

VILLAGE OF GURNEE, ILLINOIS
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



COMPASS **2040**

ADOPTED OCTOBER 5, 2020



PREPARED BY **CAMIROS** FOR THE VILLAGE OF GURNEE
ADOPTED OCTOBER 5, 2020



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VILLAGE OF GURNEE

COMPASS **2040** INTRODUCTION



Compass 2040: The Village of Gurnee Comprehensive Plan serves as an update to the Village of Gurnee's Comprehensive Land Use Plan, which was adopted by the Village Board in August of 1997. This Plan establishes a revised set of goals, objectives, and policies to guide growth and investment, and achieve the community's long-term vision for its future. Compass 2040 has been developed through a detailed evaluation of the community's existing conditions, which include characteristics and trends relating to demographics, land use, economic climate, infrastructure, and quality of life. The Plan's strategies and recommendations capitalize on Gurnee's unique assets and establish a roadmap for sustainable growth and positive change. Policies have been designed to promote new investment, preserve and enhance existing neighborhoods, improve the community's major corridors, and encourage housing types that meet market needs.

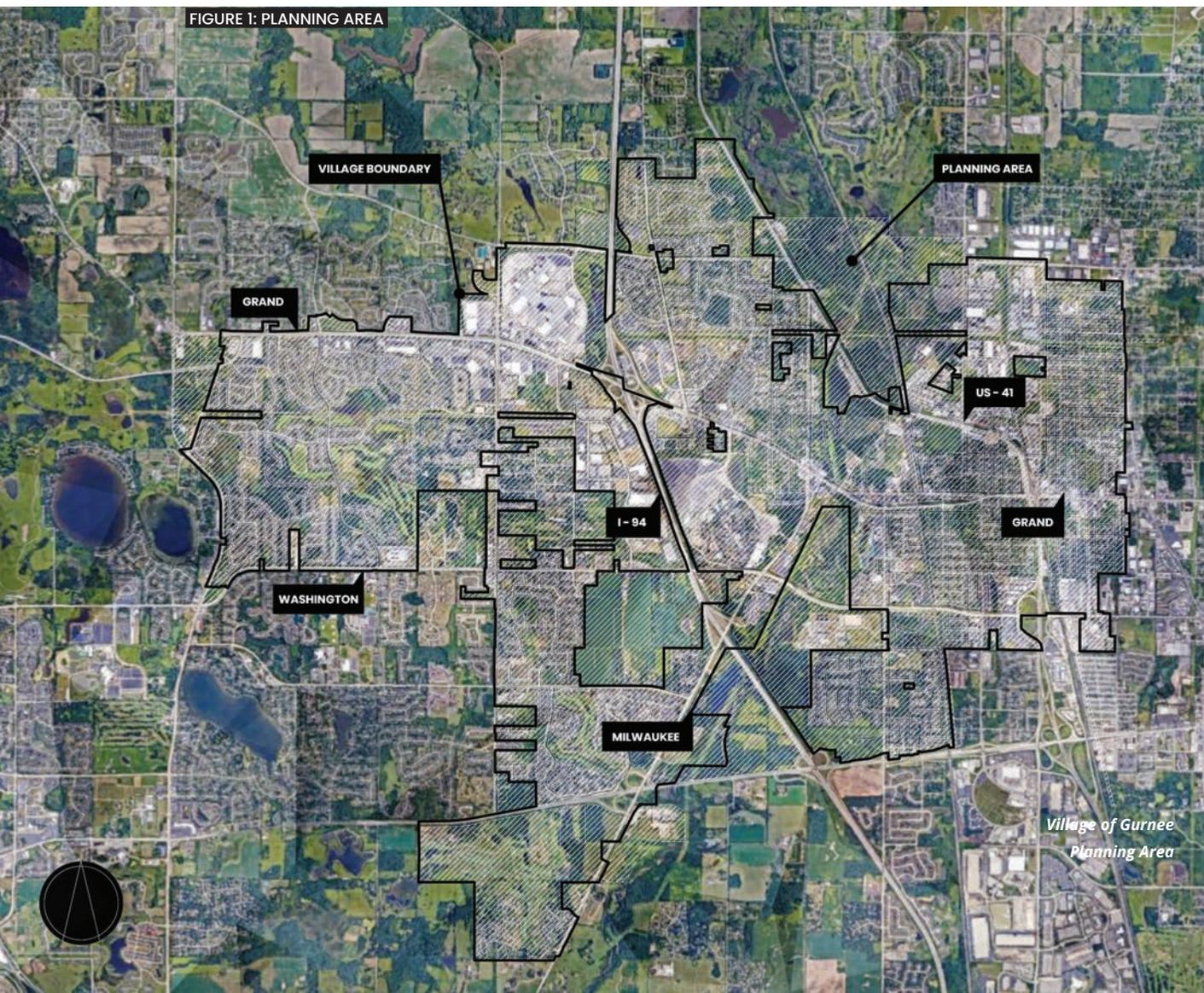
This Plan should be used as a guide to help Village officials and planners make decisions relating to the types and forms of future development, the investment of public funds and resources, and policy relating to land use, transportation, infrastructure, economic development, housing, and open space.

The Plan establishes a long-term vision for the Village, encompassing the community's common values and aspirations to serve as a guidepost to both current and future stakeholders and decision-makers. Land use strategies described in the Plan will ensure the highest and best use of land in the Village, mitigate land use conflicts, and promote responsible and sustainable growth. Plan recommendations anticipate the future needs of the community and will help prioritize public investment in capital improvements to maximize the effective use of public dollars. An adopted set of priorities will assist the Village in successfully seeking grants and awards of technical assistance. For those seeking to invest in Gurnee, the Plan will serve as an introduction to the Village's development policies and encourage projects that align with the community's vision.

PLANNING AREA

The Village of Gurnee is located in northern Illinois, roughly 4 miles west of Lake Michigan and 8 miles south of the State of Wisconsin border. Interstate 94 bisects Gurnee and connects Milwaukee, Wisconsin, (46 miles to the north) with Chicago, Illinois (38 miles to the south). Gurnee is part of the greater Chicago Metropolitan Region, which is home to roughly 9.5 million people. The municipality has a total land area of 13.6 square miles.

The Village of Gurnee's comprehensive planning area is depicted in the map below. The planning area was determined by the community's municipal boundary and its extraterritorial jurisdiction. Under Illinois State Statute (65 ILCS 5/11-12-5), a comprehensive plan is allowed to address the area extending no more than 1.5 miles from a municipality's corporate boundary, so long as the land is not incorporated by another municipality. This extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ) includes unincorporated areas of Lake County adjacent to Gurnee's current municipal boundary.



A VISION FOR GURNEE

The vision statement provided below reflects Gurnee's common aspirations as a community. The vision was developed to guide the comprehensive planning process and provide a foundation upon which the Plan's goals, objectives, and policies were developed.

Whether it be a fun destination for leisure and entertainment, a neighborhood to raise a family, or a business community to prosper, the Village of Gurnee has something for everyone. A high-quality and diverse housing stock provides options for residents of all ages, abilities, and incomes to call Gurnee home. Local jobs support workers of every skill level. Businesses and industries of every size and sector benefit from excellent public services and a diverse workforce. The Village has invested strategically in its transportation infrastructure to reduce congestion and promote active transportation options. Residents and visitors alike enjoy Gurnee's open spaces, recreation amenities, and prominent access to the forest preserve system. People aren't only visiting Gurnee for the fun, they are choosing to live, work, and invest in the community.

ACHIEVING THE VISION: GOALS, OBJECTIVES, & POLICIES

Goals, objectives and policies are defined as follows:

- **Goals** describe broad aims, desired scenarios, or ideals for achievement. A goal is typically broad in scope and on the long-range of the planning horizon.
- **Objectives** are more specific and represent an expanded description of a particular aspect of a goal.
- **Policies** are specific strategies intended to achieve the Plan's goals and objectives, moving the community closer toward its vision over the course of the Comprehensive Plan's horizon.

The goals, objectives and policies contained within Compass 2040 are focused around the categories of land use, community character areas, residential neighborhoods, economic development, environment and open space, and mobility. These themes are presented as individual chapters, each describing a comprehensive set of recommendations.



GURNEE TODAY

Gurnee is endowed with a wealth of assets that attract a great number of visitors to the community, and help to maintain a high quality of life for its residents. A Comprehensive Plan that points toward a bright future must build upon these assets, and must be rooted in a thorough understanding of the Village's past and present. This Chapter presents information regarding Gurnee's history, position within the region and previous planning efforts. A detailed overview of current community characteristics and land use trends illustrates Gurnee as it exists today. Combined, this information establishes a foundation upon which the Comprehensive Plan's goals, objectives, and policies were developed.

HISTORIC CONTEXT

Located on the banks of the Des Plaines River, the area currently known as Gurnee was originally home to Potawatomi Native Americans. These indigenous people took advantage of a natural ford crossing the Des Plaines River, which connected them to the Great Lakes and the Mississippi River.

In the 1830s, migrants from the town of Warren - in upstate New York - became the first settlers of European descent to establish permanent residence in the Gurnee area. Motivated by the prospect of government land grants, they traveled the long distance from upstate New York to the Gurnee area by foot, horseback, or covered wagon, or by way of the Great Lakes. Upon their arrival, these new residents strategically established a settlement nearby the same Des Plaines river crossing used by the Potawatomis. In 1835, a New York land company constructed a community house here, to accommodate new families in the area as they received the government land grants to their farms.

The area became a stopping point on the Chicago-Milwaukee stagecoach line, crossing the Des Plaines on a floating log bridge built at the site of the ford in 1842. The bridge soon became one of the first permanent river crossings in the region with

the construction of a stationary wooden bridge, followed by an iron bridge. Roads were established surrounding the bridge, and the area became a crossroads of transport from McHenry County to the port of Waukegan, and from Chicago to Milwaukee. Water-powered industries such as gristmills and sawmills were established along the Des Plaines, followed by businesses serving the visitors traveling through by coach. In 1850, when the larger neighboring City of Waukegan to the east sought to annex the Gurnee area, residents organized and formed Warren Township as a means to prevent the annexation.

Near the intersection of Milwaukee Road and Grand Avenue, just east of the bridge over the Des Plaines River, a two-story frame structure built in 1843 stands today as one of the oldest buildings in Lake County. Marm Rudd's Tavern served as a stagecoach stop between Chicago and Milwaukee, and as a resting place for farmers traveling east to the Waukegan port. Later called the Mutaw Tavern and the Mother Rudd House, the building also housed the area's town hall, a voting place, a post office, a candy store, and a dance hall. The barn behind the house is also believed to have served as a stop on the Underground Railroad, providing shelter for escaped slaves headed northward. The Village of Gurnee purchased the site in 1984 and fully restored the structure, which is now home to the Warren Township Historical Society.

When the railroad extended to Gurnee in 1873, it provided local farms and businesses with a quick and direct transportation route to ship products from Warren Township to central Chicago, connecting the Village with growing markets across the region. The area's commerce and development activity soon became focused around the railway station - named after former Chicago Mayor Walter S. Gurnee, a railroad land agent who purchased the right-of-way for the railroad line.

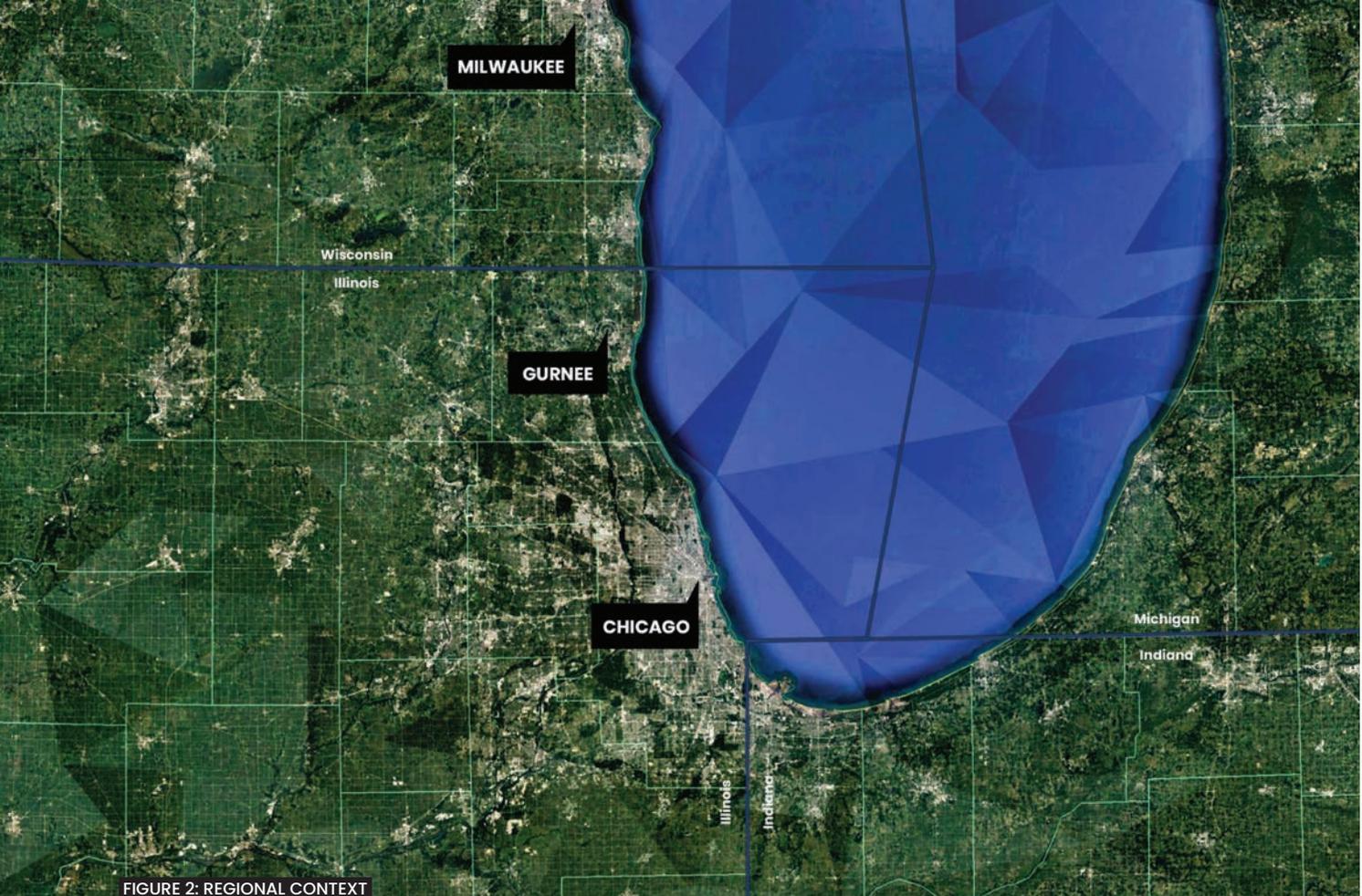


FIGURE 2: REGIONAL CONTEXT

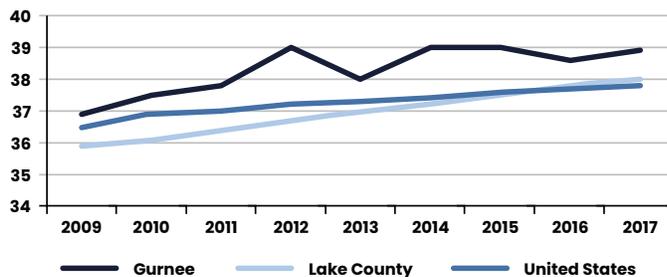
The Village of Gurnee, the first village within Warren Township, was incorporated in 1928 with only 200 residents. Gurnee experienced modest growth throughout the intervening years, but remained a largely agricultural suburb of Chicago until the 1960s, when the Interstate 94 tollway was constructed. Taking advantage of the highway access, and the ease of transportation for visitors from Chicago and the greater region, Great America opened its doors in 1976 and quickly became the region's largest theme park. In 1991, Gurnee Mills opened and became the region's largest shopping mall at the time, with nearly two million square feet of gross leasable area. As local commercial and industrial activity burgeoned and suburbanization took off, the Village experienced a period of intense growth, from 7,100 residents in 1980, to 28,800 in 2000, to over 30,000 residents today. Today, with attractions drawing over 23 million visitors every year, Gurnee has become a destination for leisure and entertainment for the Chicago region.

REGIONAL CONTEXT

Situated halfway between Milwaukee and Chicago, Gurnee residents and businesses benefit from the Village's excellent location and access to major metropolitan markets. Located just 38 miles north of the City of Chicago, residents are afforded access to the largest concentration of jobs in the Midwest, while enjoying the advantages of an amenity-rich suburb located on the verge of rural Illinois. Businesses located within the Village are provided convenient access to a diverse and skilled workforce, proximity to the interstate highway system, and a robust freight rail network.

The Village of Gurnee has successfully maintained its position as a top destination for tourism in the Midwest, attracting over 23 million visitors annually. Six Flags Great America is ranked among the top 20 amusement parks on the continent for attendance, drawing over 3 million guests to the park in 2017. The Gurnee Mills shopping mall is the third largest shopping mall in Illinois, with over 1.9 million square feet of gross leasable area. The mall draws more than 20 million visitors every year, many of whom arrive via tour bus from Chicago and surrounding communities. The Great Wolf Lodge, formerly Key Lime Cove, offers an 80,000 square foot waterpark for the enjoyment of guests staying in one of its 414 rooms. In sum, Gurnee offers a richness of experiences that few communities in Illinois can rival.

Median Age
ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2009-2017



COMMUNITY PROFILE

The community profile summarizes current conditions within the Village of Gurnee, serving as an introduction to, and overview of the community. This section includes a review of community demographics, assets, land use, and market trends. The planning team obtained its data from a variety of public sources, including the 2010 U.S. Census, the 2013-2017 American Community Survey (ACS), the Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES), and the U.S. Census Center of Economic Studies. Data was also obtained from ESRI Business Analyst and NAI Hiffman, nationally recognized business and market data providers.

Population Growth

After World War II, Gurnee was one of many rural towns in Northeastern Illinois that experienced a population boom following the construction of the Federal Highway System, specifically Interstate 94, and subsequent suburban-type development. Between 1980 and 2000, Gurnee's annual population grew by more than 1,000 residents each year.

The Village of Gurnee's population has stabilized over the past twenty years, decreasing by less than one percent since the 2010 U.S. Census, which reported 31,295 residents. The 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates approximate that 30,971 residents currently live in Gurnee.

Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) projections anticipate that Gurnee's population will increase by 2020, but at a historically lower rate than in the 20th century. CMAP projects Gurnee's population to increase by 6,424 residents between 2020 and 2050, or by an average of 214 residents per year. Likewise, ESRI Business Analyst forecasts predict relatively small change in the populations of Gurnee and Lake County over the next five years.

Population by Age

According to the American Community Survey's 2017 5-Year Estimates, the median age of Gurnee residents is 38.9, slightly higher than Lake County's median age of 38.0. Like the populations of Lake County, the United States, and most other developed countries, Gurnee's population is aging. By 2021, the median age of Gurnee residents is projected to increase to 39.2. By that time, the 55-64 age cohort is expected to become the largest group by age, at 14.6% of the total population. The Village will need to respond to this trend by adapting its housing,

services, and amenities to accommodate the needs of senior residents and help them maintain a strong quality of life.

Population by Race and Ethnicity

At 74.8%, White residents make up the largest racial group in Gurnee. Asian residents account for the second largest racial group at 11.3%. Gurnee's racial make-up is similar to that of Lake County, which has a White population share of 78.4%. Gurnee and greater Lake County have nearly equal Black population shares, at 6.7% and 6.8%, respectively.

