



# LEMONT 2030

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN OF THE VILLAGE OF LEMONT





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ADOPTED NOVEMBER 24, 2014

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*Sincere thanks to all who participated in the creation of this plan  
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& Zoning Commission and Village staff, including:*

Anthony Spinelli, *current Planning & Zoning Chairman*  
Dennis Schubert, *former Planning & Zoning Chairman*  
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Thanks to all who provided photos for Lemont 2030, including: Village of Lemont staff, JS Photo, Amy Trippel Photography, Lemont Area Chamber of Commerce, Lemont Area Historical Society, Lemont Park District, CITGO Lemont Refinery, and Active Transportation Alliance.



# INTRODUCTION

## ABOUT LEMONT 2030

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Lemont 2030 is the official Comprehensive Plan for the Village of Lemont, Illinois. Lemont 2030 is the centerpiece of Lemont's planning program; it is the framework within which all other Village plans, initiatives, and regulations operate. The plan is long-range; it recommends immediate and long-term actions to help the Village address the issues we will encounter over the next 15 years. It is comprehensive in scope; its recommendations cover a broad variety of topics, from the desired location for varying types of future development, to ways to improve civic engagement in government initiatives. The plan is comprehensive in coverage as well; it addresses land within our current village limits and unincorporated areas within the Village's 1.5 mile planning jurisdiction.

The recommendations within Lemont 2030 will guide the Village as it considers new public improvements, capital expenditures, and allocation of staff resources. The Village Board of Trustees and Planning & Zoning Commission will use the plan to evaluate future annexation and development proposals. The Plan will provide the basis for future changes to the Unified Development Ordinance and other Village regulations.

Lemont 2030 also serves as an important tool to attract new residents, development, and businesses to our community. It sets forth a clear vision for our future growth and development that is rooted in broad public input and adopted by the Village Board. Therefore, for those considering an investment in our community, the plan provides a credible harbinger of the Village's desired future course.

# LEMONT'S PLANNING HISTORY

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Lemont 2030 rests within the context of Lemont's long planning tradition and its recommendations are informed by and build upon past planning efforts. The Village adopted its first official comprehensive plan in 1969. This plan reflected Village goals for growth and recognized that the increased accessibility provided by Interstate 55 and the Tri-State Tollway would speed urbanization of the town. Nonetheless, the planning objectives at the time were to manage growth consistent with the Village's capacity to adequately service such growth. Preservation of natural features, quality construction, accessibility, and injection of cultural and recreational opportunities were of high importance.

The 1993 plan acknowledged strengths and weaknesses within Lemont and provided recommendations for future development. Lemont's unique character, historical elements, distinctive natural features, and viable industrial sector guided recommendations for a balanced growth pattern. Many of the strengths identified in the plan remain integral parts of the community and continue to guide development decisions today.

In 2002, the Comprehensive Plan was again updated. Many of the plan's priorities echoed the 1993 and 1969 plans, like the protection of natural resources and the importance of our historic assets. The 2002 plan turned its attention to new issues the community was facing, such as the demolition, or tear down, of small homes in established neighborhoods to make room for much larger new homes. The plan also took a neighborhood-level approach unseen in earlier plans, recommending specific actions for various portions of the community. The overall plan had a stronger emphasis on issues related to the design and appearance of sites and buildings.

Over the decades many plans for the downtown area have been completed. These plans echo the consistent refrain of all Lemont's plans; the importance of a vibrant downtown to the community. In 1977, a *Plan for Revitalization of the Central Area* recommended improvements to the I&M Canal and its towpath as a way to provide a

clear identity for the downtown. This theme is echoed in the *1993 Preliminary Town Planning Analysis of Downtown Lemont*, the *1994 Downtown Area Master Plan*, the *2002 Opportunities on the Waterfront plan*, the *2004 Lemont Station Area Plan*, and the *2005 Village Downtown Visioning Initiative & Charette*. Since the 1990's, all plans recommended a pedestrian oriented mix of retail, office, and residential uses in new and redeveloped buildings that suit downtown's historic setting.

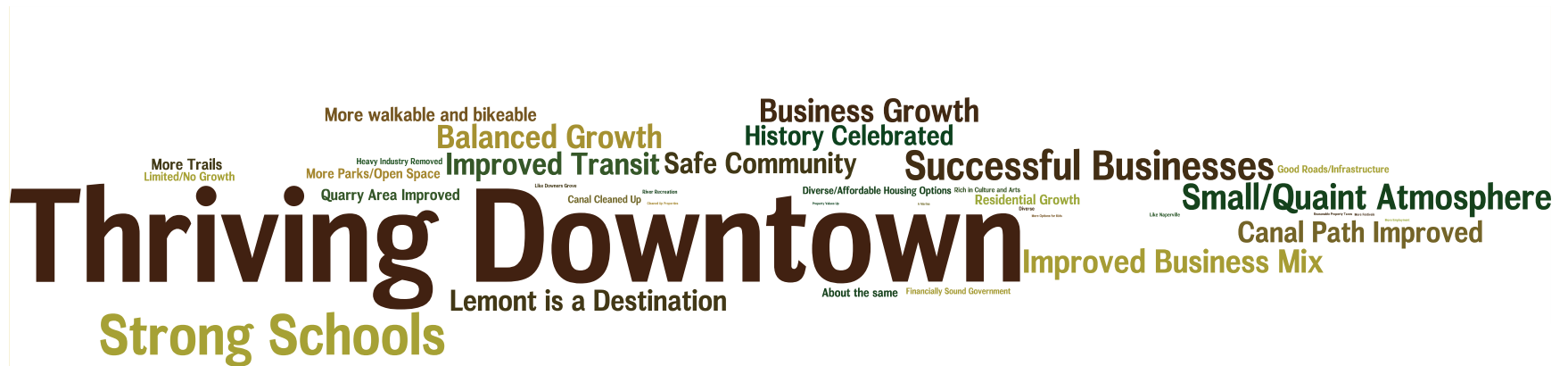
Many recommendations from these plans were completed. Today's downtown streetscape largely reflects the improvements recommended by the 1994 Downtown Area Master Plan. The Lemont Unified Development Ordinance, which became effective in 2008, codified many of the 2002 Comprehensive Plan's recommended changes, making them the minimum standard expected for all new development.

Lemont 2030 reflects the progress that has been made through the community's past planning efforts. This plan's recommended actions build on past achievements and as they are implemented, will continue to propel the community forward. Lemont 2030 also charts a new course for the community; it recognizes and responds to shifting demographic and lifestyle trends that earlier plans did not contemplate. It is firmly grounded in our ideas of what makes Lemont unique and all recommendations have been evaluated through that lens to ensure that we preserve the best aspects of our community while adapting to the needs of an ever-changing region.

# PREPARING LEMONT 2030

The development of Lemont 2030 kicked off in fall 2011. The Village issued a survey to residents and business owners asking for their assessment of the community today and their aspirations for the future of Lemont. The survey was available online and via hard copies at various public facilities including township senior centers, park district facilities, Village Hall, the library, etc. A total of 416 respondents completed the survey; all but one completed the survey online. Survey respondents were a diverse cross-section of the Lemont community, with broad geographic distribution and various age groups represented. The Village collected a list of 100 e-mail addresses from survey respondents who wished to stay involved in the plan process; this e-mail distribution list was subsequently used throughout the plan preparation process to notify stakeholders of upcoming workshops, drafts available for review on the Village website, etc. Additionally, staff discovered from the survey that respondents used the quarterly Village newsletter more than any other medium to keep track of Village news. Therefore, throughout the process, staff included updates on Lemont2030 in the newsletter, which is mailed to all addresses in Lemont.

In November 2011, staff identified the broad themes that were generally reflected in the survey results; these themes became the basis for the chapters of Lemont 2030. Staff drafted vision statements and guiding principles for each of those themes based on the priorities expressed in the survey responses. A public workshop was held on November 16, 2011 where residents and the Planning & Zoning Commission (PZC) further refined the draft vision statements and guiding principles.



*Visioning Word Cloud. The word cloud above represents the answers that respondents of the 2011 vision survey gave when asked to provide their vision for Lemont's future. Village staff categorized the responses to this open ended question into 38 different themes. The size of the text in the word cloud represents the frequency with which that theme appeared in survey responses; the larger the text, the more often that theme was mentioned.*



In early 2011, the Village received notice that it had received a grant to prepare an Active Transportation Plan. The plan addresses bicycle, pedestrian, and mass transit transportation and replaced the 1993 Lemont bicycle and pedestrian plan, which was greatly out of date. Public workshops were held to solicit input into the active transportation plan in September and October 2011. A steering committee made up of community stakeholders helped review the draft plan. This participation was invaluable to the development of the Active Transportation Plan and added new voices to the mobility and built environment issues to be addressed in Lemont 2030. The Lemont Active Transportation Plan was adopted in May 2012.

From early to mid 2012, staff research continued for various topics related to the plan's draft vision statements and guiding principles. Supporting reports were prepared, including the Lemont Housing Analysis and Target Industries Report. In July 2012, the PZC began reviewing draft chapters of Lemont 2030 at its monthly meetings. Throughout the process, drafts were posted to the Village website. Staff and the PZC continued to work on translating the community

vision into specific recommendations, revising vision statements and guiding principles where needed based on the findings of data and analysis. The Village Board also reviewed draft chapters at its monthly Committee of the Whole (COW) workshops.

By January 2014 five draft plan chapters were available for review and comment. Staff had prepared future land use categories based on the plan's guiding principles. Two public workshops were held in January and February 2014 in which residents and other stakeholders were invited to apply these future land use categories to a map of Lemont and its planning area. Participation was again solicited through the established e-mail distribution list, social media, the local newspaper, and announcements during televised Village Board meetings.

Over the course of the next few months, staff and the PZC examined the input from the public workshop and at a special workshop in June 2014, the PZC merged the varying components of the public workshop maps into a complete draft future land use map. Staff then used the ArcGIS Community Viz extension to conduct a build-out analysis of the draft future land use map under



*A mobile workshop during the preparation of the Active Transportation Plan provided feedback on the walkability of downtown. Source: Active Transportation Alliance*

high, medium, and low build-out scenarios. A build-out analysis estimates the maximum potential development under a given set of conditions. All scenarios shared the same constraints to development (e.g. floodway, road right of way, etc.) and yield assumptions. Yield, or efficiency, represents the portion of an available site that will be used for the intended purpose (e.g. residential lots) vs. supporting purposes (e.g. roads or detention basins); yield assumptions were based on yield of existing developments within the Village.

The draft map was then further refined based on the outcome of the build-out analyses and input from the Village Board at its COW workshops. The formal public hearing on the complete draft Comprehensive Plan was held on September 17, 2014. Again, several mediums were used to advertise the hearing, including the required publication in a local newspaper.

The Village Board adopted Lemont 2030 as the new Comprehensive Plan for the Village of Lemont on November 24, 2014.



*The Village established a dedicated web page for the comprehensive plan preparation process. Draft components of the plan were continually posted to this site for review and comment, as well as announcements about public workshops and other opportunities to be engaged in the process.*

# OUR PLACE IN THE REGION

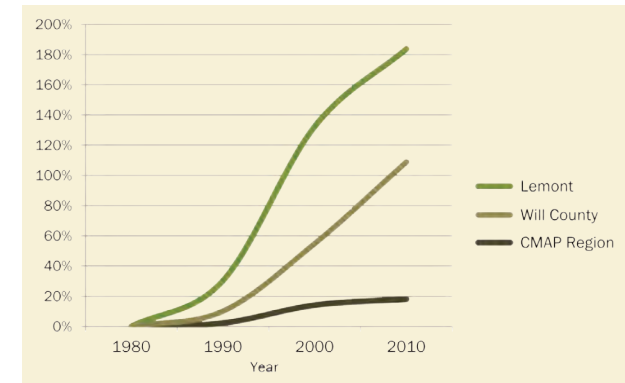


# A BRIEF HISTORY OF LEMONT

Settled in 1836, Lemont owes its existence to the Illinois & Michigan Canal. Workers arrived to the area, then called Athens, to begin construction of the waterway which would connect the Great Lakes to the Mississippi River for the first time in history. The Village was incorporated in 1873 and is one of the oldest in the southwest metro area. Although linked to the Chicago region by major freight transportation corridors and Chicago's use of locally quarried limestone in landmark buildings like the Chicago Water Tower, Lemont remained a somewhat isolated village for many decades.

In 1980, Lemont's population stood at 5,640. The village had shown steady but limited growth throughout most of the 20th century. It had taken the town 30 years to double its population. Over the course of the next 20 years from 1980 to 2000, Lemont's population increased by over 130% (see Figure 1.1). The locally explosive growth was driven in part by transportation improvements that made Lemont more accessible to the region but was primarily the result of larger regional trends. From 1980 to 2010 the metropolitan Chicago area experienced tremendous population growth and attendant expansion of urbanized areas. The population of Will County grew almost 35% from 2000 to 2010 and in that same period the population of Kendall County doubled.<sup>1</sup> Lemont, once an isolated community on the rural fringe of the Chicago area, is now firmly planted within the suburban landscape.

FIGURE 1.1: LEMONT, WILL COUNTY & REGIONAL POPULATION GROWTH 1980 - 2010



Source: US Census Bureau. Note: All CMAP population figures include Kendall County data, although Kendall County was not added to the CMAP area until 2010.

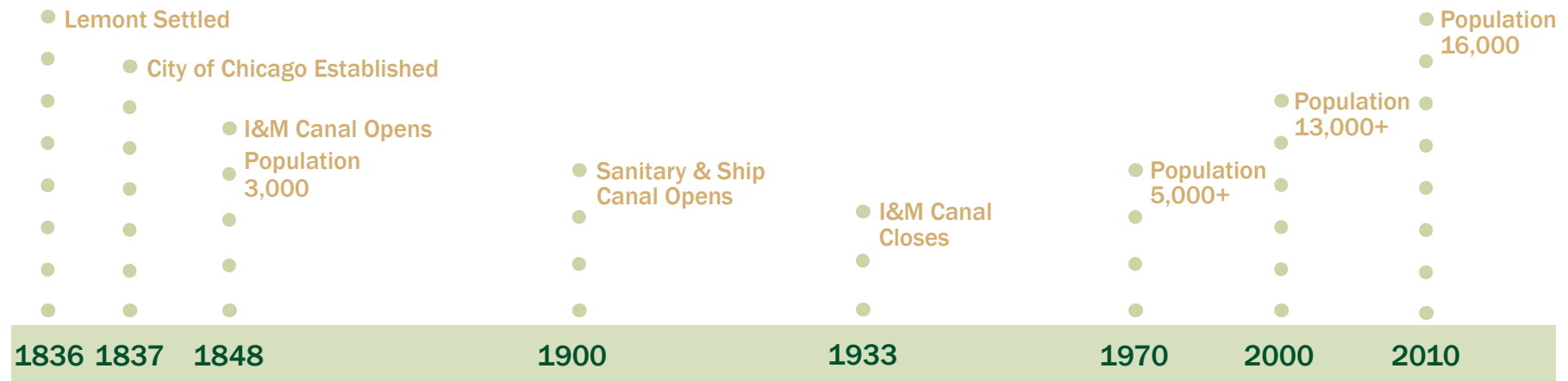


FIGURE 1.2: LEMONT HISTORY TIMELINE

<sup>1</sup> US Census Bureau, decennial census.

# LEMONT TODAY

Located approximately 25 miles southwest of downtown Chicago, Lemont is well connected to the region through waterways, interstates, and rail. Large land holders including neighboring Argonne National Laboratory, CITGO Lemont Refinery, and Cog Hill Golf Course all take advantage of the accessible location. Forest preserves to the north and east of the community and waterways to the north and west keep Lemont somewhat buffered and separated from surrounding suburbs. This greenbelt contributes to our unique community identity and provides abundant recreation amenities but also creates challenges to sustaining business activity.

The people of Lemont are another defining characteristic of our community; many families have lived in Lemont for four or more generations. Lemont's population was 16,000 in 2010.<sup>2</sup> Lemont's present racial and ethnic compositions echo the northern and eastern European roots of the community's population. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, Polish is the most prevalent ancestry; 30.6% of residents identify themselves as of Polish descent. Other common ancestries include: German (19.2%); Irish (20.3%); and Lithuanian (7.4%). Although once a blue collar community, Lemont's working population is now primarily employed in white collar occupations.<sup>3</sup> Most of these residents commute out of Lemont to work and many drive relatively long distances; Lemont residents travel farther on average than other residents in Cook County or the region.<sup>4</sup>



<sup>2</sup> US Census Bureau, decennial census.

<sup>3</sup> US Census Bureau, 2012 American Community Survey.

<sup>4</sup> CMAP Quick Facts - Lemont, <http://www.cmap.illinois.gov/documents/10180/102881/Lemont.pdf>

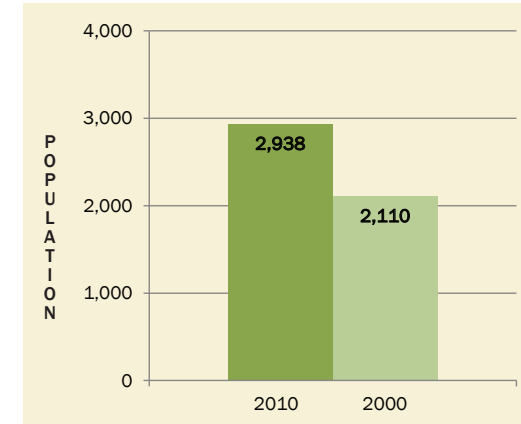
# LEMONT TODAY - STATISTICAL SNAPSHOT

TABLE 1.1: LEMONT REGIONAL COMPARISON OF SELECT STATISTICS

	Median Age	Households w/ Individuals under 18	Average Household Size	Median Home Value	Median Household Income
Village of Lemont	42.6	37.2%	2.76	\$375,500	\$89,309
Chicago-Joliet-Naperville, IL-IN-WI Metro Area	35.8	35.0%	2.68	\$236,000	\$57,104
Illinois	36.6	33.5%	2.59	\$191,800	\$52,972

Source: US Census Bureau, 2010 Census and ACS.

FIGURE 1.3: POPULATION AGE 62 & OVER

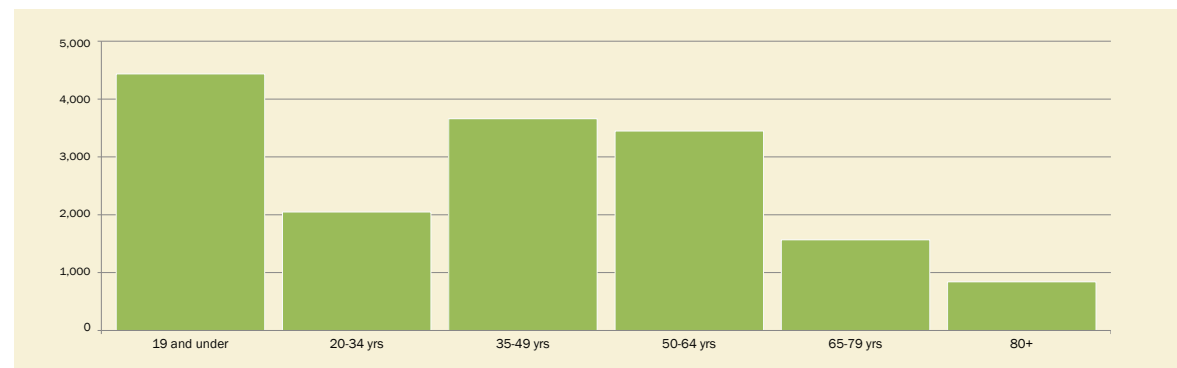


Lemont's population age 62 and over has increased by 39% since 2000. The aging of the population is also a national trend. The Our Homes chapter of this plan includes recommendations to address changing demographics and the related changes in housing needs. Source: US Census Bureau, 2010 Census.

**38.7%**

Percent of Lemont's population age 25 and over with a bachelor's degree or higher. Lemont's well educated population is one of its strengths as a potential business location.

FIGURE 1.4: AGE DISTRIBUTION OF LEMONT 2010 POPULATION



Source: US Census Bureau, 2010 Census.

# LOOKING TOWARD THE FUTURE

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Lemont's past growth was influenced by regional and national trends and Lemont's future development will be likewise. The Chicago region's population is projected to grow from approximately 8.6 million today to 11 million by 2040. Every community in the region will be faced with how to address this regional population growth within the constraints of available resources. In 2010, the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) adopted GoTo 2040 as the Chicago region's comprehensive plan. With a goal of achieving sustainable prosperity, GoTo 2040 recommends "investment in existing communities and emphasizes development that is more compact and 'livable'." By implementing GO TO 2040, CMAP states that "residents will have more options for getting around, more options for housing, more jobs nearer to where they live, more parks and open space, more plentiful and cleaner water, healthier air, and better quality of life." Lemont, like all communities, can play a role in achieving regional goals. This plan suggests local solutions in support of regional aspirations, while protecting and enhancing the characteristics of Lemont that make it a unique community.



# OUR VISION FOR LEMONT

***In 2030, Lemont will be a community where people want to live or visit. It will be known for its thriving downtown, excellent schools, successful businesses, and strong sense of community. Although new residents and businesses will grow the community, Lemont's quaint character will remain. Families who have lived in Lemont for the past 200 years will continue to choose Lemont as their hometown for future generations.***

The above vision statement represents what the Village of Lemont can be in 2030 if this plan is implemented. It describes the overarching goal for our community's future and represents the input of hundreds of Lemont residents and other community members.

Each chapter of this plan also has a vision statement, which paints a more detailed picture of our desired future relative to the topics of: civic engagement, economic prosperity, natural resources protection, recreation, housing, transportation, and community character. Following the vision statement, each chapter contains guiding principles. These guiding principles are the premise upon which each vision statement is based and further describe our expectations for the future. The recommendations of each chapter are rooted in the vision and guiding principles of the plan and informed by critical analysis of the issues Lemont will likely encounter over the next 15 years. They represent the actionable steps the village can take to ensure we achieve our vision for Lemont.





## OUR CIVIC LIFE

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*In 2030, Lemont residents will be actively involved in their community, with a strong sense of civic pride rooted in Lemont's unique community character. Village government will be characterized by professional public service provided in a cooperative, friendly, consistent, and fiscally responsible manner.*

*Our Civic Life* recognizes that we all need to be active participants in achieving the vision of this plan. It makes recommendations to improve opportunities for civic engagement, collaboration, and good governance. It is grounded in Lemont's small town tradition of connected and engaged residents. The chapter's recommendations seek to fortify community organizations that contribute to the economic and social vitality of the Village.



## OUR ECONOMIC PROSPERITY

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*In 2030, Lemont will have a thriving business community with few vacant commercial buildings. Downtown Lemont will be a vibrant mixed-use district full of unique shops, restaurants, offices, and homes. Lemont will be a desired destination for visitors from outside the community.*

*Our Economic Prosperity* recommends proactive steps the Village can take to capitalize on Lemont's unique assets and overcome our challenges to reach our vision for economic prosperity. In addition to typical business retention and attraction efforts, the chapter recommends physical and policy changes to make Lemont inviting to new investment.



## OUR NATURAL RESOURCES & RECREATION

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*In 2030, Lemont will be known as a community with exceptional opportunities for outdoor recreation, defining natural characteristics, and quality open space. Stewardship of natural resources including air, land, and water will be paramount to healthy and active living.*

*Our Natural Resources & Recreation seeks to protect our exceptional natural assets and recommends actions to enhance our local recreation amenities. The chapter also creates a framework to ensure that we provide an adequate mix of park facilities for existing and new residents as the village continues to grow.*



## OUR HOMES

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*In 2030, Lemont will have a complementary mix of housing products that provide financially obtainable options for residents of different stages of life and income levels, so multiple generations of families can call Lemont home.*

*Our Homes is based on the notion that continued population growth is desirable for Lemont. It recognizes that while one of our unique assets is the multiple generations of families living here, a majority of homes built in the last 20 years have been unattainable for many first-time home buyers and inappropriate for many older home buyers. The chapter recommends broadening the allowable kinds of new development to achieve a balanced mix of housing products and ensure that Lemont does not lose this important community characteristic.*



## OUR MOBILITY

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*In 2030, Lemont will be well connected to the rest of the Chicago region and have excellent connections within the community. Adequate connections will exist for all modes of travel, including vehicles, bicycles, pedestrians, and transit.*

*Our Mobility represents a shifting view of our local transportation network away from one of just roads to service vehicular traffic and toward complete rights of way for multiple different users. In addition to the bicycle, pedestrian, and transit recommendations influenced by the 2012 Active Transportation Plan, the chapter also recommends a framework for road connectivity in growth areas and addresses larger regional issues such as freight movement on the Sanitary & Ship Canal.*



## OUR COMMUNITY CHARACTER

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*In 2030, Lemont's buildings, structures, and patterns of development will reinforce our community's unique character. Although larger in area and population, Lemont will retain its small-town charm and sense of community.*

*Our Community Character works to tie together the other chapters of the plan and provides an overarching framework for our future land use and development. It seeks to retain Lemont's unique sense of place by preserving our most cherished physical features like our scenic vistas and historic assets, while welcoming new growth that is compatible with the vision and guiding principles of Lemont 2030.*



# OUR CIVIC LIFE

*In 2030, Lemont residents will be actively involved in their community, with a strong sense of civic pride rooted in Lemont's unique community character. Village government will be characterized by professional public service provided in a cooperative, friendly, consistent, and fiscally responsible manner.*

## LEMONT PIONEERS

*Bill Gwodz*

Growing up in Lemont, Bill attributes his sense of civic duty to early family influence. His mother and sister were actively involved in Lemont and the family tradition of contributing to the community has been passed on to Bill's own children, who currently coach baseball.

