



CITY OF PALOS HEIGHTS COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



ADOPTED JUNE 17, 2008

PREPARED BY



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



Table of Contents

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Section One: Introduction | 1 |
| Section Two: Community Outreach | 5 |
| Section Three: Vision, Goals & Objectives | 25 |
| Section Four: City-Wide Plans | 35 |
| Section Five: Harlem Avenue Corridor Plan | 57 |
| Section Six: Implementation | 65 |

Section One: Introduction

The City of Palos Heights Comprehensive Plan will assist the community in maintaining what residents have identified as being important to their quality of life while laying the foundation to promote appropriate new developments.

The Comprehensive Plan was created to improve and revitalize all components of the City; addressing land use, transportation, zoning, urban design, and economic development.

The Plan is built upon the input and comments received from residents, business owners, community leaders, recreation providers, government agencies, appointed and elected officials, and City staff. The following themes emerged early in the process, which are reinforced throughout the Comprehensive Plan:

- Maintain the residential neighborhoods of the City. Residents expressed a strong desire to keep the almost “rural” character of the residential areas of the City.
- Enhance the Harlem Avenue commercial corridor. More specifically, residents wanted the appearance, image, commercial and office uses, parking, and circulation flow improved.
- Preserve and support high-quality community facilities and services. Residents credited these community facilities as creating the City’s image and character. One such facility is Lake Katherine Nature Preserve, which is referred to as the “crown jewel” of the community. Lake Katherine creates much of the City’s image and character, and continuing to market the area for visitors is a common theme throughout this Plan.

Purpose of the Comprehensive Plan

The Comprehensive Plan is the result of a 10-month planning process with the community. The Plan sets forth the long-range recommendations and community vision for improving existing conditions, while maintaining important features of the City that add to its special image and character.

The Comprehensive Plan is the City’s official policy guide for physical improvement and development. The Plan considers not only the current needs and issues within the community, but also presents a plan for guiding new improvements or developments for the next 15 to 20 years.

The Plan establishes the ground rules for private improvements and developments. It provides the framework by which the City can review and evaluate private development proposals. In addition to private improvements, the Plan presents a number of public improvements that can help to ensure that local dollars are spent effectively.

The Plan encompasses the use of land; the circulation of vehicles and pedestrians; the protection of parks, open space and community facilities; and a guide to enhance the City’s image and identity. The Plan addresses all properties within the City’s corporate boundaries as well as the adjacent unincorporated areas within the City’s planning jurisdiction (1 ½ mile).

Pursuant to the Illinois Municipal Code, the City Council of the City of Palos Heights has implemented this Comprehensive Plan into its zoning ordinance and regulatory development controls. As such, compliance with the Comprehensive Plan shall be considered as a factor in making decisions regarding zoning and other land use determinations.

Illinois communities are not required to create and adopt Comprehensive Plans, however, if they do, they may obtain preference for state funding.

Planning Process

The City of Palos Heights Comprehensive Planning process incorporated a multi-step work program that involved public input throughout.

The multi-step work program included documenting the City's existing conditions to provide a concise and accurate assessment of strengths, weaknesses, issues and opportunities.

A "Vision" for the City was then created to be used as a foundation for future planning efforts. From this Vision, and other community outreach activities, goals and objectives were formulated. Using these goals and objectives alternative plans and policies were developed and evaluated.

The planning process was designed to produce a Comprehensive Plan that accommodates desirable new development, while preserving the established character of the City of Palos Heights.

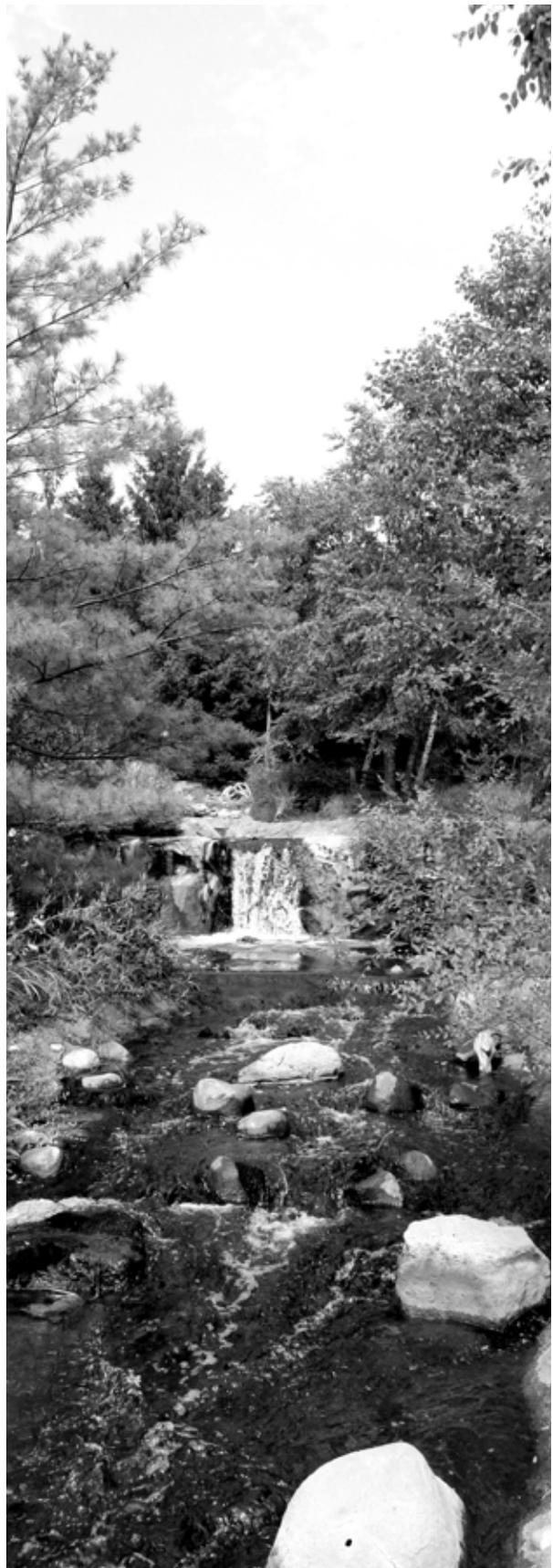
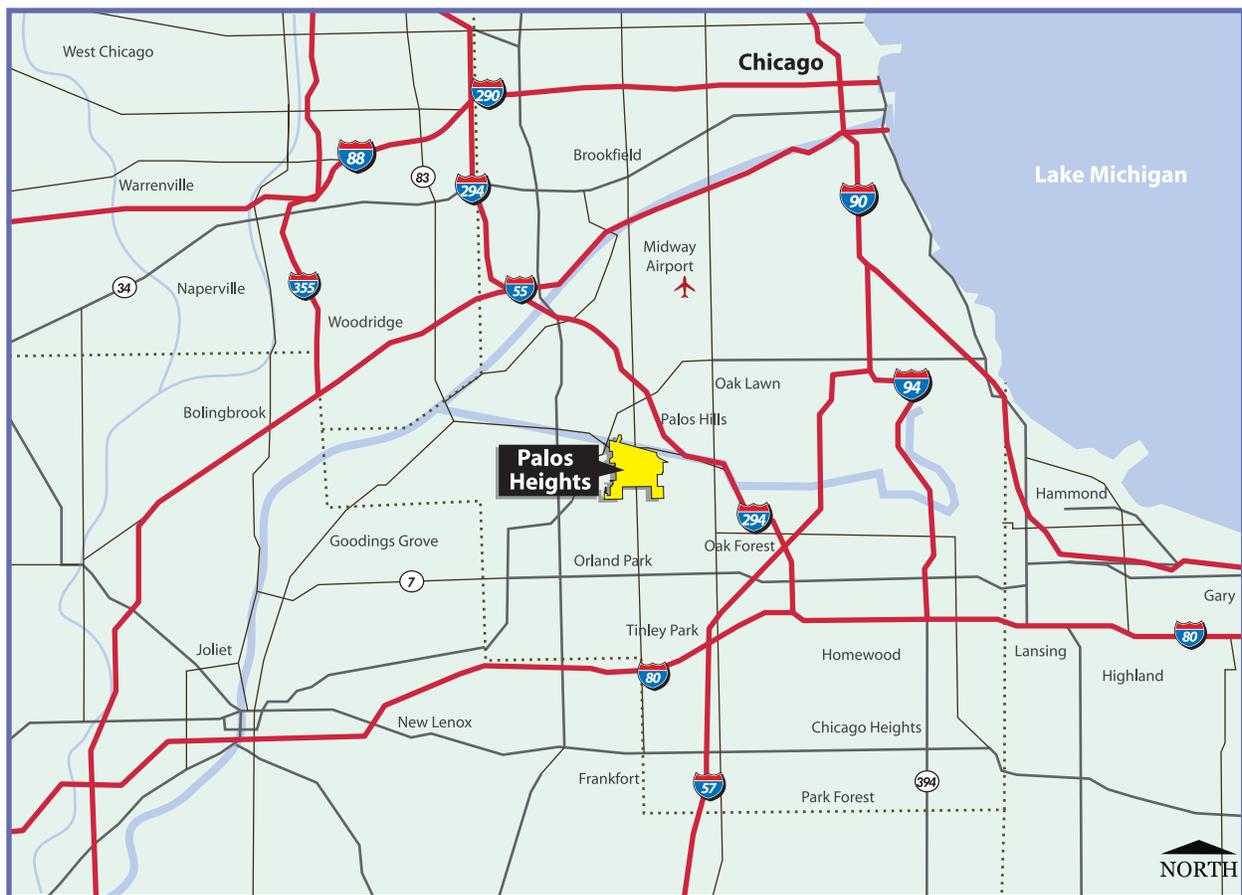


Figure 1: Community Setting



The City is located within Cook County, Illinois, approximately 26 miles south of Downtown Chicago. The City of Palos Heights is well-positioned within the Chicagoland area having excellent access to the Interstate System, two Metra Stations and Midway Airport. Being located within a short distance to these transportation routes and stations is one of the strengths of the community.

Incorporated in 1959, the City has grown to a population of 12,960, a slight increase from the City's 2000 population of 11,260.

The City includes a mix of residential, commercial, office and institutional uses. Palos Community Hospital is located in the City and is also the area's largest employer.

Commercial, retail and office uses are primarily located along Harlem Avenue, IL Route 83, 127th Street and Ridgeland Avenue.

Palos Heights also has a number of environmental features, parks and open space that add to its character. Lake Katherine Preserve is a well-known passive open space area located in the northern portion of the City.

Section Two: Community Outreach

Several community outreach activities were completed as part of the planning process. These activities were designed and used to promote community involvement and encourage citizen participation early and often in the planning process. The following community outreach activities were used:

- **Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee (CPAC) Project Initiation Workshop** – conducted at the City Hall on June 7, 2007.
- **Community Workshop #1** – conducted at the Recreation Center on July 16, 2007.
- **Key Person Interviews** – conducted at City Hall during August 21, 22, and 23, 2007.
- **On-Line Resident Questionnaire** – July to October 2007 on-line.
- **Parks and Recreation Survey** – distributed to each household in the City’s Fall 2007 Newsletter.
- **Community Visioning Workshop** – conducted at the Recreation Center on October 29, 2007.
- **Business Workshop** – held at Lake Katherine on December 6, 2007.
- **Community Workshop #3** – held on February 27, 2008 at the Recreation Center.
- **Public Open House** – held on March 13, 2008 at the City Hall.
- **Channel 4 Interview** – an interview was recorded for the local community cable channel.

Common themes heard throughout the outreach activities included:

- A desire for an improved Harlem Avenue Corridor. Improvements should include the addition of new, appropriate, commercial uses to create a cohesive commercial corridor. Specific concerns were expressed about future development for the property commonly known as the Rizza Property;
- A desire to maintain the City’s existing residential character;
- A desire to protect and improve the City’s parks and open space including environmental features and recreational amenities. Specific concerns were raised about the future of the Community Pool.

Project Initiation Meeting

As part of the planning process for completing the City’s Comprehensive Plan, the Consultant conducted a Project Initiation Workshop with members of the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee (CPAC). The Workshop was held on June 7, 2007 at City Hall. Twelve (12) CPAC members attended and participated in the Workshop. The session included a discussion of the Comprehensive Planning process and feedback from the CPAC regarding issues and opportunities in the City. The purpose of the session was to assist the Consultant Team in understanding the major issues facing the City of Palos Heights concerning the residential and commercial areas, the City’s recreational areas, transportation and infrastructure, and the community’s character.

The following is a summary of the results of the Project Initiation Workshop. The summary reflects the opinions and comments stated during the Workshop dialogue and includes a summary of participants’ responses to the Project Initiation Questionnaire.

1. Identify five (5) issues or concerns confronting the City of Palos Heights.

The CPAC is most concerned about the condition of the City's recreational facilities especially the need/desire to develop or redevelop the community pool. Currently the City pool is located on 76th Avenue near other recreational facilities such as parks, tennis courts, and baseball fields, and is in need of upgrades. The CPAC also discussed their desire for future improvements for Lake Katherine.

Another major issue for the CPAC was transportation flow and circulation within the community. The main traffic issues appeared to be focused along 127th Street and Harlem Avenue. Many would like to see these corridors redeveloped in a manner that will alleviate the current traffic congestion. Other transportation related concerns include parking problems that exist in the commercial areas of the City.

Economic development and taxes were important issues raised by the CPAC. Many would like to preserve the existing retail activity while encouraging new businesses to locate in the City. Members also discussed the importance of pursuing alternative revenue (funding) sources to pay for maintenance and new City facilities. Possible funding sources for the community pool were specifically discussed by the committee.

Other top issues and concerns mentioned include the need for infrastructure improvements. A CPAC member mentioned the need for a cell tower in the City and many members indicated the need to update other municipal facilities and infrastructure. In addition, the CPAC members mentioned community development issues including the need to redevelop the retail center and unify overall development. Members also identified the need to preserve the community's character, including the "Olde Palos", historic neighborhoods and Uptown. Issues were also raised regarding the need to improve communication between the City and residents.

2. List, in order of importance the three (3) most important issues discussed thus far.

According to the CPAC, the future of the City's community pool was the biggest issue facing Palos Heights. Many members were interested in seeing what the community's tax tolerance would be for upgrading the pool. As part of the Comprehensive Plan, a Parks and Recreation Plan will be created that evaluates future options for this recreational facility. The next most important issue as rated by the CPAC is the lack of communication with residents. Specifically, the public needs to be aware of the planning process that the City is about to undertake with this Plan. The committee stated that once the public is aware of the process, many will be educated about the needs of the City.

Other important issues noted by the CPAC included economic development; community character; development along Harlem Avenue and 127th Street; implementing the goals of the Plan; Uptown planning; land use; municipal resources; preservation and development of retail and real estate tax base; Lake Katherine; and traffic.

When asked to rank the issues in order of importance, recreational facilities related issues ranked #1, #2 and #3.

3. Identify three specific projects or actions that you would like to see undertaken within Palos Heights.

The success of this summer's pool season will most likely determine whether the pool will be open in 2008. The pool is 37 years old and is in need of additional maintenance. The Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee has listed improvements of the recreational facilities, especially the community pool, as the top project or action that should be undertaken by City. Other recreational projects should be to develop additional soccer and baseball fields in the community. Economic development and traffic improvements are the next top projects or actions that the CPAC members would like to

see undertaken. Economic development projects or actions would include the reestablishment of businesses and to create an economic development department. As mentioned earlier, there are increasing traffic concerns along 127th Street and Harlem Avenue. The CPAC members see the need to improve the two arterial routes as well as to improve pedestrian circulation.

Other projects or actions that the CPAC would like to see undertaken include: developing and improving City regulations; redeveloping 127th Street, Harlem Avenue Corridor, and Route 83; to make copies of the legal plan; and to receive assistance from a planning professional.

4. What are the Primary strengths and assets of Palos Heights?

Understanding the community's strengths and assets is an important step in the planning process to begin to create implementation steps to preserve and strengthen important attributes of the City. The top community strength and asset was identified as the City's residents. The residents of Palos Heights are stable, passionate, educated and talented.

The City of Palos Heights has a strong sense of community character and cherishes the charm of "Olde Palos". Lake Katherine is another community asset identified by the CPAC.

Additional identified strengths and assets of the City include: a responsive government, especially the Mayor, City Council, and City Administration; residential and commercial activity in the area; and excellent community facilities (schools and library).

Community Workshop

A Community Workshop was held with residents on July 16, 2007 at the City of Palos Heights Recreation Center. The workshop was conducted to obtain resident opinions, comments, and concerns about the City of Palos Heights as the City begins the Comprehensive Planning process. Approximately 60 people attended the workshop. This report provides a summary of the results of the Community Workshop. The summary reflects the opinions and comments stated during workshop dialogue and include a summary of participants' responses to the workshop questionnaire.

1. Identify five (5) issues or concerns confronting the City of Palos Heights.

Similar to the results of the project initiation workshop conducted on June 7, 2007 which involved members of the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee (CPAC), residents of Palos Heights are most concerned about the condition of the City's recreational facilities. Attendees are especially concerned about maintaining the public pool and keeping it open.

The second major issue for the residents was transportation and circulation. The residents have highlighted the need for improvements along Rt. 83, 127th Street, and Harlem Avenue. All three corridors need better pedestrian access and a more biker-friendly area. Other transportation related concerns include parking problems along Harlem Avenue, poor access to the canal, the need for more Metra train rides during the weekends and lack of stop signs in Olde Palos.

Economic development was the third issue or concern the residents mentioned the most. Residents are aware of the need for more retail and need for additional professional guidance is needed. Many residents would like to improve development of commercial properties especially the need to balance the existence of smaller and larger retail shops.

Other issues and concerns include the need for regulation changes to lessen the number of teardowns and large residential developments, improve the development review process to minimize variances, and uniformly enforce codes through out the City. Additionally, residents are concerned about developments of vacant properties especially the development of high rises in the City. Residents do not approve any development that would drastically change the character of the City.

2. List, in order of importance the three (3) most important issues discussed thus far.

The residents of Palos Heights equally agree with CPAC's decision about which is the biggest issue facing the City. The condition of the recreational facilities, which includes the pool and parks, was the most important issue discussed during the Workshop. Another important issue is the need for retail recruitment for specific corridors. The residents of Palos Heights are aware of the importance of commercial development which would provide needed tax-base revenue for the City.

Additional issues included zoning; preservation of community character and maintaining integrity and the culture of the City; Harlem Street retail and dining destinations; sidewalks and bike access; economic development; communication between administration and residents; well-planned developments; enforcement of density codes; and increase tax revenue.

When asked to rank the issues in order of importance, recreational facilities and retail recruitment ranked # 1, #2.

3. Identify three specific projects or actions that you would like to see undertaken within Palos Heights.

Residents at this meeting would prefer to save and upgrade the pool and recreational facilities rather than build a new one. Forming a park district and developing a parks and recreation plan are other projects or actions mentioned by

attendees. The top projects or actions that the residents would like to see are those related to parks and recreation.

The second and third top projects or actions that residents would like to see undertaken are regulation changes and enforcement, and commercial development. Residents feel that changing and enforcing zoning regulations would prevent building larger homes and businesses that would alter community character. Residents would also like to see façade improvement programs put in place to improve the look of buildings along Harlem Avenue. Other actions stated by attendees includes enforcing maintenance and upkeep along the rear areas of Harlem Business District.

Other projects or actions would include improving traffic and mobility; streetscape improvements; economic development actions; communication improvements; land use and infrastructure upgrades; and the City receiving professional planning advice.

4. What are the Primary strengths and assets of Palos Heights?

According to the majority of attendees, the top community strength is community character. The residents of Palos Heights are determined to keep the small rural feel of the community. Residents cherish the City's low crime rate and strong sense of community. The facilities such as schools, library, pool, police and fire departments, churches, and hospitals are also City strengths and assets.

The next top community strength and asset is the City's residents. Many admire the residents who grew up in Palos Heights and return to the City to raise their new families. The residents are friendly, have strong community involvement, and vary in ages.

Recreational and environmental features are other assets identified by attendees. This includes Lake Katherine, the mature trees throughout the City, open space, the Forest Preserve and sur-

rounding water features.

Additional strengths and assets include home and business activities; accessibility and transit; and government officials.

Key Person Interviews

Confidential interviews were conducted with key community residents, community organizations, and business owners to discuss conditions and potentials within the City. Eighteen (18) individuals who possess various interests and insights into the Palos Heights community were selected. Persons interviewed included elected and appointed officials, business owners, and educators for both public and private institutions, transit agencies, religious leaders, and residents.

Interviews were conducted on August 21, 22, and 23 2007. The interviews lasted approximately 45 minutes each. Each interviewee was asked a series of questions regarding the community. For those individuals unable to attend one of the scheduled interview dates, a phone interview was conducted instead.

Overall responses from the key person interviews are summarized below.

1. How would you define/describe the community character of Palos Heights?

Interviewees described Palos Heights as a small, friendly, middle-class, and stable community, friendly to families and business, where people have raised many generations of their family. Interviewees projected their City as having a high quality of life. They identified great access to municipal services and not a lot of “red tape” to go through to get things done. When asked why a person would choose Palos Heights as a place to live, common responses were Palos Heights location with easy access to the Chicago, Western suburbs, and less traffic than found in surrounding communities. Other reasons included: good schools, convenient shopping, nice neighborhoods, and a sense of place.

Several people mentioned the need for more recreational facilities including the need for bike paths along the riverfront which connect to existing open space networks. Another concern many discussed was the areas around Harlem Avenue. Many expressed the amount of vacant properties and outdated development in this area as an issue for generating sales tax. Many interviewees felt the city is doing a fair job, but need to address the issues around Harlem regarding redevelopment and begin focusing on generating a stronger tax base.

2. What do you believe are the primary assets and advantages of Palos Heights?

Location, small town charm, and quality of neighborhoods were cited by almost every interviewee as assets and advantages for Palos Heights. The many churches and Trinity College’s influence on volunteer work and services to the community were mentioned by many. Access to Lake Katherine and the Golf Course were discussed as great amenities, but have more potential.

Interviewees had a generally positive view of local government. Specifically, they mentioned the accessibility of City Council and their support for residents and community organizations; good communication between the City Council and businesses; and an overall stable local government.

3. What do you believe are the primary weaknesses and disadvantages of Palos Heights?

All interviewees described similar disadvantages and weaknesses of Palos Heights. These included the need for a stronger tax base, focus on economic development, address areas around Harlem, create more bike path and pedestrian connections, more recreational facilities, improve sidewalk conditions, and address pedestrian safety at major intersections.

Transportation concerns were cited by a few interviewees. Specifically, the linkages of the train need to be enhanced, along with updating

or replacing infrastructure surrounding the station. Interviewees also noted specific bridges, sidewalks, and roadways which are in poor condition. General concerns were also expressed about public safety at existing controlled intersections and the need for more controlled intersections around town.

Other concerns pertained to the development pattern and business mix within Palos Heights. Some mentioned the need to address poor housing stock as an effort to reduce teardowns. Concerns were expressed on business growth and the impact new business and redevelopment may have on the City's small town character. One interviewee stated the town will change with the attraction of new business and many residents do not want change.

4. What do you consider to be the single most important issue confronting Palos Heights today?

When asked to identify the single most important issue confronting Palos Heights, there was no consensus among interviewees. However common themes are evident including beautification, landscaping, signage, access, and traffic flow in the list of responses below.

- Economic development (draw in businesses which are not present in city)
- Proactive marketing
- Increase tax base
- Address Harlem Avenue vacancies and redevelopment opportunities
- Include residents and businesses within the Harlem Avenue Corridor in discussions on future redevelopment of this corridor.
- Maintain and or replace outdated infrastructure
- Need for younger families

- Improve pedestrian safety at controlled intersections
- Improve existing recreational facilities and add new facilities (community pool, bike paths along river)

5. If you had the power to undertake one project or improvement within Palos Heights what would it be?

When interviewees were asked what project they would undertake within Palos Heights, the list varied in specificity and scope. However, many projects addressed economic development ideas along Harlem Avenue and the addition/improvement of additional facilities. A few interviewees stated a new public pool was needed.

