGH (less than 3 yrs) - **MEDIUM** (3 to 10 yrs) - **LOW** (10 + yrs)

GOAL
9.3

The Village will continue to develop and improve strategies for active recruitment, engagement, and retention of a diverse and multigenerational cohort of volunteers.

INITIATIVE	IMPLEMENTATION PARTNER	LEVEL OF PRIORITY
Initiative 9.3.1: <i>Explore creating a means by which to recruit and grow the field of volunteers and future board and commission members for the community and Village.</i>	VOW, B&C, WPD, WSD36, WPL, TVC, NTSD203	HIGH
Initiative 9.3.2: <i>Pursue a variety of methods to attract volunteers such as holding open houses, creating a citizens' academy, collaborating with groups such as the Community House, and reaching out to younger generations.</i>	VOW, WCH, TVC, PTO, WC, WSD36, NTSD203, WYO	HIGH
Initiative 9.3.3: <i>Use the Village's website to advertise the satisfactions and benefits volunteers receive from civic engagement.</i>	VOW, B&C, TVC	MEDIUM
Initiative 9.3.4: <i>Provide training to volunteers and employees to improve their data and information literacy and how they interact with the Village.</i>	VOW, B&C	MEDIUM
Initiative 9.3.5: <i>Identify obstacles and factors deterring residents from serving on Village boards and commissions. Provide comprehensive and detailed training to Village board and commission members and all commissioners.</i>	VOW, B&C	MEDIUM

GOAL
9.4

The Village will continue to cooperate with those organizations utilized by Village residents to enhance civic involvement including various clubs, organizations, leagues, and the caucus system.

Initiative 9.4.1: <i>Inform Winnetka residents of community organizations that provide services, and engage the organizations in Village-sponsored projects.</i>	VOW	HIGH <i>On-Going</i>
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LEVEL OF PRIORITY & CORRESPONDING TIME FRAME FOR IMPLEMENTATION

HIGH (less than 3 yrs) - **MEDIUM** (3 to 10 yrs) - **LOW** (10 + yrs)

PILLAR 10:

Operational Efficiencies

Vision Statement: A community heritage founded on the fundamental principle of fostering beneficial public dialogue through active community engagement and volunteerism.

**GOAL
10.1**

The Village will manage an efficient and effective public review and entitlement process that provides clarity and predictability to both public and private reinvestment in the community.

INITIATIVE	IMPLEMENTATION PARTNER	LEVEL OF PRIORITY
Initiative 10.1.1: Engage the Village Council, Zoning Board of Appeals, Plan Commission, and Village at-large to evaluate changes to the zoning and subdivision regulations and processes. This will ensure clarity for residential and commercial applicants, as well as for the impacted residents and businesses.	VOW, ZBA, PC, BO, POW	HIGH
Initiative 10.1.2: Engage the Design Review Board to evaluate streamlining and modifying the multi-family, commercial and institutional design guidelines and the accompanying review process, while still ensuring that compatible design is achieved.	VOW, DRB, BO, POW	MEDIUM
Initiative 10.1.3: Engage all respective boards, commissions, and Village staff to consider changes to streamline development regulations and processes, while still ensuring that desired development is achieved and the public review process is transparent and consistent.	VOW, B&C, BO, POW	HIGH

**GOAL
10.2**

Whenever operationally efficient and fiscally effective, the Village will deliver exceptional public services through shared intergovernmental or regional cooperation and synergies.

Initiative 10.2.1: Continue to maintain a single, integrated, five-year capital improvement program (CIP) for all Village facilities, equipment, and infrastructure, identifying how each project helps achieve the mission and goals of the Comprehensive Plan.	VOW	HIGH On-Going
Initiative 10.2.2: Continue the practice of communication among local taxing jurisdictions (New Trier High School District, School District 36, Park District, and Library), to inform and coordinate on infrastructure and facility improvements.	VOW, WPD, WSD36, NTSD203, WPL	HIGH On-Going

LEVEL OF PRIORITY & CORRESPONDING TIME FRAME FOR IMPLEMENTATION

HIGH (less than 3 yrs) - **MEDIUM** (3 to 10 yrs) - **LOW** (10 + yrs)

Initiative 10.2.3: <i>Create and continue to maintain a Village Facilities Master Plan.</i>	VOW	MEDIUM
Initiative 10.2.4: <i>Continue to coordinate the utility infrastructure Capital Improvement Program with the Village's Roadway Improvement Program for efficient and effective programming of dependent initiatives.</i>	VOW	MEDIUM <i>On-Going</i>
Initiative 10.2.5: <i>Evaluate opportunities to approach municipal operations with effective sustainability measures, addressing current and future climate concerns.</i>	VOW, EFC	MEDIUM

GOAL 10.3

The Village governance and management will effectively evaluate, educate, and communicate current and changing community issues with its residents, businesses, and institutions.

INITIATIVE	IMPLEMENTATION PARTNER	LEVEL OF PRIORITY
Initiative 10.3.1: <i>When appropriate, engage community service organizations, such as the Winnetka Historical Society, local gardening clubs, and service clubs, among others, in local issues.</i>	VOW, WHS, TWC, WYO, WCH, WPL	LOW <i>On-Going</i>
Initiative 10.3.2: <i>Seek the use of innovative technology to communicate with residents in real time, such as community sign boards.</i>	VOW	MEDIUM



Winnetka

LEVEL OF PRIORITY & CORRESPONDING TIME FRAME FOR IMPLEMENTATION

HIGH (less than 3 yrs) - **MEDIUM** (3 to 10 yrs) - **LOW** (10 + yrs)

FUNDING SOURCES

Identifying and securing funding sources will be one of the most significant aspects of implementing the Winnetka Futures 2040 Plan. The Village should monitor future Congressional and State infrastructure/spending bills and continue tracking local, state, federal, not-for-profit grant opportunities. Potential grant opportunities are listed below.