The dedication and leadership Bill provided to the operation of organizations such as the Jaycee's and Little League has resulted in years of personal memories, community traditions, and lasting friendships. From building floats in his garage for the Keepataw Days parade to providing relief efforts after the tornado that devastated parts of Lemont in 1976, community involvement has been instrumental both in Bill's life and in shaping Lemont.

As a lifelong community leader, Bill and his wife Barbara continue to find opportunities for public service. Bill has found that no matter what stage of life you are in, opportunities for civic engagement abound. Bill believes each person is unique and can make a unique contribution to the community in which they live. It is these collective talents that have made Lemont flourish and will provide the foundation for our future success.

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

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We all bear collective responsibility for our quality of life and should be active participants in achieving the vision of this plan.

Data is vital to good decision making and should be shared cooperatively and made equally available.

Institutions that foster a sense of community should be encouraged and provided a place to grow.

High quality services add to the appeal of the community and should be bolstered through collaborative partnerships.

Accountability, transparency, and public participation are the hallmark of good governance and critical to a prosperous Lemont.

## INTRODUCTION

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A community with high civic engagement fosters civic pride and innovation and promotes community dialog. It increases awareness of the Village government's role in the community and builds a sense of stewardship for public resources. This element describes Village processes for civic engagement and identifies community organizations that are focused on the economic and social vitality of the Village. This element also makes recommendations to improve opportunities for civic engagement, collaboration, and good governance.



Lemont has a long tradition of civic involvement. Pictured above are members of the Knights of Pythias, a civic club active in Lemont from the late 1800's to the early 1900's.  
Source: Lemont Area Historical Society



The "Pride of Lemont" mural depicts the flying career of local hero Rudy Kling and was created by the Lemont Art & Culture Commission with the participation of 100+ volunteers. It is one example of how the Commission uses art to engage the community and cultivate appreciation for our local heritage.

# CURRENT CONDITIONS

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The Village of Lemont is governed by an elected Village President (Mayor), a Village Clerk, and a Board of six Trustees, elected at large. The term of each elected office is four years. Each Trustee is appointed by the Mayor to serve as Board Liaison and/or Committee Chair to a Village department or appointed Village commission.

The Village Board is committed to open and participatory government. The Village informs and engages the public in a number of ways. A Village newsletter is published quarterly and mailed out to all residents. A news update called the Community Corner is published in local papers and includes a message from the Mayor twice a month. Residents also have access to information via the Village website, the Village Facebook site, Twitter, and e-mail or text updates. For certain projects, public workshops, planning sessions, project specific email distribution lists, and public hearings are used to solicit public input.

Transparency and accountability are important to maintaining an open government. The Village keeps the public informed of how and why decisions are made by posting all Village meeting agendas, including detailed staff reports, and meeting minutes on the Village website. A financial profile for Lemont is available on the website which includes the Village bond rating and annual audit, that is prepared by an independent firm. The approved Village budget is also posted annually on the website. The Village Board has recently completed a three-year strategic plan which establishes measurable goals for the Village, further increasing accountability. There are five priorities identified in the strategic plan: 1) financial stability, 2) quality infrastructure, 3) economic development and redevelopment, 4) intergovernmental

cooperation, and 5) workforce development. Data collection and analysis are integral components of the plan. Data sharing opportunities among Village departments, local organizations, and state and regional agencies will be critical to measuring the success of the strategic plan and the comprehensive plan. The Village currently has data sharing agreements with IDOT and Cook, Will, and DuPage Counties for Geographic Information Systems data. Data sharing between departments occurs but there is no protocol in place for requesting data. Similarly, data sharing between the Village and other taxing districts or local organizations occurs but no formal process or protocol is in place.

Lemont has seven appointed Village Commissions; these Commissions are key volunteer groups that help implement our plans and provide opportunities for people to be involved in their community. The Planning and Zoning Commission conducts reviews and makes recommendations to the Village Board of Trustees about proposed zoning actions and various planning efforts. The Historic Preservation Commission reviews and approves applications for Certificates of Appropriateness for exterior alterations to buildings in the Historic District. The Commission also recommends landmark designation for buildings within the Historic District. The Lemont Environmental Advisory Commission keeps abreast of and advises the Village Board on environmental issues. The Commission sponsors an Earth Day event in April which includes recycling services and tree planting; a fall recycling day is also sponsored each October. The Art and Culture Commission has a mission of enriching the community by cultivating and promoting the appreciation of Lemont heritage through public art. The Commission has completed several

community art projects, including mosaic planters throughout downtown and more recently, a mural on Main Street. The Village Heritage Commission assists with the stewardship and planning for the I&M Canal and the Heritage Quarries Recreation Area.

Lemont also has numerous festivals and special events throughout the year, celebrating a variety of community traditions. Coordinators of events and festivals include the Park District, the Chamber of Commerce, independent organizations, communities of faith, and the Village. Festivals and events are usually free and offer excellent opportunities for community engagement. Participation by individual volunteers and community organizations is vital to the successful execution of these events. Recreational, cultural, and educational programs are another important resource in the community and there are many agencies and organizations that offer programs that enrich community living. The Lemont Public Library, Lemont Township, School District, and Park District are key providers of programs for youth and seniors alike.

To achieve our vision for civic engagement and good governance, the Village should focus its efforts on the goals outlined in the following section.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

## EMPLOY EARLY INVOLVEMENT AND GOOD PROCESS DESIGN FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.

Early public involvement in village projects enables participants to be a part of the process, develops a spirit of cooperation, and encourages the flow of accurate and unbiased information. It also helps the Village be more transparent in their efforts, informing the community about matters of interest and inviting public questions and input. While the Village has for many years stated that public involvement is important and does make efforts to engage the public, no formal process exists to ensure that public participation is a key component of all Village activities. More strategies are needed to guide public engagement. Currently there is no guide for such efforts and without guidance, some planning and decision making occurs without any valuable input from the very people the initiatives are meant to serve.

The Village should develop a civic engagement guide that defines the degree of public participation recommended for various types of initiatives. The guide should include strategies to create more effective civic engagement and establish indicators of success.

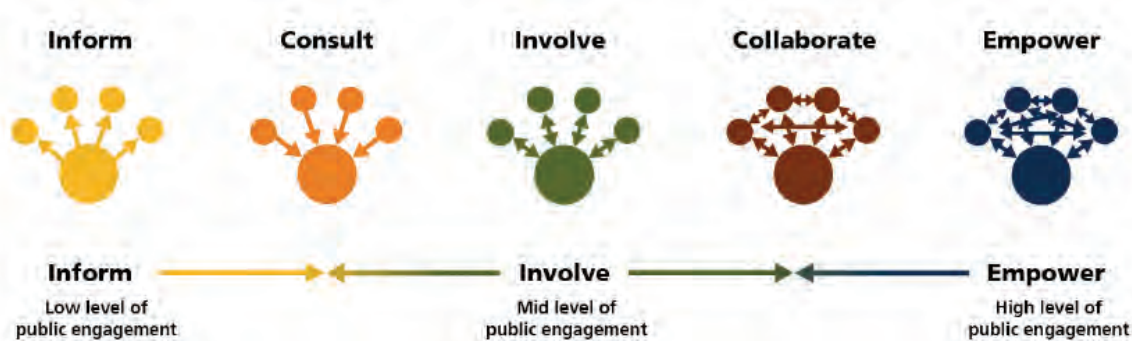
The Spectrum of Public Participation developed by the International Association for Public Participation is one example of a model that the Village could use to define different degrees of public involvement within the guide. Generally, the spectrum identifies five public participation goals ranging from “inform” being the lowest level to “empower” being the highest level. A project with the public participation goal of “inform” would include strategies such as websites, fact sheets, or open houses. Conversely, a project with the public participation goal of “empower” would include strategies such as voting and advisory groups.

Civic engagement should be robust, beginning early in the process when seeking volunteers and continuing on to the end with an evaluation of the outcomes. When soliciting public input, care should be taken to ensure that all sectors of the population are represented. In some cases targeting certain populations may be necessary. Providing equal access to information and participation opportunities is important if the community as a whole is to be served.

## INCREASE ACCESS TO DATA AND INFORMATION.

Decision making should be based on sound data. Collecting data in a functional form (electronic and able to be manipulated) and making it readily accessible is important for progress and efficiency. Data sharing agreements, data sharing officers, data catalogues, and the use of technology are all features that could increase productivity and availability of useful data.

Data sharing between departments within the Village should be done cooperatively. Understanding what data is available and in what format can increase workplace efficiency and promote collaborations among departments. Designating a contact person within each department to handle data requests would help identify what gaps exist in data availability and accessibility. Data sharing with other taxing districts should also be done in a cooperative spirit. Many of the same strategies that would facilitate data sharing among Village departments would be useful for sharing data across agencies.



International Association for Public Participation's "Spectrum of Public Participation" is one framework the Village could use to develop guidelines for the appropriate public involvement for varying initiatives.

Source: City of Burlington, CA Community Engagement Charter. <http://cms.burlington.ca/AssetFactory.aspx?did=25585>



## **PROMOTE EDUCATION AND CAPACITY BUILDING.**

Many organizations create educational/informational pieces that relate to topics addressed in the comprehensive plan. When the Village has access to or knowledge of these materials, it should act as a conduit between these organizations and our local electorate. In this role the Village can serve to help educate the public on topics related to the comprehensive plan and positively influence implementation of and support for the plan.



*The Lemont Area Chamber of Commerce's Cruise Nights event is an example of coordination between many stakeholders.*

Capacity building refers to growing the infrastructure of skilled individuals and organizations within in a community. A network of skilled individuals and organizations can be a principal factor in turning plans into actions and problems into opportunities. Locally, the Village should seek to cultivate such a network among our various community organizations. Encouraging the establishment of a Civic League that is comprised of these organizations would create a support network and help the organizations to grow and prosper in the community.

Building the capacity of the Village government workforce is also integral to achieving the goals of this plan. The Village should implement the workforce development strategies identified in the Village Strategic Plan and encourage employees to use existing resources for training opportunities.

## **PROVIDE EFFICIENT, EFFECTIVE, AND ETHICAL PUBLIC SERVICE.**

Professional public service should focus on efficiency, while maintaining the Village's high standard of quality services. Internal operations should be continually evaluated to determine if there are opportunities for improvement. Recommendations outlined earlier in the chapter related to building the capacity of village staff will play an important role as training and technology can increase employee efficiency.

To ensure that Village actions are effective in achieving our desired outcomes, evaluation should be a component of all Village initiatives. Regular evaluations should occur to measure our progress toward achieving the goals of this plan, the Strategic Plan, and other adopted Village plans. These evaluation results should be included in Village public outreach efforts.

The Village municipal code includes a code of ethical conduct and establishes a process for handling claims of ethical misconduct. As a vital resource and safeguard, ethics training should be implemented and offered annually to demonstrate the Village's commitment to carry out its responsibilities ethically.

## **ENCOURAGE PARTNERSHIPS AND SUPPORT CONTRIBUTING ORGANIZATIONS.**

Partnerships are increasingly important to make the most effective use of limited resources. There are many organizations providing services, programs, and community events for residents of Lemont. These include other taxing agencies such as the Park District, Township, Fire District, School District and Library in addition to Village Commissions, local not for profit and civic organizations, and communities of faith. Some services, programs, and events overlap and others serve a particular niche. The Village should take advantage of opportunities to partner with other providers of community events and programs, where possible.

## **SUSTAINABLY MANAGE LIMITED RESOURCES.**

Public resources need to be managed in ways that ensure current needs are met, without compromising the ability to meet the needs of the future. The strategies outlined in the Village Strategic Plan for capital improvement budgets and infrastructure planning provides a critical groundwork for continued stewardship of our public resources and should be implemented. Future resource allocations should align with the goals of this Comprehensive Plan.

## Implementation Action Area 1: Employ Early Involvement and Good Process Design for Public Participation

### Develop a Civic Engagement Guide for Village Initiatives

Lead Implementer(s): Planning & Economic Development Dept.; Administration

Encouraging public participation has been a goal of the Village for years; however no guidance is available to assist with determining the appropriate levels of participation for any particular initiative. The Village should develop a civic engagement guide that prescribes the level of participation expected for various kinds of Village initiatives and describes what that level of public participation would entail. For example, the guide may suggest that some initiatives merely inform the public through a notice in the local newspaper while other initiatives would engage the public through a series of workshops.

### Utilize Everyday Language When Making Public Notices and Announcements

Lead Implementer(s): Planning & Economic Development Dept.

Planning and zoning is a field that uses a considerable amount of jargon. Rephrasing planning and zoning requests and notices to more common terms would help the general public be more informed and less intimidated by the process, which may increase the rate of public participation. Additionally, increasing the use of visual aids in public presentations would help illustrate complex ideas and improve audience comprehension.

### Use a Variety Of Mediums to Elicit Public Participation

Lead Implementer(s): Planning & Economic Development Dept.

Using a wide variety of public participation mediums is preferred over single source methods that may unintentionally exclude certain populations from participating. The Village currently utilizes the local paper, newsletter, social media, the Village website, and some specialized mediums such as workshops and surveys as needed, but we would benefit from expanding the options for public participation. The Village should explore other options such as crowdsourcing, QR codes, focus groups, etc. The Village should develop a matrix that identifies all the available tools for public engagement and the advantages, disadvantages, cost estimate, and performance for each. The matrix would provide an opportunity to assess the pros and cons of all available mediums for any initiative and reduce the likelihood of defaulting to a traditional medium.

### Actively Engage Traditionally Underrepresented Groups

Lead Implementer(s): Planning & Economic Development Dept.

Providing opportunities for traditionally underrepresented groups such as youth, seniors, and non-English speaking populations to participate in Village planning efforts is important. The Village should create a stakeholders directory that identifies key contacts for particular groups (ethnic, elderly, disabled, youth, etc.). The key contacts would be the pathway to exchanging and disseminating information and ensuring that these harder to access groups are reached.

## Implementation Action Area 2: Increase Access to Data and Information

### **Designate a Data Sharing Contact for Each Department**

Lead Implementer(s): Administration; Village Departments

Each department collects data as part of their day to day operations. This data may be of use to another department but currently there is no protocol in place for how to obtain the information. The Village should designate a point of contact for each department to process internal data requests. Having a dedicated source within each department will help make data more accessible for decision making and foster interdepartmental collaboration.

### **Maintain a Streamlined Process for FOIA Requests**

Lead Implementer(s): Administration

The Village recently implemented an online Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) intake system to increase efficiency and transparency. In that process the FOIA Directory was updated to identify designated FOIA officers and provide guidance on what information is available to the public. The Village should adopt a practice of annually updating the Directory and evaluating the online system performance.

### **Seek Opportunities to Collaborate With Other Agencies and Organizations on Data Sharing**

Lead Implementer(s): Administration; other agencies as determined

Data is becoming increasingly more available. Technology has made data collection and dissemination much easier and less cost prohibitive. The Village should continue to collaborate with other agencies and organizations on data sharing to reduce redundancy and increase opportunities to make better informed decisions. A process should be developed to outline an appropriate method for requesting and sharing data among local agencies.

### **Utilize Technology to Make Data More Functional and Accessible**

Lead Implementer(s): Administration

Data sources that are currently paper based should be transitioned into electronic formats that are functional for sorting, searching, and manipulating. Staff training opportunities should be made available to assist in that process.

## Implementation Action Area 3: Promote Education and Capacity Building

### **Share Information About Regional and Issue Oriented Planning Initiatives that Impact Lemont**

Lead Implementer(s): Planning & Economic Development Dept.

Recognizing that the Village does not exist in a bubble, special care should be taken to ensure that the Village and the community are kept abreast of regional plans that have local impact. Plans that have a positive impact on the local community should be supported. Information about plans should be shared with the community.

### **Seek opportunities to Collaborate with Other Agencies and Organizations on Public Education Campaigns**

Lead Implementer(s): Planning & Economic Development Dept.; other agencies as determined

There are many resources available that help increase awareness of issues relevant to the community. The Village should collaborate with other agencies and organizations that provide education materials. Staff should seek out materials that are relevant to topics addressed in the comprehensive plan and disseminate that information to the local community. Examples of educational pieces may include bikeway safety brochures, trainings on native plantings and stream bank erosion control, information on proper hazardous waste disposal, water conservation tips, etc.

### **Encourage the Development of a Civic League to Increase the Capacity of Local Organizations**

Lead Implementer(s): Planning & Economic Development Dept.; other agencies as determined

As community based organizations and the individuals involved in those organizations gain skills, they can make more efficient use of local resources and be more effective in accomplishing their desired goals. Since implementation of this plan depends in part on the participation of such organizations, helping them build their capacity to effect change is important. One opportunity for increasing the capacity of local organizations is to create a member driven Civic League, whose members would be representatives of the various community organizations. The Civic League can function as a support network for each of these organizations and be a community impetus for civic engagement. The Village should encourage the development of a Civic League or other framework to increase the capacity of local organizations.

### **Build The Capacity Of Village Employees**

Lead Implementer(s): Administration; Village Departments

Government employees are charged with providing professional service to the community. Leadership and management training for employees is one of the action items identified in the Village Strategic Plan and should be supported and continued beyond the plan's three-year term. Additionally, employees should be encouraged to use the Village Employer Assistance Plan resources which have work- related skill building training opportunities available at no cost.

### **Support Training Opportunities for Village Commissioners and Committee Members**

Lead Implementer(s): Administration

Commissioners and committee members provide a valuable service to the Village and dedicate their time, effort, and expertise to the community. Implementing a training seminar for these volunteers that focuses on leadership, organizational management, and volunteer management would help the groups become more effective in their roles. The Village should also encourage commissioners to take advantage of training opportunities available through professional organizations like the American Planning Association or the National Alliance of Preservation Commissions.

## Implementation Action Area 4: Provide Efficient, Effective, and Ethical Public Service

### Maintain a Strong Ethical Culture

Lead Implementer(s): Administration; Ethics Commission

Chapter 2 of the Lemont Municipal Code includes the Village's Code of Ethical Conduct and Governmental Ethics and the State Gift Ban Act. The chapter outlines what is expected of government employees and what constitutes unethical behavior. The process for reporting violations is also described. An ethics program that includes annual training and mechanisms to support professional ethics should be implemented to help maintain a strong ethical culture in the workplace.

### Increase Efficiency in Village Processes While Maintaining Quality Public Service

Lead Implementer(s): Administration

The Village should evaluate internal processes for opportunities to maximize efficiency. The Village should evaluate opportunities to coordinate between departments and consolidate services, where feasible. Examples of areas to be evaluated include: permit processing; plan review procedures; and payment processes for village services.

### Improve Efficiency of Soliciting Input Into Small-Scale Development Inquiries

Lead Implementer(s): Planning & Economic Development Dept.

New developments come into the Village in multiple forms. For large scale developments with a concept plan, the Village offers developers an application for a technical review committee (TRC) meeting where the developer could meet with a cross-discipline team comprised of Village staff and other taxing districts for input on their development proposal prior to the submittal of a formal application. The TRC model should be expanded to include options for smaller scale development inquiries that would benefit from cross-discipline input. Establishing a process that would allow for one meeting between all pertinent parties would decrease the time frame for obtaining necessary input.

### Incorporate Evaluation Into Village Plans and Initiatives

Lead Implementer(s): Administration

Planning for future land use, infrastructure, water, and financial needs is important because it provides a strategic direction for meeting Village goals. Evaluation is equally important and because it provides an opportunity to assess and adapt strategies to ensure they are as effective as they can be. Evaluation provides an opportunity to demonstrate successes and shortcomings, which improves accountability. Additionally, when results are shared transparency is increased. Village plans should outline how the goals of the plan will be evaluated and identify the measures of success. A timeline for when the evaluation should take place should also be included. Village initiatives should be similarly evaluated on a regular basis for consistency with adopted plans and for their success in meeting established goals.

### Report on Implementation of Lemont 2030 Comprehensive Plan

Lead Implementer(s): Planning & Economic Development Dept.

Village staff should provide a report to the Village Board every two years that outlines the progress made toward fulfilling the recommendations of this comprehensive plan. These reports should include the status of each implementation action step detailed in the plan.

## Implementation Action Area 5: Encourage Partnerships and Support Contributing Organizations

### **Identify Common Goals Between the Village and Other Taxing Districts and Pursue Opportunities to Partner**

Lead Implementer(s): Administration

Districts such as the Park District, the School District, the Fire District, Library, and Township all have services and programs that positively contribute to the community and make Lemont an attractive location for long-time Lemonters and newcomers alike. Recognizing the shared benefits provided, the Village should inventory the goals of each District and identify areas that are conducive to partnership both for the short-term and the long term.

## Implementation Action Area 6: Sustainably Manage Limited Resources

### **Ensure Services Remain in Adequate Supply as the Community Grows and Service Demands Increase**

Lead Implementer(s): Administration

Services such as police, fire, water, and sewer are critical public functions in a community and the Village must take care to ensure that current demands are met and that future growth is accommodated in a manner that does not compromise the community. Additionally as telecommunication and energy services change, the Village should ensure that services are compatible with the community and that services produce positive benefits to residents.

### **Implement the Village Strategic Plan 2013-15 Strategic Initiative for Quality Infrastructure**

Lead Implementer(s): Administration

The Quality Infrastructure strategic initiative seeks to 1) conduct a comprehensive review of the existing road evaluation system, 2) develop infrastructure expansion plan for future growth and to 3) establish a multi-department capital improvement plan. These actions will ensure public resources are prioritized and spent responsibly. The Village should continue the practice beyond the plan's three-year term and should coordinate with goals of the comprehensive plan.

# OUR ECONOMIC PROSPERITY

*In 2030, Lemont will have a thriving business community with few vacant commercial buildings. Downtown Lemont will be a vibrant mixed-use district full of unique shops, restaurants, offices, and homes. Lemont will be a desired destination for visitors from outside the community.*





## LEMONT PIONEERS

*Dan Bannon, Franciscan Village*



Franciscan Village officially opened in 1965 and is sponsored by the Franciscan Sisters of Chicago. Dan Bannon, Executive Director, is responsible for carrying out the mission of the Lemont facility. The Lemont location began as a nursing home and has grown into a campus that offers independent living, assisted living, skilled nursing, and rehabilitative services. Franciscan Village's variety of housing and support options allow families to remain close; about one in five residents of Franciscan Village have family that live elsewhere in Lemont.

Franciscan Village is a prominent contributor to the economic vitality of Lemont. Twenty five percent of the people working at Franciscan Village also live in here. Franciscan Village's reach in the community goes beyond just providing housing and employment. They actively work with the Hope and Friendship Foundation to bring resources to needy families within Lemont Township and continually support other community programs, including the Lemont Library summer reading program and the Lemont High School performing arts center.

As a successful employer, Franciscan Village represents the growing economic prosperity in Lemont. As a service provider and supporter of local businesses and community groups, Franciscan Village is a valued member of the Lemont community.



## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

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Village codes and permitting processes are safeguards of public health and safety; they should also be tools for promoting economic growth and development.

Patronizing local businesses keeps money circulating in our local economy, thereby benefiting local businesses and local taxing bodies. “Shop Lemont First” should be the ethic of government agencies, local businesses, and residents.

By providing retail development consistent with local demand, Lemont residents will have adequate choices within the community to meet most of their retail shopping needs.

Proactive approaches to business recruitment and retention are needed to overcome challenges to achieving our vision for economic prosperity.

Creating local employment opportunities for residents provides many benefits to our community including environmental benefits from shorter commutes and strengthened social ties among citizens who live and work locally.

The downtown, I&M Canal, and the Heritage Quarries Recreation Area are unique assets and should be further cultivated to be attractive destinations for residents and visitors.

The unique charm and rich history of Lemont provides a strong foundation for tourism. Partnerships will create the synergies needed to import spending into the local economy and make Lemont a destination for visitors.



## INTRODUCTION

In many ways, any local community's economy is a reflection of larger regional, national, and international trends, driven by forces far beyond the control of a local municipal government. Lemont, like the region and the nation, does not have the same level of manufacturing activity and the accompanying manufacturing jobs that it once had. The health care industry has grown locally and nationally as a reflection of the increasingly complex nature of health care and the aging population in the United States. Regionally and locally there has been limited total job growth over the last ten years.<sup>1</sup>

Although all local economies are pushed and pulled by larger trends, each place has its own unique assets and challenges. While Lemont is within one of the most educated metropolitan areas in the country, Lemont's residents and local workforce have even higher rates of educational attainment than the larger region (38.7% of population 25 and over with a bachelor's degree or higher vs. 34% for the region).<sup>2</sup> Although Lemont is located within the second most populous county in the country, we are unique in that we still have hundreds of acres of land available for new residential or commercial development within Lemont township.<sup>3</sup> While Lemont's origins date back to the 1830's, many of Lemont's neighbors like Woodridge and Darien were not developed until the 1950's - 60's. Our neighbors do not face the same challenges of replacing and updating aging infrastructure as we do in Lemont.<sup>4</sup>

How do we take advantage of our unique assets and overcome our unique challenges to reach our vision for economic prosperity? This plan suggests an ongoing, comprehensive economic development effort focusing on: (1) specific industries that are likely to be attracted to Lemont's unique strengths; and (2) key areas in and around Lemont with the highest potential for current and future economic activity.

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Census Bureau (2013) OnTheMap Application. Longitudinal-Employer Household Dynamics Program. <http://onthemap.ces.census.gov/>

<sup>2</sup> Chicago ranks 45th among all 374 Census Bureau Census Metropolitan Statistical Areas for the number of people age 25 or older with a bachelor's degree or higher. U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census.

<sup>3</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census.

<sup>4</sup> Village of Woodridge incorporated in 1959; City of Darien incorporated 1969.