Many responses include redeveloping the Harlem Avenue Corridor with new commercial retailers on both sides, with a more vibrant mix of tenants and businesses which are not present in the city. One individual wanted the new development designed with a town center feel and include Trinity College in the design process. Another idea used TIF (Tax Increment Financing) for acquiring vacant properties in the corridor. Several individuals wanted to undertake improvements to the waterfront and capitalize on development and recreational opportunities similar to Naperville's and Geneva's downtowns.

6. Do you have any other comments or suggestions regarding our work on the Comprehensive Plan?

Listed below, in no particular order, are responses made by interviewees to a final open-ended question asking for any other comments or suggestions.

The streetscape should be improved and storefronts repaired. Do not widen 127th street due to safety concerns. Recreational facilities are terrible. Need to attract more young families to community. Need to develop waterfront like

Naperville and Geneva. Path and sidewalks do not link well. Paths and walks at the train station are in poor condition. Involve retailers in the community. Raised taxes in the past to balance budget as needed. Replace bad houses and allow or encourage teardowns for these properties. Incorporate Trinity College and Chicago Christian High School into comprehensive plan. Trinity College would be interested in sharing facilities with Palos Heights. Look at possibility of partnering with hospital for a healthcare facility. We can not attract new businesses and retain our rural image. Too many people don't want change. Harlem is old and tired and our biggest problem. People outside of council and staff do not understand the process.

On-Line Resident Questionnaire

From July to October 8, 2007, a community questionnaire was made available to Palos Heights residents, both online from the City's website and in hard copy. Approximately 59 responses were recorded in 6 weeks, largely from residents who have lived in Palos Heights for eleven or more years.

Respondents noted the City's residential neighborhoods as its number one strength, with schools, small town character, quality of housing, safety and security, and excellent regional location as other top strengths.

Respondents

Respondents were largely long-term residents and the majority of respondents who stated they have lived in Palos Heights for less than 10 years came from other Cook County communities. Most of the residents who moved to Palos Heights in the last 10 years were attracted most by the schools, small town character and feel, and the proximity of family.

More than half the respondents were between the ages of 35 and 54, with most others ranging from late-fifties to mid-seventies. Household size of respondents ranged from two to four people most commonly, with more than twelve percent reporting five or more people. Most residents

who are working have jobs in nearby communities and travel by automobile. Over twenty percent of respondents stated they were retired.

Almost seventy-five percent of the respondents and/or their spouses held a bachelors degree, and just over forty percent stated they obtained post graduate degrees. Questionnaire results showed that the quality of schools and neighborhoods are top priorities for families within the community.

Quality of Life and Housing

Housing quality rated well among respondents with nearly thirty percent (30%) rating the quality as excellent and another sixty-three percent (63%) rating it good. Only 5 percent rated housing quality in Palos Heights as fair and no respondents stated housing was poor.

While some respondents reported housing affordability and teardowns to be an issue for Palos Heights, over eighty percent (80%) stated that the quality of housing is getting somewhat or much better. Likewise, a majority of respondents stated their property values are increasing and most feel the neighborhoods will stay about the same in the next 5 years. Many also noted the friendliness of residents, as well as the "quiet" and feeling of safety and security of the area as benefits.

The number one weakness identified was the lack of available shopping (26%). Other weaknesses most respondents mentioned dealt with the quality of infrastructure (18%) and the lack of recreational opportunities (16%). This is consistent with other responses given when asked to rate risks on quality of life, issues facing the city, and what most residents feel are the priority needs of the community.

The most commonly perceived threats to the current quality of life in respondents' neighborhoods included the volume and speed of traffic, along with a lack of shopping. This is consistent with other responses given about what important issues are facing the city and what residents

felt are top priorities for making Palos Heights a community which better serves its residents. Other threats reported frequently included poorly maintained properties and new development.

When asked to rate facilities and services within Palos Heights, residents were mostly consistent in their responses. Facilities and services which received good overall ratings include street lighting, police protection, fire protection, water quality, sewer service, storm water drainage, snow removal, health care services, parks and open space, library services, and Lake Katherine. Areas rated fair included regional arterials/state roads, local streets, trees and landscaping on public property, cultural facilities and programs, and community meeting space. Services and facilities which need attention and were rated poor by respondents include the community pool, recreational facilities and programs, youth services, and sidewalks. There were also a number of respondents who stated they were unsure about the various cultural facilities and programs available to residents.

Future Development

Much of the questionnaire responses focused on community facilities and services rather than on specific development areas or types. Respondents were asked how important attraction of new commercial (retail, service, or office) businesses was for the City of Palos Heights. Seventy-six percent (76%) stated it is very important, while twenty percent (20%) stated it is somewhat important. Future industrial business received low support with forty-four percent (44%) stating new industrial development is not important and another thirty-five percent (35%) noting it is somewhat important.

Respondents were then asked what types of future developments they did not want to see within Palos Heights. Almost seventy-two percent (72%) of respondents do not want to see apartments. Additionally, industry (56%), condominiums (37%), and senior housing options (48%) were also top responses. It is surprising

that almost half of respondents did not want to see housing for seniors, especially given the demographics of the community. Replies indicate strong support for the attraction of new and diverse commercial businesses and support for continued single-family development.

When asked in what ways future commercial success can be achieved, seventy-four percent (74%) stated attraction of more diverse retail, sixty-six percent (66%) stated more attractive commercial development, and fifty-two (52%) said more entertainment and dining establishments will ensure success. Some respondents stated they would like to see the city utilize the riverfront as a development catalyst for attracting more development. A couple respondents also wanted to see mixed-use riverfront development which incorporates more trails and recreational facilities.

Concerns about new commercial development included the impact on existing traffic issues, convenient parking, as well as compatibility with nearby neighborhoods and character of the area. As seen throughout the survey, preservation of Palos Heights single-family neighborhoods and encouragement for continued single-family development and infill housing is most desired.

Parks and Recreation Survey

In the summer of 2007, the City of Palos Heights conducted a community wide survey focused on Parks and Recreation. Each household was mailed a survey in the City's fall newsletter.

The results of this survey will be extremely useful in assisting the City in future planning for parks and recreation in the community. A fundamental question at the outset of a survey research project is how many observations are needed in a sample so generalizations can be made about the entire population. Based upon the sample size 5,942 households, 385 surveys were needed to achieve the desired accuracy. The actual number of returned surveys (451) provides a scientifically valid sample, and affords a 95%

confidence in the responses with a confidence interval of 5%. To further explain, as an example, if 65% of respondents answered that they are in favor of more trails, we are 95% confident that the true number would fall between 60% and 70%. However, it should be noted that by mere chance alone, some differences between a sample and the population from which it is drawn must always be expected to exist.

A copy of the survey and the results are on file with the City. The following are the key results of the Survey for the creation of this Comprehensive Plan:

Parks and Facilities

In Question 8, respondents were asked how frequently they used City parks or recreational facilities during the past year. Respondents stated that those members of the households ages 5 and under, 6 to 11, and 31 to 54 used parks and facilities most frequently.

The top five parks and recreational facilities cited as being most needed by respondents (in order) included:

- Walking/Biking Trails
- Community Parks
- A Recreation Center
- Neighborhood Parks
- A Fitness Center

When asked what was not needed, respondents stated the following facilities were the least needed (in order):

- Skate Park
- Dog Park
- Football/Lacrosse Field
- Golf Course

Currently the need for community parks, nature centers, and trails are being met. On the other hand, the need for a fitness center, indoor swimming, and outdoor ice skating are needs most identified as those which are not being met.

When asked to select the top three recreational facilities needed most in order of importance, respondents selected the following facilities at their top three facilities:

Top First Choice Selections:

Outdoor swimming, Recreation Center, Walking/biking trails

Top Second Choice Selections:

Recreation Center, Outdoor swimming, Fitness Center

Top Third Choice Selections:

Recreation Center, Fitness Center, Waling/biking trails

Level of Satisfaction

Question 14 of the Survey was designed to rate respondents' level of satisfaction with park and recreation services as well as their opinion of tax dollars.

More Parks

Respondents did not feel that there was a need for acquiring new parks in the community. Most were neutral (32.1%) or completely disagreed (29.4%) with acquiring new parks. It is also interesting to note that of the six questions in this category that the highest number of "strongly disagree" selections were made for this question.

Improve Existing Parks

Most agreed that the City should improve existing parks. 21.1% strongly agreed and 36.5% agreed with improving existing City parks. Only 4.1% felt strongly that existing parks should not be improved.

Expand Lake Katherine

Most (44%) answered that they had an interest in seeing Lake Katherine Nature Preserve expanded, while 25% were neutral and 30% were not interested in seeing it expanded.

More Walking/Biking Trails

Respondents stated that they would like to see more walking and bike trails constructed. 53% agreed that the City should create more walking/biking trails, while 24% were neutral, and 22% were not interested in the City creating more trails.

Future Interests

In Question 15, respondents were asked to rate their future interests for parks and recreation in the City. There was a strong future interest in providing bike trails and walking paths, a recreation center, and swimming. Respondents were then asked to rank their top three future interests, which are listed below in order:

- Recreation Center
- Bike Trails and Walking Paths
- Swimming Pool

Major Projects

Question 16 of the Survey asked respondents about major projects that would most likely require a referendum to be constructed. Six specific questions (16.A through 16.F) were asked to gauge respondents' attitude for major projects.

16.A – Renovate the existing Pool

Respondents were closely split regarding whether the community pool should be renovated. 44% of respondents agreed with renovation, while 14% were neutral, and 40% disagreed with renovation.

16.B – Build a new Community Pool

When asked if they would support building a

brand new community pool, respondents were also very closely split. 43% of respondents agreed with building a new pool, while 15% were neutral, and 41% disagreed with building a new pool.

16.C. – Develop an indoor recreation center for all ages which may include a variety of space and activities

The majority of respondents (64%), and the highest number of "strongly agree" responses in this section agreed with developing a new indoor recreation center for all age users and may include a variety of space and activities. 14% of respondents were neutral and 21% were against development of another indoor recreation center.

16.D. – Develop a Teen Center

41% of respondents would like to see a Teen Center developed, while 33% were neutral and 25% disagreed with a new Teen Center.

16.E. – Develop a Senior Center

A similar number of respondents (41%) agreed that they would like to see a Senior Center developed, while 36% were neutral, and 21% were against the development of a Senior Center.

16.F. – Not Plan any major projects during the next five years

Only 21% were against major projects and 18% were neutral. It is clear from the responses, that most (60%) support the City continuing to plan major projects during the next five years.

Highest Priority Project

Of the six actions listed and discussed above (Questions 16.A through 16.F), respondents were asked in Question 17 to select what actions should receive the highest priority. The following are the potential parks and recreation actions listed in order of priority:

- Develop an indoor recreation center for all ages, which may include a variety of space and activities. (35% of respondents)
- Renovate the existing outdoor Community Pool (22%)
- Build a new Community Pool (21%)
- Not Plan any major projects during the next five years (10%)
- Develop a Senior Center (7%)
- Develop a Teen Center (3%)

The majority of respondents stated future development of an indoor recreation center for all ages should be the City's highest priority. The next most frequent response was to renovate the existing pool and the third highest response was to build a new community pool, indicating that the respondents were closely split over building a new recreation center or renovating the existing recreation and pool facility.

Potential Tax Increase

In Question 18, respondents were asked if they supported a tax increase in order to develop, operate and maintain the highest priority project that they selected. The majority of respondents (64.2%) indicated they would support a tax increase. Only 29.7% responded that they would not support a tax increase with 6.24% stating a tax increase did not apply to them because they did not want any new developments.

Question 19, the final question of the survey, asked respondents what they would consider an acceptable annual tax increase for their house-

hold. 26.23% of respondents did not favor a tax increase, while the remaining 73% varied in their amount of acceptable annual tax increase. Most who supported a tax increase, selected an increase of up to \$100 per year (26.4%).

Of the 286 respondents supporting small to large tax increases, 115 (40%) selected an All Ages Recreation Center as their top priority; 73 (26%) selected Build a New Pool; and 58 (20%) selected Renovate Existing Pool. Therefore, 246 (85%) tax increase supporters desire either pool facilities or a Recreation Center. Additionally, there were 354 respondents with a high priority project in Question 17, but only 286 respondents who would support any tax increase in Question 19, leaving 68 respondents who did not want to pay for their favorite project. Also, 66 individuals did not respond regarding their level of support for a tax increase in Question 19. Of these only 4 answered on Question 18 that they were willing to support a tax increase to support the top priority. Similarly, of those who did not respond to Question 19, most answered they would not support a tax increase on Question 18.

Business Workshop

A Business Workshop was held to solicit business owners and managers input on a range of community issues and concerns. The Business Workshop was conducted with business owners and managers at the Lake Katherine Club House at 8am on Thursday, December 6, 2007. Nineteen (19) people attended and participated in the workshop. Community outreach efforts, such as this workshop, provide important insight on local issues, concerns and opinions.

This report provides a summary of the results of the Business Workshop. The summary reflects the opinions and comments stated during the workshop, and includes a summary of participants' responses to the workshop questionnaire.

1. Identify five (5) issues or concerns confronting businesses in the City of Palos Heights.

Business owners and managers that attended the workshop shared many of the same issues and concerns. Issues and concerns cited most frequently included the need to lower taxes for businesses. Participants added that there was concern about the seemingly increasing number of vacancies in the commercial areas of the City, while at the same time, the cost of renting space in the City continues to increase.

Traffic and circulation issues are concerns for many business owners. Many discussed the need to improve the efficiency and appearance of existing parking areas. Parking lot lighting and landscaping improvements were discussed as potential actions to improve the current situation. Businesses also cited the importance of improving both vehicular and pedestrian circulation in the commercial areas. Noted circulation issues included the need to eliminate one-way access into businesses, the need to lower the speed limit along Harlem Avenue, and the desire to install more signalized intersections along Harlem Avenue.

Businesses were also concerned about current marketing efforts for the area. Attendees discussed the need for the City to create and market an image that will strengthen existing businesses and attract new customers and businesses. Some business owners stated they would like to see more of a variety of businesses locate in the City, including a new national anchor store. Businesses felt that it would be difficult for the City to attract a national tenant, however, if the City did succeed that it would be an economic boost for the entire business community.

Attendees wanted to see more businesses actively participate in the Chamber of Commerce. Many suggested that the Chamber improve its marketing of events and benefits offered to businesses. Attendees would also like to see the City continue to promote and host community events that attract outside customers such as the art fair, and the craft fair. Southside businesses

stated that they would like to have the City work to improve their connectivity to the rest of the commercial areas and the community.

Businesses discussed the importance of completing a long range, master plan for the commercial areas of the City. Land use issues such as the current residential properties abutting Harlem Avenue were discussed. The desire to create an inviting business environment that attracts people to spend the day shopping and dining in the City was also mentioned by many businesses. Many described the future of the commercial areas in the City as being pedestrian-friendly.

The appearance of the City's commercial areas was mentioned as an important issue. To improve the look of the area, businesses suggested the creation of an improved sign ordinance, a Citywide streetscape improvement program, and a façade improvement program. Businesses would like to see what façade improvement programs are possible to encourage and assist with building upgrades. Once identified, businesses asked that the City work with them to apply for, and implement these programs.

2. List, in order of importance, the three (3) most important issues discussed thus far.

Although many of the issues noted in the previous question were shared by most of the attendees, three areas of concern were cited most often. Businesses were most concerned about business taxes, transportation and circulation (both vehicular and pedestrian), and the poor appearance, image, and identity of the commercial areas of the City.

3. What are the three (3) most important things the City can do to improve the business climate in the City?

According to business owners and managers, the City can improve the business climate by undertaking a number of specific programs and actions. Cited most often was the lowering of taxes and the creation of tax incentive assistance programs. A façade improvement program to

improve the appearance of buildings in the commercial areas was one such program that was noted most often. Businesses would also like to see the City improve its marketing of existing businesses, and improve its programs to attract new businesses to the area. Businesses located in the southern section of the City would like the City to improve their visibility and importance with the rest of the community. Attendees discussed the potential to market the City as a “college town” to improve its image as a destination. Another suggestion was to improve and speed up the development review process. An improved review process would encourage development, while at the same time, enforce existing codes and ordinances. Businesses also would like to see the speed limit along Harlem Avenue decreased, and the parking situation improved along Harlem Avenue with a potential municipal parking structure.

4. What are the primary strengths and assets of Palos Heights?

Overall, businesses were generally pleased with the City’s current climate and potential. Businesses noted that a primary strength of the City is its excellent location in the region. The City’s proximity to the regional transportation network and its location near a number of other suburbs were also cited as strengths. Attendees noted that the good traffic flow through the commercial corridors was also an asset for businesses.

Residents are also a primary strength of Palos Heights. Businesses described residents as being loyal customers. Demographic analysis that describes residents as being well-educated, with good incomes.

Overall, attendees described the community as having a small-town charm that was a safe place to raise a family. A number of community facilities were also noted as being assets of the City. These facilities included the College, the hospital, the school system, Lake Katherine, and the many religious institutions.

Visioning Workshop

A Visioning Workshop was held to solicit residents’ input on a range of community issues and concerns in order to create a shared Vision for the community. The Visioning Workshop was conducted with the public on October 22, 2007 at the Palos Heights Recreation Center at 6601 W. 127th Street. Approximately fifty (50) people attended the workshop.

The Visioning Session involved the Consultant Team, the CPAC, elected officials, and members of the community. The session included both large group and small group working sessions which reviewed and discussed conditions and potentials within the City. The large group worked together to identify issues and opportunities, and the small “breakout” groups worked together to develop “visions” for the future of the community. The Workshop concluded with general agreement regarding the long-term role and character of Palos Heights and the projects and improvements that will be desirable in the future.

Workshop Session

Following a brief discussion of the Comprehensive Planning process, the participants were asked to answer and discuss, as a group, the following three questions:

1. What are three new private-sector projects or developments you would like to see undertaken?
2. What are three new public-sector projects or developments you would like to see undertaken?
3. What would you not like to see take place in Palos Heights in the next 10-15 years?

Many workshop attendees commented on the need for a commercial retail development on the Rizza Property, which will enhance the north gateway. Several responses also called for specialty destination shopping and entertainment uses which will draw in residents from

neighboring communities and also provide convenient family entertainment for Palos Heights residents. Many stated that they had to travel to Orland Park for these experiences. Residents stated they would like to see Palos Heights attract a large book retailer, specialty grocers, clothing stores, and a specialty cinema or entertainment venue (i.e.: Hollywood Blvd Theater, Laser Tag).

Attendees also discussed their desire for 100% retail at the Rizza Property including a potential art cinema theater and specialty food shops. Companies such as Whole Foods or Trader Joe's were named specifically. Comments were also expressed that such a grocer would be a welcome site to the Rizza Property.

Update Harlem Avenue Commercial Corridor Businesses

From the many responses about future mixed-use and commercial developments along the Harlem Avenue Corridor, many residents stated they want to see future development and improvements to existing businesses adding to an aesthetic cohesiveness along Harlem Avenue. Participants also stated that this will help define the Corridor and create a more town center feel which is a goal stated by many. Similarly, respondents wanted to see redevelopment of the Rizza property consist of structures with a mixed-use town center quality with the goal of improving the appearance of the north gateway into the Harlem Avenue Corridor. By designing the development in a more traditional manner similar to town center concepts built elsewhere, the City can use the Rizza property as the catalyst and model for future Harlem Corridor redevelopment.

Accessibility/Design on Harlem

Mobility of many aging residents has created concerns about accessibility to many existing retail and offices within the Harlem Avenue Corridor. Several workshop attendees want to see future streetscape and storefront improvements incorporate barrier free designs, thus eliminating access issues from parking areas and sidewalks.

Ridgeland/127th Street Commercial Opportunities

This area has the potential for infill and new commercial development as part of a southern gateway enhancement. Many residents spoke about the need to improve the properties located at this intersection and also promote re-development of certain sites which are currently limiting the potential of the area.

Consolidate multiple medical office uses for convenience

Several residents expressed concern over the scattering of professional medical offices. They wanted to see these offices clustered into one or two professional office centers, possibly in locations where the existing hospital or heart treatment center are located.

Other responses for this question are listed below:

- Improved parking on Harlem Avenue
- Eliminate flashing signs
- No more sit down restaurants
- 127th/Harlem Avenue – Expand Jewel (new or redevelop)
- More parking at the local Jewel
- Incorporate Cal Sag Channel into developments
- Revisit Harlem Corridor Yas Plan

List three new public projects or improvements you would like to see undertaken within Palos Heights.

The top private-sector projects or developments responses were:

New/Updated Recreation Center

Many participants placed recreation center improvements or new construction of public recreational facilities as a top priority in the

community. Many residents want to see an overhaul to the existing pool or construction of a new pool, possibly in an enclosed environment allowing year-round use. Some concerns were expressed regarding subsidized funding for existing recreational programs and facilities to keep them operating. A financial plan and funding generators making new and existing facilities run independently were mentioned as goals for the City. Some participants stated that a new recreation center would be desirable with dedicated programmable areas for seniors. Participants also stated that there be a separate or alternate concession access outside of the pool at the existing building.

Other Recreation Facilities

Participants also discussed the need for other recreational improvements. Other facilities mentioned included: skating (ice/inline), and more outdoor parks (new park needed off 127th). Community Park was cited most often as the park where these improvements should be constructed.

New Municipal Buildings

Participants stated the need for the construction of a new City Hall to replace the current, outdated facility. A new “civic campus” consisting of a City Hall, Recreation Center, and Public Works adjacent to Community Park was mentioned by participants.

Lake Katherine Improvements

Several concerns addressed the condition of Lake Katherine. Mentioned repeatedly as a jewel of the community, residents want to see improvements to the condition of walkways, recreational facilities, and promotion of this nature preserve. Several residents noted that any future development on the Rizza property should acknowledge the nature preserve to the west and include a path component which ties into Lake Katherine. Likewise, future pedestrian linkages and improvements to the Harlem Avenue Corridor should link directly to the Cal-Sag Trail. Some participants stated that the only development on the Rizza property should be a trail.

Some residents expressed concern over the water quality and edges of the lake. They would like to see the City make efforts in establishing and maintaining the edges with vegetation to prevent erosion and increase wildlife habitat. Some mentioned the need to clean up Lake Katherine and the paths surrounding it. Others mentioned the need to improve the eastern preserve area of Lake Katherine.

Infrastructure

Infrastructure improvements were among the top concerns for Palos Heights residents. Infrastructure issues ranged from stormwater management to intersection improvements for pedestrian and vehicular safety. Most of the infrastructure concerns dealt with specific locations in the City. Most of the major intersections were discussed citing traffic control, lighting, and crosswalk issues. Another comment residents brought up concerned the need for more bypass lanes on main roads for increased traffic flow. Many participants also expressed the desire to bury overhead power and phone lines. Some attendees stated their quality of service with Commonwealth Edison and other utilities have been an issue. Residents expressed concerns about junction boxes hindering sight lines at intersections and the need for adequate screening for utility junctions located near residences and commercial properties. Additional infrastructure issues discussed included: to pursue multiple service providers for cable and internet; the quantity of cellular signal towers around Community Park; the need for improved utility infrastructure within the Harlem Avenue Corridor; new parking facilities or deck in Uptown; improved stormwater management and drainage; and, improve the intersection of IL Route 83 and Harlem Avenue.

Trinity College Improvements

Some residents wanted to see the City and Trinity College complete their goal of a large sports field complex which will also be available for resident use. Given the location of the College within the Olde Palos Neighborhood, such a facility would be easily accessible for families.

There is also the possibility of tying the area into future pedestrian improvements given the creek and open space to the south. Continuing educational facilities or access to courses targeted for adults and seniors at Trinity College was suggested by workshop attendees.

Walkways/sidewalks

Participants stated the need for continuous walkways and sidewalks throughout the community. Some stated that Trinity College to Harlem Avenue needs lighted walkways along Route 83. Some mentioned the desire for curbs and sidewalks on all streets. Participants also discussed the need to define pedestrian crosswalks.