Pillar 3: Community Heritage & Placemaking

The Illinois Arts Council Agency (IACA)

The Illinois Arts Council Agency serves the people of Illinois through a variety of Grant Programs and Special Initiatives meant to Support Illinois' Arts Sector, Advance Arts Education, and Foster Creativity and Working Artists.

Quality of Life Grants Program

The Christopher & Dana Reeve Foundation awards grants to projects that foster community engagement, inclusion and involvement, while promoting health and wellness for individuals living with paralysis and their families.

The Kodak American Greenways Awards Program:

A partnership project of the Eastman Kodak Company, the Conservation Fund and the National Geographic Society, the program provides small grants to stimulate the planning and design of greenways in communities throughout America.

Pillar 4: Sustainability & Climate Action

The Conservation Alliance

This group of privately-owned companies seeks to protect threatened wild places throughout North America for their habitat and recreational values, and does so by providing grants to nonprofit organizations working to protect special wild lands and waters.

CAN'd Aid Crush It Crusade Grants

The CAN'd Aid Foundation helps to support recycling programs. The Foundation awards small grants to fund program expenses including signage and education, and also provides in-kind recycling tents and bins and training on sustainable waste management.

Congressionally Directed Spending Requests

The Village should pursue direct funding through Congressionally Directed Spending Requests (CDS). The CDS program permits Congress to directly fund projects in the form of earmarks by senators and representatives. In 2022, U.S. Senator Dick Durbin submitted for \$125,000 in earmarked funding for the Village to develop a clean energy transformation plan.



Winnetka, IL

Pillar 6: Healthy & Engaging Lifestyles

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA)

The authoritative source of federal grant programs can be found in the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA). This catalog lists available funding programs to all levels of government, nonprofit organizations, for-profit businesses, and other entities.

Community Development Block Grant Funds (CDBG)

Proposed CDBG projects must be consistent with broad national priorities for CDBG: activities that benefit low- and moderate-income people, the prevention or elimination of slums or blight, or other community development activities to address an urgent threat to health or safety.

Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR): Recreational Grants-in-Aid Programs

Federal and state funds that aim to enhance and improve recreational amenities through a competitive selection process. The programs include the Open Space Land Acquisition and Development (OSLAD) Program and the Land and Water Conservation Fund Grant.

The National Urban and Community Forestry Advisory Council (NUCFAC)

Provides financial assistance to local units of government for the development of local urban and community forestry programs. These activities must help to establish, manage, conserve and preserve the urban and community forests from inner city to associated public lands.

10-Minute Walk Planning Grant and Technical Assistance:

Through the 10-Minute Walk Campaign, NRPA with support from The JPB Foundation, is excited to offer grants and technical assistance to support planning efforts that help cities increase access to high-quality parks within a 10-minute walk.

Pillar 7: Community Infrastructure, Services, & Technology

State Revolving Loan Fund (SRF)

The Illinois Environmental Protection Agency administers the SRF Program that provides loan funding for sanitary, water, and stormwater infrastructure needs. The fund interest rate is generally 1 to 2 points below prime and offers up to 30-year terms that can be an important funding tool for Village infrastructure.

FEMA Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC)

The BRIC grant program is offered by the Federal Emergency Management Agency and administered through the Illinois Emergency Management Agency (IEMA). It is a program intended to fund projects and activities that reduce natural hazard risk to public infrastructure through nature-based solutions, climate resilience and adaptation, or adoption and enforcement of newest editions of building codes.

FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP)

The HMGP is offered by the Federal Emergency Management Agency and administered through the Illinois Emergency Management Agency (IEMA). It is a program that provides funding to mitigate identified hazard risks associated with a prior disaster declaration and must be supported by a previously approved Hazard Mitigation Plan.

FEMA Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA)

The FMA program is offered by the Federal Emergency Management Agency and administered through the Illinois Emergency Management Agency (IEMA). It is a program that funds projects intended to reduce or eliminate the risk of repetitive flood damage to buildings under the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). The Village has previously submitted for but has not yet been awarded from this funding program. The Village is currently working with the Illinois Emergency Management Agency and has applied for \$18.25 Million in funding assistance for stormwater management through the FEMA grant programs listed above.

MWRD Green Infrastructure and Stormwater Partnership Grants

The MWRD administers two stormwater-related grant programs. One is for implementation of green infrastructure to reduce stormwater runoff and stormwater pollutants. The second is for stormwater and flood control management improvements. The Village has recently obtained Stormwater Partnership Grant funds through MWRD for stormwater management improvements and should continue to apply annually for these grant funds. The Village has previously applied for but not received Green Infrastructure Grant funding, but should continue to apply when green infrastructure is contemplated in any infrastructure improvements.

MWRD Property Acquisition

The MWRD administers a property acquisition program that helps fund the purchase of flood prone property. Upon purchased of a property any building on the property must be removed and the land protected in a conservation easement. The Village has participated in this program and was awarded funding to partially pay for removal of a flood prone property.



Metra UPN Train Tracks

Pillar 8: Mobility & Connectivity

Transportation Alternative Program (TAP-IL)

Supports projects that help CMAP implement the Regional Greenways and Trails Plan. The grant covers 80% of a project and requires a 20% local match. High need local communities have no local match requirement. Phase I Engineering should be substantially complete for a project to be considered eligible for TAP funding.

Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program (ITEP)

Aims to enhance the existing transportation system in Illinois to support and encourage walking and bicycling. Local governments, regional transportation agencies, and transit agencies, among others are eligible for this grant.

Illinois Bicycle Path Grant Program (IBPGP)

This grant assists local government agencies in the acquisition, rehabilitation, and construction of public non-motorized bicycle facilities. The grant covers 50% of the capital cost of a project, requiring a 50% local match.

