

# PALOS HEIGHTS



## Comprehensive Plan City of Palos Heights, IL

SEPTEMBER 9, 2019



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Daniel Nisavic, MPA  
Lisa Pesavento, CPRP  
Dr. Chuck Polcaster

## Consultant



[www.TeskaAssociates.com](http://www.TeskaAssociates.com)

**PALOS HEIGHTS COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

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## 1

# Introduction + Process

Palos Heights is a community with a ‘small-town atmosphere’ and ‘big-city amenities’, featuring quiet residential neighborhoods served by high-quality municipal services, education, healthcare, recreation, and transportation options. This Plan is intended to be a guide for the future evolution of the City, preserving the values of the community while providing a vision for the next 20 years.

## Purpose and Use of Plan

The City of Palos Heights’ most recent Comprehensive Plan was adopted in June of 2008. The planning process included community outreach and produced a vision for the future of Palos Heights, along with associated goals and objectives. It included a number of city-wide planning objectives, plans in congruence with the Harlem Avenue Corridor Plan, and strategies for implementation.

This update to the Comprehensive Plan is being performed to ensure that Palos Heights continues to make planning decisions based on the best available data and observable trends, and to recognize the goals and objectives which have been reached. Major planning goals and objectives that have been accomplished since the previous plan include:

- Periodic updates to the City’s Zoning Ordinance;
- Creation of the Harlem Avenue Overlay District to encourage the commercial redevelopment of the Harlem Avenue corridor;
- Establishment of the Commercial Areas Design and Development Guidelines to improve the aesthetic character of the community through development and architectural standards; and
- Establishment of a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District at Harlem Avenue and College Drive to help spur redevelopment at this prominent location within the City.
- Establishment of a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District at Harlem Avenue and 127th Street to help spur redevelopment of Jewell Osco and two outlots.

## What is the purpose of a Comprehensive Plan?

- Guide land use policy, long-range goals and objectives.
- Set forth long-range recommendations and community vision for improvement while maintaining important features of the City that add to its special image and character.
- Evaluate and plan for the future of land use, transportation (vehicle and pedestrian and public transportation), parks and open space, community facilities, environmental issues (sustainability), social/cultural issues, special area plans.
- Integration with the zoning ordinance and considered as a factor in making decisions regarding land use/zoning.
- Create an opportunity for public input/community outreach regarding the future of a community.

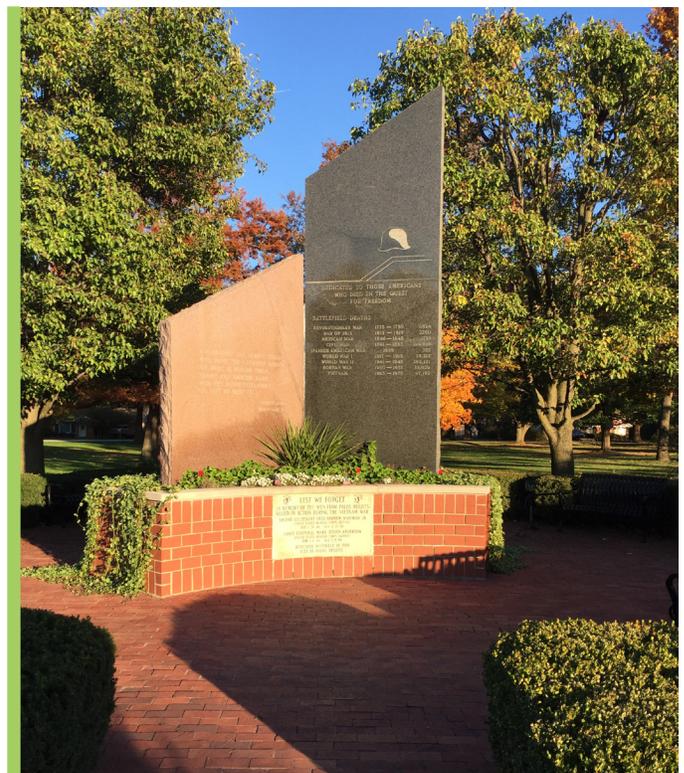
## What changed conditions indicate a need to review and revise the community’s comprehensive plan?

- **AGE OF CURRENT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN:** A comprehensive plan over five years old should at minimum be reviewed and revised to update the demographic information, which could affect projections of future population, employment, land use, and traffic conditions. Significant changes in land use have an effect on other land uses, the transportation network, and public facilities. Such changes should be incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan.  
  
Updates to the economic components are significant because of the major changes in the retail industry over the past 10 years – changes in income and buying power, changes in the competitive landscape, etc.
- **PLAN ACHIEVEMENTS:** If a significant number of goals, objectives, and recommendations have been achieved, it may be time to update the plan with new goals, objectives, and recommendations.
- **MAINTAIN BASIS OF CONNECTION WITH ZONING ORDINANCE AND MAP:** Since the community’s zoning ordinance is based upon the comprehensive plan, the comprehensive plan must stay current to be used as a guide to development.

- **ABILITY TO ADEQUATELY ADDRESS DEVELOPMENT ISSUES** Many communities have plans that do not adequately address many of today’s development issues. Other plans lack the necessary flexibility that developers and property owners need to negotiate acceptable projects, or they need to be brought up-to-date to reflect recent court decisions.
- **FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES** A Comprehensive Plan is often a criterion for acquiring some grants and state/federal matching funds for future projects.

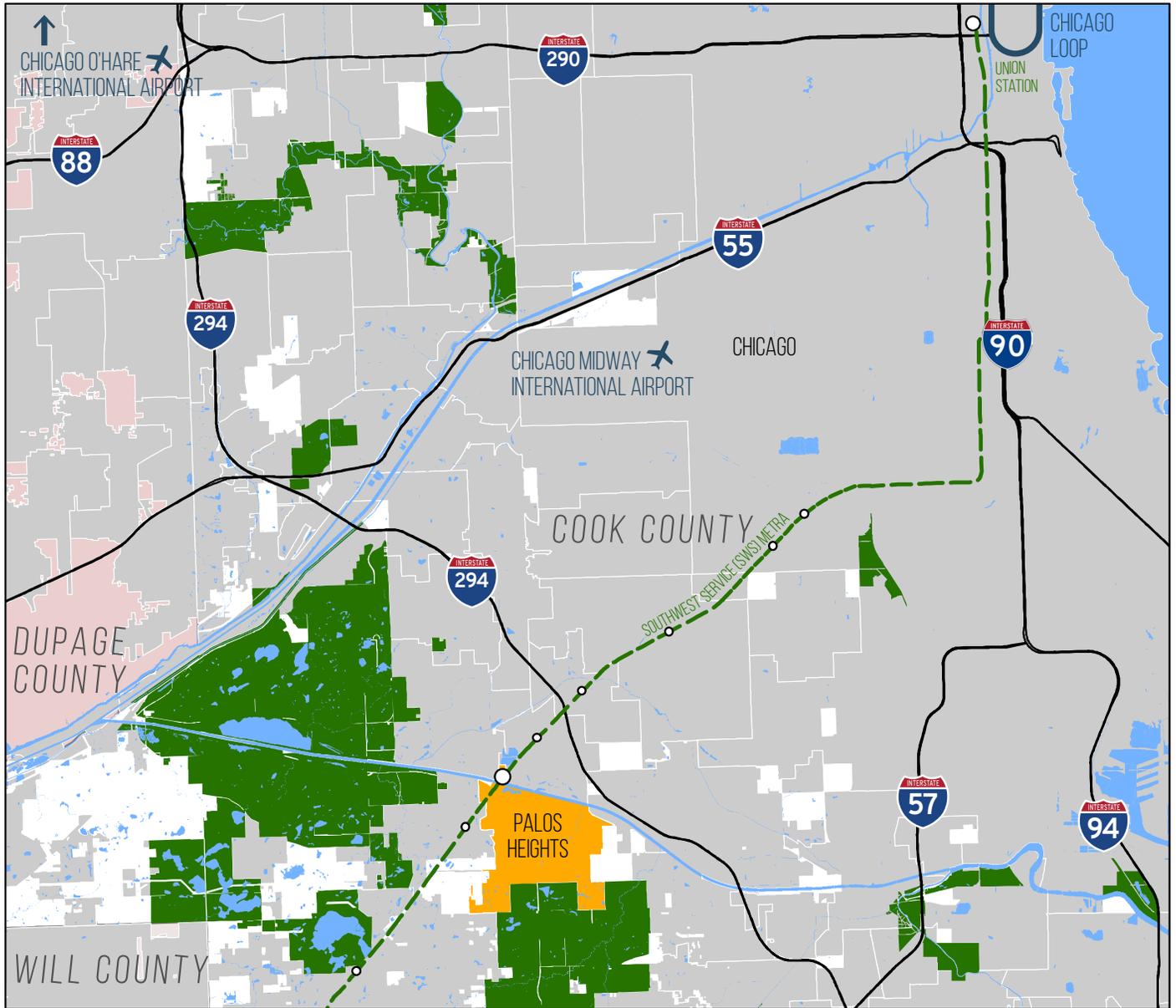
## Objectives for 2019 Plan Update

- Reflect changes in demographics/market conditions.
- Revise existing conditions and future land use map to reflect changes since 2008.
- Review and update goals/objectives.
- Revise data and plans predicated on the economy to reflect current market trends. Existing market assumptions may no longer apply due to significant changes in market conditions since 2008.
- Evaluate existing/alternate sub-areas (Olde Palos, College Drive/Harlem Avenue, Indian Trails).
- Identify opportunity sites for future (re)development.
- Revise/integrate Park and Recreation Master Plan.



# REGIONAL LOCATION

EXHIBIT 1.1



REGIONAL MAP

- Palos Heights Limits
- Municipality
- Unincorporated Cook County
- Unincorporated DuPage County
- Unincorporated Will County
- Metra Stations
- Southwest Service Metra (SWS)
- Lakes & Rivers
- Forest Preserve



## Regional Location

Located 17 miles southwest of Downtown Chicago, the City of Palos Heights is surrounded almost entirely by other incorporated communities or Cook County Forest Preserves (Exhibit 1.1). However, there are still some unincorporated areas in Palos and Worth Townships to the east and west of the southern portion of Palos Heights. Residents have the advantage of good connectivity with Downtown Chicago via Metra Commuter Rail and proximity to several surrounding municipalities for employment, open space and recreation, and leisure activities.

According to the most recent U.S. Census (2010), the population of Palos Heights was 12,515. The population has increased by over 10% from 11,345 at the previous census (2000). Population estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau (American Community Survey) indicate that the population increased slightly to 12,544 by 2016. These trends indicate that the population is increasing slightly but remains fairly stable. This reinforces Palos Heights as a nearly fully built-out community, with little to no undeveloped property remaining within the municipal limits. Whereas many Comprehensive Plans focus on accommodating new growth, this Comprehensive Plan will focus instead on accommodating appropriate land use changes through repurposing, redevelopment and improving aesthetics and multi-modal access throughout the City.

## Regional Plans

### Harlem Corridor Plan

The Harlem Corridor extends through several communities and is used as a major regional thoroughfare through the southwest suburbs. The Southwest Conference of Mayors sponsored the Harlem Corridor Plan to recognize its prominence as a major corridor and to make recommendations for communities to use the corridor as a space to show local pride and flavor. Specific action items in the 2011 plan include:

- Parking management through municipal parking (surface or garage); and
- Reconfigure streetscape and access to create a more pedestrian friendly retail corridor.

### Ridgeland Corridor Plan

The 2014 Ridgeland Corridor Plan runs from 79th Street in Burbank to 135th Street in Palos Heights. The plan integrates visions for community connectivity, transportation planning, land use and zoning, economic development, and urban design. The plan aimed to facilitate connections between community bike plans and the corridor, expand multi-use path connectivity, ensure adequate transportation options exist for residents in the communities along Ridgeland Avenue, and provide recommendations for economic development of opportunity sites along the corridor.

Within Palos Heights, priorities include linking Ridgeland Avenue to the Cal-Sag Trail, using Ridgeland Avenue to connect a bicycle network connecting to major destinations and municipalities, landscaping and wayfinding signage along the corridor to create a cohesive look while helping visitors identify the community they are in, and adding or improving sidewalks to ensure they are ADA-compliant and reduce gaps. Several recommendations include ensuring that pedestrian crossings and infrastructure are adequate, providing enough time to cross, connectivity and ensuring safety. Further evaluation was recommended for a pedestrian crossing with median refuge at Ridgeland Avenue and 123rd Street.

Indian Trails Shopping Center, included as a Sub-Area Plan in the Update, is an opportunity site in this plan as well. Recommendations include phased reuse and redevelopment of the center into a mixed-use center with retail, restaurant, office and residential uses. The plan recommends rezoning from a B Business District to a PUD Planned Unit Development District.



## Palos Heights Active Transportation Plan (2011)

Palos Heights adopted the Active Transportation Plan in 2011, with a vision on livability within the community. The plan combines economic development with active lifestyle options and sensible environmental stewardship. A primary focus of the Active Transportation Plan is connecting biking and walking routes to the Calumet-Sag Trail, Harlem Avenue merchants, and Trinity College.

- Signage and amenities to improve awareness and safety.
- Corridor-specific (Harlem Avenue, Ridgeland Avenue, and College Drive) and place-specific (Trinity Christian College, Palos Hospital, City Hall, the Recreation Center and library, and forest preserves.
- Promotes policies such as the Safe Routes to Schools program, Complete Streets, and bicycle parking.
- Guidance for education, enforcement and event programming, such as Bike and Dine, youth walk to school days, and other educational and promotional events.

Palos Height's neighbor to the west, Palos Park, also recently adopted a Bikeway Plan in 2018. This plan analyzed the most efficient routes that would offer the greatest number of connections, and determined appropriate facilities (advisory shoulder, bicycle boulevard, paved shoulder, bike lane, or side path) for the routes. Priority projects include delineating the network along 119th Street and 121st Street, connecting to the Palos Heights Bike Path, the Cal-Sag Trail, and the Sag Valley Trail System.

- Create connections to commercial corridors. Promote Bikeway and Trails Plan and make trail map more accessible to the public.

## CMAP ON TO 2050

The Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) has developed a master plan for the Chicago Metropolitan Region titled ON TO 2050. This latest regional plan recommends a variety of actions and strategies governed by three important planning principles to help communities within the metropolitan region achieve sustainable prosperity. The principles that will guide the planning process include:

**RESILIENCE** A network of communities that can endure and recover from social, economic and environmental hardships.

**INCLUSIVE GROWTH** Increased economic opportunity and improved quality of life for all residents within the region.

**PRIORITIZED INVESTMENT** Coordination of investments across sectors and communities within the region.

These three principles inform the actions suggested in the plan that address large scale trends that the region is experiencing and will continue to experience in the future. The five 'alternative futures' that CMAP addresses in this plan are:

**CHANGED CLIMATE** Frequency and strength of extreme weather events as a result of changes to the region's climate have the potential to strain infrastructure, natural systems and communities.

**WALKABLE COMMUNITIES** People want to live in walkable communities, increasing demand for existing downtown and commercial corridors within the region and increasing investment in mixed use, walkable community centers.

**INNOVATIVE TRANSPORTATION** Improvements in technology encourage integration of smart infrastructure and autonomous vehicles into the transportation network, improving the mobility of people and goods throughout the region.

**TRANSFORMED ECONOMY** Improvements in technology encourage the transition to automation and digitalization that will transform the production of goods and services, and those goods and services themselves.

**CONSTRAINED RESOURCES** State and Federal funding sources will likely continue to stagnate or diminish, putting pressure on local governments, resulting in new tolls, taxes and fees that will increase the financial burden of communities in the region.



ON TO 2050 is an extensive plan but is relevant to, and impacts Palos Heights in a number of ways. Key recommendations such as Walkable Communities is especially relevant as the City of Palos Heights works to expand paths and bike trails to allow pedestrians and cyclists to move through the community. Regional projects and recommendations for local governments include focusing constrained resources to more efficiently fund and support improvements and cooperate and work with neighboring communities instead of competing with them. Additionally, a number of regionally significant projects (RSPs) are scheduled to occur by 2050 proximally located to Palos Heights including:

- Adding lanes to I-80 between I-294 and US 30 ;
- Adding an I-294/I-57 interchange ;
- Reconstruction along I-57 between I-94 and I-80; and
- Moving SouthWest Service to LaSalle Street Station to increase frequency

### WePlan2020, Cook County Department of Public Health

This plan was adopted in 2016 and focuses on health outcomes for Suburban Cook County. The Plan includes the outcomes of the Community Health Assessment (CHA) and a Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) which aims to improve health equity, management of chronic disease, and access to resources for behavioral healthcare. It includes priority health indicators and objectives which range from life expectancy to obesity, poverty status, unemployment, behavioral health hospitalization, smoking, soda consumption and physical activity. The plan encourages an expanded understanding of health and partners in creating healthy communities. It encourages communities to increase physical activity opportunities and increase access to a variety of healthcare information and types, including behavioral healthcare.

### Connecting Cook County Plan

The 2040 Cook County Long Range Transportation Plan was adopted in August of 2016, and indicates the needs, resources, and priorities for rail, water, highway, and public transportation in the region. The plan prioritizes transit and transportation alternatives, supports the region as North America’s freight capital, promotes equal access to opportunities through transit, maintaining and modernizing existing infrastructure and networks, and increasing investments in transportation. Palos Heights has two Illinois routes that are under the jurisdiction of Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) for maintenance, Route 83 and Route 43.

## Planning Process

Every Comprehensive Plan is a little bit different, and each incorporates community engagement and outreach in different ways. The 2008 Comprehensive Plan focused on community engagement and offered residents and business owners numerous ways to take part in the planning process and share their ideas and opinions. This update is based on those very ideas and visions and focuses on integrating the goals and objectives from the 2008 Comprehensive Plan with targeted visions for the three special areas in Sub-Area Plans (Olde Palos, College Drive & Harlem Avenue, Indian Trails Shopping Center).

### Timeline of the Comprehensive Plan Update

- **January 2018:** Project Initiation
- **February/March 2018:** Community Assessment
- **March-August 2018:** Community Survey
- **March/April 2018:** Policy Formation
- **May/June 2018:** City-Wide Plans
- **May-August 2018:** Parks & Recreation Survey
- **June/July 2018:** Sub-Area Plans
- **April-August 2018:** Parks and Recreation Plan
- **August/September 2018:** Implementation Plan
- **October-December 2018:** Review of draft Plan
- **January-June 2019:** Revisions and Adoption

## Community Outreach

Key person interviews were conducted in February of 2018 with representatives from the City of Palos Heights, Palos Hospital, the Chamber of Commerce, Business and Economic Advisory Committee (BEAC), Trinity College, local business owners, and the Palos Heights Library.

A Steering Committee was formed to both offer insight and ideas and review the overall vision. Several meetings with the Committee were held:

**MEETING 1: March 19, 2018**

- Goals of the Comprehensive Plan.
- Reasons for Update.
- Strong desire for a traditional downtown.
- Presentation showing current demographic data, housing data and employment data.

**MEETING 2: May 21, 2018**

- Progress Update; Revisions of Goals and Objectives from 2008 Plan.
- Community Surveys Update (Comprehensive Plan and Park Master Plan).
- Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

**MEETING 3: July 23, 2018**

- Community Outreach Update.
- Findings and recommendations for Sub-Areas.

**MEETING 4: April 15, 2019**

- Review Draft of Comprehensive Plan and Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

The comprehensive plan website, <https://plan4palosheights.com/>, accessible through the end of 2019, was created to provide a way for residents to access information regarding the planning process for the Update and the concurrent Parks and Recreation Master Plan. Through the website, an online survey covering topics relevant to the update was available from May 11th to August 16th, 2018 and allowed the Palos Heights community to share their ideas and opinions. A total of 280 respondents shared feedback. A summary of responses and insights can be found in the Palos Today section and full survey results are available in the Appendix.

## Key Person Interviews

Key person interviews were conducted in February of 2018 with representatives from the City of Palos Heights, Palos Hospital, the Chamber of Commerce, Business and Economic Advisory Committee (BEAC), Trinity College, local business owners, and the Palos Heights Library.

Highlights:

- “Small town atmosphere, big city amenities”
- Generally good opinions of City services, public safety, parks/amenities, schools, healthcare/hospital, and Lake Katherine
- Strong desire for a traditional downtown
- Harlem Avenue not aesthetically pleasing and in need of upgrade, loss of historic businesses, lack of available parking
- Lack of sidewalks, pedestrian and bicycle access/connectivity should be improved
- Business improvement programs are helpful and should be promoted more

## Community Survey

A community survey collected opinions and ideas from residents to help inform plans for the Sub-Areas of the Update, ensuring that the plan included the voices of community members in the planning process for the future of Palos Heights.

A total of 280 people completed the survey (full survey results available in the Appendix). Respondents were asked 16 questions, including multiple choice and open response questions. Most respondents live in Palos Heights, are homeowners and have lived in the community for at least 10 years. While 30% of respondents were between 35 and 44, responses were gathered from residents as young as 25 and over 75.

Respondents of the survey indicated the factors that have drawn them to and kept them in Palos Heights are the schools, housing options and proximity to friends and family. Respondents are satisfied with the sense of community, community events, and access to healthcare in Palos Heights and feel that improvements could be made in the variety of goods, cultural institutions and proximity to entertainment options within the City. Additionally, respondents indicated that community services such as Police and Fire protection, library facilities and programs, and schools are excellent.



With regards to housing options, survey respondents indicated that there are a variety of housing options, though less for younger residents/recent college grads. The City currently has limited sidewalks, and while responses showed that many people care about expanding them, a significant number of people also prefer limiting sidewalks to certain streets or not installing them at all.

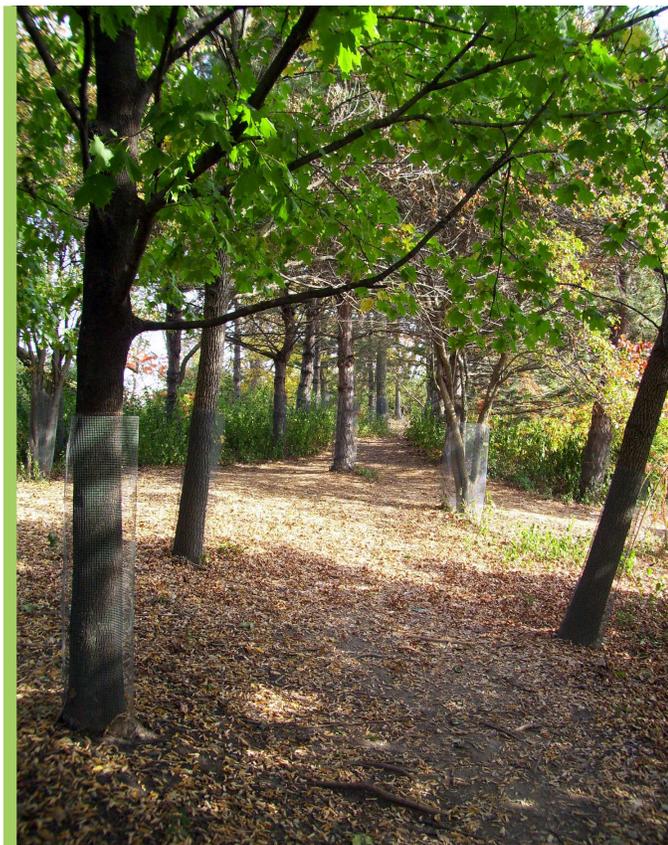
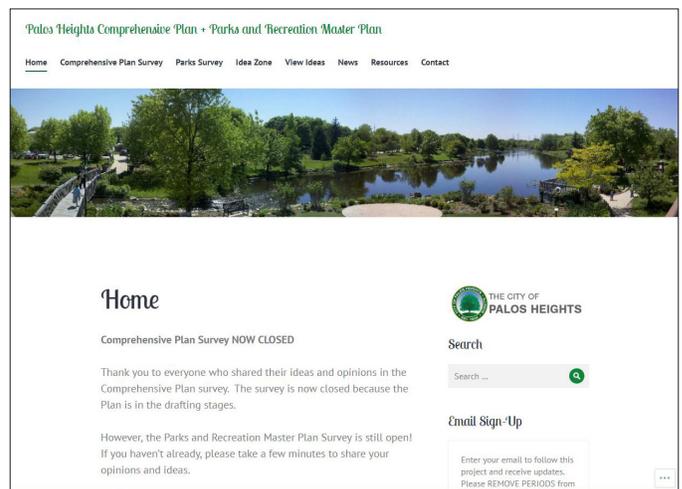
Respondents indicated that access to major roadways and highways is good, but that awareness about public transportation options is poor and that the frequency of service at the Palos Heights Metra Station is not adequate. Some survey respondents indicated that more service on the weekends was preferable, and others indicated that they travel to stations along the Rock Island Line.

Main thoroughfares such as Harlem Avenue, College Drive, Ridgeland Avenue, 127th Street and Southwest Highway are busy most of the time, respondents said, though particularly busy during morning and afternoon rush hours.

When asked about shopping behaviors, respondents indicated that they shop online most frequently, but that they also shop at local businesses. Survey respondents indicated that they never or only occasionally shop at Indian Trails and Tiffany Square, while they frequently visit businesses on Harlem Avenue and in Olde Palos (downtown).

## Plan4PalosHeights.com Idea Zone

In addition to completing the survey for the plan, residents were also encouraged to add their ideas on the plan website by adding comments with the option to upload visuals to illustrate ideas and preferences. Comments touched on many topics, including dog parks, sustainability, community gathering spaces such as an open-air pavilion (potentially located near Olde Palos or in Legion Park near City Hall), the expansion of walking paths, revitalization of Olde Palos, and many ideas for the reuse of the vacant Dominick’s site at the Indian Trails Shopping Center.



## Public Hearing

A public hearing was held on July 15, 2019, and attended by many residents of Palos Heights. Public comments focused on a number of issues in the community, including limited parking in the downtown (Olde Palos), the desire to promote the intersection of Harlem Avenue and College Drive as a prominent gateway into the community, and the need to focus on redevelopment of the Indian Trails shopping center. The public was also interested in how the City would implement the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan.