# CURRENT CONDITIONS

As a part of the Chicago metro, Lemont shares in many of the region's strengths and weaknesses. Achievement of our local economic goals depends largely on the success of coordinated efforts to improve shared regional infrastructure and workforce resources. Locally however, Lemont's infrastructure and workforce are two of its greatest assets as a potential location for business. Lemont provides its own water service and generally has excess capacity to meet demand; this allows for new development to proceed without costly upgrades to Village facilities. Most of the Village and its adjacent planning area is serviced by water and sewer, or has service within a reasonable distance. The Village has recently made plans to extend water and sewer service into a portion of its unincorporated planning area, opening this area up to additional development opportunities.

One infrastructure limitation for Lemont's growth is providing sewer service to adjacent sites in Will and DuPage counties. Any extension of service into those areas requires an amendment to the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago's (MWRD) facilities planning area. Lemont is also considerably older than many neighboring communities; its aging infrastructure is insufficient for new development in some areas and competing communities may not face similar challenges. In particular, aging infrastructure has been an issue near the historic downtown retail district. The Village has taken proactive steps to improve infrastructure in these areas, but more work remains.

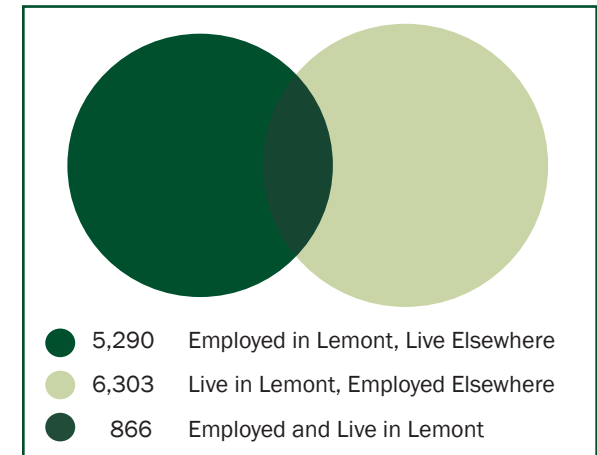
One of Lemont's other great strengths as a potential location for business is its educated workforce. The percent of Lemont residents with high school and bachelor's degrees far exceeds state and metro area averages. For retailers, Lemont has above average household incomes, resulting in above average disposable income to support local retail activity. However, the vast majority of Lemont's local residents work outside the village which means that the area has a low daytime population to support retail establishments. Of 7,169 workers living in Lemont, only 12% also work in Lemont; the other 88% work outside the community.<sup>5</sup>

Just like the region, Lemont is impacted by state and county tax policies. Lemont struggles to compete with nearby communities for commercial and industrial development due to its disadvantageous tax situation. Property taxes for commercial and industrial properties are typically higher in Cook County than in nearby Will or DuPage counties. Sales tax is another comparative weakness for Lemont versus surrounding communities. Lemont actually lies within three different counties, Will, DuPage, and Cook, but the vast majority of Lemont's territory is in Cook County. Lemont's sales tax rate in Cook County is 8.25%. By comparison, if retail properties were located in the DuPage or Will County portions of Lemont, their sales tax rate would be at least one percent lower.

## TARGET INDUSTRIES

In preparation of this comprehensive plan, a Target Industries Report was created based on a careful examination of Lemont's competitive position in the marketplace, its assets, and its liabilities.<sup>6</sup> Target Industries are industries or groups of industries that are compatible with our community vision and are likely to choose to locate, remain, or grow in Lemont because of our economic, geographic, or other comparative advantages. The practice of targeting has become increasingly commonplace among local governments and regional economic development organizations as agencies seek ways to make the most efficient use of limited resources.<sup>7</sup>

**FIGURE 4.1: LEMONT 2010 INFLOW / OUTFLOW JOB COUNTS**



source: US Census Bureau, <http://onthemap.ces.census.gov/>

<sup>5</sup> U.S. Census Bureau (2013) OnTheMap Application. Longitudinal-Employer Household Dynamics Program. <http://onthemap.ces.census.gov/>

<sup>6</sup> Lemont Target Industries Report (2012) [www.lemont.il.us/lemont2030](http://www.lemont.il.us/lemont2030)

<sup>7</sup> Swager, R. J. (1987) The Targeting Study in Economic Development Practice. Economic Development Review, Vol. 5, Issue 2: 56-60.

The Target Industries Report examines each of the 20 North American Industrial Classification System (NAICS) industry sectors. Each industry sector was evaluated on the following quantitative factors: whether the sector is experiencing positive national, regional and local employment trends; whether regional economic development agencies are targeting the sector for future growth; whether there is a relative concentration of local employment in the sector when compared to the Chicago metropolitan region and the state; whether local jobs in the sector represent a significant portion of total local employment; and whether local resident employment in the sector represents a significant portion of total resident jobs. Each sector was also evaluated on two qualitative factors: whether the sector aligns with the Lemont 2030 vision and whether the sector is compatible with Lemont’s unique strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.

The Target Industries Report ultimately identifies six industry sectors toward which the Village should

concentrate its economic development efforts. Four sectors are identified as growth targets, while two sectors are identified as preservation targets. The growth targets include: Health Care and Social Assistance (NAICS 62); Retail Trade (NAICS 44-45); Professional, Scientific and Technical Services (NAICS 54); and Arts, Entertainment and Recreation (NAICS 71). The preservation targets are Manufacturing (NAICS 31-33) and Transportation and Warehousing (NAICS 48-49).

Based on the findings of the Target Industries Report, Lemont should seek to increase the proportion of growth target industry sectors in the local economy. The Village should seek retention and success of existing businesses and limited attraction of new businesses in the preservation target industry sectors. The target industry sectors contained within the Target Industries Report should take priority as the Village considers implementation of the Comprehensive Plan recommendations.

### ECONOMIC ACTIVITY CENTERS

The Target Industries Report identifies ten locations within the Village or its planning area as economic activity centers. Economic activity centers are existing or potential future hubs of business activity; they are not intended to represent the locations of all commercial activity within the Village, but rather those areas where there already are or may in the future be significant concentrations of economic activity. These economic activity centers are the locations where the Village’s targeted industries are already located or may be located in the future.

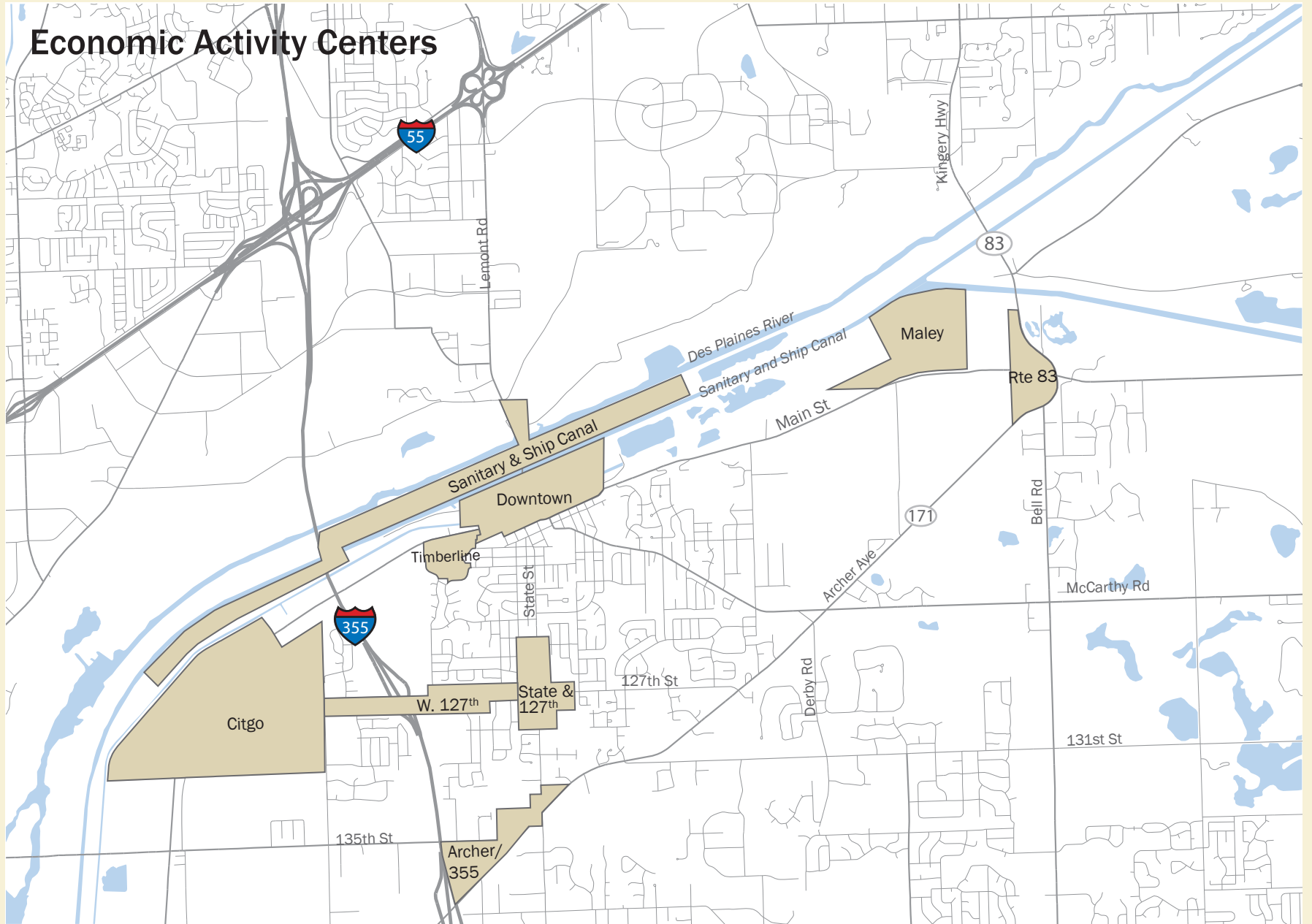
To achieve the Village’s vision for economic prosperity and to increase the proportion of target industry activity in Lemont, the Village should focus its economic development efforts on the recommendations outlined in the following section.

**TABLE 4.1 ECONOMIC ACTIVITY CENTER MATRIX**

*The Economic Activity Center Matrix (right) joins the target industries to Lemont’s economic activity centers. Cells shaded in green indicate that a given target industry is appropriate for a given activity center. These recommended locations should be considered in future annexation, planning, and economic development efforts.*

Economic Activity Centers	Growth Target Industries				Preservation Target Industries	
	Health Care	Retail	Professional, Scientific & Technical Services	Arts, Ent. & Recreation	Manufacturing	Transportation & Wholesale
Downtown						
Sanitary & Ship Canal						
Citgo						
Timberline						
W. 127th Street						
State & 127th						
Archer / I-355						
Maley Road						
Route 83						

# Economic Activity Centers



# RECOMMENDATIONS

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## **DEVELOP LEMONT’S “PRODUCT”.**

Just as the Chicago region competes with other regions in the country to attract businesses, residents, and visitors, Lemont competes with other communities for such resources. To enhance our competitive advantage, Lemont should create both a physical and a policy environment that supports economic growth. The Village’s physical environment includes the appearance of commercial districts, the gateways into our community, and other physical attributes that are key to making a good impression on visitors and residents, including visitors who might consider opening or expanding a business in Lemont. The Village’s policy environment includes zoning and building regulations, Village procedures, policies regarding incentives, and other non-physical considerations that are equally important to businesses seeking to open or expand in Lemont.

## **CREATE AND IMPLEMENT A BRAND STRATEGY.**

While the Village is making tangible physical and policy changes to support growth, it should simultaneously pursue an effort to identify the Village’s brand and promote that brand through a comprehensive and ongoing brand strategy. Branding and marketing help a community distinguish itself from other communities and help develop a sense of the community’s identity. Branding has become increasingly important for cities, as they compete against one another for residents, businesses, and visitors. “This competitive environment

is a reality of our times, and how a city stakes out and communicates its distinctive place within it largely decides which cities succeed and which falter in the race for economic prosperity. To this end, places are just like companies: those with a strong brand find it much easier to sell their products and services and attract people and investment.”<sup>8</sup>

Although branding is often thought to be simply a logo or a tagline, logos and taglines are marketing tools used to implement a brand strategy. CEOs for Cities describes branding efforts as, “anchored in a community’s societal, political or economic objectives ... identifying the core promise that it makes to key audiences, and developing and consistently communicating the core, positive attributes of the place. Whether a place is looking to rebuild, enhance or reinvigorate its image, the first step is a comprehensive brand strategy.”<sup>9</sup>

## **DEVELOP DOWNTOWN AS A DESTINATION FOR RESIDENTS AND VISITORS.**

As Lemont’s historic core and a key area of commercial activity, additional efforts should be dedicated to develop downtown’s assets. The continued vitality of downtown was a key priority expressed during the Lemont 2030 public visioning process. Additionally, downtown represents an area of significant prior investment by the Village. From 1999 to 2010, over \$5.4 million of TIF funding has been spent on public infrastructure improvements in the downtown TIF district, and nearly \$1 million has been spent on marketing, façade grants,

and other improvement efforts.<sup>10</sup> Significant private investment has also taken place during this time period, the most obvious of which is the 82-unit Front Street Lofts condominium project. But many smaller, yet substantial other private investments have been made to update and restore the many smaller and often historic buildings downtown. Over \$250,000 in private funds has been spent just by participants in the downtown façade and site improvement grant program. For all of these reasons, downtown warrants dedicated economic development efforts. Both physical improvements and policy changes will help Lemont realize its vision for downtown by 2030.

## **DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT A BUSINESS RETENTION & EXPANSION PROGRAM.**

The Village currently does not have a formal business retention and expansion program. Establishing such a program, with a designated staff coordinator, is an important step toward achieving our economic vision. Generally, it is less expensive for a community to retain and grow its existing businesses than to attract new businesses. Also, business retention and expansion efforts honor the prior investment made by local businesses. Annual surveys of local businesses are central to any business retention and expansion program. Surveys serve three functions. The surveys help collect important information that otherwise may not be available at the local level, or may not be available at the necessary level of detail. Surveys help build rapport between the business community and the

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<sup>8</sup> CEOs for Cities (2006) Branding Your City, p.2, <http://www.ceosforcities.org/research/branding-your-city/>

<sup>9</sup> CEOs for Cities (2006) Branding Your City, p.3, <http://www.ceosforcities.org/research/branding-your-city/>

<sup>10</sup> Lemont Downtown TIF District Annual Reports FYE 2000 to FYE 2010

economic development team conducting the surveys; they are a way to show businesses that the Village values their input. Finally, surveys help identify mid and long-term issues facing local businesses and provide an opportunity for the Village to assist the businesses with these issues. For example, a survey may reveal that an owner of a successful local business wants to retire; with that knowledge, the Village can assist the owner in succession planning and/or marketing the business for sale. Although annual business surveys should be the Village's first step, a successful business retention and expansion program should include other initiatives and services to support existing businesses, particularly those within Lemont's targeted industry sectors.

**DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT A BUSINESS ATTRACTION PROGRAM.**

While expansion of existing businesses will provide new economic growth, new businesses are also needed. New businesses will help expand the local tax base and add to the variety of locally available goods and services. Through straightforward strategies, like maintaining a complete inventory of commercial and industrial property in the Village, the Village can help match new or growing businesses in our targeted industry sectors to opportunities for development in Lemont.





## Implementation Action Area 1: Develop Lemont’s “Product” – Physical & Policy Improvements

### **Develop Inviting Gateways into Lemont**

Lead Implementer(s): Planning & Economic Development Dept.

Gateways are key intersections and corridors that represent major points of entry into a community. Ensuring that these points are attractive is key to creating a positive first impression of Lemont for visitors. The Village should enhance our gateways through streetscaping, signage, and other physical improvements. Private development at gateways should reinforce the public improvements and further enhance the aesthetics of these important areas.

### **Allow Amendments to Planned Unit Developments for Infill Commercial Development**

Lead Implementer(s): Planning & Economic Development Dept.

Many of the Village’s shopping centers and other commercial developments were approved as planned unit developments. As such, many of the sites are restricted to specific site designs and/or parking ratios. Often the PUDs require more parking than recommended by current Village standards or best planning practices. On these sites, PUD amendments should generally be granted to incorporate additional commercial buildings.

### **Create Master Plans for Lemont’s Economic Activity Centers**

Lead Implementer(s): Planning & Economic Development Dept.

Each site has its own unique assets and challenges. For those centers which are undeveloped, or require significant redevelopment to become a hub of economic activity, master development (or sub area) plans should be developed. In addition to land use and design considerations, these plans should address infrastructure capacity and economic feasibility of any plan proposals.

### **Annex Economic Activity Centers That are Not Already Within the Village**

Lead Implementer(s): Planning & Economic Development Dept.

Many of the economic activity centers that are key to the Village’s future economic growth are not currently within Village limits. Annexation of these areas is an important first step to add the necessary acreage for new commercial development.

### **Vigorously Enforce Existing Property Maintenance Codes and Pursue Additional Codes as Needed**

Lead Implementer(s): Planning & Economic Development Dept.; Code Enforcement

Attractive commercial districts are critical to creating a positive impression for shoppers; unattractive districts are unlikely to be successful. The Village should prioritize enforcement of property maintenance in commercial districts, including the noncommercial properties located within or adjacent to those districts.

## Implementation Action Area 1: Develop Lemont’s “Product” – Physical & Policy Improvements

### Establish a Community-Wide Façade and Site Improvement Program

Lead Implementer(s): Planning & Economic Development Dept.

The downtown façade and site improvement grant has been widely successful in helping business and property owners make needed improvements to downtown buildings and businesses. A similar program could encourage reinvestment in older commercial properties throughout the community. The program could be structured as a grant or low interest loan.

### Create a “White Elephant” Ordinance or Policy

Lead Implementer(s): Planning & Economic Development Dept.; Village Attorney

It is not uncommon for large retailers to close and leave a vacant building behind, known as a “white elephant”. Many communities have addressed the problem of white elephants through ordinances that require large retail developments to submit a detailed reuse plan before site plan approval or pay an annual fee into a redevelopment fund. Some ordinances prohibit the use of restrictive covenants, which often prevent efficient reuse of vacant commercial properties. The Village should explore the development of a “white elephant” ordinance or policy to be applicable to future large-scale commercial development.

### Annually Review Village Codes and Development Review Procedures

Lead Implementer(s): Planning & Economic Development Dept.; Building Dept.

At least once a year, Village staff should review any needed changes to the Unified Development Ordinance, other codes, and internal development review and permitting procedures to see if any improvements can be made to increase efficiency or reduce unnecessary regulation. Contractors, builders, and other stakeholders should be given an opportunity to provide input.

### Revise the Unified Development Ordinance to Support Increased Daytime and Resident Population

Lead Implementer(s): Planning & Economic Development Dept.

To support additional retail services the Village needs to increase its daytime and residential population near its commercial districts. Revisions to the Unified Development Ordinance such as smaller minimum lot sizes for single-family homes and increasing areas zoned for multi-family housing near commercial development would support residential population growth. Such revisions should be implemented, so long as they are not in conflict with other housing or land use goals of this plan.

### Create a Comprehensive Incentives Policy

Lead Implementer(s): Planning & Economic Development Dept.; Administration; Finance

A comprehensive incentives policy will let businesses and residents know what kinds of incentives will be considered by the Village and for what kinds of projects. The policy should include consideration of in-kind as well as direct monetary incentives. Generally, incentives should only be available to businesses within Lemont’s targeted industries (growth or preservation) and/or businesses that will redevelop an underutilized or brownfield site. More detailed criteria may be included for specific types of incentives (e.g. the criteria for receiving in-kind incentives may be different than tax abatement). Incentive requests should be evaluated using a cost-benefit analysis.

## Implementation Action Area 1: Develop Lemont’s “Product” – Physical & Policy Improvements

### Promote the Development of Health Care Sector Businesses Along 127th Street, West of State Street

Lead Implementer(s): Planning & Economic Development Dept.; Administration

Typically sales tax generating uses are the preferred land use for commercial corridors. However, the area along 127th Street, west of State Street has two characteristics that make it particularly attractive for the development of health care businesses; it is located along I-355 in close proximity to two major hospitals and several medical uses already exist within the corridor. Conversely, the area is not particularly attractive for retail development due to its low traffic counts, which are unlikely to change dramatically. For these reasons, the Village should prefer medical office and other health care industry development along this corridor when making land use decisions, including incentive and planned unit development requests.

### Maintain Existing Industrial Zoning with Very Limited Expansion

Lead Implementer(s): Planning & Economic Development Dept.

Manufacturing and transportation & warehousing are Lemont’s two targeted preservation industries. These industries, located on the Village’s manufacturing and B-4 zoned properties, provide local jobs and play an important role in the regional economy. To retain this important component of our local economy, the Village should not reduce the amount of manufacturing zoned property, with the exception of properties within and immediately adjacent to the Route 83 & Main Gateway TIF area and downtown Lemont. The Village should seek to increase our total acreage of industrial land use through annexation when the areas of annexation that are adjacent to existing industrial/manufacturing areas and such zoning will not create a conflict with existing residential development. The Village should refrain from rezoning existing territory to manufacturing, with the exception of B-4 zoned properties, discussed below. Any new industrial development should comply with the Village’s high standards for site design and aesthetics.

### Revise the B-4 Zoning District Regulations and the Canal Overlay District

Lead Implementer(s): Planning & Economic Development Dept.

The B-4 zoning district is intended for outdoor commercial recreation. However 67% of B-4 zoned properties are within the Canal Overlay District, which allows for uses related to water-borne shipments and the barge industry along the Sanitary and Ship Canal that are unrelated to outdoor recreation. The zoning district and overlay cause unnecessary confusion and should be revised. The uses allowed within the Canal Overlay District should still be allowed along the Sanitary and Ship Canal, but new zoning districts should be created to distinguish between the currently B-4 zoned areas truly intended for recreation, and those intended for industrial and/or transportation related uses.

### Annex Nearby Arts, Entertainment and Recreation Employment Centers

Lead Implementer(s): Planning & Economic Development Dept.

Where owners are willing, the Village should annex existing nearby employment centers within the Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation growth target industry sector.

## Implementation Action Area 2: Branding

### Define Lemont's Current Brand Image

Lead Implementer(s): Administration; Planning & Economic Development Dept.

Define the current perceptions of the community using tools like surveys or in person interviews.

### Define Lemont's Aspirational Brand Identity

Lead Implementer(s): Administration; Planning & Economic Development Dept.

Define the perceptions we want people to have of Lemont in the future. The aspirational brand identity is a goal the Village will strive to achieve.

### Create a Brand Positioning Strategy

Lead Implementer(s): Administration; Planning & Economic Development Dept.

The gap between the current brand image and the aspirational brand identity influences the brand positioning strategy. The brand positioning strategy begins to move the village toward the aspirational identity, but communicates a credible image of Lemont as it is today. The brand positioning strategy is used to drive communications and the marketing plan.

### Execute a Brand-Based Marketing Plan

Lead Implementer(s): Village Administration; Planning & Economic Development Dept.

The marketing plan will execute the brand positioning strategy, and will change over time as the brand positioning strategy changes. A brand-based marketing plan will include advertising, but should also include other opportunities to enhance the Village's brand (e.g. customer service interactions).

## Implementation Action Area 3: Develop Downtown as a Destination for Residents and Visitors

### **Stabilize the I&M Canal Wall and Improve Water Conditions in the Canal**

Lead Implementer(s): Planning & Economic Development Dept.

The I&M Canal is the reason Lemont was founded and the nationally historic canal still cuts through the downtown. The Village has installed miles of walking paths on either side of the canal and planted extensive landscaping along the canal in heart of downtown. However, the canal and its original limestone canal walls are in need of repair. Restoring water to the canal and stabilizing the limestone canal walls, at least in the heart of downtown, will honor the past investments made by the Village and ensure the canal serves as an asset to the downtown, rather than a liability.

### **Create an “Open Air Museum” Within the Downtown**

Lead Implementer(s): Lemont Art & Culture Commission; Historic Preservation Commission; Lemont Area Historical Society

Downtown has many historic structures with rich histories and various works of public art depicting aspects of Lemont’s past. However, visitors do not have information to help them realize the historical significance of these buildings and displays. By adding historic interpretation (e.g. signs, self-guided tour maps, podcasts) the Village can create opportunities for people to interact with downtown’s existing historic features and enhance the visitor experience. The Village should also add features in the downtown that use Lemont’s history to engage and inform visitors.

### **Continue to Support Increased Commuter Rail Service**

Lead Implementer(s): Administration

The Village has long recognized that increased Metra service would enhance the economic vitality of downtown and the entire community. As such, the Village has supported increased service on the Metra Heritage Corridor Line. Efforts in support of increased service should continue.

### **Market Downtown as a Visitor Destination**

Lead Implementer(s): Planning & Economic Development Dept.; Chamber of Commerce

Downtown Lemont is a unique, historic, traditional business district. It is also host to most of the Village’s special events. To take advantage of downtown’s unique assets, promote attendance at special events, and remain competitive with other nearby downtown districts, the Village should create print and online advertising campaigns to market downtown to local residents, visitors from nearby communities, and heritage tourists.

### **Revise UDO as Needed to Continue Support of a Mixed Use Environment, Consistent with Historic Development Patterns**

Lead Implementer(s): Planning & Economic Development Dept.

In 2005, Lemont adopted new zoning standards for the downtown. The standards are designed to maintain the area’s mixed use, pedestrian-oriented environment. The standards are also designed to allow new construction, but with design features and setbacks that fit with the historic patterns of development downtown. The use standards have generally been successful to date, but in some instances the bulk regulations may allow construction that would be incompatible with existing buildings. The bulk standards should be re-evaluated and amended as deemed prudent. The standards should strike a balance between preserving the character of the downtown and stimulating investment in the area.

### Implementation Action Area 3: Develop Downtown as a Destination for Residents and Visitors

#### **Minimize the Visual Impact of Vacant Storefronts**

Lead Implementer(s): Planning & Economic Development Dept.