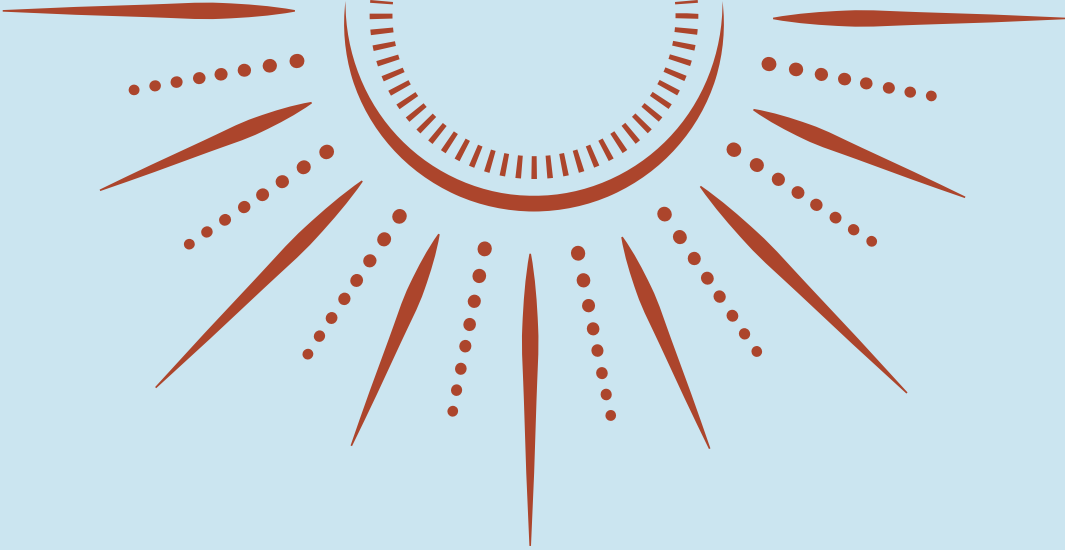
IDOT Safe Routes to School Grant

This grant enables and encourages children to walk and bicycle to and from school. The **Safe Routes to School Grant** would also be beneficial in implementing some of the initiatives listed under Pillar 5: Educational Excellence.

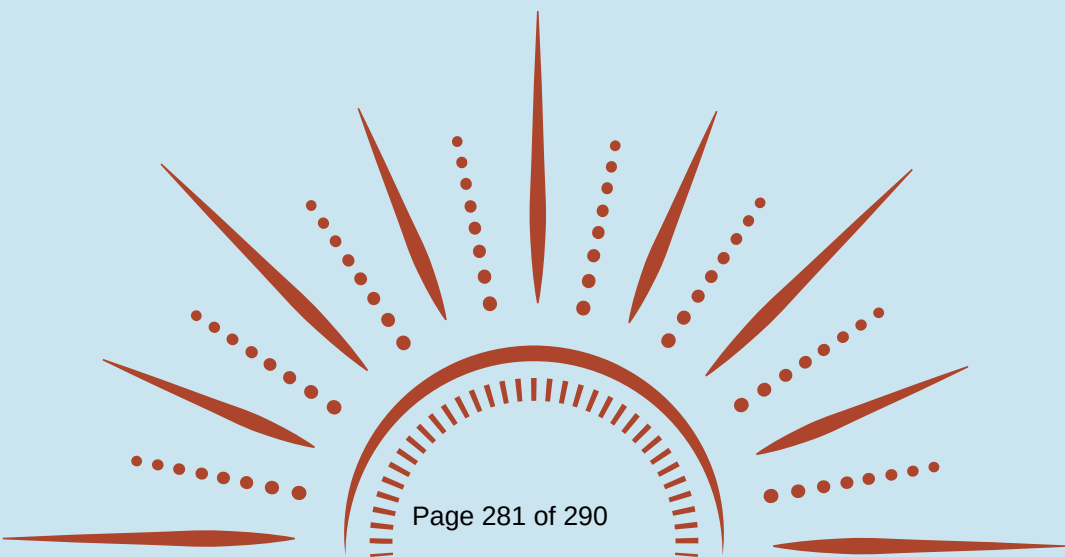
Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) Improvement Program

This grant funds projects that help Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) meet the National Ambient Air Quality Standards of the Clean Air Act. This includes projects that help to reduce congestion, and encourage a shift to more sustainable modes of transportation including walking, bicycling, mass transportation, and zero emission vehicles and related charging equipment.