2

## Palos Today

Palos Heights today is a welcoming residential community and a great place to live and raise a family. Palos Heights offers the amenities of a larger community—such as the Recreation Center, public swimming pool, Palos Hospital, convenient access to downtown Chicago and the region—all in a park-like setting surrounded by forest preserves.

The first step in the planning process is to gain perspective through existing conditions research and data collection. The following sections cover population, housing and income characteristics, the economy and employment trends, transportation and mobility conditions, recreation opportunities, and environmental conditions within Palos Heights. This section also looks at community facilities including healthcare, educational and religious institutions, and municipal services. Community outreach included a survey, the results of which are included at the end of this chapter, and a presence at the Palos Heights Health and Business Expo to talk to local residents.

## Demographics

### Population + Housing

Palos Heights is a community that has very little room for geographic growth and is primarily comprised of single-family residences. While there is little room for growth, understanding the ways in which the community is changing ensures that the community can prepare to address evolving needs during the life of this plan.

The City of Palos Heights is bordered by the Calumet-Saginaw Channel (commonly referred to as the Cal-Sag) on the north and Cook County Forest Preserves on the south. Major roadways that run through the City include Route 43, also known as the Harlem Avenue, and Route 83, known as College Drive within Palos Heights. Access to major expressways via I-294 in Hickory Hills and in Alsip, allows residents to link to I-55 and I-57.

**PALOS HEIGHTS CHICAGO METROPOLITAN AREA**



**TABLE 2.1 POPULATION, 2015**

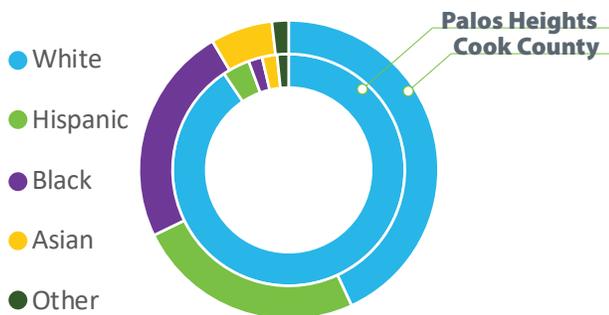
	PALOS	COOK COUNTY
Total Population	12,566	5,236,393
Total Households	4,775	1,942,959
Average Household Size	2.5	2.6
Population Change 2000-2010	11.2%	-3.4%
Median Age	50.9	35.9

Source: 2015 American Community Survey, 5-year estimates

**TABLE 2.2 RACE + ETHNICITY, 2015**

	PALOS HEIGHTS		COOK COUNTY	
White	11,380	90.6%	2,256,002	43.1%
Hispanic	481	3.8%	1,295,026	24.7%
Black	245	1.9%	1,239,171	23.7%
Asian	261	2.1%	352,123	6.7%
Other	199	1.6%	94,071	1.8%

Source: 2015 American Community Survey, 5-year estimates



Since 2000, the population has increased overall by 11.2% (Table 2.1), with a current (2015) population of 12,566. Compared to Cook County, Palos Heights has a much lower proportion of households with children under 18 and a much higher proportion of households with residents over the age of 60 (Table 2.3). However, a smaller proportion of people live alone than in the County at large, and the number of those living alone over the age of 65 is also less than the County.

**TABLE 2.3 AGE, 2015**

	PALOS HEIGHTS		COOK COUNTY	
19 and under	2,594	20.6%	1,332,360	25.4%
20 to 34	1,578	12.6%	1,216,029	23.2%
35 to 49	1,923	15.3%	1,054,127	20.1%
50 to 64	2,905	23.1%	970,994	18.5%
65 to 79	2,221	17.7%	477,643	9.1%
80 and over	1,345	10.7%	185,240	3.5%

Source: 2015 American Community Survey, 5-year estimates

Trends indicate that Palos Heights is aging—the median age in 2000 was 46.8, 50.9 in 2010 and 50.9 in 2015 (Table 2.1). The median age is expected to rise again to 52.8 by 2022 (source: ESRI Business Analyst Online). In 2015, less than 15% of the population was over 80, but more than 25% were 65 or older in Palos Heights (Table 2.3). This trend will impact the future housing and retail environment of the City.

**TABLE 2.4 INCOME, 2015**

	PALOS HEIGHTS		COOK COUNTY	
Less than \$25,000	444	9.3%	463,890	23.9%
\$25,000 to \$49,999	992	20.8%	424,589	21.9%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	829	17.4%	328,904	16.9%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	560	11.7%	231,125	11.9%
\$100,000 to \$149,000	1,025	21.5%	258,409	13.3%
\$150,000 and over	925	19.4%	236,042	12.1%
Median Income	\$78,727		\$55,251	

Source: 2015 American Community Survey, 5-year estimates

Compared to Cook County, Palos Heights has a greater proportion of households earning over \$100,000 and a smaller proportion of households earning less than \$25,000. The median income is 42% higher than the County's at just under \$80,000 (Table 2.4).

**TABLE 2.5 EDUCATION, 2015**

	PALOS HEIGHTS		COOK COUNTY	
High school or higher	8,678	92.4%	4,930,208	87.0%
Bachelor's degree or higher	4,221	44.9%	2,095,647	37.0%

Source: 2015 American Community Survey, 5-year estimates

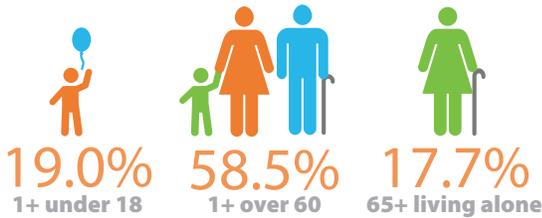
Residents of Palos Heights are well-educated; nearly all have a high school diploma or higher and 44% have a bachelor's degree or higher—both significantly higher proportions than the County (Table 2.5).

Most housing units are single-family detached houses (61%), and another 21% are single-family attached houses. Around 15% of residential structures have 3 or more units (Table 2.8). Ninety-four percent (94%) of all housing units are owner-occupied and, in 2015, only 5.6% of units were vacant—significantly lower than the county (10%) (Table 2.7). Most units were built in the last 80 years, and almost 50% of all units were built between 1970 and 1999 (Table 2.9). Compared to the County, homes tend to have at least 2 bedrooms, and the vast majority have 3 or more whereas in the county, 50% of units have one or no bedrooms (studio) (Table 2.10).

**TABLE 2.6 HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTICS, 2016**

HOUSEHOLD TYPE	PALOS HEIGHTS	COOK COUNTY
Households with one or more people under 18 years	19.0%	30.4%
Households with one or more people 60 years and +	58.5%	34.6%
Householder Living Alone	26.0%	82.5%
65 years and over	17.7%	26.8%

Source: 2016 American Community Survey



**TABLE 2.7 HOUSING TENURE, 2015**

HOUSING TENURE	PALOS HEIGHTS	COOK COUNTY
Owner-Occupied	4,508 94.4%	1,107,485 57.0%
Renter-Occupied	267 5.5%	835,474 43.0%
Vacant Units	288 5.6%	233,590 10.7%

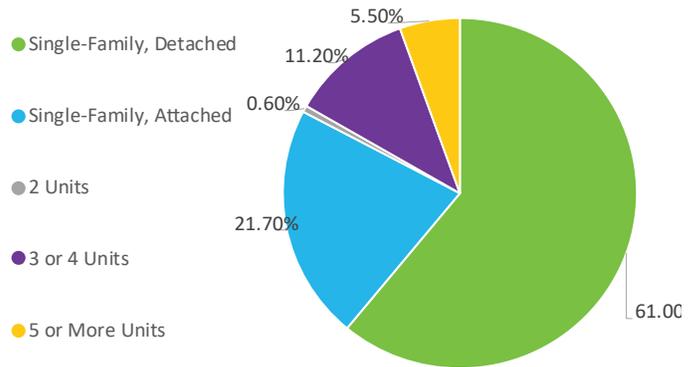
Source: 2016 American Community Survey



**TABLE 2.8 HOUSING TYPE, 2015**

HOUSING TYPE	PALOS HEIGHTS	COOK COUNTY
Single-Family, Detached	3,086 61.0%	1,687,381 50.4%
Single-Family, Attached	1,101 21.7%	255,569 7.6%
2 Units	31 0.6%	237,396 7.1%
3 or 4 Units	565 11.2%	281,795 8.4%
5 or More Units	280 5.5%	886,515 26.5%

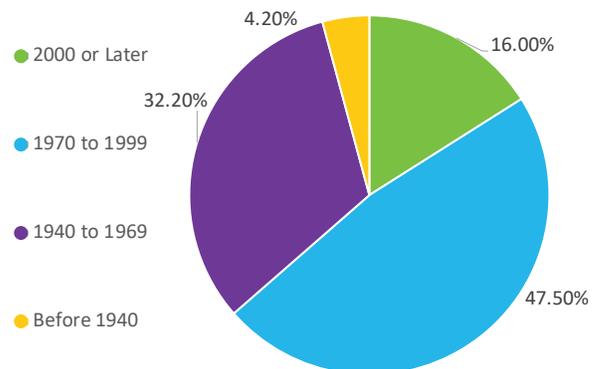
Source: 2015 American Community Survey, 5-year estimates



**TABLE 2.9 AGE OF HOUSING STOCK, 2015**

HOUSING AGE	PALOS HEIGHTS
2000 or Later	810 16.0%
1970 to 1999	2,411 47.5%
1940 to 1969	1,629 32.2%
Before 1940	213 4.2%
Median Year	1976

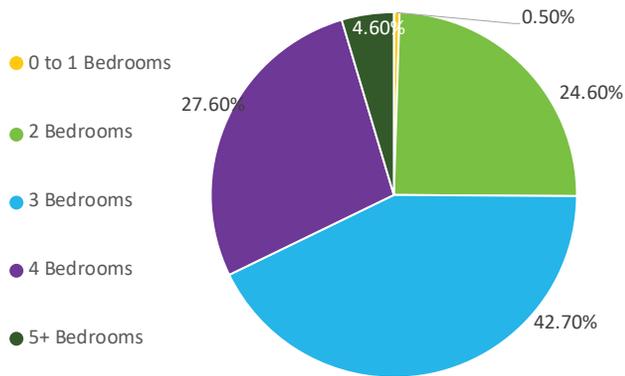
Source: 2015 American Community Survey, 5-year estimates



**TABLE 2.10 HOUSING SIZE, 2015**

HOUSING SIZE	PALOS HEIGHTS	
0 to 1 Bedrooms	25	0.5%
2 Bedrooms	1,244	24.6%
3 Bedrooms	2,163	42.7%
4 Bedrooms	1,396	27.6%
5+ Bedrooms	235	4.6%
Median Rooms (all)	6.6	

Source: 2015 American Community Survey, 5-year estimates



### Industries & Occupations of Palos Heights Residents

Around 14% of Palos Heights residents are employed in the education industry, another 12% work in healthcare and 11% in Retail. Others work in industries such as construction, hospitality, entertainment, and manufacturing (Table 2.11). Within the various industries, 15% of residents work in management, 14% in Administrative roles, 14% in Sales roles, and 10% in educational professions (Table 2.12).

### Where Palos Heights Residents Work

Around 7% of all residents live and work in Palos Heights and just under 25% of residents work in the City of Chicago. Around 68% of residents work elsewhere, in nearby communities and beyond.

### Where Palos Heights Workers Live

Less than 5% of all workers in Palos Heights live and work there and around 10% of workers live within the City of Chicago. Around 95% of workers live elsewhere, either in surrounding communities such as Orland Park, Tinley Park, Oak Lawn and beyond.



**TABLE 2.11 OCCUPATION BY INDUSTRY**

OCCUPATION	% POP	OCCUPATION	% POP
Education	14.3	Transportation	3.9
Healthcare	12.4	Real Estate	3.6
Retail	11.5	Entertainment	3.4
Manufacturing	9.0	Other Services	2.8
Professional	7.6	Administrative	2.8
Finance & Insurance	6.5	Information	2.3
Construction	5.1	Agriculture	0.8
Government	4.6	Utilities	0.3
Hospitality	4.5	Oil, Gas, & Mining	0.0
Wholesalers	4.5	Management	0.0

Source: US Census Bureau via statisticalatlas.com

**TABLE 2.12 OCCUPATION BY POSITION TYPE**

OCCUPATION	% POP	OCCUPATION	% POP
Management	15.0	Engineering	1.8
Administrative	14.4	Repair	1.8
Sales & Related	14.3	Production	1.7
Education	10.4	Fire Fighting	1.7
Business	7.2	Legal	1.5
Healthcare	6.7	Entertainment	1.5
Health Technicians	3.1	Personal Care	1.1
Construction	2.6	Material Moving	1.0
Facilities	2.6	Healthcare Support	0.9
Food Service	2.5	Social Service	0.8
Law Enforcement	2.4	Farming	0.4
Transportation	2.4	Science	0.3
Computers & Math	2.1		

Source: US Census Bureau via statisticalatlas.com

## Economy

Though Palos Heights is primarily a residential community, there are many businesses that provide access to retail, restaurants, healthcare and more within the community. However, vacancies in commercial centers can render commercial land unproductive for the City and limits access to proximate goods and services for residents. For example, Indian Trails Shopping Center, located at Ridgeland Avenue and 127th Street, was a grocery-anchored center, but the center persistently has vacancies since Dominick’s closed in 2013. This plan update includes a Sub-Area plan for the Indian Trails Shopping Center which contains over 10 acres. The Sub-Area Plan (Section 9) expands on the market potential for this area and provides recommendations going forward to decrease vacancies at this commercial center.



**TABLE 2.13** EQUALIZED ASSESSED VALUE, 2013-2016

	2013	%	2014	%	2015	%	2016	%
Residential	\$ 300,826,801	75%	\$294,015,990	75%	\$282,923,643	74%	\$295,819,117	75%
Commercial	\$80,869,249	20%	\$98,980,347	25%	\$ 96,344,458	25%	\$99,752,409	25%
Industrial	\$17,933,796	4%	\$ 474,532	<0%	\$464,642	<0%	\$488,096	<0%
Railroad	\$108,846	<0%	\$ 107,363	<0%	\$111,501	<0%	\$100,792	<0%
Total	\$ 399,740,670		\$393,578,232		\$379,844,244		\$396,160,414	

Source: Illinois Department of Revenue, 2013-2016

City property tax revenues are generated primarily from residential property taxes – roughly 75% of the equalized assessed value (EAV) of all properties in the City is residential and 25% is commercial (Table 2.13).

With limited commercial and no industrial currently located within the City, this is unlikely to change in the near future and must be considered given that the community is aging, and a high proportion of residents are likely to be retired and on fixed-incomes. Additionally, as residents age, the inability to afford to remain in their home due to rising property taxes can create a barrier to aging in place (the ability for aging residents to remain in their homes).

### Spending Power in the City of Palos Heights

The City of Palos Heights has a median income of \$78,727, higher than Cook County and many neighboring communities. While Palos Heights has a number of restaurants and commercial establishments, all the retail needs of residents cannot be met within the city limits. This is clear when looking at market data. Within the US, average household consumption is used to indicate the potential spending index for a variety of retail types.

Market Research indicates that there is leakage in most commercial categories within the boundaries of Palos Heights. Based on consumer spending reports and sales data, leakage or surplus of different retail and business types within a community or geography can be determined. (Source: ESRI Business Analyst Online)

Leakage occurs when the sales within the community are lower than the spending power indicated by residents within that community and that residents are spending their money outside the community. This could mean that the community does not have the type of commercial retail in demand, that internet sales have replaced in-store purchases, or that there is an incentive to go to an out-of-town establishment. Leakage is indicated by a positive number and the maximum is 100, indicating that within a community there are no opportunities for spending within that retail type.

**TABLE 2.14** RETAIL SALES 2015

	PALOS HEIGHTS	COOK COUNTY
Total Retail Sales	\$116,901,780	\$70,705,972,394
Per Capita	\$9,303	\$13,503

Source: Illinois Department of Revenue

**FIGURE 2.1 LEAKAGE/SURPLUS FACTOR BY INDUSTRY GROUP**

RETAIL GAP DETAILED					
Industry Group	Retail Potential	Actual Sales	Retail Gap	Leakage/ Surplus Index	Number of Businesses
Motor Vehicle & Parts Dealers	\$47,773,333	\$4,965,431	\$42,807,902	81.2	3
Furniture & Home Furnishings Stores	\$7,953,645	\$2,961,053	\$4,992,592	45.7	5
Electronics & Appliance Stores	\$9,214,949	\$4,913,834	\$4,301,115	30.4	3
Bldg Materials, Garden Equip. & Supply Stores	\$17,101,619	\$6,213,423	\$10,888,196	46.7	5
Food & Beverage Stores	\$38,140,142	\$4,694,624	\$33,445,518	78.1	6
Health & Personal Care Stores	\$15,841,767	\$15,688,394	\$153,373	0.5	16
Gasoline Stations	\$23,279,481	\$14,294,130	\$8,985,351	23.9	5
Clothing and Clothing Accessories Stores	\$13,118,487	\$4,436,789	\$8,681,698	49.5	6
Sporting Goods, Hobby, Book, and Music Stores	\$6,238,081	\$3,689,761	\$2,548,320	25.7	3
General Merchandise Stores	\$40,212,387	\$0	\$40,212,387	100	0
Miscellaneous Store Retailers	\$8,415,492	\$2,738,437	\$5,677,055	50.9	7
Nonstore Retailers	\$6,696,035	\$4,397,818	\$2,298,217	20.7	2
Food Services & Drinking Places	\$26,431,847	\$23,756,180	\$2,675,667	5.3	44

Source: ESRI Business Analyst, 2018

Surpluses, or exports, are indicated by negative numbers, and they indicate that sales within the community are higher than the spending power of residents within the community. This could mean that residents spend a significantly higher amount on the type of commercial retail, above the US household average, or that people from outside the community are coming to the community and making purchases.

In Palos Heights, there are few commercial categories that indicate a surplus (Figure 2.1). Large regional commercial centers exist within close proximity to the City, including Chicago Ridge Mall roughly 3 miles north on Ridgeland Avenue in Chicago Ridge, Rivercrest Shopping Center roughly 2 miles southeast on College Drive (IL Route 83) in Crestwood, and Orland Square roughly 4 miles southwest on LaGrange Road (IL Route 45) in Orland Park. Such close proximity to large existing commercial centers, as well as the limited population of Palos Heights due to the significant amount of forest preserve land surrounding the City, limit the potential for commercial growth within the City.

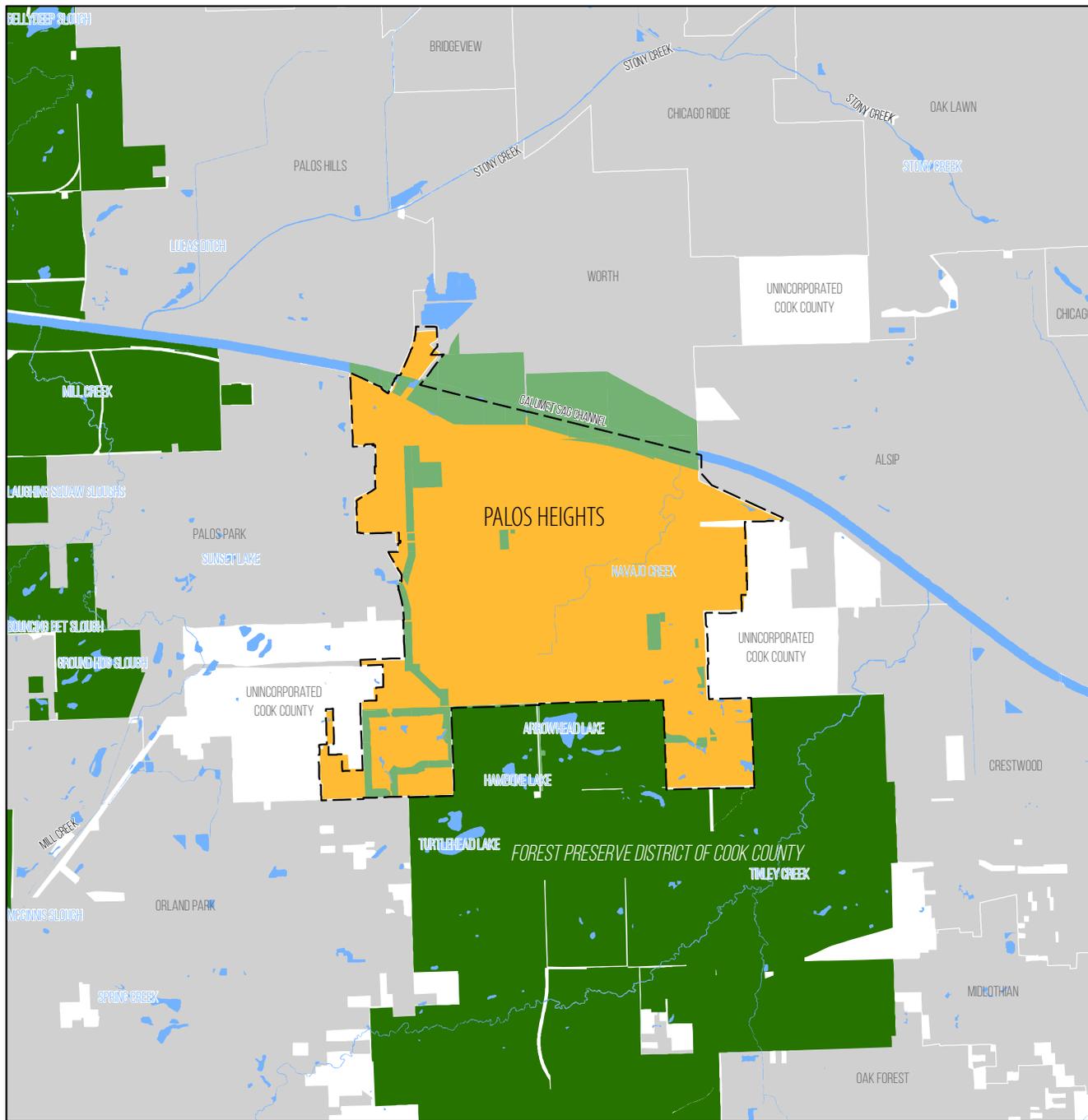
## Environment

Within the City limits of Palos Heights, there are little to no natural geographical features (Exhibit 2.1). Lake Katherine was man-made and all other natural geographical areas are outside of city limits. While the city does not directly have the responsibility to care for regional water resources or natural lands, maintaining communication with the managing departments is an important action in order to assure that actions within City limits do not have unintended impacts across governmental boundaries.



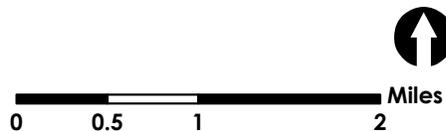
# NATURAL FEATURES MAP

EXHIBIT 2.1



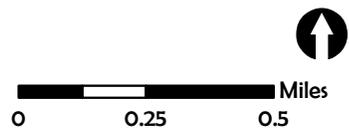
## NATURAL FEATURES

- Water Bodies
- Forest Preserves
- Open Space/Parks
- Palos Heights
- Municipalities



# SUB-AREAS MAP

EXHIBIT 2.2





## 3

## Vision + Goals

### VISION STATEMENT

The City of Palos Heights provides a “small-town” character and charm, paired with “big-city” amenities and services. Palos Heights offers a range of high-quality residential neighborhoods served by state-of-the-art healthcare, education, and recreational facilities. Palos Heights’ commercial corridors provide a range of shopping and dining opportunities. The City is well connected via roadways, rail and trails to the greater Chicago region.



Palos Heights remains a friendly community with a small-town atmosphere and charm. While there have been many economic challenges, both within the community and the region at large, Palos Heights continues to prepare and to adapt to changing conditions while maintaining the health, safety and welfare.

Community leaders have sought to ensure that quality housing and development occurs throughout Palos Heights, and that commercial corridors flourish through a series of business improvement programs and flexible zoning controls which provide the opportunity for more mixed-use types of developments to occur. While Harlem Avenue, 127th Street, Ridgeland Avenue, and College Drive continue to be busy roadways, pedestrian improvements have occurred and will continue where feasible to allow residents to connect to regional amenities via a variety of transportation methods.

### Goals

This plan is meant to build on the goals and objectives of previous planning efforts within the City, many of which have been completed and/or are ongoing pursuits. City-wide goals are the result of research regarding existing conditions, as well as key person interviews and community-wide surveys concerning the vision for the future of the City. Decisions over future development should be made in context with the vision, goals and objectives contained in the Comprehensive Plan.

A primary goal of this plan is to create and implement sub-area plans for three targeted focus areas, including: Olde Palos (downtown), College Drive/Harlem Avenue, and the Indian Trails Shopping Center. The City is encouraged to develop one or more action plans to assist with refining the vision for each subarea. Action Plans may identify key parcels for land assemblage, as well as detailed visuals illustrating conceptual site plans for each subarea. These sub-areas have the greatest potential to:

- Promote Palos Heights' image and identity;
- Ensure that commercial retail centers are viable contenders in the marketplace;
- Encourage walkability and circulation improvements along busy corridors; and
- Provide a realistic opportunity for (re)development in the near future.

## Objectives

The following objectives highlight more specific actions that can be undertaken to promote the more generalized city-wide goals for the community. These objectives were derived from conversations with City staff, the Steering Committee, Key-person interviews, and residents of Palos Heights.

### City Image & Identity

- Improve the image and appearance of all existing commercial areas (facade, signage, landscaping, streetscape amenities, etc.).
- Continue to implement existing gateway signage program and entry features at key locations to distinguish Palos Heights from neighboring communities.
- Promote key locations at entry points into the City as gateway locations, incorporating high quality design and creating a sense of place and arrival into the community.
- Encourage compatible and high quality design and construction for all developments within the City, emphasizing site design, architecture, construction materials, and site improvements.
- Maintain consistent and high quality improvements of all public streets, parkways, sidewalks, and other municipal infrastructure.
- Continue to implement landscaping and tree planting programs to beautify commercial and residential areas within the City.

### Community Facilities

- Ensure an adequate level of police and fire protection throughout the City.
- Maintain adequate facilities for City Hall, public works, police and fire stations, and other City services. Construct, renovate and/or relocate as necessary.
- Improve and/or expand specialized facilities and services for youths and senior citizens.