Teardowns

Another topic discussed extensively was residential teardowns within the City. Many residents want to see more regulation and review of proposed teardowns, specifically within the Old Palos Neighborhood where older homes retain similar setbacks, rooflines, building heights, architectural characteristics, and scale. Attendees want to see guidelines and regulations in place addressing these concerns in an effort to preserve the character of the neighborhoods, but continue to allow infill housing. Most residents stated the reason Palos Heights is such a desirable place to live and most families return to the City is due to the character and friendliness of its neighborhoods. Addressing teardowns proactively will help preserve these main attractions of the City while allowing residential infill development.

Other responses for this question are listed below:

- More information on City website about meetings, councils
- Leaf vacuum truck service

What would you not like to see take place within Palos Heights in the next 10-15 years?

The following are the top five projects that par-

ticipants would not like to see take place within Palos Heights within the next 10-15 years:

- Senior Housing (including assisted living) at the Rizza Property
- Tall Buildings (responses varied between no buildings over 2 stories, over 3 stories, over 4 stories, over 45', and homes over 35')
- Flashing, moving, or LED signs
- Banks
- Medical buildings

The following is a complete listing of the remaining unwanted items that participants noted in their questionnaires. Individual respondents also stated that they do not want/do not support:

- Changing small town character
- Loss of trees
- Rental units/apartments
- Teardowns
- Bankruptcy of the city
- Close the pool
- Neighborhood sidewalks
- Things remaining the same
- Traffic
- Merger with bordering towns
- Bars
- Big box retail
- Burying of utility lines
- Limiting of developers

- Loss of funds at Lake Katherine
- Homogenized commercial strip down Harlem
- The existing tree ordinance
- Upgrading the pool without doing other rec. upgrades first
- Encroachment on Forest Preserves
- Non-retail space along Harlem
- Government spending without accountability
- Lot size reduction
- Low income housing
- Lower speed on Harlem
- New City Hall
- Not for Profit Housing
- Office space
- Overdevelopment
- Private fishing derbies on Lake Katherine
- PUD Zoning
- Homes with less than 25' rear yard setbacks
- Restaurants
- Buses in neighborhoods
- Street lights
- Subdivision of City
- Sale of City owned property
- TIFs
- Ugly progress

Workshop Discussions

Following the larger group discussions, the participants were divided into seven small working groups. Each group was asked to describe the City of Palos Heights as they hoped it would be in the year 2018. After developing their Vision for the City, each group presented its vision to the larger group.

Group One: Written Statement

The following is a summary of the Vision for Palos Heights that Group One created and presented to the larger group:

- Sidewalks throughout the City.
- Multi purpose site for City Hall, Community Room, Multipurpose room.
- Improve lighting in Community Park.
- North Pointe – develop the property and up and running.
- Walgreens on east side and improve commercial area.
- Uptown/ Harlem Avenue – Family and Community uses.
- “European fountain” for gathering, to enhance an entertainment area near Ben Franklin Store.
- Lighting at gateways.
- Low voltage lighting throughout community – safety, not too much light pollution.
- Cal Sag cruises, marina, public landing, restaurants.
- Bus service for both sides of town (currently bus routes stop at Harlem).
- Gateway signs.

Group Two: Written Statement

The following is a summary of the Vision for Palos Heights that Group Two created and presented to the larger group:

- Generally agrees with Group 1.
- Move public works from existing site (to MWRD property?).
- New City Hall; park; pool; parking; multiuse recreation center.
- Stormsewers/Bury electric.
- Rizza Property – family entertainment, bowling, for young people.
- Uniform/Unified streetscape appearance, unique look for the community (like Oak Lawn 95th).
- Pedestrian-friendly to attract/keep business, charming look (Flossmoor?).
- Expand the existing Jewel grocery store.
- Town Square (Like the Harlem Avenue – YAS Plan)

Group Three: Written Statement

The following is a summary of the Vision for Palos Heights that Group Three created and presented to the larger group:

- Complete Southwest Highway & College Drive.
- Rizza Property – tie to Lake Katherine.
- Trinity College / City partnership for the Recreation Center; multi-purpose room.
- Stone Church/Walgreens – commercial redevelopment.
- North of Stone Church and Walgreens residential infill/redevelopment.
- Existing Recreation Center – should acquire more open space.



Group Four: Written Statement

The following is a summary of the Vision for Palos Heights that Group Four created and presented to the larger group:

- Include Metra, Hospital, 127th, commercial areas in the Plan.
- Arterial entrances – show pride; Southwest highway – trees are too small.
- Open Space focus.
- Passive parks - open space, views.
- Yas Plan – open space, parks, theater; art; water as shown on the Plan.
- Natural Creek – incorporate back into the City with paths.

Group Five: Written Statement

The following is a summary of the Vision for Palos Heights that Group Five created and presented to the larger group:

- IL Route 83, 127th, and South Ridgeland – Boulevard effect – add more trees.
- Harlem Avenue – improved, redress buildings.
- 123rd and Harlem – purchase four corners and open up for coordinated development.
- An architectural feature for Harlem at 123rd (like Frankfort bridge).
- 127th drainage area – highway improved, rural look maintain, throughout town, but remove drainage ditches.
- Open an artery east Jewel to get to strip mall and condos.
- Rizza Property – City purchase?



Group Six: Written Statement

The following is a summary of the Vision for Palos Heights that Group Six created and presented to the larger group:

- Use best management practices for stormwater.
- Turn lanes added at 127th; remove guard rails (and ditches).
- North of Cal Sag (Ridgeland to Harlem) add a multiuse development (business/office/residential/open space).
- Use mixed use concepts – residential and retail.
- Yas Plan– bridge to 131st – mega Jewel and park district.
- Tree canopy – protect, maintain, database.

Group Seven: Written Statement

The following is a summary of the Vision for Palos Heights that Group Seven created and presented to the larger group:

- Character of premiere residential southwest community.
- Utility lines buried.
- Sidewalks along all major arterials.
- Well maintained quality homes, charming character, innovative landscaping, active collaborative home owners associations.
- Maintain tree city; upgrade all parks; new parks added.
- New recreation complex/pool winter sports too (four season).
- Commercial – multi-use, mixed use, multi level, 2 stories.
- Landscape the corridors.
- Eastern Preserve is now functional with multi-use passive recreation, path native plants.
- New city hall
- Coordinated development on both sides of Harlem near Tiffany
- City bus service
- Walking paths throughout town
- Trails surrounding and traversing city
- Charming homes

Section Three: Vision, Goals & Objectives

The Vision Statement is intended to be a retrospective that chronicles the accomplishments and achievements that have been undertaken in the City of Palos Heights since the Comprehensive Plan was completed in 2008.

The Vision Statement incorporates the main ideas and recurring themes discussed at the Visioning workshop, and includes input from previously held workshops, interviews, questionnaires, and surveys.

The Vision Statement provides a foundation for the goals, objectives, policies, and recommendations contained in the Comprehensive Plan.

Vision Statement

Since the City of Palos Heights Comprehensive Plan was completed 10 years ago, considerable change has occurred, yet, the small-town character and charm of the community has been strengthened. The City has achieved a healthy balance of new commercial redevelopment and improvements to its commercial corridors. Many of the existing residential neighborhoods have experienced new residential homes that are appropriately scaled and blend in with the neighborhoods. Existing parks and open space has been improved and new recreational facilities have been constructed. The vehicular traffic problems moving through the City have been alleviated and public transit service is provided throughout the City. A mix of uses thrives in the revitalized Harlem Avenue Corridor, and the City's overall image has been greatly improved.



IN THE YEAR 2018...

The City of Palos Heights continues to be an excellent community to live, work and play. Many new improvements have occurred since 2008. At key locations along Harlem Avenue, College Drive (IL Route 83), 127th Street, and South Ridgeland Avenue gateway signage has been installed. Gateways include signage, decorative lighting, and landscaping that announces to visitors that they have entered Palos Heights. This has added to the character of the community and assists the City in setting itself apart from neighboring communities. The City also holds several community events and festivals each year that bring the community together. The Summer Concerts Series, the Classic Car Show, and the July 4th Parade are examples of the City's popular events.

The new City Hall and Recreation Center have created a new civic campus for the community in the area of the old City Hall. The new City Hall has a more efficient layout for the administration offices and larger community meeting space including a larger City Council Meeting Room. Public Works is part of the Civic Campus and the improved screening and buffering has allowed the public works operations to continue at its existing location without negative effects to the new facilities. The new Recreation Center includes recreational programming space and community meeting space for all ages with special areas geared towards seniors and teens. The new swimming pool which replaced the outdoor pool, is located within the Civic Campus area at Community Park and has been a tremendous success.

All parks within the community have been improved based upon community input using mostly alternative funding sources such as grants. Community Park has been improved with a more efficient layout which has allowed for better use of the space. Community Park has seen new development including recreational amenities desired by residents, such as outdoor skating, and improved athletic field and pedestrian path lighting.

Residential properties throughout the City are attractive, sought-after properties. Although the City is still a predominately single-family detached community, a variety of residential types have been added including high-end condominiums and senior housing. New single-family developments in existing neighborhoods, such as Olde Palos, consist of attractive architecture, high-quality materials, which are appropriately scaled to maintain the character of the neighborhood. Seniors that have raised their families in the community have moved into the new senior housing developments in the City. Young professionals have also moved into the City, attracted to the area by new condominium development that have been strategically located within the community.

Harlem Avenue is the shopping destination for the community. Existing business have completed façade improvements, increased landscaping, and parking efficiency improvements. Shared parking areas and a minimization in the number of curb cuts along Harlem Avenue has increased the pedestrian-friendly shopping potential and improved traffic flow through the Corridor. A landscaped median has been installed only at key locations within the Corridor which has improved the look of the area, while still providing for access and turning movements into businesses. Private landowners have consolidated parcels to allow for larger master planned developments. The southeast corner of 127th Street and Harlem has been redeveloped into a model site. No longer are commercial uses hidden behind other buildings, without direct access, with buildings separated by large parking areas. In and around this central portion of the Harlem Avenue Corridor, all developments now include better pedestrian connections, landscaping and improved architecture which creates a pedestrian friendly feel. New streetscaping includes benches, pedestrian scaled lighting, banners, landscaping, street trees, wayfinding signage, and other pedestrian amenities. At the north end of the Corridor, the Rizza property has been developed into a mix of uses with a focus on retail and commercial uses. The property is now an attractive and exciting entrance into the community.

Lake Katherine Preserve continues to be the jewel of the City. Attendance and usage at the Preserve continue and it's reputation as the jewel of the City is solid. Due to the tremendous success of the new development along Harlem Avenue and successful negotiations with the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District, property along the Cal-Sag is now planned to be transformed into an exciting recreational area. Future developments to the area include a boating marina, walking paths and open space, which connects, to the eastern extension of the Lake Katherine Preserve.

Planned infrastructure improvements continue in the City based upon a Capital Improvements Plan (CIP). The City works with property owners and utility companies to better locate their utilities. The City plans ahead with utility companies to better locate utility boxes and overhead utility lines along the commercial corridors as new development occurs. The open drainage ditches along 127th Street have been replaced with storm sewers which has improved storm-water controls. Sidewalks have also been installed along the arterial streets and commercial corridors in the City which provides pedestrian and bicycle connections between community facilities, schools, parks, and shopping opportunities. At major intersections throughout the City pedestrian crossing improvements have been implemented. Improved lighting, a variety of pavement materials, and signage has improved pedestrian and vehicular safety at the pedestrian crossings. Lowering the speed limit along Harlem Avenue has improved the pedestrian and vehicular safety and circulation in the area.

Public transit has increased its service in Palos Heights to include improved Pace and Metra services. Pace Buses now provide connections throughout the entire community. These buses connect residents with community facilities, shopping areas, the Metra Stations, and Palos Community Hospital. The City's trail system continues to be a popular route for many pedestrians and cyclists in the community and has grown to include new on and off-street connections. The City's trail network connects to the

Cal-Sag Recreational Trail which continues to be built through several adjacent communities. The population increase of the City and the surrounding communities has led Metra to increase the frequency of its train service into Chicago, which now includes weekend service from the Palos Heights Metra Station. This increased service has also encouraged more young professionals and younger families to move into Palos Heights.

Through all of the improvements that have occurred in the City since 2008, the City still maintains its small town charm and character. This unique charm and character continues to be one of the community's greatest strengths.

Goals & Objectives

Together, the goals and objectives paint a picture of what Palos Heights wants to accomplish with its Comprehensive Plan and with other development tools and ordinances. They provide direction and serve as a guide for evaluating specific projects and land use alternatives.

Goals describe desired results toward which planning efforts should be directed. They are broad and long-range. They represent an end to be sought, although they may never actually be fully attained.

Objectives describe more specific actions that should be undertaken in order to advance toward the overall goals. They provide more precise and measurable guidelines for planning action.

The goals and objectives presented below are based on input from City staff, community workshops, key person interviews, and from feedback and discussions at various public meetings.

The goals and objectives have been categorized into the following topics:

- City Image and Identity;
- Community Facilities & Services;
- Residential Neighborhoods;
- Commercial Areas;
- Transportation & Circulation;
- Recreation, Open Space
- Intergovernmental & Organizational Cooperation;
- Fiscal & Economic Development; and
- Administration
- City Image & Identity

City Image & Identity

Goal

Improve the community's image through public and private improvements which enhance various physical features of the community and which brings the community together as a whole.

Objectives

- Improve the image and appearance of all existing commercial areas, with particular emphasis on the appearance of buildings, signage, site landscaping, and streetscape amenities.
- Establish gateway or entry features at key locations to "announce" arrival into Palos Heights and distinguish the City from neighboring communities and to improve the City's image for motorists entering into and passing through the City.
- Improve and maintain an attractive appearance for all areas of the City.
- Encourage compatible and high-quality design and construction for all developments, with an emphasis on quality site design, building orientation, architecture, building materials, and site improvements.
- Maintain consistent and high quality improvement of all public streets, parkways, sidewalks, and other visible municipal infrastructure.
- Develop and implement landscaping and tree planting and maintenance programs that beautify the residential and business areas.
- Implement a program to screen fixed utility locations.
- Develop a program to bury utility lines along commercial corridors.
- Promote Lake Katherine Preserve, City activities and events, and explore opportunities to

approach tourism on a regional level.

- Develop programs and events such as community festivals (i.e.: Classic Car Event, Summer Concerts, and July 4th Parade) to bring the community together and create a sense of unity for City residents.

Community Facilities & Services

Goal

Ensure the provision of high-quality public services, including municipal, educational, recreational, and health facilities, for all residents of the community.

Objectives

- Ensure an adequate level of fire and police protection throughout the City.
- Maintain adequate sites for the City Hall, Police Station, Public Works, Fire Station(s) and other City facilities including recreational facilities; constructing, renovating, and relocating facilities when necessary.
- Improve and expand specialized facilities and services for senior citizens and youths.
- Improve coordination and communication between the City, Worth and Palos Townships, Cook County, School Districts, Trinity College, Library, Cook County Forest Preserve and neighboring communities to maximize the mutually beneficial assets these institutions can provide each other and the residents.

Residential Neighborhoods

Goal 1

Provide a diverse housing inventory and living environment which supports the local population of the City.

Objectives

- Maintain and enhance the predominant single-family character of the City.
- Encourage growth consistent with the density and intensity that provides the City's present character.
- Ensure the City's senior citizens have quality housing options.
- Promote appropriate condominium development as part of a new commercial/mixed-use areas within the Harlem Avenue Corridor.
- Promote the economic importance of the diversity of the City's housing stock and work to ensure neighborhood stability in all areas of the City.

Goal 2

Maintain attractive and safe housing that reflects the desired character of the community.

Objectives

- Protect residential areas from encroachment by incompatible land uses and the adverse impacts of adjacent activities.
- Strictly enforce all building, zoning and fire codes.
- Encourage the use of attractive architectural design and landscaping in all neighborhoods.
- Encourage new development and infill development/redevelopment which are complementary to the scale and character of surrounding residential uses.
- Preserve sound existing housing through

regular and active code enforcement and preventative maintenance programming.

Commercial Areas

Goal 1

Achieve a compatible and marketable system of attractive commercial development that is organized to provide various goods and services within the community along the Commercial Corridors.

Objectives

- Maintain a range of retail and service commercial activities throughout the City.
- Promote new commercial development and redevelopment primarily along Harlem Avenue, and the other commercial corridors in the City such as South Ridgeland Avenue, and 127th Street.
- Initiate programs to encourage the improvement and rehabilitation of older commercial buildings and areas which are, or are becoming, functionally obsolete including improvements to facades, signage, and parking areas.
- Develop and enforce a signage ordinance to promote appropriate and aesthetic signage in the City's commercial areas, including the amortization of non-compliant signage.
- Promote and require landscaping within commercial areas and require the upkeep of parking lots, opaque screening of service areas, drives, buildings, and incompatible uses.
- Establish and implement consistent code enforcement standards for business areas.

Goal 2

Enhance the economic viability of Harlem Avenue as the primary commercial corridor, providing regional shopping opportunities where marketable.

Objectives

- Promote a healthy and mutually reinforcing mix of commercial, retail, and service uses along Harlem Avenue. In addition, promote the introduction of residential uses in mixed-use, pedestrian friendly developments at key locations within the Harlem Avenue Corridor where marketable.
- Where existing single-family homes abut Harlem Avenue, the City should work with property owners to convert these into non-residential uses, such as retail and office, which will create a more cohesive retail corridor.
- Identify and prioritize economic strategies in conjunction with commercial property owners and managers to ensure economic vitality and stability in all commercial corridor areas.
- Identify specific actions and strategies to be undertaken which will enhance the economic health of the City's commercial corridors.
- Provide safe and efficient access to shopping areas by varied transportation routes and modes including bicycle and pedestrian routes.
- Encourage coordinated and shared vehicle access wherever possible.
- Continue to encourage and promote shared parking areas.
- Due to the common shallow parcel lot depth along much of Harlem Avenue, encourage parcel consolidation and private partnerships to redevelop larger, better-planned developments.
- Work with existing property owners and businesses to promote current businesses and work towards keeping existing businesses in the community.

Goal 3

Develop aesthetically pleasing and functionally well-designed retail and shopping areas.

Objectives

- Encourage high-quality development and redevelopment of sites, buildings, and amenities in commercial areas.
- Encourage the design of new commercial development to facilitate a system of pedestrian access and amenities.
- Establish a program that reasonably and uniformly regulates signage while providing for the identification of businesses.
- Ensure that new development and redevelopment of private property is designed in scale with, and complementary to, existing development.
- Establish design and development guidelines for commercial areas, for appropriate scale, appearance, orientation, and overall character of new development.
- Ensure that all new, improved and existing commercial development is effectively screened and buffered from adjacent residential uses.

Transportation & Circulation

Goal

Provide a balanced transportation system, which ensures the safe and efficient movement of vehicles, pedestrians, and cyclists.

Objectives

- Protect and improve the function of the overall street hierarchy within the community through effective access, land-use controls, and street/intersection design improvements.
- Ensure adequate resources are made available for the maintenance of City streets and public rights-of-way.
- Continue the Capital Improvement Program to annually budget infrastructure maintenance and construction projects throughout the City.
- Minimize curb cuts on arterial and major collector streets to the extent possible and use intersecting side streets for access into properties.
- Implement traffic management strategies to minimize the impact of peak traffic flows in the City.
- Minimize non-local, truck, or “cut-through” traffic within residential neighborhoods.
- Work with PACE to further improve bus/shuttle service throughout the community, either through expanded PACE bus service or the addition of new shuttle/van service.
- Work with Metra and adjacent communities towards the introduction of increased Metra service at the Palos Heights Metra Station.
- Continue to work with other groups, agencies, and municipalities to implement the construction of the Cal-Sag Recreational Trail.
- Maintain the existing City Trail system and look for additional trail connections through-

out the community.

- Where appropriate install sidewalks along arterial streets that provide linkages to shopping and community facilities such as parks, schools, and the library.
- Coordinate median, parkway, pedestrian, residential screening and similar improvements along Harlem Avenue Corridor.

Parks, Open Space & Environmental Areas

Goal

Maintain and enhance the system of parks and open spaces that satisfies the recreational, social, leisure-time, and environmental protection needs of Palos Heights residents.

Objectives

- Maintain/support the City’s Parks and Recreation Department system that maximizes recreational opportunities that are available within the community.
- 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).
- 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.
- Ensure that parks and open space are designed to maximize their utility and usefulness to residents in terms of meeting the demand for programmable recreation space, athletic facilities, and other desirable uses and amenities.
- Monitor local community needs and perceptions and develop new recreational facilities and services which respond to specific desires of City residents.

- Continue to provide swimming opportunities in the community, either indoor or outdoor at the current Community Pool or a renovated outdoor, or new indoor swimming facility.
- Work with the community to identify the need for an indoor recreation center that supports a variety of uses and facilities, such as areas for seniors, teens, and potential swimming opportunities.
- Promote continued cooperation between the City, the School Districts, and other public/private recreational providers, such as Trinity College, in the provision of recreational services.
- Support efforts to promote Lake Katherine Preserve as a destination for tourism and recreation.
- Continue to work with other groups, agencies, and municipalities to implement the construction of the Cal-Sag Recreational Trail.
- organizations in realizing mutual objectives.
- Continue to seek cooperative working relationships with adjoining communities in the financing of local community facilities and services that provide area benefits.
- Continue to seek grants, loans, and other sources of intergovernmental funding transfers.
- Continue to encourage communication and collaboration among service providers to provide the most efficient and cost effective services possible.
- Continue utilizing governmental and private partnerships to establish and promote Lake Katherine Preserve as a destination for tourism and recreation.
- Develop a marketing campaign to promote the advantages and benefits of living, working, doing business in, or visiting the City.

Intergovernmental & Organizational Cooperation

Goal

Encourage the coordination and cooperation among federal, state, county and local agencies and organizations potentially having interest in Palos Heights to ensure the greatest level of efficiency and effectiveness in the provision of municipal services.

Objectives

- Coordinate with other municipal service providers, surrounding communities, and county and regional agencies to ensure continuity and consistency of overall community planning and development activities.
- Establish meaningful lines of communication with communities, agencies and organizations that can assist the City in meeting its overall planning objectives and work to secure participation from these agencies and
- Improve communication to residents in an effort to increase awareness of and participation in programs, services and events within the City.
- Improve and maintain relationships with the press and other media.

Fiscal & Economic Development

Goal

Achieve economic prosperity by maintaining and enhancing a balance of retail, personal and commercial service, and office uses.

Objectives

- Encourage the maximization of retail sales tax generating uses in key commercial areas.
- Improve resources for maintenance of the City's physical facilities, including buildings, properties, and infrastructure.
- Coordinate planning and economic development activities in a manner which provides regular opportunities for contact between business and development interests.
- Seek opportunities for new employment growth through retention and expansion of existing Palos Heights employers.
- Ensure that new development pays its fair share attributable to the additional demand on the infrastructure, public facilities and services.
- Establish marketing strategies to retain and attract businesses and developers along Harlem Avenue.
- Promote locally based marketing programs to boost local investment and awareness between the residential and business community.
- Seek an appropriate balance between retail, commercial, service, office, and medical uses.
- Investigate the benefits to the City of annexation of adjacent unincorporated properties.

Administration

Goal

Implement, monitor progress, and update the Comprehensive Plan.

Objectives

- Annually, in conjunction with the City's budget schedule, develop an action agenda plan to prioritize objectives and list accomplishments of proceeding years. This should be coordinated with the City's Capital Improvement Plan (CIP).
- Make available existing and/or new financial resources to implement the Comprehensive Plan.
- Establish a process for the regular review of and updates to the City's Zoning Ordinance to appropriately meet the changing needs of the community.
- In the Plan review and amendment process, the City should include input and involvement of the City Council, Plan Commission, City Committees, local organizations, and the public.
- Identify and engage agencies and organizations willing to share in the responsibility of the Plans implementation.
- City Staff should initiate a review (may be internal) of the Plan every two to three years, and a more intensive update of the Comprehensive Plan should occur every five to ten years to help ensure that the Plan is current and effective.