Ethnically, 13.7% of Gurnee residents self-identify as Latino or Hispanic, which is significantly lower than the 21.1% estimate for Lake County. Latino and Hispanic populations for both the Village and County are growing. The Latino and Hispanic population share in the Village of Gurnee has increased from 9.5% in 2009 to 13.7% in 2017, while Lake County's share has grown from 18.6% to 21.1% over the same period.

While Gurnee is still home to a predominantly White and non-Latino or Hispanic population, the Village, Lake County, and the region continues to become more diverse. The Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) projects that if current demographic trends continue, persons of color will become a majority of the region's population within the next ten years. The Village has an opportunity to capitalize on this increasing diversity, both local and regional, as an economic and cultural strength.

Race & Ethnicity
ACS 2017 5 Yr. Estimates

	Gurnee		Lake County	
	Est.	%	Est.	%
Race				
WHITE	23,165	74.8%	552,121	78.4%
BLACK OR AFRICAN AMERICAN	2,088	6.7%	47,970	6.8%
AMERICAN INDIAN AND ALASKA NATIVE	146	0.5%	1,359	0.2%
ASIAN	3,496	11.3%	50,460	7.2%
NATIVE HAWAIIAN & OTHER PAC. ISLANDER	-	0.0%	401	0.1%
SOME OTHER RACE	862	2.8%	32,945	4.7%
TWO OR MORE RACES	1,214	3.9%	19,220	2.7%
Ethnicity				
NOT HISPANIC OR LATINO	26,721	86.3%	555,582	78.9%
HISPANIC OR LATINO	4,250	13.7%	148,894	21.1%
Total	30,971	100%	704,476	100%

Ethnicity

ACS 2009 & 2017 5 Yr. Estimates

	Gurnee		Lake County	
	Est.	%	Est.	%
2009 Ethnicity				
NOT HISPANIC OR LATINO	27,356	90.5%	571,567	81.4%
HISPANIC OR LATINO	2,881	9.5%	130,991	18.6%
Total	30,237	100%	702,558	100%
2017 Ethnicity				
NOT HISPANIC OR LATINO	26,721	86.3%	555,582	78.9%
HISPANIC OR LATINO	4,250	13.7%	148,894	21.1%
Total	30,971	100%	704,476	100%

Housing

According to 2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 11,780 housing units are located in the Village of Gurnee. With 74.8% of the homes in the Village constructed in the high-growth period since 1980, the local housing stock is relatively new, and predominantly comprises detached single-family dwellings. The west side of the Village became home to much of this growth, with many newer residential developments that feature large homes on relatively large lots. Contrastingly, housing stock on the east side of the Village is generally older and more modest in size, the majority having been constructed between the 1960s and 1980s.

The Village is also home to a number of senior and supportive living accommodations including Heritage Woods, Sunrise of Gurnee, and the Autumn Leaves Memory Care living facility. The Village's existing offerings were further complemented by a number of new developments opened in 2018, including Bickford of Gurnee – offering 60-units of assisted living in a new 38,000-square foot facility, and Stonebridge – a 120-unit facility offering supportive living services for adults aged 22-64.

Overall, residents are content with the quality of local housing. In a resident questionnaire conducted as part of this Comprehensive Plan process, approximately 68% of participants reported that Gurnee's existing housing stock is "good" with relation to appearance, cost, and maintenance. Approximately 63% reported stability in the quality of local housing, while roughly 22% reported it to be in a state of decline.

The Village's housing market has a vacancy rate of 3.1%, which is significantly lower than Lake County's residential vacancy rate of 6.9%. Of the 11,417 occupied housing units, 71.6% are owner-occupied and 28.4% are renter occupied. This high homeownership rate is reflective of Gurnee's predominantly single-family housing stock.

Based upon the 2013-2017 American Community Survey five-year estimates, the following shows the breakdown of housing types within the Village:

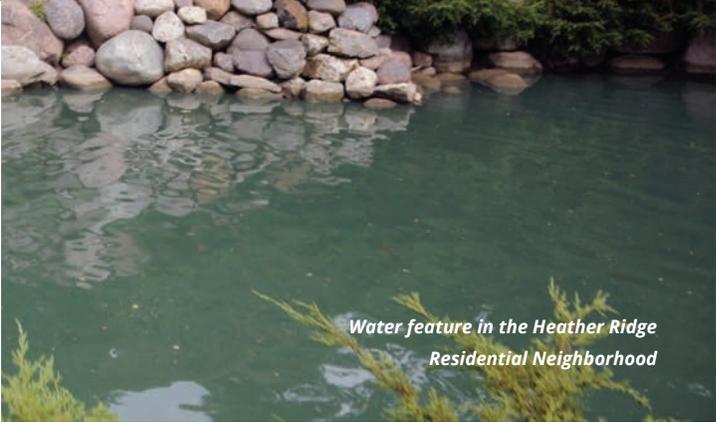
Total Occupied Units: 11,417 Type of Unit and Occupancy (Number)

	Total	Owner Occupied	Renter Occupied
SINGLE-FAMILY	7,024	6,534	490
TWO-FAMILY	50	20	30
TOWNHOUSE	1,630	1,224	406
MULTI-FAMILY	2,705	392	2,313
MULTI-FAMILY: 3-4 UNITS	393	146	247
MULTI-FAMILY: 5-9 UNITS	570	43	527
MULTI-FAMILY: 10 OR MORE UNITS	1,742	203	1,539
OTHER (MOBILE HOME)	8	8	0

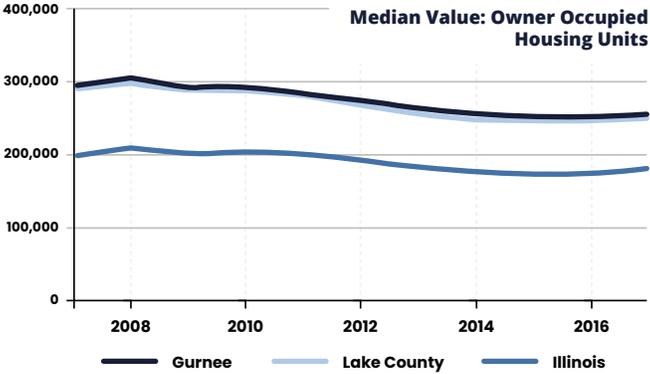
Total Occupied Units: 11,417 Type of Unit and Occupancy (Percentage of Total)

	%	% Owner Occupied	% Renter Occupied
SINGLE-FAMILY	61.5%	79.9%	15.1%
TWO-FAMILY	0.4%	0.2%	0.9%
TOWNHOUSE	14.3%	15.0%	12.5%
MULTI-FAMILY	23.7%	4.8%	71.4%
MULTI-FAMILY: 3-4 UNITS	3.4%	1.8%	7.6%
MULTI-FAMILY: 5-9 UNITS	5.0%	0.5%	16.3%
MULTI-FAMILY: 10 OR MORE UNITS	15.3%	2.5%	47.5%
OTHER (MOBILE HOME)	0.1%	0.1%	--

The median value of owner-occupied homes located in the Village is \$254,000, which is slightly higher than the median home value of \$251,400 for all of Lake County and significantly higher than the median value of Illinois homes, at \$179,700. The value of owner-occupied units in Gurnee peaked at \$304,700 in 2008. The recession hit that same year, with the collapse of the housing market at the heart of the national economic downturn. The median value of housing units in Gurnee fell to its lowest in 2016, with a slight rebound in 2017. The same figures for Lake County and Illinois have followed a similar trajectory, declining between 2008 and 2015 before increasing in 2016 and 2017. While increasing median values indicate a stabilization of the housing market, Gurnee's median home value was roughly \$50,000 less in 2017 than in 2008. The median monthly rent for rental units located in Gurnee is \$1,181, just slightly higher than Lake County's median rent of \$1,127.



Water feature in the Heather Ridge Residential Neighborhood



Gurnee's share of cost burdened residents is lower than the national average (47.4% of renters and 22.5% of owners). According to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, households who spend more than 30% of their income on housing are considered cost burdened and may struggle to afford other life necessities, such as transportation, food, and medical care. 2017 5-year estimates from the American Community Survey indicate that approximately 21% of homeowners within the Village spend more than 30% of their income on housing costs. The number of renters within the Village who are considered cost burdened is double that of homeowners, at 42%.

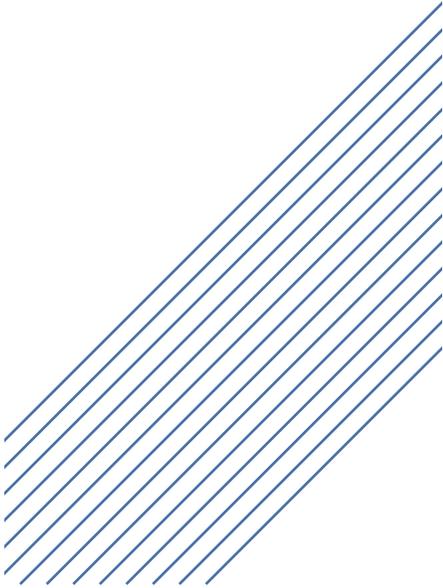
Economy

The Village of Gurnee is one of five communities in the State of Illinois that does not levy a property tax and one of three communities that does not collect a property or utility tax. Since 2000, government operations in the Village have been

supported by taxes on sales, amusement, hotel and resort, food and beverage, and state income taxes. As of fiscal year 2020, the general fund reserve is budgeted to again exceed policy standards, and operating costs are fully funded by revenues (Village of Gurnee, Annual Budget FY2020).

Commercial & Tourism

Gurnee's largest retail and entertainment uses are located around the intersection of I-94 and Grand Avenue, a concentration comprising over 125 restaurants and 300 individual retailers. High vehicular traffic volumes – in excess of 90,000 vehicles per day on I-94 and nearly 50,000 vehicles per day on Grand Avenue – are critical to the success of establishments within the Grand and Tri-State Commercial Districts. The Village's top three major commercial attractions – Gurnee Mills Mall, Six Flags Great America, and the Great Wolf Lodge (formerly Key Lime Cove) are located near this intersection.



Top Right:
Gurnee Mills



Bottom Right:
Six Flags Great America
Photo: Jeremy Thompson (Flickr)

The opening of Great Wolf Lodge in the summer of 2018, following a \$65 million renovation to the former Key Lime Cove location, signals that Gurnee is successfully maintaining its position as a premier retail and entertainment destination within the region. The full-service resort features 414 rooms, over 80,000 square feet of indoor water park attractions, multiple restaurants, and a variety of amusements on-site. The Gurnee location marks Great Wolf Lodge's 17th resort opening in North America.

The third largest mall in Illinois, Gurnee Mills is visited by more than 20 million people each year. While many malls have closed their doors over the past decade, Gurnee Mills has stayed competitive by investing in facility improvements and actively attracting new retailers, restaurants, and entertainment uses to meet changing consumer demands. Since its acquisition by Simon Property Group in 2007, the mall has been diversifying into a "hybrid center," featuring a combination of both outlet and full-service stores. Continuing to attract new tenants and retailers, in 2017 the mall opened a remodeled Marcus Cinemas location,

numerous new tenants including Portillos, Buffalo Wild Wings, and a 100,000-square foot Floor & Décor home improvement store. Also in 2017, the Village and Gurnee Mills partnered to complete a \$6 million common area renovation through a redevelopment agreement – critical to continuing successful tenant recruitment. Store openings have continued, with 2018 seeing the opening of a Dick's Sporting Goods location, as well as The Room Place furniture store.

Six Flags Great America's 300 acres of theme park and 20 acres of outdoor water features attracted more than three million visitors to the park in 2017, ranking the location as one of the top 20 amusement parks in North America by attendance. The park continues to invest in new rides and attractions to maintain its position as one of the top attractions in the region. Recent improvements include "The Joker," the park's 15th roller coaster, opened in 2017, "Mardi Gras Hangover," the world's largest loop coaster in 2018, and "Maxx Force," in 2019 – a new coaster that holds records for the tallest and fastest inversions, as well

as the fastest launch in North America. With 19 parks across North America, the Six Flags Entertainment Corporation is the world's largest regional theme park company. For 2020 Six Flags Entertainment announced the opening of Tsunami Surge in Hurricane Harbor. Tsunami Surge will be the tallest water coaster in the world, towering over 86 feet in height,

Industry

Gurnee's industrial uses are concentrated within its three industrial districts, the Tri-State Industrial District, the Northeast Industrial District, and the smaller Washington Industrial District. Office uses are generally located around the periphery of the Tri-State Industrial District and along major roadways, including Grand Avenue, Washington Street, Milwaukee Avenue, and Dilleys Road. The advantageous locational characteristics of the

Village's industrial parks – and the amenities they offer – continue to attract new investment to the Village. Tri-State Business Park's offering of 10GBps fiber internet has been a boon to the park's appeal to advanced manufacturing clientele; the park has seen the addition of significant square footage in recent years, including numerous expansions and new buildings, most recently including the completion of nearly 200,000 square feet of warehouse distribution for Luxor Furniture.

Employment

The Village of Gurnee has an unemployment rate of 4.9%, lower than the surrounding Lake County rate of 6.1% according to 2017 estimates from the American Community Survey. Gurnee Mills and Six Flags Great America together constitute over 1/3 of the total jobs within the Village. It is important to note that



*Tri-State Business Park
Gurnee, Illinois*

Six Flags Great America is primarily seasonal employment, and Gurnee Mills may include seasonal fluctuations amongst the retail establishments during the holiday season.

Perhaps unsurprisingly given these figures, Retail Trade is the largest industry by sector in Gurnee. It is followed by Accommodation and Food Service, Manufacturing, Health Care & Social Assistance, and Administration. The principal employers in Gurnee are as follows:

- Bass Pro Shops Outdoor World
- Domino Amjet
- Dynapar Corp.
- Great Wolf Lodge Illinois
- Gurnee Mills
- Gurnee School District 56
- Home Depot
- Jewel-Osco
- Kalle USA Inc.
- Menards
- Nosco Inc.
- Nypro Chicago
- Ohio Medical LLC
- Six Flags Great America
- Target Stores
- Village of Gurnee
- Walmart Stores
- Warren Township High School District 121
- Weiman Products
- Woodland School District 50

Source: 2019 Illinois Manufacturers Directory
2019 Illinois Services Directory, Dun & Bradstreet

The majority of residents travel outside of the Village to work, with only 9.3% of the population both living and working in Gurnee. Of those workers who commute into the Village for work, more than 11% travel from nearby Waukegan, with still others coming from Chicago, Kenosha, and other communities. Using data provided by Local Employment Dynamics (LED), a partnership between the Illinois Department of Employment Security and the U. S. Census Bureau, the following tables describe the inflow and outflow of workers to and from the Village.

Where Gurnee Residents Live and Work

Where Gurnee Residents Work

GURNEE	11.2%
CHICAGO	8.3%
WAUKEGAN	8.2%
LIBERTYVILLE	3.6%
VERNON HILLS	3.6%

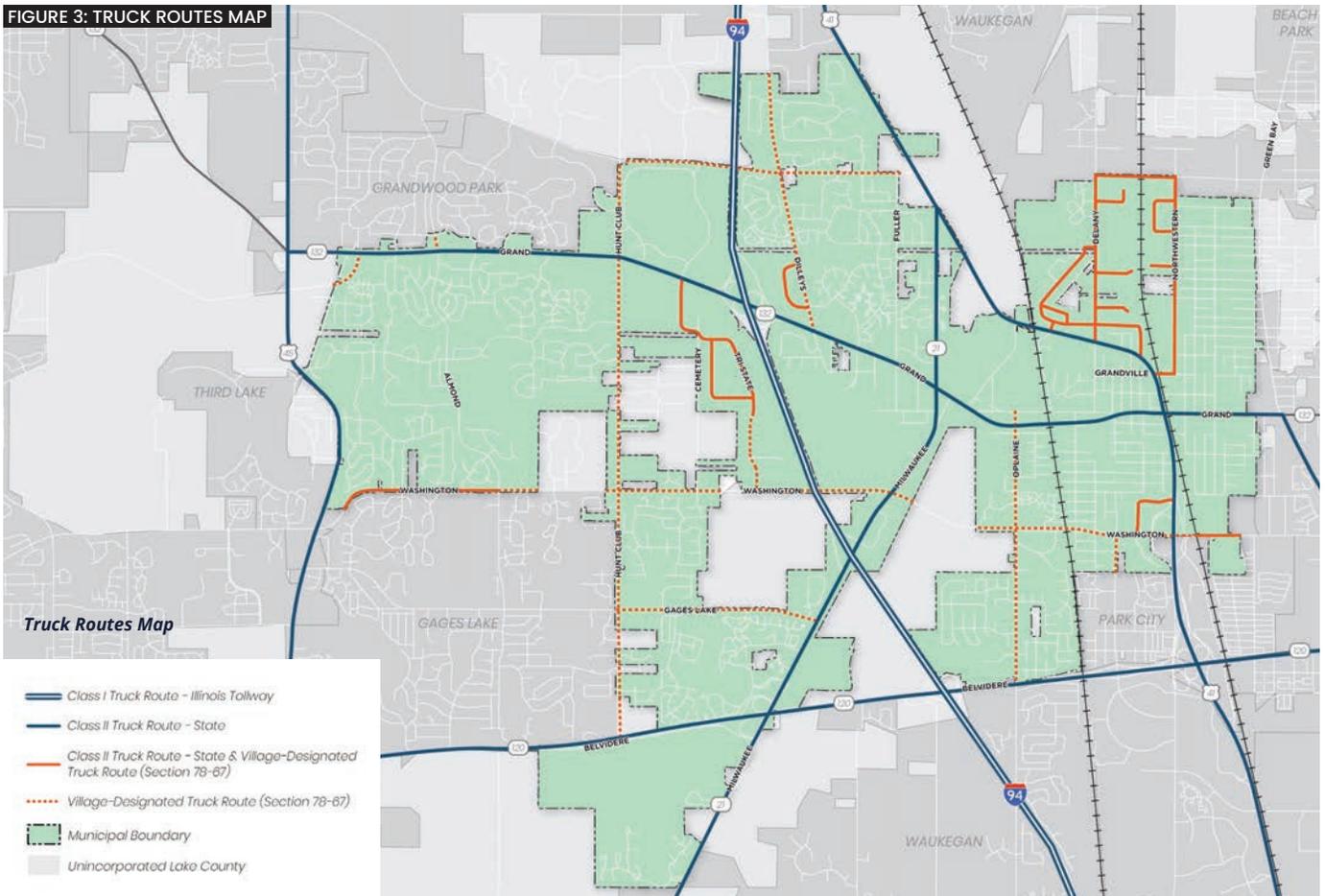
Where Gurnee Workers Reside

WAUKEGAN	11.3%
GURNEE	7.5%
CHICAGO	5.7%
ZION	2.8%
ROUND LAKE BEACH	2.4%

Employment and Place of Residence by Municipality

	Gurnee	Libertyville	Round Lake Beach	Vernon Hills	Mundelein	Zion	Waukegan	Kenosha, WI
EMPLOYED IN MUNICIPALITY	22,013	17,642	3,459	19,388	13,550	5,506	32,464	37,505
EMPLOYED IN THE MUNICIPALITY, LIVING OUTSIDE THE MUNICIPALITY	92.0%	92.0%	87.8%	95.4%	89.9%	83.0%	80.7%	61.4%
EMPLOYED AND LIVING IN THE MUNICIPALITY	8.0%	8.0%	12.2%	4.6%	10.1%	17.0%	19.3%	38.6%
LIVING IN THE MUNICIPALITY	15,686	10,426	12,566	13,172	15,933	10,568	34,699	48,930
LIVING IN THE MUNICIPALITY, EMPLOYED OUTSIDE THE MUNICIPALITY	88.8%	86.5%	96.6%	93.3%	91.4%	91.2%	81.9%	70.4%
LIVING AND EMPLOYED IN THE MUNICIPALITY	11.2%	13.5%	3.4%	6.7%	8.6%	8.8%	18.1%	29.6%

FIGURE 3: TRUCK ROUTES MAP



Gurnee’s labor dynamics (where workers live and work) are similar to surrounding suburbs. The larger nearby cities of Waukegan and Kenosha, WI deviate from the dynamics of Gurnee and its nearby suburbs, which is to be expected. They have been included as part of the table for illustrative purposes.