### Residential

- Maintain and enhance the single-family residential neighborhoods within the City.
- Protect residential areas from encroachment by incompatible land uses and the adverse impacts of adjacent activities.
- Encourage new residential infill development that is complementary to existing residential development.
- Diversify housing options to provide a range of housing opportunities for residents of all ages and income levels.
- Ensure the City's senior citizens have quality housing options.
- Promote appropriate condominium development as part of new commercial /mixed-use areas.
- Encourage uniquely designed and integrated residential living in mixed-use settings.
- Encourage the use of attractive architectural design and landscaping in residential neighborhoods.
- Strictly enforce all residential building, zoning and fire codes.

### Commercial

- Encourage a complementary mix of commercial, retail, and service uses within commercial areas within the City.
- Promote new commercial (re)development primarily along Harlem Avenue and other commercial corridors, such as Ridgeland Avenue and 127th Street.
- Promote safe access to commercial areas, both vehicular and pedestrian.
- Initiate programs to encourage the rehabilitation of older commercial buildings (facades, signage, landscaping, etc.).
- Create consistent, uniform sign regulations and enforce codes to promote appropriate and aesthetic commercial signage program. Develop an amortization program for non-compliant signage.
- Encourage landscaping within commercial areas.
- Encourage shared parking arrangements between neighboring businesses, particularly along the Harlem Avenue corridor.
- Explore opportunities for additional parking, and encourage the assemblage and use of adjacent property for additional parking.

## VISION AND GOALS

- Work with residential property owners near Harlem Avenue to convert to retail/service/office uses and/or parking where appropriate.
- Work with existing property owners to assemble parcels of obsolete configuration into sites more suitable for present-day commercial development.
- Ensure that all commercial development is effectively screened and buffered from adjacent residential and incompatible land uses.
- Establish consistent code enforcement standards for commercial areas.

### Transportation

- Continue the City's capital improvement program to provide sufficient resources to maintain City streets and sidewalks.
- Implement traffic management strategies to minimize the impact of peak traffic flows within the City.
- Work with Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) to reduce traffic congestion along Illinois Route 83 at the intersection of Southwest Highway (Illinois Route 7), including delay complications arising from emergency vehicles resetting the signalization cycle.
- Work with IDOT to coordinate the Illinois Route 83 traffic signal at 76th Avenue with the traffic signals located at Southwest Highway and Harlem Avenue.
- Minimize curb cuts on arterial and major collector streets where possible and use intersecting side-streets for access into properties.
- Work to minimize non-local, truck, and 'cut-through' traffic within residential neighborhoods.
- Work with Pace to improve/expand local bus service to City residents, either through expanded PACE bus service or the addition of new shuttle/van service.
- Work with Metra and adjacent communities to explore ways to improve Metra schedule and increase utilization of the Metra station.
- Expand pedestrian access where appropriate to provide connections between residential areas and local parks, shopping, and municipal services.
- Improve pedestrian circulation and safety within the Harlem Avenue corridor. Explore additional sidewalk connections to and within the Olde Palos downtown area.

- Coordinate median, parkway, pedestrian, and residential screening and other improvements along Harlem Avenue.

### Parks and Open Space

- Continue to support the Parks and Recreation Department to provide high-quality recreational opportunities to the residents of the City.
- Ensure adequate resources for the maintenance of City-owned parks and recreational facilities, including the recommendations of the City's Parks Capital Improvement Plan (CIP).
- Ensure that the City's facilities for swimming and indoor recreation are maintained.
- Maintain the City's existing trail network, and work with neighboring communities and agencies to promote additional trail connections. Continue to pursue the Lake Katherine Master Development Plan.
- Continue to promote Lake Katherine as a local and regional destination.
- Encourage the integration of recreation and commercial uses to create a vibrant and active community.
- Explore 'placemaking' opportunities to provide outdoor spaces for people to gather and for special events.
- Ensure that parks and open spaces are designed to maximize their utility and usefulness to residents.
- Continue to pursue alternative funding sources for park development such as donations, volunteer efforts, and grants such as the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) Open Space Lands Acquisition and Development (OSLAD) grant program.
- Continue to monitor the community's needs and perceptions and develop new services to respond to specific community desires.

### Economic Development

- Encourage the maximization of retail sales tax generating uses in key commercial areas.
- Continue to coordinate planning and economic development activities to provide regular opportunities for contact between the City, local businesses and development interests.
- Promote retention and expansion of existing businesses to expand employment opportunities within the City.
- Establish marketing strategies to retain/attract businesses to the Harlem Avenue corridor and other commercial centers, including the branding of Palos Heights.
- Maintain an appropriate balance of residential, commercial, retail, office and medical uses within the City.
- Investigate potential benefits of annexation of adjacent unincorporated areas to the City.
- Encourage the expansion of shared parking, and acquire where possible additional parking in blocks and locations where parking conflicts and shortages exist.
- Continue to actively monitor commercial occupancy rates.

- Consider a permanent electronic monument sign on Harlem Avenue to promote community programs and special events.
- Improve communications to and with residents to increase awareness and participation in City programs, services and events.

### Plan Administration

- Establish a funding mechanism to implement the goals and recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan.
- Develop an annual action plan to review previous accomplishments and prioritize objectives in implementing the Comprehensive Plan.
- Continue to monitor and review the Zoning Ordinance and update as necessary.
- Promote cooperation between the City Council, Plan Commission, other City commissions and agencies, and the public during the Comprehensive Plan review and amendment process.
- Conduct an internal staff review of the Comprehensive Plan every 2-3 years, and update every 5-10 years in order to ensure that it is current and effective.

### Intergovernmental Cooperation

- Coordinate with neighboring communities, agencies, service providers, etc. to ensure the most efficient and cost effective services for the City.
- Explore ways to consolidate services between communities, service providers, etc. where possible.
- Seek out State and Federal grant and loan opportunities and other potential funding sources to offset costs to the City.
- Continue communication between the City and local media to promote City services, programs and events.
- Promote and maintain the City website and social media as a way for residents to gain information about City programs and events.
- Develop a marketing campaign to promote the advantages and benefits of living, working and visiting the City.
- Consider hiring a full-time City marketing person to coordinate advertising, fundraising and promotion of special events for the City, Parks and Recreation, and Lake Katherine.



4

# Land Use + Development Framework

The City of Palos Heights is a quiet residential community of primarily single-family neighborhoods served by limited commercial corridors and nodes, almost completely surrounded by forest preserves. The City is nearly built-out, with limited opportunities for growth and expansion. Palos Heights boasts ample parks, open space, and recreational opportunities, as well as signature health and educational resources that are a defining characteristic of the City.

## Existing Land Use

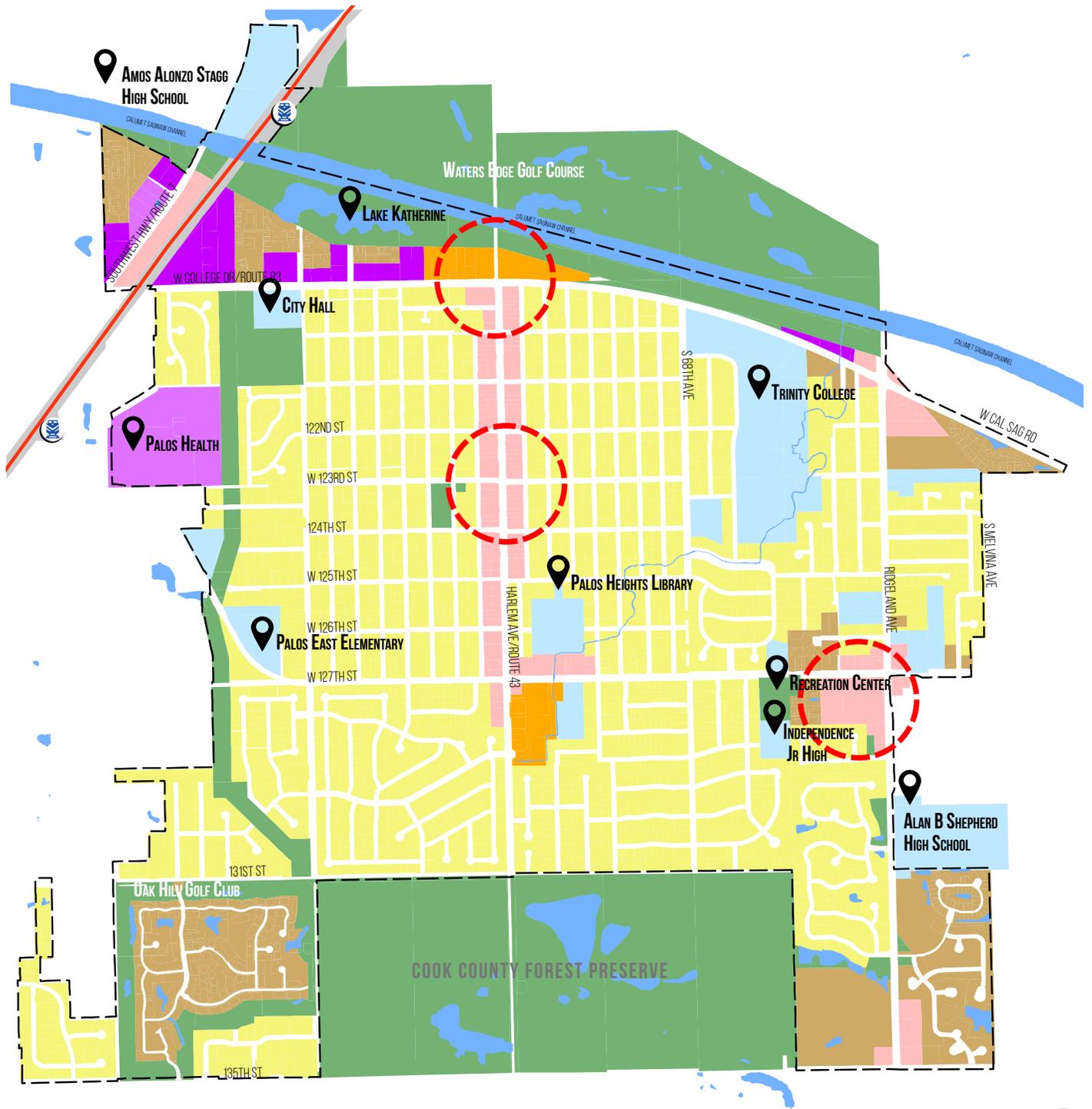
Palos Heights continues to be a primarily residential city, comprised mostly of single-family homes (51%) (Exhibit 4.1). However, the City also hosts abundant open space, commercial space including retail and office, and a number of educational institutions. The community does not currently have any industrial uses. About a quarter of land use in the City is used for transportation networks and utilities, including waste and stormwater management facilities. There are isolated multi-family residences, accounting for less than 2% of the overall land use within the City.

Institutional uses, including schools and municipal buildings, account for almost 9% of land in Palos Heights, and Open Spaces, including parks and recreational areas, account for almost 7%. Commercial uses are located primarily along Harlem Avenue and at intersections at 127th Street and Ridgeland Avenue. While there are a number of retail and service establishments, total commercial land use is less than 6% in the City.

There are three principal commercial centers in the City. One is located at the intersection of Harlem Avenue and 127th Street where the Jewel-Osco is located. Another includes the commercial uses at the intersection of College Drive and Harlem Avenue (included as one of the sub-areas in this plan). The third is the Indian Trails Shopping Center where the former Dominick's is located (also included as a sub-area).

# EXISTING LAND USE

EXHIBIT 4.1



## PALOS HEIGHTS FUTURE LAND USE



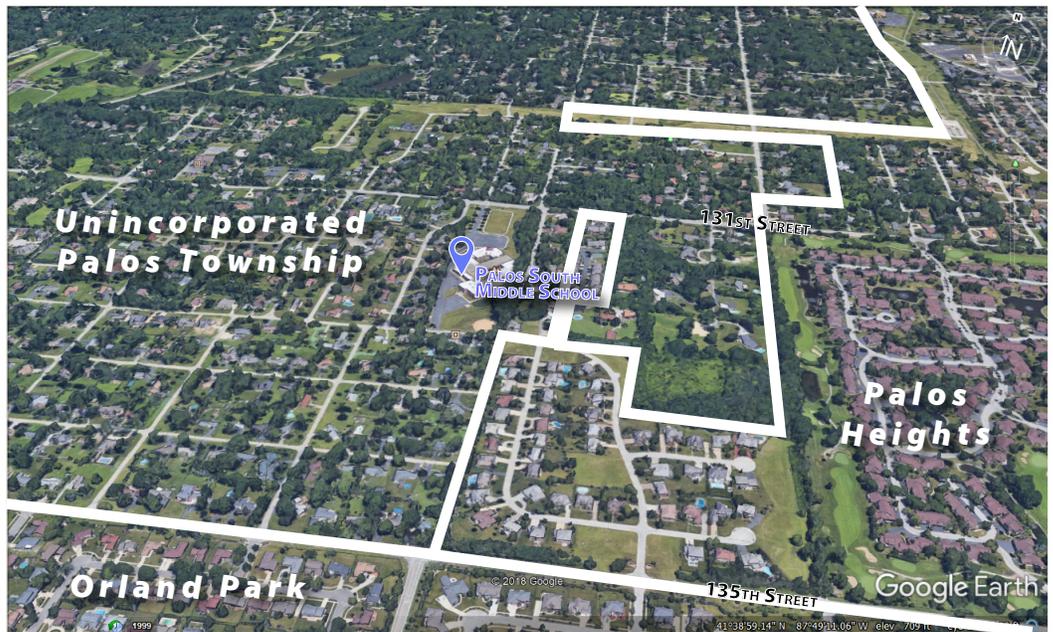
# LAND USE + DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

**TABLE 4.1 LAND USE DISTRIBUTION IN PALOS HEIGHTS**

LAND USE	ACRES	PERCENT
Single-Family Residential	1,275.7	51.5%
Transportation and Other	609.7	24.6%
Institutional	214.5	8.7%
Open Space	170.5	6.9%
Commercial	135.6	5.5%
Vacant	32.7	1.3%
Multi-Family Residential	28.1	1.1%
Agricultural	8.4	0.3%
Mixed-Use	1.6	0.1%
Industrial	0.0	0.0%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,476.8</b>	<b>100.0</b>

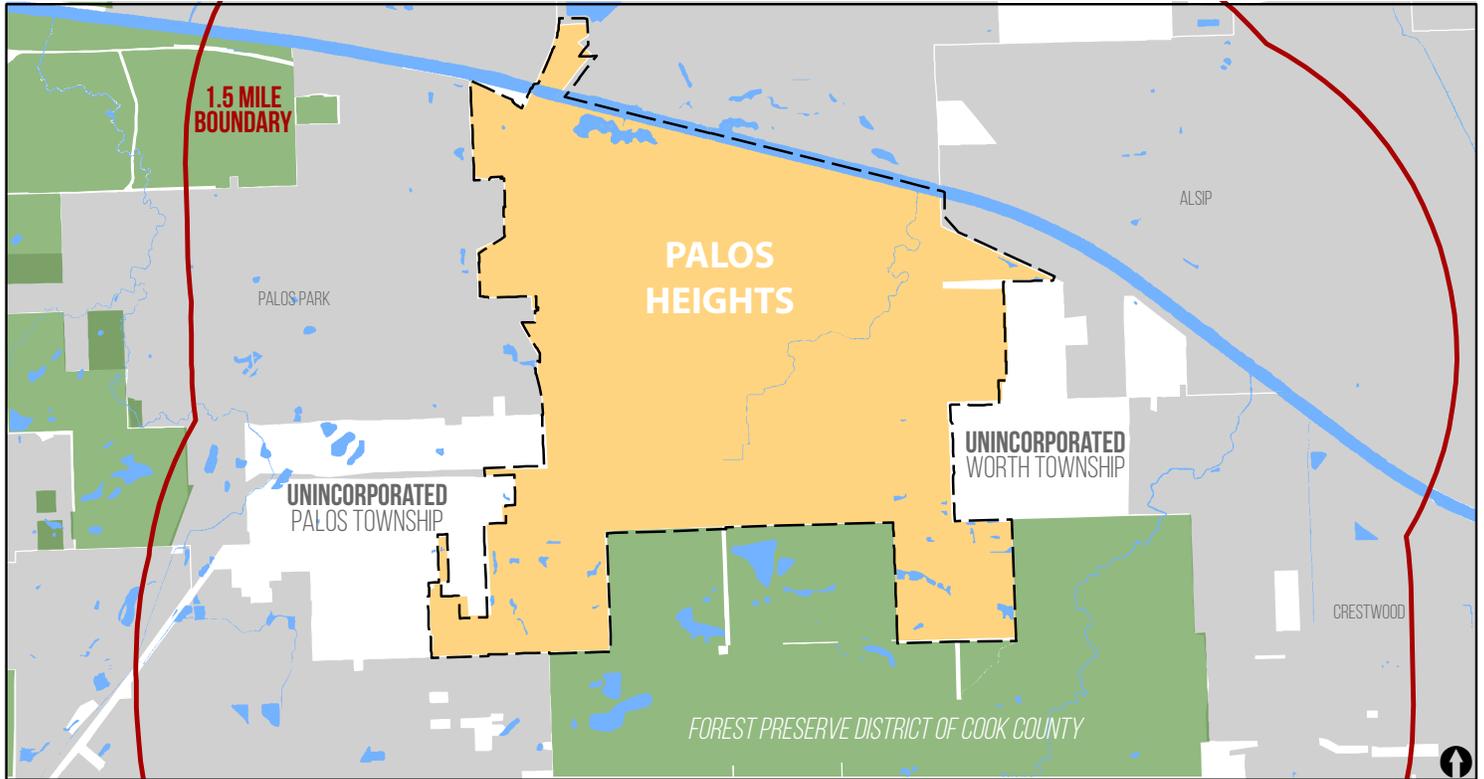
Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) Parcel-based Land Use Inventory, 2013

There are 32 acres (1.3% of land use) that are vacant or undeveloped within the City. Currently, the senior living facility at the northeast corner of Harlem Avenue and College Drive (commonly known as the Rizza property) is being constructed on 8 acres. The remaining vacant land available for development is limited primarily to residential lots suitable for infill residential development. However, the sub-areas examined in this Comprehensive Plan may provide for new complementary mixed-uses.



# UNINCORPORATED AREAS

EXHIBIT 4.2



## Annexation

Palos Heights has the opportunity to plan for land use within a 1.5-mile extraterritorial boundary and consider the land uses of unincorporated areas. At present, there are isolated unincorporated areas adjacent to the City, including some single-family residences to the west in Palos Township, and to the east in Worth Township (Exhibit 4.2). While this plan does not make any specific recommendations for the annexation of any specific parcels, the City should evaluate the benefits and costs of annexation in the future.

The City currently connects sewer lines to some limited areas outside the City limits, and offers discounted rates for Park Department and other City services to residents of these unincorporated areas. Bringing these unincorporated areas into the City would provide additional revenue in property taxes, but also increase costs to provide additional services to these residents. The City should consider pursuing annexation only if further study indicates it would be cost-effective and advantageous to the City and residents of Palos Heights.

## Zoning

The Palos Heights Zoning Code includes a total of ten districts. Updates to the zoning code have been made as recently as 2017 and the city’s official zoning map was most recently updated in 2016 (Exhibit 4.3). Updates to the zoning code should be performed on an as-needed basis, determined by the City. The City’s zoning map should be reviewed and adopted every year.

The districts are intended to permit primary uses and complementary uses within the same district, allowing institutional uses such as municipal buildings, services, medical, etc. to be located in a variety of districts rather than in a separate district.

Palos Heights is divided into multiple zoning districts, including:

- R – Residence District
- R-1 Residence District
- Planned Unit Development District
- Planned Residential District
- F - Farming District
- B - Business District
- B-1 Restricted Service District
- M – Manufacturing District
- Sports and Recreation District
- Harlem Avenue Overlay District

## Harlem Avenue Overlay District

Harlem Avenue runs through a number of communities including Palos Heights. In 2011, the Harlem Avenue Corridor Plan (spearheaded by the Southwest Conference of Mayors) was adopted. In Palos Heights, a small portion of the corridor contains the Olde Palos Shopping Center, and along the rest of the corridor is a mixture of commercial, office and scattered residential uses.

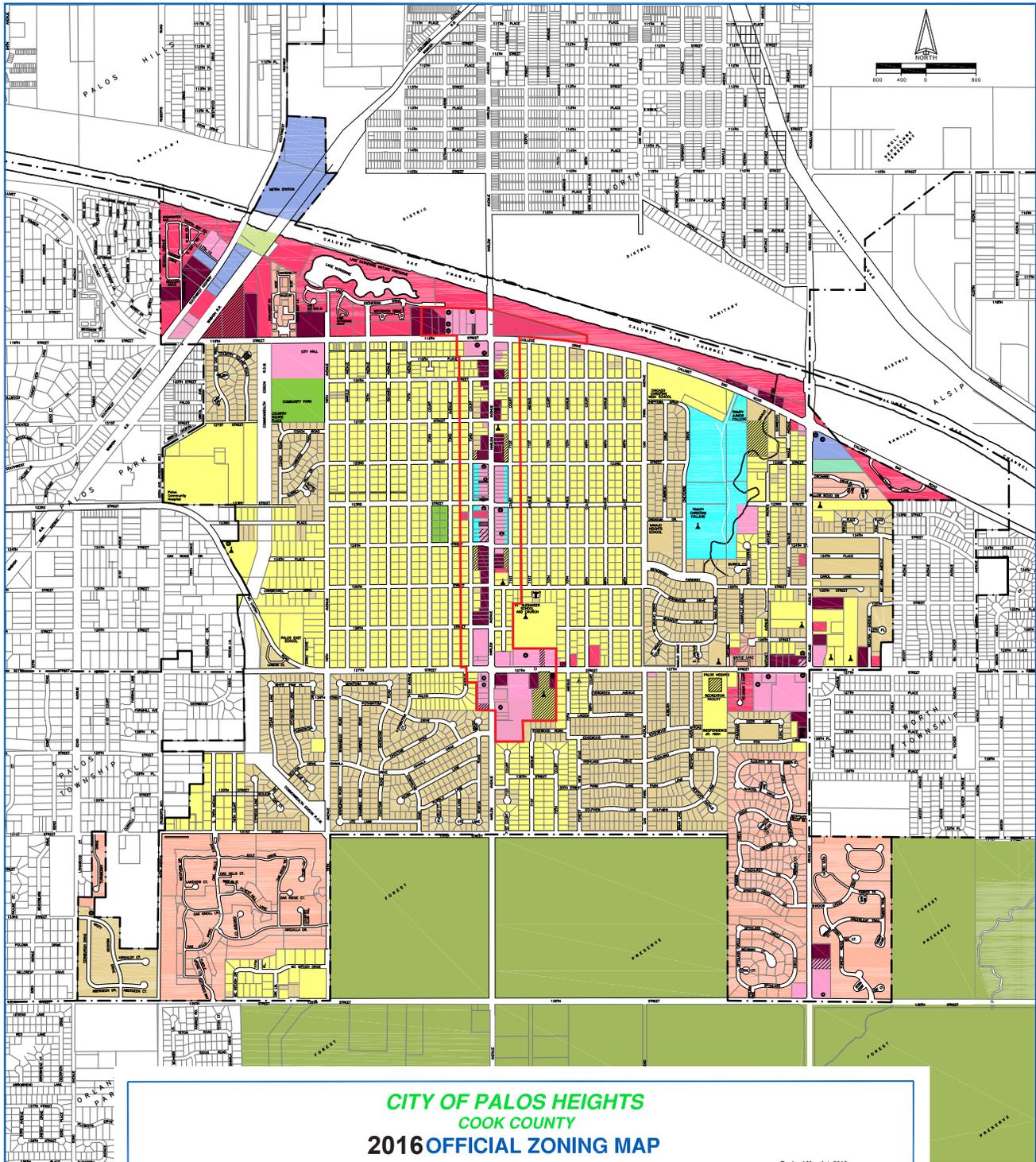
Harlem Avenue at College Drive is a major gateway into the community, and is included as one of the opportunity sites (sub-area) included in the plan, and the Olde Palos Shopping Center (downtown) is another. The Harlem Avenue Corridor Plan includes recommendations for improving the aesthetics and cohesiveness of the corridor throughout these communities and opportunity sites.

In order to help achieve the goals of the Harlem Avenue Corridor Plan, the City of Palos Heights enacted the Harlem Overlay District in 2015, which includes both use restrictions and design guidelines that aim to guide development and redevelopment to create a more cohesive and pedestrian friendly environment throughout the Harlem Avenue corridor. However, in its current form the Overlay District is highly complicated (by limiting land use as a percentage of uses on each block) and is difficult for residents and property owners to interpret and for City staff to enforce. The City should review and revise the overlay district to accomplish its objectives in an easier to understand, more user-friendly format.