Vacant storefronts are particularly detrimental to the vitality of a downtown district; because shops are close together and buildings are close to the street, the storefront windows are highly visible. The Village should coordinate with building owners to place artwork or other signs in the storefront windows of a building that has been vacant for a given period of time. The signs or art displays serve to reduce the visual impact of the vacant storefront window in the streetscape.

#### **Create a Funding Plan to Continue Maintenance of TIF Improvements Upon Expiration of the Downtown TIF**

Lead Implementer(s): Administration; Planning & Economic Development Dept.

The downtown TIF district expires in 2014. Upon the expiration of the TIF, the Village will need to develop a plan to maintain and continue improvements to the public amenities in the downtown.

## Implementation Action Area 4: Develop and Implement a Business Retention & Expansion Program

### Conduct Annual Business Retention Surveys

Lead Implementer(s): Planning & Economic Development Dept.

Annual business surveys are the foundation of most business retention and expansion programs. Due to resource constraints, some surveys will be conducted electronically or by paper but in-person surveys should also be conducted, particularly for businesses within the Village's growth target industries.

### Increase Local Shopping

Lead Implementer(s): Planning & Economic Development Dept.; Chamber of Commerce

Increasing the percentage of total household disposable income spent within the village will increase local tax revenue and support local businesses. The Village should seek to increase local shopping through 1) a marketing campaign to educate residents on the benefits of local shopping and 2) assisting local businesses to match their inventory and services to those in demand by local residents.

### Support Retail Clusters Through Advertising

Lead Implementer(s): Planning & Economic Development Dept.

The Village should create targeted advertising campaigns aimed at supporting existing local retail clusters that draw people into the trade area. For example, a "lunch in Lemont" campaign directed to nearby employment centers to enhance spending at Lemont's quick service eating establishments.

### Identify and Assist Home-based Businesses

Lead Implementer(s): Planning & Economic Development Dept.; Chamber of Commerce

Working with the Chamber of Commerce, the Village should begin a program to identify existing home based businesses in Lemont in the professional, scientific, and technical services target industry sector. Once identified, the Village should survey the businesses to discover common needs and interests and work to create programs and/or services to assist the businesses to transition to an office-based business with employees.

### Support the Lemont Art & Culture Commission to Further Growth in Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation

Lead Implementer(s): Planning & Economic Development Dept.; Lemont Art & Culture Commission; Chamber of Commerce

Lemont should build on its existing assets to promote economic growth within the Arts, Entertainment & Recreation target industry sector. One of these assets is the Lemont Art & Culture Commission. The Commission has been successful in developing several public art projects. It also provides art classes and features works of local artists in the recently opened Lemont Center for the Arts. The Commission works collaboratively with the Lemont Artists Guild, a group of local artists. The Village should support the continued work of the Art & Culture Commission by providing a staff liaison to assist with grant applications and programming aimed at promoting economic growth in the arts and entertainment sector. The Village should also support the Commission in its efforts to raise funds for a permanent Lemont Center for the Arts in the downtown.

## Implementation Action Area 5: Develop and Implement a Business Attraction Program

### **Create and Maintain a Sites and Buildings Inventory**

Lead Implementer(s): Planning & Economic Development Dept.

In order to quickly respond to requests for information from real estate brokers, developers, retailers, and others, the Village should create and maintain an inventory of all commercial and industrial property in the Village. The inventory should also include properties currently outside the village limits that have development potential and could be annexed.

### **Cultivate a Positive Reputation for Lemont in the Region**

Lead Implementer(s): Planning & Economic Development Dept.; Administration

The Village should participate in industry group events, particularly real estate industry events. Participation in such events provides opportunities for Village staff to interact with these communities, make Lemont more known in the region, and cultivate a positive, pro-active reputation for the community.

### **Pursue Health Care Industry Businesses**

Lead Implementer(s): Planning & Economic Development Dept.

Lemont has many existing health care industry businesses, particularly along the 127th Street corridor. The Village should work with these businesses to identify other kinds of health care businesses that would be complementary to the existing business mix. Working with business and property owners, the Village should develop marketing materials targeted toward these kinds of health care industry businesses and execute outreach strategies to recruit the businesses to Lemont.





# OUR NATURAL RESOURCES & RECREATION

*In 2030, Lemont will be known as a community with exceptional opportunities for outdoor recreation, defining natural characteristics, and quality open space. Stewardship of natural resources including air, land, and water will be paramount to healthy and active living.*



## LEMONT PIONEERS

*Jeanette Virgilio*

Jeanette has been described by a fellow committee member as a person that provides “unfailing support” in all areas of her involvement. As anyone who has ever met her can attest, she not only organizes opportunities to get people outdoors, she also actively participates.

Recreation opportunities including the Quarryman Challenge, Heritage Fest, Halloween Hoedown, and Hometown Holiday would not be possible without her commitment and enthusiasm. She is a behind the scenes crew member and also part of the cast in all Village events.

Having a “get it done” attitude, Jeanette has no problem getting her hands dirty. After spending a countless number of hours organizing events such as the annual I&M Canal clean up, she volunteers an equal amount of time actually wading in the Canal doing the work.

One of Jeanette’s most notable contributions to the community is her dedication to the establishment and growth of the Lemont Heritage Quarries Recreational Area (HQRA). Phase 1 of the Master Plan for the HQRA is complete and has won two American Public Works Association Awards. She has partnered with the Public Works department in creating and maintaining the trails and amenities throughout the site. Work boots, jeans and gloves are common attire for this 4-term Village Trustee.



*A group of volunteers installing a rain garden at Lemont United Methodist Church. Rain gardens are one of many available tools to help reduce stormwater runoff in the community.*

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

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Lemont's natural features and topography have intrinsic value and should not be compromised by development.

Access to clean, safe drinking water is an essential ingredient to a healthy and viable community.

Natural areas and ecosystems should be managed to respect natural processes.

Better air, land, and water quality means a cleaner environment, improved opportunities for economic development, and a healthier way of life.

Ample recreational amenities and connectivity between open spaces contributes to high quality of life and supports healthy living.

The I&M Canal and the Heritage Quarries Recreation Area are unique natural assets with untapped recreational potential.



*Waterfall in the Heritage Quarries Recreation Area.*

## INTRODUCTION

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Lemont is distinctive in the Chicago region for its topography and natural surroundings. In a region that is generally known for its flatness, the Village sits on the crest of a hill - the bluffs of the Des Plaines River Valley. Forest preserves surround the community on the north and east side. Long Run Creek (a tributary of the Des Plaines River) can be found at the southern end of the Village. These exceptional natural assets are juxtaposed with industrial uses along the Sanitary and Ship Canal to the north and west of the Village. The recommendations of this element seek to provide a balance between natural resource protection and development.

The Heritage Quarries Recreational Area and I & M Canal are assets to the community and have potential to provide quality recreational experiences for residents and visitors alike. These natural features are signature to Lemont and can provide vibrant recreational experiences. Lemont is well positioned to become an active and healthy community; this chapter makes recommendations to ensure that these opportunities are realized.

# CURRENT CONDITIONS

Air and soil quality is generally regulated by the EPA through various permitting regulations. Industries along the Sanitary and Ship Canal report on air emissions and toxic releases to the air.<sup>1</sup> Currently nine companies located in and near Lemont report on toxic releases to the air. Odor complaints are often times the harbinger of environmental issues such as leaks, pipe breaks, and spills and can help limit risks in a community. Lemont was the first municipality in Illinois to establish a management system, called the

Odor Alert Network (OAN), to respond to odor complaints. The discharge leading to the local Lockport, Illinois Buckeye Oil spill that occurred in 2010 was discovered in response to an odor complaint by a nearby resident.<sup>2</sup>

Trees also improve air quality and the Village has taken several measures to ensure trees are taken into consideration during the development process. New development proposals are required to submit a tree preservation plan which includes a tree inventory and

take measures to mitigate any losses. Landscape plans are also required and guidance is provided on what plant material and parkway trees are suitable options for our region.

Energy conservation and the use of green products and services are additional methods to improve air quality. The Village, in renovating Village Hall and constructing the new Police facility employed energy and water conservation measures and is supportive of green products and alternative energy. Village codes are flexible and supportive of green home design as evidenced by the construction of the “green” home in Briarcliff Estates subdivision.<sup>3</sup> The home was built in a way that increases occupant comfort and reduces negative environmental impacts. Additionally, Electric Vehicle Stations are available in the community at the Long Run Marketplace shopping center.

Soil contamination is handled by the EPA through a variety of programs such as Superfund, Leaking Underground Storage Tank (LUST), Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) sites and Brownfield sites, to name a few. The Village currently has one EPA-identified brownfield located at the former Tri-Central Marine site. An environmental assessment was completed in 2001 and a clean-up plan is currently underway. Lenz Oil Service, Inc., a former Superfund site, completed construction cleanup in 2009.<sup>4</sup>



*Industry and natural resources have always intersected in Lemont. Pictured above is the Lemont Citgo Refinery, located along the historic I&M Canal and near the Des Plaines River.*

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Environmental Protection Agency My Environment My Air (2013) Lemont 60439. <http://www.epa.gov/myenvironment/>

<sup>2</sup> Lockport Illinois Buckeye Oil Spill (2010) EPA Region V NRC# 962179, [http://www.epaos.org/site/site\\_profile.aspx?site\\_id=6549](http://www.epaos.org/site/site_profile.aspx?site_id=6549)

<sup>3</sup> The Green Home was built as a partnership of Chicago Regional Council of Carpenters' Labor and Management Committee and Lakeshore Public Television. Lemont was selected to be featured on the show Built to Last® as a series that will follow construction of a home from the ground up, incorporating affordable green materials.

<sup>4</sup> U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Cleanups in My Community, 60439. <http://ofmpub.epa.gov/apex/cimc/f?p=cimc:63:0>

## WATER QUALITY AND SUPPLY

A majority of the community is served by groundwater resources. The Village of Lemont water distribution system consists of approximately 75 miles of looped water main, two above ground storage tanks, and one ground level storage tank. Four deep wells and one shallow emergency well provide an average of 2.5 million gallons of water per day to Village residents. Wells draw from deep bedrock aquifers of the Ancell Unit and the Iron-ton-Galesville formation. The aquifers are topped with fine grained material of low permeability, which provides a degree of natural protection to the groundwater.<sup>5</sup> While the impermeable layer between the shallow and deep aquifers does better protect deep groundwater from contamination, it also makes groundwater recharge for the deep aquifers a more challenging and slower process because vertical infiltration is limited.<sup>6</sup> This, coupled with projected increases in demand, threatens the ability of deep aquifers to adequately meet the regional need without interceding measures.

Illinois Executive Order 2006-01 required planning activities to address water supply issues in the 11-county Northeastern Illinois Regional Water Supply Planning area. This executive order resulted in the development of Water 2050 Plan released in 2010. The Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning facilitated the development of the Plan and has made over 200 recommendations for state, regional and local agencies.

Urban runoff is rainfall that does not soak into the



*Lemont is one of the few communities in the area to rely on groundwater for its public water supply; many surrounding communities rely on Lake Michigan water.*

ground but instead flows over the land or in the stormwater sewer system to the nearest body of water. For Lemont, the principal water body is the Illinois & Michigan Canal. Water going into a waterway is not treated so it is important to filter what goes into the storm sewer. Industrial uses in Lemont are generally located along the waterways on the northern border of the community. The cumulative effects of these uses and

storm water runoff upstream have impaired the water quality of the I & M Canal, the Des Plaines River, and the Sanitary and Ship Canal. Primary contact recreation, such as swimming, in the Des Plaines River is impaired by fecal coliform. Fish consumption is impaired by the presence of mercury and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs). Aquatic life in the waterways is impaired by the presence of iron, oil and grease, chloride, and

<sup>5</sup> Illinois Environmental Protection Agency Source Water Assessment Fact Sheet (2011), Lemont

<sup>6</sup> Meyer et al., (2012) Opportunities and Challenges of Meeting Water Demand in Northeastern Illinois

phosphorus, much of which is caused by urban runoff and storm sewers.<sup>7</sup> To help keep silt from entering the sewers and ultimately the receiving waters, the Village has erosion and sedimentation control measures, some green infrastructure, and street sweeping.

## RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE

The I & M Canal is not only an important waterway for managing the Village storm water, it is also an important natural and cultural amenity. Natural areas in Lemont range from small corridors in the form of conservation easements to large tracts of land as found in the Heritage Quarries Recreation Area (HQRA). The HQRA is nearly 230 acres of open space a half-mile east of downtown Lemont; it is a combination of land owned by the Village and Township along with MWRD-owned property that is leased to the Village. The HRQA is currently managed by the Heritage Committee in partnership with the Village Public Works department.

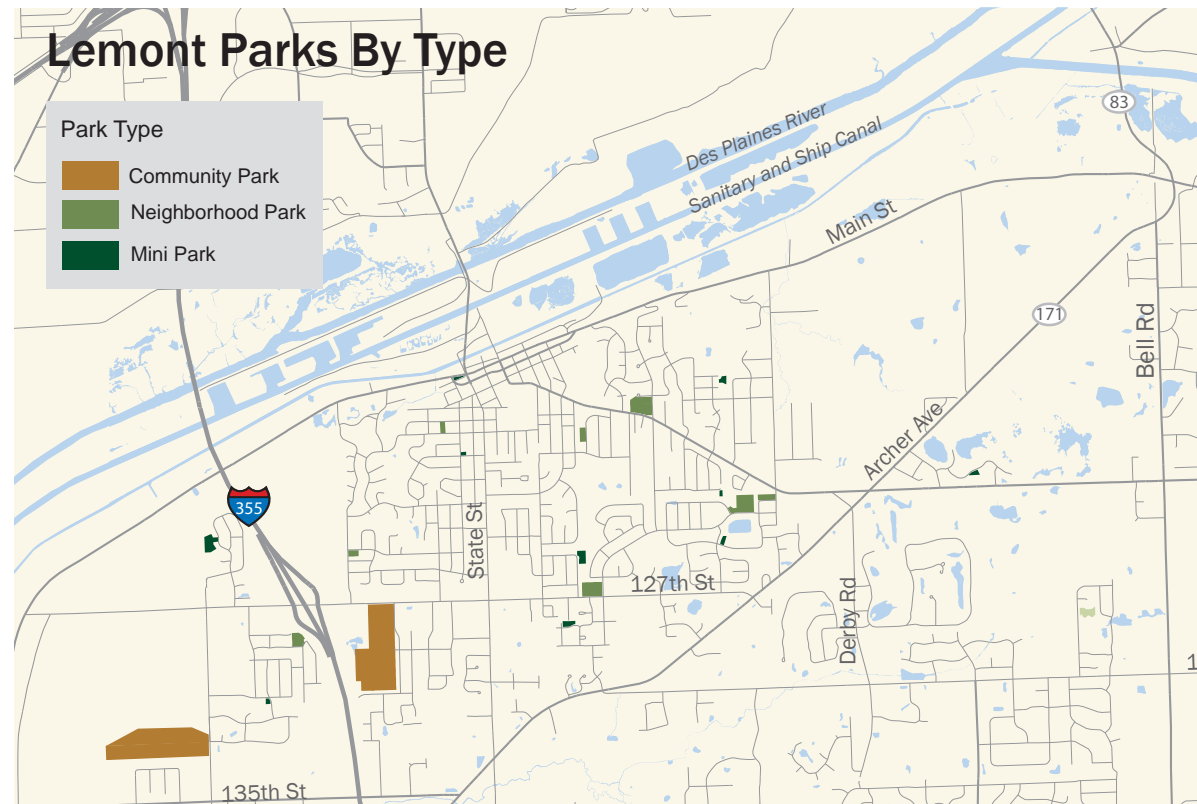
Lemont Township owns and maintains the 59-acre Heritage Woodland Sanctuary near I-355. Maintenance of and improvements to the Heritage Woodland Sanctuary were originally grant funded, but are now transitioning to mostly volunteer based management.

The Park District has smaller natural open space areas: a naturalized detention facility at Bambrick Park and an open space area in Kensington Park. Maintenance of the naturalized detention area at Bambrick Park is under the direction of the Park District and has been funded through a three year maintenance grant. Future maintenance is likely to be contracted out at the Park District's expense. The Park District's Kensington open space has been generally left unmanaged.

In addition to natural areas, Lemont Park District maintains park facilities that range from small playgrounds to large recreation centers. The National Recreation and Park Association recommends between 6.25 to 10.5 acres of developed open space per 1,000 residents.<sup>8</sup> When the area of the Heritage Woodland Sanctuary and the HQRA are added to the area of Park District park sites, the recommended standard for total park acreage per thousand residents is currently met. However, this standard does not address the geographic distribution of various park types.

In 2004, a Park District master plan was developed that inventoried the Park District's existing facilities and categorized each facility by park type. The plan assessed the diversity of available park types throughout the community and the equitability of their geographic distribution. The plan then recommended level of service standards for future park development.

Based on the park classifications used in the 2004 plan and the current inventory of Park District facilities, the Village has a total of 120 acres of park land. The



<sup>7</sup> U.S. Environmental Protection Agency: My Environment My Water (2013) Lemont, 60439. <http://www.epa.gov/myenvironment/>

<sup>8</sup> National Recreation and Park Association (1983) Recreation, Park and Open Space Standards and Guidelines, A Recommended Classification System for Local and Regional Recreational Open Space.

geographic distribution of parks by park type is shown in the Lemont Parks by Type map and includes 88 acres of community parks, 20 acres of neighborhood parks and 12 acres of playgrounds. Generally playgrounds are distributed throughout the community. Community parks are concentrated west of State Street, while neighborhood parks are lacking in this area.

Since 2004, the Park District has reclassified some of its parks. Four parks that would have been considered too small by the 2004 plan to be labeled community parks have been designated as such. Similarly, some of the playgrounds listed in the 2004 plan have been reclassified as neighborhood parks. To some extent, these reclassifications are representative of the ways in which these park facilities are currently being used. For example, Covington Knolls Park is only five acres and is therefore considered a neighborhood park by the 2004 plan. However the use of the park, fields for organized team sports, is consistent with a community park.

The repurposing and reclassification of some parks is likely indicative of a lack of certain types of park facilities in the community. For example, the repurposing of neighborhood parks for community park purposes indicates that there is insufficient community park space to meet demand.

In 2013, Lemont residents completed a community needs assessment survey developed by the Park District. The survey revealed that the top three new facilities desired by residents were 1) biking paths/trails, 2) paths/trails that connect to one another, and 3) walking paths/trails. That finding has been translated to a long term goal in the Park District's current strategic plan. Additionally, the Park District has a strategic goal to explore opportunities to bring recreation to the downtown area.

In addition to parks and open space, Lemont residents have a variety of opportunities to participate in recreational events throughout the year. The Village sponsors the Quarryman Challenge and provides support for other organizations' events through the issuance of special event permits and the dedication of staff resources. The Park District also holds special recreational events, such as the Frigid 5K run.

Special events are supported with Village advertising, police service, and assistance from the Public Works Department.

To achieve the Village's vision for natural resource protection and community recreation, the Village should focus its efforts on the goals and activities outlined in the following section.



Lemont Park District Outdoor Aquatic Center at the Centennial Campus



# RECOMMENDATIONS

## PROMOTE ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP TO ENHANCE AIR AND SOIL QUALITY.

Air pollution and soil contamination have negative health impacts and decrease quality of life. A healthy community should have clean air and toxic free soils, but accidents or negligence sometimes compromise these basic needs. Lemont has made many efforts to ensure a safe and healthy environment by working to remediate brownfields, establishing the Odor Alert Network, and supporting energy conservation and green building. While great strides have been taken, additional efforts can be made to continually improve air and soil quality.

## MAINTAIN INTEGRITY OF NATURAL WATER SYSTEMS AND KEEP SUPPLY NETWORK IN GOOD REPAIR.

The Village is dependent on groundwater to provide safe drinking water to all its residents. The quantity and availability of water from deep aquifers is difficult to gauge because aquifers are recharged at a slower rate than surface waters. The time frame can range from months to thousands of years, depending on the depth and the composition of the aquifer. It is believed that regionally the deep aquifer systems and Lake Michigan cannot be relied upon for additional water as both have nearly met the sustainable or legally mandated limits.<sup>9</sup> With projections of water shortages from increases in demand, water conservation and water infiltration measures will become critical strategies for meeting future water needs.

There has been considerable advancement in



*The Lemont Park District recently converted detention basins at Bambrick Park (above) to naturalized facilities, which promote better water quality than traditional dry bottom detention basins.*

understanding water resource supply and demand in recent years as a result of studies conducted by the Illinois Department of Natural Resource and the Illinois State Water Survey for the northeastern Illinois region. Adequately managing the supply and demand will take regional cooperation to ensure water supply is managed sustainably. Recommendations outlined in the Water 2050 plan should be implemented and additional regional coordination should be pursued by the Village.

Although the Village has taken steps to promote and implement best management practices in stormwater,

a more comprehensive approach to managing water quality and supply is needed. One approach would be the implementation of a natural infrastructure network (NIN), which the EPA identifies as an “interconnected network of natural areas and other open spaces that conserves natural ecosystem values and functions, sustains clean air and water, and provides a wide array of benefits to people and wildlife.”<sup>10</sup> Parcels containing or near streams, wetlands, waterways, ravines, forests and other natural areas should be designated resource protection areas. To maintain the integrity of ecosystem health, green infrastructure measures (e.g. permeable

<sup>9</sup> Metropolitan Planning Council, Openlands Project, and Campaign for Sensible Growth (2005) Troubled Waters, Meeting Future Water Needs in Illinois.

<sup>10</sup> U. S. Environmental Protection Agency, Green Communities (2013) Natural Infrastructure and Green Communities Linking Landscapes and Communities, [http://www.epa.gov/greenkit/natural\\_infrastructure.htm](http://www.epa.gov/greenkit/natural_infrastructure.htm)

pavers, bioswales, rainwater harvesting, etc.) and low impact development should be pursued on these parcels. Strategies to preserve and/or develop parcels within the NIN with green infrastructure and low impact development produces multiple benefits including improvement to water quality and supply and improving biodiversity.

**ENSURE LONG-TERM MANAGEMENT OF NATURAL AREAS AND HABITATS.**

Natural areas have economic, environmental, and social benefits that are threatened if quantity and quality are not maintained. Lemont has several natural areas that provide open space amenities to community residents including the 200+ acre Heritage Quarries Recreation Area. Areas owned and managed by the Park District and Township adds another 110 acres of open space.

All of Lemont’s natural areas and green infrastructure components are managed individually and without a comprehensive long-term maintenance plan. A common misconception about natural areas is that natural means unmanaged. However, the fact is that left unmanaged, areas can quickly deteriorate, lose quality species, and become overwhelmed with invasive species that damage biodiversity. A comprehensive approach and partnerships are needed to more adequately manage Lemont’s natural open space.

**ENHANCE RECREATION EXPERIENCES.**

Recreational amenities in a community increase healthy living by providing a place to be physically active and allowing residents to interact in the community. Many recreational amenities exist within the community but there are untapped opportunities, particularly

**TABLE 5.1: PARK LEVEL OF SERVICE STANDARDS**

Park Type	Type of Activity	Desired Size	Service Area	LOS
Mini Park	Specialized park that serves a limited population or specific group such as toddlers or seniors.	Up to 1 acre	¼ mile	0.5 acres/1,000
Neighborhood Park	Serves multiple users and includes a playground and may include other amenities such as ball fields, courts, or passive recreation opportunities. Fields and courts generally do not have scheduled activities and parking is often off-site.	5 acres	½ mile	2.0 acres/1,000
Community Park	Active park space that includes more intense recreation facilities such as pools, courts, and multiple ball fields. Scheduled games are predominate. May also include some passive recreational options. Parking is generally provided on-site.	25 acres	Community wide, but geographically distributed throughout the community	10.0 acres/1,000
Special Use Park	Park of unique interest including areas of natural quality for outdoor recreation such as hiking, boating, fishing, or camping. Also includes linear parks developed for varying modes of recreational travel such as hiking, biking, skating, etc. with the goal of making connections throughout the community.	Size sufficient to protect the resource and provide maximum use	Community wide	

at the Heritage Quarries Recreation Area and the downtown area. A natural resource inventory and further development of the HQRA master plan are key to understanding the recreation potential that exists at the site and planning for future improvements. A baseline inventory will allow the Village to develop a range of recreational amenities for the enjoyment of an expanding number of visitors/users.

**MAINTAIN ADEQUATE PARK LEVELS AND PARK ACCESS.**

While the community as a whole has exceeded the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) standards for open space, meeting the changing needs of the community remains a concern. When residents

were surveyed by the Park District, trails and walking paths were listed as a high priority. Connectivity between parks and open space is a need identified in the Lemont Active Transportation Plan (LATP). Functional park and open space connections is also a recommendation of the CMAP Go To 2040 plan. The Village and Park District should pursue multi-use paths or linear parks to meet connectivity goals.

Additionally, although the Village exceeds the standards for the amount of park space, the community should seek to have a balance of park facilities within appropriate reach of all residents. One area of concern is the downtown, where there is currently a void of family oriented park space.

A Level of Service (LOS) ensures that park and recreational facilities are appropriately planned and in adequate supply. Service standards provide a benchmark for evaluating service deficiencies. They also help define what new services and facilities are needed to support new growth in the community. The Park District identified LOS standards in their 2004 Comprehensive Plan but have since reclassified some of their parks. In evaluating the Park District LOS standard, the Village LOS standard from 1969, and the NRPA standard for parks, the recommended park types and standards for Lemont are as follows:

#### **Mini Park**

Generally a mini park consists of an age specific playground and may include passive recreation items such as picnic shelters or a walking path. The desirable size is less than 1 acre. The service area is 1/4 mile radius and it meant to be within walking distance of the population it is to serve. One half acre of mini parkland per 1,000 people is recommended.