Transportation

Gurnee’s system of well-connected roadways and direct access to I-94 provide local mobility and regional access to the greater Chicago and Milwaukee metropolitan areas. With limited public transit, pedestrian, and bicycle facilities, the Village is currently an auto-oriented community. The majority of households within the Village own two or more vehicles, and 88% of Village residents commute to work alone in their cars. CMAP estimates also indicate that average Vehicle Miles Traveled for the Village are higher than those of Lake County and the larger region, suggesting that residents are not only driving to work, but may also be driving further to access other services and amenities.

This Plan identifies a variety of opportunities for enhancing the vehicular transportation network and expanding alternative transportation options for residents of Gurnee.

Roadway Network

The majority of major roadways in the Gurnee are not under the Village’s jurisdiction. I-94 is a federal highway under the jurisdiction of the Illinois Tollway. US Route 45 and US Route 41 (Skokie Highway) are federal highways that fall under IDOT’s jurisdiction. IDOT also controls Illinois state routes in Gurnee, including Route 132 (Grand Avenue), Route 21 (Milwaukee Avenue), and Route 120 (Belvidere Road). Lake County has jurisdiction of eleven roadways in Gurnee, or segments thereof. The Village’s lack of jurisdiction over local roadways limits its ability to address issues relating to much of the network, meaning future roadway infrastructure projects may require interagency coordination. A recent example of successful coordination, and replicable forward-thinking policy movement on the part of the Village, is the effort to maintain a bicycle and pedestrian connection across the Stearns School Road bridge, as the Tollway Authority plans to replace the bridge within the near future to accommodate additional lanes of traffic on I-94.



Above Left:
University Park Playground



Above Right:
Richard A. Welton Village Plaza

Truck Route Network

A truck route network is a system of connected roadways that are designed to support heavy commercial traffic and avoid residential areas. IDOT's Designated Truck Route System consists of three roadway classifications: Class I, II, and III. Each roadway type must be constructed in accordance with specific design standards and is subject to dimensional and weight restrictions for vehicles. The only Class I Facility located within Gurnee's municipal boundary is I-94, an interstate highway under the jurisdiction of the Illinois Tollway.

The Village also establishes truck routes in Section 78-67 of its municipal code. Per Village Code, trucks may not use any non-designated street, except for the purpose of making a delivery, and then for one block only. While some of Gurnee's designated truck routes are recognized by IDOT, the majority are not. Both Village and IDOT-designated truck routes are illustrated in Figure 3.

Public Transit

The Village is served by PACE, the suburban bus service of the Regional Transportation Agency, the local public transportation agency for the Chicago area suburbs. PACE routes offer connections to the Waukegan and Grayslake Metra Station (commuter rail) and the regional destinations of Six Flags and Gurnee Mills. Currently, the PACE system provides limited connections to the office and industrial centers, limiting the ability of workers to commute by public transit. Opportunities for improved connections to major employment centers as well as adoption of signal over-ride technology should be explored as means to expedite and enhance public transportation options.

Parks & Open Space

The Gurnee Park District serves the residents within the Village of Gurnee, in addition to the residents of the following subdivisions: Continental Village and Hickory Hills in Waukegan and Countryside and Quality Acres in unincorporated Warren Township. There is a significant and diverse amount of open space within the Village enjoyed by the residents - the Park District maintains 34 parks and facilities. These include 24 playgrounds, six outdoor tennis courts, 23 outdoor basketball courts, 21 soccer fields, 16 baseball or softball fields, six outdoor volleyball courts, three small skate parks, 14 picnic shelters, a fishing area, a sled hill, four outdoor ice rinks, a band shell, dance hall and summer kitchen.

In addition, there are two facilities not maintained by the Park District. The first is Dunhill Park, which is a mini park in the Fairway Ridge subdivision located at the northwest intersection of Route 21 and Route 120, owned and maintained by the Fairway Ridge Homeowner Association. Second, an open space area located within the Conservancy at Ravinia Woods neighborhood is owned and maintained by The Ravinia Woods Homeowners Association. The majority of this area is set aside for wildlife conservation.

Within the 2010 Gurnee Park District Master Plan, the following analysis was conducted using the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) recommended standard for parkland per person, calculated by community and neighborhood park standards. Community parks as those parks that are intended to serve a large part of the community as a whole, designed for a 1 to 3 mile radius of service and usually serve multiple neighborhoods. Per the NRPA: "Community parks usually have both day and evening activities which can result in lighted



Above: Village of Gurnee, Village Hall

fields and amenities. Community parks include a mix of active and passive activities and attract users of all ages. Large play structures, baseball fields, football fields, soccer fields, hiking trails, sled hills, and swimming pools can all be part of a community park.” The NRPA generally categorizes community parks as those 15 to 50 acres in size, though it may as small as 10 acres. These parks are designed for a 1 to 3 mile radius of service and usually serve two or more neighborhoods. They are also easily accessible by multiple modes of transportation with on-site parking available. Neighborhood parks are smaller, and serve the surrounding neighborhoods within a 1/4 to 1/2 mile radius of service. They are generally 5 to 10 acres, but can be as small as 2 acres. Per the NRPA: “Neighborhood park features include aesthetically designed play areas, picnic areas, splash pads, ball fields, skating, open space for field games, shelters, and walking paths.”

The NRPA recommends a standard of 5-8 acres of community parks per 1,000 persons, and 2 acres of neighborhood parks per 1,000 persons. The 2010 Gurnee Park District Master Plan has adopted the standard of 6 acres per 1,000 for community parks and 4 acres per 1,000 for neighborhood parks.

The Park District found that the Village meets these standards on the cumulative level, which would be 10.0 acres of parkland per 1,000 persons. However, when broken down by park type there is a deficiency for community parks. The following calculations illustrate this using the 2010 population used in the study of 34,170.

	Total Parks 10ac/1,000	Neighborhood Parks 4ac/1,000	Community Parks 6ac/1,000
EXISTING	399.9ac	341.7ac	131.8ac
REQUIRED	341.7ac	136.7ac	205.0
DIFFERENCE	+58.2ac	+131.8ac	-73.6ac

Village Government

Gurnee operates as a Village served by a Village President, also referred to as the Mayor, and six Trustees that compose the Village Board. The Mayor and Village Board are supported by Village staff and several boards and commissions. The Village is a home-rule unit by virtue of its population – the Illinois Constitution grants automatic home-rule status to municipalities of populations greater than 25,000 residents. Five municipal departments, including Administration, Community Development, Fire, Police, and Public Works, are responsible for daily operations, and are described in greater detail below. The majority of municipal operations are based at Village Hall, located at 325 North O’Plaine Road.

Administration: The Administration Department prepares and maintains Village records and official documents, oversees contracts and intergovernmental agreements, and handles finance, personnel, and information systems for the Village.

Community Development: The Community Development Department handles construction, planning, and infrastructure projects, and oversees the safety and maintenance of property in the Village. The department is composed of four divisions: Building Safety, Engineering, Planning and Zoning, and Property Maintenance.



*Village of Gurnee
Public Works Fleet*

Fire: The Fire Department provides fire protection and prevention services for property located within Gurnee’s municipal boundaries. Operations are based out of Fire Station Number 1 (4580 Old Grand Avenue) and Fire Station Number 2 (6581 Dada Drive). The department’s Insurance Service Office (ISO) rating ranks Gurnee’s safety response within the top 14.5% of fire stations in Illinois.

Police: The Police Department works to protect the community through crime prevention and control, traffic enforcement, neighborhood watch, and youth assistance programs. The department operates out of the Police Station (100 North O’Plaine Road) and a substation located within Gurnee Mills. Community outreach conducted through the Comprehensive Plan process did not find crime or violence to be an issue within the community.

Public Works: The Public Works Department is responsible for the operation and maintenance of Village facilities and vehicles, public rights-of-way, and public utility systems, including water, sanitary, and sewer systems. Operations are based out of the Public Works Facilities (1151 Kilbourne Road), and are divided into four divisions: Street, Utility, Forestry, and Vehicle Maintenance.

Public Education

Public education in Gurnee is provided by three school districts: Gurnee School District 56, Woodland School District 50, and Warren Township High School District 121. These are supplemented by a variety of private and religious schools both within Gurnee and the surrounding municipalities. Post-secondary education is provided by Columbia College and DeVry University, both of which operate satellite campuses in Gurnee, as well as the College of Lake County and its associated University Center, the only entity of its kind in Illinois, offering bachelor’s degrees from 16 area colleges and universities at its Grayslake facility.

PREVIOUS PLANNING EFFORTS

A review of past plans, studies, and reports acknowledges the work that has already been done in Gurnee and helped guide the planning process. The Gurnee Comprehensive Plan does not replace, but serves as an umbrella for past plans, studies, and reports. Existing planning documents work at scales larger and smaller than a comprehensive plan, but all helped to inform this Plan's goals, objectives, and policies, and will work as extensions of the Comprehensive Plan. Recognizing the value of past efforts, the following documents helped guide the planning process and provided a framework upon which the Comprehensive Plan was built.

Comprehensive Land Use Plan Update (1997)

The Village of Gurnee adopted its most recent Comprehensive Land Use Plan Update in 1997. This plan was designed to guide developers, decision makers, and other officials and commissions as growth and development progress. The plan's goals and objectives were crafted to serve as the basis for land use decisions within and around the community to ensure that future development occurs in an appropriate manner, important issues are addressed, and that adequate facilities are provided to accommodate future development and population growth.

One of the main focuses of the plan is maintaining a low-density, single-family community, with between 65% and 82% of the housing stock as single-family housing, and encouraging future development and population growth in undeveloped areas. Additionally, the plan aims to maintain a strong, balanced employment base and strives to reach a ratio of 0.9 jobs per resident.

The goals of the comprehensive land use plan include providing diverse housing options for residents of all ages; preserving natural features and open space, especially around the Des Plaines River; coordinating residential neighborhoods with commercial areas; coordinating traffic and road patterns with residential and commercial development; coordinating industrial and office/service development with major thoroughfares, such as I-94 and US 41; and creating a safe, pleasant environment for industrial, office, service, and retail uses. The plan emphasizes the need to closely coordinate with various jurisdictions for effective growth management and discusses the need to annex areas to accommodate future growth. The plan also highlights the need to coordinate with IDOT and PACE in addressing land use issues tied to state transportation and transit systems.

East Grand Revitalization Study (2004)

This study was designed to help guide corridor improvements and potential improvements on a site-by-site basis for the redevelopment of the East Grand Gateway Overlay District. The study is the third in a series of planning studies for the redevelopment of the East Grand Avenue Gateway area, providing recommendations for streetscape enhancements, signage, and buildings, as well as site specific recommendations for the central, eastern, and western subareas. Guidelines include façade improvements, curb cut consolidations, building design guidelines, landscaping guidelines, lighting, above and below ground utilities, and other existing factors.

The goals of this study include increasing safety for both pedestrians and vehicles; increasing green space for sidewalks, landscaping, and public amenities; revitalizing the East Grand Avenue corridor through appropriate economic development; encouraging pedestrian-oriented development and mixed uses to improve neighborhood identity; and enhancing East Grand Avenue as a Village gateway.

Village of Gurnee Strategic Plan Fiscal Years 2017-2021 (2015)

In 2015, work began to update the Village's Strategic Plan, which was written in 2007. The update process aimed to revisit community concerns and areas of focus to develop new Key Performance Areas, which include maintaining fiscal sustainability; working with public and private partners to preserve and maintain infrastructure; maintaining exceptional Village services and staff; keeping the Village safe and livable; and providing a high-quality lifestyle for Village residents.

The Plan intends to resolve specific issues, such as creating a formalized plan to fill staff vacancies; working with Pace to expand transportation options; maintaining communication with manufacturers to identify and respond to issues or concerns; stabilizing and improving property values; maintaining and enhancing deteriorating parking lots; expanding pedestrian connectivity; and stormwater management. Village departments and divisions are expected to provide status reports on their action steps and initiatives during the annual budget development process.

Revitalization Strategies for East Grand Avenue (2016)

Revitalization Strategies for East Grand Avenue is a technical assistance report completed by the Urban Land Institute (ULI) of Chicago to address issues and opportunities for eastern Grand Avenue. The study area includes the Grand Avenue east of the US 41 / Skokie Highway intersection, designated the "East Grand Gateway." While western segments of the Grand Avenue corridor have prospered, East Grand has aged and depreciated, largely consisting of local businesses in older strip centers with declining property values. The report focuses on recommendations to revitalize and generate new activity in the study area, led by four guiding principles:

- Focus on a sense of community, with a preference for independent businesses
- Tie into the neighborhood
- Consider mixed-use and multi-family residential uses
- Adopt a multi-faceted perspective and employ both short term and long term strategies

The report also identifies development opportunities sites and proposes placemaking concepts for the East Grand Gateway.



GURNEE TOMORROW

As an outer-ring suburb of Chicago with excellent access to highway, transit, and freight transportation networks, Gurnee experienced significant growth between 1980 and 2000. Historically, the community developed as a desirable community where people can both live and work. While population is not anticipated to increase rapidly in the coming decades, Gurnee will continue to grow as residents and businesses take advantage of the Village's excellent location, assets, and amenities.

As new technologies emerge, populations shift, and consumer demand evolves, Gurnee can position itself to find opportunity in future change. Gurnee can adapt to a changing global economy and shifts in regional demographics through responsive municipal policy and regulation. The Gurnee Comprehensive Plan establishes a series of goals, objectives, and policies to help guide decision-makers as they look to the future. These planning elements are organized around the following themes:

- 01 Land Use** - Land use policies promote future development that is balanced, provides consumer choice, diversifies the local economy, encourages high-quality design, and is environmentally sensitive.
- 02 Community Character Areas** - Gurnee is made up of a range of commercial, office, industrial, and residential districts that give the community its distinct character. Two sub-area plans were created for existing opportunity sites to promote development to support the overall land use goals of the Village. In addition, policies are established for the continued development of the Village Center and East Grand Gateway.
- 03 Economic Development** - The jobs and tax revenue generated by Gurnee businesses support residents and fund public services. The Plan's economic development policies support existing business activity and attract a balanced variety of new development.
- 04 Environment and Open Space** - The Plan includes policies designed to promote and protect Gurnee's invaluable network of open spaces and natural resources.
- 05 Mobility** - Transportation objectives and policies were designed to improve local multi-modal transportation networks in order to move people and goods safely, efficiently, and comfortably while reducing negative impacts on livability and the environment.

LAND USE

The Comprehensive Plan summarizes the community's long-term vision for Gurnee and establishes a framework through which to achieve that vision. The overall goal of the Plan's land use strategy is to establish a balanced diversity of land uses, which lends to long-term economic stability and resilience. A diversity of land uses as part of long-term land use strategy provides investors with flexibility to meet the development demands of the marketplace as demographic, lifestyle, and market conditions change over time. Gurnee contains a rich array of land uses and a healthy stock of unimproved land suitable to serve all types of new development in the future.

This Chapter presents existing land use patterns in the form of an Existing Land Use Map, which serves as a starting point, and recommends changes to those patterns in the form of a Future Land Use Map. Land use strategies have been applied to the parcel level in order to guide future development and redevelopment, promote balance among land uses, and achieve a high-quality environment. The Future Land Use Map establishes priorities for the types of future development on land within the Village's municipal boundary and in the surrounding extraterritorial jurisdiction.

Future development within Gurnee will be directly shaped by the Village's Zoning Ordinance and related development controls, which regulate and manage land use. The Future Land Use Map and supporting recommendations provide a set of policies upon which to base future amendments to the zoning ordinance and direct broader land use decision-making.

Land Use Designations

Parcels within the Village and in the surrounding extraterritorial jurisdiction were inventoried and classified into land use designations through a combination of research, data analysis, and field work. The Village's Existing Land Use is presented below as Figure 4. The following land use designations have been designed to describe each land use category included in both the Existing Land Use Map and Future Land Use Map. Certain land use classifications from the existing map have been altered, consolidated or eliminated on the Future Land Use Map. Likewise, the Future Land Use Map contains new classifications not included on the Existing Land Use Map. These changes are indicated for each classification in the list below. Not all categories are included in each map.

Village of Gurnee Land Use Classifications – Existing and Future Land Use

Existing Land Use	Future Land Use Classification	Purpose Statement
LOW DENSITY	LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL (<3 DU/ACRE)	The purpose of the Low Density Residential land use classification is to preserve and maintain the character of Gurnee's large-lot, low-density neighborhoods, which tend to be buffered from land uses of higher intensity. The land use category includes primarily single-family detached homes.
MEDIUM DENSITY	MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL (3 TO 8 DU/ACRE)	The purpose of the Medium Density Residential land use classification is to provide for a mix of housing types on relatively smaller lots within the Village. Areas may include single family detached dwellings, townhouses (single-family attached) and two-family housing developments.
HIGH DENSITY MULTI-FAMILY	HIGH-DENSITY RESIDENTIAL (>8 DU/ACRE)	High Density Residential areas are intended to provide for higher density residential developments near transportation corridors. Areas may contain townhouse, two-family, and multi-family housing. Multi-family residential structures include multiple housing units stacked vertically and horizontally. These buildings have a common point of entry, with shared hallways and amenities. Apartment complexes and senior housing facilities are considered to be multi-family uses.
COMMERCIAL/BUSINESS	COMMERCIAL	The Commercial land use category includes smaller retail and service businesses that meet the day-to-day needs of community residents, and larger retailers and service providers that meet the demands of a regional market beyond the Village, such as national retailers and "big box" developments. Hospitality uses may complement both Commercial and Entertainment land use categories.
--	ENTERTAINMENT	Entertainment areas include businesses which provide some form of entertainment, including amusement parks, theaters, arcades, and other attractions.

OFFICE/SERVICE	OFFICE	Office uses consist primarily of professional firms and medical practitioners that provide employment within Gurnee. This land use category includes both large office spaces in campus-styled developments and stand-alone office spaces on smaller properties, which may be in converted structures. Areas may also feature medical offices, clinics, and facilities.
--	EAST GRAND CORRIDOR	The East Grand Corridor serves as a mixed-use gateway into Gurnee along Grand Avenue. The area is predominantly made up of smaller commercial uses, with some multi-family residential development. Small- and medium-scale retail and service establishments, and mixed-use developments are appropriate for future site redevelopment. Development types should promote pedestrian connectivity and be oriented toward the corridor.
	VILLAGE CENTER	The Village Center features a mix of uses ranging from low-intensity professional offices to single family homes. Lots located in the Village Center tend to be smaller, creating difficulties in accommodating on-site parking. The conversion of residential uses into low-intensity and small-scale commercial uses is encouraged within the Village Center, though future redevelopment should maintain the area's traditional neighborhood character.
INDUSTRIAL/OFFICE RESEARCH	INDUSTRIAL	Industrial uses range from the manufacturing and assembly of goods using raw materials, to warehouse and fulfillment centers that distribute finished products. Industrial areas may also include high-tech businesses, such as data farms, research and development firms, and digital manufacturers, which focus on the use of technology to improve product creation. Industrial uses can generate noise and may have aesthetic and environmental impacts on the surrounding community.
--	INDUSTRIAL MIXED USE	The Industrial Mixed-Use land use category is intended to serve as a transition zone between traditional industrial areas and non-industrial areas, especially where commercial uses have started infringing on traditional industry. Areas may contain commercial, including hotel and entertainment uses, office, and light industrial uses, including research and development and small-scale warehousing. Industrial uses must conduct all operations indoors and may not cause extensive impacts on surrounding property. With excellent access to transportation corridors, Industrial Mixed-Use areas are employment centers and intended to be flexible to changes in development demand.
PUBLIC/QUASI-PUBLIC	PUBLIC/SEMI-PUBLIC	Public and semi-public land uses include properties intended for public access that support quality of life within the community. This includes government uses, such as municipal facilities or police and fire stations; educational uses, such as schools; larger medical uses, such as hospitals; and religious uses, such as places of worship and congregation.
--	PARKS & OPEN SPACE	Parks include public or private sites and facilities that provide active and passive recreational amenities. Open space areas include land that has not been designated as active parkland, but may contain environmental features such as large stands of trees, streams, and wetlands. Cemeteries and land associated with trail rights-of-way can also be classified as open space.
	UTILITY & RAILROAD	Utility uses include sites and facilities that accommodate critical infrastructure, wastewater treatment sites, water towers, power generation and substations, and electrical support towers. Railroad uses, such as private rights-of-way, switching yards, and other facilities are also included.