# ZONING MAP

EXHIBIT 4.3



**CITY OF PALOS HEIGHTS  
COOK COUNTY  
2016 OFFICIAL ZONING MAP**

**ZONING LEGEND**

R RESIDENTIAL	B-1 RESTRICTED BUSINESS	SPORTS AND RECREATION (PARKS NOT INDICATED)	CHURCH
R-1 RESIDENTIAL	M MANUFACTURING	NON-CONFORMING USE	LIBRARY
PRO PLANNED RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT	F FARMING	UNIMPROVED DEDICATED RIGHT-OF-WAY	BUILDING CORNER SPECIAL USE
PUD PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT	S SPECIAL USE	CITY LIMITS	Harlem Overlay District Boundary
B BUSINESS	PUBLIC PARKS	FOREST PRESERVE	



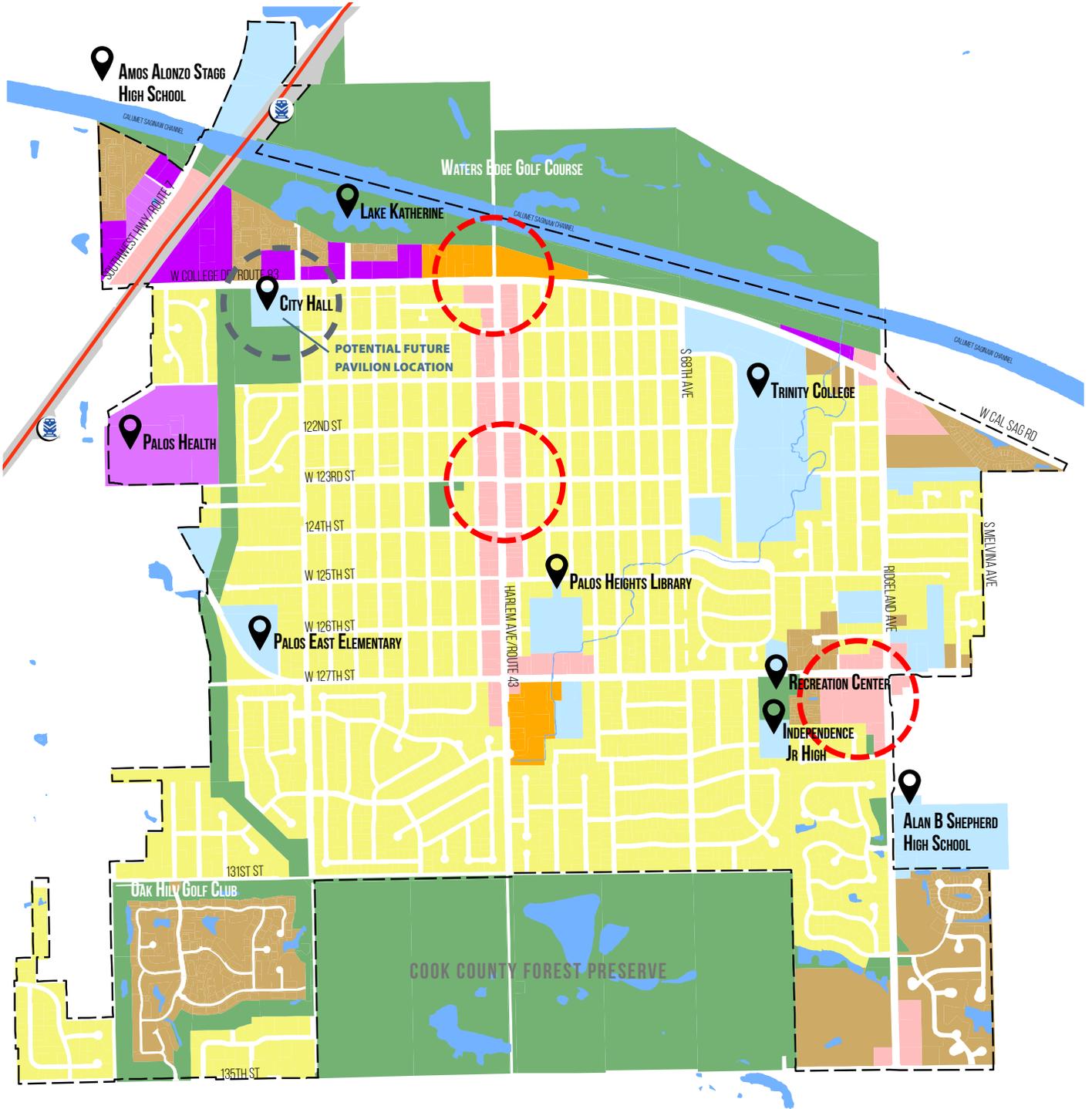
Revised May 1st, 2016

The title is provided without warranty or any representation of accuracy, timeliness, or completeness. It is the responsibility of the "recipient" to determine accuracy, timeliness, completeness and to make any necessary adjustments or updates to the use of the title. The City of Palos Heights makes no warranty, express or implied, to the use of the title.



# FUTURE LAND USE

EXHIBIT 4.4



## PALOS HEIGHTS FUTURE LAND USE





**FUTURE LAND USE RECOMMENDATIONS**

A major reason for updating the comprehensive plan is to ensure that the future land use goals are based on compatible land uses. Additionally, development priorities may change over time and the Future Land Use map should reflect these changing goals.

Current zoning districts manage present conditions, but the Future Land Use Map indicates the vision for land use within

the City going forward into the future. Exhibit 4.4 shows the future land uses within the City, and some areas outside of the city limits such as the Cook County Forest Preserves and green spaces across the Cal-Sag Channel. These areas are within the 1.5 mile extraterritorial planning boundary and while these areas are not under the jurisdiction of Palos Heights, planning within the City should aim to consider the compatibility of adjacent uses to these natural resources.

**Single-Family Residential**

The majority of land use within the City consists of single-family residential. Single-family neighborhoods within the City are quiet, well-maintained, and generally separated from incompatible non-residential areas within the City.

**Multi-Family Residential**

Few multi-family (duplexes, townhomes, condominiums, and apartments) residential developments are present within the City, including the Hamptons of Palos, the Moorings, Oak Hills, Colonial Heights, and Westgate developments. Multi-family residential developments within the City are primarily owner-occupied as opposed to rental, and are generally well-maintained.

**Commercial**

The commercial land use category consists of retail and service oriented commercial uses, with service uses outnumbering retail. Commercial use occurs primarily along the Harlem Avenue corridor between College Drive at the north to 131st Street at the south, as well as two large shopping centers located at Harlem Avenue and 127th Street and at Ridgeland Avenue and 127th Street.

**Mixed-Use**

The mixed-use land use category envisions a mixture of commercial, office and residential land uses in planned developments at targeted locations. The mixed-use category primarily targets the identified sub-areas of the plan such as the intersection of Harlem Avenue/College Drive. Mixed-use development allows for more creative and flexible design to meet the needs and desires of the City and its residents.

**Medical Office/Hospital**

This land use category includes the Palos Hospital and nearby areas, primarily along Southwest Highway and College Drive, that could accommodate complimentary medical office uses in conjunction with the hospital.

**Office**

General office uses are located throughout the City, scattered amongst the commercial centers and corridors. A majority of office uses are currently located along College Drive and along Harlem Avenue.

**Institutional**

Institutional uses include government facilities (City Hall, library, police, fire, public works), education (Trinity College, Palos Elementary School, Palos South Middle-School, Independence Junior High School) and religious institutions and places of worship. Alan B. Shepard High School is also located immediately east of the City in unincorporated Palos Township.

**Open Space/Parks**

This land use category includes parks, open spaces and recreational amenities. Parks within the City are well-maintained and highly utilized by residents. The crown jewel of the City is Lake Katherine, located northwest of Harlem Avenue and College Drive. The City is also fortunate enough to be surrounded by multiple forest preserves owned and operated by Cook County. The enhancement of key gateways with passive or active open space should be encouraged to create a sense-of-place and arrival.

The future land use plan offers a guide to the City for the future growth and development of Palos Heights. As Palos Heights is a primarily built-out community, future land use recommendations include primarily opportunities for in-fill development within currently developed areas, as well as redevelopment of appropriate targeted sites. The future

land use plan builds on current land use patterns within the City, and attempts to preserve the single-family residential character of the City, while protecting the City's parks and recreational amenities, while also promoting economic development through improved and enhanced commercial corridors and centers.

### Residential

- Protect existing single-family developments. Provide adequate screening and buffering from adjacent non-residential development where/when appropriate.
- Provide a range of residential options to serve residents from all age groups and income levels.

### Commercial

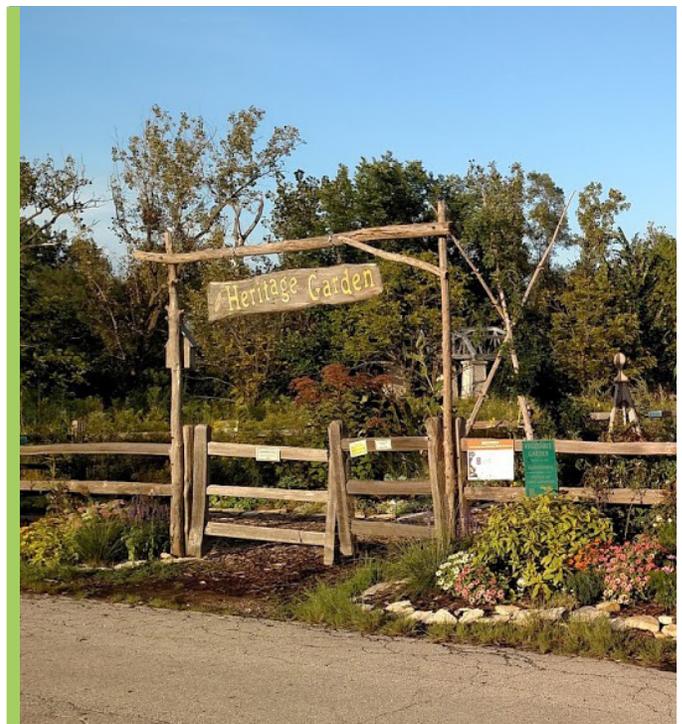
- Review and revise the Harlem Avenue Overlay District to be more user-friendly while still maintaining established standards along the corridor.
- Promote shared-parking arrangements between commercial users where and when appropriate.
- Encourage mixed-use (re)development at the intersection of Harlem Avenue and College Drive (see Sub-area Plan for further details).
- Encourage mixed-use (re)development within the Olde Palos Shopping District (Harlem and 123rd), while preserving the scale and community character of Olde Palos.
- Improve pedestrian access to commercial centers.
- Encourage the acquisition of property within the Overlay District to accommodate growing parking demands.

### Office

- Encourage medical-related office uses within close proximity to Palos Hospital.
- Minimize the impact of tax-exempt properties within commercial districts.

### Parks and Open Space

- Continue to provide high-quality recreational opportunities to the residents of Palos Heights through the Palos Pool, Recreation Center, Community/Memorial Park, etc.
- Follow, where possible, specific detailed recommendations related to parks and open space provided in the "Palos Heights Parks and Recreation Master Plan."





# 5 Transportation + Mobility

Palos Heights is conveniently located in the Southwest Suburbs, less than twenty miles from downtown Chicago. Residents enjoy convenient regional access through proximity to multiple interstate highways, public transportation options, and recreational trails.

## Transportation + Mobility

### Air

The closest airport is Chicago Midway International Airport which is approximately 10 miles to the northeast. The 43-gate airport served 20 million passengers in 2013 and has recently expanded concession facilities, parking and security checkpoints in 2015. As of June 2018, the airport has 255 direct daily flights to 63 U.S. cities and 11 daily direct flights to 8 international destinations including Mexico, Canada, the Dominican Republic, and Jamaica.

In 2018, just under 2 million domestic and 79,000 international passengers were served between January and June. The airport is also used for cargo operations and moved 2,046 tons of domestic freight during the month of June, and 10,292 tons between January and June 2018.

O'Hare International Airport is about 30 miles to the northwest of Palos Heights, and has a total of 191 gates primarily operated by American Airlines and United Airlines. The airport has 1,115 daily direct flights to 167 U.S. cities and 132 daily direct flights to 58 international destinations as of June 2018.

Between January and June 2018, O'Hare served 31.7 million domestic and 6.4 million international passengers. During the same period, cargo operations included 835,838 total tons of freight, 82,568 total tons of express and 40,081 total tons of mail.

## Major Roadways

Palos Heights has convenient access to several interstates and major thoroughfares in the region including Southwest Highway (IL Route 7), College Drive (IL Route 83), Harlem Avenue (IL Route 43), Ridgeland Avenue, 127th Street, and 131st Street. Residents can access I-294 at 127th Street in Crestwood and link to I-57 or I-55. The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) owns and maintains Harlem Avenue, College Drive, and 131st Street (west of Harlem Avenue) within the City limits and there are currently no proposed roadway projects proposed (Exhibit 5.1). Ridgeland Avenue and 135th Street are owned and maintained by the County. All other roadways are owned and maintained by the City.

### ARTERIAL STREETS

Roadways classified as arterial streets are designed to quickly and efficiently move traffic through the City. These streets are generally wider, with higher speed limits and fewer curb cuts to facilitate high volumes of traffic. Arterial streets include Southwest Highway, Harlem Avenue, College Drive and 127th Street. Arterial streets can be classified as ‘major’ and ‘minor’ depending on the traffic volume they are intended to accommodate (Table 5.1).

### COLLECTOR STREETS

Roadways classified as collector streets are intended to collect traffic from local streets and move it efficiently towards higher volume arterial streets. Collector streets serve the local population, and can be classified as ‘major’ and ‘minor’ depending on the traffic volume they are intended to accommodate.

### LOCAL STREETS

All other roadways within the City are classified as local streets. Local streets are low volume, low speed streets intended for local traffic only.

**TABLE 5.1** TRAFFIC COUNT CHANGE, 2009-2017

ROADWAY	2009	2017
Southwest Highway (Route 7)	19,800	25,900
College Drive (Route 83)	14,400	18,600
Harlem Avenue (Route 43)	31,300	31,000
Ridgeland Avenue	23,900	20,200
127th Street	14,800	16,400
131st Street	7,700	8,100

Source: Illinois Department of Transportation

All major arterial roadways have increased in traffic volume except for Ridgeland Avenue. This decrease is potentially due to road repairs and commercial vacancies (Dominick’s) during the timeframe, and will likely increase again in the future.

## Public Transportation

Pace Bus Route 383 South Cicero and Route 386 South Harlem provide service within Palos Heights, though it is limited. Palos Heights also has a Pace van provided by the Pace Municipal Vehicle program. The service allows residents of Palos Heights to schedule rides to and from any location within Palos Heights during the week and on Saturdays. The vehicle is provided by Pace to Palos Heights and Pace requires a designated transportation coordinator to maintain contact with Pace during the duration of the program. The city is responsible for providing drivers, maintaining the vehicle and insurance, and coordinating service within the city limits.

The Palos Heights Metra Station is part of the SouthWest Service (SWS) line. The station had 238 boardings and the Palos Park Metra Station had 432 boardings in 2016 (Table 5.3). Most people drive alone to access the Palos Heights Metra Station, though about 16% are dropped off, 3% walk, and 3% carpool to the station (Table 5.2). Since 2006, boardings at this station have dropped from 281 to 238 in 2014 (Table 5.4). There are a total of 440 parking spaces at this station.

The Palos Heights Metra Station is located at the far northwest corner of the Palos Heights city limits. The Palos Park Metra Station is just west of Palos Hospital, has more boardings than Palos Heights Station (Table 5.5). In the Comprehensive Plan Survey, several residents indicated that they drive to Blue Island to use the Rock Island Metra line instead of SouthWest Service because the train schedule is less convenient. This means that residents working in downtown Chicago drive about 20 minutes to the Blue Island station, then travel another hour before reaching the LaSalle Street Station whereas commuters from the Palos Heights Station reach Union Station in only 45 minutes.

The increasing median age of Palos Heights residents (Table 2.3) will also have a continued impact on Metra ridership into the future, as aging residents commute less to downtown Chicago.

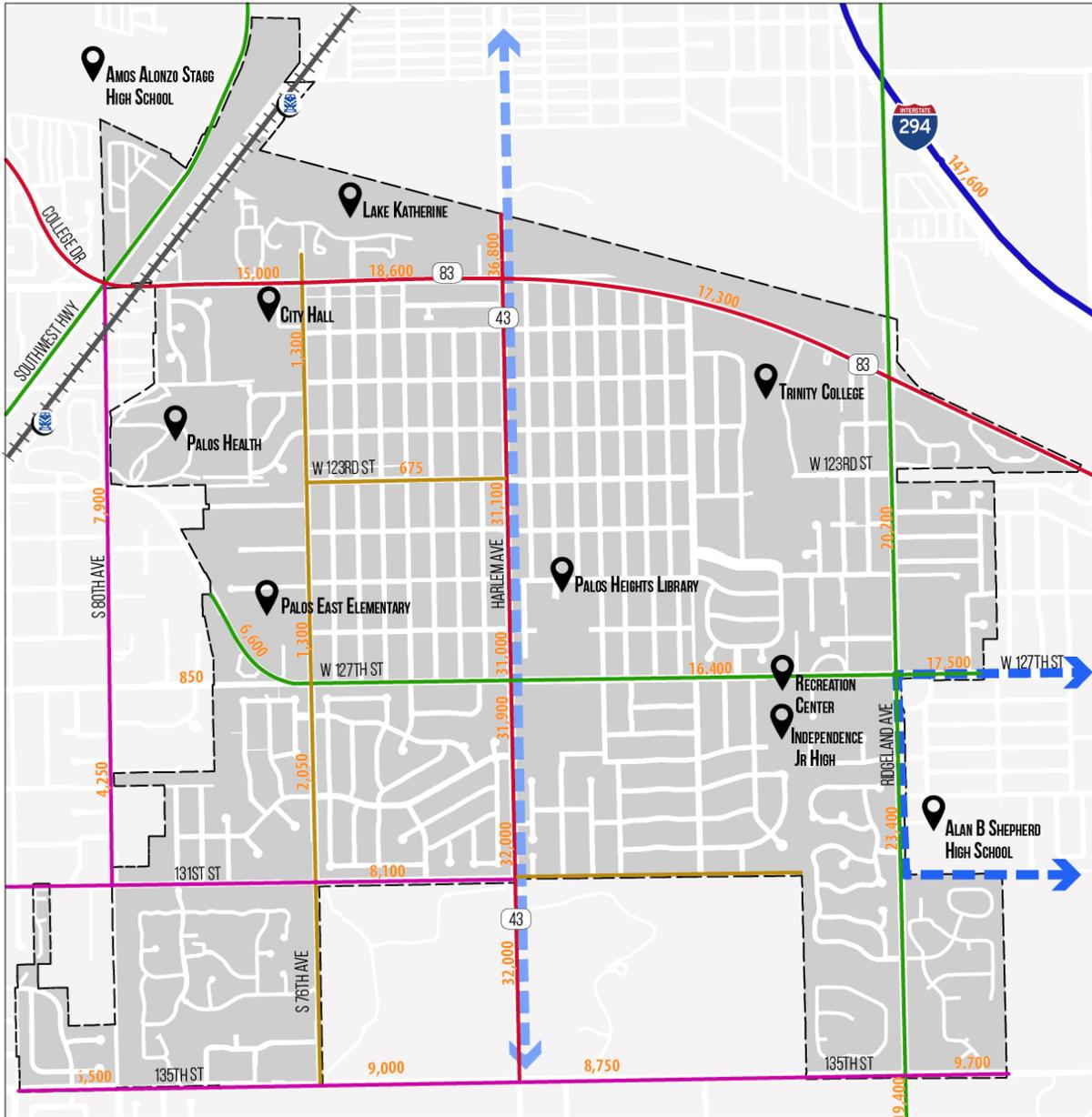
**TABLE 5.2** MODE OF STATION ACCESS, PALOS HEIGHTS STATION, 2016

WALK	DRIVE ALONE	CARPOOL DRIVER	CARPOOL PASSENGER	DROP OFF
3%	77%	1%	3%	16%

Source: Metra Origin-Destination Survey, 2016

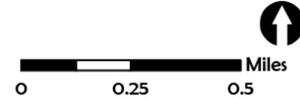
# ROADWAY CLASSIFICATION

EXHIBIT 5.1



## ROADWAY CLASSIFICATION

- Interstate
- Principal Arterial
- Minor Arterial
- Major Collector
- Minor Collector
- Average Daily Traffic (ADT)
- Pace Route 383
- Pace Route 386
- State Route
- Union Pacific Railroad



ADT stands for 'Average Daily Traffic' and is a count of vehicles using the roadway. Roads with higher ADTs often have greater capacity (more, wider lanes) and require a more maintenance. Higher ADT is also an indicator of the use of a roadway-- to move quickly between communities, to shopping areas, or to downtown. The lower the ADT, the more comfort a pedestrian or cyclist is likely to feel using the same or a parallel path.

Roadway classifications are based on a hierarchy of roads based on level of traffic and use often coincide with the use of roadways. **Collectors** are roads that collect traffic from local, residential streets and link to arterials. They carry up to 4,999 vehicles per day. **Arterials** are more heavily traveled and are used to move quickly between communities. They carry between 5,000 and 19,999 vehicles per day.

**TABLE 5.3** RIDERSHIP, PALOS HEIGHTS STATION, 2016

INBOUND ON	INBOUND OFF	OUTBOUND ON	OUTBOUND OFF	ALL TRAINS ON	ALL TRAINS OFF	TOTAL AM BOARDINGS
238	0	0	230	238	230	224

Source: 2016 Station Boarding/Alighting Counts

**TABLE 5.4** RIDERSHIP OVER TIME, PALOS HEIGHTS STATION

FALL 2006	SPRING 2014	FALL 2014
281	254	238

Source: 2016 Station Boarding/Alighting Counts

**TABLE 5.5** STATION COMPARISON

SWS STATION	INBOUND ON	INBOUND OFF	OUTBOUND ON	OUTBOUND OFF
Palos Park	432	3	0	427
Palos Hts.	238	0	0	230
Worth	419	1	0	430

Source: 2016 Station Boarding/Alighting Counts

**TABLE 5.6** STATION COMPARISON

SWS STATION	ALL TRAINS ON	ALL TRAINS OFF
Orland Park 179th	201	183
Orland Park 153rd	604	591
Orland Park 143rd	548	529
Palos Park	432	430
Palos Hts.	238	230
Worth	419	431
Chicago Ridge	339	355
Oak Lawn	1,329	1,329

Source: 2016 Station Boarding/Alighting Counts



## Streetscape Improvements

Improvements to the streetscape of major roadway corridors can improve the visual character and image of the City, and are encouraged. The City has recently begun adding such improvements along Harlem Avenue, such as street trees, planters, pedestrian crosswalks, planters and street furniture.

While streetscape improvements can help to improve the visual character of the area and be a benefit to the City, it must be balanced with the needs of business owners and travelers. Such improvements should not impede vision of passing drivers or endanger pedestrians. Due to the age and width of Harlem Avenue and the properties along it, such visual amenities should be balanced with the needs of business owners such as parking and visibility.

## Gateway + Directional Signage

Attractive and appropriate monument signage, highlighted with attractive landscaping, at entry points to the City can provide visual appeal and identity for the community. Similarly, directional signage can guide residents and visitors to local amenities and attractions, such as parks, community facilities like the Recreation Center and post office. The City has recently begun installing such signage along Harlem Avenue, and is encouraged to expand these efforts.

## Parking Lot Landscaping

Screening of parking lots with landscaping, masonry walls or decorative fencing is encouraged where such parking is adjacent to residential uses.

## Pedestrian Access + Circulation

Sidewalks, trails and other modes of pedestrian access and circulation are disjointed and lacking connectivity within the City. Sidewalks should be encouraged to link residential areas to shopping centers, parks and community facilities such as the Recreation Center, library and post office. Continuous, uninterrupted sidewalk access should be provided along all arterial roadways identified in the Transportation Plan.

The City should continue to work to provide access and connections to the Cal-Sag Recreational Trail. Particular focus should be on connecting this trail to residential areas of the City, and to the downtown area along Harlem Avenue.

## Bikeways + Trails

Regional bike trails such as the Cal-Sag Trail and the Tinley Park Trail have connections to Palos Heights trails and access points within the City, as well as connections to trail systems in neighboring communities. These trails can be used both to connect to surrounding communities as well as the Forest Preserve system (Exhibit 5.2). The Palos Heights Bike Trail also connects these trails together, (2-mile north-south trail).

The 2014 Ridgeland Avenue Corridor Plan proposed a multi-use path along Ridgeland Avenue, extending into the Village of Worth and connecting to the Tinley Park Trail in the Forest Preserves. This path is planned to be constructed in 2019.

The 2018 Palos Park Bikeways and Trails Plan established an extension of the Palos Heights Bike Trail by using Commonwealth Edison Rights-of-Way areas running east-west between Palos Heights and Palos Park. The plan also establishes 119th Street (connects to College Drive) and 131st Street as bikeways.



## Sidewalks

Palos Heights has several main thoroughfares which have heavy auto traffic and provide the most efficient routes within Palos Heights. The construction of sidewalks along main thoroughfares in recent years has increased opportunities for Palos Heights residents to move through the City on foot. Exhibit 5.2 shows existing sidewalks along major roadways. The completion of sidewalk construction along major streets is a priority for the City. Sidewalks along other streets will be constructed where deemed appropriate, with sidewalks connecting community and educational institutions given the highest priority.

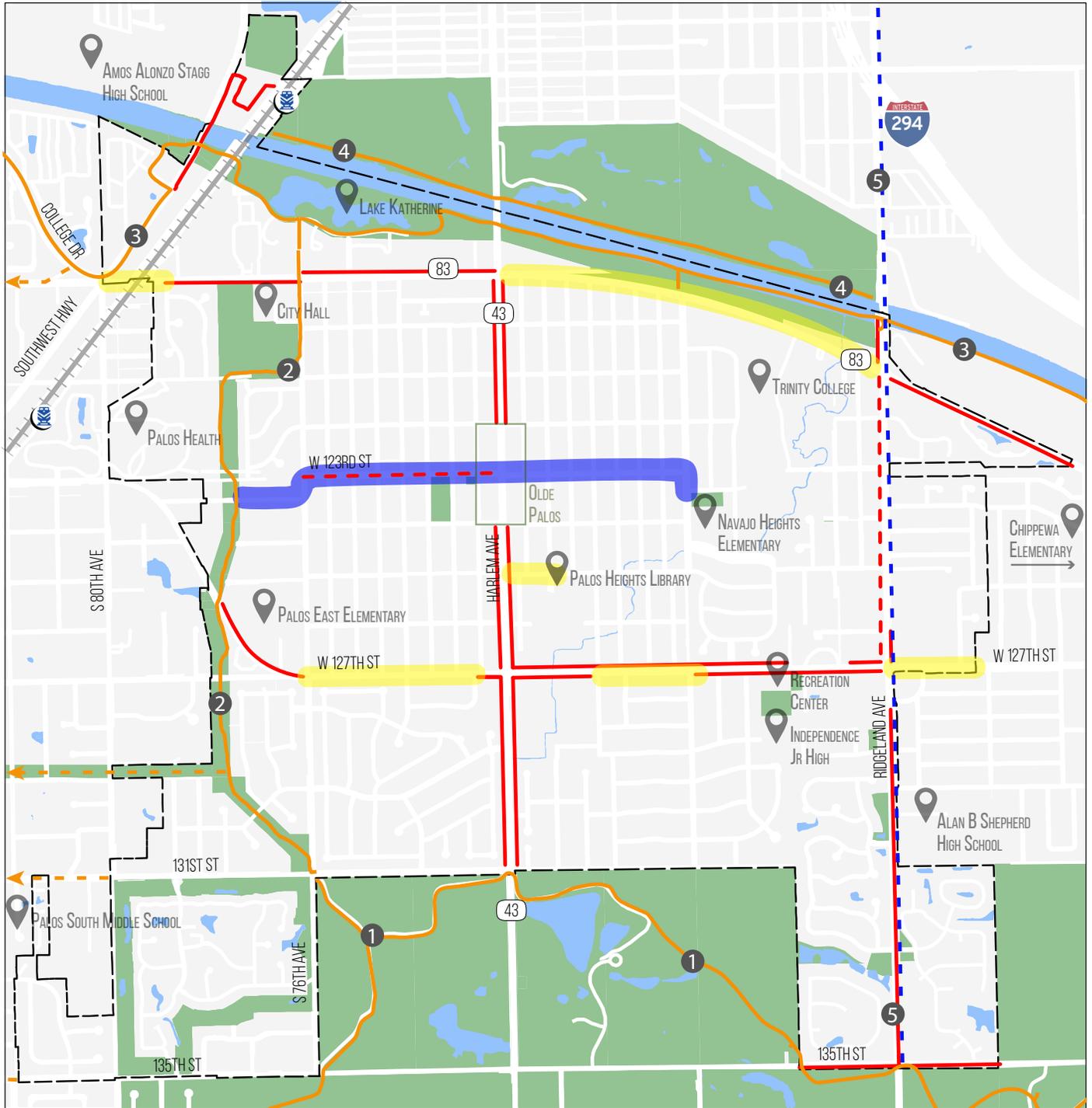
In some cases, there are sidewalks along both sides of the street, and in other cases there are sidewalks only on one side. Gaps where there are no sidewalks, either on one side or both, are highlighted in yellow. These areas include gaps along 127th Street and College Drive most prominently. Recently, construction of a sidewalk along the western side of Ridgeland Avenue commenced and an extension of the sidewalk along Route 83/College Drive from the City Hall to Old Oak Trail.