Section Four: City-Wide Plans

Existing Land Use

The City of Palos Heights is a mostly built-out, well-established community that is predominately residential. Non-residential uses such as commercial, office and institutional uses are located along the main arterials. Parks and open space are also located throughout the community.

The City is characterized primarily by single-family residential neighborhoods, with concentrations of multi-family residential throughout the community. Commercial concentrations radiate from major streets such as Harlem Avenue, College Drive, and Ridgeland Avenue. Several schools, religious institutions and other public facilities are also located within the community, which adds to the overall character of the City.

The following figure illustrates existing land use and is based on field surveys undertaken by the Consultant in the summer and fall of 2007.

Single-Family Residential

Overall, a large percentage (72%) of the City's housing stock consists of single-family detached homes. These single-family residential neighborhoods are located in Residential, R-1, PRD, and PUD zoned districts. In general, these homes are well-maintained and are relatively well-buffered from adjacent non-residential uses. A number of "teardowns" are occurring or have recently been completed in many neighborhoods.

Multi-Family Residential

Multi-family residential dwellings comprise a relatively small portion of the City's residential housing stock. Less than 18% of the City's dwelling units are considered multi-family (townhomes, condominiums, apartments, duplexes). Developments such as the Hamptons of Palos, The Moorings, Oak Hills, Colonial Heights, and Westgate anchor the corners of the City and range in size from a dozen units to over one hundred units. These developments are primarily owner occupied and well maintained.

Office

General office uses are scattered throughout the community, primarily along Harlem Avenue, Southwest Highway 7, South Ridgeland Avenue, and College Drive. A majority of the office space in Palos Heights is dedicated to medical offices. Along Harlem Avenue, a majority of the office buildings are for medical use.

Commercial

The majority of commercial uses are located in the Harlem Avenue Corridor from College Drive south to 131st Street and along 127th Street and South Ridgeland Avenue. Most of the businesses are not retail establishments; rather they are service or specialty businesses, such as martial arts studios, veterinarians, banks, restaurants, grocery stores, or gas stations. Clusters of commercial uses on 127th Street and Ridgeland Avenue serve as convenient neighborhood retail and services for residents.

Institutional

A variety of uses make up the institutional land use classification, including public and private schools, Trinity Christian College, and the many churches within the community. The majority of Public Schools within the City of Palos Heights are part of School District 128, serving 675 students. Their schools include Independence Junior High School, Navajo Heights School, Chippewa Elementary (Crestwood, Illinois) and Indian Hill Center (early childhood). School District 118 serves residents west of Harlem Avenue at two schools, Palos East Elementary, and Palos South Middle School.

Manufacturing

Manufacturing areas are located in only two areas, the far northwest and northeast corners of the city. Of the parcels zoned for manufacturing, only a few actually have industrial type uses on them. The other parcels are home to medical offices, a Metra Station with commuter parking, and neighborhood commercial businesses such as a gas station.

Government

A variety of governmental facilities exist in the City, including the City Hall/Police Station, Public Works, Fire District Stations, and Parks and Recreation Administration. The Palos Heights Library, located at the intersection of 125th street and 71st Avenue, is centrally located just east of the Harlem Avenue Commercial Corridor. The existing City Hall and Police Department are located on College Drive. While the new Police and Public Works buildings were completed in 2000, the City Hall needs attention.

Open Space

The City of Palos Heights provides local open space for residents. The local parks within the City are well maintained and well-used by residents, visitors, and athletic groups. Lake Katherine is a favorite among residents and visitors because of its location off the Cal-Sag Channel and the trail systems connecting it to other recreational areas within and outside of the City.

Vacant/Under Development

There are a limited number of vacant parcels scattered throughout the community. The largest vacant parcel, commonly referred to as the Rizza Property, is at the northeast intersection of College Drive and Harlem Avenue. It is a prime location for development given the volume of traffic and large frontage along College Drive. Another large vacant parcel sits on the east side of Harlem Avenue just south of the 127th Street intersection. This parcel currently acts as a buffer between commercial at the intersection of Harlem Avenue and 127th Street, and existing single-family residences directly to the south.

Transportation/Utilities

Passing through the far northwest corner of Palos Heights is the Metra Southwest Service Line. Two stations, the Palos Heights Station and the Palos Park Station, provide convenient access for commuters from Palos Heights. The two stations are less than a mile apart. The Worth Metra Station is also located close to Palos Heights (approximately 1 mile northeast of the

Palos Heights Metra Station).

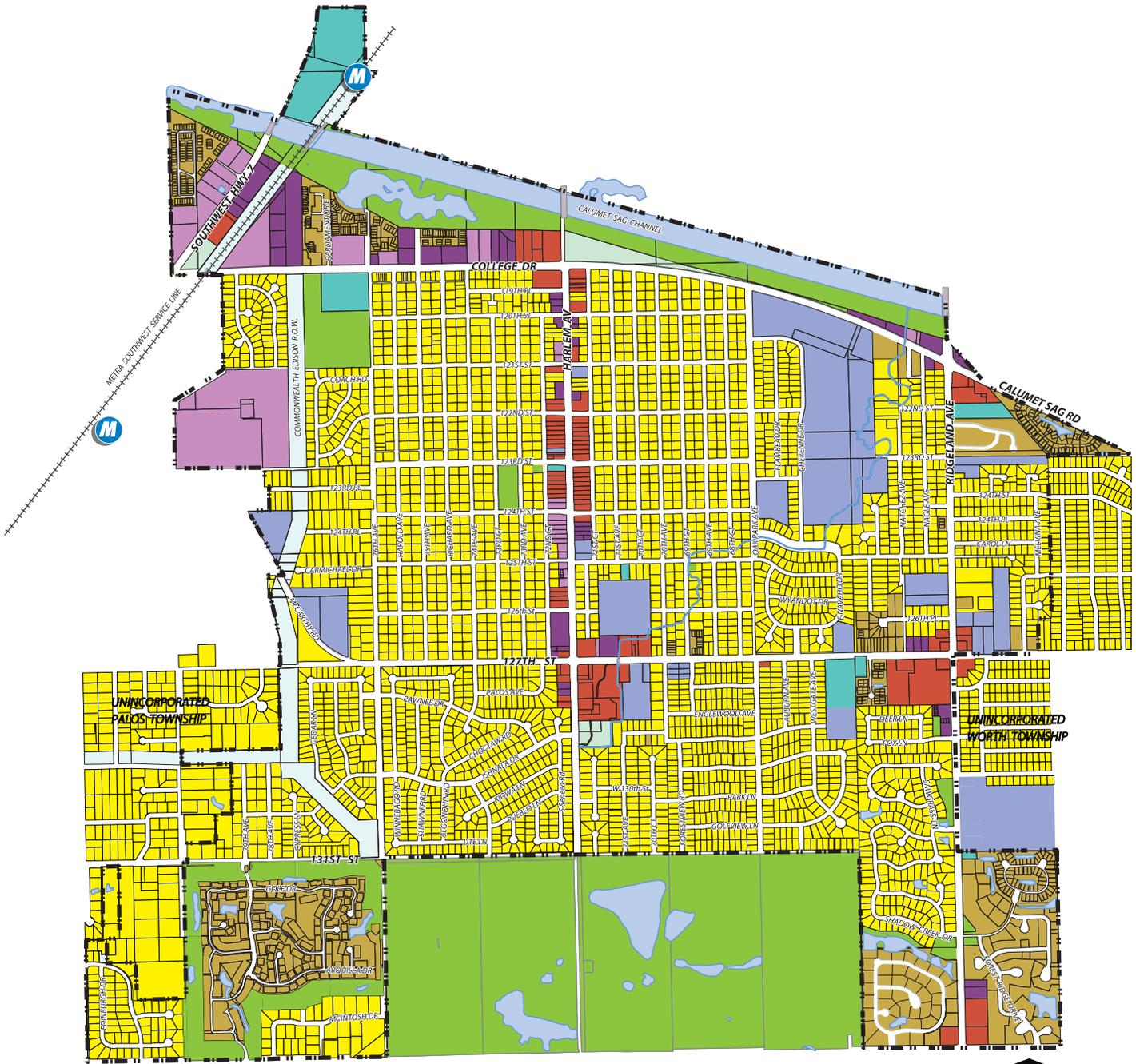
Along the western edge of the City, running north to south is a Commonwealth Edison Right-of-Way containing high-tension power lines. This right-of-way also doubles as an open space/trail link for the Palos Heights Bike Path beginning at Lake Katherine and linking into the Tinley Creek Trail found within Cook County Forest Preserve's Region 8 Area to the south.

Unincorporated Areas

The City should continue to monitor the potential of incorporating properties outside of the City's current municipal boundary in Palos and Worth Townships.

The City of Palos Heights can plan up to 1 ½ miles outside of its current municipal limits for those areas that are unincorporated. This Plan recommends that the primarily residential uses in the unincorporated areas within the 1 ½ mile planning area of the City continue to remain primarily residential in character.

Figure 2: Existing Land Use



NORTH

0 1/4 1/2 Mile

Existing Land Use Plan Legend

- | | | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|-------------|---------------|
| Single-Family Residential | Medical Office / Hospital | Institution | Utilities |
| Multi-Family Residential | Office | Open Space | City Boundary |
| Commercial | Public / Semi-Public | Vacant | Metra Station |

* Based upon field observations undertaken in October 2007

Land Use Plan

The Land Use Plan presents recommendations for improving and enhancing existing land-use areas and promoting compatible new development and redevelopment in certain locations of the City.

The Palos Heights Land Use Plan regulates land use within the City and its planning jurisdiction. Generally, the City is a “built-out” community, except for only a few vacant parcels.

Land use designations along Harlem Avenue and College Drive are intended to indicate existing uses and/or guide appropriate uses for redevelopment and infill sites. The land between College Drive and 127th Street is the primary commercial/retail core of the City. Much of this area is already developed or zoned for commercial uses and it is anticipated that some portions will redevelop in the near term.

Although Palos Heights is primarily a “built-out” community, there will continue to be demand for new residential, commercial and office development in the future. In the near term, mixed-use and commercial redevelopment will likely occur in key locations along Harlem Avenue and College Drive.

The Land Use Plan builds upon the existing land use patterns of Palos Heights, and strives to re-inforce and strengthen the traditional residential character of the community and the Olde Palos Neighborhood. The Plan also strives to improve the commercial areas of the City.

The Land Use Plan also protects and preserves the City’s parks and open space. Together with other recreational and community facilities and services, these are important amenities for the community.

Residential

There are two categories within the residential land use classification: Single-Family, and Multi-Family.

Single-Family Residential

The majority of the City consists of single-family detached homes. The Plan strives to protect these neighborhoods and as new development occurs on adjacent properties, the Plan recommends appropriate buffering and screening.

Multi-Family Residential

The Plan supports the continuation of multi-family residential areas within the City. Multi-family can include condominiums, townhomes, apartments, and senior housing. New multi-family residential developments should primarily consist of owner-occupied units. Multi-family residential is also an excellent opportunity to provide quality senior housing in the community.

Commercial

The Land Use Plan designates commercial uses at key locations throughout the City as well as specifically along the Harlem Avenue Corridor. The commercial land use designation can also include retail, service, and office uses.

The Land Use Plan aims to provide guidance to realize the community’s vision for an improved, cohesive retail corridor along Harlem Avenue. As the most traveled corridor through the City, Harlem Avenue has tremendous opportunity to be improved.

The Plan recommends converting residential uses fronting Harlem Avenue, north of 125th Street, and residential properties west of Harlem Avenue, north of 126th Street, to non-residential uses (please see Harlem Avenue Corridor Plan Section for further detail). This conversion is only recommended if the property owners choose, and only as part of larger consolidated developments.

Mixed-Use

Mixed-use areas are recommended in three locations along the Harlem Avenue Corridor. A Mixed-use area designates specific locations of land suitable and appropriate for a mix of

land uses emphasizing a traditional commercial environment with pedestrian-scaled, mixed-use buildings, roads and amenities. In these areas, residential and office uses are not recommended on the ground floor. Retail and commercial uses are the preferred land use for the ground floor.

The Land Use Plan designates mixed-use redevelopment of key parcels in the Corridor into gateway developments, which will help preserve the existing character of the surrounding community, while improving the appearance and image of the Corridor.

Office

Office uses are separated into two classifications on the Land Use Plan; office, and medical office/hospital.

Office uses are also appropriate in commercial and mixed-use land use area.

General Office

General office uses are scattered throughout the community, primarily along Harlem Avenue, Southwest Highway 7, and College Drive.

Medical Office/Hospital

A majority of the office space in Palos Heights is dedicated to medical offices. Along Harlem Avenue, a majority of the office buildings are for medical use.

Community Uses

Within the City a number of community uses add to the quality of life and overall character of Palos Heights. Community Uses consist of a variety of community facilities and services including City Parks, Schools, Forest Preserve Property, bike trails, and public transit. More detailed recommendations for community uses are presented in the Community Facilities Plan.

Public/Semi-Public

The public/semi-public land use classification identifies land that is public land including the City Hall, Police Station, and Fire Protection Districts.

Institution

All schools, public and private, are identified in the Institution classification. According to the school districts no new public school property is planned to be acquired.

Open Space

This classification includes City Parks, Forest Preserves, a private golf course, and open space along the Calumet-Sag Channel.

Utilities

This classification includes City utilities, including buildings and water towers, and Commonwealth Edison property.

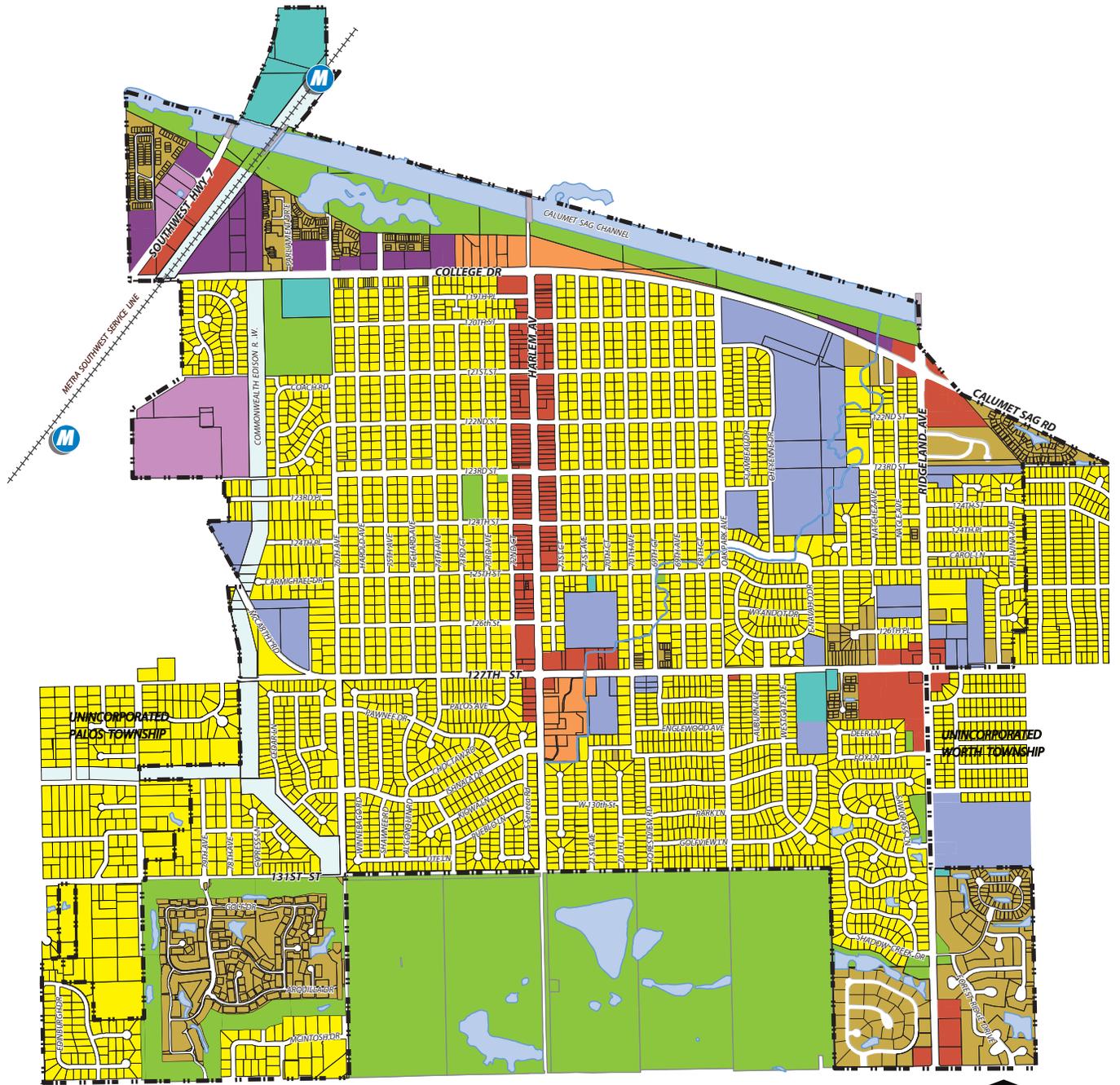
Metra Station

Three Metra stations are located near the community (Palos Park, Palos Heights, and Worth). The Plan recommends promoting public transit use in the community, and also recommends pedestrian connections linking the Palos Park and Palos Heights Stations to the City.

Zoning Updates

The land uses and their descriptions do not necessarily correspond to current zoning districts or the uses permitted in the various zoning districts established by the City's Zoning Ordinance. When necessary, the City should adopt new zoning regulations and districts to implement the recommendations of the Land Use Plan.

Figure 3: Land Use Plan



NORTH

0 1/4 1/2 Mile

Land Use Plan Legend

- | | | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|---------------|
| Single-Family Residential | Mixed Use | Public / Semi-Public | Utilities |
| Multi-Family Residential | Medical Office / Hospital | Institution | Metra Station |
| Commercial | Office | Open Space | City Boundary |

Community Facilities Plan

This Plan presents recommendations for maintaining and improving the various community facilities and services within the City of Palos Heights, including municipal facilities, parks and recreational facilities, the forest preserve, educational facilities, religious institutions, public safety facilities, and others.

One of the key objectives of the Comprehensive Plan is to maintain adequate sites for community facilities including City Hall, Police Station, Public Works, Fire Station(s) and other City facilities including recreational facilities; constructing, renovating, and relocating facilities when necessary.

City Hall and other City Buildings

The following departments are housed in the Palos Heights City Hall: City Administration, Mayor's Office, Alderman, Water Billing, Accounts Payable, Public Service Desk, Personnel Manager, and Finance.

According to the City, the City Hall is no longer serving their existing space needs. Additional space is needed for meeting rooms with updated technology and more fluid space for the Public Service Desk and other areas accessed by the public. Traffic flow into and around these areas is not sufficient and there are security concerns due to a lack of control at access points. Additionally, HVAC systems are erratic in servicing areas and the components break down frequently.

The City does anticipate the need for significant improvement, expansion and/or replacement of the City Hall within the next 10-15 years. Development of an overall facilities plan should be a priority for the City.

The Community Facilities Plan recommends that if in the future a new City Hall is constructed, it should be located in the same general area.

In addition to City Hall, the City owns other properties within the community. The Public

Works and Police Department buildings are relatively new and in good condition.

The Police Department was completed in 2000 and services the needs of its 41 full and part time employees. According to the Police Department, there may be a need to evaluate the use of its existing space and possibly improve upon its layout for efficiency purposes.

Located near the municipal buildings at Community Park is the Community Pool. The condition of the pool is in poor condition and is the subject of much debate.

Lake Katherine Nature Preserve is considered the crown jewel of the community. The City leases the property around Lake Katherine and owns two buildings on this property; the Lake Katherine Nature Center, and the E.G. Simpson Clubhouse. The E.G. Simpson Clubhouse, formerly the Palos Heights Gun Club, now serves as a banquet facility overlooking Lake Katherine. The Brigid O'Malley Auditorium is also located at the Preserve.

Overall, according to the City, there is a need for more storage space for the various departments and possibly garage facilities for City owned vehicles and equipment.

City of Palos Heights Parks & Recreation Department

The Parks and Recreation Department currently operates eight (8) park sites and facilities in the City of Palos Heights. In addition to these sites, the department has a lease agreement with School District 128 for the use of Meyers Park and the land surrounding the Recreation Center.

The Department has also completed a Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). According to the Department, this CIP will determine the order that park sites will be redeveloped. The city plans on using the OSLAD Grant Program to assist in funding future park redevelopment projects recommended in the CIP.

In addition to providing parks and open space, the Parks & Recreation Department offers a variety of recreational programs. Popular programs include youth sports, early childhood, and dance classes.

According to the Department and residents, in addition to a renovated/new pool, the City is in need of indoor recreation space. The community needs a Recreation Center that includes a fitness center, senior/teen space, a high school size gymnasium, and group aerobics studio.

Swimming

The City should continue to provide swimming opportunities in the community. Although swimming is an important recreational amenity currently provided in the community, there are funding issues related to its ongoing operation and maintenance. Swimming can be provided in the community in a number of potential scenarios including: at the current pool; at a renovated Community Pool; at a completely new outdoor pool; or indoors.

The City should work towards a solution that fits both their financial means and the desires of users and residents.

This Plan recommends that if a new pool is constructed, that it be located in the general area of the current Community Pool.

Indoor Recreation

The City should continue to work with the community to identify the need for an indoor recreation center that supports a variety of uses and facilities. An indoor recreation center could consist of a variety of areas for seniors, teens, and other groups.

One of the major concerns of the Parks & Recreation Department is the lack of adequate space for seniors. Currently, there is a need for senior meeting space.

The provision of indoor recreation space is typically expensive, and therefore, the City needs to

continue to work with the community to determine if this is truly desired.

The Comprehensive Plan recommends keeping the current Recreation Center and exploring the need for an additional center. If a new recreation center is constructed it should be located in the location of Community Park.

A new recreation center could consist of multi-purpose activity and meeting space, a senior center, teen center, and indoor gymnasium.

If a new City Hall is part of a new recreation center, the City should study the land outside of community park where the existing City Hall is located. This land could be used for the new building, additional parking, or new open space.

New developments in this area will need to address additional parking and stormwater requirements. Parking at this location will be a factor in the design of the building(s) and the overall site plan for the property. Consideration should be given to a parking structure, which would use less acreage and therefore potentially increase the amount of open space in the park.

Palos Heights Police Department

The Palos Heights Police Department is staffed by 41 full and part time employees. There are 27 full time sworn officers, 3 part time sworn officers, 2 full time civilian administrative assistants, 2 part time administrative assistants, 4 part time community service officers, and 3 part time crossing guards. The Chief of Police expects to hire one more full time sworn officer when the budget permits, but currently states the manpower level of the department is adequate.

The Police Department currently operates 20 vehicles and two mobile radar detectors for speed limit enforcement. Other local Departments and the County Sheriff's Department provide support upon request in a number of specialty areas including; bomb squad, K9 Support, evidence technicians, and graffiti removal. All calls including those requiring special assistance are

handled from the main police station at 7607 West College Drive. Another unique service provided in the community is the Southwest Central Dispatch, which is located next to the Police Department.

While Palos Heights doesn't have any significant crime or public safety problems, traffic has steadily increased and will continue to do so. This may create issues on Route 83, which will need to be addressed in the future.

The City should continue to ensure an adequate level of police protection throughout the City.

Fire Protection

Palos Heights receives fire protection from three separate fire protection districts: Palos Heights Fire Protection District, North Palos Fire Protection District and Palos Fire Protection District. Each district has several skilled paramedics and EMT's who operate from life-support equipped ambulances.

The city straddles the boundary between Palos and Worth townships. Both entities provide extensive services through general assistance and senior citizen programs.

Similar to Police Protection, the City should continue to ensure an adequate level of fire protection throughout the City.

Palos Fire Protection District

According to the Fire Chief, the Fire District has 8 full-time Employees and 4 part-time employees. The Department's current manpower level is satisfactory but, an additional full time Firefighter and one administrative employee are projected for next year given call volume and increased responsibilities for the department. In addition to future manpower needs, the District has plans to replace their 110' foot ladder truck by 2009, replace their ALS Rescue Pumper and ALS Ambulance by 2010.