Future Land Use Map

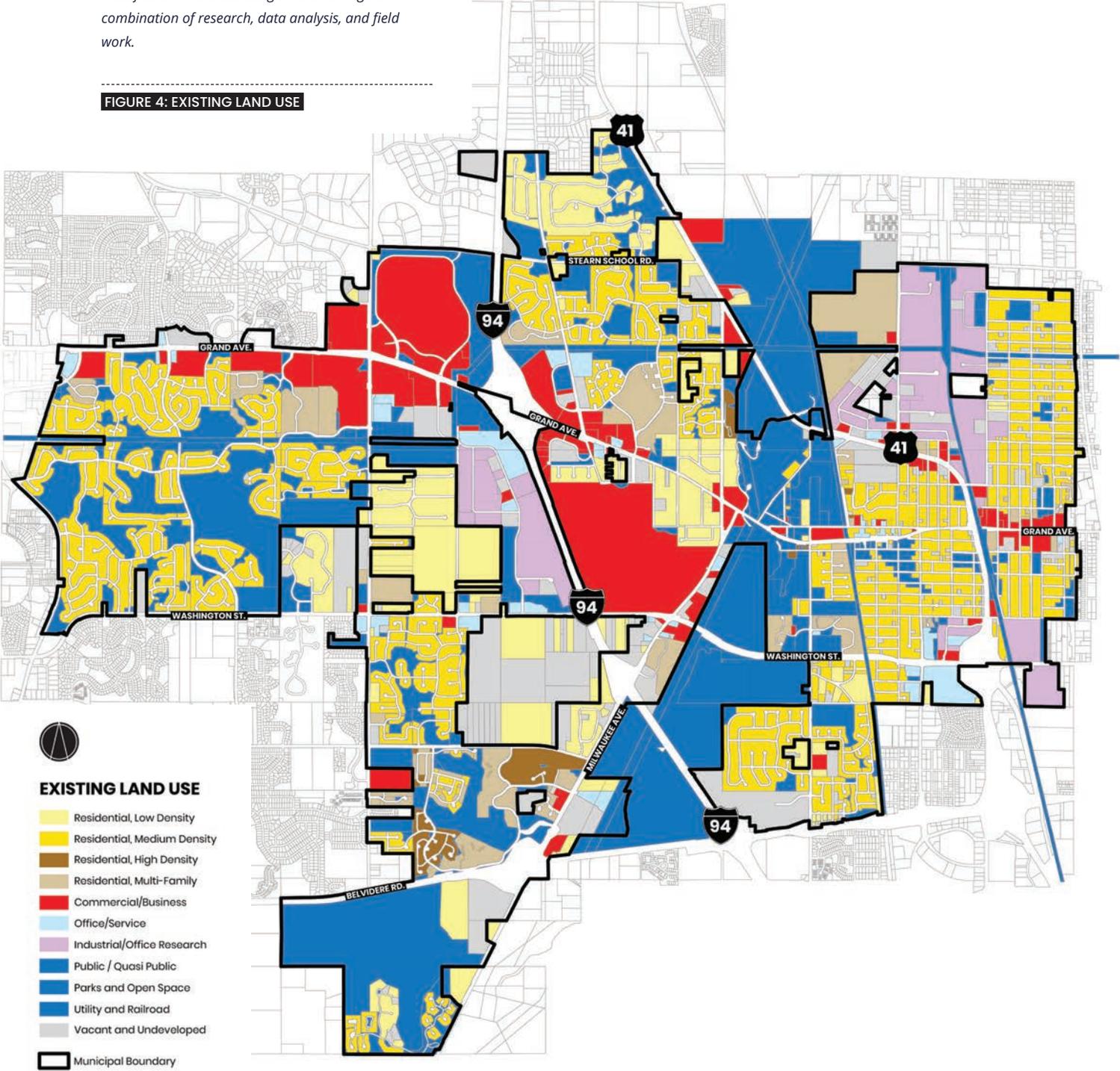
Future growth in Gurnee will occur through the development of vacant parcels and the redevelopment of under-utilized and older properties as well as infill. Planning for future land use is essential to supporting the highest and best use of land, promoting growth that is responsible and sustainable, and achieving the community's long-term vision. The goal of the Future Land Use Map and supporting policy is to ensure that development occurs in a balanced manner that supports a diverse and stable economy, provides a variety of housing choices to serve the needs of all residents, ensures high quality and environmentally sensitive development, and provides a full range of services and amenities.

Presented as Figure 4, the Future Land Use Map illustrates a strategic pattern of land uses by category and intensity. Changes between the Existing Land Use Map and Future Land Use Map include the removal of existing land use categories, the addition of new land use categories, and the reclassification of parcels into a different category. Changes in land use are discussed in greater detail in the following section. Existing uses do not change when a property's future land use classification is unaligned with existing uses. Rather, the reclassification represents a recommended change in land use direction for the future of an area. All parcels currently designated as vacant and undeveloped on the Existing Land Use Map (Figure 4) have been assigned a future land use classification, in order to ensure that future development is of a desired type and compatible with surrounding uses.

EXISTING LAND USE

Parcels within the Village and in the surrounding extraterritorial jurisdiction were inventoried and classified into land use designations through a combination of research, data analysis, and field work.

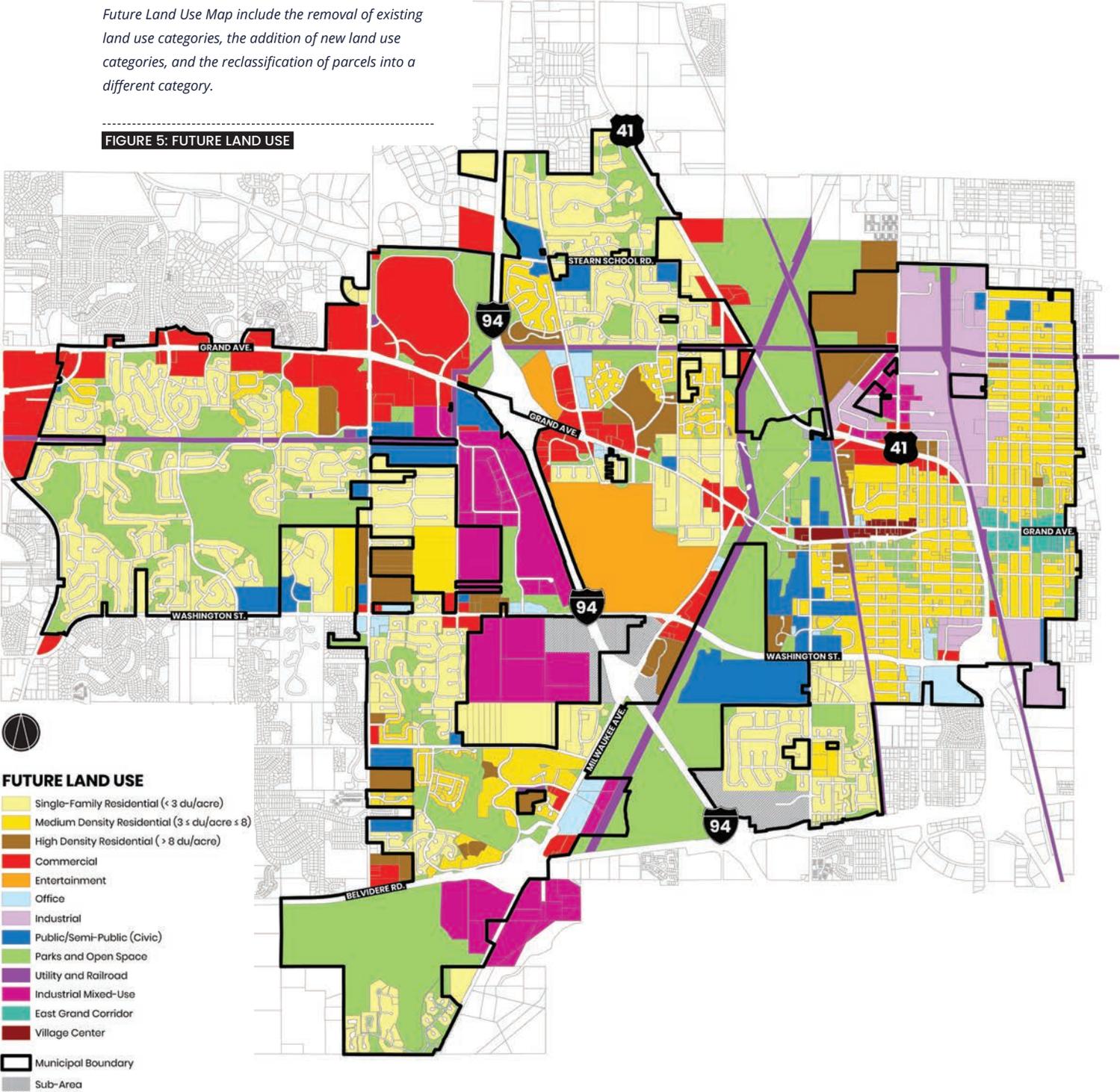
FIGURE 4: EXISTING LAND USE



FUTURE LAND USE

The Future Land Use Map illustrates a strategic pattern of land uses by category and intensity. Changes between the Existing Land Use Map and Future Land Use Map include the removal of existing land use categories, the addition of new land use categories, and the reclassification of parcels into a different category.

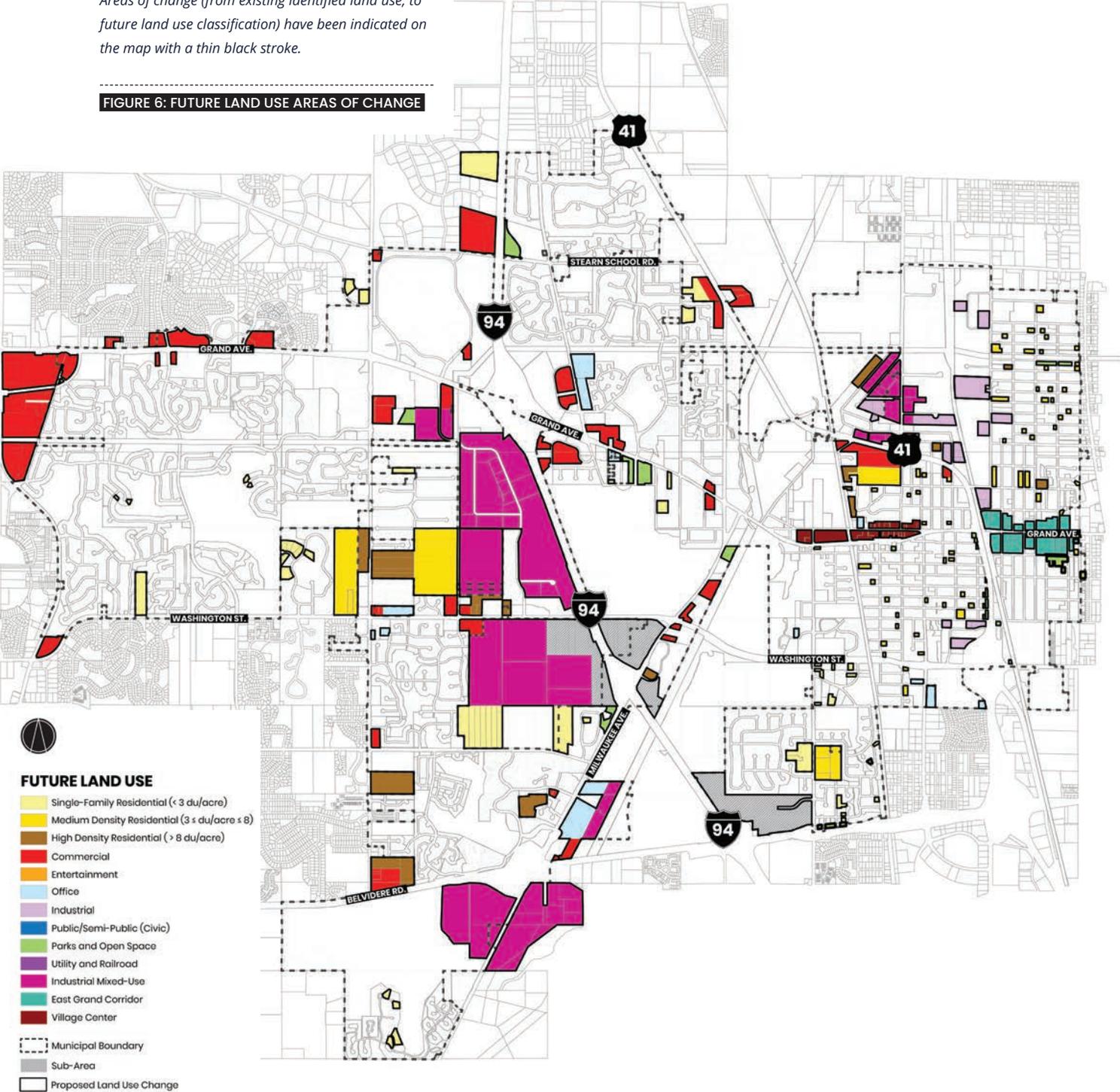
FIGURE 5: FUTURE LAND USE



FUTURE LAND USE AREAS OF CHANGE

Areas of change (from existing identified land use, to future land use classification) have been indicated on the map with a thin black stroke.

FIGURE 6: FUTURE LAND USE AREAS OF CHANGE



The unincorporated areas located outside the Village boundary are not subject to Gurnee zoning regulations. As a result, unincorporated land may currently contain uses that differ greatly from the land uses of adjacent incorporated properties. These land use inconsistencies may produce negative impacts on the character and quality of life of the Gurnee community. For example, single-family homes may be located adjacent to heavy industrial facilities or interstate commercial uses. The Future Land Use Map, in combination with other development tools, can help address incompatibilities through the strategic placement of transitional land use designations, such as higher density residential, and the inclusion of unincorporated areas of Lake County adjacent to Gurnee's current municipal boundary, known as the extraterritorial jurisdiction. In the event of future annexation to the Village, the Future Land Use Map will serve as a guide for future land use and zoning classification.

Transitions may also be necessary within the application of the map's larger land use categories, to ensure compatibility between areas of the Village that may exhibit different developed character. This nuance is structured into each of the land use categories, and the Village may interpret each category to include such necessary transitions. For example, a large area classified as commercial on the Future Land Use map may include residential uses where the parcel abuts existing residential development, to create a buffer transitioning into the existing developed fabric. Such uses should not be seen as conflicting with the commercial classification on the Future Land Use map, but rather as a necessary component of implementing the policies of the map in a responsible, sensitive manner.

The Future Land Use Map should help guide the Village of Gurnee's decisions relating to development and zoning issues. Changes in market conditions, however, or planning direction in a particular area may warrant adjustments to these land use designations moving forward. As such, the Village must see this Future Land Use map as a living guide to development within the community, which must incorporate and reflect both the vision and policy set during the planning process, as well as current market realities and pressing development issues within Gurnee. Importantly, though changes may be necessary, any adjustment to the future land use map should be made in a deliberative manner, carefully in keeping with the larger vision of the Comprehensive Plan.

Land Use Changes

As the Village is a largely built-out community, the Future Land Use map indicates a series of changes that are largely evolutionary, intended to provide a level of flexibility that encourages sensible infill development and redevelopment in strategic locations, and that lays out a vision for new development at strategic locations within the Village and its extraterritorial jurisdiction. Recommended changes also serve to bring

land use classifications into alignment with developed character in certain areas of the Village, such as the medium-density residential areas at the Village's eastern edge. Other changes include the application of new land use classifications, such as Industrial Mixed-Use, East Grand Gateway, and Village Center.

All areas of change are indicated on the Future Land Use Map – Areas of Change presented as Figure 6. The majority of changes indicated on the map are minor edits and revisions intended to clean-up the map and reflect an alignment with current use and character. Within certain areas of Gurnee, however, changes indicated on the map reflect a shift in land use policy. These more significant changes are outlined below, relative to their respective land use classifications.

Residential Change. Residential changes primarily included an analysis and classification of residential parcels to reflect currently developed densities, and to reorient neighborhood patterns in a manner that reinforces the existing character of the Village's developed communities. More significant changes include mapping of higher density residential zoning to provide opportunities for development of new, high-quality, denser residential development within the Village and diversification of Gurnee's housing options. These areas include select areas of development within the site located off of Washington Street near the Tri-State Parkway, and a number of areas within the Village's ETJ to the northeast and southwest.

Commercial Change. Commercial land use changes are limited in scope, and narrowly consist of adjustments that reflect reinforcement of existing uses, a change in local/regional distinction from the Village's previous land use categories, and implementation of Village policy through discrete classification of key areas, such as the East Grand Gateway and the Village Center. Notably, the commercial classification has been expanded and strengthened to reinforce existing patterns nearby the intersection of Grand Avenue and Dilleys Road, areas to the south of Gurnee Mills on Hunt Club Road, and along Milwaukee Avenue east of Six Flags Great America.

Industrial Change. Changes to industrial use on the map reflect the application of the new Industrial Mixed-Use designation to accommodate a greater variety of uses and to encourage reinvestment and redevelopment in areas of transition. A good example of this application is the Tri-State Parkway area – currently characterized by a mix of office, industrial, and commercial uses, and designated with individual use classifications on the Existing Land Use map.

This mixture of uses has been absorbed into the "Industrial Mixed-Use" designation on the Future Land Use map, reflecting the true diversity of uses within the area and providing flexibility in terms of their location and orientation. The Industrial Mixed-Use classification has also been applied to a significant portion of the Village's ETJ to the south of Six Flags Great America on Washington Street, and south of the intersection of Belvidere Road and Milwaukee Avenue. This classification is intended to provide the flexibility for these areas to respond to market demand with a large variety of potential uses as conditions shift and they become ready for development or redevelopment in the future.

LAND USE / OBJECTIVES & POLICIES

The Future Land Use Map and land use changes described in the previous sections represent strategies to enhance Gurnee's general land use patterns. This section describes broader objectives and policies relating to land use, which were crafted to enhance the quality of Gurnee's physical environment and promote balanced growth. The recommended objectives and policies were crafted based on existing land use patterns and character, and in anticipation of the future needs of the community and the marketplace.

OBJECTIVE. Maintain a balance of land uses between residential, commercial, industrial, office, and community uses. Gurnee is currently home to a robust retail and entertainment sector, stable office and industrial districts, and a range of housing types. A diversity of land uses provides strength and stability in a local economy while offering residents, workers, and visitors an array of options in housing, employment, shopping, and entertainment.

Residential

Accounting for 60.8% of the local housing stock, Gurnee's dominant dwelling type is the detached single-family home. In order to adapt to community needs and changing demographics, which are described in detail in Section X.X, the Village should complement its strong single-family housing stock with denser housing development that is located near public transit and transportation corridors, features smaller unit sizes and lots, and is physically accessible to families, seniors, and people with disabilities. The Village should support residential infill and larger multi-family development projects in order to enhance local housing diversity. Permitting higher density housing and flexibility in site design can encourage developers to invest in the production of new housing and amenities.