A sidewalk is planned along 123rd Street, west of Harlem Avenue which will better define 123rd Street as a main pedestrian passageway to Olde Palos, with the Art Garden and Palmer Park also accessible. In addition to a sidewalk, establishing 123rd Street as a shared route extending east and west of Harlem Avenue has numerous benefits (shown in blue on Exhibit 5.2). To the west of Harlem, a shared path along 123rd Street (connecting to 123rd Place via 76th Avenue) would create a designated route to access the Palos Heights Bike Path. To the east of Harlem Avenue, a shared path along 123rd Street would provide a designated route to Navajo Heights Elementary School, Navajo Park, and Trinity College (via 68th Avenue).

Issues leading to a lack of pedestrian connectivity include the presence of multiple, privately owned and maintained sidewalks on private property. This is particularly an issue within the Olde Palos area, and combined with constrained right-of-way widths and the demand for parking, can make coordinated efforts towards connectivity a challenge, both in acquiring property and enforcing unified design standards.

# BIKE + SIDEWALK PLAN

EXHIBIT 5.2



## BIKEWAY AND SIDEWALK PLAN



- |                    |                        |                          |                          |
|--------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Existing Sidewalk  | Existing Bike Trail    | Tinley Park Trail        | Worth Multi-Use Trail    |
| Planned Sidewalk   | Planned Bike Trail     | Palos Heights Bike Trail | Ridgeland Multi-Use Path |
| Proposed Sidewalks | Planned Multi-Use Path | Cal-Sag Trail            |                          |
|                    | Proposed Shared Route  |                          |                          |



## TRANSPORTATION + MOBILITY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Continue to monitor METRA ridership, and coordinate with METRA to identify ways to increase utilization of the existing METRA station.
- Promote awareness of public transportation options such as METRA and PACE bus routes to residents of the City.
- Continue efforts to beautify Harlem Avenue corridor through streetscape improvements.
- Install gateway signage at key visible locations entering the City.
- Create wayfinding signage program to help residents and visitors navigate throughout the community.
- Review and update Zoning Ordinance requirements for parking lot landscaping.
- Discourage Tow Zones in commercial areas.
- Complete sidewalks along main thoroughfares to eliminate sidewalk gaps.
- Work with adjacent communities and other agencies to increase pedestrian and bicycle trail connections.
- Construct sidewalk along 125th Street between Harlem Avenue and the Palos Heights Library.
- Ensure where there is a sidewalk on only one side of the street that there is a safe crosswalk to connect pedestrians to the other side of the street.
- Establish 123rd Street as a multi-use route by adding sidewalks and adding “sharrow” signs to the pavement.
- Conduct a parking study in Olde Palos to better understand and prepare for existing and future parking needs.
- Provide additional parking within commercial districts, including Olde Palos, and encourage shared parking arrangements.
- Limit use of concrete parking stops where shared parking is encouraged.





6

# Community Facilities

Palos Heights has access to many facilities and services, including emergency medical care, quality education at all levels, several municipal services and open space and recreation facilities. These are located throughout the city and many act as regional amenities as well.

## Healthcare

Palos Health opened in Palos Heights in 1972, and offers a range of medical services including heart care, orthopedics, women’s health services, maternity care, home health services and behavioral health services. There are 428 beds and in 2015 there were almost 20,000 total admissions, handling around 60,000 emergency room visits that year. The hospital holds classes and provides emergency and immediate care and sponsors a number of events to raise awareness about health issues. However, Palos Health is not a Level 1 Trauma Center and the closest one is located in Oak Lawn.

The hospital is affiliated with Loyola University Health System and is a not-for-profit. The land of the main campus (approximately 6 acres) does not generate property tax revenue for the City or other local governments. While other medical offices along College Drive do generate property taxes, the Palos

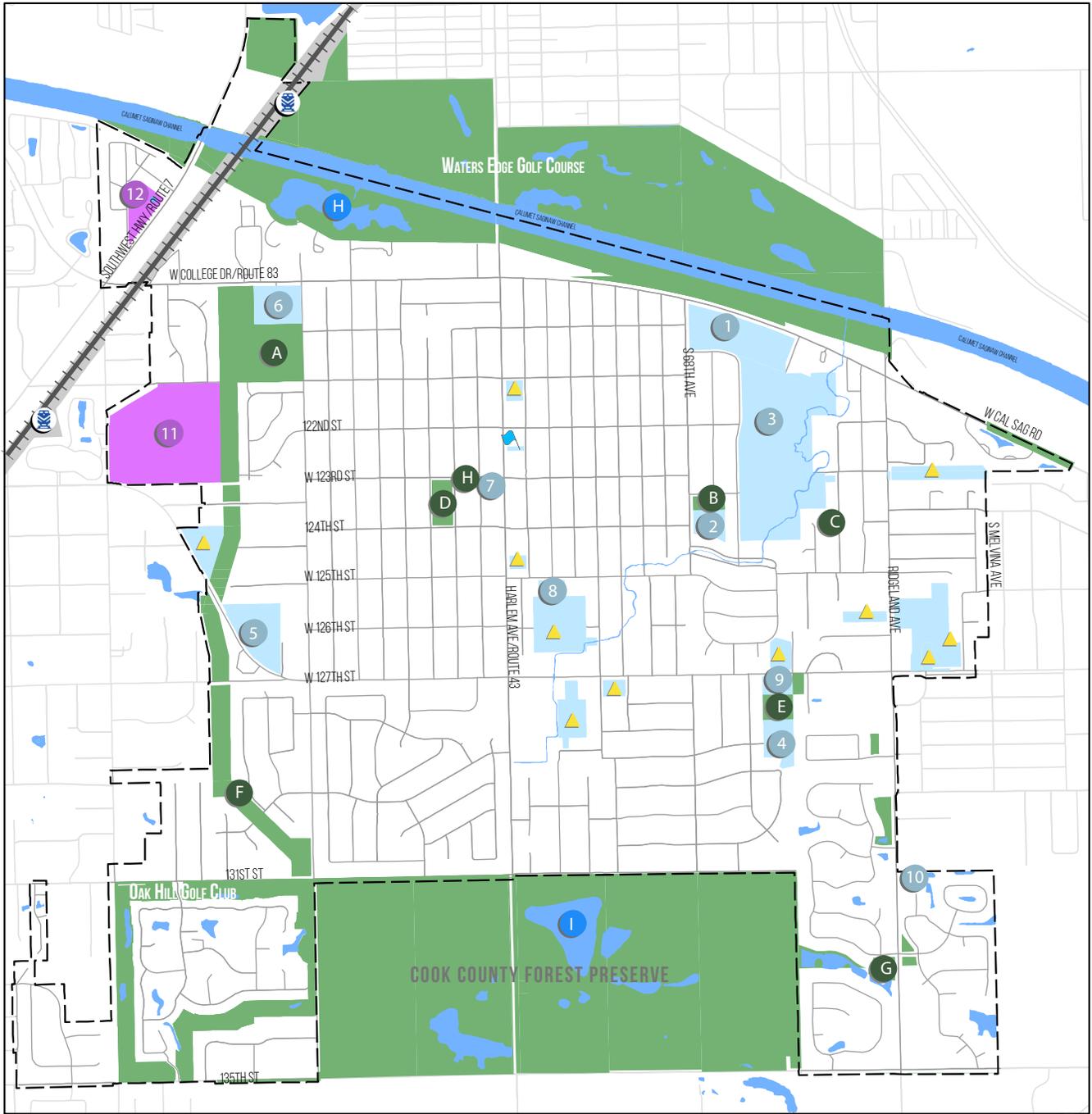
Health business offices at 7500 College Drive do not generate property taxes. There are about 3,000 full-time employees at the hospital, and about 5% of employees live in Palos Heights. Some use Metra service and are able to walk from the Palos Park Metra Station.

The hospital was renovated in 2010 and was completed in 2013. Phase I included a 7-story east wing addition and Phase II focused on modernizing the original hospital by expanding the emergency room, converting all patient rooms to be private, and new ICU, and expanded bed counts. While there is some room for expansion, there are no current plans to do so.

Healthcare uses complementary to the hospital are encouraged in the City, however, due to the limited commercial space available within the City, future tax-exempt healthcare uses should be encouraged to locate on the existing tax-exempt hospital campus.

# COMMUNITY FACILITIES

EXHIBIT 6.1



- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● OPEN SPACE</li> <li>● A COMMUNITY PARK</li> <li>● B PASSARELLI PARK</li> <li>● C VETERANS PLAYLOT</li> <li>● D PALMER PARK</li> <li>● E MEYERS PARK</li> <li>● F CRAWFORD PARK</li> <li>● G WALSH-WESTGATE PARK</li> <li>● H ART PARK</li> <li>● I ARROWHEAD LAKE</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● INSTITUTIONAL</li> <li>● 1 CHICAGO CHRISTIAN HIGH SCHOOL</li> <li>● 2 NAVAJO HEIGHTS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL</li> <li>● 3 TRINITY CHRISTIAN COLLEGE</li> <li>● 4 INDEPENDENCE JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL</li> <li>● 5 PALOS EAST ELEMENTARY SCHOOL</li> <li>● 6 CITY HALL</li> <li>● 7 PALOS HEIGHTS FIRE STATION #1</li> <li>● 8 LIBRARY</li> <li>● 9 RECREATION CENTER</li> <li>● 10 PALOS HEIGHTS FIRE STATION #2</li> <li>● RELIGIOUS INSTITUTION</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● WATER</li> <li>● H LAKE KATHERINE</li> <li>● HOSPITAL/MEDICAL</li> <li>● 11 PALOS HEALTH HOSPITAL</li> <li>● 12 CONGENITAL HEART CENTER</li> </ul> |
|---|---|---|

## Education

Palos Heights’ school-aged children are served by several schools in four different school districts, separated by Harlem Avenue. Generally, enrollment numbers have decreased for schools serving Palos Heights, especially those in District 128 (east of Harlem Avenue) which serves Palos Heights families almost exclusively. Proficiency measures in Illinois include the PARCC, ISA and SAT, and the most recent scores from 2017 indicate that Palos Heights’ students are performing at or above the state average (Table 6.1).



**College Readiness** is based on the percentage of graduating seniors who achieve a combined score of at least 21 on any ACT assessment taken prior to graduating. In 2017, 51% of students were college ready.

**Graduation Rate** is the percentage of students who receive a diploma each year against the number of students who had enrolled in the 9th grade as part of that cohort. In 2017, 87% of students in Illinois graduated within 4 years.

This statistic includes students who don't graduate, as well as students who leave school due to relocation or other reasons.

**ISA** stands for the Illinois Science Assessment which measures science proficiency. For the year 2017, 39% of students in Illinois were proficient.

**PARCC** stands for Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Career which measures college readiness for students in grades 1-8. For the 2017 year, 34% of students around the state were proficient by the PARCC standards.

The **SAT** is administered to high school juniors and seniors and is used by colleges to indicate proficiency. Among students in Illinois, 39% of students in the state met or exceeded standards on the exam in 2017.

**TABLE 6.1 PUBLIC EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES**

		ENROLLMENT		PROFICIENCY LEVELS*
		2013	2017	2017
<b>EAST OF HARLEM AVENUE</b>				
DISTRICT 128	Indian Hill Elementary School (Pre-K/K)	147	117	n/a
	Chippewa Elementary School (1-3)	209	197	PARCC = 65%
	Navajo Elementary School (4-5)	164	144	PARCC = 56%
	Independence Junior High School (6-8)	243	229	PARCC = 60%
DISTRICT 218	A. B. Shepard High School (9-12)	1,791	1,723	Graduation Rate = 93% College Readiness = 36% SAT = 31% ISA = 34%
<b>WEST OF HARLEM AVENUE</b>				
DISTRICT 118	Palos East Elementary School (K-5)	776	670	PARCC = 49%
	Palos South Middle School (6-8)	655	695	PARCC = 55%
DISTRICT 230	Amos Alonzo Stagg High School (9-12)	2,398	2,286	Graduation Rate = 94% College Readiness = 49% SAT = 38% ISA = 42%

Source: Illinois Report Card

**TABLE 6.2** PRIVATE EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES

PRIVATE INSTRUCTION	
GRADE SCHOOLS	Elim Christian School
	Incarnation School
	Palos Evangelical Lutheran School
	Saint Alexander School
	Landmark Christian Academy
	Trusting Hearts Preschool & Kindergarten
HIGH SCHOOLS	Chicago Christian High School *

### Colleges & Universities

**TRINITY CHRISTIAN COLLEGE** is a 4-year liberal arts college established in 1959, with the intention of providing local area students with a higher education in the ‘Reformed Christianity’ tradition. They offer 49 degrees, with over 60 majors and over 50 minors, as well as opportunities to study abroad, and adult education programs. In the 2016-17 school year, there were 1,286 students with an average class size of 20 (11:1 student to faculty ratio).

**MORAIN VALLEY COMMUNITY COLLEGE** is located in nearby Palos Hills, and offers a range of associates degrees and certification programs in areas such as healthcare, management, education, and entertainment. It was founded in 1967, and has an enrollment of roughly 36,000 students.

Palos Heights is also within reach of multiple major Universities in the Chicagoland area, including the University of Chicago, University of Illinois at Chicago, DePaul University, Loyola University, and Northwestern University, among others.

### Religious Institutions

There are 12 congregations within Palos Heights, offering a variety of denominations of the Christian faith.

- Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd
- Harvest Bible Chapel Palos Heights
- Mercy Gate/Life Church (Trinity College)
- Moraine Valley Church
- Palos Bible Church
- Palos Heights Christian Reformed Church
- Palos Lutheran Church
- Palos United Methodist Church

- Saints Joachim and Anne Armenian Apostolic Church
- St. Alexander Catholic Church
- St. Mary Orthodox Church
- St. Spyridon Greek Orthodox Church

## Municipal Facilities + Emergency Services

City facilities are in good repair and are adequate at present for both the number of employees and the functions of each department. There is no current need or plans for expansion within the life of this plan. The ‘Palos Heights Parks and Recreation Master Plan’ is an extension of this plan and includes specific recommendations for all recreation facilities and parks within Palos Heights.

**PALOS HEIGHTS PUBLIC LIBRARY | 12501 South 71st Street.** The Palos Heights Library was constructed in 1972, and was expanded in 1988 and again in 2004 in order to meet the needs of the community. The library has a meeting room, conference room, activity room, a media lab and several study rooms available for adults and youth. The library also organizes programs for adults and youth, computer education and homework help.



**PALOS HEIGHTS POLICE DEPARTMENT | 7607 West College Drive** Palos Heights is a very safe community, due in part to the efforts of the Palos Heights Police Department. The police department is currently at full staffing, including: 25 patrol officers, 2 detectives, 2 deputy chiefs, and the Chief of Police. The department responds to roughly 10,000 calls per year, and performs roughly 12,000 traffic stops per year. The police department also participates in three Federal Task Forces that have generated approximately \$12 million in the previous 15 years.

The department installed traffic cameras in 2009 in an effort to reduce accidents due to failure to stop at red lights. Cameras were installed at the southbound intersection of College Drive and Harlem Avenue and at the westbound approach of the 135th Street and Ridgeland Avenue intersection.

The Police Department receives calls from Southwest Central Dispatch and now has the capability to receive text messages in emergencies as well

**FIRE PROTECTION |** Palos Heights is primarily served by two fire protection districts – the Palos Heights Fire Protection District (PHFPD) and the Palos Fire Protection District (PFPD). A third district, the North Palos Fire Protection District (NPPFD), also serves a small area of the City north of the Cal-Sag Channel. All three districts enjoy a good relationship with Palos Heights; however, there is some confusion among residents as to the exact boundaries of each of these districts.

The Palos Heights Fire Protection District provides paramedics and EMT services to Palos Heights’ residents roughly east of 76th Avenue. The Palos Fire Protection District provides paramedics and EMT services to Palos Heights’ residents roughly west of 76th Avenue and unincorporated areas south of the Cal-Sag Channel. The North Palos Fire Protection District primarily serves Palos Hills, but also serves the Metra Station and properties north of the Cal-Sag Channel along Southwest Highway in Palos Heights.

**PALOS HEIGHTS PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT | 7607 W. College Drive.** The public works department manages and maintains city streets, draining, drinking water, sanitary sewers, municipal buildings, parks, easements, and all public property.

## Parks + Recreation

Palos Heights has fantastic access to open space through the Cook County Forest Preserve system. Local and regional trails have enhanced access to Cook County Forest Preserves and surrounding communities, and both indoor and outdoor recreation facilities provide the opportunity for residents to perform a variety of physical activities. The Parks and Recreation Master Plan provides an overview of current facilities, programs and services and recommendations going forward.

For every 1,000 residents, Palos Heights has 13.6 acres of open space within city limits (Table 6.3). The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) finds that on average there are 10.1 acres of parkland for 1,000 residents in communities across the nation. Palos Heights’ residents have the benefits of taking advantage of all open space and forest preserves within Cook County and the larger Chicago Metropolitan area which increases resident’s access to almost 40 acres per 1,000 residents. The Palos Height Parks and Recreation Master Plan is an extension of this comprehensive plan and provides and overview of existing conditions and recommendations for parks and recreation facilities in the City.

**TABLE 6.3** OPEN SPACE

ACRES/1,000 RESIDENTIAL	
Palos Heights	13.6
Cook County	18.8
Chicago Metro Area	39.8

Source: CMAP Parcel Based Land Use Inventory



## Regional

**COOK COUNTY FOREST PRESERVES.** Just south of Palos Heights is a 612-acre forest preserve area, where Burr Oak Woods, Tinley Creek Woods, Bachelor’s Grove Woods and others are encircled by the Tinley Creek Trail System. Visitors can picnic and camp in selected areas and Palos Heights’ residents can connect to the Tinley Creek Trail system via the Palos Heights Bike Path.

The Metropolitan Water Reclamation District (MWRD) runs a side stream elevated pool aeration (SEPA) station just across the Cal-Sag Channel, north of Palos Heights. While the principal use of the facility is to ensure proper aeration for the channel, the SEPA station is essentially a regional urban water-fall area that is open for public viewing and photography.

## Trails

**CAL-SAG TRAIL** This trail follows the Cal-Sag Channel and will extend approximately 26-mile, from Lemont to Calumet City & Burnham, once complete. The Cal-Sag Trail will be one of the longest and best-connected trails in the region.

**PALOS HEIGHTS BIKE TRAIL** This trail runs along the western side of Palos Heights, partially on Commonwealth Edison right-of-way. The trail connects to the Tinley Creek Trail in the Cook County Forest Preserve to the south and connects in the north to the Cal-Sag Trail. The Cal-Sag Trail can be accessed at Lake Katherine, at Harlem Avenue/College Drive, and at College Avenue/Oak Park Avenue. The trail runs through Community/Memorial Park as well. There is also the Trinity College Trail, which currently runs through campus but is not connected to the Cal-Sag Trail.

**TINLEY CREEK TRAIL** This paved trail system extends roughly 30 miles and encircles a number of wooded and forested areas. It can be accessed via the Palos Heights Bike Trail directly, or at Arrowhead Lake where there is parking.

## Local

Locally, residents have access to a number of parks within neighborhoods. Additionally, residents are served by larger areas of recreation, including the Lake Katherine Nature Center and Botanic Garden, and a municipal indoor fitness center and the long-standing Oak Hill Golf Course.

In order to best serve and prepare for the recreational needs of residents, the Palos Heights Parks and Recreation Master Plan was updated in 2019. The plan analyzes current facilities and provides recommendations beyond the Comprehensive Plan.

**PALOS HEIGHTS PARKS** There are a total of 8 parks, totaling 67 acres of green space.

- Community/Memorial Park
- Crawford Park
- Palmer Park
- Walsh Westgate Park
- Passarelli Park
- Veteran’s Playlot
- Meyers Park
- Art Park

**LAKE KATHERINE NATURE CENTER AND BOTANIC GARDENS** Covering an area of roughly 85 acres, Lake Katherine is a public park area with gardens, woodland, prairie and a 10-acre man-made lake. There are around 100,000 visitors each year.

The original purpose of the Lake was as a retention basin in 1988 and has since blossomed into a public amenity where visitors relax, fish, kayak, and more. The land is owned by the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District (MWRD) and leased by the City of Palos Heights. The creation of Lake Katherine was originally funded with tax increment financing derived from local taxable mixed uses. The Lake is managed by the non-profit organization Lake Katherine Nature Center and Botanic Gardens which is overseen by a Board of Directors and there are four staff members and many volunteers which help runs programs and perform daily operations.

A Master Plan was developed in 2011 which details the potentials for expansion along MWRD property adjacent to the Cal-Sag Channel both west and east of Harlem Avenue which would offer spaces for additional events, parking and educational spaces. The Nature Center is host to a number of weddings and events in addition to providing educational workshops and resources for people of all ages. A number of programs including summer camps, and field trips take place throughout the year.

<http://www.lakekatherine.org>

**PALOS HEIGHTS FITNESS CENTER** Operated by the Palos Heights Parks & Recreation Department, the fitness center offers residents the ability to exercise indoors, with a variety of machines, weights, personal training and group exercise and the facility offers onsite childcare services.

**OAK HILL GOLF COURSE** This 9-hole private course was originally an 18-hole course. It is open to the public and has been in existence for over 100 years. Part of the original course was developed into townhomes and condominiums.

### COMMUNITY FACILITY RECOMMENDATIONS



- Encourage taxable medical related office uses to locate within close proximity to Palos Hospital.
- Coordinate with local schools and colleges to involve students in the community, and to provide services in demand by local students.
- Maintain the Palos Pool and Palos Heights Recreation Center as attractive amenities serving the community.
- Cooperate with the fire districts to communicate with residents to better inform them about the boundaries of the two primary (three in total) fire protection districts.
- Continue to promote Lake Katherine as a regional destination.
- Continue to explore pedestrian and trail connections throughout the City and to neighboring communities.





7

# Olde Palos Sub-Area

Harlem Avenue is an important corridor connecting several communities. Locally, the corridor is the location of the Palos Heights downtown area (between 122nd Street on the north and 124th Street on the south), known as “Olde Palos Shopping Centre”.

Harlem Avenue is also a primary arterial for the community as most other roads are quiet, residential streets. Regionally, Harlem Avenue is part of a larger corridor, the planning for which most recently culminated in The Harlem Avenue Corridor Plan (2011) and the Harlem Avenue Overlay District (2015). This sub-area plan intends to build on this momentum and focuses on recommendations both for the Olde Palos Shopping Center, and for the Harlem Avenue corridor as a whole, within Palos Heights.

## Key Existing Conditions

### Business Improvement Programs

**FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM** The City implemented this program in 2009. The City will pay for \$10,000 or 50%, whichever is less, towards qualifying projects and improvements. Businesses that have taken advantage of the program include: Capri Italian Restaurant and Franklins Public House.

**SIGN GRANT PROGRAM** The City will contribute up to \$2,500 or 50% of total cost of wall signage and architecturally compatible sign lighting for businesses. Businesses are encouraged to consult the City’s Design Guidelines.

**TAX INCREMENT FINANCING (TIF) DISTRICTS** There are two TIF districts in Palos Heights. The Gateway TIF began in 2005 and is due to expire in 2028. It includes properties at the intersection of Harlem Avenue and College Drive. The other TIF district began in 2011 and is due to expire in 2034. It includes the southeastern corner of 127th Street and Harlem Avenue.

### Commercial Renovation

Façade renovations of existing buildings should be encouraged throughout Olde Palos. City incentives should be used as appropriate. While the City’s Façade Grant Program offers some incentive, its funding is limited to effect change at a scale and in a timely manner as may be needed along Harlem Avenue. Consideration should be given to other possible funding sources including, and not limited to, grants, business districts, tax incremental financing, revolving loans, and other unique programs. Also, where appropriate, funding of the Façade Grant Program may be expanded to capture and incentivize new construction and large renovations.

To enhance the vibrancy of the commercial building frontage along Harlem Avenue, the City may encourage the repurposing of existing properties with new present-day standard buildings. Priority should be given to obsolete and oddly configured buildings and properties, and properties with chronic vacancies. New and renovated buildings and properties should be of a scale and configuration to complement the existing character of Olde Palos. Off-street parking must accommodate new and renovated properties. Where benefits can be realized for the greater Olde Palos Area, the City may repurpose or expand its existing parking locations to accommodate innovative new and renovated buildings.