#### **Neighborhood Park**

Generally a neighborhood park has a playground and some type of ball field or court (baseball, soccer, football, basketball, tennis, etc.). The desirable park size is 5 acres but can be smaller or larger if the amenities are provided. Courts and fields are generally used for unscheduled pick-up games but may at times be used for scheduled games. A neighborhood park has good visibility and parking is generally off-site. Two acres per 1,000 people is recommended and the service area is 1/2 mile radius. All residents should be within the service area of a mini or neighborhood park.

#### **Community Park**

A community park has multiple amenities and serves a multitude of users. Common amenities include fitness centers, playgrounds, pools, splash pads, picnic areas, walking paths and multiple ball fields

and courts. Community parks are geographically distributed throughout the community. Fields and courts accommodate scheduled practices and games. Parking is primarily on-site and good vehicular access is provided as a park may serve residents community-wide, dependent upon the types of amenities present. The desirable park size is 25 acres but can be smaller or larger depending on available amenities. Ten acres per 1,000 people is recommended.

#### **Special Use Park**

A special use park is one that offers a community a unique recreational opportunity. The size is dependent on the offerings but the desired size is 50+ acres. The park serves the entire community and may draw interest from neighboring communities.

The Village will use the recommended LOS in evaluating future development proposals and their impact on the availability of recreational resources within the

community. Implementing the recommended LOS will ensure that developments will either have or be within easy access of recreational amenities and facilities.

#### **ENCOURAGE PRIVATE RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES.**

Inviting visitors to appreciate the natural environment, history, and culture of Lemont will play an important role in identifying Lemont as a community with exceptional recreational opportunities. Public-private partnerships that provide additional recreation opportunities such as golfing, boat and kayak rental on waterways, rugby, or tennis are needed and should be actively encouraged. Likewise, special events that are recreational in nature and serve a multitude of users should be supported in the community. Businesses or organizations offering geocaching events, birding hikes, camping, bike tours, canoeing, fishing derbies are all examples of recreational activities that would stimulate interest in Lemont as a recreational destination.



*Private recreation facilities add to the variety of recreation options for residents and visitors. There are seven golf courses in and around Lemont, including Ruffled Feathers Golf and Country Club.*

## Implementation Action Area 1: Promote Environmental Stewardship to Enhance Air and Land Quality

### Adopt a Tree Care Plan for Village Owned Trees

Lead Implementer(s): Public Works

For improvements to air quality, the Village should develop a tree care plan to ensure that the investments made in planting parkway trees is balanced with a plan for long-term care of trees. This is particularly important as it relates to controlling pest infestations such as the Emerald Ash Borer which has impacted a significant portion of Lemont's tree canopy.

### Improve Documentation of Lemont's Trees and Conservation Easements

Lead Implementer(s): Planning & Economic Development Dept.

Lemont requires the submittal of tree surveys for new developments and landscape plans that detail information on proposed parkway trees. Similarly, conservation easements to protect trees in certain areas are also often created. This information should be requested in electronic format so the Village could begin assembling a database to assist in the documentation and preservation of species. This effort will ensure species diversity is maintained in the Village and will better direct tree care, as not all trees require the same care. It can also help identify and better control the spread of pest infestation if the Village can identify clusters of certain species in any particular location of the Village.

### Identify Brownfields and Seek Funding for Remediation

Lead Implementer(s): Planning & Economic Development Dept.; Administration

Village should continue to seek funding for brownfield remediation and work to redevelop underutilized areas back to productive use. While the EPA only identifies one brownfield site in Lemont, more may exist as the definition of brownfields also includes properties with perceived environmental contamination. A better inventory of our local brownfields would be beneficial.

### Increase the Use of Native Plantings

Lead Implementer(s): Planning & Economic Development Dept.

Native plants have deep roots that help stabilize soils more effectively than non-native plantings. Native plantings are also effective at filtering contaminants from water which improves water quality. The Village should implement incentives to use native plants in new developments and recreation areas.

### Support the Odor Alert Network and Similar Risk Reduction Efforts

Lead Implementer(s): Planning & Economic Development Dept.; Lemont Emergency Management Agency; Police Dept.

The Odor Alert Network provides a valuable service to the residents of Lemont. Other efforts to minimize potential threats in the community should be supported such as emergency management programs and environmental reviews for certain kinds of industrial development.

## Implementation Action Area 1: Promote Environmental Stewardship to Enhance Air and Land Quality

### **Promote Alternative Energy, Energy Conservation, and the Use of Green Technology and Products**

Lead Implementer(s): Planning & Economic Development Dept.; Administration

Energy conservation is important because it decreases air pollution, saves natural resources and decreases the emission of greenhouse gases that contribute to climate change. Similarly, green products and materials are more environmentally friendly. While the Village is supportive of green design and materials and current codes allow for innovation, more can be done. The Village should encourage alternative energy, green technology, materials, and building in the form of public education and incentives.

## Implementation Action Area 2: Maintain Integrity of Natural Water Supply and Keep Water Systems Network in Good Repair

### Develop a Green Infrastructure Menu

Lead Implementer(s): Planning & Economic Development Dept.; Public Works

Green infrastructure helps filter pollutants before they get to a waterway, helps recharge water sources, helps stabilize soil and promotes biodiversity. A green infrastructure menu should be created and made available to developers to help guide their decision-making on alternative stormwater measures. The menu should detail various types of green infrastructure measures, describe the intended outcome of the green infrastructure measure, estimated costs, and maintenance requirements.

### Identify a Natural Infrastructure Network (NIN)

Lead Implementer(s): Planning & Economic Development Dept.

Natural areas with significant ecological benefits or topography and parcels that are in close proximity to water courses, wetlands, ravines, and tributaries are places that maintain ecological processes and sustain natural hydrological cycles. These areas should be identified as part of a NIN and flagged for low impact development and targeted for green infrastructure improvements.

### Update the UDO to Incorporate Green Infrastructure

Lead Implementer(s): Planning & Economic Development Dept.

Currently the stormwater regulations identify measures for conveying water from a site to the storm water system. Options to filter pollution, increase infiltration, and reduce sedimentation are not discussed in much detail and left to be determined by the developer but should be encouraged with more guidance.

### Implement Recommendations of Local Watershed Plans

Lead Implementer(s): Planning & Economic Development Dept.; Public Works

Local watershed plans such as the Long Run Creek Watershed Plan and the Calumet-Sag Channel Watershed Plan identify specific projects and measures that would benefit water quality in the region. Identified projects should be evaluated and implemented.

### Evaluate Pollution Prevention Measures and Develop a Comprehensive Approach to Improving Water Quality

Lead Implementer(s): Planning & Economic Development Dept.; Public Works; Building Dept.

Runoff is a problem that we collectively share. Regular street sweeping, effective erosion control measures, and public education can reduce pollution going into our waterways. The Village currently has several measures in place to help reduce pollution on local streets and waterways. These measures should be evaluated to ensure the most effective strategies are in place.

## Implementation Action Area 2: Maintain Integrity of Natural Water Supply and Keep Water Systems Network in Good Repair

### Improve the I & M Canal and Restore Canal Banks

Lead Implementer(s): Planning & Economic Development Dept.; Administration

The I & M Canal has high levels of sedimentation and the canal's water is generally stagnant. Strategies to improve the water quality, such as dredging, and improvements to reduce future levels of contamination should be explored and implemented. Additionally, the canal walls should be restored to help stabilize and improve current conditions. Measures to reduce stormwater runoff should also be implemented to reduce future sedimentation.

### Partner With and Support Regional Water Resource Planning Efforts

Lead Implementer(s): Planning & Economic Development Dept.; Administration

Water resource planning is needed to ensure water resources will be available for future water demands. Many recommendations outlined in the Water 2050 Plan can be implemented locally and should be pursued. Regional cooperation will be needed to address some of the larger context issues. The Northwest Water Planning Alliance has formed to address issues in the Northwest Water Planning area. The South Water Planning area is currently in formation stage and may be a potential resource for collaboration.

### Update the Village Report on Water Utility

Lead Implementer(s): Public Works.; Administration

Understanding the Village water supply system is critical to ensuring that water supply and distribution will accommodate the planned future land uses identified in the 2030 Plan. The Village commissioned a report to study the water utility in 1993 and has updated that report in 2003. The report should again be updated to evaluate more current conditions and should take into consideration water supply, distribution capacity, and water conservation.

### Promote Water Conservation

Lead Implementer(s): Planning & Economic Development Dept.; Public Works; Building Dept.

Ensuring a balance between water supply and demand can essentially be done in two ways 1) increase well capacity and storage to meet demand and 2) reduce water consumption. The Chicago Metropolitan Agency on Planning advocates for water conservation and has developed a model water conservation ordinance. Because water conservation measures can reduce or defer the need for a utility to increase its capacity, thus reducing costs, the Village should promote and employ the recommendations of the regional Water 2050 plan.

### Implementation Action Area 3: Ensure Long Term Management of Natural Areas and Habitats

#### Explore the Development of a Community Land Trust for Natural Open Space

Lead Implementer(s): Planning & Economic Development Dept.

Community land trusts are used to protect land from certain developments or actions. They also can be an effective way to properly manage natural open space. Currently the Village has conservation easements and portions of the I & M Canal as part of the open space inventory. Exploring a community land trust model for Village properties or all protected open space within the Village could prove to be a sound long-term solution to land management issues.

#### Develop a Green Infrastructure Maintenance Plan

Lead Implementer(s): Planning & Economic Development Dept.; Public Works

Green infrastructure improvements (naturalized detention, bioswales, rain gardens, permeable pavements, etc.) have specific maintenance needs. The time and efforts taken to incorporate green infrastructure need to be bolstered with a plan to adequately maintain the infrastructure to ensure the investment is maintained for the long term.



## Implementation Action Area 4: Enhance Recreation Experiences

### Explore Partnership Opportunities for Recreation in the Downtown District (DD)

Lead Implementer(s): Planning & Economic Development Dept.; Park District

The Downtown District has limited park space or recreational areas for families or children. Park space is particularly needed in the DD and nearby residential neighborhoods because this geographical area has smaller lots and less private green space available to residents. Recreational opportunities in the DD could also be a draw for families to visit and stay in the downtown. Recreation should be family friendly and include sensory features such as water, music, textures, etc. Partnership with the Park District, which also identified recreation in the downtown area as a goal in their strategic plan, should be explored.

### Conduct a Natural Resource Inventory at the HQRA

Lead Implementer(s): Planning & Economic Development Dept.; Heritage Committee

A natural resource inventory (NRI) at the HQRA would provide critical information on the existing conditions of the site, would highlight important natural assets, and would recommend management strategies. Natural assets (nesting sites, quality ecosystems, waterfalls, etc.) have the potential to draw visitors from around the region. The NRI would provide the needed information and data to guide future improvements and amenities.

### Expand on the Heritage Commission's HQRA Master Plan

Lead Implementer(s): Planning & Economic Development Dept.; Heritage Committee

The HQRA has an expansive amount of recreational potential and should be developed in a manner that suits a variety of users and caters to both residents and visitors. The current plan by the Heritage Commission is a great step towards identifying future trails that will be instrumental in providing access to amenities. Identifying the appropriate recreational activities should be the next step in the process.

### Capitalize on Opportunities to Engage Other Partners in the Ownership and Maintenance of the HQRA

Lead Implementer(s): Administration; Planning & Economic Development Dept.; other agencies as determined

The HQRA is an important community asset and as such, the Village will continue to take a leadership role in developing its ecological and recreational potential. However, the Village is not primarily a recreation centered organization, like a park district, forest preserve district, or other similar organizations. Therefore, the Village should capitalize on any opportunities to engage other partners in the development of the HQRA into a regional outdoor recreation destination, up to and including transfer of ownership to an appropriate organization.

### Partner With Other Taxing Districts to Showcase Recreational Amenities

Lead Implementer(s): Planning & Economic Development Dept.; other agencies as determined

As a community that prides itself on outdoor recreation, more public outreach is needed to highlight existing recreation resources. Partnering with other taxing districts to showcase the community's recreational assets will be more effective than if each agency pursued its own outreach program independently.

## Implementation Action Area 5: Maintain Adequate Park Levels and Park Access

### **Increase Connectivity of Open Space and Recreational Areas**

Lead Implementer(s): Planning & Economic Development Dept.; Village Commissions

The Lemont Active Transportation Plan identifies strategies for increasing connectivity between communities and between existing recreational facilities. Recommendations in the plan pertaining to bikeway planning and trails should be implemented.

### **Implement the Level of Service Standard**

Lead Implementer(s): Planning & Economic Development Dept.

Implement the recommended level of service standard to ensure that all residents have adequate access to recreational opportunities and park space. The Unified Development Ordinance's park impact fees should be evaluated and revised if necessary to ensure that land donations and cash in lieu fees are fully accounting for a development's impact on demand for all park types, not only mini or neighborhood parks.

### **Direct Cash in Lieu of Park Donations to Projects that Meet Connectivity Goals**

Lead Implementer(s): Planning & Economic Development Dept.

PUDs are required by the UDO to set aside 15% open space. In instances where that requirement is not feasible, a cash in-lieu donation should be encouraged. Additionally, all subdivisions must include either a park land or cash in-lieu donation. The Village should work with the Park District to direct at least a portion of cash in-lieu funds to create linear parks and other connections between recreational areas in the Village.

## Implementation Action Area 6: Encourage Private Recreational Opportunities

### **Support and Encourage Efforts to Bring Private Recreational Opportunities to the Village**

Lead Implementer(s): Planning & Economic Development Dept.; Administration

The location, topography, and vicinity to waterways make the Village an attractive location for recreation. Private ventures that bring additional recreational opportunities to the community will actualize the vision of Lemont being a town with “exceptional opportunities for outdoor recreation” and should therefore be encouraged.

### **Continue Support for Special Events that Provide Recreational Opportunities**

Lead Implementer(s): Planning & Economic Development Dept.; Village Commissions

Special events in the community provide occasions for residents to interact and create a social network. Supporting community organizations and vendors that provide these opportunities is important for maintaining an active and robust community.

### **Explore Public/Private Partnerships for Recreation Opportunities**

Lead Implementer(s): Planning & Economic Development Dept.; Administration

The recreational potential in the community should be a shared endeavor of both public and private interests. Opportunities to partner with private entities in providing quality recreational experiences should be explored and pursued.

# OUR HOMES

*In 2030, Lemont will have a complementary mix of housing products that provide financially obtainable options for residents of different stages of life and income levels, so multiple generations of families can call Lemont home.*



## LEMONT PIONEERS

*Pat & John Jurinek, New Horizon Homes*

Pat and John Jurinek of New Horizon Homes had nearly a decade of experience as home builders when they started the first phase of Rolling Meadows on the site of a 60-acre cornfield on the west side of Lemont in 1999. Today that cornfield is a neighborhood of 148 families.

Along the way Pat and John built not only semi-custom houses, but lasting friendships with many of the people for whom they constructed dream homes. Paul and Georgianna Wyszynski for example, had been long-time residents of Lemont when the Jurineks built a new home for them in 2006. The transformation from a business relationship to friendship, or vice versa, is typical of life in Lemont.



# GUIDING PRINCIPLES

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Continued population growth is desirable and important for Lemont's economic prosperity.

The social vibrancy and economic health of the community can be greatly enhanced by a cohesive mix of housing types.

The creation of housing options—including multi-generational products—is important to maintaining and enhancing family and communal ties, and ensuring that people in all stages of life can find a housing option that meets their needs.

Housing products with higher densities will provide the population density needed to fulfill the goals of this plan and are therefore desirable, so long as they do not detract from the aesthetics or small-town charm of the community.

Lemont is but one municipality in a large region, by providing housing that is financially obtainable to a wider range of income levels and ensuring equal access to housing, Lemont helps to support the overall vitality of the larger Chicago region.





The purpose of the housing element of the Comprehensive Plan is to provide a plan for housing creation and preservation in order to meet the needs of the current and future populations. The plan should reflect the community's vision for itself, and it needs to account for land use patterns and how the Village will grow. Ideally, the plan should address several inter-related issues concerning housing:

*Growth management.* How much new housing is appropriate, where should it go, and what form should it take? Responses to these concerns are found in this element as well as the future land use section of the community character element.

*Preservation of community character.* Almost any community's identity is forged by the type, quality, and maintenance of its housing stock. Lemont is no different. How does the housing stock define Lemont's character? How should this character be altered or maintained?

*Housing diversity.* Housing within our community should accommodate individuals and families with a range of incomes, including those who serve the community in relatively lower-paying jobs, and those who have not reached their peak income-producing years of employment. Without proper planning, younger members of our community may be forced to leave because they cannot find affordable housing.

*Fair housing.* Fair housing refers to equal access to housing. While seldom addressed in comprehensive plans, ensuring equal access to housing supports the vision and guiding principles of this element.

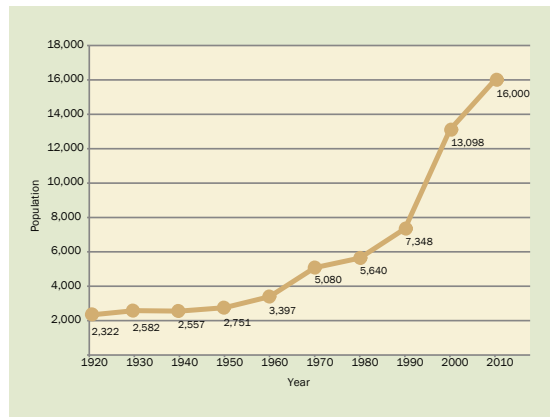
# CURRENT CONDITIONS

For most of its existence, Lemont was a quiet little town of under 5,000 people. Over the last 30 years Lemont has seen tremendous growth in the number of residents, the number of acres developed, and the number of dwelling units. See Figure 6.1.

From 1980 to 2007 the metropolitan Chicago area experienced tremendous population growth and expansion of suburban areas. The largest share of the region's residential growth occurred in the outlying western and southwestern suburbs. The population of Will County grew almost 35 percent from 2000 to 2010. In that same period the population of Kendall County doubled. Meanwhile, Chicago's population decreased by nearly 7 percent, and Cook County's population fell by 3.4 percent. To a large extent, the increase in suburban population was accommodated by new single-family construction on greenfield sites.

Concern over the dispersed, large-lot development patterns in the region and throughout the nation led to campaigns for Smart Growth, traditional neighborhood design, and transit oriented development. Nationally, the American Planning Association (APA) was a proponent of Smart Growth, which it defined as growth that "supports choice and opportunity by promoting efficient and sustainable land development, incorporates redevelopment patterns that optimize prior infrastructure investments, and consumes less land that is otherwise available for agriculture, open space, natural systems, and rural lifestyles."<sup>1</sup>

FIGURE 6.1: LEMONT POPULATION, 1920-2010.



Source: US Census Bureau

Locally, the 2002 Comprehensive Plan did not specifically advocate SmartGrowth, but it cautioned against a pattern of scattered development and urged the use of conservation design in new residential subdivisions. Yet, the development pattern that has evolved over the last decade and the specific developments approved in that time period did not follow the guidance espoused in the 2002 Comprehensive Plan.

Related to smart growth principles was the planning and construction of high-density housing near public transit, known as transit-oriented development (TOD). TOD often involved public-private partnerships and was hailed

as effective public policy. Regionally, transit-oriented development usually manifested itself in mixed-use projects—condo or apartments on top of ground-floor retail—near Metra stations. Lemont undertook a couple of studies and efforts aimed at capitalizing on downtown's location along Metra's Heritage Corridor line: "Opportunities on the Waterfront" in 2002 and "Lemont Station Area Plan" in 2004.<sup>2</sup> Both plans examined the potential for redevelopment of underutilized downtown properties for residential and commercial use. In 2005, two small, mixed-use projects re-introduced a housing type that had been absent from the local housing boom of the 1990s and early 2000s: the multi-family dwelling. Building permits were issued for 10 such dwelling units that year. In late 2004 the Village embarked on a public-private mixed-use transit oriented development effort with Marquette Companies that resulted in the creation of 82 condominium units along the I&M Canal, a few blocks from the Metra station.

## LOOKING AHEAD—REGIONAL HOUSING ISSUES & LOCAL IMPACTS

A decade ago there was a major shortage of affordable housing in the region.<sup>3</sup> Large tracts of farmland were being consumed for development. Housing was viewed as an excellent investment. Credit was easy, and a home could be purchased with virtually no money down. Since 2008, however, the regional housing market has changed dramatically. Foreclosures have hit the region hard, with many properties throughout the region

<sup>1</sup> American Planning Association (2012), Policy Guide on Smart Growth, <http://www.planning.org/policy/guides/adopted/smartgrowth.htm>.

<sup>2</sup> "Opportunities on the Waterfront" was completed with the assistance of Hitchcock Design Group. "Lemont Area Station Plan" was financed in part through a grant from the U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Transit Administration, and the Regional Transit Authority. URS Corporation partnered with BauerLatoza Studio in completing the study. The document is dated November 5, 2004.

<sup>3</sup> Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (2008), *Housing Preservation Strategy Report*.



still vacant and bank-owned. Regionally, home prices dropped an average of 33 percent from 2007 to 2011, and 25 percent of homes were “underwater,” i.e. the mortgage was more than the resale value of the home.<sup>4</sup>

The regional and local housing markets perked up in 2012, particularly in the outer edges of the region.<sup>5</sup> Over 50 dwelling units were created in Lemont in 2012 and over 60 in 2013. The Village approved zoning entitlements for a new 241 unit single-family subdivision, with construction anticipated to begin in 2014.

Looking ahead, the current inventory of foreclosed and vacant homes will continue to diminish. According to CMAP, population in the six-county Chicago region is projected to increase from eight to 11 million by 2040.<sup>6</sup> Both the current senior and Latino populations will double by 2040.<sup>7</sup> The broad demographic shifts in the nation and the Chicago region will also affect Lemont. Up until the 1960s, half of US households had children. Today only approximately one-third of households have children, and the share of households with children is expected to continue its decline, perhaps sinking to one quarter.<sup>8</sup> The greatest housing demand will be generated by households without children, and it is possible that these households will prefer something rather than single-family detached homes on large lots

in homogeneous subdivisions. In general, however, Americans still want their castle. According to a 2011 study by the National Association of Realtors (NAR), 80 percent of respondents would prefer to live in a single-family detached home if they had the option.<sup>9</sup>

Nationally, as home preferences meet the new demographic and economic realities, a large unmet demand is emerging for housing types other than large-lot single-family detached development. The housing market, long dominated by baby boomers, will be more affected by the post-baby boom generations and immigrants. Despite that desire for a castle, numerous polls, including a 2013 NAR survey, indicate that people desire neighborhood attributes more akin to mixed-housing and small-lot development: access to transit and ability to walk to school and shops.<sup>10</sup> Survey respondents indicated a willingness to trade home and/or yard size for a preferred neighborhood.

Recent mistakes that contributed to the housing market collapse were identified in *Homes for a Changing Region* (see box to the right). The following recommendations seek to avoid the mistakes of the past and plan for a more diverse housing inventory to meet the needs of a growing and changing population.

## HOMES FOR A CHANGING REGION HOUSING REPORT

*Homes For a Changing Region*, produced by the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus, the Metropolitan Planning Council, and the Chicago Metropolitan Planning Agency, noted several mistakes that contributed to the recent housing market collapse, including:

- Building too many large-lot, single-family homes priced beyond the reach of moderate and middle-income families.
- Building too few moderately-priced dwelling units, whether small-sized detached homes or attached homes.
- Not creating housing options for multi-generational families that want to live together.
- Not focusing on the need for rental housing, especially affordable rental housing.

<sup>4</sup> Metropolitan Mayors Caucus, Metropolitan Planning Council and Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (2012). *Homes for a Changing Region, Phase 3: Implementing Affordable Housing Plans at the Local Level*.

<sup>5</sup> Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (2012) *Housing Policy Update, Trends for the first half of 2012*.

<sup>6</sup> Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (2010) *Go to 2040 Comprehensive Regional Plan*, full version, p.36.

<sup>7</sup> Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (2010) *Go to 2040 Comprehensive Regional Plan*, full version, p.36.

<sup>8</sup> U.S. Census Bureau and U.S. Department of Commerce Economics and Statistics Administration (2013) *America's Families and Living Arrangements: 2012*.

<sup>9</sup> Nelson, Arthur C. (2011) *The New California Dream: How Demographic and Economic Trends May Shape the Housing Market*. Urban Land Institute, p.15-26.

<sup>10</sup> National Association of Realtors Community Preference Survey (2013), <http://www.realtor.org/reports/nar-2013-community-preference-survey>

# RECOMMENDATIONS

## ACHIEVE AND MAINTAIN THE RIGHT HOUSING MIX.

The 2010 US Census reported that Lemont has 6,100 housing units. The housing stock consists predominately of single-family detached dwellings (see Figure 6.2). The geographic distribution of these single-family homes is widespread, covering every area of the community, including the downtown. Two-flats are present in certain areas of the Village, particularly in and near the downtown and the older residential areas near State Street, to the north of Peiffer Street. Clusters of townhouses are found in many areas of the Village, sometimes as a component of a larger, primarily single-family detached subdivision. Multi-family housing units are limited in both number and geographic distribution within the Village; only one multi-family development exists south of 127th Street. The highest concentration of multi-family units is in the 82-unit, mixed use Front

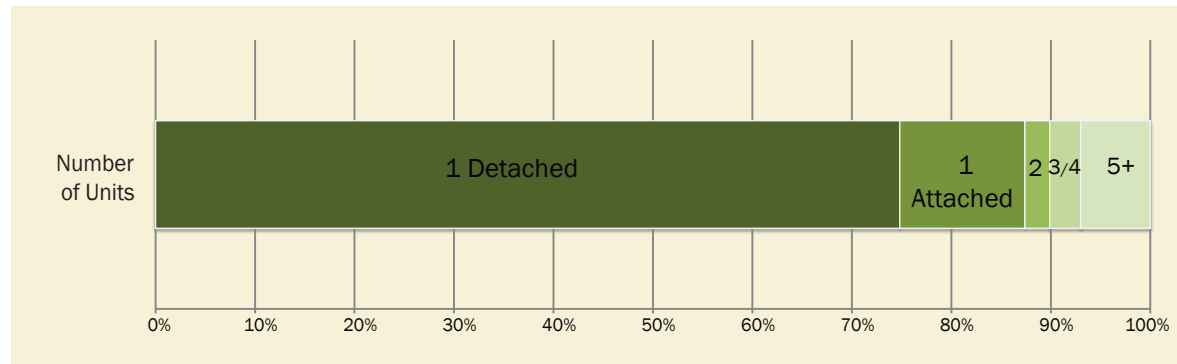
Street Lofts building downtown. Many of the Village's multi-family units are part of senior assisted living facilities.