Notably, many suburban communities across the country are recognizing an emerging shift in their demographic composition, as data suggests that so-called "millennials" may be seeking to leave the City in pursuit of the amenities, space, and relative affordability of suburban communities. There is no clear consensus as to whether this is a long-term or cohort-wide trend, as the data shifts significantly when factoring in other considerations such as declining marriage rates, higher levels of educational attainment, and increasingly diverse populations across the urban/suburban spectrum. Additionally, research suggests that this trend is also dependent upon the interpretation

of what constitutes "the city" versus "the suburbs" in terms of geography and accessibility, with the real observable shift occurring not necessarily from urban to suburban communities, but from rural areas to metropolitan ones. As such, and to ensure its ability to respond to emerging markets and housing trends, the Village is wise to pursue a strategy of increased housing diversity, providing opportunities for a variety of new residents to come to the Village, or for current residents to move, downsize, or upgrade.

A significant age cohort - the "Baby Boomers," born post-World War II - began turning 65 years old in 2011. By 2029, the end of the cohort will turn 65 years old. Because of better quality of life and modern advances in healthcare, it is estimated that the 65 and older cohort in the U.S. will be 88 million persons, doubling current figures. This means the demand for senior housing of all types will increase. As stated earlier in this Plan, with Gurnee having a slightly older population than that of Lake County as a whole, the Village may feel pressure regarding construction of such facilities to meet future demand. However, it is critical to balance the amount of senior housing within the Village with other residential dwellings, being careful not to become the repository for senior housing within the market area. Oversaturation of senior housing can create a number of issues. There may be issues with traffic and circulation, particularly from emergency vehicles, incompatibility with adjacent neighborhoods due to the 24-hour nature of the facility, and, when located within certain areas, they may negatively impact areas, whether existing or future planned, intended to create active, pedestrian-oriented commercial corridors or mixed-use nodes.

It is recommended that the Village undertake a specific housing study to assess the most up to date amount of senior housing in Gurnee, and how much additional senior housing development it can support before it becoming oversaturated. Based on a study conducted by the AARP Public Policy Institute in 2010, Illinois averaged 18 beds per 1,000 persons 65 and older, and the United States was 31 beds per 1,000 persons 65 and older. These parameters serve as a preliminary guide to determining whether Gurnee is oversaturated or in danger of being oversaturated by such facilities. Using these guidelines, there is evidence that there is cause for concern regarding oversaturation. With 12.7% of the population in 2017 of 65 years of age or older (approximately 3,900 persons) according to the 2017 US Census, Gurnee's average is 94 beds per 1,000

persons 65 and older based upon a survey of available data from the development plans for existing facilities. This is three times the average of the State of Illinois. In addition, there are also tax credit facilities that restrict all, or the majority of, units for seniors or those over 55 years of age that are not included in the above estimate of beds per persons.

Commercial

As the home of large shopping and entertainment attractions, Gurnee is known as a tourist destination and employment hub. A large commercial base not only generates significant jobs and tax revenue for the Village, but provides Gurnee with its definitive character as a community. The Village should continue to support the retention and growth of local commercial businesses in a strategically focused manner in order to strengthen its most defining land use.

As the nature of retail evolves rapidly, Gurnee has shown resiliency to the rising vacancy rates of communities with an oversupply of commercial space. In order to mitigate future vacancy and encourage investment in current activity centers, the Village should limit the construction of new retail space located outside of existing commercial districts. To keep commercial activity geographically focused helps concentrate foot traffic, allows retailers to share in public and private improvements, and enhances competition within retail centers to remain relevant to consumers.

Finally, while Gurnee's large regional attractions are successful in drawing throngs of visitors, the Village should seek to preserve these regional destinations, but also work to diversify the commercial sector by increasing the number of local and unique businesses located within more compact and walkable nodes of retail development. Local independent businesses can have greater multiplier effects on the local economy. Local establishments provide convenient retail and services in close proximity to residential neighborhoods, lending to a walkable environment and enhancing quality of life for residents. Local business owners also tend to have a greater stake in the community and, as a result, are more involved corporate citizens.

Small independent businesses are best positioned to thrive when they are within walking distance to local residents. Areas with smaller and more affordable commercial units that are nearby residential neighborhoods, such as the East Grand Avenue Gateway, should be targeted for new small businesses. The Village's New Business Handbook also assists business owners with an overview of local permitting and licensing processes.



The Village should regularly update this handbook with business resources and programs as they become available. Work with partnering organizations and institutions should focus on removing barriers to entrepreneurship and growth by expanding small business education and financing opportunities.



Industrial/Office

The redevelopment of existing office and industrial sites and the development of large vacant parcels are opportunities to attract new industrial and office uses to Gurnee. In order to strengthen the Village's existing clusters, the Village should focus new industrial and office development on larger parcels located within and in close proximity to existing centers of activity.



Clockwise from Top Left:

Entering the Village on East Grand, the Greenleaf Center, Gurnee Mills, Saratoga Square (2), ALEC (Abbott Laboratories Employee's Credit Union), Retail on East Grand, and Signage for the Gurnee Village Center

Many existing industrial and office sites are outdated, presenting an opportunity for new and renovated facilities that meet the needs of modern industry and the workplace. New and renovated facilities that are functional, energy efficient, aesthetically pleasing, and incorporate stormwater management features will enhance Gurnee's competitiveness within the industrial and office markets and increase the opportunities to provide more jobs for residents, so that they do not have to travel outside of Gurnee for employment.

Opportunity sites for new industrial and office development are identified in Figure 7. Because existing industrial and office districts are relatively built out and have few large undeveloped parcels that would suit new industrial or office development without parcel consolidation, the Future Land Use Map recommends adding new areas to accommodate industrial and office uses that are near to existing centers of activity and along major transportation routes. Such areas have generally been assigned to the industrial mixed-use category, which is intended to serve lighter industrial uses, complemented by a mix of office, commercial, and entertainment uses where appropriate. The flexibility of the industrial mixed-use land use category allows the Village and the development community to be responsive as market conditions and demand change over time.

POLICIES.

- *Allow for a diverse range of housing types, including areas of higher density (small lot single-family, townhouse, multi-family) and mixed-use development*
- *Conduct a housing study to assess the current amount of senior housing in the Village and market area, and how many additional senior housing developments the Village specifically can support*
- *Continue to support the Village's successful commercial base in retail, service, and amusement sectors*
- *Support new industrial and office uses within larger parcels, on both vacant land and through redevelopment of existing sites, in coordination with the existing transportation system*
- *Encourage the establishment of local and unique businesses within smaller commercial nodes and centers*
- *Organize future growth to optimize the use of existing and planned Village facilities and services*

OBJECTIVE. Promote high quality and sustainable

development. By enhancing appearance and experience, high quality building and site design helps a community attract and retain businesses, visitors, and residents. Incorporating sustainable design elements, such as high-performance building materials and techniques, and green infrastructure in the form of landscape and stormwater features that beautify and provide ecosystem services, can improve both site aesthetics and environmental quality. Development and redevelopment projects should meet high standards of design and sustainability, ensuring that future residential, commercial, and industrial investment contributes positively to Gurnee's built and natural environment.

Design standards are especially important for areas of high visibility, including property located along Gurnee's principal corridors. Development controls may also be used to maintain the scale and charm of Gurnee's traditional residential neighborhoods. New construction and renovated structures or additions should also maintain compatibility in scale and style with surrounding buildings, but flexibilities should be incorporated into development controls to allow for creative and innovative design. The policies listed below were crafted to ensure that future development in Gurnee incorporates high quality design, and principals of sustainability that enhance community appearance and health.

Sustainable design features and green infrastructure should also be encouraged for future development and redevelopment projects. Such features may include bio-swales, rain gardens, permeable pavement, green roofs, and low level shielded lighting. These building and site elements help to reduce the Village's overall carbon footprint, improve environmental indicators, and manage stormwater. Implementing sustainable design throughout the Village can be accomplished through the creation or strengthening of clear standards, guidelines and incentive programs.

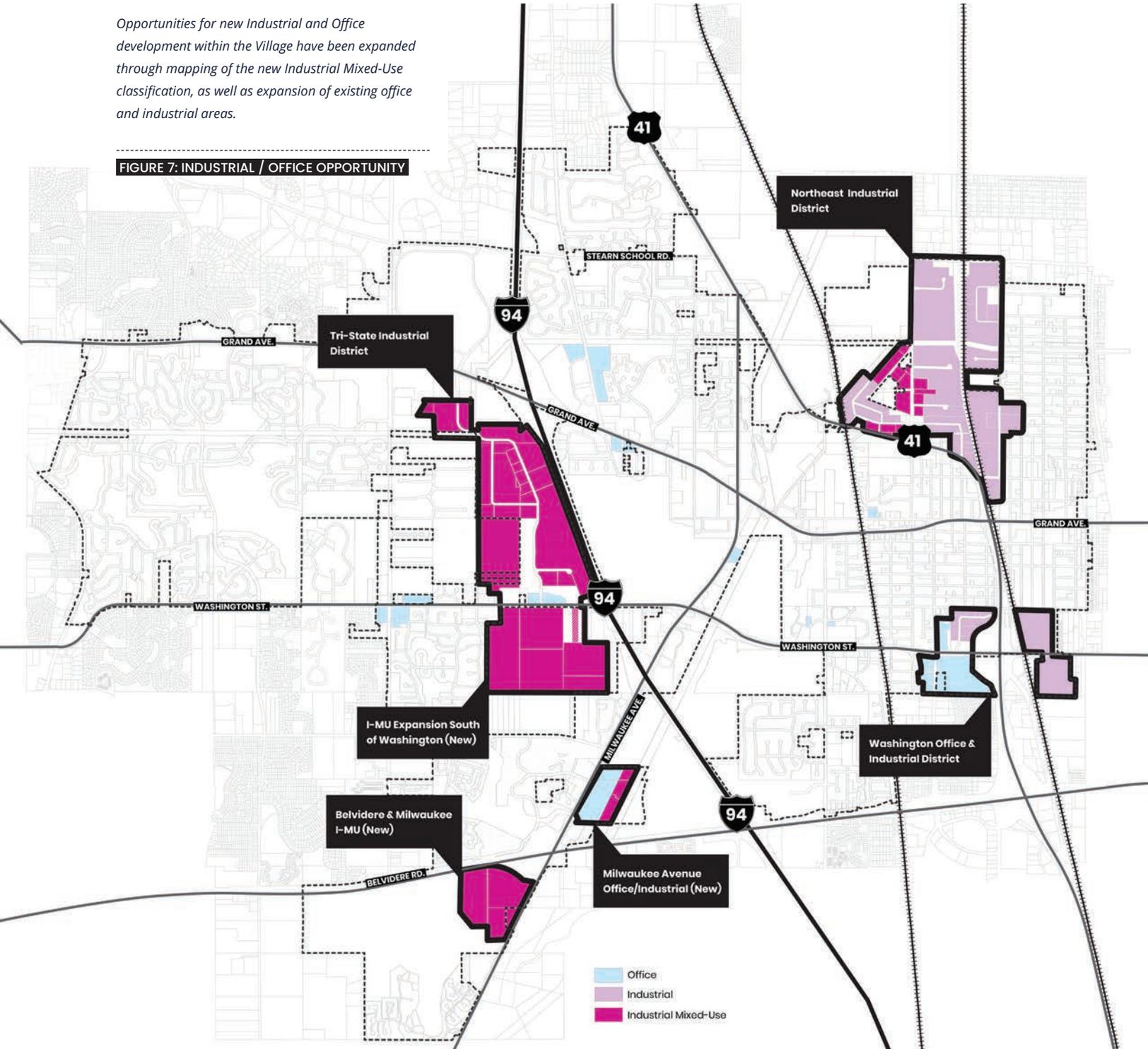
POLICIES.

- *Maintain development controls that are flexible, and that accommodate future growth, but require high quality design and proper transitions between uses of different intensities*
- *Incorporate principals of sustainability in new development*

OPPORTUNITY SITES

Opportunities for new Industrial and Office development within the Village have been expanded through mapping of the new Industrial Mixed-Use classification, as well as expansion of existing office and industrial areas.

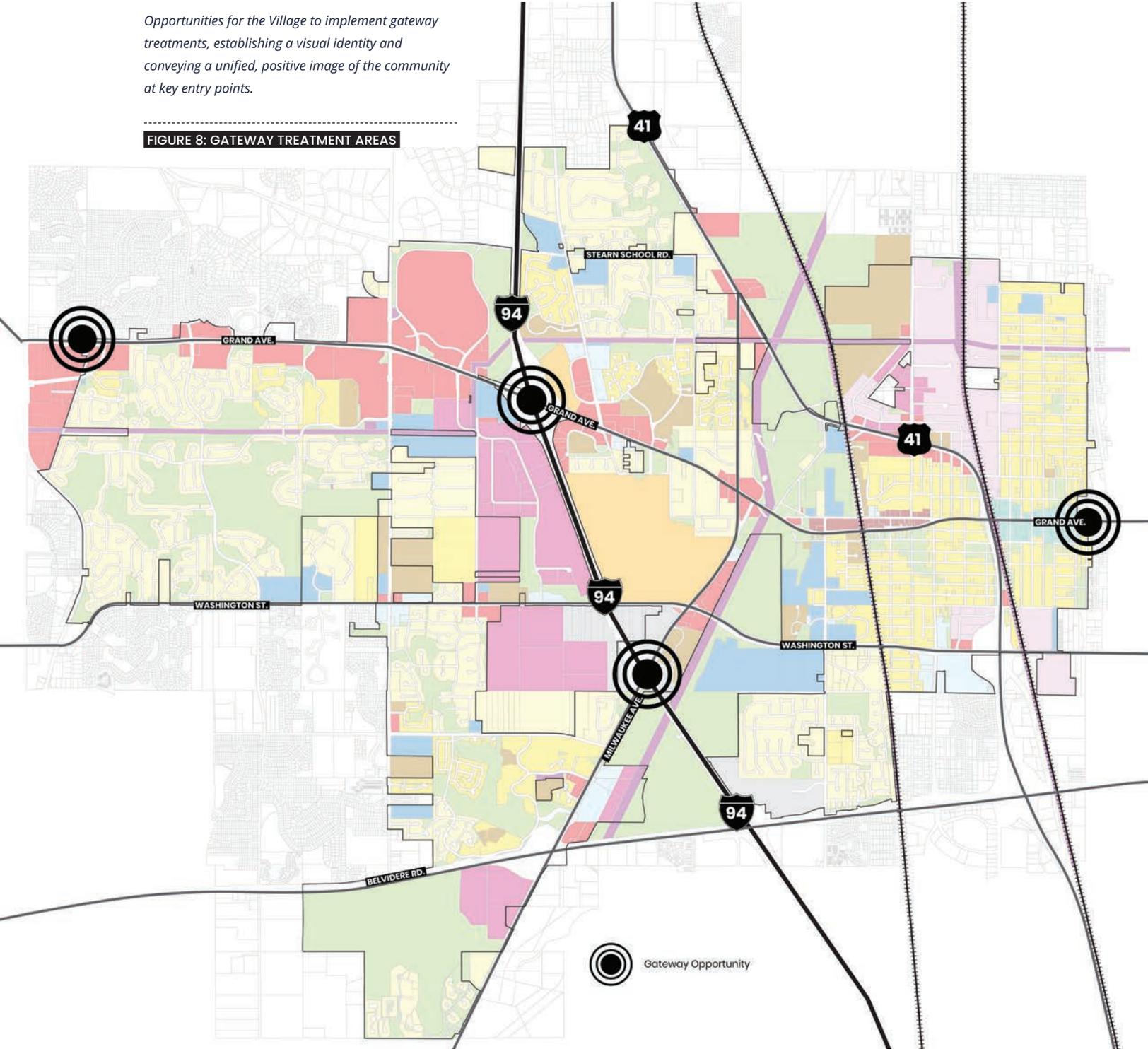
FIGURE 7: INDUSTRIAL / OFFICE OPPORTUNITY



GATEWAY TREATMENT AREAS

Opportunities for the Village to implement gateway treatments, establishing a visual identity and conveying a unified, positive image of the community at key entry points.

FIGURE 8: GATEWAY TREATMENT AREAS



 Gateway Opportunity

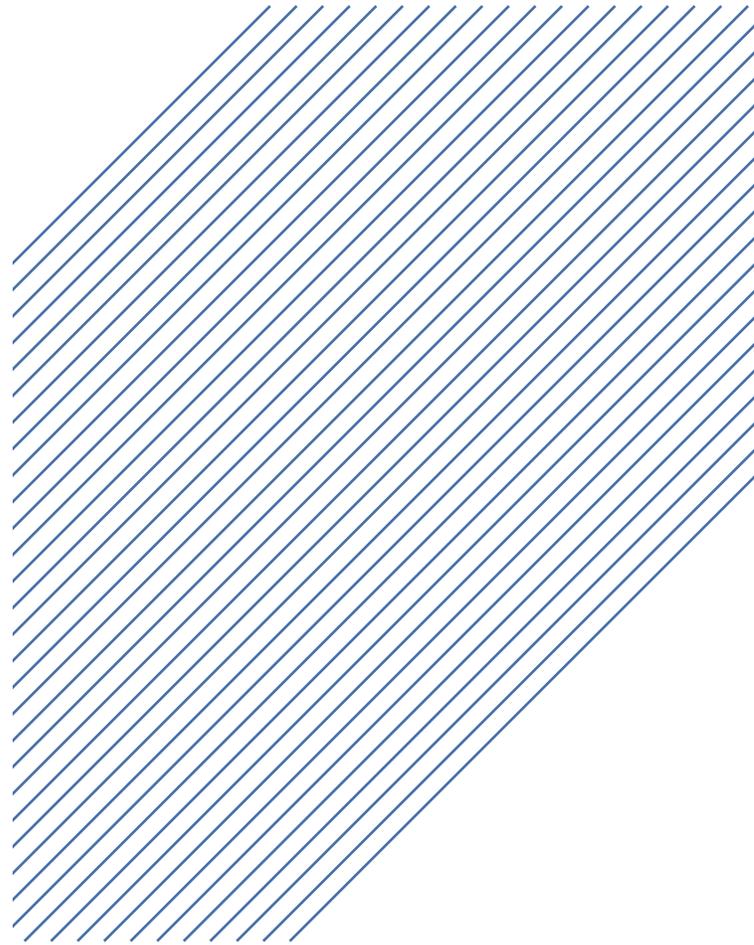
OBJECTIVE. Establish and maintain a positive image of Gurnee throughout the Village. Gurnee's healthy and stable business and residential sectors indicate that the community is a great place to live and conduct business. However, residents reported that the community lacks a strong, positive, and consistent image throughout the Village. Enhancing community image and identity can be achieved through a mix of public and private realm improvements.

Gateways can also help define the boundaries of a community, corridor, or neighborhood and lend to greater identity of place. Gateway elements are used as a form of visual communication with the general public, conveying information about where they are, the history or identity of the place, and what they may find nearby. Wayfinding elements can support gateways and help direct people to and within an area. Landscaping, lighting, banners, and public art features can all help to enhance visual transitions between and within communities. The Village has already installed some gateway signage, but additional elements can help give greater definition to Gurnee and its unique districts.

A map of proposed locations for gateway treatments in Gurnee is provided as Figure 8. The style of a gateway treatment should be tailored to the specific area the gateway serves, but all treatments should convey to the public that they are located within the same Village. The same large monument or sign may be used at entry points into the Village, whereas commercial and industrial corridors may feature signage with styles that provide greater visual distinction. The Village should also help industrial and commercial centers coordinate internally to install gateway elements on private property, which can make centers more desirable to prospective businesses.