### Harlem Avenue Overlay District

The regional Harlem Avenue Corridor Plan was adopted in 2011, and the Harlem Overlay District Ordinance was adopted in 2015. The Harlem Avenue Corridor Overlay District was created in order to provide additional zoning regulations and requirements for new development.

The Overlay District shown in Exhibit 4.3 includes regulations for uses, building design, parking requirements, configuration and access, landscaping, signs, pedestrian and transit access and mobility, and public spaces and amenities.

The district includes commercial and residential properties along Harlem, beginning with Tiffany Square and the Palos Heights Senior Living site in the north at College Drive, and extending to the Jewel-Osco development and commercial properties at 127th Street in the south. Residential properties located 1.5 blocks to the east and west of Harlem are also included with the understanding that many of those properties could potentially be rezoned and assembled for commercial expansion of parking in the future. Residential properties are exempted from regulation unless and until they are proposed to be redeveloped as a commercial use.

While the Overlay District is applicable to properties within the boundary, regulations are not universal, and have no bearing on residential properties. The Overlay district ordinance imposes complicated formulas for limiting types of uses on a block-by-block basis, which are difficult to understand and interpret and therefore enforce. The overlay district should be reviewed and revised as necessary to maintain the same higher standards while simplifying the format and process.

### Parking and Circulation

As commercial occupancy grows in the Old Palos Shopping District, so does the demand for off-street parking. Off-street parking is a stabilizing force for sustained commercial activity, including the area of Olde Palos. The growth in demand for off-street parking has become more apparent as unique culinary restaurants locate along Harlem Avenue, creating a destination dining experience in Olde Palos.

In 2017, the City expanded its existing parking lot at 12217 S Harlem Avenue with the purchase of 12221 S Harlem. The City lot provides parking relief in the blocks north of 123rd Street, and particularly east of Harlem. The City lot also serves as a gathering place for special events. From May through October the lot serves as the location for the City's farmer's market. In early December it is the location of the Kris Kringle Market. The City lot may also accommodate art festivals, concerts, and other special events. The location of special events on these lots instantaneously markets Olde Palos along Harlem Avenue as a lively place to gather, shop and dine. To increase pedestrian activity, and thereby bolster the commercial viability of Olde Palos, special events should be encouraged on the City lot and within the Olde Palos Shopping District.

Nonetheless, when the City lot is used for special events, parking demand is exacerbated. However, parking demand is

a good thing, as it translates to a larger customer base, added foot traffic and new customers for local businesses. Moreover, special events on the City lot and within the downtown reinforces and punctuates the City center identity of the Olde Palos Shopping District for the community and region at large.

To preserve and bolster the commercial viability of the Olde Palos Shopping District, the City should consider the acquisition of key parcels or the creation of parking along sidestreets (71st and 72nd Court) to accommodate parking demand. Priority should be given to parcels located along the east side of 71st Court and the west side of 72nd Court, as well as parcels centrally located near 123rd Street. The acquisition of parcels along these streets would preserve the commercial building frontage of Harlem Avenue. Additionally, centrally located parking areas can provide a more accommodative gathering place for Olde Palos community activities. As such, existing parking locations along Harlem may be repurposed for commercial businesses, thereby fortifying the commercial presence and strength of Olde Palos.

The provision of new parking areas should be matched with safe and convenient pedestrian sidewalk connections to and within the Olde Palos Shopping District. Businesses are encouraged to renovate back entrances to be used as secondary customer entrances, thereby improving access via existing parking areas. An integrated site design of off-street parking and pedestrian connections within the Olde Palos Shopping District offers the greatest long-term benefits for occupants and customers of the Olde Palos Shopping District. Accordingly, priority should be given to creating an integrated site design of off-street parking and pedestrian connections within Olde Palos. Cross-access and shared parking agreements are encouraged for all properties within the Olde Palos Shopping District.

### Connectivity to Services & Institutions

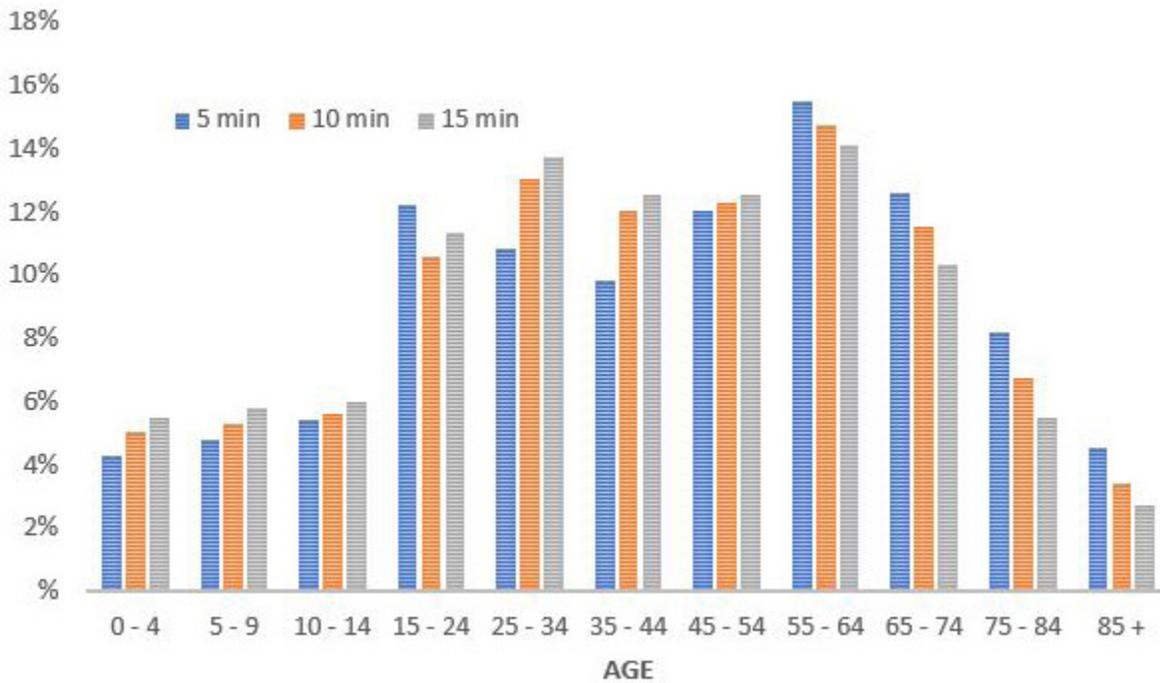
Olde Palos acts as the downtown area for Palos Heights. Accordingly, convenient connections combined with easily viewed directional signage to nearby institutions and services are desired and encouraged, such as:

**PALOS HEIGHTS PUBLIC LIBRARY** Located along 125th Street, just two blocks east of Harlem Avenue.

**THE POST OFFICE** Located along Harlem Avenue, within Olde Palos.

**PALMER PARK** Located to the west of Olde Palos, Palmer Park is directly accessible via 123rd and 124th Streets. There is limited directional signage to lead someone between the park and Olde Palos, though it is quite natural to do so due to

**FIGURE 7.1** AGE DISTRIBUTION BY DRIVING DISTANCE FROM OLDE PALOS, 2018



Source: ESRI Business Analyst

proximity. A Master Plan for Palmer Park was created in 2018, concurrently with the Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

### Aesthetic Opportunities

Generally, from College Drive on the north to Ishnala Drive on the south, Harlem Avenue contains a mixture of commercial building styles, with a scattering of single-family properties where the rear yards face Harlem. On the other hand, the character of the four-block Olde Palos Shopping District (122nd to 124th Streets) is unique to the entire length of Harlem. Olde Palos features multiple single-story, zero-lot-line buildings that contain multiple tenants. These buildings are controlled by multiple owners. Some buildings are owner-occupied, while other buildings are tenant-occupied, or a combination thereof. Generally, businesses occupy between 1,200 and 6,000 square feet.

Business façades in Olde Palos are a mixture of styles due, in part, to multiple ownership. Some façades have been updated, while other façades are older and dated to earlier periods. The appearance and customer attraction of Old Palos could benefit from a comprehensive façade renovation program. The scale and nature required for Olde Palos should encourage an updated, yet uniquely traditional downtown style and feel. Such a façade program may preserve the look and feel of individual shops, and preserve the scale and nature of Olde Palos.

**TABLE 7.2** INCOME TRENDS WITHIN 15-MINUTE DRIVE-TIME OF OLDE PALOS

	5 MIN	10 MIN	15 MIN
2018 Median Household Income	\$80k	\$66k	\$65k
2018 Average Household Income	\$108k	\$89k	\$85k
2018 Per Capita Income	\$42k	\$35k	\$33k
Projected Change in Median Household Income, 2018-2023	7%	8%	9%

Source: ESRI Business Analyst

The City’s existing Façade Grant Program relies on the motivation of individual owners for participation. And, while the City’s design guidelines must be followed by participating owners, the design guidelines do not encourage area-wide district branding for Olde Palos. Such a comprehensive façade renovation program of the scale and nature required for Olde Palos must identify sources of funds in order to make it financially attractive for all impacted property owners to participate. Sources of funds that may be explored include, and may not be limited to, Business Districts, Special Service Areas, and Tax Increment Financing. Participation among owners can be encouraged with preliminary façade designs for Olde Palos, as well as expanding funding sources that may be utilized.

### Map Key:

- Study Area
- Traffic Signals

### Design Opportunities:

- Vertical Identity Features**  
Unique monument features to identify the Palos Heights commercial area as a destination.



- Wayfinding Signage**  
Signage should be applied throughout the City to identify municipal destinations, including public parking and parks. Signage located within the Harlem Ave right of way requires IDOT permitting.



- Facade Treatments**  
Coordinate improvements to commercial buildings with property owners. Non structural façade improvements may include canopies, awnings, signage, lighting and landscaping.

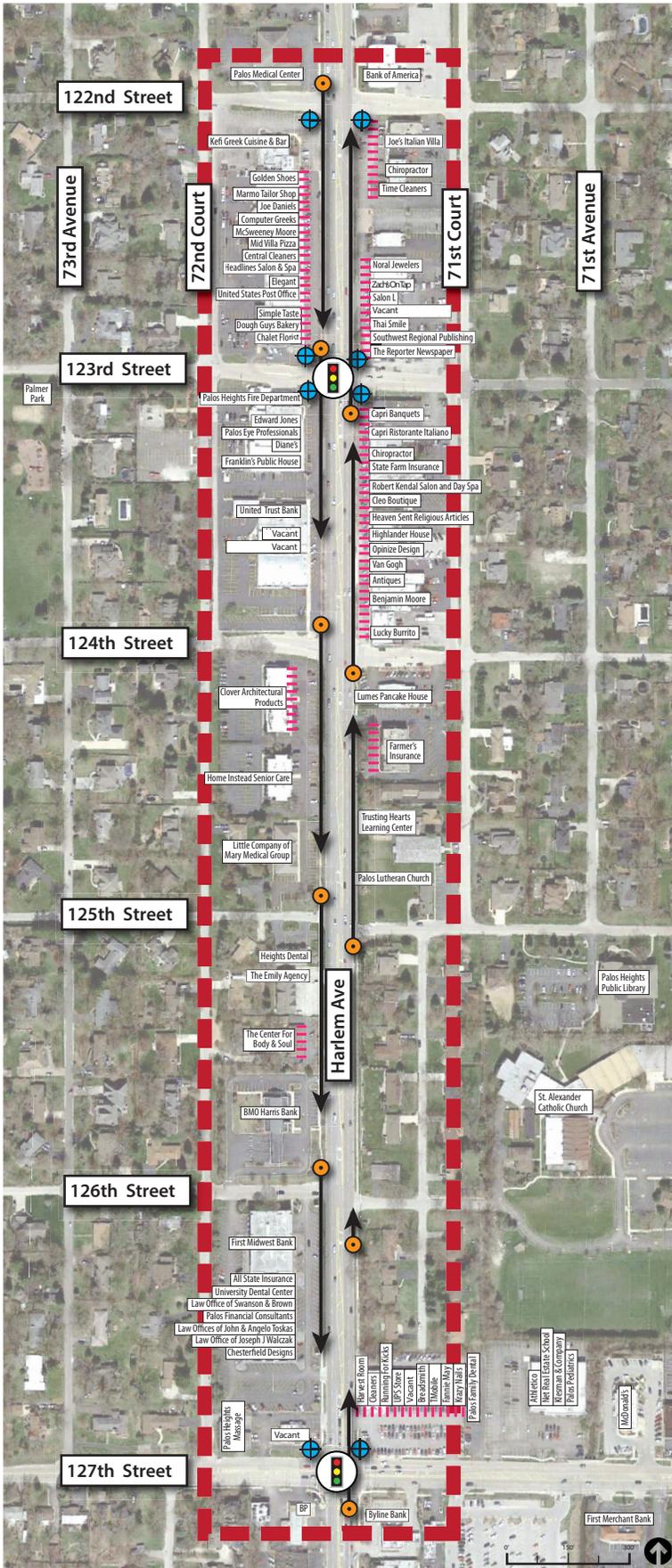


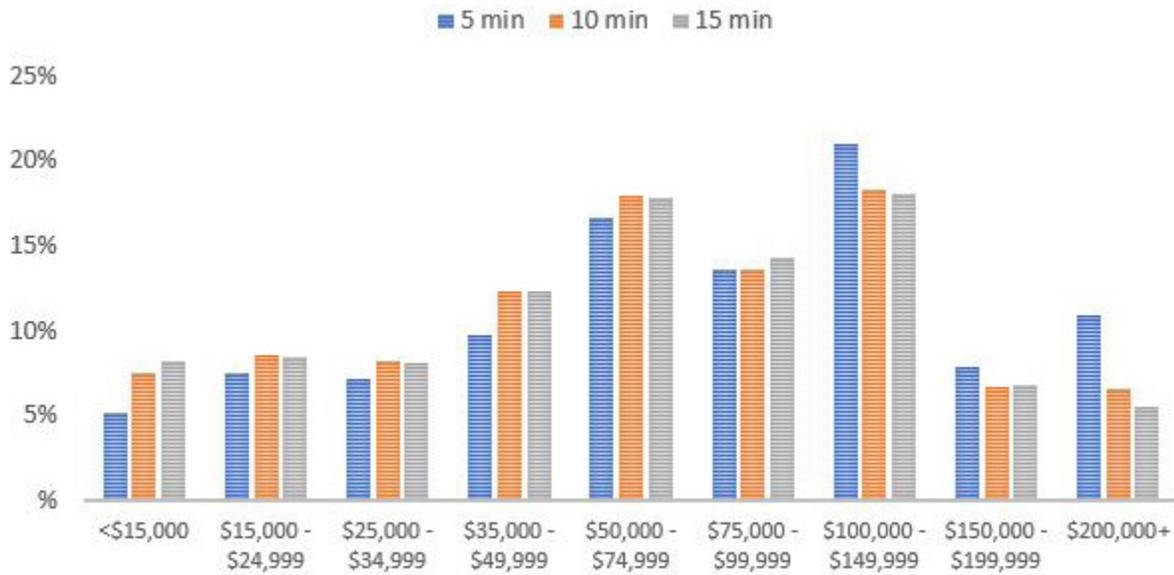
EXHIBIT 7.1

## Palos Heights Comprehensive Plan - City of Palos Heights

Harlem Avenue Design Issues and Opportunities



**FIGURE 7.3** HOUSEHOLD INCOME BY DRIVING DISTANCE FROM OLDE PALOS, 2018



Source: ESRI Business Analyst

### Public Transportation Opportunities

Access to public transportation is limited within Palos Heights. Pace sponsors the Municipal Vehicle Program which provides Palos Heights residents paratransit service to any location within the city. Pace Bus 386 runs along Harlem and passengers are invited to signal to the driver to stop at any intersection within the Palos Heights area. There is a posted bus stop at 127th Street. The 2011 Harlem Corridor Plan indicated the desire to add a posted bus stop at Olde Palos, but this has not occurred.

### Market Data

Olde Palos businesses have the opportunity to attract customers within walking distance of the downtown, as well as residents within a 15-minute drive of Olde Palos. Results from the Comprehensive Plan Survey indicated that many residents visit Olde Palos 1-4 times per month (39%), more than once per week (30%) and occasionally, as needed (21%). Respondents indicated similar frequencies for businesses along Harlem Avenue. Demographic data for the market is used to classify the likely behavioral and life stages of the market (source: ESRI Business Analyst). The market for many goods and services extends far beyond city limits, and in this case, data is provided for a 15-minute drive-time from Olde Palos to capture changes occurring more broadly.

For the period 2019-2023, the population is projected to slightly decrease within a 15-minute drive-time and the average household size is also projected to decrease slightly (Table 7.1). These changes are likely to be unnoticeable within the time frame of this plan, and trends should be revisited in order to determine whether any significant changes are likely to take place. The median age is expected to continue to rise, indicating that the broader community is aging.

These estimates of population change do not consider the 2020 occupancy of the new 178-unit independent senior living residence at the northeast corner of Harlem Avenue and College Drive.

**TABLE 7.4** PROJECTED POPULATION CHANGES, 2019-2023

	5 MIN	10 MIN	15 MIN
Population	-0.29%	-0.06%	-0.11%
Households	-0.29%	-0.08%	-0.13%
Families	-0.31%	-0.10%	-0.16%
Average Household Size	-0.29%	-0.08%	-0.13%
Median Age	0.03%	0.04%	0.05%

Source: ESRI Business Analyst



**OLDE PALOS SUB-AREA  
CHALLENGES AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Household income nearest to Olde Palos is highest, \$15,000 higher within a 5-minute drive time than within a 15-minute drive-time. The average household income is over \$100,000 within 5-minutes, and the per capita income is between \$33,000 and \$42,000 (Table 7.2). Within this area, median household income is projected to increase, most significantly within the 15-minute drive-time (9%).

As the median age continues to climb, it is evident that the market closest to Olde Palos is aging most. Although as Figure 7.2 shows, there is also a higher proportion of 15-24-year-olds within 5-minutes of Olde Palos than beyond. These numbers suggest that ensuring mobility to and within Olde Palos for a variety of ages and abilities is an important step to ensuring that these demographics frequent businesses in the area.

The newly constructed 178-unit Palos Heights Senior Living residence provides a unique opportunity for local senior residents to relocate from existing single-family residences. The resale of existing single-family residences may capture new young families locating within Palos Heights. Such a move can increase the percentage of younger age cohorts, and thereby further bolster the customer base for Olde Palos.

Lifestyle data is projected using demographic, income and spending data broken down into "Tapestry" segments. Marital status, profession, education level, housing, and free time information is used to determine the lifestyles of households by geography. Within a 15-minute drive-time of Olde Palos, the top three Tapestry segments are Parks & Rec, Pleasantville, and Comfortable Empty Nesters (Table 7.3).

These categories indicate that the market surrounding Olde Palos is generally older, with higher education and income levels. Residents own their homes, have multiple vehicles, and tend to enjoy outdoor activities. They budget wisely, and invest conservatively. The City should focus on attracting retail and service businesses to serve these market segments in the Olde Palos Area. A number of restaurants have seen recent success within Olde Palos, and are attracting more visitors to the area. As this market trend strengthens, convenient parking and pedestrian access to and within the area is important to retain these higher income shoppers once they arrive and for return trips. The City should emphasize diversifying the corridor, to provide a range of retail and service uses to complement the existing restaurants that currently draw consumers to the area. The City should also acquire strategically located parcels for parking to capture a growing demand for Olde Palos services.

**Parcel Size**

The four-block area of Olde Palos consists mostly of similar one-story buildings. However, along Harlem Avenue there are a number of properties that are single buildings used for only one business. These building types are impacted by the parcel lot size, and produce an inconsistent and in-cohesive streetscape. Most of the lots fronting Harlem Avenue are either long and narrow, or more square than rectangular in shape. This pattern occurs mostly outside of the Olde Palos area along Harlem Avenue, but is a significant barrier to expanding commercial uses since many of the available lots are too small to provide on-site parking, and commercial redevelopment is likely only to occur after multiple adjacent lots are acquired by a single entity.

**Streetscape Buffer**

Harlem Avenue is not an easy corridor to navigate safely as a pedestrian or as a bicyclist. While there are sidewalks along parts of Harlem Avenue, they are not continuous. Three intersections along Harlem Avenue have demarcated crosswalks, facilitating safer crossing at busy intersections: at College Drive, at 123rd Street in Olde Palos, and at 127th Street.

While implementing continuous sidewalks along Harlem Avenue is preferred, streetscape improvements without sidewalks have been implemented within the Olde Palos area. The enhancements act as a buffer between the roadway and businesses. The buildings within Olde Palos feature narrow walkways under a patchwork of awnings, and minimal parking in front of the storefronts. Pedestrians must maneuver in Olde Palos between walkways and driveways.

While pedestrian and bicyclist improvements are an important consideration for making Olde Palos more accessible, it is vital that improvements also consider elderly residents who may have limited mobility.

## Circulation

In an effort to retain the efficiency of traffic flow within the corridor, IDOT has restricted curb cuts. While landscape improvements along Harlem Avenue increase the aesthetics of the corridor, it does so at the expense of visibility to Olde Palos businesses. The City should continue to work with IDOT to decrease the speed limit (currently 35mph) through the downtown to allow for a safer environment for pedestrians and enhance the visibility of businesses within the Olde Palos area.

Turning left onto Harlem Avenue can be difficult due to the amount of traffic along Harlem Avenue, and curb cuts into Olde Palos areas are allowable only from the right. If entering from a side street at an intersection, drivers must navigate side or back entrances to Olde Palos Shopping Areas.



## Parking

Interviews and Steering Committee meetings indicated that there are concerns about the availability of parking within Olde Palos. Along Harlem Avenue, many businesses have considerable parking behind their businesses and a limited amount directly in front. Parking can be difficult to navigate for those unfamiliar with the area. Parking areas along the sides and back of commercial buildings lack visibility from Harlem Avenue, and are poorly lighted.

The new municipal lot within Olde Palos (where the Farmer's Market is held), is meant to address any of these concerns. There are 64 spaces and four handicapped parking spaces in the lot, which includes a decorative fountain near the street.

Olde Palos was first platted from 1935 through 1940, and developed on a piecemeal basis. By 1973, Olde Palos was largely built out in its current form, consisting of zero-lot-line buildings constructed on parcels 60 feet wide by 222 feet deep on the east side of Harlem, and 247 feet deep on the west side of Harlem. Throughout this time, Harlem Avenue was a two-lane road. Flanking each side of Harlem Avenue was a one-way aisle of double-loaded parking in front of the storefronts. The east side contained a north-bound one-way aisle, and the west side contained a south-bound one-way aisle. Each side contained a row of angle-parking within the Harlem Avenue right-of-way, thereby providing conveniently located on-street parking for customers of local merchants.



## OLDE PALOS SUB-AREA

The availability of on-street public parking continued along Harlem Avenue until it was widened to four lanes in approximately 1978. After this widening, on-street public parking was removed, and front-loaded parking was reduced to a single row of off-street private parking. At this point a greater reliance was placed on rear-loaded off-street private parking. Olde Palos merchants adapted by accommodating more parking behind their stores, and creating front and rear entranceways. Nonetheless, the removal of on-street parking along Harlem Avenue, combined with structural changes in commercial retail and services set in motion a shift in parking demand.

In the mid- and late- 1970s regional malls became the preferred means of shopping. Consumer preference then shifted toward large-format retailers (Best Buy, Sports Authority, Toys-R-Us, etc.) in the 1980s and 1990s. During the last decade, consumers have shifted to the convenience of online shopping, which has all but eliminated traditional brick-and-mortar retail. During this period, the mix of commercial businesses within Olde Palos shifted from primarily retail-oriented to service-oriented businesses. The greatest impact of this shift, from a land-use perspective, is on parking.

For traditional commercial retail, time and locational demand for parking is generally smooth throughout the day, thereby mitigating parking demand conflicts among neighboring uses. On the other hand, service-oriented retail businesses often create peak-hour and locationally concentrated demands for parking, leading to parking conflicts among neighboring uses. This is particularly true of restaurant uses where peak hour times are breakfast, lunch and dinner. As Olde Palos brands itself as a unique regional dining destination, the demand for additional peak-hour parking grows, and the ability to meet the demand becomes a challenge. Moreover, competing for

unique destination restaurants requires well-located and sufficient parking to meet the peak-hour demands of restaurants.

Exacerbating parking demand in the Olde Palos Shopping District is multiple ownership of property. Twenty-five (25) separate entities control the 4-block, 13-acre Olde Palos Shopping District. There are no known or documented cross-access or shared parking agreements within Olde Palos. Several property owners have reacted to increased restaurant parking demand, some by posting warning signs about parking and towing. Wondering whether your vehicle will be towed during your meal can make for a very unsettling dining experience. Worse yet, it may prevent repeat customers, thereby eroding the ability to brand Olde Palos as a regional dining destination.

While single ownership of entire blocks may mitigate some parking conflicts, the opportunity to own and control property in which a restaurateur operates is at the core nature of entrepreneurs creating unique regional destination dining venues. Alternately, single ownership often drives homogeneous non-distinct solutions, thereby hindering the ability of Olde Palos to brand itself as a regional dining destination. Accordingly, land assemblage of multiple properties must be done with care so as to preserve the unique character of Olde Palos. Whatever the direction may be with property ownership, there remains a need for additional peak-hour parking to accommodate the branding of the Olde Palos area as a regional dining destination.

A comprehensive parking and circulation study should be undertaken by the City, to evaluate current parking needs and availability, and to ensure that adequate parking is available to support current and future development.



## Enhance Wayfinding to Improve Circulation

Wayfinding is a critical missing piece in Olde Palos. Within the City, there are no signs directing traffic to Olde Palos other than two signs demarcating the area in either direction on Harlem Avenue. Wayfinding signage can be a useful tool to direct visitors to Olde Palos, to parking areas, and to other attractions and points of interest in the City.

### Signage

Harlem Avenue is a very busy corridor, accommodating over 30,000 vehicles per day. Passing vehicles travel at a moderate speed (35 mph) on a five-lane roadway, therefore businesses are incentivized to create signage that is large and prominent in order to attract the attention of travelers on Harlem Avenue.