Generally, the Village should do more to encourage single-family attached and multi-family housing. Developments that offer single-family detached homes alongside other complementary housing products offer many social benefits, like providing options for extended families with members at different life stages to live in proximity to one another. These kinds of development have also proven attractive in the marketplace. Similarly, a mix of detached single-family home and lot sizes can add diversity and vibrancy to a neighborhood, and accommodate the desires of various homebuyers. The Village should be receptive to new development proposals that mix housing types and lot sizes. In the near-term, the existing supply of entitled

but undeveloped subdivisions will need to be absorbed. The Village should consider proposals to add a diversity of lot sizes and/or housing types to previously approved subdivisions comprised entirely of homogeneous single-family detached lots. Such changes will help the Village meet the changing demands of the regional housing market and should also prove attractive to the baby boomers, whether from Lemont or elsewhere, who will increasingly seek to downsize from their large single-family detached homes.

Advocates for affordable housing have long been concerned that local zoning and land use regulations were increasing social and racial stratification in the region.<sup>11</sup> In an effort to increase the supply of affordable housing, defined as housing which is affordable for people whose incomes are 80% or less of the area's median income, the State of Illinois passed the Illinois Affordable Housing Planning and Appeal Act in 2003 (310 ILCS67/). The law mandated that municipalities and counties without at least 10 percent of their housing stock classified as affordable create and adopt an affordable housing plan by 2005. Over 10% of the housing in Lemont is considered affordable; therefore, Lemont is not required by the state to prepare an affordable housing plan. Providing housing options for those in our area who earn less than average incomes should nevertheless remain a concern and the Village should seek to include affordable units in future growth. Finally, the Village should remain open to inter-jurisdictional discussions aimed at addressing a regional fair share of affordable housing distribution.

FIGURE 6.2: LEMONT HOUSING STOCK BY DWELLING UNIT TYPE.



Source: US Census Bureau, 2011 American Community Survey

<sup>11</sup> For a further discussion of national and regional affordable housing issues, see: Meck, Stuart, Rebecca Retzlaff and James Schwab (2003), *Regional Approaches to Affordable Housing*, American Planning Association Planning Advisory Service Report Number 513/514.

## ENCOURAGE INFILL DEVELOPMENT.

Converting existing second story office spaces downtown to residential units provides property tax relief for building owners and boosts foot-traffic for downtown businesses. The Village and Lemont Fire Protection District should explore ways to make this conversion process as simple as possible. The Village has already taken some steps in this direction; in 2012, the Village removed its requirement for the installation of costly sprinkler systems to existing buildings within the downtown historic district. The Village currently administers the 2006 International Building Code, which includes a chapter tailored to existing structures. However, the Village should work with the Lemont Fire Protection District to evaluate further potential amendments to building and fire codes to encourage infill development. Additionally, changes to the zoning code and the zoning map could allow for some infill redevelopment at slightly higher densities; a higher density may make redevelopment more financially viable as costs of redevelopment are generally higher than that for new greenfield development. Infill redevelopment at higher densities should still be designed to blend in with any established single-family character in the area.

## REINVEST IN LEMONT'S HOUSING STOCK.

Historically, Americans have been extremely mobile. While one recent study suggests that internal migration is at a 30-year low, "the latest Census data reveal that that young people aged 25 to 29 are increasingly more mobile and willing to move to new cities, very often in new states, in search of jobs."<sup>12</sup> People's choices on where they live are based on many factors. For most households, housing characteristics interacting with



*Residential neighborhood in Lemont.*

evolving stage-of-life housing preferences are the dominant reasons for moving. Housing characteristics, therefore, also influence whether current or future residents will choose to reinvest in existing dwellings or purchase new ones. The well-being of neighborhoods, local governments, and regions is linked to reinvestment in structures. If the reinvestment motivation and capacity of too many current owners is insufficient, neighborhoods, local governments, and communities suffer. To remain attractive for new residents—and retain current ones—both the range and quality of Lemont's housing stock need to be continually assessed and addressed as necessary.

The age and quality of Lemont's housing are not homogeneous; indeed the age of Lemont homes is truly

diverse. The historic district contains residences that date from the 1850s – 1880s while subdivisions on the fringes of town are lined with brand new two-and-a-half story, masonry homes of substantial size and bulk.

The R-4A zoning district, near downtown, contains an abundance of small one-story frame homes built in the immediate years after World War II. The small size of the homes built in the 25 years after World War II pose obstacles to effecting enough housing reinvestments to achieve neighborhood stability. According to the National Home Builders Association "every dwelling needs reinvestment to avoid being discarded when the first vital system (roof, walls, heating, water, sewer, electricity) no longer functions adequately". However, a review of building permit activity (basement, remodel,

<sup>12</sup> Molley, Raven, Christopher L. Smith and Abigail Wozniak (2011). Internal Migration in the United States, *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, Vol 25, No 3, p173-196, suggest that "migration rates have fallen for most distances, demographic and socioeconomic groups, and geographic areas." On the other hand, William H. Frey, senior fellow at the Brookings Institute, notes that young people are increasingly mobile. See Frey, William H. "America's Young Adults: A Generation on the Move," at <http://www.brookings.edu/research/expert-qa/2012/11/20-frey-qa>.

addition) from 2006 to 2012 reveals reinvestment is occurring in homes in the R-4A. For the moment, it appears that neither the age nor the quality of Lemont's housing stock poses a threat to the long-term social and economic stability of any of the Village's neighborhoods. Nevertheless, as Lemont's existing housing stock continues to age and as the availability of new homes increases, reinvestment in the older homes in town will remain important.

The Village should seek to preserve the community's existing housing stock. The Village should continue to monitor reinvestment in its existing homes, particularly the residences in the DD and R-4A zoning districts. Lack of re-investment should be addressed through various programs, including, where feasible, the use of Community Development Block Grant money. As noted with infill development, the Village should also seek to ensure that building and fire codes are supportive of rehabilitation.

#### **RE-INVIGORATE FAIR HOUSING EFFORTS.**

While affordable housing policy addresses the economic attainability of housing for all segments of the community, fair housing policy addresses equal access to housing. "Equal and free access to residential housing (housing choice) is fundamental to meeting essential needs and pursuing personal, educational, employment, or other goals. Because housing choice is so critical, fair housing is a goal that government, public officials, and private citizens must achieve if equality of opportunity is to become a reality."<sup>13</sup>

The Village of Lemont has had a fair housing ordinance since at least 1992. Over the years the Village has undertaken various efforts to publicize its fair housing

ordinance, but these efforts have been sporadic and uncoordinated. The Village should enact consistent and comprehensive practices that seek to increase awareness of fair housing issues and ensure that potential fair housing violations can be easily reported. And despite staffing and budget constraints, the Village should analyze impediments to fair housing choice in Lemont. Staff training and workshops with local real estate brokers should also be considered as part of a Fair Housing Plan.

Associated with fair housing is housing that is accessible to those with disabilities. "Accessible housing increases housing opportunities and choices for the elderly and persons with physical disabilities, and enhances convenience for non-disabled persons and children."<sup>14</sup> Although most multifamily housing is now required to comply with the accessibility provisions of the Fair Housing Act, single-family housing and multifamily developments less than four units are not required to be accessible or have adaptable units. Visitability is a housing design strategy to provide a basic level of accessibility for single-family housing, thus allowing people of all abilities to interact with each other. Visitability standards do not require that all features be made accessible. As the population trends toward an older demographic, visitability and universal design will increase in importance.

#### **PRESERVE LEMONT'S SINGLE-FAMILY CHARACTER.**

Almost any community's identity is forged by the type, quality, and maintenance of its housing stock. Lemont is no different, and for decades our town has been one of predominately single-family detached homes. This should remain so. Other recommendations contained within this chapter for a varied housing mix should not



*Continued investment in Lemont's older neighborhoods, like the one pictured above, contribute to Lemont's character and broaden the range of housing choices.*

be considered in conflict with this recommendation to preserve the single-family character. The Village should plan for and regulate the orderly integration of urban single-family attached and multi-family building forms within suburban single-family residential neighborhoods.

<sup>13</sup> U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity (1996) Fair Housing Planning Guide, Volume 1.

<sup>14</sup> American Planning Association (2006) Policy Guide on Housing. <https://www.planning.org/policy/guides/adopted/housing.htm>

## Implementation Action Area 1: Achieve and Maintain the Right Housing Mix

### Allow Detached Single-Family Development on Smaller Lots

Lead Implementer(s): Planning & Economic Development Dept.; Planning & Zoning Commission

As part of the effort to re-evaluate greenfield development, the Village should consider the creation of a new zoning district aimed at allowing detached single-family home construction on smaller lots. Requirements for lot size, width, and setbacks should be reduced from the current R-4 zoning standards. Smaller lot sizes should be tied to controls over the size of the house on the lot, e.g. standards similar to the Village's floor area allowance in the R-4A. Additionally, subdivisions with such lot standards should be required, through PUD, annexation, or other zoning control, to contain adequate open space.

### Allow the Construction of "Rowhouses"

Lead Implementer(s): Planning & Economic Development Dept.; Planning & Zoning Commission

The Village should do more to encourage single-family attached and multi-family housing. Current zoning regulations effectively prohibit the construction of rowhouses, i.e. groups of townhouse units more than five abreast. The rowhouse product should be allowed as of right in the R-5 and R-6 zoning districts. The allowance for rowhouses should be coupled with a requirement for articulation of the façade, i.e. one or more units should protrude from the plane of the other façades.

### Allow Two-Flats and/or Duplexes on Corner Locations Within Single-Family Zoning Districts

Lead Implementer(s): Planning & Economic Development Dept.; Planning & Zoning Commission

The Village should do more to encourage single-family attached and multi-family housing. Two-flats, at least legal ones, are uncommon in Lemont. This housing product offers great opportunities for multi-generational usage, or provides an income-producing opportunity for homeowners. The two-flat has proven popular in the immigrant communities, and their availability in Lemont could be particularly attractive to our existing Lithuanian and Polish communities. Two-flats and duplexes have been successfully blended within the fabric of single-family neighborhoods in many urban environments, and with attendant design controls, need not appear out of place.

### Encourage Residential Planned Unit Developments That Contain a Range of Housing Products or Lot Sizes

Lead Implementer(s): Planning & Economic Development Dept.; Planning & Zoning Commission; Village Board of Trustees

In Lemont, planned unit development proposals have, with only two exceptions over the last 15 years, contained only one type of housing product, e.g. all townhouse units or all single-family homes. The Village should encourage developments with a mix of housing types and a mix of lot sizes for detached single-family lots. Encouragement should come in preliminary talks between the Village and developers, i.e. the Village should express its desire and willingness to see various housing products. Additionally, approval of annexations and planned unit developments should be more closely tied to the proposed balance of housing products.

## Implementation Action Area 1: Achieve and Maintain the Right Housing Mix

### Monitor and Report on Dwelling Unit Construction and Home Buying Trends

Lead Implementer(s): Planning & Economic Development Dept.; Building Dept.

The Building Department tracks construction activity. Staff, primarily through functions with the Lemont Area Chamber of Commerce, receive anecdotal information on home buying activities in town. Planning & Economic Development staff should meet periodically with real estate brokers to obtain information on home buying trends in Lemont. Likewise, staff should track regional home construction and home buying trends. The data on housing construction and the information from the realtors should be analyzed and reported to elected officials on at least an annual basis. Such reports should form the basis for continuing discussions of the appropriate housing balance and potential amendments to the comprehensive plan.

### Reduce the Practice of Incorporating Provisions in Development Approvals That Result in More Expensive Construction

Lead Implementer(s): Planning & Economic Development Dept.; Planning & Zoning Commission; Village Board of Trustees

In Lemont, annexation agreements and planned unit development ordinances often include requirements that increase the cost of home construction. The most common manifestation of this has been provisions for high percentages of brick on building exteriors and minimum home sizes. Rather than blanketing all new developments with such requirements, the Village should limit the incorporation of such provisions to a select number of new developments or require them on only certain phases of new developments.

### Improve Citizen Perceptions of Affordable And Multi-Family Housing by Ensuring Good Design

Lead Implementer(s): Planning & Economic Development Dept.; Planning & Zoning Commission

Poor site design and poor architecture contribute greatly to people's unfavorable perceptions of affordable and multi-family housing. Good design, therefore, could go a long way to assuaging such concerns over a potential project. As addressed more fully in the community character element, the Village should continue to strive for high quality architecture and site design for housing products of all kinds and all price ranges.

## Implementation Action Area 2: Encourage Infill Development

### **Remove Barriers to the Conversion of Commercial Space to Residential Space in the Downtown**

Lead Implementer(s): Building Dept.;  
Lemont Fire Protection District

The Lemont Fire Protection District and the Village have different adopted standards regulating construction within existing buildings. The Village and LFPD should explore amendments to the adopted codes to 1) achieve consistency between the two regulating agencies and 2) adopt codes that protect life safety while being supportive of renovation activity. Tools to be evaluated should include the Existing Structures chapter of the International Building Code (Ch.34) and the International Existing Building Code.

### **Amend Zoning to Allow More Housing Options in Infill Locations**

Lead Implementer(s): Planning & Economic  
Development Dept.

The Village should consider amending the R-4A zoning district regulations to allow slightly higher density products such as two-flats, duplexes, etc. on corner lots. Additionally, the Village should examine expanding the territory devoted to R-5 zoning in appropriate infill locations.

*Note: many of the implementation action steps to achieve the right housing mix will also encourage infill development, if applied to already developed areas in addition to new greenfield development.*

### Implementation Action Area 3: Re-invest in Existing Housing Stock

#### **Monitor Construction Activity in Existing Housing Stock**

Lead Implementer(s): Building Dept.; Planning & Economic Development Dept.

The Village should continue to monitor reinvestment in its existing homes, particularly the residences in the DD and R-4A zoning districts. Lack of re-investment should be addressed through various programs, including, where feasible, the use of Community Development Block Grant money.

#### **Amend Local Building Codes to Encourage Reinvestment and Preservation of Older Homes**

Lead Implementer(s): Building Dept.; Fire Protection District

The Lemont Fire Protection District and the Village have different adopted standards regulating construction within existing buildings. The Village and LFPD should explore amendments to the adopted codes to 1) achieve consistency between the two regulating agencies and 2) adopt codes that protect life safety while being supportive of renovation activity. Tools to be evaluated should include the Existing Structures chapter of the International Building Code (Ch.34) and the International Existing Building Code.



## Implementation Action Area 4: Reinvigorate Fair Housing Efforts

### **Appoint a Fair Housing Officer; Publicize the Officer's Role**

Lead Implementer(s): Administration; Planning & Economic Development Dept.

The mayor should appoint a Fair Housing Officer who will have oversight of the Village's Fair Housing policy and who will function as the initial point of contact for those having inquiries or concerns about fair housing. The appointment of the officer and the officer's function should be publicized. Residents should be encouraged to contact the Fair Housing Officer, and contact information and details on fair housing should be prominently displayed on the Village's website and in other appropriate Village documents or media.

### **Consider the Use of CDBG Grant Money for Purposes Other Than Water/Sewer Repair**

Lead Implementer(s): Planning & Economic Development Dept.; Administration

Like many eligible municipalities in Cook County, the Village has used CDBG grant money for projects related to water main replacement. The Village should consider the use of CDBG money for other eligible projects, such as: streetscape improvements, housing rehabilitation, and correction of building and fire code deficiencies.

### **Analyze Impediments to Fair Housing**

Lead Implementer(s): Planning & Economic Development Dept.; Administration

The Village should determine if any practices within the Village, e.g. actions by real estate brokers, are impediments to fair housing. Engagement of a consultant may be necessary to adequately implement this action.

### **Update Lemont's Fair Housing Policy**

Lead Implementer(s): Planning & Economic Development Dept.

Lemont's policy on fair housing remains consistent with federal, state, and county policies. This ordinance, however, does not include all of the protected classes as listed in federal, state, and county regulations and policies; it requires review and updating.

### **Consider Visitability Programs and Building Code Amendments to Improve Accessibility in Single-Family Homes**

Lead Implementer(s): Building Dept.

Accessibility can be improved with the concept of visitability and even more so with universal design. Universal design incorporates features that make homes adaptable to persons who require handicapped access without negatively impacting curb appeal or value. Many universal design features can make a home more convenient and mitigate common household safety hazards.

# OUR MOBILITY

*In 2030, Lemont will be well connected to the rest of the Chicago region and have excellent connections within the community. Adequate connections will exist for all modes of travel, including vehicles, bicycles, pedestrians, and transit.*



## LEMONT PIONEERS

### *Dan Ganzer*

20 years ago Dan Ganzer and his wife Colleen were looking for a place to buy a home and raise their family. An avid runner, cyclist and swimmer, Dan saw Lemont as a community with great potential to provide families with quality opportunities to be physically active. Since settling in Lemont, Dan has consistently worked to help Lemont achieve its potential.

Dan served as President on the Lemont Park District Board from 2003 to 2007. He was a key player in the effort to build what is now known as the CORE. The CORE is a fitness and aquatic complex that offers residents an array of indoor recreation opportunities including a six-lane pool, batting cages, 21,000 s.f. of court space, and a state-of-the art fitness facility.

In 2006, Dan had a vision for an event to celebrate Lemont's distinctive character, while providing area families with an opportunity for physical activity. From this vision the Quarryman Challenge was born. A 10 mile and 5k race through Lemont's hilly neighborhoods and historic downtown, the Quarryman Challenge has grown to be a major running event in the Chicagoland area. Last year the race attracted nearly 800 participants.

Dan, like many residents of Lemont, supports improved transportation networks so that families looking to bike, walk, or run around town are not faced with obstacles. On occasion, Dan has even been seen sweeping the sidewalk on the Lemont Road Bridge so that fellow bicyclers could ride across without encountering compromising road debris. Inspired and dedicated individuals like Dan are the cornerstone for change in a community; we will continue to need pioneers like him to achieve Lemont's potential for active transportation and recreation.





*A cyclist on the Centennial Trail near Lemont.*

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

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A safe and well maintained street network is the right of all roadway users.

Walking and biking should be a viable mode of transportation in Lemont for people of all ages and abilities.

A safe and convenient bicycle and pedestrian network that links homes, schools, businesses, and recreational facilities is an important contributor to a high quality of life for residents and supports improved public health.

Creating safe connections to regional trails and improving transit service are not only important components of a complete transportation network, but are equally integral to this plan's recreation and economic development goals.



*Metra train arriving in downtown Lemont. Lemont is on Metra's Heritage Corridor Line.*

## INTRODUCTION

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Like many communities in the Chicago area, Lemont is planning for future growth within the confines of a generally well established transportation network. Yet Lemont is unique among most Cook County communities in that there are still large areas of potential greenfield development, providing opportunities for new additions to the established transportation connections. The Village, like the county and the state of Illinois, is shifting its view of the transportation network from one of just roads to service vehicular traffic, to complete rights of way for multiple different users. The recommendations of this element reflect these dynamics and attempt to achieve our vision for 2030.

# CURRENT CONDITIONS

Lemont's current transportation network remains relatively unchanged since the adoption of the 2002 Comprehensive Plan, with the notable exception of the completion of I-355. The opening of I-355 has had positive and negative impacts for the Village, improving regional access to and from Lemont but decreasing traffic through the community that is vital to many local businesses. The Village's convenient access to I-55 is unchanged. The Village's railways and industrial waterway remain important components of the regional freight transportation network. The 2002 Comprehensive Plan notes that good interconnections between streets are critical in Lemont due to our irregular street network, which was dictated largely by development along our adjacent waterways and by our locally varied topography. This conclusion is perhaps even truer today, as I-355 has added another physical barrier to east-west transportation connections within the community.

The streets comprising the Village's roadway network are classified as interstate, arterial, collector and local streets. A description of these roadway functional classifications is found in Table 7.1.

The Village's collection of arterial, collector and local roads carry significant volumes of vehicular traffic through and within the community, although traffic volumes on most major roads have decreased since the opening of I-355. The arterial roads in the network also serve as truck routes, which can create conflicts between truck traffic and passenger vehicles, bicycles, and pedestrians.

In addition to the roadway network, the local transportation network consists of bicycle, pedestrian and transit facilities. The Village has recently made significant strides in planning for non-motorized transportation. In 2012, the Village adopted

the Lemont Active Transportation Plan, our first comprehensive bicycle and pedestrian plan. In 2011, the Village adopted a Complete Streets policy, guaranteeing that future road construction would consider all users of the roadway, not just vehicles.

**TABLE 7.1: LEMONT ROADWAY FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATIONS**

Functional Classification Description <sup>1</sup>	Area Streets
<b>Interstates:</b> Limited access roads extending far beyond the Village limits, serving as the key transportation corridors within the Chicago region and between metropolitan regions. They are high speed roads accessed via interchanges and intended to carry the largest volumes of traffic.	I-55 I-355
<b>Principal Arterials:</b> Principal arterials generally serve the major centers of activity of a metropolitan area. They are normally the highest traffic volume corridors outside of interstates. Principal arterials carry significant inter-community travel and carry a major portion of trips entering and leaving the community.	Rte 83 / Bell Road Archer Ave. 111th Street / Rte 83
<b>Minor Arterials:</b> Minor arterials connect with and augment the principal arterial system. The minor arterials provide service to trips of moderate length at a somewhat lower level of travel mobility than principal arterials. The minor arterial system places more emphasis on access to adjacent land than principal arterials.	Lemont Road / State Street* McCarthy Road New Avenue / Main Street Parker Road 135th Street 143rd Street
<b>Collectors:</b> Collectors distribute trips from the arterials through the area to the ultimate destination. Collector roads provide access to property and traffic circulation. Facilities on the collector system may penetrate residential neighborhoods. Collector streets collect traffic from local streets in residential neighborhoods and channel it into the arterial system. Collector systems may include the street grid which forms a logical framework for traffic circulation.	127th Street High Road Derby Road 131st Street Wolf Road 107th Street
<b>Local Streets:</b> The local street system comprises all facilities not in one of the higher classifications. Local streets serve primarily to provide direct access to abutting land and access to the higher order roadway systems.	All other roads

Note: IDOT considers State Street to be a collector road; this plan considers it to be a minor arterial.

<sup>1</sup> Definitions drawn from [http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/planning/processes/statewide/related/functional\\_classification/fc02.cfm](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/planning/processes/statewide/related/functional_classification/fc02.cfm) and <http://www.cmap.illinois.gov/documents/20583/9e3de9a4-cdd9-40b8-9c9b-14245313c9bf>

Both documents will be integral in guiding future construction projects.

The Village has a relatively extensive network of sidewalks and requires sidewalks on both sides of the street in all new developments. However, the sidewalk inventory completed as part of the Active Transportation Plan notes several gaps in the sidewalk network and indicates that maintenance is needed for existing

sidewalks to ensure pedestrian safety. The Village has no on-street bicycle facilities and three off-street recreational trails (Park District Centennial Campus, Lemont Township and I&M Canal Trail). The I&M Canal Trail follows the historic I&M Canal towpath and provides six miles of crushed stone surface for bicyclists and pedestrians. The trail runs through the heart of downtown Lemont and is an exceptional amenity, but does not link to longer regional trails. Connections to

these regional trails would provide a much richer user experience and generate additional economic activity in downtown.

To achieve the Village's vision for transportation, the Village should focus its efforts on the recommendations and implementation action steps outlined in the remainder of this chapter.



# RECOMMENDATIONS

## IMPLEMENT THE LEMONT ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION PLAN.

The Lemont Active Transportation Plan was adopted in 2012. Its goals are to: build a complete, connected active transportation network; create an institutional environment that encourages development and use of active transportation; and engage residents and visitors in active transportation. In order to accomplish these goals, the plan recommends physical infrastructure improvements to provide a comprehensive network of safe and convenient intersections, bicycle facilities, and pedestrian facilities. It recommends facilities to link these amenities to existing transit service and policies in support of expanded transit service. The plan also recommends municipal policy change and education & encouragement programs to support active transportation.

## PROVIDE A HIGHLY CONNECTED ROADWAY NETWORK.

A highly connected roadway network has multiple benefits for residents and visitors. It disperses vehicular traffic, rather than concentrating it on a few, larger roads. As there are more low-speed, low-traffic roads in a connected network, active transportation is safer. Additionally, a connected network provides multiple, and often more direct, routes for walking and bicycling making these modes of transportation more attractive options. Emergency response is better in a connected network, as there are many available routes to access an emergency response site. Public Works, police patrol,

and school bus operations are improved in a connected network as well, saving time and money. Finally, a connected street network assists visitors; if a wrong turn is made, there are multiple ways to quickly get back on the correct route.