POLICIES.

- *Install gateway elements at major entries to Gurnee*
- *Seek out opportunities to establish a more cohesive relationship between east and west Gurnee, particularly pedestrian connections through physical barriers, such as the railroad, and continue to improve vehicular mobility.*
- *Encourage redevelopment of vacant parcels or underutilized commercial uses*
- *Undertake streetscape improvements that support multi-modal connectivity throughout the Village*
- *Continue to enhance and expand the urban tree canopy with requirements for tree planting along parkways and in new developments*
- *Encourage the burial of utilities where feasible, particularly in older neighborhoods and commercial areas*





Top Right:

Entry Signage on East Grand

Bottom Right:

Spring colors in Viking Park, in the Village Center

Far Right:

Concepts for new development at the intersection of Washington Street and Milwaukee Avenue



COMMUNITY CHARACTER AREAS

This Chapter of the Plan differs from the others, in terms of structure, in that it does not list objectives followed by policies. Instead, it focuses specifically on four areas within the Village and outlines strategies for their futures. These four areas are:

- Village Center
- East Grand Gateway
- Milwaukee + Washington
- O'Plaine + Belvidere



Policy recommendations are included below for both the Village Center and the East Grand Gateway. These areas have been historically identified as key focal points for the Village and have been the subject of multiple previous plans and studies. While some development has occurred in line with the Village's adopted policy for these areas, the Compass 2040 process provides a valuable opportunity to revisit and refine the established directions in light of current development realities.

The second two community character areas, focused around Milwaukee Avenue and Washington Street, and O'Plaine Road and Belvidere Road, are new areas of focus for the Village. These sites have been identified as prime areas of consideration within the Village, given their size, locations, and proximity to key transportation access and other community assets. As such, sub-area plans are proposed for each of these locations, including more detailed land use guidance, as well as conceptual development proposals that highlight the Village's vision for their future development. These conceptual development plans, and the recommendations included are designed to support and capitalize on the most successful aspects, or to identify and highlight the opportunities presented by each area.

VILLAGE CENTER

Previous Planning Efforts

In 1979, Gurnee approved the Village Center Development Plan, the goal of which was to maintain and enhance the Village Center as a focal point within Gurnee. At the time, the Village Center was conceived as significantly larger than its current incarnation; the area defined within the 1979 plan covered Grand Avenue from Greenleaf Street on the east to Kilbourne Road on the west, and also contained the area north-south on O'Plaine Road between Grand Avenue and Washington Street.

The Plan looked to create a mixed-use environment in this area, bringing together a combination of active commercial, institutional, and residential uses. Surrounding areas such as East Grand Avenue were anticipated to benefit from proximity to this Village Center both in terms of programming and business development, as well as coordination with the area's established design identity and architectural character.

In the Village's 1997 Comprehensive Plan, goals for the Village Center became more specific in terms of geographic extents, establishing three distinct sub-areas. The characteristics and policies of each of these sub-areas, per the 1997 Plan, were as follows:

Sub-Area A. Sub-Area A covered the eastern portion of Grand Avenue, from Greenleaf Street to the Railroad Bridge. Policy directions for this area included:

- Convert existing single-family homes to low intensity office and commercial uses, while maintaining a predominantly single-family residential character.
- Use driveways for off-street parking to relieve the need for parking lots, slow vehicular traffic, and preserve existing on-street parking.
- Bury utilities along Grand Avenue, creating more area for the creation of pedestrian and bicycle amenities, as well as streetscape improvements.

Sub-Area B. Sub-Area B contained the entirety of Grand Avenue from the Railroad Bridge, west to Kilbourne Road. Policy directions in the 1997 Plan included the following:

- Work to establish a cohesive character within this area through street tree plantings and streetscape improvements.
- Create a gateway feature or a small park entering the area from the western edge.
- Create a pedestrian plaza by closing Old Grand Avenue between Petersen Park and the Mother Rudd Historic Home.
- Bury Utilities along Grand Avenue, reconfigure the intersection of Grand Avenue/Old Grand Avenue, and connect the Village Center to a proposed Riverwalk.

Sub-Area C. Sub-Area C contained the area along O'Plaine Road, between Grand Avenue to the north and Washington Street to the south. At the time, this area contained some of the largest tracts of undeveloped land within the Village Center Area, focused around the intersection of O'Plaine Road and Washington Street. The Plan envisioned this area as a mixed-use Village square, incorporating an expanded post office and Village library.

Current Status

The area along O'Plaine Road between Grand Avenue and Washington Street, or Sub-Area C within the 1997 Plan, has

been developed with a mix of residential and public uses, and is currently zoned the P Public Lands District, and a variety of residential districts (R-3, R-4, R-5, R-6). Much as proposed within the previous plan, it has developed into a concentration of residential uses, as well as Village and public services (Village Hall, the Post Office, the Library, Warren Township High School, and the Village Police Department). The perception among Gurnee residents is that this concentration of uses represents the "Village Center."

The area located on Grand Avenue (Sub-Areas A and B), however, has not seen much development occurring in accordance with the vision presented in the 1997 Plan. Currently, the area presents a mix of uses predominantly characterized by low intensity office and single-family residences. This mixture is more pronounced to the west of the Railroad Bridge, while the eastern edge of the corridor is more residential in character. A number of market considerations and physical development constraints have made this area a challenge for redevelopment over the intervening years. Key development issues for this area include:

While the 1997 Plan encouraged residential conversion, the process to convert the existing structures within the area is made quite difficult due to requirements within the Building Code. Currently, structures within the area front on and take access from Old Grand Avenue. Since many of the lots between Grand Avenue and Old Grand Avenue are through lots, the backs of these buildings, and their rear yards represent the majority of the Grand Avenue "frontage." This has presented a challenge, as any potential redevelopment must address how sites and structures are configured, and must consider their visual impacts and the creation of a presence along Grand Avenue. Sites located here also tend to be smaller, creating difficulties in accommodating on-site parking and required landscape. As such, uses anticipated to generate a high number of vehicle trips may not be appropriate for the area in its current configuration. It is assumed that lot assembly would be needed for any such more intense use.

During the 2015 Zoning Ordinance update process, the Village took the opportunity to re-evaluate this area, and created the C-4 Village Center zoning district in an effort to move toward implementation of the overall vision contained within the 1997 Plan. The district sought to provide for a mix of commercial and residential uses, including, among other uses, retail sales and service, office, and multi-family housing. The district was mapped narrowly along the corridor between Grand Avenue and Old Grand Avenue, the area represented on the Future Land Use Map as the Village Center.



Above: Typical Development on East Grand Avenue

Future Development

Given the existing character of the area, current market realities, and the physical development constraints present on many of these sites, the Village should restructure policy and regulatory approaches to this area, focusing on maintenance of the area's traditional neighborhood character, and allowing for the gradual conversion of residential structures into commercial uses over time. Such an approach would allow for the redevelopment of sites with small scale commercial uses, not placing such an emphasis on lot assembly, and would encourage and enable an incremental shift to a more mixed-use residential/professional environment within the area, more suited to its physical realities.

Additionally, the residential dwellings along Old Grand Avenue that are still in residential use are overall well maintained and unlikely to redevelop within the near term. As such, a residential/professional approach would likely be more palatable to current residents of the area, who take pride in their homes within the historic Village Center area, and who wish to remain. In regard to zoning regulations, the current C-4 Village Center District aligns with this policy, as the current C-4 District standards encourage conversion and a mixture of uses, and area tailored to the lot sizes and characteristics within the area. The area along O'Plaine Road between Grand Avenue and Washington Street would continue to function as the effective Village Center within Gurnee.

EAST GRAND GATEWAY

The East Grand Gateway is a commercial area that has not seen the same level of investment as other areas in the Village over the past few decades. The corridor's older building stock produces low retail rents and declining property values. In order to establish a viable improvement plan for this highly visible yet indiscernible gateway to Gurnee, the Village solicited the technical assistance of the Urban Land Institute (ULI) of Chicago to produce "Revitalization Strategies for East Grand Avenue" (2016). The report's recommendations are summarized and included in this section.

The Village of Gurnee hopes to establish East Grand Avenue "as an attractive and thriving gateway into Gurnee from the east side, and make it an asset for the neighborhood and the Village as a whole." This policy guided the revision of the EGG East Grand Gateway Overlay Zoning District in the Zoning Ordinance rewrite (2015) and the "Revitalization Strategies for East Grand Avenue" report by the Urban Land Institute (ULI) – Chicago (2016). As ULI Report evaluates the corridor from a use and design perspective, and makes recommendations on the same, this Comprehensive Plan summarizes the key findings.

Challenges Identified

East Grand Avenue is currently home to modest, aging strip centers and freestanding businesses. The high-speed five-lane roadway has an average daily traffic count of 26,000 vehicles. Site conditions cited by ULI include outdated signage, overhead power lines, overgrown grass, a lack of beautifying landscape, and broken sidewalks. These physical issues detract from the image of the corridor and the larger area. The railroad adjacent to the Route 41 intersection creates a visual and psychological barrier, the Route 41 and Grand Intersection creates a physical

barrier, while the roadway's narrow sidewalks, numerous curb cuts, and lack of a bike lane create an uncomfortable and unsafe environment for pedestrians and bicyclists alike. Residents of the East Grand Avenue area report feeling disconnected from larger Gurnee. The corridor's aging facilities, and lack of identity and investment, have created an environment that does not support the desired services and restaurants that would cater more toward the local population.

Summary of ULI Recommendations

The following recommendations are taken from the ULI Report. The Report also includes implementation strategies.

Guiding Principles

- *Focus on a sense of community, with a preference for independent businesses to meet community needs*
- *Focus on physical connections from surrounding residential neighborhood to the corridor*
- *Consider mixed-use development*

Brand the Corridor as a "Maker's Corridor"

- *Building on the popularity of the Gurnee Garden Center, Habitat for Humanity ReStore, create a cluster of other home-improvement businesses (i.e. home goods, tools, paint shop)*
- *Tap into the market for vintage goods, including events such as a seasonal vintage goods fair with second-hand retail, food, and music*
- *Create a brand for the corridor as a "DIY/Maker Corridor," which would include a logo that can become part of a gateway feature and on banners and signs*

Transportation Improvements

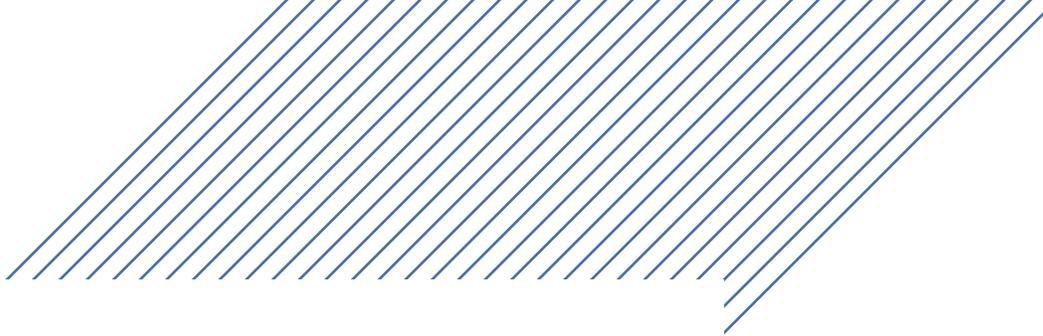
- *Implement "Complete Streets" principals, which will require working with the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT)*
- *Widen existing sidewalks and provide landscape buffers from traffic lanes, and create pedestrian amenities (pedestrian scale lighting, street trees to provide shade, and designated bus stops with waiting shelters)*
- *Encourage cross-access easements to reduce the number of curb cuts directly onto Grand Avenue*

Development Opportunities

- *Current market rents are not high enough to cover cost of new construction and provide return on investment typically required by private developers*
- *Strategic transportation/streetscape improvements and "pop up" concepts can rejuvenate interest in the corridor and strengthen long-term development potential*
- *The report has site specific recommendations for 860 Waveland Ave (the U-Haul site) and 3545-3575 Grand Avenue and 3521-3525 Grand Avenue.*

Place-making

- *Connecting pedestrian amenities and place-making elements can create a unified environment*
- *Relatively low-cost improvements: stamped crosswalks, decorative banners, plantings, and street art*
- *Murals for large blank walls*
- *Unique events, like the current Farmers and Artisans Market, and festivals such as those that celebrate Latino heritage, and strengthen sense of community and draw people to the corridor*



WASHINGTON + MILWAUKEE

The Washington and Milwaukee Subarea, due to both its size, as well as the nature of the subarea being split into three pieces by the Milwaukee Avenue corridor and the Illinois Tollway (94), is proposed to be handled as three distinct focus areas, each responding to the conditions of its unique context, as well as the Village's future land use vision. These three focus areas are described below, and illustrated on the following page.

Commercial Core, Mixed-Use Development Focus Area

The Commercial Core area is characterized by a variety of building types from two to six stories, and a variety of potential uses including residential dwellings, retail, office, entertainment and hospitality uses. Residential uses within the commercial core may include a number of workforce housing units, taking advantage of the prime location and mix of uses easily accessible from the site. Overall, the Commercial Core area is designed as a mixed-use entertainment destination within the Village, offering recreation-oriented activities and events such as bowling, indoor trampoline parks, indoor skydiving, etc. This focus area is also able to accommodate a venue of approximately 100,000 square feet. The site is designed to create a central gathering space, which is segmented by a primary access, but which may be united and used as one space for special events, by closing off the central access and routing traffic to the east and west from the primary entrance off of Washington Street.

This central gathering space is flanked by commercial retail/eating and drinking establishments, and office uses above the ground floor. On street parking would be available on streets within the development, creating a more urban, "Village Center" appeal. Residential uses would be oriented toward the eastern edges of the site, maintaining a buffer from the tollway and the more intensive uses that may benefit from tollway visibility.

Industrial Mixed-Use, Flexible Development Focus Area

This focus area is designed to take advantage of the growing market for flexible industrial/mixed-use space. Buildings proposed for this area are between 25,000 and 50,000 square feet in area, a favored footprint for many modern uses and users. High bay design (single stories of up to 50-60 feet) provides flexibility for a variety of operations on the interior of these buildings, which may be subdivided and used for a variety of purposes, from light fabrication, to entertainment, to office, to retail sales. The site design here includes minimal loading for each building, as well as primary entrances from the proposed green boulevard that moves through the site, connecting this first phase to the remainder of the sizable development site, classified on the land use plan as "Industrial Mixed-Use."

FIGURE 9: WASHINGTON/MILWAUKEE OVERVIEW



Overview of the three focus areas established for the Washington & Milwaukee Subarea

This classification, and the orientation of the proposed development and its internal circulation acknowledges a close connection to undeveloped land within the Village's extraterritorial jurisdiction further west. Extension of the Tri-State Parkway across Washington Street would provide easy access to new development sites, and allow the Village to connect development within this focus area to a larger future industrial/mixed use development to the west.

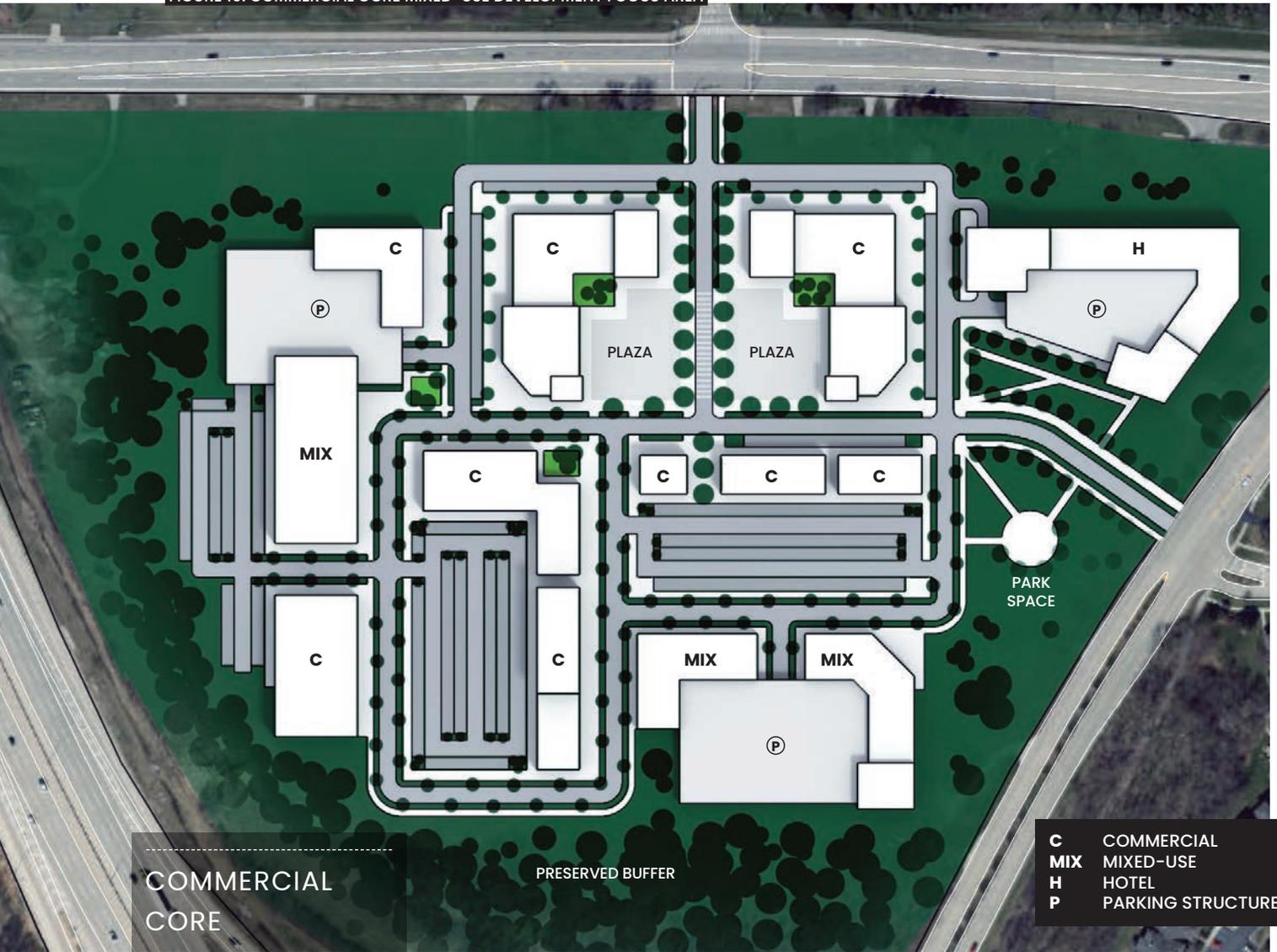
Additionally, the proposed site design prioritizes the protection of adjacent water resources, as well as the conservation of existing natural resources on site, and creates a network of paths proposed to span the acreage of the entire development area,

providing a passive recreational opportunity for both employees in the area, as well as the community at large.