There are two Fire Stations in the Department; Station #1 (8815 West 123rd Street) and Station

#2 (13010 South 104th Avenue). According to the Fire Chief, Stations #1 and #2 are adequate; however, Station #2 is being evaluated for an expansion of living quarters.

The current fire insurance rating for the City is class 3, which is one of the higher ratings in the region and similar to other fire departments in the area. The district will be re-assessed by ISO, and anticipates maintaining or improving on the current class 3 rating.

For the future, the Department would like to see improved communication between city officials, staff, and departments with both fire districts which serve the city. This will allow the districts to be more effective in playing a role in planning and development processes. The District hopes a uniform fire prevention code between the City, Palos Fire Protection District, and Palos Heights Fire Protection District will be developed. This will allow for a more effective method of plan review, inspection and enforcement of applicable zoning and building codes, and increase the overall safety and quality of life for the Cities residents.

Palos Heights Fire Protection District

Palos Heights Fire Protection District is located at 12300 South Harlem Avenue (Station 1) and at 13101 South Ridgeland Avenue (Station 2). The District has 22 career firefighters. Depending upon the type of development or redevelopment in certain locations of the City, the District would need to purchase new vehicles/apparatus. The District currently has an ISO rating of 3 which is comparable to other communities.

North Palos Fire Protection District

The North Palos Fire Protection District provides fire protection service to the area of the City of Palos Heights that is North of the Cal-Sag Channel. The Palos Heights Metra Station is covered by this District.

Palos Heights Public Library

Before the city was incorporated the library shared space at different locations until 1972 when a library was built at the present location on 12501 S. 71st Avenue. An addition was built in 1988 and a second addition and renovation was completed in 2004. The library offers a variety of services for all ages and has wireless internet access and homebound delivery service. The train station also has a shelf of paperback books which can be taken by commuters.

Given the recent additions and renovations in 2004, the library is currently up to date and in good condition. These additions and renovations were part of a planning process conducted in the late 1990's. Currently, the library meets the community's needs and does not feel these needs will change in the next 10-15 years.

However, there are improvements the library is currently looking to address in the near future. These include acquiring an adjacent home site for expanding its parking facility to accommodate more dedicated staff spaces, and the incorporation/addition of a delivery entrance.

Education

Palos Heights is served by four school districts; Palos Community Consolidated School District 118, Palos Heights School District 128, Community High School District 218, and Consolidated High School District 230.

The City should continue to look for partnering opportunities with the local schools to provide outdoor and indoor recreational space for residents.

School District # 128

School District #128 serves the eastern half of Palos Heights; the district boundary follows Harlem Avenue. The School District has a current enrollment of approximately 675 students from pre-kindergarten through 8th grade. These students attend one of two schools within the City, Independence Junior High School, and Navajo

Heights School (4-5), or two schools outside of the City, Chippewa Elementary, and Indian Hill Center (early childhood). Currently, the district is showing a downward trend in attendance; however, the District expects this trend to level off in the near future. Therefore, the district does not see a need for any more facilities in the next 10-15 years.

School District # 118

Palos Consolidated School District 118 serves approximately 2,000 students in grades pre-kindergarten through eighth grade. District 118 is home to three schools; Palos West Elementary, Palos East Elementary, and Palos South Middle School. The district draws students from Palos Park and portions of Palos Heights, Palos Hills, Orland Park, and Worth. District 118 residents value quality education and contribute in many ways toward the maintenance of a superior school system. District 118 students consistently score well above state and national norms, recently being honored as achieving in the top 10% of Illinois school districts.

Private Schools – Palos Evangelical Lutheran, Chicago Christian, St. Alexander

Both Palos Evangelical and Chicago Christian are experiencing slight declines in their enrollments. Palos Evangelical has 41 students and Chicago Christian has 400 students. Both are also below their capacities. Both schools do not see the immediate need for expansion, but Chicago Christian is considering adding another school to the south. Saint Alexander (440 Students) is the only one of the three which is near capacity. However, their enrollment trends show a decline in enrollment as many of their feeder schools are showing reduced enrollments in the future.

Trinity Christian College

Trinity Christian College is located at 6601 West College Drive in Palos Heights on a 50-acre campus. The College was founded in 1959 and has nearly 1000 undergraduates. Three new facilities have been constructed at the College since 2001 including the Martin and Janet Ozinga Chapel; Arts Center, Christian Book Store,

the Heritage Science Center; and the Alumni Hall. In addition to learning space the College has athletic fields and the Mitchell Memorial Gymnasium.

The City should install sidewalks connecting the College with the Harlem Avenue Corridor. Also, the City should continue potential partnering opportunities with the College to provide recreational facilities.

Palos Community Hospital

There are various medical institutions and services provided within the City of Palos Heights. The largest of which is Palos Community Hospital and based upon recent news the Hospital plans to continue to improve and grow. The Hospital has announced a proposed \$400 million expansion.

Palos Community Hospital is located at 12251 South 80th Avenue in Palos Heights. The Hospital opened in 1972 with 265 beds, and expanded in 1975 to 321 beds. Additional construction has brought the hospital to 436 licensed beds. The hospital employs 2800 people (the City's largest employer) and approximately 400 volunteers. In 2006 the hospital had 20,293 admissions.

The hospital continues to expand its services by constructing additional facilities in the surrounding area such as the Primary Care Center in Orland Park, Southwest Hospitals MRI Center in Oak Lawn, Palos Community Hospital Home Health Care and Hospice in Lemont, Palos Health and Fitness Center in Orland Park, and Palos Community Hospital Family Health Center in Homer Township.

The City should work with the Hospital to promote and market the services, such as shopping and dining uses, that exist within the City for hospital employees and visitors. Directional signage near the hospital could be installed providing directional information towards Harlem Avenue for example.

Religions Institutions

There are numerous religious institutions and denominations located throughout the City. These religious institutions continue to add to the community's character.

Worth Township

Worth Township is bordered by Harlem Avenue (Illinois Route 43) on the west, 87th Street on the north, Western Avenue on the east and 135th Street on the South. Worth Township is responsible for various assessment services and carrying out state and county level responsibilities. Worth Township does not currently have any facilities at this time located in the City of Palos Heights. Both of their offices are located in the City of Alsip.

Palos Township

Palos Township is west of Worth Township and is bordered by Harlem Avenue on the east, 135th Street on the south, Will-Cook Road on the west and 87th Street on the north. The northwest border with DuPage County is along the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal. Palos Township Departments are located at 10802 South Roberts Road in Palos Hills. The Township is responsible for various assessment services and carrying out state and county level responsibilities.

Cook County Forest Preserve

The Forest Preserve District is a separate, independent taxing body, but the Cook County Board of Commissioners also acts as the Forest Preserve District Board of Commissioners. The District is a belt of 68,000 acres of forest reservations surrounding the City of Chicago. It provides recreational areas consisting of six nature and educational centers, nine bike trails, 200 miles of multi-use trails for hiking, horseback riding, and cross-country skiing, hundreds of picnic groves, 30 fishing ponds and lakes, access to fishing and canoeing on rivers and streams, golf courses, swimming pools, model airplane flying fields, dog training areas, a cross-country ski center, and other winter sports areas are among the

facilities provided.

The City should continue its plan of connecting the City Bike Trail system to the forest preserves located at the southern boundary of the City.



Figure 4: Community Facilities Plan

Community Facilities

- | | | |
|--|------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. Palos Heights Metra Station | 10. Palmer Park | 20. Palos Heights Bike Trail |
| 2. Congenital Heart Center | 11. Passarelli Park | 21. Cal Sag Trail |
| 3. Lake Katherine Preserve | 12. Navajo School | 22. Palos Park Metra Station |
| 4. City Hall/Police/Public Works | 13. Palos East Elementary | 23. Tinley Creek Forest Preserve |
| 5. Community Park | 14. Recreation Center | 24. Lake Arrowhead |
| 6. Post Office | 15. Meyers Park | 25. Palos Heights Library |
| 7. Palos Fire Station #1 | 16. Independence Junior High | 26. Palos Fire Station #2 |
| 8. Trinity Christian College/ Chicago Christian High School | 17. Crawford Park | 27. Oak Hill Golf Course |
| 9. Palos Community Hospital | 18. Walsh Westgate Park | 28. Evers Park |
| | 19. Tinley Creek Trail | |



Community Facilities Legend

- | | | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Metra Southwest Service Line | Hospital | Water Tower | Trinity College Trail Extension |
| Metra Station | Existing Indoor Recreation Center | Cal-Sag Trail | City Boundary |
| Open Space | Potential Recreation Center | Tinley Creek Trail | |
| Institutional | Swimming Pool | Palos Heights Bike Trail | |
| Public / Semi-Private | | Trinity College Trail | |

Transportation and Circulation Plan

The City is well-served by a roadway system that provides access to the City from surrounding areas and enables the movement of vehicles within and around Palos Heights. The efficiency and convenience of the transportation system will significantly affect the quality of life within the community.

The Transportation and Circulation Plan for the City strives to provide a balanced transportation system to ensure the safe and efficient movement of vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists.

The Transportation and Circulation Plan consists of two figures; a vehicular mobility plan; and, a pedestrian mobility plan. Together, these two figures represent the City's Transportation and Circulation Plan.

Arterial Streets

The purpose of arterial streets is to move traffic within and through the City. These streets are generally wider, faster, and have limited access along their length. The Plan identifies Southwest Highway, IL Route 83 and Harlem Avenue as the main arterial streets within the community. According to IDOT, Southwest Highway has 19,500 average daily vehicle trips, IL Route 83 has 17,300, and Harlem Avenue has the highest number of vehicle trips with 37,000. Harlem Avenue is one of the busiest arterial streets in the region.

In an effort to improve circulation along arterial streets, the Plan recommends minimizing curb cuts on arterial streets to the extent possible and use intersecting side streets for access into properties.

The City should also continue to monitor traffic flow on arterial streets and to widen, add additional lanes or improve intersections when warranted, and eliminate or reduce unnecessary access points where feasible.

The Plan also recommends that the City coordinate median, parkway, pedestrian, residential

screening and similar improvements along Harlem Avenue to improve traffic flow and the corridor's appearance.

The City should work with IDOT to lower the vehicular speed limit through the central portion of the Harlem Avenue Corridor. This would improve vehicular safety throughout the Corridor. The speed limit along Harlem Avenue is not conducive with retail development. The City should work cooperatively with IDOT to identify a speed that more appropriate assists the City in creating a safe shopping destination.

Collector Streets

Collector streets are intended to collect traffic from local streets and move the traffic toward arterial streets for efficient flow. Collector streets are intended to serve the local population. Collector streets can be classified as major and minor depending on the volume that they are intended to carry

Major Collectors in the City generally have average annual daily traffic counts between 10,000 and 17,500 trips. Minor collector streets have lower trips per day and are those streets that run through neighborhoods connecting to major collector streets and arterials.

The Plan identifies four major collector streets within the City. The following collector streets provide important connections from the local streets to the arterial streets. Collectors in the City include 127th Street, 131st Street, 80th Avenue, and South Ridgeland Avenue.

Similar to the recommendation for arterial streets, this Plan recommends minimizing curb cuts on collector streets to the extent possible and using intersecting side streets for access into properties. The City should also continue to monitor traffic flow on collector streets and to widen, add additional lanes or improve intersections when warranted.

Local Streets

All other streets within the City are classified as local streets. Reconnaissance conducted by the Consultant showed that the local streets within the City are well-maintained and in good condition.

To improve the character of residential neighborhoods, this Plan recommends minimizing non-local, truck, or “cut-through” traffic within residential neighborhoods.

Streetscape Improvements

The City’s primary corridors should be improved through the implementation of a streetscape enhancement program. Public rights-of-way should be improved with street trees, grass parkways, connecting sidewalks, pedestrian and vehicular-scaled lighting, improved pedestrian crosswalks, banners, plantings, street furniture, and other pedestrian amenities.

An attractive streetscape will maintain and improve the City’s overall character, image, and identity.

Gateways

Gateways into the City should include an appropriate entry monument sign with high-quality landscaping that identifies the City of Palos Heights and welcomes people to the community. These gateway features should relate specifically to the site and should emphasize and symbolize the qualities of Palos Heights which set the tone for the architectural quality expected in the City.

Parking Lot Landscaping

Throughout the City there are many off-street surface parking areas that are very unsightly due to lack of screening and landscaping. The City should encourage all parking lots to install perimeter landscaping that consists of a continuous shrub hedge that is maintained at a height of 24”-36”. In addition to perimeter screening, shade trees, landscape islands, decorative ground cover, and other landscape elements

should be required for the interior areas of all parking lots. Where a landscaped perimeter cannot be provided, a low masonry wall or decorative wrought iron fencing may be utilized.

Existing Traffic Signals

Existing traffic signals should also be synchronized with one another to coordinate the flow of traffic within the City especially along Harlem Avenue, which has a significant volume of vehicular trips.

Pedestrian Improvements

This Plan recommends creating continuous sidewalks along arterial streets in the City. Sidewalks should provide linkages to shopping and community facilities such as parks, schools, and the library. Improved pedestrian crossings at existing signalized intersections, including brick pavers, lighting, and signage are recommended.

The City should continue to work with other groups, agencies, and municipalities to construct the Cal-Sag Recreational Trail.

It is important that the Cal-Sag Recreational Trail be designed with connectivity to the rest of the City. Pedestrian connections should be made from the Trail, south, towards the residential areas of the City, and especially the Harlem Avenue Corridor.

Directional signage should be installed to notify trail users about Community Events and a directory of businesses located within the City. The City should consider creating Trail Support Buildings at key locations along the trail system. Trail Support Buildings could include a shelter, drinking fountain, restrooms, and parking.

In addition, the City should maintain the existing trail system and look for additional trail connections throughout the community. The City should work to create a pedestrian linkage from the Metra Station, south along IL Route 83 to connect to a sidewalk system along College Drive.

Public Transportation

Pace

Pace currently provides three routes through the City of Palos Heights. Routes 383, 384, and 386. These routes currently provide service to and from Midway Airport, CTA Orange Line, multiple METRA stations, Orland Square Shopping Center, 5th Municipal District Courthouse, Toyota Park, and Playfield Plaza. Pace is restructuring service in the Palos Heights area as part of its South Cook County and Will County initiative. Pace has also met with the City to discuss developing a local circulation service. These initiatives are scheduled to take effect early in 2008. The proposed routes will be reduced to two, the 348 and 386. These will continue and serve the same main stops and facilities as the current three Pace bus routes.

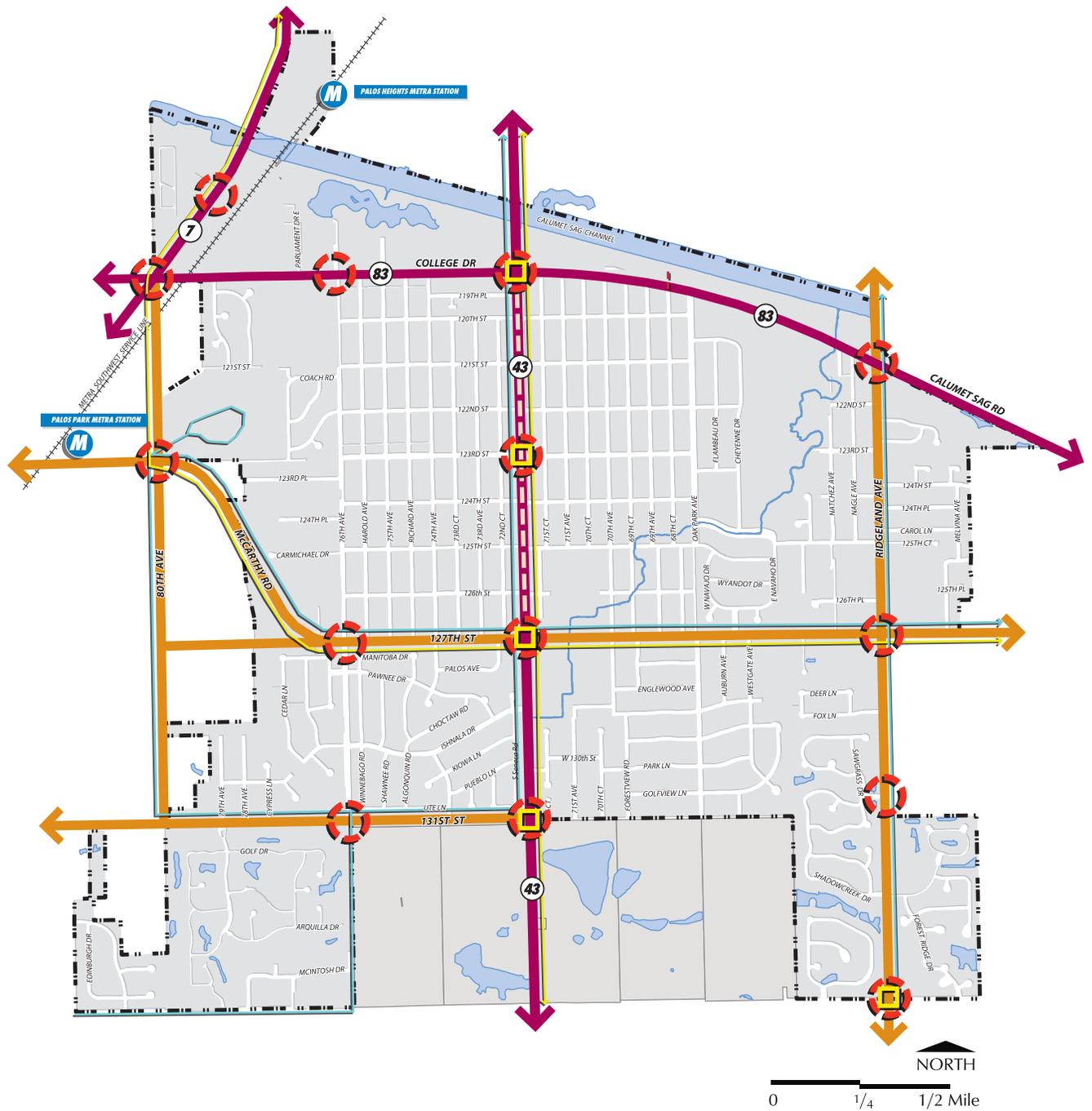
The City should work with Pace to further improve bus/shuttle service throughout the community, either through expanded Pace bus service or the addition of new shuttle/van service.

Metra

Metra currently operates the South West Service Line from Chicago's Union Station to Manhattan, Illinois with intermediate stops at the Palos Heights Station which opened in December 2004. This station has parking capacity for 513 commuters. Service on this line was substantially increased after the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) approved a Full Funding Grant Agreement with Metra to upgrade and extend the SWS Line. This work was completed in January 2006 and has increased service between Chicago and Orland Park from 16 trains to 30 trains. The 2030 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) Update produced by the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) includes additional proposed upgrades to infrastructure and levels of service for the SWS line. The plan also proposes additional extension of the SWS Line and grade separations at a few points close to downtown where commercial freight lines intersect and create operating conflicts. These improvements will increase the reliability and reduce operating conflicts for commuters in the future.

The City should continue to work with Metra and adjacent communities to monitor and eventually increase Metra service at the Palos Heights Metra Station.

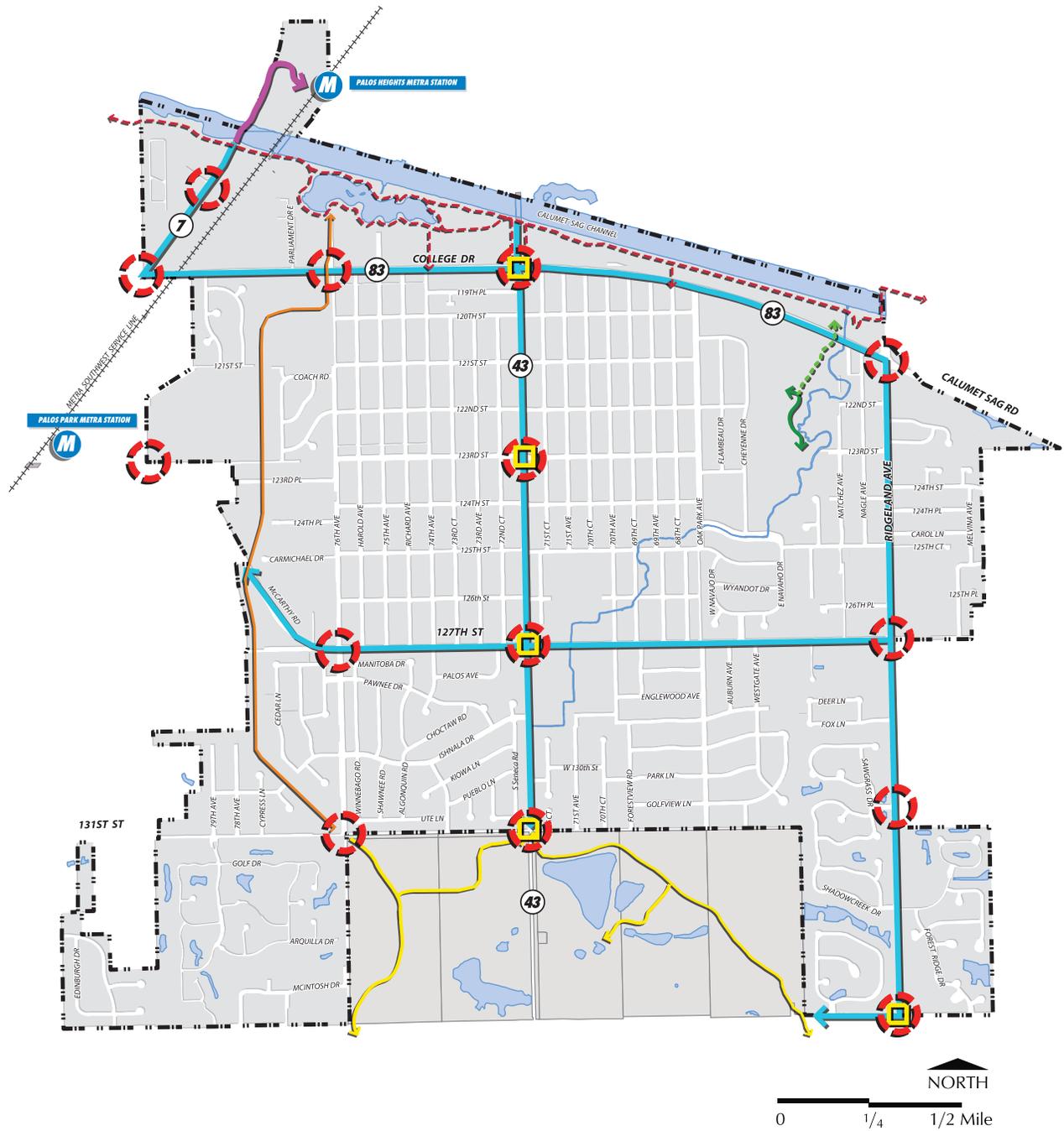
Figure 5: Transportation Plan - Vehicular



Transportation & Circulation Legend

-  Arterial Street
-  Lower Speed Limit
-  Collector Street
-  Metra Southwest Service Line
-  Metra Station
-  Signalized Intersection
-  Pedestrian Improvements at Existing Signals
-  Pace Bus Routes 383, 384, 386
-  Proposed 2008 Pace Bus Routes

Figure 6: Transportation Plan - Pedestrian



Transportation & Circulation Legend

- | | | |
|---------------------------------|---|------------------------------|
| Cal-Sag Trail | Existing Sidewalk to Metra | Metra Southwest Service Line |
| Palos Heights Bike Trail | Proposed Continuous Sidewalks | Metra Station |
| Tinley Creek Trail | Signalized Intersection | City Boundary |
| Trinity College Trail | Pedestrian Improvements at Existing Signals | |
| Trinity College Trail Extension | | |

Environmental Features and Open Space Plan

The Environmental Features and Open Space Plan protects and enhances the City's existing parks and open space, including Lake Katherine, the trail system, and the various City parks. The City's open space adds to the community's unique image and character.