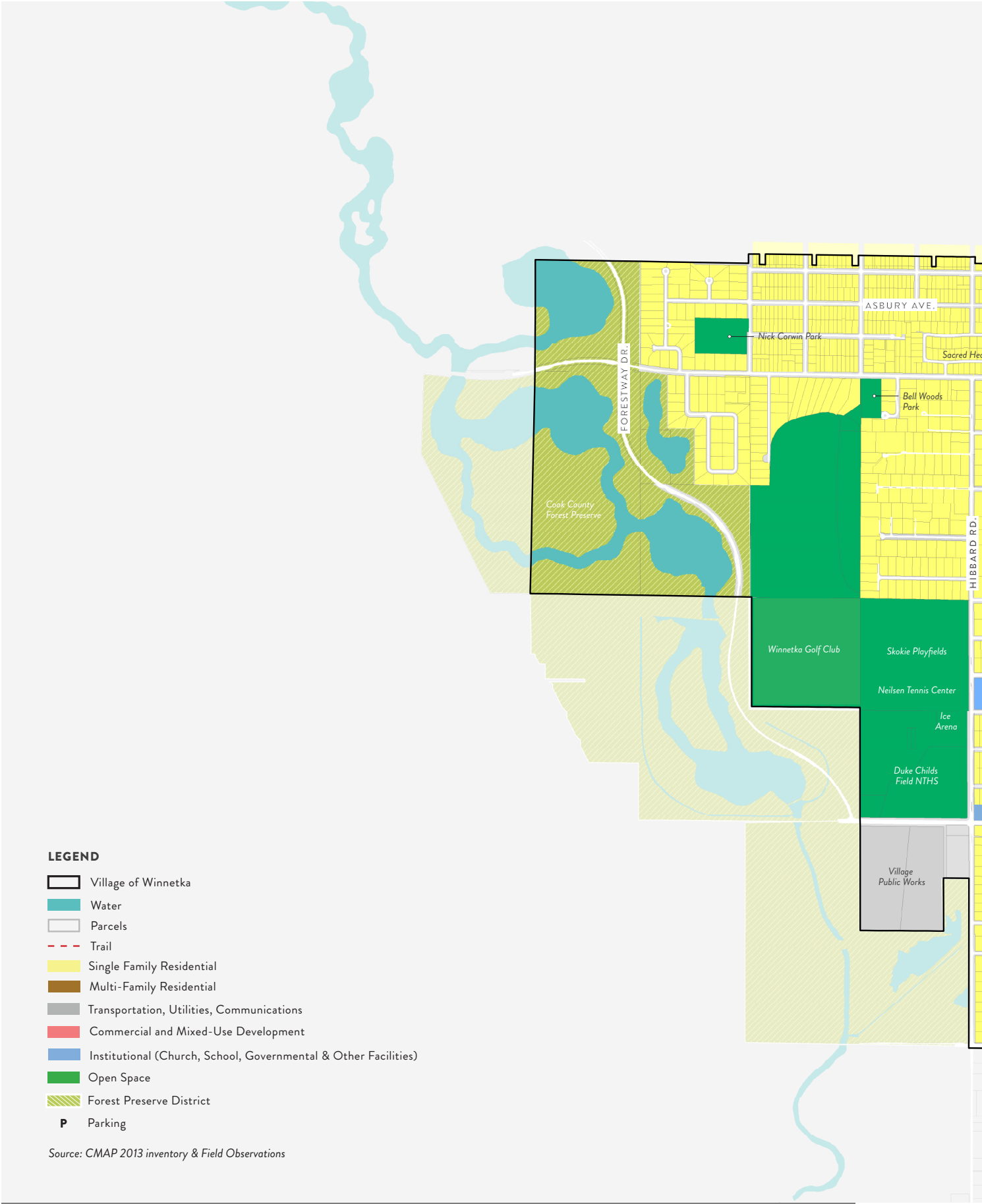


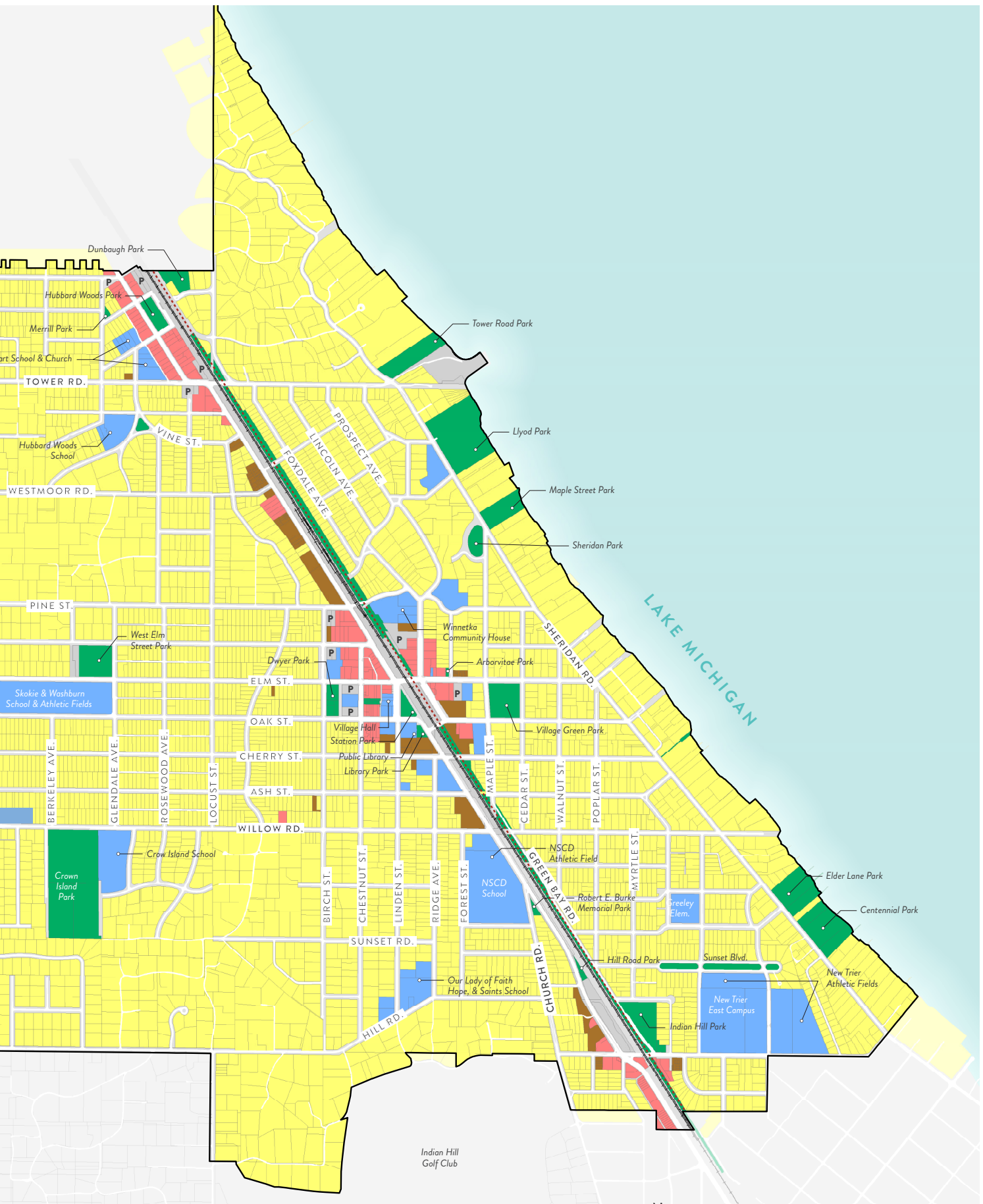


APPENDIX