Multi-Family Residential Development Focus Area

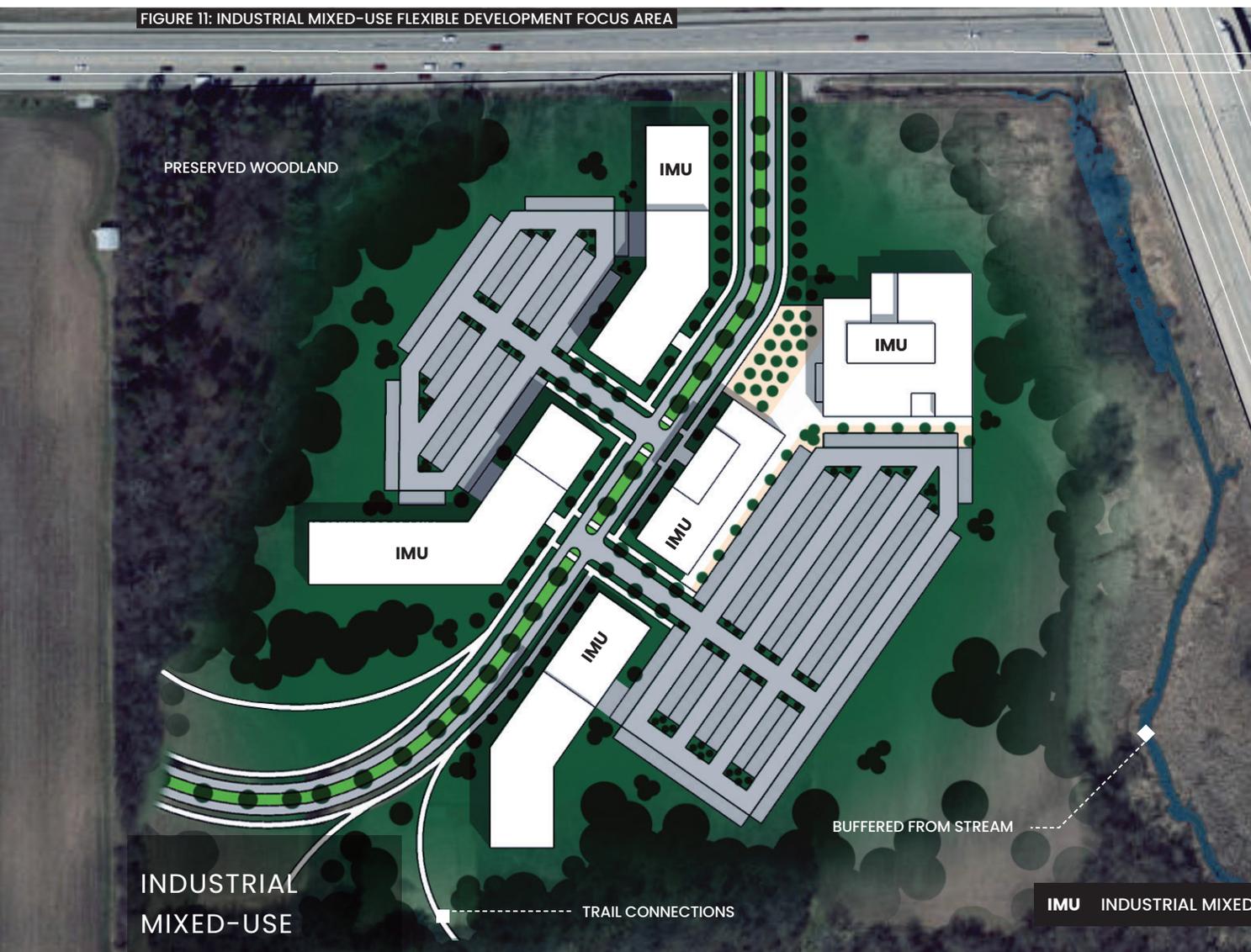
The multi-family focus area leverages the existing multi-family development along Woodlake Boulevard, and proposes the expansion of this development onto adjacent sites. Proposed development mimics the footprints already constructed at the Woodlake Apartments, and represents a logical "last phase" of development on the residential loop, increasing the available housing within the Village.

FIGURE 10: COMMERCIAL CORE MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT FOCUS AREA



MIXED-USE
DEVELOPMENT
FOCUS AREA

FIGURE 11: INDUSTRIAL MIXED-USE FLEXIBLE DEVELOPMENT FOCUS AREA



FLEXIBLE
DEVELOPMENT
FOCUS AREA

FIGURE 12: MULTI-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL FOCUS AREA



RESIDENTIAL
DEVELOPMENT
FOCUS AREA



O'PLAINE + BELVIDERE

The O'Plaine and Belvidere subarea includes the ±72.5-acre parcel located on the northwest corner of O'Plaine Road and Belvidere Road in Gurnee, Illinois. The proposed site plan for this subarea presents a mixed-use development concept containing attached single-family residential, multi-family (including possible senior living), commercial, and office uses.

Throughout the site plan, buildings are oriented to the street or to the proposed open space network, setbacks are minimal, and parking is located to the rear of the principal structure wherever practicable. There is also a good deal of preserved open space proposed within the concept, including maintenance and enhancement of the existing wooded buffer along Interstate 94, and the significant forested areas to the northwest, and abutting O'Plaine Road to the east.

Within the proposed site plan, 45 single-family attached homes are situated on the northern portion of the site, along a proposed open space buffer and walking trail that provides ample buffering of the existing single-family residential neighborhood that abuts the site to the north. Homes are served by shared alleys, which enhance the sidewalk network by reducing the need for curb cuts. Further, the residential portion of the site may be accessed via a direct connection from O'Plaine Road that does not require connection through the commercial portions of the site, preserving the neighborhood feel that the Village of Gurnee is known for. Multi-family and mixed-use structures serve as a transition to the non-residential uses located closer to the southern portion of the site. These 2-4 story buildings may contain market-rate condominiums or apartments, or affordable housing units. They may also contain a variety of more active ground-floor uses where mixed-use is indicated.

Commercial and office uses are proposed within the area of the site closer to Belvidere Road and Interstate 94, with primary access provided by the existing curb cut along O'Plaine Road. Commercial uses are situated closer to this roadway access point so that proposed retail, office, and service establishments can benefit from increased visibility, easy vehicular access, and higher traffic volumes.

O'PLAINE +
BELVIDERE



SFA	SINGLE-FAMILY ATTACHED
MF	MULTI-FAMILY
MIX	MIXED-USE
C	COMMERCIAL
O	OFFICE

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Gurnee is home to a robust business community with major regional attractions that draw millions of visitors every year, including Six Flags Great America, Gurnee Mills, and Great Wolf Lodge. These centers for retail and entertainment are major assets to the community; they generate economic activity, produce significant revenue, and support continued investment. The Village also supports healthy industrial and office sectors, which benefit from access to a diverse, skilled workforce and proximity to major transportation networks. Gurnee's locational assets, business-friendly environment, and access to a regional consumer base have made it a major center of commerce, driven by a strong entrepreneurial spirit.

Gurnee's existing commercial and industrial districts are described in Section X.X. These business centers generate not only jobs and tax revenue, but also provide Gurnee with its distinct character in the Chicago metropolitan region. Enhancing and expanding existing districts to ensure their health and longevity should be prioritized in future economic development efforts. Such efforts should pay special attention to strengthening the Village's older non-residential areas, which are home to small, local businesses, such as East Grand Avenue.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT / OBJECTIVES & POLICIES

The Plan strategizes to focus future growth and investment around existing centers and corridors, while providing land and infrastructure to support future growth. The goal of the following economic development objectives and policies is to attract new office, industrial, and commercial development to the Village, creating new opportunities for growth while continuing to support existing, stable employment centers.

OBJECTIVE. Promote the growth and redevelopment of office and industrial areas. Retaining and expanding Gurnee's office and industrial sectors is critical to maintaining a healthy

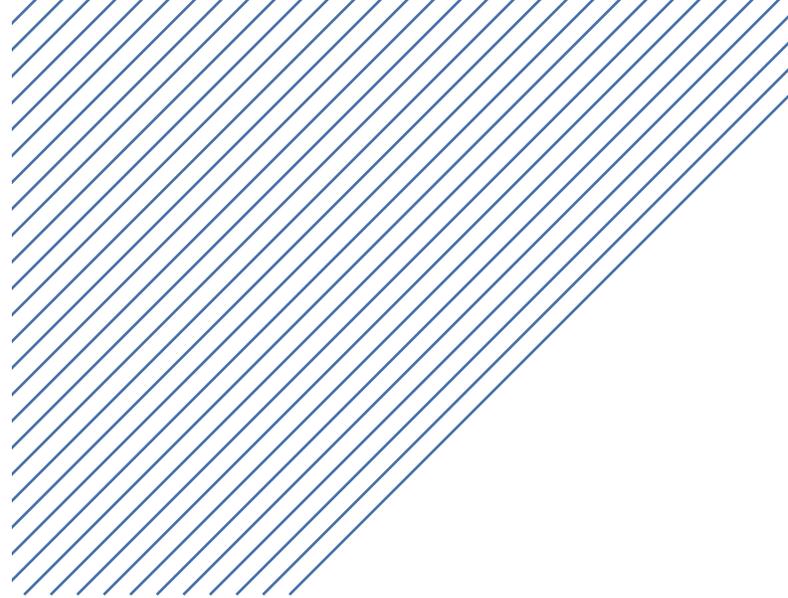
economic balance that will fortify the community's resilience to future shifts in the marketplace. In order to encourage the growth and redevelopment of office and industrial centers, the Village must address barriers to doing business in Gurnee and actively recruit prospective investors in the business and development communities. Gurnee has the existing advantages and infrastructure to support such investment, but those assets must be leveraged and aggressively marketed in order to outweigh regional competition.

In particular, I-94 and US 41 provide Gurnee with direct access to regional and national transportation networks, connecting local businesses with markets across the Chicago region, the Midwest, and the world. Several significantly sized vacant or underutilized parcels are located within a mile of these roadways. Because Gurnee's large commercial centers are largely established, and residential development will not benefit significantly from direct proximity to I-94 and US 41, these sites should be reserved for and marketed to future office and industrial development. Such proximity, supported by infrastructure that facilitates the efficient movement of people and goods, is desirable to office and industrial facilities because it lowers transportation costs, is convenient to a regional workforce, and can be used for business advertising through on-premise signage.

In a competitive market, future development and redevelopment should pair excellent access to the highway network with design and amenities that showcase innovation and positive corporate culture. The following policies can help to retain existing office and industrial centers, and encourage future investment and expansion within the Village.

POLICIES.

- *Establish future land use policies that accommodate additional office and industrial development in key locations with easy access to I-94 and US 41.*



Use zoning and regulatory tools to protect areas designated for industrial and office facilities from encroachment by other non-industrial or office uses.

- *Actively market the Village to prospective businesses, developers, residents, and visitors through both digital and traditional media outlets.*

OBJECTIVE. Actively market vacant properties to prospective businesses and developers. The Village contains several vacant parcels suitably sized and zoned for non-residential development. Considering the relatively healthy economic climate of Gurnee, these sites should be viewed as an opportunity rather than a challenge. Vacant and underutilized sites should be marketed for uses which will be supported by the market, will generate living-wage jobs, and are compatible with existing or desired neighborhood character. Sites should be strategically positioned to attract businesses that would help strengthen a unique identity for a district or corridor. For example, uses that fit the theme of “DIY/Maker Corridor,” a unifying theme established by ULI for East Grand Avenue, should be targeted for opportunity sites within that district. Manufacturers and other industrial uses may be targeted for larger sites located along I-94. The type and scale of desired development for a site should influence how the site is marketed and through which outlets.

Prospective businesses and developers should be targeted by the Village, in coordination with property owners, using a variety of marketing outlets and tools. The Village’s online mapping tool and inventory of retail, industrial and office space is a powerful tool that could be leveraged in such an effort. Similarly, the current “Gurnee’s Got It,” suite of marketing materials and small business resources is a valuable asset to the Village, and could be repositioned into a more active marketing strategy.

POLICIES.

- *Create print and digital advertisements marketing larger sites positioned for commercial and industrial use for regional and national real estate publications and online listings.*
- *Work with property owners to develop and distribute marketing packages for available properties that are geared toward the desired types of development.*

OBJECTIVE. Ensure that the existing truck route network is maintained and enhanced so that trucks can adequately serve the Village’s current and future industrial development. Commercial and industrial business operations depend on the

use of trucks to move products, materials, and equipment. A freight network that is connected, clearly designated, and avoids non-compatible uses will support growth in the freight and manufacturing sectors, reduce business transportation costs, and minimize the negative impacts of truck traffic on a community’s quality of life, such as congestion, noise, and air pollution. The Village of Gurnee should work to support efficient truck access to the local, regional, and interstate freight networks while protecting public safety, resident quality of life, and infrastructure investment. Multi-jurisdictional coordination of truck routing and infrastructure management is necessary in order to establish a regional truck network that is well-connected and mitigates dead-end routes that may force trucks onto non-designated streets.

Under state regulations, trucks over 65 feet in length are legally limited to travel within one mile of an interstate exit or on roadways designated by IDOT as Class II. However, many local truck routes codified by the Village have yet to be identified and submitted to IDOT for Class II designation. Gurnee’s existing truck route network is included as Figure 3. The Village’s locally designated truck route network should be assessed to ensure that roadways appropriate for Class II designation are submitted to IDOT for state adoption. Roadways under the jurisdiction of Lake County will need to be submitted at the county level and policy changes or infrastructure investment may be necessary to meet all IDOT requirements. Class II roadway designation will permit through movement and local access for larger trucks, including those with 53-foot trailers, and better connect the local truck route network to the state system. Upon successful submission of a resolution and supporting data by the appropriate agency, IDOT will post designated Class II routes on the gettingaroundillinois.com website, which provides an interactive map used to communicate with the trucking industry and other sectors. Clear signage is required by the State on designated truck routes to facilitate navigation and reduce safety hazards.

Truck route infrastructure often outdates the modern truck, which has grown larger and heavier in the past decades. Designated truck route infrastructure should be assessed and modernized where necessary to accommodate the weight, turning radii, and navigational needs of today’s truck. Coordination with IDOT, the Illinois Tollway Authority, and Lake County will be necessary on projects involving roadways outside of municipal jurisdiction. Insufficient infrastructure may include height limits, poor turning radii, narrow lane width, inadequate sight-lines, limited capacity, and at-grade rail crossings.

POLICIES.

- *Work with Lake County to coordinate existing and future truck route designation with IDOT and install appropriate signage where needed.*
- *Identify gaps in the existing truck route network and designate additional routes as necessary.*
- *Identify substandard roadways and intersections that limit truck movement and prioritize future infrastructure investment accordingly.*
- *Work across jurisdictions to identify regional investments to ensure connectivity between routes and freight facilities.*

OBJECTIVE. Decrease reliance on retail employment, and increase employment in professional office and industrial sectors.

Address the mismatch between the types of jobs available in Gurnee and the highly educated workforce that lives in Gurnee, the majority of whom are employed elsewhere. While Gurnee's strong retail sector puts the community at a competitive advantage in attracting businesses and investment, a diversified economy and tax base is critical to the long-term health of Gurnee's economic climate. A mix of industries from which a community receives its revenue ensures resiliency against future shifts in the marketplace. Gurnee can capitalize on marketplace trends in order to maintain, strengthen, and grow its office and industrial sectors, thereby achieving a healthy and resilient mix of tax revenue and employment opportunities. This involves continued evaluation of the office and industrial sectors.

Office Sector

While Gurnee is not anticipated to see substantial development of new office space in the next few years, a focus on modernizing existing office space will help attract and retain corporate office users, and keep the Village competitive in the office marketplace. Gurnee is part of the North Suburban office submarket, which extends from the City of Chicago's northern boundary to the Wisconsin border. The submarket has historically attracted large financial and healthcare businesses due to its proximity to a variety of executive housing options, and a diverse and skilled labor force. However, the submarket is experiencing lower demand and higher rates of vacancy than in past decades because many large corporate users have downsized or relocated their offices from the suburbs to downtown Chicago, according to Colliers International. Gross asking rent for all classes of office space in the North market has continued to steadily increase, in spite of the flight of corporate offices to Chicago's downtown.

At the end of the fourth quarter of 2019, overall vacancy for office space in the North (Central/Far North) market was 13.5%. Office spaces are classified using Class A, B, or C, with A being the highest quality product. Office space classifications are subjective, and vary between markets, but generally they are defined as follows;

- Class A space is the highest quality space, located in the most desirable areas. The structures have typically have state-of-the-art technology infrastructure, modern mechanical equipment (HVAC, elevators, etc.), and amenities such as a concierge, cafes and services within the building, on-site parking and the like.
- Class B space buildings are generally older structures, usually between 10 and 20 years old, and have usually been previously occupied. Finishes, mechanical equipment, and amenities on-site may be a bit older or outdated.
- Class C space buildings are older structures a minimum of 20 years old. Class C space buildings generally lack amenities and are filling a market need for functional office space below average rent.

Class B and C vacancy rates were 9.7% and 9.1%, respectively; market rents for these property types averaged \$18-21 per square foot. However, vacancy for higher quality Class A office space was estimated to be 17.5% with market rents averaging \$27 per square foot. (source: CoStar)

Another trend within the market is the consolidation of office spaces. Larger companies are looking to condense their campuses and properties to increase efficiency. Additionally, the Financial Accounting Standards Board (FASB) recently introduced a new accounting standard (ASU 2016-02) that requires companies to recognize operating lease assets and liabilities on the balance sheet, which will make leasing office space less preferable to consolidation or ownership. These trends are anticipated to increase office vacancy over the next few years.

At the end of 2019, the vast majority of office product available for lease or sale in Gurnee consisted of Class B and Class C space. The development of new or renovated Class A office space presents the best opportunity for new investment considering market trends. Class A space that is well situated and offers modern amenities will attract companies consolidating their operations or relocating from Class B or Class C spaces. Future office development should be located close to public transit and within walking distance

to dining and service establishments. The Village should also actively encourage the renovation of existing Class B and Class C spaces to increase the availability of Class A product within the Gurnee office market.

Industrial Sector

Following retail trade, manufacturing is the second largest employment industry concentrated mainly within three industrial districts: the Tri-State Industrial District, the Northeast Industrial District, and the smaller Washington Industrial District. According to the Village's 2019 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report, seven of the Village's top 20 employers are within the industrial sector: Domino Amjet, an industrial packaging and coding operation; Dynapar, a manufacturer of encoders and resolvers; Kalle USA, a sausage casings manufacturer; Nosco Printing Group, a packaging solutions company headquartered in Gurnee; Nypro Chicago, which provides design and manufacturing support for the healthcare market; Ohio Medical, manufacturer of respiratory medical devices; and Weiman Products, manufacturer of household cleaning products.

According to the Village's financial report, there has been a significant increase in the amount of taxable sales from manufacturers. From 2008 to 2018, the ten year timeframe for which the plan provides data, an increase from \$172,265 in 2008 to \$402,566 in 2018 was reported. Years 2014 to 2015 saw the most significant jump from \$283,231 to \$400,537. Since 2015, annual taxable sales from manufacturers have remained above \$400,000.

Regional industrial development trends indicate a strong demand for modern speculative industrial development within the Lake County submarket. The second quarter of 2019 saw record leasing activity within the County, contributing to a net absorption of 1.4 million square feet in new leases and lease expansions. Gurnee is well-positioned to continue the growth of its industrial districts and take advantage of this trend, as evidenced by the recent completion and leasing of nearly 200,000 square feet of speculative industrial space within the Tri-State Business Park (Colliers International). Continued support of existing industrial areas should be a priority, as well as marketing of key undeveloped sites located along I-94 and US 41 that provide direct access to the regional and national transportation networks, and areas along existing truck routes.

POLICIES.

- *Explore economic development tools to spur redevelopment within industrial and office areas and become more competitive within the region.*
- *Explore options to enhance public transit to attract workers*

OBJECTIVE. Attract new commercial businesses that serve residents. In the 12 month period that ended April 30, 2019, Gurnee's total retail sales per capita was \$40,940. This is anticipated to remain significantly higher than the Lake County and the Chicago metropolitan region as it has been in prior years. While data for the same period is not available, a comparison to the available 2017 values show that this is higher than the Chicago metropolitan region's per capita retail sales of \$14,939 and Lake County's \$18,611. The Village relies on the strong and consistent retail tax base generated by the large volume of retail activity to fund public services and infrastructure projects. Retail trade is also the Village's largest employment sector, accounting for 23.5% of jobs located in Gurnee. Gurnee Mills alone employs over 5,000 workers, which makes up the majority of local retail jobs.