City of Palos Heights Parks and Recreation Department

The Department provides parks and recreational opportunities at its neighborhood parks, Recreation Center, and through its recreation programs. The City operates eight (8) sites within the community including: the Recreation Center, Community Pool, Community Park/Memorial Park, Palmer Park, Passarelli Park, Crawford Park, Meyers Park, and Walsh-Westgate Park. In addition to these City-owned sites, the Department has a lease agreement with School District 128 for the use of Meyers Park and the land surrounding the Recreation Center.

Lake Katherine Preserve

Lake Katherine is a beautiful 80-acre natural area that contains outdoor and indoor facilities. It is considered by many to be the jewel of Palos Heights. Lake Katherine is owned and supported by the City of Palos Heights and managed by the Lake Katherine Nature Center and Botanic Gardens, a non-profit organization. In 2008, the City plans to construct a bike path that connects Lake Katherine Preserve to the Harlem Avenue Bridge.

In addition to the environmental features and walking trails, Lake Katherine Preserve has two indoor facilities; the Lake Katherine Nature Center, and the E.G. Simpson Clubhouse. The E.G. Simpson Clubhouse, formerly the Palos Heights Gun Club, now serves as a banquet facility overlooking Lake Katherine. The facility can accommodate 100 people on its second floor. The Brigid O'Malley Auditorium is also located at the Preserve.

Bike Paths

Palos Heights Bicycle Trail - The 1.8-mile bike trail is located along the Commonwealth Edison property, which the City leases. The trail travels along the western edge of the community, running north and south between 131st Street (a connection to the Cook County Forest Preserve District trail) and north to Lake Katherine Preserve.

Calumet-Sag Recreational Trail - When completed the Trail will run 26 miles from Lemont to Burnham through 14 separate communities, connecting five regional multi-use trails, creating a trail system that will stretch more than 150 miles. It is expected that this year Phase 1 engineering will begin on the Cal-Sag Recreational Trail. The Trail is planned to run along the northern boundary of the City through Lake Katherine Nature Preserve.

Three of the main goals for the Cal-Sag Trail are: 1) Strengthen local economies, 2) Reinforce and protect the corridor's natural and historical legacies, and 3) Improve people's lives.

Parks and Recreation Master Plan

As part of this Comprehensive Planning process, a stand-alone Parks and Recreation Master Plan has been prepared. Although the City's Comprehensive Plan provides analysis and recommendations for environmental features and open space in the community, the Parks and Recreation Master Plan consists of more detailed analysis and recommendations.

The Parks and Recreation Master Plan sets forth the long-range recommendations for future improvement and enhancements of parks, open space, and recreation in the City of Palos Heights. The Plan is the City's official policy guide for parks and recreation. The Plan strives to help preserve and protect existing open space, natural features and resources. The Parks and Recreation Master Plan provides guidelines by which the City can review current facilities, and plan for improvements to existing sites, as well as any potential new parks and open space

areas that become available in the community.

The Parks and Recreation Master Plan will assist the City in planning for and budgeting for future improvements desired by the community. The Plan provides recommendations that build upon the Department's Capital Improvements Plan (CIP), and community outreach techniques involving workshops, meetings, open houses, and a community survey.

Recommendations within the Plan also strive to ensure that local dollars are spent efficiently. It is also recommended that the City continue to partner with and promote other agencies in the provision of parks and recreation to minimize any duplication in parks and recreation services in the community.

Forest Preserve District of Cook County

The Forest Preserve District is a separate, independent taxing body, overseen by the Cook County Board of Commissioners, which also acts as the Forest Preserve District Board of Commissioners. The District owns 68,000 acres of open space throughout the County. In addition, it provides recreational areas consisting of six nature and educational centers, nine bike trails, 200 miles of multi-use trails for hiking, horseback riding, and cross-country skiing, hundreds of picnic groves, 30 fishing ponds and lakes, access to fishing and canoeing on rivers and streams, golf courses, swimming pools, model airplane flying fields, dog training areas, a cross-country ski center, and other winter sports areas are among the facilities provided. Woodlands, prairies, and marshes, including 4,400 acres of dedicated Illinois Nature Preserve, are habitat for birds and other wildlife.

The Cook County Forest Preserve maintains numerous facilities along the southern border of the City of Palos Heights. As part of the Forest Preserves Region 8, recreational amenities are provided for residents of Palos Heights, Palos Park, Orland Park, Crestwood, Tinley Park, Midlothian, and Oak Forest. Specific areas of Region 8, which are easily accessible to Palos

Heights residents, include Arrowhead Lake, Burr Oak Woods, Elizabeth Conkey Forest, and Turtlehead Lake.

The Palos Heights Bike trail links Lake Katherine Nature Preserve on the north end of the city to the Tinley Creek Bike Trail and Cook County Forest Preserve to the south. The two trails meet close to Hambone and Arrowhead Lakes. Activities within the northern area of Region 8 are numerous and include, bike and hiking trails, fishing, sheltered picnic areas, cross country skiing, snowmobile trails, ice-skating, and bird watching.

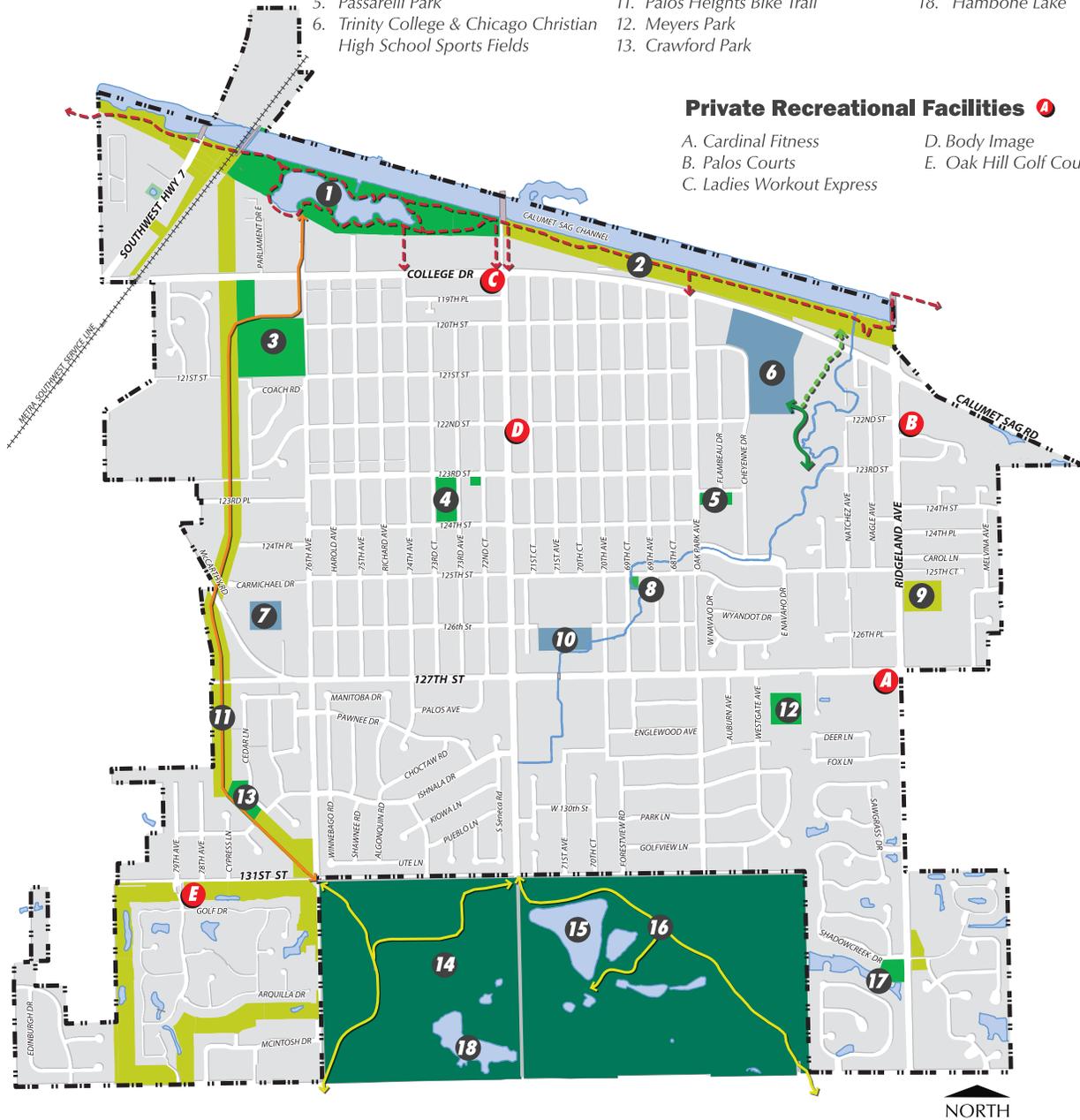
Figure 7: Parks, Open Space and Environmental Features

Public Parks & Open Space Areas ①

- | | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Lake Katherine Preserve | 7. Palos East Elementary Open Space | 14. Forest Preserve |
| 2. Cal Sag Trail | 8. Evers Park | 15. Lake Arrowhead |
| 3. Community Park | 9. Moraine Valley Baptist Open Space | 16. Tinley Creek Trail |
| 4. Palmer Park | 10. St. Alexander Sports Fields | 17. Walsh-Westgate Park |
| 5. Passarelli Park | 11. Palos Heights Bike Trail | 18. Hambone Lake |
| 6. Trinity College & Chicago Christian High School Sports Fields | 12. Meyers Park | |
| | 13. Crawford Park | |

Private Recreational Facilities ②

- | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| A. Cardinal Fitness | D. Body Image |
| B. Palos Courts | E. Oak Hill Golf Course |
| C. Ladies Workout Express | |



Environmental Features & Open Space Legend

- | | | |
|--------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------|
| City Parks | Cal-Sag Trail | Trinity College Trail Extension |
| School Open Space | Tinley Creek Trail | City Boundary |
| Forest Preserve | Palos Heights Bike Trail | |
| Open Space - Other | Trinity College Trail | |

Section Five: Harlem Avenue Corridor Plan

In addition to the City-wide plans, the Comprehensive Plan presents detailed analysis and recommendations for the Harlem Avenue Corridor.

The primary objectives of the Harlem Avenue Corridor Plan are to:

- Strengthen the retail, commercial and office components of the Corridor to provide residents shopping opportunities while also improving the City's tax base.
- Improve transportation and circulation for both vehicles and pedestrians in the Corridor.
- Improve the appearance and image of the Corridor.
- Protect and adequately buffer existing residential neighborhoods.
- Provide opportunities for new housing options as part of mixed-use developments in appropriate locations.

The following figures form the Harlem Avenue Corridor Plan.

- Existing Conditions
- Land Use and Development Plan
- Priority Redevelopment Sites
- North and Central Subarea Concepts
- South Subarea Concepts
- Urban Design and Circulation Plan (two pages)

FIGURE EIGHT: HARLEM AVENUE CORRIDOR - EXISTING CONDITIONS

Existing Land Use. Commercial land uses make up the majority of the property within the Corridor, including retail, restaurant, service, office/medical office, and a variety of other uses. Although many of the business appear to be doing well, there are a number of commercial space vacancies within the Corridor. Many of the sites within the Corridor suffer from shallow lot depth, poor circulation and parking, and older/obsolete buildings.

At certain locations within the Corridor, single family homes are immediately adjacent to commercial property, with some

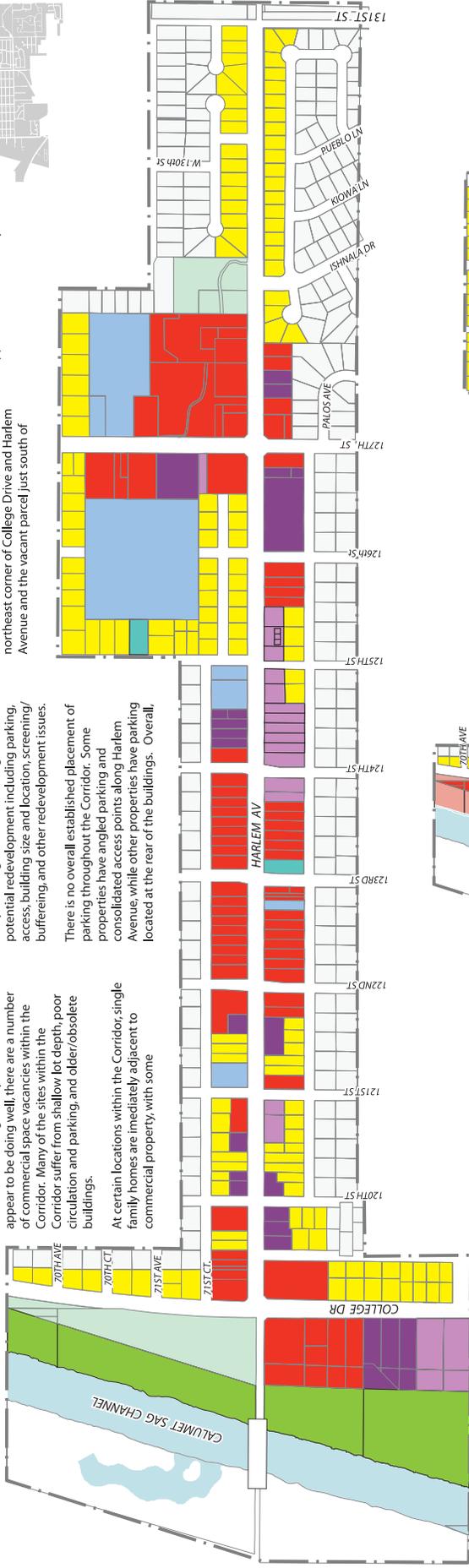
single-family residential fronting directly on Harlem Avenue. Most parcels within the Corridor maintain an average depth of only 115 feet. The lot shallow depth presents many challenges for both existing uses and potential redevelopment including parking, access, building size and location, screening/buffering, and other redevelopment issues.

There is no overall established placement of parking throughout the Corridor. Some properties have angled parking and consolidated access points along Harlem Avenue, while other properties have parking located at the rear of the buildings. Overall,

both vehicular and pedestrian connections are not cohesive and should be addressed.

There are two large vacant properties within the Corridor, the *Rizza Property* on the northeast corner of College Drive and Harlem Avenue and the vacant parcel just south of

Jewel on the east side of Harlem Avenue. Both of these properties present tremendous development opportunities for the City.



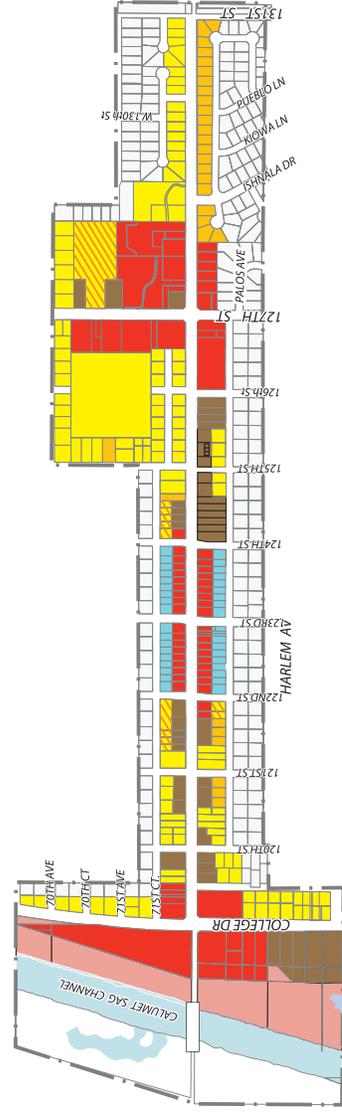
Harlem Avenue Existing Land Use Map Legend

- Single-Family Residential
- Residential
- Multi-Family Residential
- Office
- Public / Semi-Public
- Commercial
- Medical Office
- Open Space
- Vacant
- Utilities

Current Zoning. Properties within the Harlem Avenue Corridor are generally zoned B (Business) and B-1 (Restricted Business), with some R (Residential), R-1 Residential, Special Use, Non-Conforming Use, and a small number of office/medical uses and institutional use districts. Both the Non-conforming Use and Special Use zoned districts are found along the rear of lots abutting interior blocks of 71st Court and 72nd Court in the Olde Palos Neighborhood. The properties in these classifications consist

of surface parking lots. Within these parking lots are typical service amenities found in commercial areas, including refuse corrals and some utility junctions for the businesses located on the front of the lots, facing Harlem Avenue.

Current zoning does not reflect the existing land uses in many locations throughout the Corridor. The City should update the current zoning to reflect the Comprehensive Plan's Land Use Plan recommendations.



Harlem Avenue Current Zoning Map Legend

- Residential
- B-1
- B Business
- B-1 Restricted Business
- PUD
- Non-Conforming Use
- Utilities
- Study Area Boundary



FIGURE NINE:

HARLEM AVENUE CORRIDOR - LAND USE & DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The Harlem Avenue Corridor Land Use and Development Plan recommends continuation of many of the existing land uses, consolidation of non-residential uses, the long-term goal of converting residential uses fronting Harlem Avenue to commercial, and expansion of commercial uses on the south end near 127th Street.

Enhancement of existing properties is a goal of the Corridor Plan. Priority locations for redevelopment illustrated on this plan are described in further detail in the following figures. A recommendation of the Corridor Plan is to update the City's current zoning to reflect the goals of this Plan. The current zoning classification "non-conforming use" should especially be updated.

Retail Commercial. Commercial service and retail uses should be the predominate use along Harlem Avenue. The high volume of traffic along Harlem Avenue creates a tremendous opportunity for improved commercial opportunities. Commercial uses

should be a combination of local retail uses that serve the immediate residential areas such as convenience stores, and larger destination corridor commercial uses such as grocery stores. Further study should be conducted to explore the potential of creating additional public parking areas by closing certain cross-streets. While these commercial areas should be developed primarily for the automobile, pedestrian access and amenities should be part of any new commercial development

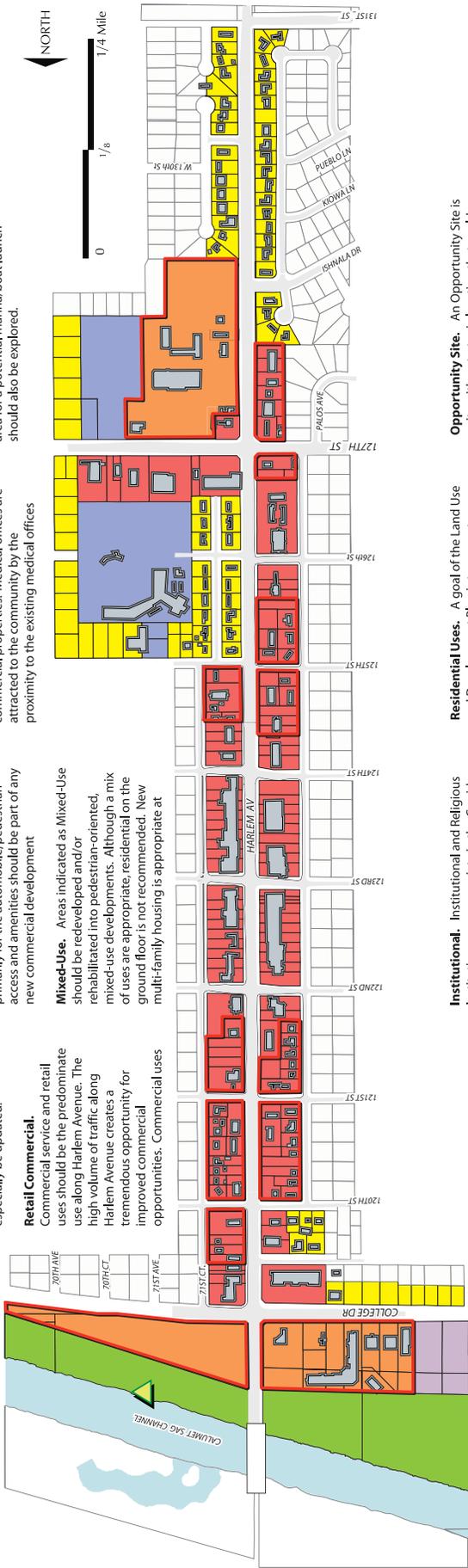
Mixed-Use. Areas indicated as Mixed-Use should be redeveloped and/or rehabilitated into pedestrian-oriented, mixed-use developments. Although a mix of uses are appropriate, residential on the ground floor is not recommended. New multi-family housing is appropriate at

these locations in the Corridor to provide a variety of housing within the City. All new multi-family housing should positively contribute to the family- and senior-oriented character of the community.

Office. Throughout the Corridor office uses are appropriate in the areas shown as commercial properties. Medical offices are attracted to the community by the proximity to the existing medical offices

and the Palos Community Hospital.

Open Space/Recreation. A pedestrian path, such as the planned Calumet Sag Recreational Trail, or a riverwalk should be constructed along the Calumet Sag Channel to promote pedestrian and bicycle use. A greenway should be extended from Lake Katherine, east along the Channel. An area for a potential marina/boat launch should also be explored.



Institutional. Institutional and Religious Institutions are appropriate in the Corridor, however, if redevelopment opportunities for these properties occur in the future, commercial or office uses should be encouraged.

Residential Uses. A goal of the Land Use and Development Plan is to convert single-family residential properties fronting Harlem Avenue north of 125th Street, on the east side, and north of 126th Street, on the west side to non-residential uses. These sites will likely redevelop over time as new development occurs in the Corridor. This conversion is only recommended if the property owners choose, and only as part of larger consolidated developments. Parcel consolidation and planned development of these sites is preferred over individual property conversions. Future redevelopment along the Corridor should include appropriate buffering and screening for protecting and enhancing the adjacent residential neighborhoods.

Opportunity Site. An Opportunity Site is a site with a strategic location that could serve as a catalyst to redevelopment for other sites. Typically, these sites are highly visible, large in size, or are vacant or underutilized. More detailed recommendations for these sites are shown in Figure 10.

FIGURE TEN: HARLEM AVENUE CORRIDOR - PRIORITY REDEVELOPMENT SITES

The Harlem Avenue Corridor Plan identifies Priority Redevelopment Sites within the Corridor. A priority redevelopment site is a site with a strategic opportunity to serve as a catalyst for redevelopment and improvement of other sites and the Corridor as a whole. Typically these sites are highly visible, larger in size, and vacant or underutilized. Twelve opportunity sites

have been identified within the Corridor. These sites have been identified based upon their location, size, and current use.

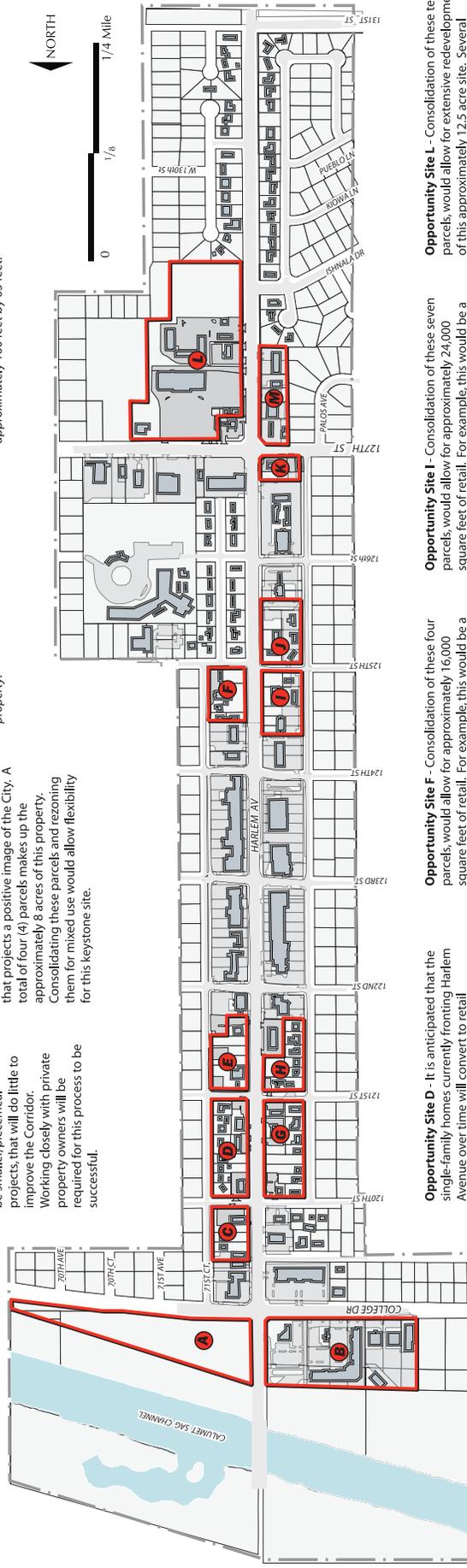
Some of these Sites consist of single-family residential uses that overtime should be converted to commercial uses fronting Harlem Avenue. Future redevelopment of many of these Sites will require parcel consolidation. Without parcel consolidation, future development will continue to be smaller, piecemeal projects, that will do little to improve the Corridor. Working closely with private property owners will be required for this process to be successful.