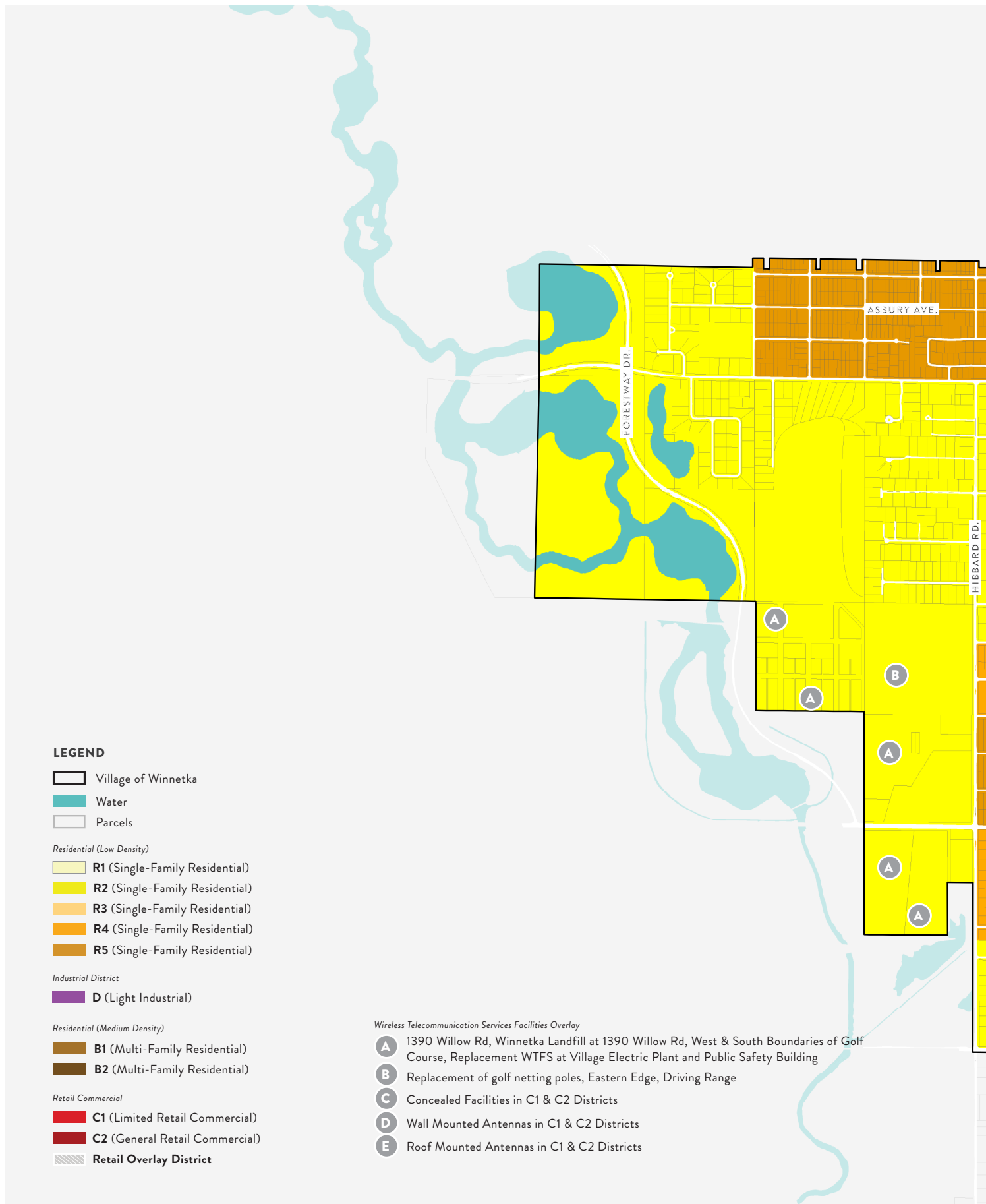


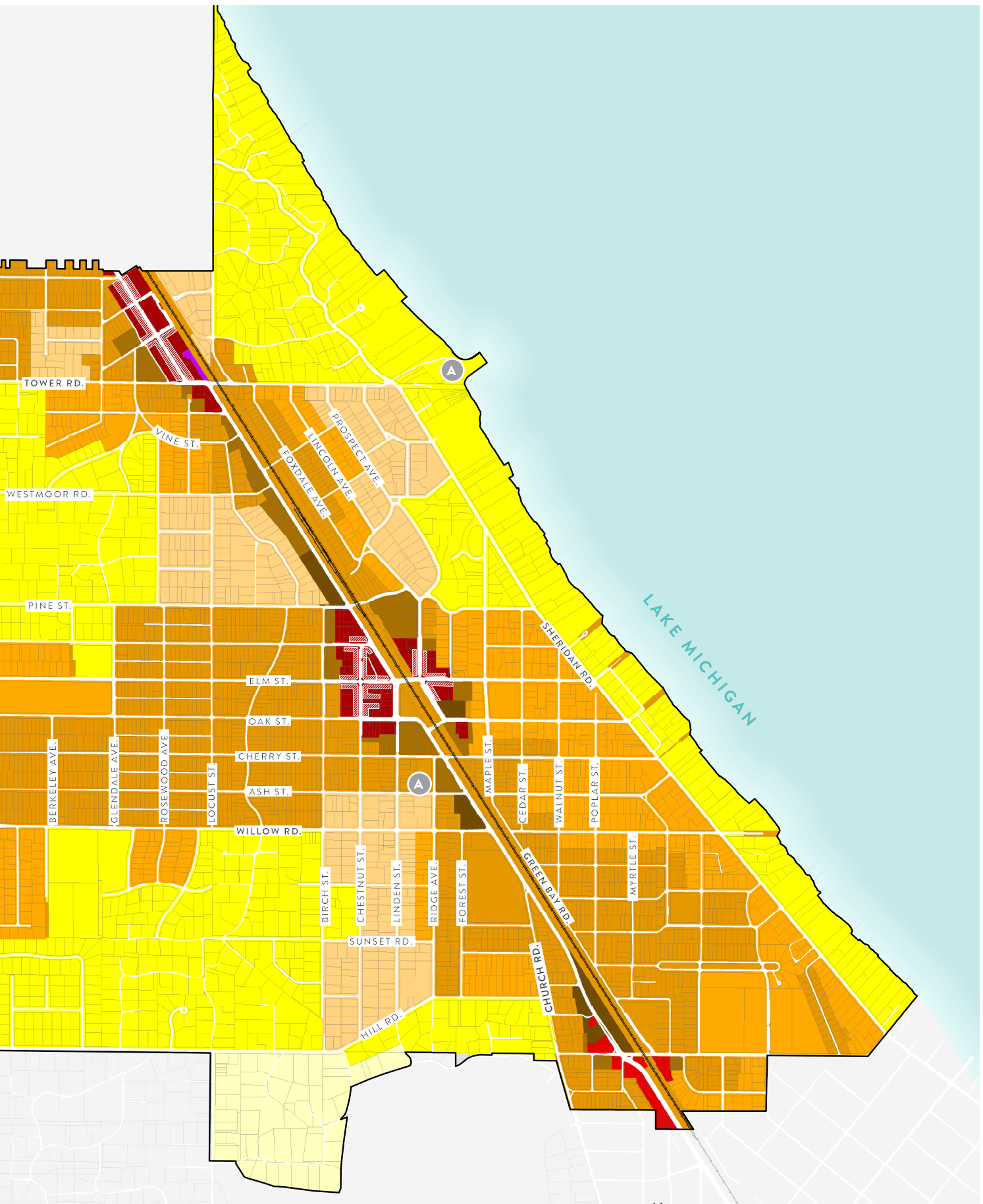
EXISTING LAND USE MAP