As a regional destination for retail and entertainment, Gurnee has an abundance of commercial businesses that cater to leisure shopping and activities, many of which are national or international brands with the capital to thrive in a competitive and global retail market. In focus groups held as part of the Gurnee Strategic Plan 2017-2021, residents reported a desire for more independent retail and service businesses, such as restaurants, grocers, and pharmacies. While independent small businesses may generate less sales tax than corporate chains, they are part of what makes a community unique. However, small and independent businesses often struggle to compete with large corporations, which are supported by vast resources in marketing, technology and analysis, and economies of scale.

In Gurnee, national brand retailers tend to locate near the Grand/ Tri-State interchange, which benefit from high traffic counts. For small and independent retailers, the Village should actively promote smaller neighborhood commercial centers located to the east and south, which offer smaller units and more affordable lease rates. By connecting entrepreneurs with small business programs focusing in areas such as market analysis, business plan writing, and business financing, the Village can help provide new businesses with the tools for long-term success. Broader support of these neighborhood commercial centers through marketing, special events, public improvements, and incentive programs will help strengthen Gurnee's independent retail market, better serve local resident demand, and encourage a diversity in business that reflects the community's unique character.



Right:

Six Flags Great America

Photo: Michael Wallace (Flickr)

POLICIES.

- *Explore assistance programs for business owners to help them improve their properties and/or expand successful businesses.*
- *Encourage façade improvements by private property owners.*
- *Implement the recommendations for improving East Grand Avenue as articulated in the ULI Plan.*
- *Use economic incentives and infrastructure improvements to attract retail and other commercial uses to occupy commercial areas with vacant storefronts.*

OBJECTIVE. Continue to support the Village’s regional attractions. Like manufacturing, transportation, and communications, technology has pushed the retail and entertainment industries to evolve. Nationally, shopping centers are learning to reconfigure themselves as hubs for entertainment, dining, lifestyle, and education. Major retailers and attractions can stay relevant in the digital marketplace when they capitalize on the unique in-person experiences they can offer, something that is not available online. The Village can continue to support Gurnee’s existing retail and entertainment centers by providing them the flexibility to adapt as consumer demand continues to evolve.

Within Gurnee, three major regional attractions are located within roughly a mile long stretch of I-94, at the expressway’s intersections with Grand Avenue and Washington Street. Gurnee Mills, Six Flags Great America, and Great Wolf Lodge are all major regional attractions that bring visitors, jobs, and revenue to the Village. In order to reinforce and focus investment and reinvestment in these existing commercial activity centers, the Village should encourage future commercial development on already available sites and out-parcels located near these major attractions.

For parcels that are currently zoned for strictly commercial uses but are unlikely to be developed as such over the horizon of this Comprehensive Plan, alternative uses may be considered, including multi-family, mixed-use, office, and light industrial or industrial mixed-use development. Where permitted, alternative development types should be compatible with and enhance adjacent commercial activity. Providing the flexibility to ensure that the Village’s regional attractions can continue to be supported through the development of new commercial uses, as well as high-density housing, restaurants, bars, and other entertainment attractions can help to increase their resiliency to changes in the market moving forward.

The Village is currently exploring such an approach, evaluating the opportunity to create a sports-oriented entertainment destination near Six Flags Great America, at the intersection of Milwaukee Avenue and Washington Street. Development concepts have been included in the “Community Character Areas” section of this Plan, and include accommodation for a range of commercial, office, and residential uses within a new pedestrian-oriented mixed-use complex.

POLICIES.

- *Evaluate the opportunity to create a new regional sports-oriented entertainment complex at Milwaukee Avenue and Washington Street, augmenting the Village’s current offerings and reinforcing the area as a year-round entertainment destination.*
- *Provide flexibility for Gurnee Mills to adapt to changing trends in retail.*
- *Ensure that Six Flags and Great Wolf Lodge can continue to make improvements to ensure their regional draw.*



ENVIRONMENT & OPEN SPACE

Gurnee is home to a network of parks, open space, and trails that is integral to the health and well-being of the community's environment and residents. These amenities provide residents, visitors, and workers with opportunities for recreation, leisure, exercise, and connection with nature. Environmental features, including waterways, lakes, floodplains, tree canopies, and other elements of the natural landscape, help maintain a healthy ecosystem and contribute to the character and allure of the community. Features such as the Des Plaines River and surrounding Lake County Forest Preserve help define Gurnee's landscape and can serve as a destination for residents and visitors.

ENVIRONMENT AND OPEN SPACE // OBJECTIVES & POLICIES

Research indicates that access to parks and open space is beneficial to public health, well-being, and safety. While Gurnee has an extensive network of open space and defining environmental features that lend to a high quality of life for residents, these objectives and policies identify ways of enhancing and expanding existing assets. The overarching goal of the recommended objectives and policies is to protect the Village's natural resources and open space, and connect residents to active and passive recreation areas and trails.

OBJECTIVE: Maintain and enhance the Village's high-quality open space and preserve existing natural resources, including the Des Plaines River, wetlands, wooded areas, and other features. Open space includes natural areas, forests, parks, green spaces, and wildlife conservations. Such spaces enrich resident quality of life, improve community appearance, help manage stormwater, and improve environmental health indicators. Because developed land is rarely returned to open space, preservation of existing open space and the incorporation of open space in future development is critical to maintaining a balance of land uses.

The majority of Gurnee's existing open space lies along the Des Plaines River. Five wildlife conservation areas maintained by the Gurnee Park District are designated for their high concentrations of native plant species. The Village should seek opportunities to acquire or establish conservation easements on land located adjacent to existing open spaces to expand such areas. Larger site development and planned unit developments (PUD) are an opportunity to incorporate additional open space and trails into new development. Special consideration should be given to sites that are required to incorporate new or expanded stormwater retention or detention features by Village Code or the Lake County Stormwater Management Commission's Watershed Development Ordinance. The design of required stormwater facilities presents an opportunity to create attractive open space features that serve not only as infrastructure, but as open space amenities.

When possible, new open space should be connected to existing open space to create an interconnected green infrastructure network consisting of trails, greenways, parks, water features, and natural areas. Accessibility to open space can be enhanced through strengthened connections to the existing sidewalk and trail network. Future transportation improvements should prioritize bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure where there is an opportunity to provide or improve access to open space.

POLICIES.

- *Protect existing natural resources from incompatible encroachment.*
- *Preserve open space around the Des Plaines River.*
- *Create standards that ensure new development does not adversely impact the natural features of development sites.*



Right:

Fishing spot on the Des
Plaines River Trail

Photo: JanetandPhil (Flickr)

- *Work with the Park District and others to create a greenway system that combines existing pathways, parks, and floodplain areas into an integrated open space system.*
- *Include requirements or incentives for publicly accessible open space in new development, for all Village residents.*
- *Prioritize the creation of pedestrian and bike paths that connect neighborhoods to parks and to other open spaces.*

OBJECTIVE. Mitigate flooding impacts. Bisected by the Des Plaines River, parts of the Village are located within the regulatory floodway and floodplain. Floodplains are areas located adjacent to waterways that are prone to flooding. Gurnee’s floodplain surrounds the Des Plaines River and extends east along Grand Avenue and Old Grand Avenue. In the summer of 2017, nearly one of the worst flooding events took place in the Village’s history. The Des Plaines River crested at 12.09 feet, more than five feet above flood stage, and it took days for the water to drain out of the floodplain. Shortly after, the Village purchased and demolished the 27th property located in the floodplain through the Village’s floodplain acquisition program, which was initiated in the 1990s.

The floodplain acquisition program continues to be an effective and proactive tool in the Village’s efforts to protect local property and investment from rising waters, and to preserve Village resources, through the reduction of damage caused by flooding events. The historic Gurnee Grade School on Kilbourne Road was demolished in 2013 through the program and the property was added to Viking Park. The downtown area has roughly 20 buildings remaining in the high-risk flood area. The Village should

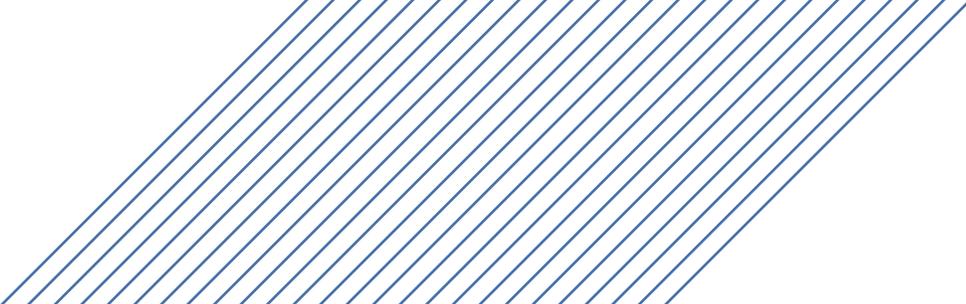
continue to purchase properties through the acquisition program, and seek funding from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) in order to do so.

In addition, in 2009, Gurnee adopted a Stormwater Management Program Plan (SMPP). Based upon the Lake County Stormwater Management Commission’s template and meeting the standards required by the US Environmental Protection Agency under the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Phase II program, the SMPP describes the implementation actions to reduce the discharge of pollutants from stormwater runoff.

On a more site-specific level, the Zoning Ordinance offers a number of runoff mitigation measures built into various development controls. The Village should continue to require landscape on larger sites in order to assist with stormwater management and allow flexibility within those regulations to include new “best practices” in such controls. Other dimensional controls, such as maximum impervious surface ratios and lot coverage maximums, prevent the overbuilding and over-paving of sites and allow stormwater to be absorbed on-site.

POLICIES.

- *Continue to acquire land that is subject to repetitive losses and convert to greenway or open space uses.*
- *Refine the delineation of wetlands and floodplains, and require clear designation of such impacted lands within development plans.*
- *Promote and implement a variety of stormwater management techniques.*



MOBILITY

As part of developing the 2016-2021 Strategic Plan, the Village held a series of public meetings asking for resident feedback on community conditions. Desire for greater walkability and improved sidewalk infrastructure emerged as top priorities for community members. As a result, the Mayor and Village Board appointed a diverse group of residents, including bike enthusiasts, planners, transportation experts, and community leaders, to serve as the Blue Ribbon Commission. Using previous plans, a 2016 pedestrian survey, and GIS mapping, the Commission then developed a plan outlining infrastructure projects and strategies to help the Village to become a safer and friendlier community for pedestrians and bicyclists. Final recommendations from the Commission were presented to the Village Board in 2017. Principles guiding the selection and prioritization of projects included:

1. *Connections to regional trails*
2. *Connections to parks and schools*
3. *Improve connectivity along major roadways*
4. *Connections to local businesses*
5. *Fill in infrastructure gaps*

Implementation of the Blue Ribbon Commission's recommendations is underway, with many projects in the pipeline or already completed. In 2018, the Village completed construction of an eight foot wide path along Knowles Road to link one of the Village's major bike paths with the Rollins Savanna Forest Preserve and the Millennium Trail. Funding of projects is anticipated to stem from a collaboration of partners, including the Village, Lake County, the Lake County Division of Transportation, Illinois Department of Transportation, private property owners, and developers. Regional partners such as the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning and the Active Transportation Alliance may also provide grants and awards of technical assistance for trail projects.

MOBILITY // OBJECTIVES & POLICIES

Mobility is key to the livelihood of Gurnee residents and businesses. The goal of the objectives and policies described in this section is to ensure efficient and effective multi-modal transportation throughout the Village.

OBJECTIVE. Adopt a policy and implement "Complete Streets" design strategies throughout the Village to accommodate all modes of transportation, and provide safe and efficient circulation within the Village. "Complete Streets" are defined as right-of-way facilities that are designed and operated to enable safe access for all users; persons with disabilities, pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and transit riders are able to safely move along and across a complete street. When right-of-way is reconstructed or newly constructed, it should be designed in a way that accommodates multi-modal transportation (auto, bike and pedestrian) where appropriate and reflects how residents move about their neighborhood and the larger Village.

The Village, through its planning efforts such as the 2016-2021 Strategic Plan referenced above and the older Pedestrian/Bicycle Trail Master Plan, has already laid the groundwork for adopting a Complete Streets policy. By reconstituting the Blue Ribbon Commission and building on their work to date, they can work to create a specific Complete Streets policy for adoption by the Village. Per the National Complete Streets Coalition such a policy should address:

- *A vision for how and why the community wants to complete its streets*
- *The definition that "all users" refers to pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit passengers of all ages and abilities, as well as trucks, buses, and automobiles*

- *The specification the policy applies to new and retrofit projects, including design, planning, maintenance, and operations, for the entire right-of-way*
- *Clear procedures for any exceptions*
- *The goal to create a connected network for all modes*
- *Reference to progressive design guidelines*
- *Context-sensitive design procedures and solutions*
- *Performance standards with measurable outcomes*
- *Next steps for policy implementation*

When working on such a policy, it should acknowledge that Gurnee includes areas of different development character, from grid neighborhoods to more rural subdivisions. Standards should acknowledge these varied conditions, including a series of right-of-way widths and design requirements, and implementing more comprehensive multi-modal principals where appropriate to the character of the area. Bike lanes in particular may not be appropriate for every roadway, but should still work to establish a connected travel path through the Village.

Finally, new developments and expansions of existing developments should also plan for more connectivity both within the development area and to adjacent areas. Sidewalks and bicycle lanes where appropriate are one component, but new subdivisions should also include requirements for greenway connections between parks and natural areas, road access to adjacent properties or subdivisions, and direct connections to abutting rights-of-way.

POLICIES.

- *Adopt a Complete Streets policy.*
- *Acquire land to accommodate the installation of new sidewalks and bike paths in locations where substandard right-of-way widths currently exist.*
- *Include pedestrian and bicycle amenities in road improvement projects.*
- *Provide a multi-modal arterial system which facilitates through and cross-town movement.*
- *Ensure safe and efficient crossings across major roads for cyclists and pedestrians.*
- *Explore opportunities to increase the comfort of pedestrians and beautify the Village through streetscape improvements and enhancement of the urban tree canopy (parkway trees).*
- *Install bus shelters and pedestrian amenities along bus routes.*

OBJECTIVE. Implement the Pedestrian/Bicycle Trail Master Plan.

The Pedestrian/Bicycle Trail Master Plan (1994) was one of the first formal steps in the development of a comprehensive trail system for the Village of Gurnee. The Plan was designed harmoniously with the Gurnee Park District, other Village plans, and regional plans to serve as a guide for the long-term development and implementation of Gurnee's current and future trail system. The guidelines set forth in this plan are applicable to recreational and commuting trail uses, from paths for cycling and walking to creating a complete sidewalk network for pedestrians.

The Plan's goals include creating interconnected linkages among the various neighborhoods, commercial areas, schools, and government services; completing a Village Center pedestrian and bicycle circulation system to provide increased access to parks, open spaces, and natural features; and developing and implementing a Class IIA hybrid approach to trail design, which takes elements from the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) bikeway classifications to create a bikeway trail/shared roadway and sidewalk combination standard. The updated Plan - "The Blue Ribbon Commission Report Recommendations on Pedestrian and Bicycle Infrastructure Improvements" - was presented to the Village Board on July 24, 2017.

POLICIES.

- *Connect to the regional trails of the Des Plaines River Trail and Millennium Trail.*
- *Create bicycle and pedestrian paths to schools and parks from neighborhoods.*
- *Implement bicycle and pedestrian paths, as feasible, along Grand Avenue, Washington Street, Almond Road, Milwaukee Avenue/Rt21, Hunt Club Road, Dilley's Road, and Gages Lake Road.*
- *Develop bicycle or multi-use paths that connect with existing or future paths in neighboring communities.*
- *Use signage and wayfinding techniques to link pedestrian and bicycle paths.*

OBJECTIVE. Improve public transit opportunities.

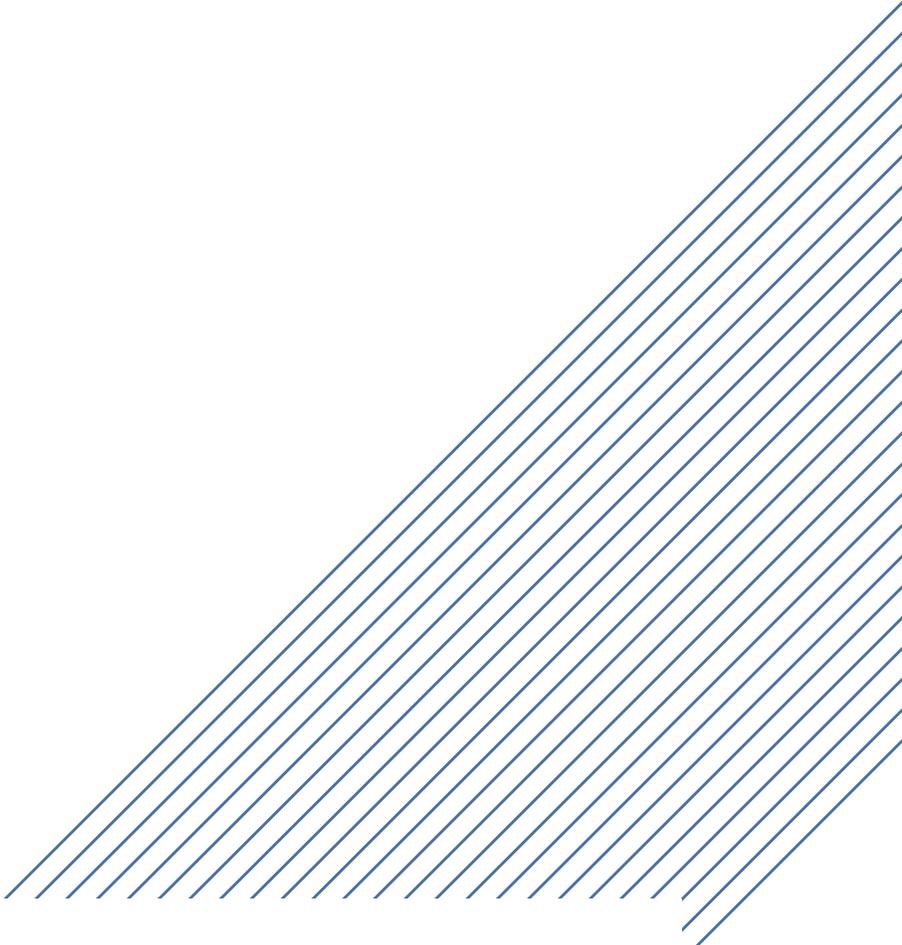
Currently the Village of Gurnee is served by PACE, the suburban bus service of the Regional Transportation Agency, the local public transportation agency for the Chicago area suburbs. Generally the PACE routes offer connections to the Waukegan and Grayslake Metra Station (commuter rail) and the regional destinations of Six Flags and Gurnee Mills; there are designated stops along Grand Avenue and Washington Street. The PACE system through

Gurnee is not necessarily robust and provides limited options for employees within the office and industrial centers to reach work by public transit. In addition, the lack of a Metra station also further limits transit options - to access Gurnee by Metra requires a commuter to stop at the Waukegan or Grayslake Station and use a PACE route to get to the Village.

As the Village looks to support and potentially increase non-retail employment, public transit is often a factor in attracting employees. Looking to the future, the Village should continue to work with public agencies to increase the connectivity of public transit. This includes short-term actions such as enhanced bus routes, which quickly and efficiently serve major employment centers as well as longer term goals such as a commuter rail station.

POLICIES.

- *Coordinate PACE bus routes and bus stops with employment centers targeted for growth*
- *Continue to explore options for Metra or Amtrak service*
- *Identify and address PACE service gaps*



VILLAGE OF GURNEE, ILLINOIS
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



COMPASS 2040
ADOPTED OCTOBER 5, 2020