According to the Institute of Traffic Engineers, the most efficient urban roadway networks provide route flexibility and an opportunity for special street functions; networks like this have arterial roadways spaced a half mile or less from one another.<sup>2</sup> The Congress for New Urbanism agrees with this benchmark, but concedes that arterial roadways in suburban environments may be spaced in up to 1 mile intervals if they are supplemented with collector roads and the knowledge that the arterials may be bigger than if they were located closer to one another.<sup>3</sup> Similarly, the Federal Highway Administration notes that minor arterials should not be more than one mile from each other in fully developed areas.<sup>4</sup> Lemont's current roadway network is fairly well connected, but is challenged by the area's topography, the historic pattern of road development in the community, and manmade barriers like I-355. Our arterial roads are 1 to 2.5 miles from one another.<sup>5</sup> Lemont should plan its future road network development to provide arterials at approximately one mile intervals, supplemented by collector roads at one-half to one-quarter mile intervals. The Generalized Planned Roadway Network map depicts the approximate location of arterial and collector roads in Lemont's planning jurisdiction; the map includes approximate locations of potential new roads and

existing roads which may need to be upgraded to serve their recommended function as an arterial or collector road.

The Generalized Planned Roadway Network Map is intended to serve as a conceptual guide to future development and redevelopment, providing a visual approximation of the kind of roadway network Lemont desires. In order to ensure that this kind of network is achieved, Lemont needs to adopt policies and standards to require a highly connected roadway network; these steps are defined in the implementation action area table.



*The 2012 Lemont Active Transportation Plan includes detailed recommendations related to non-motorized transportation and is a supporting document to this plan.*

<sup>2</sup> Institute of Traffic Engineers, Designing Walkable Urban Thoroughfares, p.26

<sup>3</sup> CNU Statement of Principles of Transportation Networks, p.26

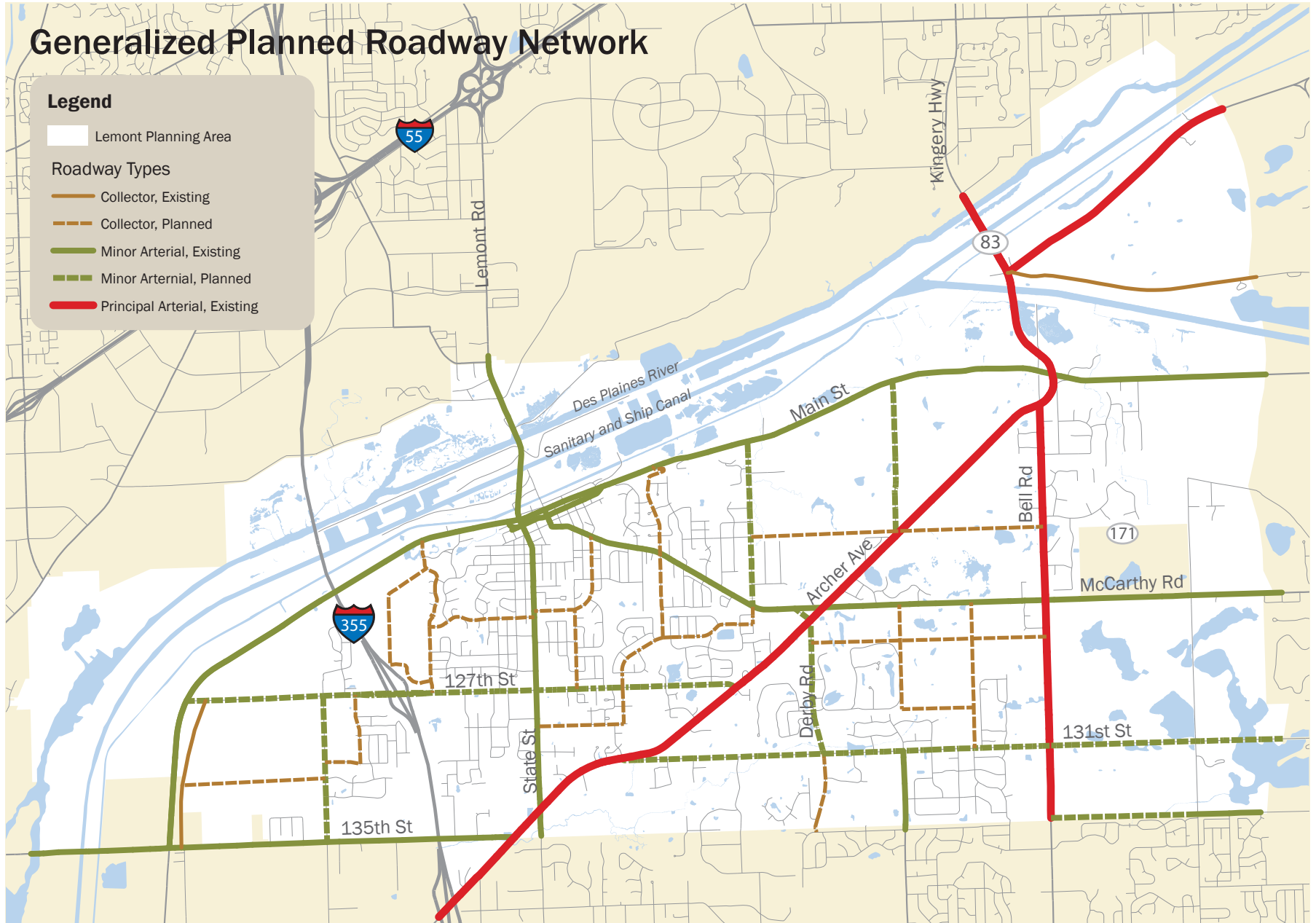
<sup>4</sup> [http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/planning/processes/statewide/related/functional\\_classification/fc02.cfm](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/planning/processes/statewide/related/functional_classification/fc02.cfm)

<sup>5</sup> Note: IDOT considers State Street (from Illinois to 143rd) to be a collector roadway; this plan considers it an arterial roadway.

# Generalized Planned Roadway Network

## Legend

- Lemont Planning Area
- Roadway Types**
- Collector, Existing
- Collector, Planned
- Minor Arterial, Existing
- Minor Arterial, Planned
- Principal Arterial, Existing





**ENSURE CONTEXT SENSITIVE RIGHT OF WAY DESIGN.**

As previously detailed, roads are often categorized and labeled by their functional classification. Functional classifications are generally based on the intended purpose and vehicular traffic volume of a road. While functional classifications are a helpful tool to differentiate between roadway types, they do not fully represent the character of a particular roadway.

For example, one minor arterial road may have an entirely different character from another (e.g. McCarthy Road vs. New Avenue). Additionally, one roadway may have varied character at different points, yet have the same functional classification for the entire roadway. For example, all of Main Street is categorized as a minor arterial, but Main Street has a much different character in downtown Lemont than it does near Route 83. In order to ensure that new roads and improvements to existing roads are designed in a manner that complements the surrounding environment, the Village needs to adopt a palette of road typologies that go beyond mere functional classification.

**SUPPORT REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS WITH POSITIVE LOCAL IMPACTS.**

IDOT is currently working on plans to install an additional lane on I-55, which will be a managed lane (e.g. high occupancy or variable toll). This additional managed lane will accommodate expansion of PACE’s express bus service to and from Chicago, currently operated as a bus-on-shoulder program on I-55. The additional managed lane will provide benefits for Lemont motorists and has the potential to increase viable mass transit options for residents. Therefore, the Village should provide all appropriate support of this project. As other regional transportation projects are proposed, the Village should evaluate each for its impact to the community and support those with positive local impacts.

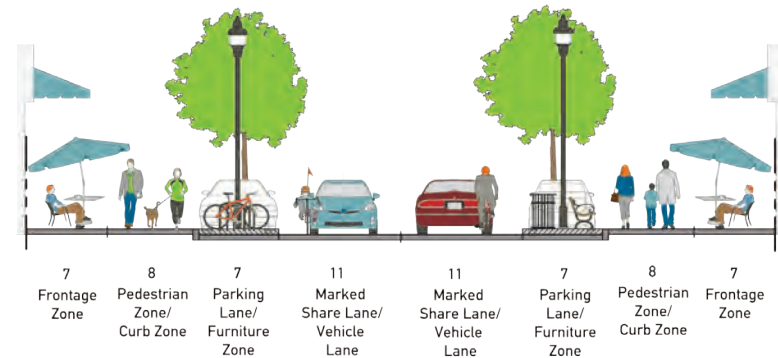
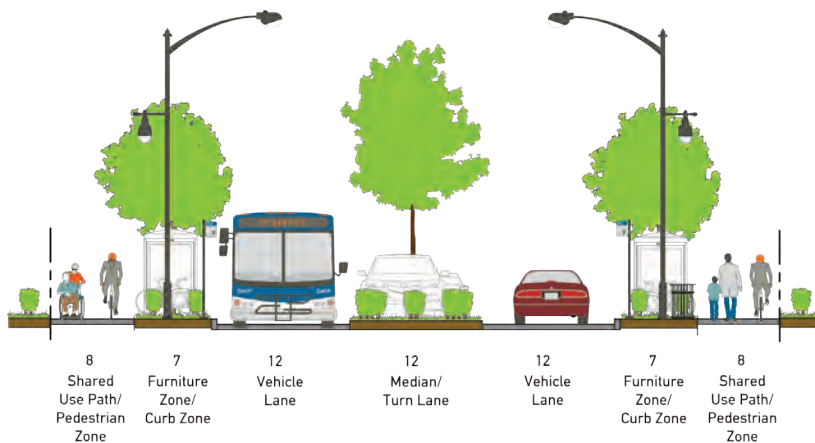
**MAINTAIN THE LOCAL ROADWAY NETWORK IN GOOD REPAIR.**

A well maintained roadway network is important to efficient and safe movement of passenger vehicles, freight, bicycles, and pedestrians. Many

recommendations to improve safety and to repair existing facilities for bicycles and pedestrians are contained within the Active Transportation Plan. For vehicular traffic, the Village should continue to provide adequate maintenance of existing roadways. Additionally, the Village needs to ensure that new territory annexed to the Village contributes positively to the state of our roadway network and does not create a burden on our ability to maintain our existing infrastructure.

**SUPPORT THE SANITARY AND SHIP CANAL AS AN IMPORTANT REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION LINK.**

Recently, the use of the Canal has been threatened by the Asian Carp. The Canal, and its related industry, is an important component of Lemont’s local economy. Therefore, the Village should support efforts to keep the canal functional as a working industrial waterway.



*The Active Transportation Alliance’s “Complete Streets, Complete Networks” manual includes a palette of street typologies that vary depending on street type, right of way width, adjacent land uses, and other factors (see above). Tools like this will be useful as the Village develops its standards for context sensitive right of way design.*

## Implementation Action Area 1: Implement the Lemont Active Transportation Plan

### Create a Five-Year Capital Plan of Active Transportation Improvements

Lead Implementer(s): Planning & Economic Development Dept.; Public Works Dept.

The Active Transportation Plan provides a detailed list of proposed infrastructure improvements for intersections, bicycle facilities, and pedestrian facilities. These improvements are categorized as near, mid or long term projects. The Village should adopt a five year plan, updated annually, to schedule these recommended improvements for construction. Each five-year plan should include a balance of intersection, bicycle, and pedestrian improvements. Priority areas for improvements should be near schools, shopping, and other traffic generators. Maintenance of existing, deficient bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure should be incorporated into these plans. By 2030, all improvements should be constructed.

### Implement the Policy Recommendations of the Active Transportation Plan

Lead Implementer(s): Planning & Economic Development Dept.

The Active Transportation Plan recommends several policy changes to support active transportation. The Village should amend the Unified Development Ordinance and other ordinances, as recommended by the plan. Additionally, the Village should coordinate with the school districts to implement the school policy recommendations of the Active Transportation Plan.

### Create a Connection to the Centennial Trail

Lead Implementer(s): Planning & Economic Development Dept.; Village Engineer

The Active Transportation Plan describes several potential courses of action to connect downtown Lemont and the local I&M Canal Trail to the Centennial Trail. Most of the solutions involve use of the Lemont Road bridge; in approximately 10 years the bridge will be due for significant maintenance. Therefore, the Village should work quickly to select a preferred improvement among the potential long-term solutions to connect to the Centennial Trail and vigorously pursue the selected option.

### Pursue Mass Transit Improvements, Particularly Increased Metra Service

Lead Implementer(s): Administration; Planning & Economic Development Dept.

The Active Transportation Plan recommends improvements to increase local availability of mass transit service and the Village should seek to implement all of the recommended improvements. However, the Village should continue to hold improved Metra service as the highest priority because improved Metra service is integral to supporting Lemont's other goals related to economic and downtown development.

### Require Dedication of Right of Way and/or Construction of Facilities Recommended by the Active Transportation Plan

Lead Implementer(s): Planning & Economic Development Dept.

The Village should require dedications and/or construction of bicycle and pedestrian facilities from new development when facilities recommended by the Active Transportation Plan are within or adjacent to the proposed development area.

## Implementation Action Area 1: Implement the Lemont Active Transportation Plan

### **Measure Progress of Implementation of the Active Transportation Plan and Complete Streets Policy**

Lead Implementer(s): Planning & Economic Development Dept.

The Village should adopt performance measures to evaluate the progress it is making toward achievement of the Active Transportation Plan recommendations; these measures should be reported annually. Additionally, the Village should adopt similar performance measures to determine whether the recently adopted Complete Streets Policy is effectively influencing road projects to consider all users of the right of way, not just cars.

### **Promote Active Transportation Through Education, Encouragement and Enforcement Activities**

Lead Implementer(s): Planning & Economic Development Dept.; Police Dept.; other agencies

To promote active transportation and encourage safe behaviors the Active Transportation Plan recommends education, encouragement, and enforcement activities. Although the Village can take the lead in some of these activities, it will need to engage partners like the School Districts, Park District, and community organizations to see many of the recommended programs come to fruition.

## Implementation Action Area 2: Provide a Highly Connected Roadway Network

### Amend UDO as Necessary to Require Collector Streets at Appropriate Intervals

Lead Implementer(s): Planning & Economic Development Dept.; Village Engineer

The Unified Development Ordinance currently requires collectors in developments greater than 20 acres. This standard should be evaluated and revised to either require collectors at certain intervals or continue to require for developments of a certain threshold. If the threshold approach is used, that threshold should relate to total traffic generation, number of dwelling units, and/or number of jobs created, rather than just the overall size of the development.

### Require New Developments to Meet a Connectivity Index

Lead Implementer(s): Planning & Economic Development Dept.

A Connectivity Index measures the internal and external connectivity of roads in a proposed development. There are various ways to calculate a connectivity index, including: total number of street segments divided by total number of intersections; a ratio of intersections divided by intersections plus dead-ends; maximum block length; intersections per square mile; etc. The Village should evaluate various indices and select one to use in evaluating new development proposals for consistency with the goals of this chapter.

### Require Public Streets

Lead Implementer(s): Planning & Economic Development Dept.

The Village should continue its policy to require dedicated public streets in all new developments, with very limited exceptions for restricted areas, such as small industrial developments where no connectivity to public streets is practical. Gated communities shall be discouraged.

### Require Connection to Existing Streets

Lead Implementer(s): Planning & Economic Development Dept.

The Village should continue its policy to require new developments to connect to existing roads and existing developments.

### Make Connections Between Existing Streets

Lead Implementer(s): Planning & Economic Development Dept.; Village Engineer

Wherever possible, the Village should connect local streets that are aligned but not joined yet, unless safety concerns advise against the connection.

## Implementation Action Area 3: Ensure Context Sensitive Right of Way Design

### Amend UDO to Create a Variety of Permitted Street Arrangements

Lead Implementer(s): Planning & Economic Development Dept.; Village Engineer

The Unified Development Ordinance currently has one residential right of way cross section. Additionally, Chapter 17.26 of the code requires a 27' minimum pavement width from back of curb to back of curb and a minimum pedestrian way including a 5' pedestrian sidewalk. These are the only requirements guiding the allocation of elements in the local right of way. The UDO should be amended to adopt a palette of different road types, describe where each is appropriate, and include desired cross sections for each. In addition to functional classification, road types should be based on a number of characteristics including adjacent land use, type of access, number of dwelling units served, average frontage of adjacent lots, etc. Additionally, the cross sections should make clear where on-street parking is desired and where it is acceptable to design the street without on-street parking. The cross sections should provide allowances for narrower streets, where appropriate.

### Seek to Reduce Turning Radii, Where Appropriate

Lead Implementer(s): Planning & Economic Development Dept.; Village Engineer

Streets with overly large turning radii encourage vehicles to turn corners quicker than necessary. Reducing turning radii may be appropriate in high pedestrian traffic areas, or as a traffic calming measure in residential subdivisions. It is not appropriate for intersections with high volumes of heavy truck traffic. The Village should evaluate opportunities to reduce turning radii at existing intersections and seek to keep turning radii to a minimum in new residential subdivisions.

### Allow Alleys

Lead Implementer(s): Planning & Economic Development Dept.; Village Engineer

The Village has many alleys in the older areas of town. Alleys provide a useful function and may be desired in future developments. The UDO should accommodate alleys by providing standards for their construction.

### Amend UDO Access Limit Requirements

Lead Implementer(s): Planning & Economic Development Dept.; Village Engineer

Currently the UDO limits access to every 60' for "major streets" in commercial areas and 40' for commercial streets that are not a collector or above. This language is unclear, as major streets are not defined in the code. The Village should evaluate its current access limitations and consider adopting new standards that are, at a minimum, more clear. The Village should also strengthen its requirements in the UDO for shared access or cross access agreements between commercial developments.

### Evaluate the Use of One-Way Streets Downtown

Lead Implementer(s): Planning & Economic Development Dept.; Village Engineer

One-way streets can have many benefits, and drawbacks. For example, Illinois Street is due for major work, but needed accessibility retrofits and limited right of way make the project very costly. A conversion to one-way traffic may make it easier to achieve the required accessibility retrofits but may negatively impact other aspects of the transportation network. The Village should thoroughly study what impacts potential one-way conversions would have, particularly to residents and businesses on and near the affected road way, and to bicycle/pedestrian circulation.

## Implementation Action Area 3: Ensure Context Sensitive Right of Way Design

### Prohibit Reductions in Existing Connectivity

Lead Implementer(s): Planning & Economic Development Dept.

The Village should continue its policy to prohibit any street abandonment or closure that would reduce connectivity of the existing street network. Outside the Village limits, the Village should advocate that the County discourage the same.

### Incorporate Traffic Calming on Covington and Timberline Drives

Lead Implementer(s): Planning & Economic Development Dept.

Both Covington and Timberline Drives have street widths similar to 127th Street, but are designed as residential collector streets. Timberline is calmed somewhat by the curvature of the road and natural topography of the area, but Covington is less so. Stop signs have been installed on both roads, but stop signs can slow emergency response speeds and can contribute to speed spiking between stop signs.<sup>6</sup> Other traffic calming treatments, such as curb extensions, planted medians, etc. do not have the same potential negative impacts, provide effective means of altering driver behavior, and can add to the aesthetic appeal of the street.

### Encourage Pedestrian Scale Lighting

Lead Implementer(s): Planning & Economic Development Dept.; Village Engineer

The UDO's current street lighting standards do not include any pedestrian scale lighting. Such lighting has been used in the downtown and other pedestrian oriented areas. The UDO should contain standards for such lighting, and encourage such lighting in any new development intended to have a high concentration of pedestrians and/or in areas noted as Pedestrian Oriented Zones in the Active Transportation Plan. Where street lights are already publicly owned and maintained in Pedestrian Oriented Zones, the Village should install pedestrian scale lighting.

<sup>6</sup> Center for Livable Communities, Emergency Response, Traffic Calming and Traditional Neighborhood Streets. Response time is slowed typically due to cars and other visual blockages at these intersections.

## Implementation Action Area 4: Support Regional Transportation Projects with Positive Local Impacts

### **I-55 Managed Lane**

Lead Implementer(s): Planning & Economic  
Development Dept.; Administration

The additional managed lane will provide benefits for Lemont motorists and has the potential to increase viable mass transit options for residents. Therefore, the Village should provide all appropriate support of this project by attending steering committee meetings, remaining involved with IDOT and CMAP on the project, etc.

## Implementation Action Area 5: Maintain the Local Roadway Network in Good Repair

### **Require SSAs for Annexations, Where Appropriate**

Lead Implementer(s): Planning & Economic Development Dept.

There are many established residential subdivisions around Lemont's corporate limits in unincorporated Cook County that may one day wish to annex into the Village. When such annexations occur, the roads within those subdivisions should be evaluated. If the roads are in a poor state of repair, a special service area should be placed on the annexing territory to fund the necessary improvements so as not to burden existing residents with the additional cost of improvements.

### **Continue to Require Developers to Mitigate Road Impacts**

Lead Implementer(s): Planning & Economic Development Dept.

The Village should continue UDO requirements for traffic studies to ensure developers calculate traffic impacts of proposed developments on the existing roadway network. The Village should continue to require those developers to pay for any road and/or right of way improvements needed because of the development's impacts.

### **Continue to Require Right of Way Improvements When New Development Occurs**

Lead Implementer(s): Planning & Economic Development Dept.

Continue the current UDO requirements that new development bring existing substandard right of way up to Village standards whenever a development contains or adjoins the substandard right of way.

### **Establish and Maintain a Desired Level of Maintenance for All Local Roads**

Lead Implementer(s): Public Works Dept.

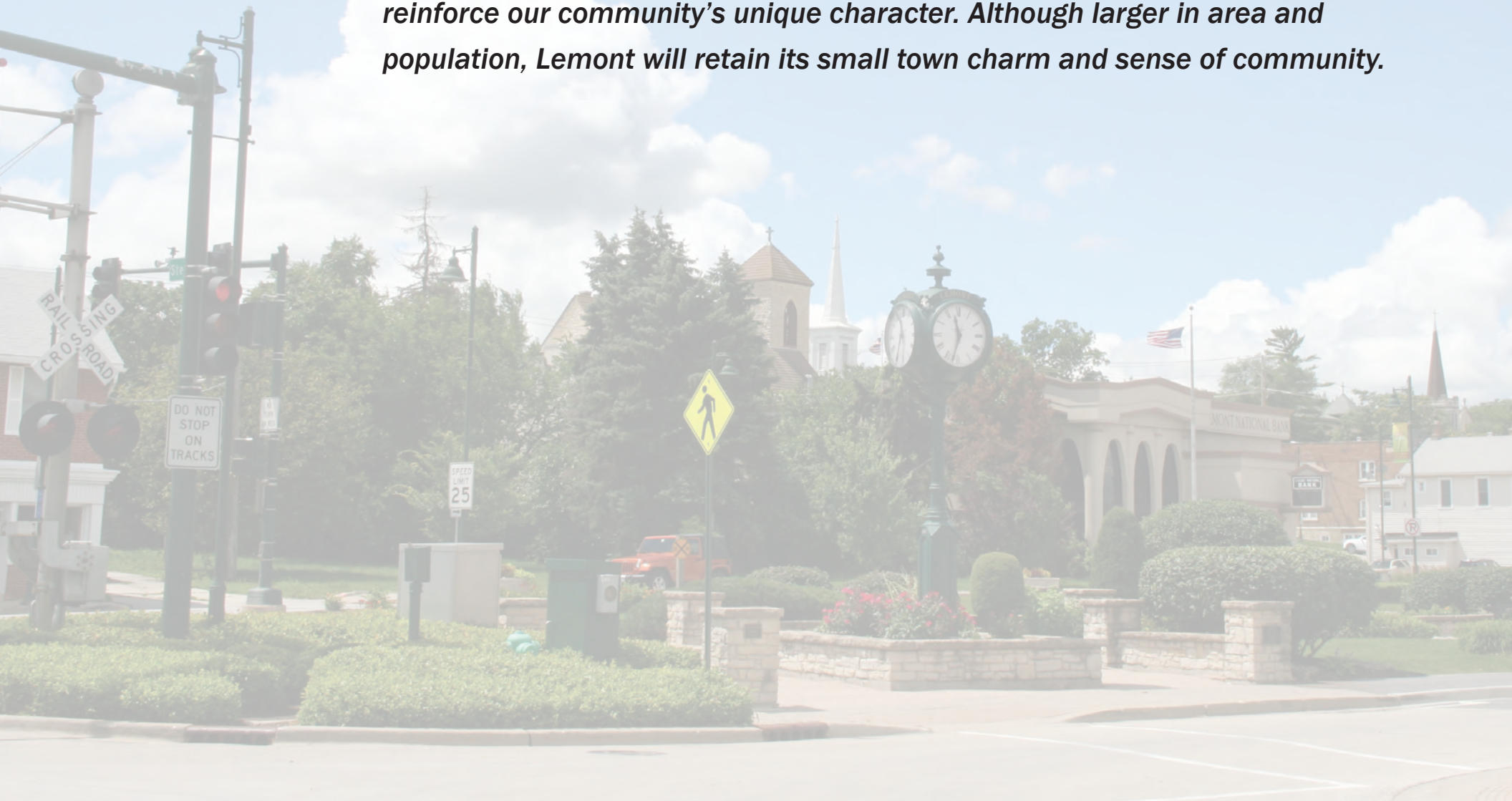
The Village recently adopted its first ever 3-year strategic plan and will soon adopt a 5-year capital improvement program. Contained within these documents will be a five year plan for local road maintenance. These documents should provide the basis to establish a long-term minimum desired level of maintenance for all local roads. Such level of service should be used to direct future capital planning efforts.





# OUR COMMUNITY CHARACTER

*In 2030, Lemont's buildings, structures, and patterns of development will reinforce our community's unique character. Although larger in area and population, Lemont will retain its small town charm and sense of community.*



# LEMONT PIONEERS

## *Simon Batistich*

People often describe downtown Lemont as quaint and full of character. While we are fortunate to have an authentic downtown, maintaining the historic feel amidst growth has challenges.