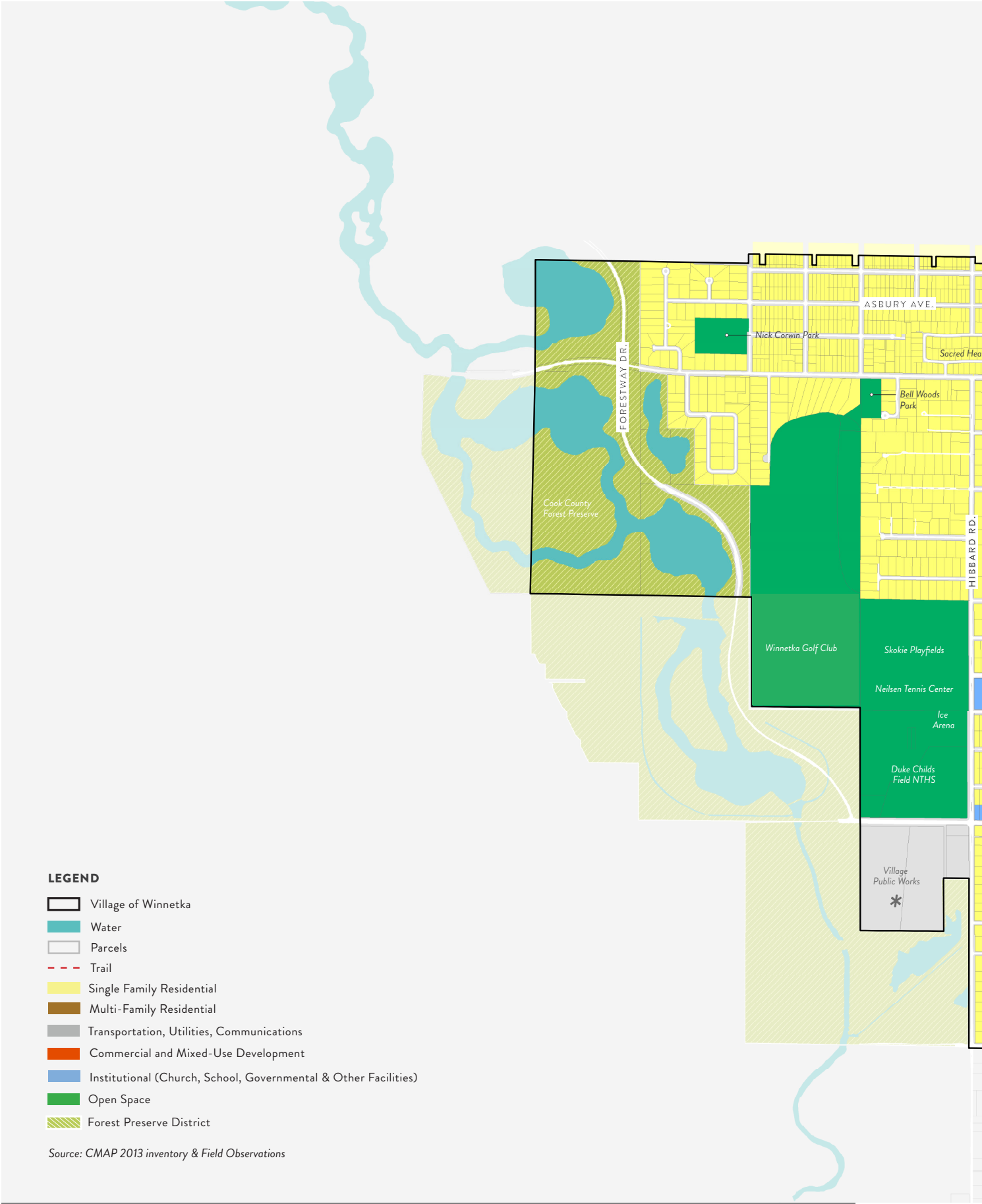


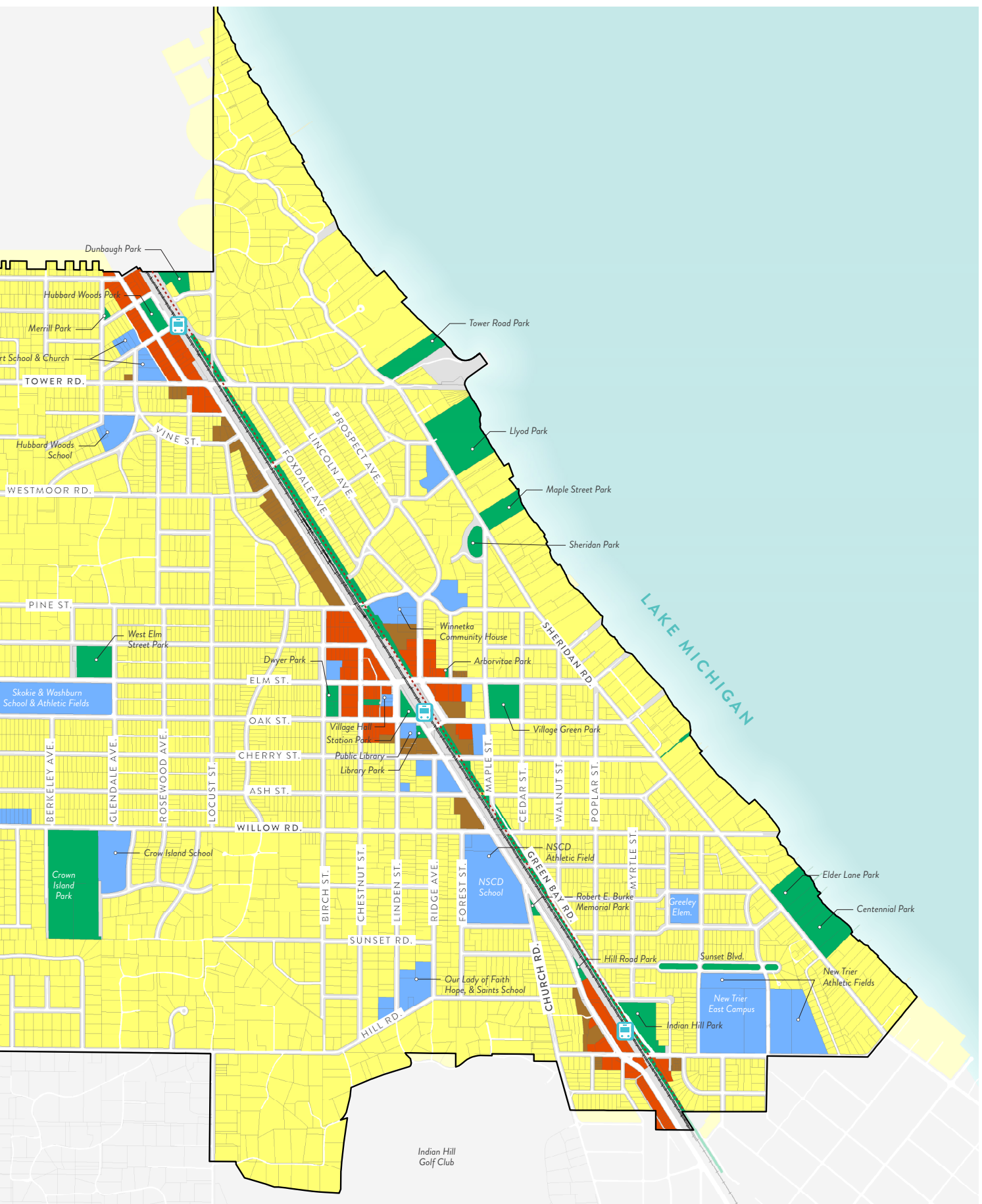
EXISTING ZONING MAP



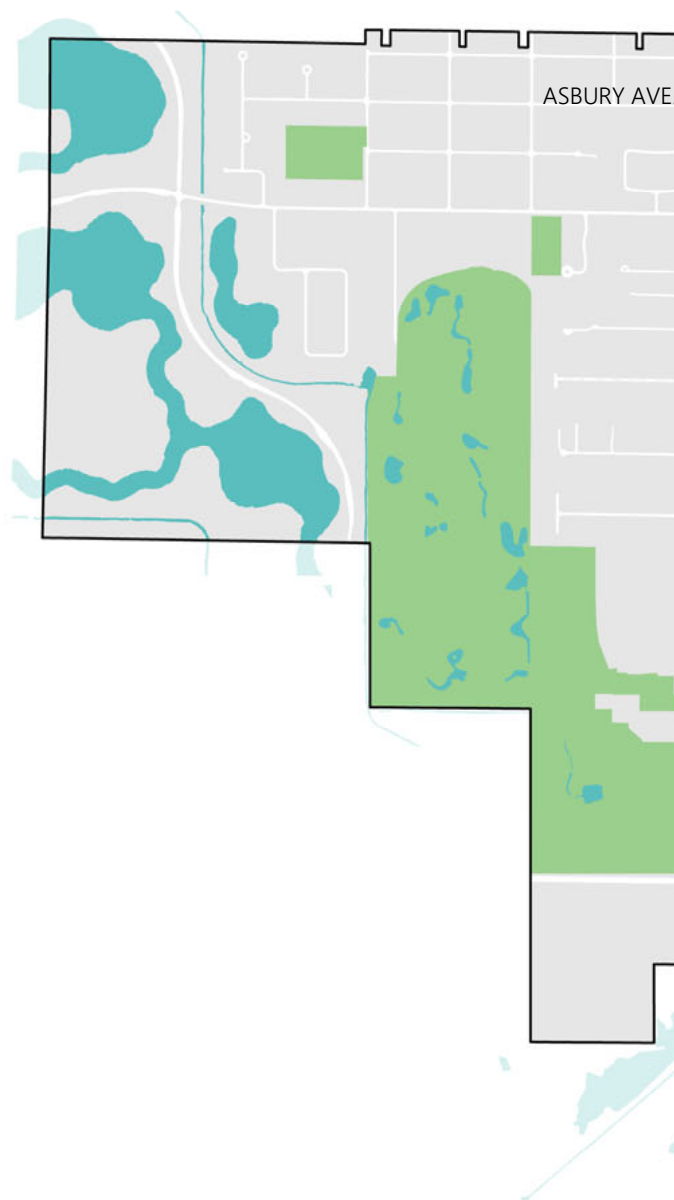