Exhibit 7.1 shows locations where wayfinding signs, vertical identity features, and coordinated façade treatment improvements should be made in order to improve the look, feel and character of the area for drivers and pedestrians.

**VISUAL IDENTITY FEATURES** are a useful way to indicate a destination. They are often ornamental, but more importantly they act as coordinating features that help identify a place. They should be easily recognizable from a distance with minimal information for drivers and can include smaller details for pedestrians, such as a map or provide a fact about the area. They are best located at the beginning and end of an area and at central locations within the area.

**WAYFINDING SIGNAGE** can be used to help orient and welcome newcomers and visitors, as well as residents, to an area of interest. Currently, wayfinding signage is limited to signage targeted for vehicles traveling into and through the area. There are two Olde Palos entrance way signs, one near 122nd Street for the south-bound approach and the other near 124th for the north-bound approach. However, they are low to the ground and dark in color, making them easy to miss. Other than these signs, there is little that visually indicates the significance of the area. Improved signage for the Olde Palos area, and targeting pedestrian/bicycle as well as vehicular traffic, could enhance place-making and give the area a more traditional downtown feel.

Palos Heights is a city with many amenities such as Lake Katherine, Palos Hospital, and the Forest Preserves that draw people and families from the region, but there is little to help

visitors find their way from these other areas to Olde Palos. Municipal wayfinding signage throughout the community can help to orient visitors and newcomers to various amenities and places that are important to find, such as City Hall or the public library or Recreation Center. Adding directional signs along the major thoroughfares can help people connect with the location of other places.

**FAÇADE TREATMENTS** should be encouraged and coordinated with property owners to improve the look and character of Olde Palos and the Harlem Avenue corridor. Treatments can be non-structural, including canopies, awnings, signage, lighting and landscaping. The City's Façade Improvement Program can be used to offset the costs for property owners and all Harlem Avenue businesses will benefit from improved, coordinated aesthetics.

The municipal parking lot acts as a gathering space for the Farmer's Market and other community events. Enhancing the downtown look and character of Olde Palos can help reinforce it as a community gathering space and solidify it as a destination for residents and the greater community.

### Vehicle Circulation

Within the Olde Palos area, parallel roadways 72nd Court and 71st Court are already used to access businesses and could be further enhanced to provide access to and circulation within Olde Palos. Also, increased parking and improved parking circulation with wayfinding signage is needed within Olde Palos. Residents voiced concerns about parking throughout the planning process, and further study regarding parking needs and availability is recommended.

The 2008 Comprehensive Plan recommended working with the Illinois Department of Transportation to decrease the speed limit along Harlem Avenue within the Olde Palos area. No changes have been made and reopening this discussion could help in the implementation of more pedestrian friendly infrastructure in the Olde Palos area.

## Strengthen Connections to Community Facilities

Strengthening pedestrian and bicycle connections between Olde Palos and community facilities such as Palmer Park and the Palos Heights Library, can improve the safety of pedestrian and bike circulation across and along Harlem Avenue.

There are a number of ways to improve infrastructure for cyclists without constructing bike lanes or creating separate bike trails and paths. Given that residential streets in Palos Heights have very low traffic volumes, they are much safer for bicyclists even without designated bike lanes compared to busy arterials such as 127th Street and Ridgeland Avenue. Establishing bikeway networks can create routes for cyclists and pedestrians along low-traffic roads. Simple additions such as signs along designated routes can help users follow the route and can provide distance information. Also, instead of adding painted lines for bikers, roads can be designated as sharrows, where cars and cyclists use the same lane when traveling in the same direction. Sharrow symbols are painted on the roadway and would be appropriate for wide, residential streets like those in Palos Heights. East/west streets such as 123rd, 124th and 125th Streets are good candidates for sharrows as they can help lead cyclists and pedestrians across Harlem Avenue safely and are within the Olde Palos area.

Palmer Park is located just two blocks west of Harlem Avenue, near the Olde Palos area. Someone starting at the park or in Olde Palos could easily walk between the two, however there is little to no pedestrian infrastructure to do so and there are limited wayfinding signs to facilitate this linkage, although improvements are planned. The Palmer Park redevelopment plan enhances the recreational opportunities at the park and strengthens the link between the park and Olde Palos, encouraging more movement between the two.



## Review Harlem Avenue Overlay District Ordinance

The Overlay District is complex and is intended to regulate the design of new development and land use, while taking into consideration vacancies and existing uses within each block. The District allows the City greater control over the design of the corridor as it continues to be developed and redeveloped, while offering flexibility in filling vacancies in commercial spaces. However, the District ordinance requires complex calculations and is cumbersome to implement. The District ordinance should be reviewed to improve and enhance the guidelines for efficiency and effectiveness.

## Market Business Improvement Programs

A few businesses have taken advantage of the Facade and the Sign Grant programs sponsored by the city. Encouraging property and business owners to take advantage of these programs through marketing and outreach can address many of the recommendations for Olde Palos and the broader Harlem Avenue corridor. Local organizations such as the Chamber of Commerce and the Business and Economic Development Committee could be effective partners to enhance communication between the City and business owners regarding these programs. Historically, these annual grant programs have been funded in an amount to attract single users. The City may consider expanding its funding of the grants to attract the comprehensive improvement of entire blocks within Olde Palos.

## Public Art

The Palos Heights Public Arts Commission implements a City-wide plan for the placement of public art, such as sculptures, murals, and paintings. The Commission works to improve the business climate and aesthetic appeal of the City, and focuses on educational outreach. The Commission promotes the Public Arts Garden at 123rd Street and 72nd Court, just west of Harlem Avenue.

The City should continue to coordinate with the Public Arts Commission to sponsor public art installations and events to help draw visitors to Olde Palos, and market the area (and the City as a whole) as a regional destination.



## 8

## College Drive + Harlem Sub-Area Plan

Harlem Avenue (IL Route 43) is a major north-south regional thoroughfare through Palos Heights. As such, intersections with Harlem Avenue provide important opportunities for businesses to take advantage of visibility and high traffic volumes. The intersection with College Drive (IL Route 83) is the first major intersection in the north of Palos Heights, and the crossroads of two major commuting routes. This intersection is the gateway into Palos Heights, and likely the first impression visitors have of the community. Given the proximity to Lake Katherine and the new Palos Heights Senior Living Facility at the northeast corner, this intersection is a prime location for high-quality, unified redevelopment consistent with the character of the community.

## HARLEM + COLLEGE DRIVE SUB-AREA

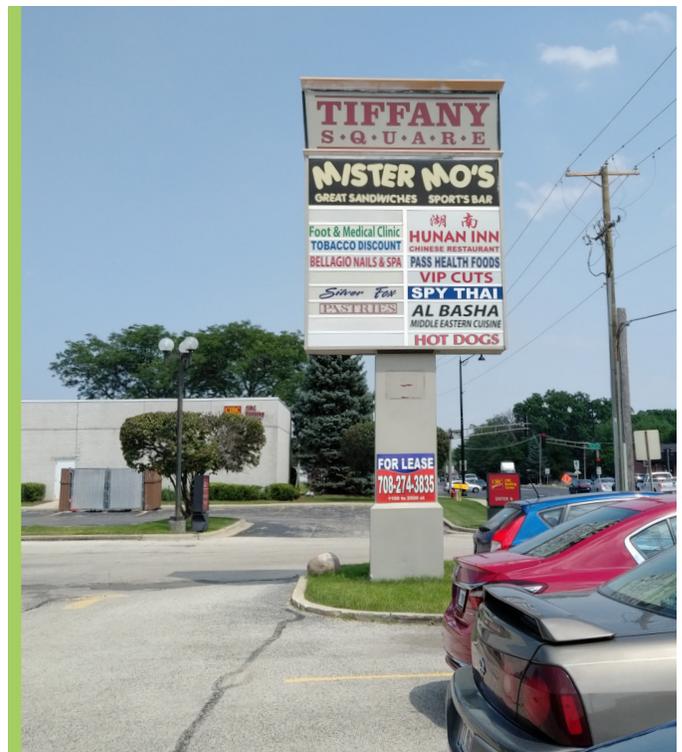
**SOUTHWEST CORNER:** Southwick Commons is a one-story shopping center located within a retail-zoned B District at the southwest corner of Harlem Avenue and College Drive. Retail-zoned B Districts are strategically located along major thoroughfares to provide convenient locations for consumer-driven sales-tax generating uses. Southwick Commons is well kept, visually appealing and contains several major retail uses, including 7-11, Julianni's Pizza restaurant, Jimmy John's sandwich deli, and a Sprint cellular store. A limited number of non-retail, complementary special uses exist in the center, including Lush Hair Salon, Revival Yoga, and Athletico Physical Therapy.

**NORTHWEST CORNER:** Tiffany Square is a one-story shopping center located within a retail-zoned B District at the northwest corner of Harlem Avenue and College Drive. Tiffany Square is unkempt and visually unappealing. A significant amount of floor area is devoted to non-retail uses, including wholesale, storage and manufacturing. While the City zoning code was amended in 2017 to allow limited incidental wholesale related to retail uses, Tobacco Discount exceeds those limitations. Moreover, Silver Fox Pastries has no retail presence, and is solely a wholesale bakery, restricted to M Manufacturing Districts. Other non-retail uses include a day care, a media consultant, and hair and nail salons. Retail uses include Pass Health Foods and the following restaurants: Al-Basha, Hunan Inn, Taco el Gavilan, and Tuay Thai.

Also located on this northwest corner is a CIBC Bank, and a newer three-unit building containing a Starbucks, Kinza clothing, and a chiropractor. The CIBC Bank occupies a 2.4-acre parcel at the immediate corner, and contains two structures. One structure is an obsolete drive-up facility on the north end of the property. The principal bank building is located very near the corner, and obscures the view of retailers on the northwest corner. The bank has plans to expand and relocate the drive-up facility to the main building, freeing up land to the north for potential redevelopment.

**SOUTHEAST CORNER:** The southeast corner of Harlem Avenue and College Drive is a retail-zoned B District. The corner contains several buildings with the following uses: a Sherwin Williams paint store, a new AT&T Cellular store (formerly Radio Shack), an animal hospital, a medical clinic and a bike shop. The parking area and façade of the building containing the Sherwin Williams and former Radio Shack is currently being renovated. The other three buildings appear well maintained. The 2017 occupancy of the medical clinic prompted a cross-access agreement with the animal hospital and bike shop, which provided for new asphalt and shared maintenance.

**NORTHEAST CORNER:** The northeast corner of Harlem Avenue and College Drive is zoned PUD. A 178-unit Independent Living Senior Residence is currently being constructed on approximately 6 acres. The remaining 2.2-acre parcel directly on the corner will be sold for the construction of commercial uses.



## Key Existing Conditions

The northwest corner of College Drive and Harlem Avenue is broken into several parcels and includes a CIBC Bank, the Tiffany Square shopping center, and a three-suite outlot with a Starbucks and chiropractor. Tiffany Square shopping center is older and is occupied by a number of businesses, though many suites are used for storage. The center itself is no longer in good condition there are a number of reasons why redevelopment is a priority:

**LAKE KATHERINE EXPANSION:** Properties to the west of Tiffany Square are mostly medical offices and the existing parking lot for Lake Katherine ends northwest of Tiffany Square. The property to the north of Tiffany Square is owned and maintained by the Metropolitan Water reclamation District (MWRD). The City plans to expand parking for Lake Katherine on this parcel. Easement access must be worked out with the three owners of the northwest corner.

**UNDERUTILIZED SPACE:** The subarea, overall, contains many single-use, separately designed buildings that are not well integrated or interconnected. CIBC Bank is located on the northwest corner of the intersection and has good visibility. However, the bank itself is reportedly larger than current banking needs require. Additionally, a separate obsolete drive-up teller building is located north of the principal bank building. The bank property appears to have more parking than is currently required for modern banks. Moreover, the parking is disconnected from the shopping center, thereby providing little or no benefit to the shopping center.

The commercial strip center is not well maintained, and businesses have poor visibility from the roadway. Exacerbating its poor visibility is that CIBC Bank blocks visual corridors from the intersection of Harlem and Route 83.

**PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE ACCESS:** Enhancing connections to Lake Katherine and the Cal-Sag Trail are priorities for the city and must be considered within the context of redevelopment of Tiffany Square. The parking area for Lake Katherine and the trail itself are separate from Tiffany Square only by undeveloped green space. At present, there is a sidewalk along the southern side of College Drive and a path leading to the Cal-Sag Trail along the western side of Harlem Avenue. There is a parking lot for Lake Katherine that allows pedestrians and cyclists to park and then access the trail, but it is often busy and has little capacity.

There are existing entrances to the Cal-Sag Trail along the western side of Harlem and on the north side of College Drive at 68th and 76th Avenues. The College Drive/Harlem Avenue

intersection has demarcated crossings at a stoplight, but pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure connecting to the intersection is limited. College Drive hosts 17,300 vehicles per day, making safe connections to the Cal-Sag across it important.

West of Harlem Avenue, along College Drive at 76th Avenue, there is a direct access point to the Cal-Sag Trail at the northern end of 76th Avenue. A stoplight at this intersection makes a safe connection between the Cal-Sag Trail entrance and the Palos Heights Trail. East of Harlem Avenue, along College Drive at 68th Avenue, there is a crosswalk providing access to the Cal-Sag Trail. The City intends to create a new entrance to Lake Katherine, off of Harlem Avenue, just south of the Cal-Sag Bridge.

**LANDSCAPING & CIRCULATION:** At present, current landscaping on site is in fair condition, and the Tiffany Square parking lot is fairly simple to navigate. Redevelopment of the center would provide an opportunity to explore new access points and improve land use on the site. An improved pedestrian crossing at the intersection would enhance the potential for future residents and visitors at the senior living development to access businesses and services available at the corners and access to and from the Cal-Sag Trail enhances the opportunity for businesses to directly benefit from trail users. Current plans for commercial development at the northeast corner of College Drive and Harlem Avenue are also an encouraging step towards enhancing circulation for businesses at the intersection.

**GATEWAY OPPORTUNITY:** The intersection of Harlem Avenue and College Drive is the main entryway to the City, and offers the first impression of the community to visitors. Special care should be given to this unique opportunity to provide a prominent 'gateway' into the community. Emphasis should be given to providing a unified vision for the area, encouraging high-quality architectural design, and providing a sense of 'place' and arrival for visitors.

## Parcel Ownership

Within this sub-area, there are numerous property owners. The Tiffany Square shopping center covers several parcels, the outlot is its own parcel, and the entire CIBC Bank area is a singular parcel. The businesses and medical offices to the west of Tiffany Square along College Drive also cover several parcels that are underutilized given their proximity to both IL Route 43 and IL Route 83. Along the south side of College Drive are nine (9) single-family residences. Redevelopment must consider multiple property owners and stakeholders.

# HARLEM + COLLEGE DRIVE SUB-AREA

EXHIBIT 8.1



## PARCEL OWNERSHIP

OWNERS HOLDING MULTIPLE PARCELS

- Groebe Standard 17925
- Tiffany Center LLC
- T. R. Kleven
- Jade Enterprises
- 🏠 Single-Family Home

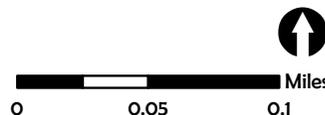


EXHIBIT 8.2



## PROPOSED USES

KEY	LAND USE / # OF STORIES	CONCEPTUAL BUILDING SF	
A	MULTI-STORY RESIDENTIAL CONDOMINIUMS / 4 STY	80,000 GSF	<span style="color: red;">★</span> OUTDOOR GATHERING AREA / OPEN SPACE
B	MULTI-STORY OFFICE / MEDICAL / 3 STY	36,000 GSF	<span style="color: green;">—</span> EXISTING CAL-SAG TRAIL
C	EXISTING OFFICE BUILDINGS		<span style="color: green;">—</span> PROPOSED CAL-SAG TRAIL LINK
D	MULTI-STORY OFFICE / MEDICAL / 3STY	32,000 GSF	<span style="color: green;">●</span> EXISTING CAL-SAG ACCESS POINT
E	MULTI-STORY OFFICE / MEDICAL / 3 STY	15,000 GSF	<span style="color: green;">●</span> PROPOSED CAL-SAG ACCESS POINT
F	EXISTING STARBUCKS		
G	RETAIL / RESTAURANT / 1 TO 2 STY	9,000 SF / FL	
H	RETAIL / RESTAURANT	10,000 SF	
I	RESTAURANT / ENTERTAINMENT / 1 TO 2 STY	5,000 SF / FL	
J	RETAIL / 1 STY	9,000 SF	
K	FUTURE SENIOR HOUSING		

**HARLEM + COLLEGE DRIVE  
SUB-AREA CHALLENGES AND  
RECOMMENDATIONS**



**Redevelop as a mixed-use residential and commercial area**

Redeveloping Tiffany Square into a mixed-use development to complement the mixed-use development east of Harlem Avenue would enhance the commercial and mixed-use nature of the Harlem Avenue Corridor within Palos Heights. Development of multi-family housing at the north, adjacent to the proposed parking lot expansion for Lake Katherine would expand housing opportunities in the City with unparalleled access to a number of amenities and still be buffered from busy roadways. Structured parking serving the mixed uses and open to the public is encouraged to maximize the highest and best use of the area, as well as provide additional parking for Lake Katherine. Figure 8.2 is a hypothetical conceptual plan for this area that illustrates how redevelopment could occur, including a range of uses, including condominiums, (medical) office space, and new commercial spaces.

Extending redevelopment westward would serve to create an expanded commercial area and enhance access to Lake Katherine by providing a new access point for vehicles that leads directly to parking areas. Some existing office buildings would remain and would benefit from revitalization of the area.

While there are currently few vacancies in the area, redevelopment could enhance the use of this area and create stronger bike and pedestrian connections across College Drive and concentrate commercial uses at this busy intersection, drawing them away from residential uses.

Any mixed-use development would have to be approved as a Planned Unit Development (PUD), thereby allowing the City to review proposals on their merit overall. Where feasible, an outdoor pavilion and seating area may be incorporated into a PUD.

**Enhance multimodal connectivity**

Incorporating access to and from the Cal-Sag Trail with these developments will provide better access to the trail and Lake Katherine, and also the amenities that each offer. Existing access points to the Cal-Sag Trail within the area should remain and the creation of additional access points encouraged at the residential development (D) and at the future commercial areas near the senior living residences (H).

**Encourage High-Quality, Unified Development**

Due to the prominent location of this intersection as the northern gateway into Palos Heights, the City should encourage high-quality, unified development of the area consistent with the character of the community. Future development at this intersection should incorporate modern and attractive architectural design, unified signage (including gateway signage), appropriate landscaping of development sites as well as parking areas, and multiple modes of access (auto, bicycle, and pedestrian).

In order to ensure the highest quality development at this key gateway location, the City may wish to consider purchasing the commercial property at the northeast corner of Harlem Avenue and College Drive if the opportunity arises. This would allow the City to control the property and future development of the site, and ensure the highest quality development at the gateway into the community. The enhancement of this gateway with passive or active open space should be encouraged to create a sense of place and arrival.



## 9

## Indian Trails Sub-Area Plan

Indian Trails Center is located at the southwest corner of Ridgeland Avenue and 127th Avenue. It is a strip center with two outlots that was grocery-anchored by Dominick's until the business closed in 2013. Since then, the space which housed Dominick's has remained vacant and its vacancy stunted the vitality of the center. This sub-area plan takes an in-depth look at the current and projected market conditions within Palos Heights and the area within a 15-minute drive-time of Indian Trails. This data drives recommendations for new tenant ideas, redevelopment options and business attraction strategies.

## Ridgeland Corridor Plan

The 2014 Ridgeland Corridor Plan runs from 79th Street in Burbank to 135th Street in Palos Heights. The plan integrates visions for community connectivity, transportation planning, land use and zoning, economic development, and urban design. The plan aimed to facilitate connections between community bike plans and the corridor, expand multi-use path connectivity, ensure adequate transportation options exist for residents in the communities along Ridgeland Avenue, and provide recommendations for economic development of opportunity sites along the corridor.

Within Palos Heights, priorities include linking Ridgeland Avenue to the Cal-Sag Trail, using Ridgeland Avenue to connect a bicycle network connecting to major destinations and municipalities, landscaping and wayfinding signage along the corridor to create a cohesive look while helping visitors identify the community they are in, and adding or improving sidewalks to ensure they are ADA-compliant and reduce connectivity gaps. A number of recommendations include ensuring that pedestrian crossings and infrastructure are adequate, providing enough time to cross, effective connectivity and ensuring safety. Recommendations included further evaluation for a pedestrian crossing with median refuge at Ridgeland Avenue and 123rd Street.

Indian Trails Shopping Center, included as a Sub-Area Plan in the Update, is an opportunity site in this plan. Recommendations include phased reuse and redevelopment of the center into a mixed-use center with large format retail, restaurant, office and residential. The Sub-Area Plan would require rezoning from a B Business District to a PUD Planning Unit Development District.

## Key Existing Conditions

### Existing Businesses

A recent survey of the shopping center indicates that of a total 28 suites, only 50% are occupied. The entire center is 136,000 square feet, and less than 40% of all floor area is occupied at present. In 2019, the property rental rate was listed by CBRE at \$12 per square foot.

The vacant Dominick's space is almost 67,000 square feet and is the main barrier to increasing tenancy in the center. Such large spaces can be difficult to fill and are often adapted for multiple businesses or cleared for entirely different uses.

Existing businesses on site are doing well—the Royalberry Waffle House is a local favorite and supports local recreation. ACE Hardware and Charter Fitness are currently the most prominent tenants and occupy multiple suites. A dry cleaner, a nail salon, Aurelio's Pizza and Weight Watchers were all observed in business in June 2018. One of the outlots is a sports bar and the other was recently renovated from a restaurant into Providence Bank.



## Indian Trails Market Area

To better understand the market for Indian Trails, demographics and market research was compiled for 5, 10, and 15-minute drive-time radii:

In general, the population is quite stable near Indian Trails, with minimal (less than 1%) marginal population decreases projected over the next 5 years (Table 9.1).

The median age within Palos Heights is stable—50 years in 2010 and in 2017. This trend is observable in the radii for Indian Trails, where the proportion of population among older age groups is higher within 5 minutes of the center, and as distance increases, the population becomes younger (Figure 9.1). Trinity College also brings in 1,500 students (12% of Palos Heights population) each school year which are likely to support businesses at Indian Trails given proximity. Each Fall, City businesses offer discounts for Trinity students, faculty and staff. Participating businesses included retail, dining, and service establishments.

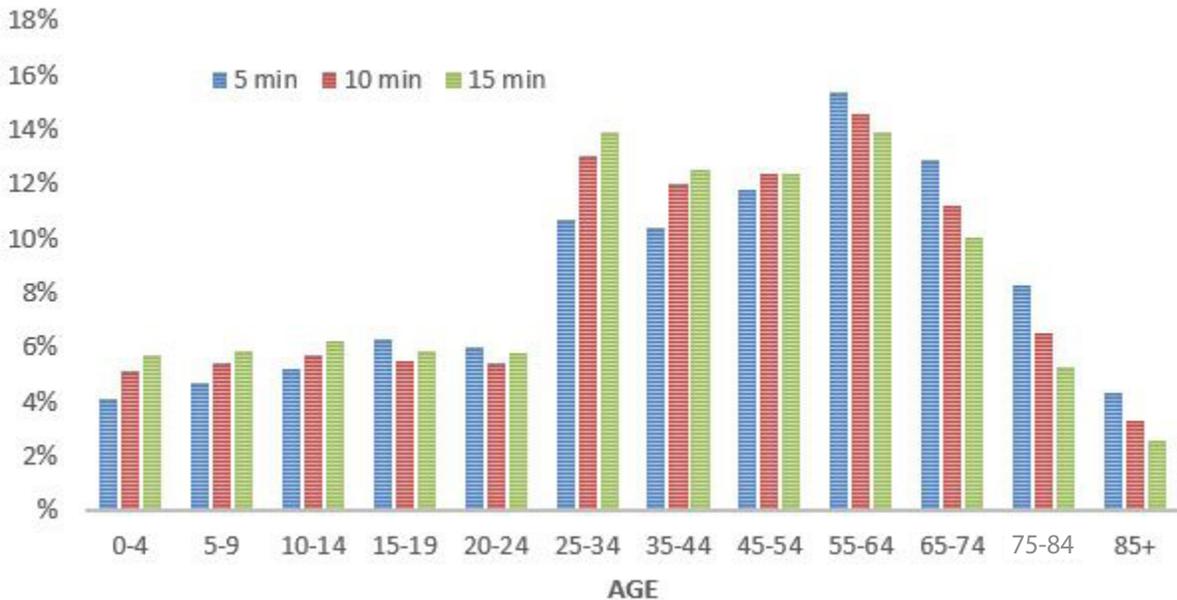
Household incomes and per capita incomes are higher closer to Indian Trails as well, and the median household income is projected to increase between 2018 and 2023 (Table 9.2).