Figures 11, 12, and 13 illustrate some of the conceptual developments that may be possible for the Priority Redevelopment Sites identified in the figure below.

Opportunity Site A - The Rizza Property at the northeast corner of College Drive and Harlem Avenue is a priority redevelopment site. As the front door into the Harlem Avenue Corridor, this property should be developed and enhanced to create not only new retail and shopping destinations, but a gateway intersection development that projects a positive image of the City. A total of four (4) parcels makes up the approximately 8 acres of this property. Consolidating these parcels and rezoning them for mixed use would allow flexibility for this keystone site.

Opportunity Site B - Across the street to the west of the Rizza Property are several properties containing multiple commercial uses and businesses. The corner site houses two businesses, a Starbucks and a Founders Bank, situated on a parcel approximately 2.5 acres. The remaining parcels are part of Tiffany Square and four (4) professional office buildings total another 7.5 acres. Together, this site provides potential for an exciting new development similar in scale to the Rizza property.

Opportunity Site C - It is anticipated that the single-family homes currently fronting Harlem Avenue over time will convert to retail development. This conversion is only recommended if the property owners choose, and only as part of larger consolidated developments. Consolidation of these five parcels would allow for redevelopment of this area to accommodate approximately 16,000 square feet of retail. For example, this would include one building measuring approximately 160 feet by 65 feet.



Priority Redevelopment Sites Legend

- Priority Redevelopment Site
- Existing Building
- Existing Parking Area
- Study Area Boundary

Opportunity Site D - It is anticipated that the single-family homes currently fronting Harlem Avenue over time will convert to retail development. This conversion is only recommended if the property owners choose, and only as part of larger consolidated developments. Consolidation of these eleven parcels would accommodate approximately 22,000 square feet of retail. For example, this would include one building approximately 220 feet by 100 feet.

Opportunity Site E - It is anticipated that the single-family homes currently fronting Harlem Avenue over time will convert to retail development. This conversion is only recommended if the property owners choose, and only as part of larger consolidated developments. Consolidation of these six parcels would allow for approximately 14,000 square feet of retail space. For example, this would be a building, approximately 140 feet by 100 feet.

Opportunity Site F - Consolidation of these four parcels, would allow for approximately 16,000 square feet of retail. For example, this would be a building approximately 160 feet by 65 feet.

Opportunity Site G - It is anticipated that the single-family homes currently fronting Harlem Avenue over time will convert to retail development. This conversion is only recommended if the property owners choose, and only as part of larger consolidated developments. Consolidation of these twelve parcels, would allow for approximately 22,000 square feet of retail space. For example, this would be a building approximately 220 feet by 100 feet.

Opportunity Site H - Consolidation of these three parcels, would allow for approximately 8,525 square feet of retail space. For example, this would be a building, approximately 155 feet by 55 feet.

Opportunity Site I - Consolidation of these seven parcels, would allow for approximately 24,000 square feet of retail. For example, this would be a building approximately 240 feet by 100 feet.

Opportunity Site J - Consolidation of these six parcels would allow for approximately 18,000 square feet of retail. For example, this would be a building approximately 240 feet by 75 feet.

Opportunity Site K - Consolidation of these two parcels would allow for approximately 13,200 square feet of retail. For example, this would be a building approximately 220 feet by 60 feet.

Opportunity Site L - Consolidation of these ten parcels, would allow for extensive redevelopment of this approximately 12.5 acre site. Several mixed-use buildings ranging from small to big box users could be accommodated on a site this size. For example, approximately 200,000 to 250,000 square feet of retail space with appropriate parking could locate on this Opportunity Site.

Opportunity Site M - Consolidation of these seven parcels, would allow for a more cohesive, master planned retail development. Existing residential uses should be well buffered from new development. For example, approximately 20,000 square feet of retail space with appropriate parking could locate on this Opportunity Site.

FIGURE ELEVEN:

HARLEM AVENUE CORRIDOR - NORTH AND CENTRAL AREA IMPROVEMENT CONCEPTS

The north and central areas of the Corridor presents many planning challenges for redevelopment. A typical block south of College Drive is roughly 610 feet by 230 feet with an approximate acreage just below 3.5 acres. Within these blocks there are usually 6 to 9 parcels, many with different owners. Additionally, some of these parcels contain single family residences which have frontage on both Harlem Avenue and residential side streets.

For Opportunity Sites, A through I, as identified below, new conceptual development is represented by orange buildings. These conceptual development footprints illustrate one possible development orientation for new buildings and parking areas. Each is intended to help visualize the development potential of the site. As illustrated in this figure, retail buildings should be located close to the street, creating a strong visual presence along the corridor.

Future redevelopment of the properties in these central blocks to create effective commercial retail areas will require parcel consolidation. Without parcel consolidation, future development along the Corridor will continue to be piecemeal and fail to acknowledge the goal of a cohesive Corridor. Only through consolidating parcels will issues such as cross access, parking, traffic and circulation be improved.

Working closely with private property owners will be required for this process to be successful.

Considering the similarities between the blocks along Harlem Avenue, alternative development patterns can be easily configured which maximize redevelopment opportunities effectively within the narrow blocks. These options should be starting points for evaluating future redevelopment of entire blocks and partial blocks. Opportunity sites C, G, E, and F represent these typical variations and are illustrated in the figure below. The concepts show potential redevelopment with buildings near the street with parking in the rear. Although the sites could be developed in a number of different ways, any redevelopment should provide a strong, positive, attractive presence along Harlem Avenue.

Opportunity Sites: The Rizza Property at the northeast corner of College Drive and Harlem Avenue is a priority redevelopment site (Priority Redevelopment Site A). As the front door into the Harlem Avenue Corridor and for many of the City of Palos Heights, this property should be developed and enhanced to create not only new retail and

shopping destinations, but a gateway intersection development that projects a positive image of the City. Uniform landscaping & streetscaping can beautify the area and screen parking areas. The property should be developed with a mix of uses with commercial/retail uses at street level with office or residential above. Multi-family residential uses may be appropriate in this location, while single-family detached homes are not. Future development should allow access to future open space which may include an extension of Lake Katherine Preserve.

Illustrative concept plans are also illustrated for other Redevelopment Sites in the Corridor. With parcel consolidation, potential buildings and parking area configurations are illustrated. Potential site layouts address the need for retail buildings to be close to Harlem Avenue which will better define the streetscape environment and parking needs. Parking is located in the rear areas of the property on many of the illustrative concepts. Over time, as part of master planned, high-quality development involving parcel consolidation (not

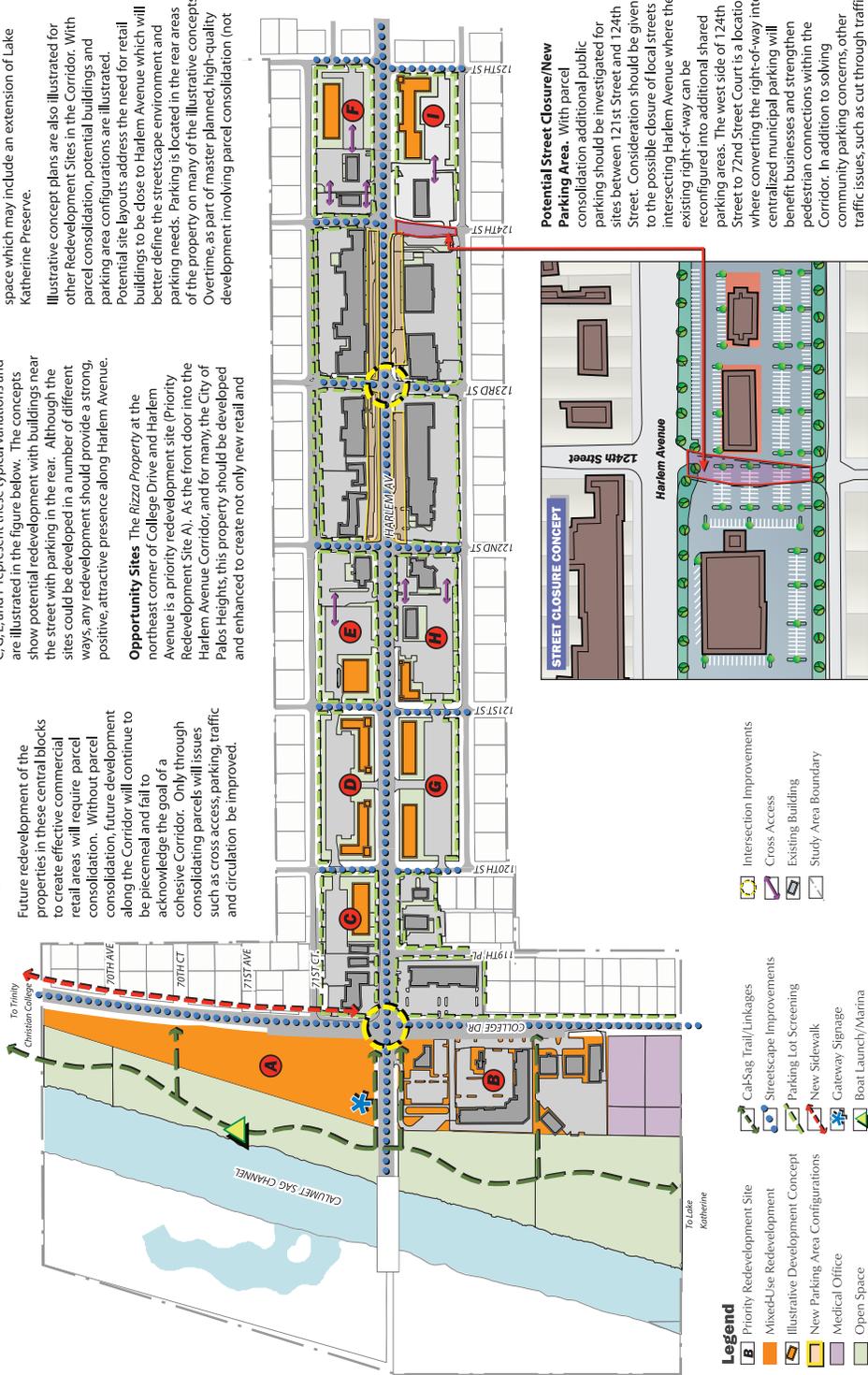


individual lot conversions), existing single-family residential properties abutting Harlem Avenue should be converted to commercial uses to create the community's desire for a more cohesive retail Corridor.

Open Space/Potential Marina. Future open space along the Calumet Sag Channel should also include recreational amenities such as a pedestrian trail or Calumet Sag Trail. The opportunity may also exist to discuss with the IWRD the potential of creating a public boat launch/marina in this area.

Screening and Buffering. Parking should be well buffered along Harlem Avenue providing ample space for sidewalks, ornamental streetscape elements, and landscape screening for the parking areas. Adjacent residential uses should be well-buffered from non-residential uses.

Vehicular and Pedestrian Flow. Many of these concepts will dramatically improve traffic flow along Harlem Avenue. Signalized Intersections should be improved to include more formalized and visible pedestrian crossings. The City should also begin to work with IDOT to consider a reduction in speed in this segment of the Harlem Avenue Corridor.



Potential Street Closure/New Parking Area. With parcel consolidation additional public parking should be investigated for sites between 121st Street and 124th Street. Consideration should be given to the possible closure of local streets intersecting Harlem Avenue where the existing right-of-way can be reconfigured into additional shared parking areas. The west side of 124th Street to 72nd Street Court is a location where converting the right-of-way into centralized municipal parking will benefit businesses and strengthen pedestrian connections within the Corridor. In addition to solving community parking concerns, other traffic issues, such as cut through traffic may be addressed by this concept.



CITY OF PALOS HEIGHTS COMPREHENSIVE PLAN: HARLEM AVENUE SUB-AREA

- Legend**
- Priority Redevelopment Site
 - Mixed-Use Redevelopment
 - Illustrative Development Concept
 - New Parking Area Configurations
 - Medical Office
 - Open Space
 - Cal-Sag Trail/Linkages
 - Streetscape Improvements
 - Parking Lot Screening
 - New Sidewalk
 - Gateway Signage
 - Boat Launch/Marina
 - Intersection Improvements
 - Cross Access
 - Existing Building
 - Study Area Boundary

FIGURE TWELVE:

HARLEM AVENUE CORRIDOR PLAN - SOUTH AREA IMPROVEMENT CONCEPTS

South of 127th Street, the Corridor begins to consist of larger parcels. Three Priority Redevelopment Sites are identified on the South Area Improvement Concept. Sites J and K are discussed in Figure 10, however, this Plan provides specific detail for Opportunity Site L. The potential exists for Opportunity Site L to become redeveloped into a more efficient and exciting mixed-use area. For Opportunity Sites, J, K, and L, as identified below, new conceptual development is represented by orange buildings. These conceptual development footprints illustrate one possible development orientation for new buildings and parking areas. Each is intended to help visualize the development potential of the site.

Opportunity Site L. Parcel consolidation is key to the redevelopment of Opportunity Site (L) at the southeast corner of 127th Street and Harlem Avenue. Although parcel consolidation may be difficult, a master planned redevelopment of the

properties into a larger development could offer a more pedestrian friendly mixed-use area. Access, circulation and parking could be improved & overall retail square footage could also be increased. The Concept shows a 70,000 sq.ft building (large enough for a new grocery store) and smaller outlet buildings. The priority of the redevelopment of Opportunity Site L should be to accommodate a new Jewel to front either Harlem Avenue or 127th Street. The illustrative

figure on this graphic illustrates the Jewel store fronting Harlem Avenue. Due to the number of parcels (thirteen), assemblage may be challenging, however, the majority of the parcels are retail and commercial and the future plans to redevelop the existing Jewel may entice current property owners to consolidate the site. The total land area of all the parcels once consolidated will be approximately twelve (12) acres.

Although the site could be developed in a number of different ways, any redevelopment should provide a strong, positive, attractive presence along Harlem Avenue.

As illustrated in this figure, retail buildings should be located close to the street, creating a strong visual presence along the Corridor.

Vehicular access is shown from 127th Street and Harlem Avenue. Only two curb-cuts are illustrated along Harlem Avenue which will improve circulation into the site without adversely impacting through traffic on Harlem Avenue. In addition, two access points are shown off of 127th street, one full access and one limited access for a parking area along the northeast corner.

New Parking Configurations. Existing parking areas within the Corridor should be studied to ensure that they are efficient, safe and appropriately sized. Existing businesses should be included in any future parking studies for the area. Parking area modifications may be necessary to improve parking.

Streetscape Improvements. A Corridor-Wide Streetscape Improvement Program for Harlem Avenue should be developed to improve the overall appearance and cohesiveness of the Corridor. Streetscape Improvements will distinguish it from surrounding communities. Coordinated streetscape improvements may include banners, lighting, landscaping, and gateway signage at key locations.

Parking Lot Screening. Parking lots should be screened from view along sidewalks and roadways through the use of low masonry walls, hedge plantings, and shrubs. Screening should be implemented not only along Harlem Avenue frontage but where parking areas are adjacent side streets, and/or residential areas.

Cross Access. As properties redevelop along the Corridor, design techniques such as shared-access and cross-access should be implemented. This will result in fewer curb-cuts along Harlem Avenue which will improve circulation, flow and safety. The Corridor currently has many areas where good cross access has been designed, new developments should continue to create cross access wherever feasible.

Minimize Curb Cuts. Although mentioned throughout the document it is important to emphasize that curb cuts should be minimized along Harlem Avenue. Shared driveways, cross access and curb cut reductions along with providing site access via intersecting east/west cross streets will improve traffic flow and circulation.

Pedestrian Crossings. To improve pedestrian crossings in the Corridor the City should work with IDOT to implement improvements. Techniques such as improved signage, lighting, or paver markings at signalized intersections should be installed where feasible.

Gateway Signage. The City should encourage the placement of "Gateway" signs that should be developed according to the Plan at major entry routes into Palos Heights. In addition to the signs, the gateway features may include attractive landscaping and decorative lighting.



CITY OF PALOS HEIGHTS COMPREHENSIVE PLAN: HARLEM AVENUE SUB-AREA

FIGURE THIRTEEN: HARLEM AVENUE CORRIDOR - URBAN DESIGN AND CIRCULATION PLAN

The Urban Design and Circulation Plan addresses both the public and private improvements within the Harlem Avenue Corridor. The Plan is based upon community input including a Business Workshop and the Corridor's Vision, Goals and Objectives. In general, the Urban Design and Circulation Plan strives to:

- 1) Promote public and private improvements and developments that will help create and reinforce the desired character of the Harlem Avenue Corridor.
- 2) Foster new development and redevelopment within the Corridor.
- 3) Improve the Corridor's appearance and the quality of existing structures and developments.

- 4) Ensure high-quality and compatible building and site designs throughout the Corridor.
- 5) Establish a development pattern that encourages more significant pedestrian and bicycle activity, while still accommodating auto traffic and parking.

The Plan does not attempt to dictate architectural styles or make all the buildings look the same throughout the Corridor. Rather, the Plan strives to promote a level of quality, compatibility, and consistency that will help make the Corridor a truly unique and distinctive area for residents, businesses, employees, shoppers, and visitors alike.

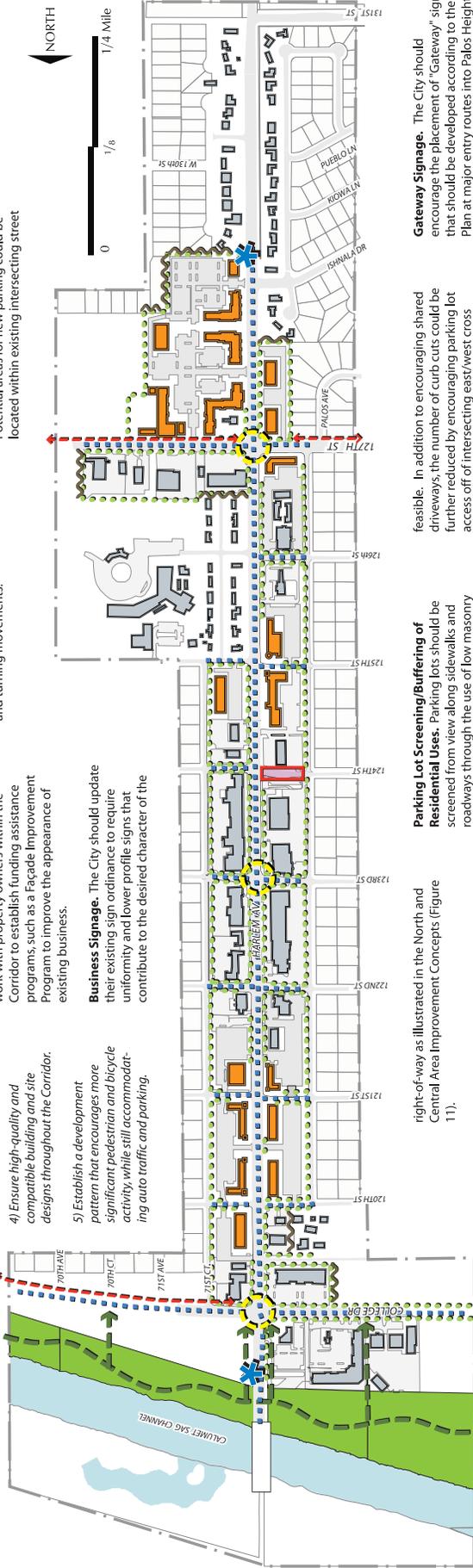
Facade Improvement. The City should work with property owners within the Corridor to establish funding assistance programs, such as a Façade Improvement Program to improve the appearance of existing business.

Business Signage. The City should update their existing sign ordinance to require uniformity and lower profile signs that contribute to the desired character of the

Corridor while still providing sufficient business identification and visibility.

Harlem Avenue Speed Reduction. Consider and consult with IDOT to reduce vehicular speeds within a designated segment along the Harlem Avenue Corridor in order to enhance a more pedestrian friendly shopping district. Reducing the speed will also improve vehicular transportation circulation, flow, and turning movements.

Parking Areas. Existing parking areas within the Corridor should be studied to ensure that they are efficient, safe and appropriately sized. Existing businesses should be included in any future parking studies for the area. Parking area modifications may be necessary to improve parking. The City should work with property owners to identify preferred locations for new municipal parking areas and work towards their construction. Potential areas for new parking could be located within existing intersecting street



- Legend**
- Streetscape Improvements
 - Parking Lot Screening
 - Buffering
 - New Sidewalk
 - Calumet Sag Trail/Linkages
 - Gateway Signage
 - Intersection Improvements
 - Possible Street Closure/Parking Area
 - Open Space
 - Existing Building
 - Illustrative Development Concepts
 - Study Area Boundary

right-of-way as illustrated in the North and Central Area Improvement Concepts (Figure 11).

Streetscape Improvements. A Corridor-Wide Streetscape Improvement Program for Harlem Avenue should be developed to improve the overall appearance and cohesiveness of the Corridor. Streetscape improvements will distinguish it from surrounding communities. Coordinated streetscape improvements may include banners, lighting, landscaping, and gateway signage at key locations. Although previous landscape medians have been removed, more strategically located medians that still allow turning movements throughout the Corridor should be installed to improve the appearance and function of the Corridor.

Parking Lot Screening/Buffering of Residential Uses. Parking lots should be screened from view along sidewalks and roadways through the use of low masonry walls, hedge plantings, and shrubs. Screening and buffering should be installed not only along Harlem Avenue parking area frontage but where parking areas and buildings are adjacent to side streets, and/or residential areas.

Cross Access and Restrictive Curb Cuts. As properties redevelop along the Corridor, design techniques such as shared-access and cross-access should be implemented. This will result in fewer curb-cuts along Harlem Avenue which will improve circulation, flow and safety. The Corridor currently has many areas where good cross access has been designed, new developments should continue to create cross access wherever

feasible. In addition to encouraging shared driveways, the number of curb cuts could be further reduced by encouraging parking lot access off of intersecting east/west cross streets.

Pedestrian Improvements. To improve pedestrian crossings in the Corridor, the City should work with IDOT to implement improvements. Techniques such as improved signage, lighting, or paver markings at signalized intersections should be installed where feasible. New sidewalks should be installed along the south side of College Drive, east of Harlem Avenue, providing pedestrian access to Trinity College, and along 127th Street providing pedestrian access to the adjacent residential areas.

Gateway Signage. The City should encourage the placement of "Gateway" signs that should be developed according to the Plan at major entry routes into Palos Heights. In addition to the signs, the gateway features may include attractive landscaping and decorative lighting.



FIGURE FOURTEEN: HARLEM AVENUE CORRIDOR - URBAN DESIGN AND CIRCULATION PLAN (CONTINUED)

Parking Area Screening. To continue to improve the appearance of the Corridor the City should continue to work with property owners and IDOT to install streetscaping improvements. At no point along Harlem Road, should a parking area be directly adjacent to a public sidewalk without some

form of barrier. Examples are shown in the following illustrations of typical barriers between parking and pedestrian paths. Examples are shown for right-of-way distances of 2, 5' and 10' from the ROW to the parking area. Even for areas where there is almost no separation, a decorative iron fence could be installed between the pedestrian and vehicular realm.