Simon Batistich was born and raised in Lemont and continues to call Lemont home. Following in his father's footsteps, Simon became an architect and recalls doing his dissertation on the redevelopment potential of Old Lemont High School. As a professional architect, Simon has designed numerous residential and commercial properties throughout town. In his downtown Lemont commercial renovations, he has worked to retain the historic elements that give the district its sense of place. As a long time resident, Simon has a special appreciation for Lemont's rich history and its built environment.

As a member of the Historic Preservation Commission, Simon was a major contributor to Lemont's design guidelines for historic properties and has provided guidance and direction to owners of property looking to restore historic buildings in town. His expertise and understanding of sensitive design is invaluable and ensures that the character of Lemont remains intact, regardless of growth and change.



# GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Architecturally and historically significant buildings are a key contributor to our sense of place. As such, these buildings need to be preserved and redevelopment of nearby properties need to be compatible with their historic surroundings.

The I&M Canal and accompanying towpath is our community's single most vital historic asset.

Lemont's public art plays an important role in celebrating our rich history and beautifying our community.

Maintaining our community character depends largely on ensuring that new development respects existing community character in architecture and site design.

Lemont's unique topography sets it apart from other communities in the area; flattening of our naturally varied topography diminishes our community character.

Lemont's skyline, as viewed from the Des Plaines River valley, is an important view corridor and a key component of the community's visual identity.

Downtown Lemont is the cornerstone of our community's historic charm and improvements to make it a thriving mixed use district are vital to the success of this plan.

Lemont's small town charm can be supported through design features in new development that foster community interaction.



# INTRODUCTION

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All elements of this plan work together to shape our community character. Our transportation network, our residential neighborhoods, our open spaces and natural resources, and our economic development initiatives all influence our built environment. This element builds upon these other plan components and provides an overarching framework for our future land use and development.



# CURRENT CONDITIONS

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The Village's planning for and regulation of the built environment has changed significantly since the last Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 2002. At that time, the Village's zoning and land use regulations were spread over a myriad of different ordinances with many dating from the 1980's or earlier. Most of the downtown was zoned B-2, a retail commercial zoning district, but areas along Canal Street and Talcott Avenue were zoned M-1 manufacturing district.

The Village's physical form has changed substantially since 2002 as well. The Village has permitted over 1,300 new dwelling units in over a dozen new subdivisions. A new commercial district has emerged to serve the east side of Lemont, with 53,000 s.f. of office and retail use located in the "three corners" area around the intersection of McCarthy Road, Archer Avenue, and Bell Road. In the downtown, several light industrial and deteriorating properties have been redeveloped into townhomes, mixed use buildings, and condominiums. These redevelopments have added over 25,000 s.f. of new commercial space, over 100 new dwelling units, and a public parking garage to the downtown environment.

As the community encountered these proposals for new development and engaged in the planning and public outreach processes associated with them, the Village better defined its vision for the built environment. Over this period, the Village acquired new tools for articulating this vision.

In 2005, a community planning charrette was conducted, which resulted in the creation of a new downtown zoning district rooted in form based standards. These standards have further been revised

and improved since their initial adoption and provide guidance for potential redevelopment within Lemont's historic downtown.

In 2004, confronted with the challenge of tear downs, the Village created an overlay to preserve the character of our established neighborhoods by regulating infill residential development in these areas. As Village staff began applying these new requirements, the regulations were further refined and improved and in 2007, the Village adopted the R-4A zoning district. The district provides land development regulations that are tailored to the character of our oldest and most established neighborhoods. They require that new homes are compatible with the existing neighborhood, but also ensure that zoning requirements related to setbacks, accessory structures, detached garages, etc. are appropriate for the kinds of existing homes and lot sizes found in these older neighborhoods. Although over 60 demolition permits have been issued from 2002-2012 within the R-4A boundaries, general public consensus has been that the regulations strike an acceptable balance between allowing new houses that meet modern demands and still fit in with the character of the established neighborhoods.

In January 2006, the Village adopted the 127th Street Design Guidelines as an amendment to the 2002 Comprehensive Plan. The 127th Street Design Guidelines apply to development along 127th Street, from I-355 to State Street, an area in which low-intensity office uses, a school, park district facility, and a cemetery already lined the street. The standards aim to prevent the typical suburban strip commercial development characterized by "high-intensity uses, heavy traffic,

long hours of operation, high levels of illumination, unappealing architecture, lack of landscaping, and a profusion of signs." In doing so, the guidelines are intended to ensure that "future development along this corridor blends in with the nearby residential areas" and the existing lower intensity developments along the corridor. The guidelines establish desired parking arrangements, landscaping features, and building types.

In 2008, following an intensive three year effort, the Village consolidated and updated its zoning, subdivision, and land development regulations into one consolidated book, known as the Unified Development Ordinance. In addition to streamlining and modernizing Lemont's zoning requirements, the ordinance also established high standards for landscaping and commercial building and site design.

These past planning efforts have laid the groundwork for this plan. This chapter contains recommendations to continue the Village's positive momentum, to ensure we continue to protect our existing community character and grow in ways that are consistent with our past traditions, while embracing change.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

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## **MAINTAIN HIGH STANDARDS OF DESIGN FOR RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT TO ACHIEVE THE VISION OF THIS PLAN.**

The Village's first residential appearance code was adopted in 1993. The Village's residential design standards for single-family homes are now contained within Chapter 17.22 of the Unified Development Ordinance are intended to promote aesthetically pleasing residential districts, protect and enhance property values, encourage distinctiveness in exterior design, and discourage excessive similarity in home design. The chapter's requirements effectively prevent overly similar homes from being located near one another, but the requirements can be cumbersome to administer and difficult for some home builders to understand. The anti-monotony standards only address the front elevation of homes, leaving the possibility of nearly identical rear elevations. Overly similar rear elevations are equally capable of creating a "cookie cutter" subdivision appearance as front elevations when such elevations may be highly visible from nearby thoroughfares or open spaces.

The residential design standards also presuppose that homes will have significant masonry components on the front elevations, yet the Village's residential design standards do not require a minimum amount of masonry. Nearly every new home built in Lemont over the last ten years has had at least first floor masonry, largely as a result of minimum masonry requirements in planned unit development approvals and annexation agreements. In the past, the Village has relied on requirements for significant masonry elements to ensure a minimum aesthetic quality to new homes. However, as architectural preferences shift and the Village relaxes its requirements for masonry clad homes consistent with

the recommendations of this plan's housing element, the Village's residential design standards need to look beyond masonry to achieve quality home design. By developing more comprehensive residential design guidelines, the Village can balance our desire to broaden Lemont's housing choices with our tradition of attractive residential properties that maintain their value over time.

## **MAINTAIN HIGH STANDARDS OF DESIGN FOR NEW COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT TO ACHIEVE THE VISION OF THIS PLAN.**

The Village has made significant strides over the past decade to improve its built environment within commercial and industrial districts. Prior to 2005, Village codes did not include requirements for paved parking lots in commercial development and dumpsters were allowed to be entirely open to view. Current codes articulate the Village's high standards of architectural and site design in new development. The Village should maintain its high standards for design throughout economic fluctuations. However, all requirements should be reviewed through the lens of this plan's vision and whether they are integral to achieving that vision. In some cases, new or adapted requirements may be necessary. In others, some relaxing of current requirements may be called for.

## **CONTINUE TO PROTECT & ENHANCE OUR UNIQUE COMMUNITY ASSETS.**

Lemont's defining physical characteristics are the foundation of our community character. These characteristics include natural features like our topography and man-made features like our historic buildings, charming downtown, and public art. The Village has consistently sought to preserve these assets over decades. To ensure that we retain our community character as we continue to grow, we need to continue to protect these unique assets. This plan recommends the actionable steps and public policies to build on these past efforts.

## **GUIDE FUTURE GROWTH THROUGH THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FUTURE LAND USE MAP & POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS OF THIS PLAN.**

Incorporated within this chapter is the Village's future land use map. The map assigns a future land use category to every property within the current Village limits and our planning area. The characteristics of each future land use category are rooted in the vision and principles of this plan. The map and its related future land use categories express the Village's expectations for new development. However, annexation requests and development proposals should not only be evaluated against the map, but also against the applicable principles and recommendations found throughout this plan.

## Implementation Action Area 1: Maintain High Standards of Design for New Residential Development to Achieve the Vision of This Plan

### Develop Standards for 360° Architecture for New Residential Development

Lead Implementer(s): Planning & Economic Development Dept.

360° design, also referred to as four-sided architecture, is a way of designing homes with materials and design that are consistent on all elevations of the home. Although some building trends today place all architectural interest and material variation on the front elevation of a home, quality design on the side and rear elevations are also important to support a good public realm and positively impact the long-term desirability of a subdivision.

### Revise the Anti-Monotony Code for Single-Family Residential Development

Lead Implementer(s): Planning & Economic Development Dept.

The Village's current anti-monotony requirements are effective to prevent homes with overly similar front elevations in the immediate vicinity of one another. However, the code has administration challenges as noted. The anti-monotony standards should be revised to streamline and clarify the requirements. The code should also consider monotony as viewed from the rear of the homes.

### Continually Review Codes for Changes in Technology

Lead Implementer(s): Planning & Economic Development Dept.

Building materials and building technologies in new construction are ever-changing. The Village should remain vigilant in updating its zoning and building code requirements to keep up with these changes in products.

### Develop Comprehensive Residential Design Standards

Lead Implementer(s): Planning & Economic Development Dept.

In developing a comprehensive set of residential design standards, the Village should address an array of design characteristics in addition to the anti-monotony and 360° architecture items noted above. For example, comprehensive design standards might include minimum eave overhangs, window framing requirements, a maximum number of exterior materials, etc. A public engagement process is needed to identify which elements are priorities for inclusion in the design standards. The residential design standards should differentiate between requirements that are applicable to any new construction, including infill lots, and those that are applicable to new subdivisions on a larger scale. Standards should also be created to guide townhouse and multi-family development.



## Implementation Action Area 2: Maintain High Standards of Design for New Commercial and Industrial Development to Achieve the Vision of This Plan

### Develop Design Standards for Non-Retail Commercial Buildings

Lead Implementer(s): Planning & Economic Development Dept.

The Unified Development Ordinance's commercial design standards for new buildings in the B-1 and B-3 zoning district are tailored to retail buildings. For example, the code requires that a minimum of 40% of the area between four feet and ten feet in height on a building elevation facing a public street be comprised of windows. Although this sort of minimum is very appropriate for retail uses, it does not always help achieve the best possible design for an office building or other commercial building in the B-1 and B-3 zoning district. The Village should revise the building design standards to include different types of buildings.

### Maintain High Standards for Retail Commercial Buildings

Lead Implementer(s): Planning & Economic Development Dept.

The Village's commercial design standards set high standards for the design of retail commercial buildings. These standards include limitations on EIFS and similar materials, requirements for building articulation, roofline variety, etc. These and other standards help the Village avoid corporate architecture and reinforce our community's unique sense of place; they should continue to be supported.

### Revise Landscaping Requirements for Commercial Development

Lead Implementer(s): Planning & Economic Development Dept.

The Village has high standards for landscaping in commercial zoning districts. While we should continue to require generous landscaping, we should evaluate our codes to ensure we aren't setting unrealistically high standards. Additionally, the Village should adopt standards to ensure that detention facilities do not detract from the appearance of a development, but contribute to its overall attractiveness.

### Continue to Seek Exceptional Commercial Design Along 127th Street, from State Street to I-355

Lead Implementer(s): Planning & Economic Development Dept.

The 127th Street Design Guidelines of the 2002 Comprehensive Plan recognize the importance of the 127th Street corridor as a key entry into Lemont and the home to a large concentration of civic sites. The goal of the guidelines was to prevent typical suburban strip commercial development and to ensure high quality buildings. Those goals are still important today, but the Village no longer seeks to accomplish this goal by requiring buildings to mimic residential architecture. Rather, care should be taken to ensure that new development along 127th Street is of the highest quality, while encouraging design creativity. New building and site plans along this corridor should be sensitive to the high pedestrian activity within the area and the abutting residential properties. Examples of sensitive design might include: generous sidewalks or other pedestrian amenities, generous landscaping along property lines that are adjacent to homes, etc.

### Create Design Standards for Industrial Development

Lead Implementer(s): Planning & Economic Development Dept.

The Unified Development Ordinance does not include design guidelines specific for industrial development. Landscaping standards are tailored by zoning district, but other site design requirements are either absent or are the same as those for commercial development. Similarly, UDO building material regulations simply prohibit metal panels; no other requirements exist. Industrial development has different site design needs and distinct building types; the Village needs standards that are tailored to this type of development.

## Implementation Action Area 3: Continue to Protect & Enhance Our Unique Community Assets

### **Continue to Prevent Disturbances to Our Natural Topography**

Lead Implementer(s): Planning & Economic Development Dept.

New development shall minimize disturbances to the area's natural topography to the maximum extent possible. The Village should ensure that the site design for annexations and planned unit developments take our natural topography into account at the onset of site planning.

### **Continue to Improve and Restore the I&M Canal and its Towpaths**

Lead Implementer(s): Planning & Economic Development Dept.

As noted in the economic prosperity element, the I&M Canal and its towpath are the reason Lemont was initially founded and are central to our community identity. The Village should improve and restore the I&M Canal and its towpaths. Additionally, through development review and approval processes the Village should continue to ensure that future development along the canal respects this historic asset and encourages public use of the canal path.

### **Continue to Preserve Lemont's Iconic Skyline**

Lead Implementer(s): Planning & Economic Development Dept.

Lemont's skyline, as viewed from the Des Plaines River valley, is one of Lemont's key identifying features. The Village has fought to preserve this scenic view in the past. New development should not infringe on this important vista or create changes to our skyline which are out of character with the existing conditions.

### **Preserve Architecturally and Historically Significant Buildings in the Historic District**

Lead Implementer(s): Historic Preservation Commission

Lemont's historic district encompasses downtown and nearby historic residential neighborhoods. Buildings that are architecturally or historically significant should be preserved, as they contribute to the small town charm of the community and preserve our sense of place.

### **New Buildings Should Contribute to the Charm of Downtown**

Lead Implementer(s): Planning & Economic Development Dept.; Historic Preservation Commission

In the downtown, buildings that are neither architecturally nor historically significant may be redeveloped, but such redevelopment should occur in a way that fits into the overall historic character and charm of the downtown. As noted in the Economic Prosperity element, amendments to Unified Development Ordinance may be needed to accomplish this goal.

## Implementation Action Area 3: Continue to Protect & Enhance Our Unique Community Assets

### Continue to Install Public Art that Reinforces Our Community Character

Lead Implementer(s): Art & Culture Commission

Lemont has a long tradition of using public art to beautify our community and celebrate our rich history. This beloved tradition should continue through the preservation of our existing public art installations and the support of new public art initiatives, particularly in the downtown.

### Develop a Form-Based Land Use Plan for the State Street Corridor

Lead Implementer(s): Planning & Economic Development Dept.

State Street reflects Lemont's past growth, with historic churches and homes at the north end of the corridor, midcentury multi-family housing midway through the corridor, and newer commercial development at the south end of the corridor near 127th Street. Although the corridor is predominantly residential in character, there have been some small commercial uses scattered throughout the corridor since the 1950's or earlier.

State Street, from Illinois Street to 127th Street, is a well trafficked road. Recently, several of the older homes along the corridor have been offered for sale. There are concerns that the sale of the residential properties may be hampered by the higher traffic volume on the adjacent roadway, particularly because these homes do not have particularly deep setbacks. Some of the older, more architecturally significant homes are large and because of their condition, proximity to the road, or other factors, may have a value that lends itself to ownership that lack adequate means to properly maintain the properties. Because of these factors and the corridor's history of mixed use, the Village needs to develop guidelines for allowing limited commercial and/or mixed use in this otherwise residential corridor. In the plan, design considerations should be paramount; the form of any redevelopment should be consistent with the predominantly residential character of the corridor. Once developed, the plan's recommendations should be integrated into the Unified Development Ordinance.

### Develop a Subarea Plan for the Cog Hill Property

Lead Implementer(s): Planning & Economic Development Dept.

Cog Hill is one of Lemont's unique community assets and, occupying approximately 1.5 square miles, is a major land use in the Village's planning area. The Future Land Use Map reflects the expectation that it will remain a functioning golf course for the foreseeable future. However if, during the term of this plan, it becomes probable that a change of land use is looming, then the Village should initiate a planning process dedicated to the appropriate potential redevelopment of the Cog Hill area.

## EMPLOYMENT CENTER

This district is characterized by a mix of uses, all of which generate high employment per square foot of building area. The Employment Center district shares some characteristics with the retail districts, but the primary purpose of the Employment Center district is different from the retail districts. The Employment Center district has the primary benefit of generating local employment, and may have a secondary benefit of providing useful services to local residents. Retail districts primarily exist to provide services of use to residents and visitors, with the secondary benefit of adding employment.

The buildings in this district generally house professional offices, but these offices are typically larger than the professional offices that would be found in a retail district. The buildings may vary widely in size but are generally no more than three stories high. On-site parking is typically provided and is primarily for employees, while also accommodating visitors. New development in this district will be designed to accommodate non-motorized access, both for local employees who wish to bike or walk to work and to provide pedestrian and bicycle connections to nearby retail destinations.



courtesy of Lawrence Group

## INFILL RESIDENTIAL

Properties within this district are existing residential neighborhoods, typically in platted subdivisions. New development in this district is expected to be minimal and generally limited to new construction on the few vacant lots in the area. Some redevelopment of older home sites may also occur over time, but would likely not increase the total number of dwelling units on the redevelopment parcels. Any new development or redevelopment will be consistent with the established character of these neighborhoods.

## OPEN SPACE & RECREATION

The open space and recreation district is characterized by large parks, open green spaces, and outdoor commercial recreation, such as golf courses. Although the majority of land in this area will remain open, structures such as parking facilities, recreation equipment, and buildings to support recreation uses will be present on sites in this district. Sites may range in size from a 25+ acre community park to large regional open space facilities over 100 acres. Smaller park sites that primarily serve the surrounding neighborhood are not included in this district; park sites are considered a component of a residential neighborhood.



## INDUSTRIAL

The industrial district is characterized by a wide range of industrial and manufacturing uses. New development in this district will be characterized by well designed sites that include suitable buildings with modern functional features, screening for outdoor storage and equipment, and landscaping to create street-side “curb appeal.” Since industrial and manufacturing uses are often local employment centers, new development in this district will provide non-motorized access for local employees who wish to bike or walk to work. Buildings in this district will vary widely in size and may include features such as docking bays for semi-tractors. Sites in this district will also vary widely in size.



courtesy of Roll Real Estate Group

## NEIGHBORHOOD RETAIL

The neighborhood retail district is characterized by convenience-oriented retail uses; i.e. the shops and offices that local residents need to visit on a regular basis. Destination retail uses that customers travel long distances to patronize are generally not found in this district. Buildings in this district are typically buildings occupied by a single business on a stand-alone site or small shopping centers made up of one or two buildings containing a row of attached retail units. On-site parking is generally provided.

Development within the neighborhood retail district will be designed to complement adjacent neighborhoods. Generally, neighborhood retail developments will be located at the intersection of two arterial roadways or the intersection of an arterial roadway and a collector roadway. Although located along higher traffic streets, developments in this district will be easily and comfortably accessed by walking and bicycling, and, where applicable, by transit.

Developments in this district may include single-tenant retail sites and multi-tenant shopping centers. The shopping centers in this district vary in size from less than 30,000 s.f. to 125,000 s.f. on sites of up to five acres. The smaller shopping centers in this district may not have an anchor tenant and primarily rely on the population within 1 mile or less for the majority of their customers. The larger centers in this district generally have only one anchor tenant and primarily rely on the population within 3 miles or less for the majority of their customers. Anchor tenants are usually grocers, but less common anchor tenants include pharmacies, dollar/novelty stores, and discount apparel stores. Other tenants in a neighborhood retail center commonly include food service businesses, personal service businesses (e.g. salons), and financial services businesses (e.g. banks).



courtesy of Bondy Studio



## COMMUNITY RETAIL

The community retail district is characterized by general retail uses, in addition to the convenience-oriented uses also found in the neighborhood retail district. Local residents still form the primary customer base for businesses in this district, but the businesses draw from a slightly larger area and some customers may travel longer distances to visit certain establishments. Developments in this district are generally multi-tenant shopping centers. Shopping centers in this district rely on the population within 3-6 miles for the majority of their customers. Community shopping centers may have one or two anchor tenants; these tenants are typically grocery stores, discount stores, or large specialty discount stores like a sporting goods store. The other tenants in a community shopping center are the same as what would be found in a neighborhood center: food service businesses, personal service businesses (e.g. salons), and financial services businesses (e.g. banks). However, tenants in a community center will generally represent a broader range of retail uses, including more apparel stores.

Buildings in this district are often shopping centers of 125,000 s.f. to 400,000 s.f. on sites of 10 to 40 acres. Developments in the community retail district will be more auto-oriented than those in the neighborhood retail district, but bicycle and pedestrian access will still be accommodated, and buildings will be situated to encourage walking between businesses. Due to their size and intensity, community retail developments should be located at or near the intersection of two arterial roadways.



courtesy of Bondy Studio

## CONVENTIONAL NEIGHBORHOOD

Neighborhoods in this district are characterized by mostly single-family detached homes, with some single-family attached homes and multi-family homes incorporated throughout the district. Housing types, though different, are designed to relate to each other to create cohesive streetscapes. Similarity of massing, building setbacks, architectural styles, and exterior building materials help single-family attached and multi-family buildings blend with surrounding single-family detached homes.

Neighborhoods in this district have a typical gross density of two to four dwelling units per acre. Although some developments may feature common open space in their designs, most open space will be private yards. All neighborhoods in this district will have a walkable site design with streets that connect in a logical manner throughout the neighborhood and in seamless transitions to adjacent developments. They are designed to safely accommodate walking and bicycling. However, less residents in conventional neighborhoods will live within walkable and bikable distances of commercial and recreational destinations than residents in neighborhoods with more compact development.





## CONTEMPORARY NEIGHBORHOOD

Neighborhoods in this district are characterized by mostly single-family detached homes, with some single-family attached homes and multi-family homes incorporated throughout the district. This district has a higher proportion of single-family attached and multi-family homes than the conventional neighborhood district. Like the conventional neighborhood district, the different housing types in this district are designed to relate to each other to create cohesive streetscapes. Similarity of massing, building setbacks, architectural styles, and exterior building materials help single-family attached and multi-family buildings blend with surrounding single-family detached homes. Private open spaces will be smaller than those found in the conventional neighborhood district, but more developments will feature common open space in their designs.

All neighborhoods in this district will have a walkable site design with streets that connect in a logical manner throughout the neighborhood and in seamless transitions to adjacent developments. They are designed to safely accommodate walking and bicycling. With an average gross density of five dwelling units per acre throughout the district, many residents in contemporary neighborhoods will likely live within walkable and bikable distances of commercial and recreational destinations.



courtesy of Austin College

## MIXED USE

This district is characterized by the presence of buildings that house a mix of commercial and residential uses. Within the district, there may also be some single-use buildings, but they are less prevalent than the mixed use buildings. Buildings in this district may vary greatly in size, from a 1,000 s.f. historic structure in downtown to a 250,000 s.f. building on a newly developed site featuring a community retail shopping center. Building and site designs are sensitive to and compatible with the established character of nearby neighborhoods and corridors.

Sites will be planned with care to provide adequate public and private space to accommodate the mix of uses; open green space will be provided for residents. Residents within this district will have ample opportunities to walk to dining, shopping, and services.



courtesy of Bondy Studio

## MULTI-FAMILY MIDRISE

This district is characterized by larger scale multi-family development such as apartment complexes and multi-building condominium developments. These developments will generally feature more than one building on sites of at least 10 acres, with amenities such as club houses and swimming pools for residents. Within each site, building locations, open space, parking, and storm water detention are balanced and properly integrated. Both motorized and non-motorized traffic circulation are logical and clear. Open spaces are purposefully designed and well integrated within the development, with opportunities for residents to enjoy private and public open spaces. Buildings in this district will generally be three to six stories.



courtesy of Midwest Render

## INSTITUTIONAL

Existing and planned civic, educational, governmental, and religious land uses comprise this district. Characteristics of new development within this district will vary widely depending on the particular type of proposed land use. All new development in this district should be sensitive to the established character of the surrounding neighborhood and/or corridor.



## CONSERVATION DESIGN (OVERLAY)

This overlay is characterized by residential development that permanently sets aside land to protect natural features on site. The remaining land is then developed in a compact fashion. This results in developments that yield the same or more lots than would be allowed if developed with typical subdivision design, but occupying less of the total development area. Typically, conservation developments protect 40% - 50% of the available land on a site. Conservation design is most important on land that includes environmentally sensitive features such as floodplains, significant stands of trees, highly permeable soils, and wetlands. Many conservation developments also are low impact developments that protect the natural water cycle of the landscape and reduce negative impacts of storm water runoff through implementation of green infrastructure such as bioswales, rain gardens, naturalized detention, etc.



source: Randall Arendt, *Growing Greener: Putting Conservation into Local Plans and Codes*, Island Press, 1999.

# Lemont 2030 Future Land Use Map



**Legend**

Future Land Use Category

- Contemporary Neighborhood (CTP)
- Conventional Neighborhood (CVN)
- Multi-Family Midrise (MFM)
- Infill Residential (INF)
- Neighborhood Retail (NR)
- Community Retail (CR)
- Mixed Use (MU)
- Institutional (INST)
- Employment Center (EC)
- Industrial (IND)
- Open Space and Recreation (OS&R)
- Conservation Overlay
- Utility Right of Way