**TABLE 9.1.** POPULATION TRENDS 2018-2023

2018-2023 ANNUAL RATE	5 MIN	10 MIN	15 MIN
Population	-0.16%	-0.16%	-0.12%
Households	-0.14%	-0.16%	-0.14%
Families	-0.18%	-0.19%	-0.17%
Owner Households	-0.04%	0.06%	0.12%

Source: ESRI Business Analyst

**FIGURE 9.1** AGE DISTRIBUTION BY DRIVING DISTANCE FROM INDIAN TRAILS, 2018



Source: ESRI Business Analyst

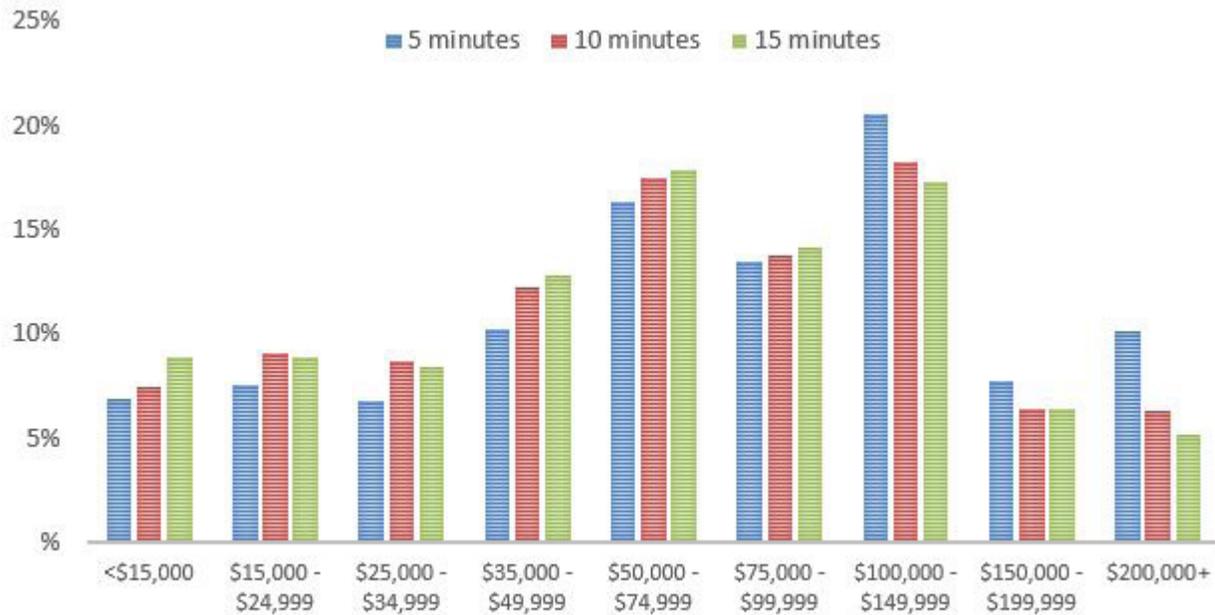
**TABLE 9.2** HOUSEHOLD INCOME BY DRIVING DISTANCE FROM INDIAN TRAILS, 2018

HOUSEHOLD INCOME BY DRIVING DISTANCE FROM PALOS HEIGHTS	5 MIN	10 MIN	15 MIN
2018 Median Household Income	\$78k	\$65k	\$62k
2018 Average Household Income	\$104k	\$87k	\$82k
2018 Per Capita Income	\$42k	\$35k	\$31k
Projected Change in Median Household Income, 2018-2023	1.18%	1.64%	1.63%

Source: ESRI Business Analyst

## INDIAN TRAILS SUB-AREA

**FIGURE 9.2** HOUSEHOLD INCOME BY DRIVING DISTANCE FROM INDIAN TRAILS, 2018



Source: ESRI Business Analyst

As Figure 9.2 shows, households earning less than \$100k increase in number as the radius increases, however, the opposite occurs above \$100k. Thus, the market for Indian Trails has the ability to cater to families at all income spectrums, though the closest market has greater spending power.

The highest expenditures are related to financial services and have been omitted because related establishments tend to be small and add little vitality to commercial areas.

### Retail Goods + Services

The Spending Potential Index (SPI) is used to indicate whether a market area is able to meet the retail demands of residents. The SPI is calculated using data from the Consumer Expenditure Survey collected by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Households are surveyed for a period of four quarters about their actual expenditures for a variety of retail goods and services. An index of 100 is equal to the national average. Anything higher indicates that average expenditures per household in the community is higher than the national average—anything lower than 100 indicates spending is lower.

Table 9.3 indicates the SPI for retail goods and services within a 5-minute drive-time of Indian Trails. In most of these categories, households in this area spend a greater amount on average on these goods and services than the average household in the nation. Top expenditures include leisure activities (tickets to theater/operas/concerts and admission to sporting events), home remodeling services, memberships for clubs and travel (airline fares, lodging on trips, auto/truck rental on trips etc.).

**TABLE 9.3** TOP 20 RETAIL GOODS & SERVICES EXPENDITURES, 5 MINUTE DRIVE-TIME FROM INDIAN TRAILS

	SPI	AVERAGE AMOUNT
Tickets to Theatre/Operas/Concerts	138	\$91.06
Maintenance and Remodeling Services	136	\$2,784.20
Membership Fees for Clubs	135	\$305.12
Admission to Sporting Events, excl. Trips	133	\$79.02
Rugs	132	\$32.51
Reading	132	\$148.39
Airline Fares	132	\$697.21
Lodging on Trips	132	\$753.42
Fees and Admissions	131	\$898.43
Fees for Participant Sports, excl. Trips	131	\$148.06
Auto/Truck Rental on Trips	131	\$36.39
Maintenance and Remodeling Materials	130	\$635.03
Lawn and Garden	130	\$560.39
Food and Drink on Trips	130	\$671.49

Source: ESRI Business Analyst (Full table in Appendix)

Top expenditures indicate that Health & Wellness activities and purchases, as well as Home & Car expenditures are common within this area. Tables 9.4 and 9.5 indicate the SPI for these activities and expenditures. Retail establishments that support these types of goods and services have the potential to reverse sales leakage in automobile sales, auto parts, furniture/home furnishings, building material and supplies, and health & personal care among others.

**TABLE 9.4 HEALTH + WELLNESS ACTIVITIES AND PURCHASES**

	SPI
Membership Fees for Clubs	135
Admission to Sporting Events, excl. Trips	133
Fees for Participant Sports, excl. Trips	131
Fees for Recreational Lessons	128
Sports/Recreation/Exercise Equipment	127
Eyeglasses and Contact Lenses	126
Recreational Vehicles and Fees	126
Prescription Drugs	125
Nonprescription Drugs	124
Personal Care Products	122

Source: ESRI Business Analyst (Full Table in Appendix)

## Leisure + Recreational Expenditures

Many of the top expenditures are related to leisure and recreational activities. Similar to SPI, the Market Potential Index (MPI) is based on nationally representative survey data that determines the likelihood of consumer purchasing behaviors. The MPI uses 100 to represent the US average and determines the likelihood that adults and households in a specific area will exhibit the same consumer behaviors. MPI was gathered for Sports and Leisure activities and Recreational Expenditures.

Data indicates that many adults within a 5-minute drive-time from Indian Trails go to see movies and live events, dine out, read books, do exercise, and cook for fun. The greatest market potential lies in various types of exercise, attending live events such as theater, and visiting cultural spaces such as art galleries and museums. The MPI for sports and leisure activities indicates most strongly that households nearest to Indian Trails are interested in and participate in such activities.

Figure 9. indicates that households nearest to Indian Trails spend significantly more on many recreational expenditures on average than do households in the larger trade area. However, within the trade area, it's clear that household expenditures are at or close to the national average. The SPIs for recreational activities within the trade area indicate that there is an opportunity to expand recreational options at Indian Trails and potentially garner customers from a larger area.

**TABLE 9.5 HOME + CAR EXPENSES**

	SPI		SPI
Maintenance and Remodeling Services	136	Pets	122
Mortgage Payment and Basics	132	Small Appliances	121
Rugs	132	Telephones and Accessories	121
Maintenance and Remodeling Materials	130	Housekeeping Supplies	121
Lawn and Garden	130	Audio	121
Housewares	125	Utilities, Fuel, and Public Services	120
Miscellaneous Video Equipment	125	Televisions	120
Household Textiles	124	TV/Video/Audio	119
Furniture	123	Child Care	118
Major Appliances	122	Streaming/Downloaded Video	117
Moving/Storage/Freight Express	122	Gasoline and Motor Oil	116
Vehicle Maintenance and Repairs	122	School Books and Supplies	114

Source: ESRI Business Analyst (Full Table in Appendix)

**INDIAN TRAILS SUB-AREA CHALLENGES AND RECOMMENDATIONS**



**Large Vacant Retail Space**

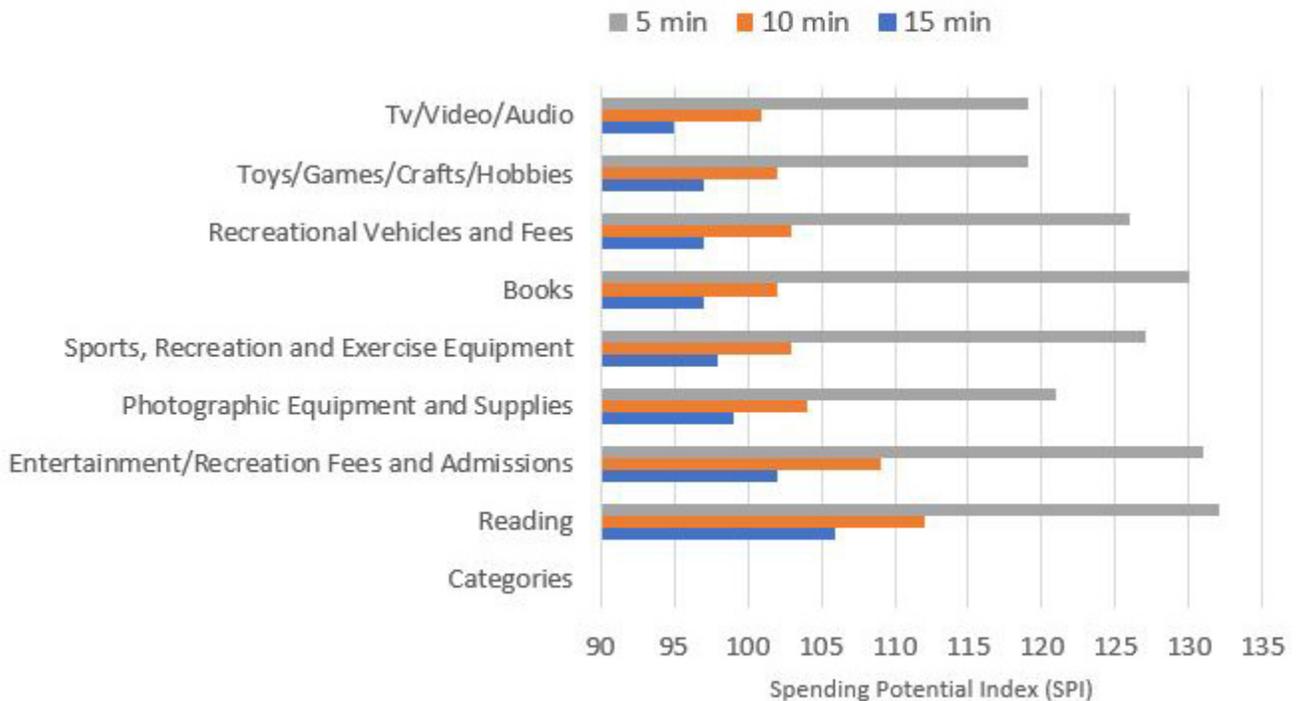
Due to the size of the vacant storefront of the former Dominick's, the center is visually unappealing. The previously grocery-anchored retail space is large (67,000 sq ft) and can be difficult to fill with other retailers, especially given changes in the way businesses are choosing to invest in and maintain brick and mortar retail. Some department stores have closed many of their stores around the nation and many big box retailers have closed the least performing stores while others have begun to downsize their store sizes. Filling this space with another retailer may prove to be difficult based on the size of the space. Additionally, and most importantly, the parent company of Jewel has acquired the lease to the vacant Dominick's site, and will not relinquish the lease to another, competing grocery store. This severely limits the available options to re-tenant the vacant space that was designed and built specifically for a grocer. It may be necessary to subdivide the Dominick's space in order to capture new retail.

**Persistent Vacancies**

Without a big draw to the center, several suites are vacant at varying sizes. Vacant suites range in size from 900 square feet to 4,800 square feet. The vacancies exist in clusters within the property, emphasizing the look of abandonment and the feel of significant vacancy.



**FIGURE 9.3 RECREATIONAL EXPENDITURE TYPES BY DRIVE-TIME TO INDIAN TRAILS**



# INDIAN TRAILS SUB-AREA

FIGURE 9.4 INDIAN TRAILS SUBAREA AERIAL



### Existing Zoning Classification

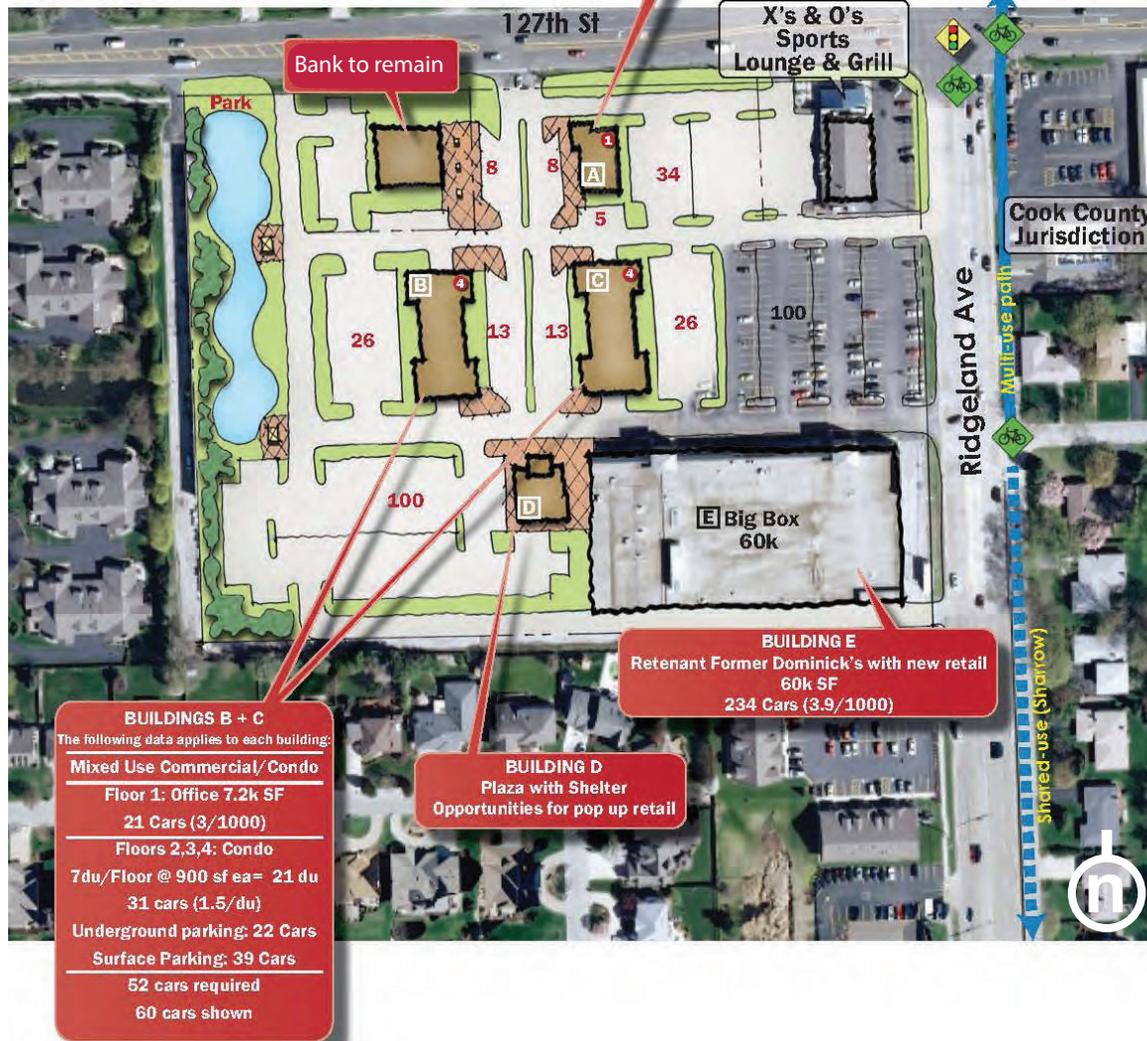
Palos Heights

**B** Business District

The City may consider rezoning these parcels from 'B' to Planned Unit Development (PUD)

**Cook County Jurisdiction**

FIGURE 9.5 INDIAN TRAILS SUBAREA CONCEPTUAL PLAN (HYPOTHETICAL)



## Pursue Creative, Temporary Uses of the Space

Indian Trails continues to have persistent vacancies. In order to attract customers and foot traffic to the center, the City may encourage the property management to pursue temporary uses of the center. Large parking lots are often used to host temporary market areas for goods such as Christmas trees and carnivals, such as the Kris Kringle Market. Such uses enliven such spaces for a short time and can reinvigorate interest in the businesses at the center despite vacancies. These uses also allow for creative uses of the space and can help to re-envision space.

## Work with Property Management to Re-tenant the Center

Data indicates that the Indian Trails Center does indeed have market potential and that the City overall is experiencing leakage in most industries. Expenditure data around Indian Trails Center indicates that a significant number of the population living within a 5-min drive purchase and read books and demographic data indicates that leisure and recreational activities and associated goods are popular among the population within a 15-minute drive-time. Residents in this area are already spending more than national averages towards these goods and services and could be encouraged to make these purchases in Palos Heights if a retailer is attracted.

While vacancy in the former Dominick's space is a barrier to attracting tenants in the other spaces, working with the property management company to find alternative businesses for other suites is an important step to returning the commercial space to productive use and ensuring there are greater retail opportunities for Palos Heights' residents to support retail in the City.

## Encourage High-Quality, Unified Development

Due to the prominent location of this commercial center as the eastern gateway into Palos Heights, the City should encourage a high-quality, unified approach to redevelopment consistent with the character of the community. Future redevelopment efforts should incorporate modern and attractive architectural design, unified signage, appropriate landscaping of parking areas, and pedestrian and bicycle access. Redevelopment of the center should be compatible with existing construction, and provide appropriate screening and buffering of adjacent residential areas.

## Encourage Patronage at Local Businesses

A hypothetical conceptual plan for Indian Trails (Figure 9.5) envisions reconfiguration of the center. This conceptual plan is intended only as a guide for potential future redevelopment. Existing commercial tenants are encouraged to remain in place, or elsewhere within a redeveloped center if at all possible.

Commercial retail and businesses within Palos Heights are limited, but many are local, small businesses. This is true of Indian Trails and encouraging patronage city-wide, including at Indian Trails, is a way to enhance patronage overall.

Trinity College students are incentivized to buy local through discounts—residents need an incentive to buy local as well, especially when there are a number of options that may be more convenient, offer better prices, or are well-known chains. Many communities work to organize events that highlight local restaurants and retailers, others highlight excellence through rating programs. Local programming through Channel 4 should continue to highlight new businesses and area activities, and could be used to promote campaigns to buy and eat locally.



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## Implementation

This chapter examines ways the City of Palos Heights can begin to proactively move towards achieving the key objectives highlighted in this Comprehensive Plan.

### Leadership

In order to implement the goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan, the Mayor, City Council, and City Administrator should be responsible for implementation, and periodic review of progress towards implementation of the Plan. This may require appropriation of sufficient staff and resources.

### Use in Development Review

The Comprehensive Plan is a key point of reference when reviewing proposed zoning changes (permitted uses and special uses). In general, if a rezoning is proposed that is not consistent with the Comprehensive Plan, it should receive additional scrutiny and review, or denied. In most cases, it may be appropriate to deny a request that is not consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. However, in some cases conditions may have changed since the plan was adopted that would suggest another use, and resulting zoning, is more appropriate. In such cases, if it is determined that the rezoning is appropriate, the Comprehensive Plan should also be amended to reflect this new use.

### Comprehensive Plan Updates

This Comprehensive Plan is based on currently available information including market and other conditions. Over time, it will be important for the City to reevaluate plan recommendations considering current economic conditions, desires of the community, and progress towards identified goals. It is recommended that the City review the plan at least every five years, and update it as needed (at least every 10 years).

### Development Regulations

Palos Heights has building, zoning, and subdivision regulations in place to protect the health, safety and welfare of its residents. It is important for the City to periodically update these regulations to accommodate new types of development and the latest design and construction techniques. Selective updates have been made to the Zoning Ordinance over the years, and additional updates will be needed in the future.

Like the Comprehensive Plan, it is recommended that development regulations (zoning and subdivision ordinances) be reviewed by the Planning Commission every 5 years, or

as needed, to address new land uses, building types, and modern design standards.

The City should review and evaluate the Harlem Avenue Overlay District, with a goal to maintain the existing standards for land use and design, while simplifying the regulations to be easier for residents, business owners and staff to interpret and enforce.

The College Drive/Harlem Avenue sub-area plan will require rezoning of property to accomplish the goal of redeveloping the area as a mixed-use center. While much of the overall sub-area is already zoned as PUD, which allows for more creative development, Tiffany Square is zoned only for commercial. Rezoning of this property to PUD will allow for the concepts developed in the sub-area plan to be realized.

## Grant Opportunities

### PARKS, OPEN SPACE, ENVIRONMENT, AND TRAILS

The Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) administers a number of grant programs that may be helpful in implementing plan recommendations. In particular, the Open Space Land Acquisition and Development (OSLAD) program has been used by the City and other communities to acquire and develop parks. This link provides general details on existing programs: <http://www.dnr.illinois.gov/grants/Pages/default.aspx>. IDNR staff should be contracted to determine if and when any programs are open for new applications.



### INFRASTRUCTURE, TOURISM, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) administers many programs that can assist in plan implementation. Among these programs, the Illinois Community Development Assistance Program (CDAP) is one of the better known and more focused programs available to assist communities. Funding is focused on improving public infrastructure, and comes from a pass-through from the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). A link to various programs offered by DCEO is found here: <http://www.illinois.gov/dceo/ServicesGuide/SitePages/Search.aspx>. As with other programs funded by the State of Illinois, the current budget crisis makes it difficult to know which programs will or will not have funding in future years.



### TRANSPORTATION

The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) is responsible for operating and maintaining most major roadways in Palos Heights, such as Harlem Avenue (IL Route 43) and College Drive (IL Route 83). Improvements to roads in and around Palos Heights compete with funding for other roadway enhancements throughout the State of Illinois. Given limited funding, IDOT often requires private development to fund roadway and intersection improvements adjacent to their property for items like turn lanes and traffic signals. IDOT does have several programs designed to assist with economic development, including programs to assist with road improvements needed to spur economic development (Economic Development Program), and truck access (Truck Access Route Program). More information on these programs can be found here: <http://www.illinois.gov/dceo/ExpandRelocate/Incentives/grants/Pages/Biz-Idot.aspx>. IDOT also administers a Safe Routes to Schools Program (SRTS) designed to make bike and pedestrian improvements to improve accessibility. More information on this program is available here: <http://www.idot.illinois.gov/transportation-system/local-transportation-partners/county-engineers-and-local-public-agencies/safe-routes-to-school/index>

## Other Funding Sources

Aside from grant opportunities, other potential funding and incentive sources include Tax Increment Financing, Cook County Class 7 Special Service Areas, Business Improvement Districts, and Main Street programs. The City has successfully utilized some of these programs in the past to accomplish its planning and economic development goals.

### Tax Increment Financing

Tax Increment Financing (TIF) is an economic development tool communities can use to leverage future property tax increases to accomplish redevelopment activities. The City has two existing TIF districts, one located at the intersection of Harlem Avenue and College Drive, and the other at 127th Street and Harlem Avenue. TIF can help fund such redevelopment activities as building rehabilitation, property assembly, infrastructure, and environmental remediation.

The City first used TIF in 1986 with the adoption of the Lake Katherine TIF. This redevelopment project repurposed a gun shooting range and large sewage lagoons into a unified site design creating the Lake Katherine Nature Center and Botanic Gardens, residential condominiums and offices. The Lake Katherine Center is a regional attraction, and educates children and adults about the local biology and larger environment. The Lake Katherine TIF was dissolved in 2005, four years sooner than its possible twenty-three year life. Following its dissolution in 2006, the annual Recovered Tax Increment Value (RTIV) for all local taxing agencies totaled \$1.8 million, including \$470,000 for High School District 230, and \$570,000 for Elementary School District 118. The land uses within the former Lake Katherine TIF District remain economically strong and stable, and continue to contribute to the vitality and tax base of the larger community.

The potential benefits of TIF can be realized in other areas of the community where properties require improvements or repurposing in order to strengthen and stabilize the local economy. These other areas include, and may not be limited to, Olde Palos Shopping District, College Drive and Harlem Avenue, Indian Trails Shopping Plaza, and the larger 127th and Harlem Avenue commercial area. The use of TIF in these areas can assist with building renovation, land assemblage, streetscapes and sidewalks, and expanded parking within Olde Palos to promote its strength and stability.

MUNICIPALITY	SALES TAX RATE
<b>PALOS HEIGHTS</b>	<b>9%</b>
Palos Park	9.5%
Palos Hills	9%
Crestwood	10%
Chicago Ridge	10%
Orland Park	9.75%
Alsip	10%

### Business Improvement Districts

Business Improvement Districts (BID) are similar to TIF districts in that they can help fund redevelopment projects within a designated area. However, restrictions on how the money is spent are not as limited as TIF, and the money can be used to promote businesses through marketing programs and other expenses not allowable through TIF. Business Districts generate funding through a sales tax, which is imposed on businesses within the district to fund activities within the district. Business Districts can be used in conjunction with TIF to provide needed resources to redevelop and market businesses within Palos Heights.

A Business District allows for up to an additional 1% sales tax be levied within the district. Palos Heights' sales tax rate compares favorably to neighboring communities so that a nominal increase could be applied while remaining competitive with surrounding communities.

The City currently utilizes a Business Improvement District as a funding source to repay redevelopment project costs associated with the new Jewel-Osco and Wendy's properties. This funding source is in addition to TIF, and thereby reduces the reliance on TIF for funding redevelopment costs, as well as accelerates the payment of Notes issued to fund such costs.

## Special Service Areas

Special Service Areas (SSAs) are an economic development tool that allows property owners to cooperatively plan for, and finance, capital improvements and services within an area. SSAs are typically funded through a special tax levied on properties within the area, for the benefit of properties within the area. They can be used to fund such improvements and services as parking improvements, lighting, signage, marketing, snow removal, security, and flood control measures.



## Main Street Programs

The National Trust for Historic Preservation and the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency sponsor Main Street programs throughout the State and country. These programs are based on the 'four point approach' including: organization, economic restructuring, promotion, and design. As Main Street programs are individually tailored to each community, they can be effectively utilized by local businesses to organize, provide education and training, promote and market the area, and provide technical assistance to members.

The Main Street program requires management and could have significant costs to establish and maintain. But the principles are sound. The City could utilize concepts from the Main Street program to help revitalize and market the Olde Palos downtown shopping district.