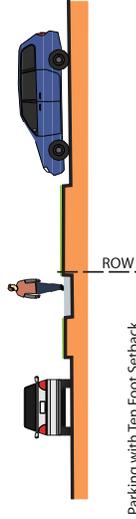
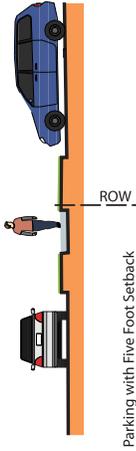
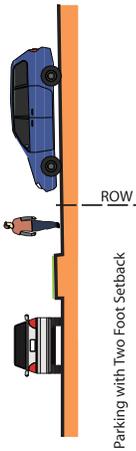
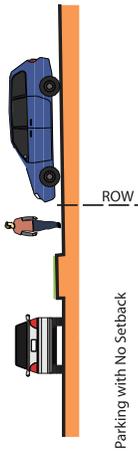
Parking Locations. The location of the parking area, in relation with the building and Harlem Avenue is also a major factor in the type of

screening that should be used. The following illustrates three examples of appropriate screening based upon the parking areas location. Landscaping, decorative iron rod fencing, low masonry walls, and parkway trees can be used in a variety of way to provide the screening of cars,

while still allowing sufficient visibility for businesses in the Corridor.

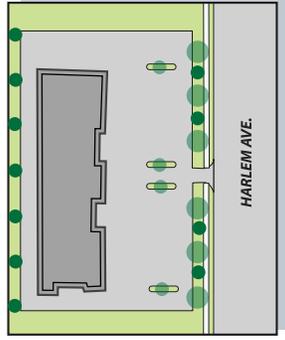
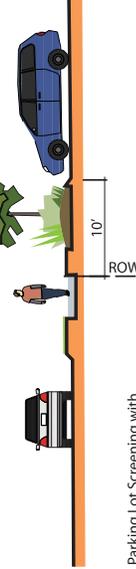
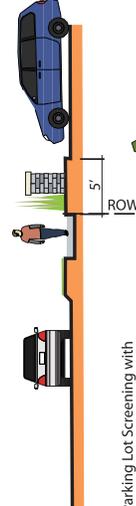
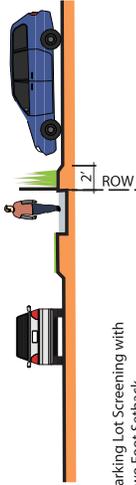
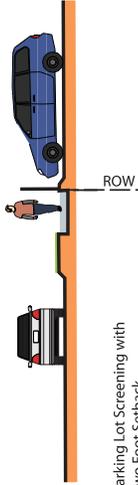
EXISTING CONDITIONS

HARLEM AVE. PARKING AREA

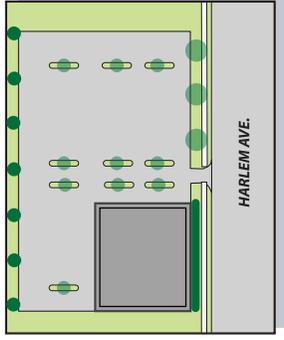


AFTER IMPROVEMENTS

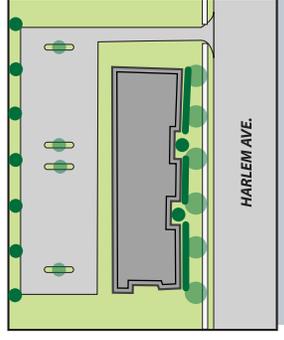
HARLEM AVE. PARKING AREA



Parking areas in the front should be screened by a combination of landscaping and fencing.



Parking areas in side and rear of the property should be screened by a combination of landscaping and fencing. Landscaping, such as a hedgerow, should be used along building frontages as foundation screening.



With buildings located in the front that have an appropriate setback, larger street trees can be installed along Harlem Avenue.

Section Six: Implementation

The Comprehensive Plan sets forth an agreed to “road map” for the City of Palos Heights over the next 15 to 20 years. It is the product of considerable effort on the part of the residents, business owners, City Council, Plan Commission, Committees, members of the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee, and the City staff.

Although the comprehensive planning process has been completed, the City’s process for implementing the Plan has just begun. Many steps are required by both the public and private sectors over the next 15 to 20 years to accomplish the recommendations of this Plan.

Adoption of the Comprehensive Plan does not mark the end of the Comprehensive Planning process. Rather, it should be viewed as the beginning of the real effort to achieve the community vision. This document has identified numerous implementation strategies in each of the various plan elements needing to be initiated and completed. Many of these implementation strategies will be ongoing activities. All of the implementation strategies will require the City to commit various resources to the effort.

This section presents a description of implementation steps that should be undertaken. Implementation steps presented include:

- Adopt the Plan and use it often
- Prepare an implementation “action agenda”
- Update and use a 5-year Capital Improvement Program (CIP)
- Update the Comprehensive Plan regularly
- Review and update the City’s Zoning Ordinance and other development controls
- Explore possible funding sources
- Promote cooperation, communication, and participation among governmental agencies

Adopt the Plan and Use It Often

The Comprehensive Plan should become the official policy guide for Palos Heights to implement improvements and coordinate development or redevelopment projects within the community. It is essential that the Plan be adopted by the City Council and then be used on a regular basis by City staff, boards, commissions, and committees to review and evaluate all proposals for improvement and development within the community in the years ahead.

Prepare an Implementation “Action Agenda”

The City should prepare an implementation “action agenda” which highlights the improvement and development projects and activities to be undertaken during the next few years. For example, the “action agenda” might consist of:

- A detailed description of the projects and activities to be undertaken with City Council and staff input;
- The priority of each project or activity, including a suggested date of completion;
- An indication of the public and private sector responsibilities for initiating and participating in each activity; and,
- An indication of possible funding sources and assistance programs that may be available/ appropriate for implementing each project or activity.

In order to remain current, the “action agenda” should be updated once a year. Staff may also create an annual report based upon the “Action Agenda” that is presented to Council to update them about the Comprehensive Plan recommendations. This report may be submitted annually, preceding sessions at the Staff and Council levels to evaluate and update the Plan and Implementation strategies, especially as they may relate to budgeting for the following fiscal year, i.e. public street projects, specific site

development, planning studies, etc.

Update and Use a 5-year Capital Improvement Program (CIP)

Building upon the Implementation “Action Agenda”, the City should also use a Capital Improvement Program for implementing the Comprehensive Plan. It establishes schedules and priorities for all public improvement projects within a five-year period. The City first prepares a list of all public improvements that will be required in the next five years. Then all projects are reviewed, priorities assigned, cost estimates prepared, and potential funding sources identified.

The Capital Improvement Program typically schedules the implementation of a range of specific projects related to the Comprehensive Plan, particularly the restoration and upgrading of existing utilities and infrastructure facilities, including the water system, sanitary sewers, storm water facilities, the street system, and streetscape enhancements. Expansion, construction, or improvement of municipal buildings, recreational facilities, and other special projects would also be included in the Capital Improvements Program.

Palos Heights’s financial resources will always be limited and public dollars must be spent wisely. The Capital Improvements Program would allow the City of Palos Heights to provide the most desirable public improvements, yet stay within budget constraints.

Update the Comprehensive Plan

It is important to emphasize that the Comprehensive Plan is not a static document and that community attitudes or opportunities and issues may change. The City should regularly undertake a systematic review of the Plan. The City should initiate an internal Staff review of the plan every two to three years and it should consider an update of the Plan every five to ten years. Routine examination of the Plan will help ensure that the planning program remains

relevant to community needs and aspirations.

Review and Update the City’s Zoning Ordinance and Other Development Controls

Zoning is an important tool in implementing planning policy. It establishes the types of uses to be allowed on specific properties, and prescribes the overall character and intensity of development to be permitted.

Adoption of the Comprehensive Plan should be followed by a review and update of the City’s various development controls including the zoning ordinance, subdivision regulations, and other related codes and ordinances. It is essential that all development controls be consistent with and complement the Comprehensive Plan.

The Comprehensive Plan sets forth policies regarding the use of land within the City and establishes guidelines for the quality, character and intensity of new development to be promoted in the years ahead. The Plan’s policies and guidelines should greatly assist the City in formulating new zoning and development code regulations that can better reflect the unique needs and aspirations of the Palos Heights community.

Non-Conforming Use Zoning Classification

The City should rezone all properties currently characterized in the non-conforming use district into an appropriate district based on the zoning of surrounding properties or the existing or desired use of the property. Communication and coordination with landowners of property within the non-conforming use designation will be necessary in order to ease concerns over continued and future use of their property. Not all properties will conform to an existing zoning district of the City, which is acceptable, since these had already been deemed non-conforming.

Similar principles to those described for the current non-conforming use district should be

applied simply as general requirements in the zoning ordinance. The following are potential steps for the City to consider:

- Rezone each property within the non-conforming district
- Amend the ordinance to do away with that district, but add a description of non-conformities in the appropriate section of the zoning code

Overlay Districts

The Comprehensive Plan recommends that a Harlem Avenue Commercial Corridor Overlay District be implemented to encourage the commercial redevelopment of the Corridor. The Harlem Avenue Commercial Corridor Overlay District would provide additional zoning regulations to those already imposed by the “underlying” commercial district. The overlay district should include requirements for new development (defined in the overlay district itself) which may include potential bonuses for new developments that meet the requirements of the district.

It is recommended that a City policy moving forward be to convert (over time, as opportunity presents itself) existing single-family residential uses fronting Harlem Avenue (see the Harlem Avenue Corridor Plan for details), into commercial or office uses.

Ideally, no new single-family residential homes should be constructed between 71st Court and 72nd Court in the areas designated in the Harlem Avenue Corridor Plan for commercial or office uses. Existing single-family residential uses can remain; however, any renovations must conform to the Olde Palos Residential Overlay District. As these uses are converted to commercial or office, the Harlem Avenue Corridor Overlay District should then regulate these properties.

A Harlem Avenue Commercial Overlay District should be established that includes the properties designated in the Comprehensive Plan for commercial (including retail and office) land

uses, within the Harlem Avenue Corridor Plan. This should also include all existing residential properties along the Corridor designated in the Plan for future commercial land use. As properties convert over time from residential to commercial or office land uses, it will be clear that these new uses follow the Harlem Avenue Corridor Commercial Overlay District requirements. As development proposals are brought forward for consideration, the City should evaluate each development proposal as a potential opportunity to improve the commercial and economic strength of the Harlem Avenue Corridor, consistent with the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan.

Residential to Nonresidential Conversion Over Time

The City’s vision for the Harlem Avenue Corridor is to transform this area into a more cohesive commercial corridor (including retail and office uses), and pedestrian-friendly shopping area. Therefore, the Plan recommends promoting the conversion of certain single-family homes to commercial or office uses (see Harlem Avenue Corridor Plan). This is not an action that the City should take, but rather follow these criteria if a private landowner proposes rezoning and a new commercial development:

1. Minimum lot size for conversion (for example, must be two or more adjacent lots)
2. Shared access/Cross-Access
3. Appropriate buffering from adjacent residential uses
4. High-quality design and architecture
5. Appropriate parking and circulation plan

Development Standards & Design Guidelines

Prepare and adopt a set of Development Standards & Design Guidelines for the City. Development Standards & Design Guidelines are a

graphic and textual description of allocation of permitted land uses, form of lots and buildings, and standards for streets and parking. They describe land use and development guidelines – consideration of factors beyond the overall land use proposed on the Land Use & Development Plan. The document should include the expectations of Palos Heights for the development of the general land use categories including:

- Commercial
- Mixed Use Development
- Residential Infill and Redevelopment

Explore Possible Funding Sources

The City of Palos Heights is aware of many of the grants and funding sources available to the Community. These programs should be monitored and applications made at appropriate deadlines and cycles to implement projects planned for the upcoming fiscal year. Since many grants require a percentage match, ranging from 5% to 20%, it is important for the City to budget the match even prior to receiving grant awards. Some time should be devoted to researching additional or new funding sources to enhance revenues that most often implement highly visible projects and make a difference in community function and appearance. Having a Comprehensive Plan to refer to in grant applications is a great improvement and will assist the City in gaining more funds in the future.

Other than grants, other implementation techniques such as Tax Increment Financing, Special Service Areas, and more could be considered to spur the redevelopment and reinvestment desired for the Harlem Avenue Corridor and areas along the Calumet Sag Channel or vacant parcels scattered throughout the city. It is critical to understand and analyze the incentives being offered by neighboring communities in order to remain competitive in retaining and attracting businesses to Palos Heights.

The City should continue to explore and con-

sider the wide range of local, county, state and federal resources and programs that may be available to assist in the implementation of the Plan's recommendations. A list of possible funding sources is provided in the following section. These funding source descriptions are current as of February 2008.

Tax Increment Financing (TIF)

Tax increment financing (TIF) is a mechanism used to carry out revitalization and redevelopment activities on a local basis. TIF allows a community to capture the increase in local property taxes that results from a redevelopment project in order to pay for the public costs involved in the project. TIF districts are most typically used in commercial and industrial areas of communities throughout Illinois.

TIF is being undertaken increasingly for mixed-use and residential areas as well. To carry out a TIF project, the municipality designates an area for revitalization and redevelopment, and establishes specific boundaries for the project area. The base equalized assessed valuation (EAV) of all properties within the area is determined as of the date of TIF adoption. Thereafter, all relevant property taxing districts continue to collect property taxes based on levies against the base EAV for a time period not to exceed 23 years. The increased real estate tax revenues generated by all new private development and redevelopment projects, and all appreciation in the value of existing properties which result in higher property values, are used to pay for public improvements within the project area. Tax Increment Financing does not generate tax revenues by increasing tax rates, but rather through the temporary capture of increased tax revenues generated by the enhanced valuation of properties resulting from the municipality's redevelopment activities. It should also be noted that TIF does not reduce the tax revenues received by any individual taxing district. Under TIF, all taxing districts continue to receive property taxes levied on the initial valuation of properties within the project area. At the conclusion of a TIF, the revenues accruing to the individual districts are most often significantly

greater than those initially received. TIF funds can be used for:

- Acquisition, clearance and other land assembly and site preparation activities.
- Sensitive rehabilitation of older, deteriorating or obsolete buildings.
- Incentives to attract or retain private development.
- Marketing of development sites.

Other redevelopment activities are also possible under TIF, including:

- Area-wide infrastructure improvements such as road repairs and utility upgrades.
- Correction or mitigation of environmental problems.
- Job training, workforce readiness and other related educational programs.
- Professional fees related to the project, such as legal, planning, and architectural services.

Necessary site or building improvements, such as streets, landscaping, property assembly and resale are typically accomplished using existing municipal revenues or revenues generated from the sale of municipal bonds. Because of the public investment, private developers are encouraged to build or lease facilities in the area and generate new tax revenues from their business operations. The increased tax revenues generated by higher property values are used to pay for the initial public improvements. Many communities have successfully used TIF funds to finance public improvements and other economic development incentives through the increased property tax revenue the improvements help generate. It should be emphasized that TIF will only be viable if significant new building development or redevelopment is expected to occur. In most cases, advanced private investor commitment to a development project is an im-

portant prerequisite to establishing a TIF district.

Special Service Areas

Special Service Area (SSA) financing is an economic development tool that enables a municipality, property owners and community members to cooperatively plan, provide for, benefit from, and finance capital improvements or “special services” for an identified geographic area. The projects or services of an SSA district are typically paid for with revenue from taxes levied on the properties receiving the benefit. SSA services and programs are in addition to the normal programs and services provided by the City.

SSA districts often are used in commercial or business districts but can include residential areas as well. SSAs have been used by communities throughout Illinois to accomplish a range of improvement activities, including: parking structures and surface lots, lighting, paving, landscaping installation and maintenance, streetscape improvements and seasonal decorations, litter control, security services, snow removal, storm sewers, tenant search and commercial attraction activities, and area-wide marketing and promotion activities.

SSA services and improvements are funded most often through revenues generated by an ad valorem tax on the real estate in the SSA, although taxes imposed on another basis are sometimes used. The process for establishing an SSA involves first establishing proposed boundaries of a contiguous area and defining the benefits and services to be paid for within that area. The costs of these services and projects are then estimated to determine a corresponding tax levy, rate and duration of the SSA. The decision of whether the municipality will issue bonds for SSA projects is also evaluated at the initial stages of SSA consideration. A public process for notifying property owners and other stakeholders within the SSA is required to provide information, gather feedback, and to allow for challenge. Upon successful adoption of an SSA ordinance, which includes a levy and budget, the sponsoring municipality typically

serves as the administrator of the SSA. Depending on the types of projects and services proposed for the SSA, however, many communities choose to delegate administration of the SSA to either an existing or new organization with a mission consistent with the purposes of the SSA. Amendments to and dissolution of the SSA, however, are accomplished by the sponsoring municipality.

Business District Designation

Business district development and redevelopment is authorized by Division 74.3 of the Illinois Municipal Code. A municipality may designate, after public hearings, an area of the municipality as a Business District. While business district designation does not provide a funding source, it empowers a municipality to carry out a business district development or redevelopment plan through the following actions:

- Approve all development and redevelopment proposals.
- Acquire, manage, convey or otherwise dispose of real and personal property acquired pursuant to the provisions of a development or redevelopment plan.
- Apply for and accept capital grants and loans from the United States and the State of Illinois, or any instrumentality of the United States or the State, for business district development and redevelopment.
- Borrow funds as it may be deemed necessary for the purpose of business district development and redevelopment, and in this connection issue such obligation or revenue bonds as it shall be deemed necessary, subject to applicable statutory limitations.
- Enter into contracts with any public or private agency or person.
- Sell, lease, trade or improve such real property as may be acquired in connection with business district development and redevelopment plans.

- Exercise the use of eminent domain for the acquisition of real and personal property for the purpose of a development or redevelopment project.
- Expend such public funds as may be necessary for the planning, execution and implementation of the business district plans.
- Establish by ordinance or resolution procedures for the planning, execution and implementation of business district plans.
- Create a Business District Development and Redevelopment Commission to act as an agent for the municipality for the purposes of business district development and redevelopment.

Community Development Corporations

Many communities use Special Service Areas or Tax Increment Financing (as appropriate) to fund the start up and/or operation of a Community Development Corporation (CDC) to oversee a range of redevelopment activities for a specific geographic area, particularly commercial areas and central business districts. A CDC is typically an independently chartered organization, often times with not-for-profit status, that is governed by a board of directors. The directors typically bring expertise in real estate or business development along with a demonstrated commitment to the community. CDCs are often funded through public-private partnerships with financial commitments from local financial institutions or businesses and a public funding source (TIF, SSA, etc.) to provide for both operating expenses and programs, as appropriate. CDCs may undertake traditional chamber of commerce-like activities such as marketing, promotion, workforce development, information management, and technical assistance to small businesses, but may also administer loan programs or acquire and redevelop property in the community. Many communities create CDCs under the umbrella structure of an established chamber of commerce in the community so that missions are complementary and do not overlap. An example of a distinctive

CDC activity is the facilitation or administration of a revolving loan fund or a community lending pool capitalized by commitments from local financial institutions to provide low-interest/low-cost loans. Such funds typically target both new and expanding businesses for such redevelopment activities as interior improvements, façade and exterior improvements, building additions, site improvements, etc. Some state and federal small business assistance programs are structured to work in combination with CDC-administered loan programs. Another distinctive activity of a CDC is property acquisition and redevelopment, which is most successful when the organization is mature in both expertise and capabilities (particularly if the CDC intends to manage property after redevelopment).

Façade Improvement Program

A Façade Improvement Program provides a financial incentive to property owners who are renovating the exterior of their businesses. The program operates on a rebate or reimbursement basis with funds being disbursed by the City after all work is completed. The maximum rebate amount allowed under the program varies by municipality. Typically, Façade Improvement funds may be used only for exterior repairs or improvements and all work should be performed in compliance with all City codes and ordinances. Allowable costs may include: window/door repair, storefront rehabilitation, cleaning or painting, repair or restoration of architectural detailing, awnings, signs, landscaping, building permits, architectural fees and other labor and materials.

National and State Main Street Programs

Comprehensive guidance pursuant to improving the appearance and economic performance of exiting commercial districts is available through the “Main Street” programs of the National Trust for Historic Preservation and the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency. These programs, based on a quarter century of success of the “Main Street Four-Point Approach” model developed by the National Trust, teach community members how to lead a comprehensive revitalization. The approach is structured around four committees—organization, economic restructuring, promotion, and design—that work simultaneously on multiple aspects of revitalization. Main Street programs are as unique as their communities but revitalization work can include: facilitating public improvements with local government and physical improvements with building owners, helping local business owners compete with national retailers, and hosting events to encourage tourism and bring shoppers to the district. The Illinois Main Street program provides training and technical assistance to participating communities.

Transportation and Infrastructure Improvements

A number of transportation and infrastructure funding sources are available to the City for implementing goals of the Comprehensive Plan.

SAFETEA-LU

The Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) represents the largest surface transportation investment in our Nation’s history. These two landmark bills brought surface transportation into the 21st century—the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA) and the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21). These previous Acts shaped the highway program to meet the Nation’s changing transportation needs. SAFETEA-LU builds on this strong foundation.

SAFETEA-LU addresses the many challenges

facing our transportation system today including improving safety, reducing traffic congestion, improving efficiency in freight movement, increasing intermodal connectivity, and protecting the environment. SAFETEA-LU promotes more efficient and effective Federal surface transportation programs by focusing on transportation issues of national significance, while giving State and local transportation decision makers more flexibility for solving transportation problems in their communities.

Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program (ITEP)

This funding source is administered by the Illinois Department of Transportation and is a set-aside fund from the SAFETEA-LU. Among the projects that are eligible for this funding include bicycle/pedestrian facilities, streetscaping, landscaping, historic preservation and projects that control or remove outdoor advertising. Federal reimbursement is available for up to 50 percent of the cost of right-of-way and easement acquisition and 80 percent of the cost for preliminary engineering, utility relocations, construction engineering and construction costs.

Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ)

The CMAQ program is also part of SAFETEA-LU and focuses on projects that provide solutions to regional congestion and air quality problems. Eligible project types include transit improvements, commuter parking lots, traffic flow improvements, bicycle/pedestrian projects and projects that result in emissions reductions. These projects are also federally funded at 80 percent of project costs.

Surface Transportation Program (STP)

These funds are allocated to coordinating regional councils to be used for all roadway and roadway related items. Projects in this funding category must have a local sponsor and are selected based, among other factors, on a ranking scale that takes into account the regional benefits provided by the project. STP funds are allocated among the following programs: demonstration projects; enhancement; hazard elimination; and urban funds.

Promote Cooperation, Communication, and Participation

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

However, in order for the Comprehensive Plan to be successful, it must be based on a strong partnership between the City, other public agencies, various neighborhood groups and organizations, the local business community, and the private sector.

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

- Other governmental and service districts, such as the four school districts, Worth and Palos Townships, neighboring Recreation Departments, the Library, METRA, Cook County, the private utility companies, the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), the Forest Preserve District, etc;
- Regional and local institutions, such as religious and philanthropic organizations;
- Local banks and financial institutions, which can provide assistance in upgrading existing properties, facilitating desirable new development and packaging assistance programs for residents and businesses;
- Builders and developers, who should be encouraged to undertake improvements and new construction that conform to the Plan and enhance the overall quality and character of the community;
- The Palos Heights community, since all residents and neighborhood groups should be encouraged to participate in the on-going planning process, and all should be given the opportunity to voice their opinions on improvement and development decisions within the community.

An example of an implementation step that involves the City cooperating with other agencies is the goal to lower the speed of traffic along the Harlem Avenue Corridor. The speed limit along Harlem Avenue is not conducive with retail development. The City should work cooperatively with IDOT to identify a speed that more appropriately assists the City in creating a safe shopping destination.