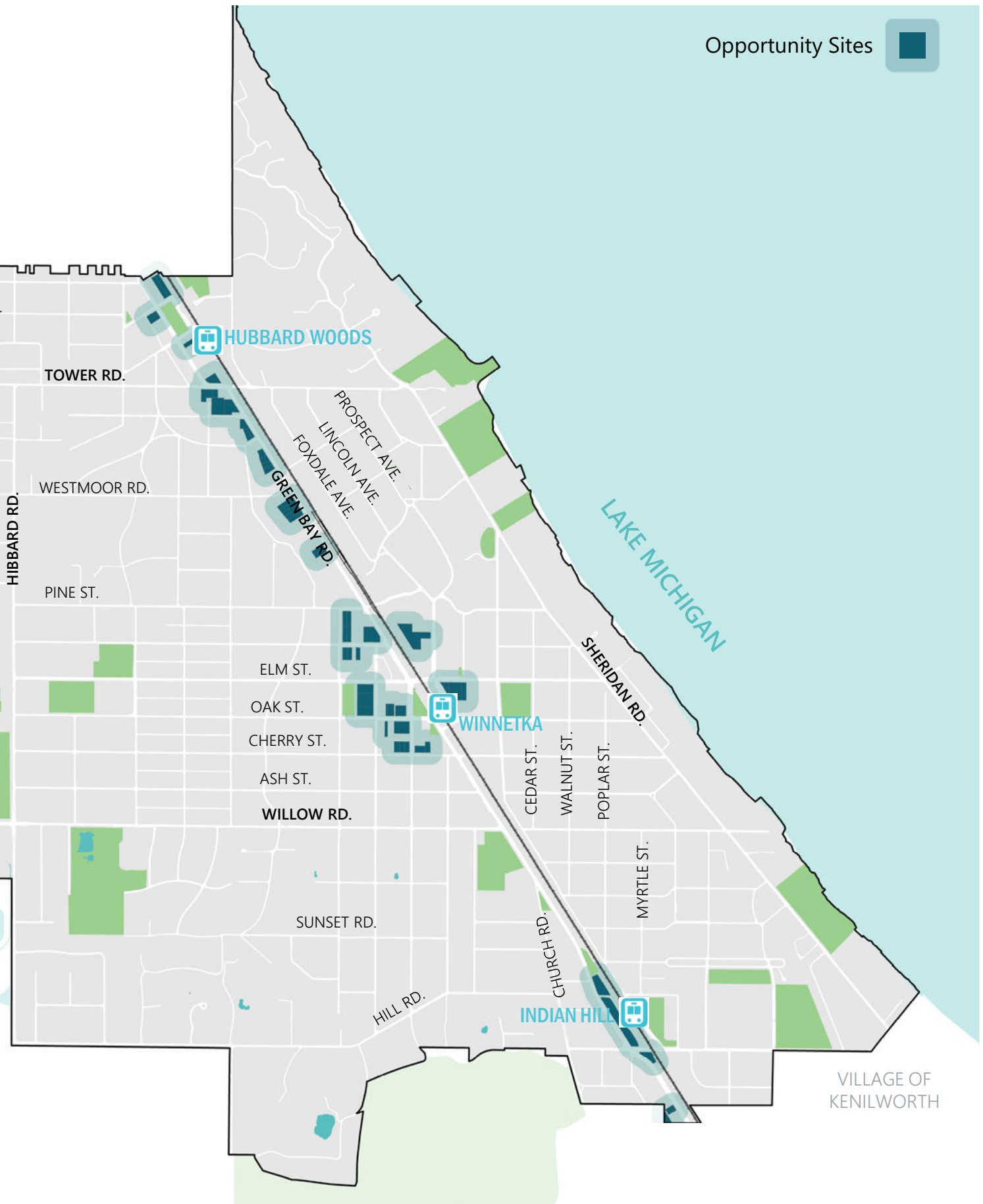
FUTURE LAND USE MAP





VILLAGE OF
GLENCOE





Opportunity Sites



HUBBARD WOODS



WINNETKA



INDIAN HILL

VILLAGE OF
KENILWORTH



Winnetka Futures

2040 PLAN