

**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

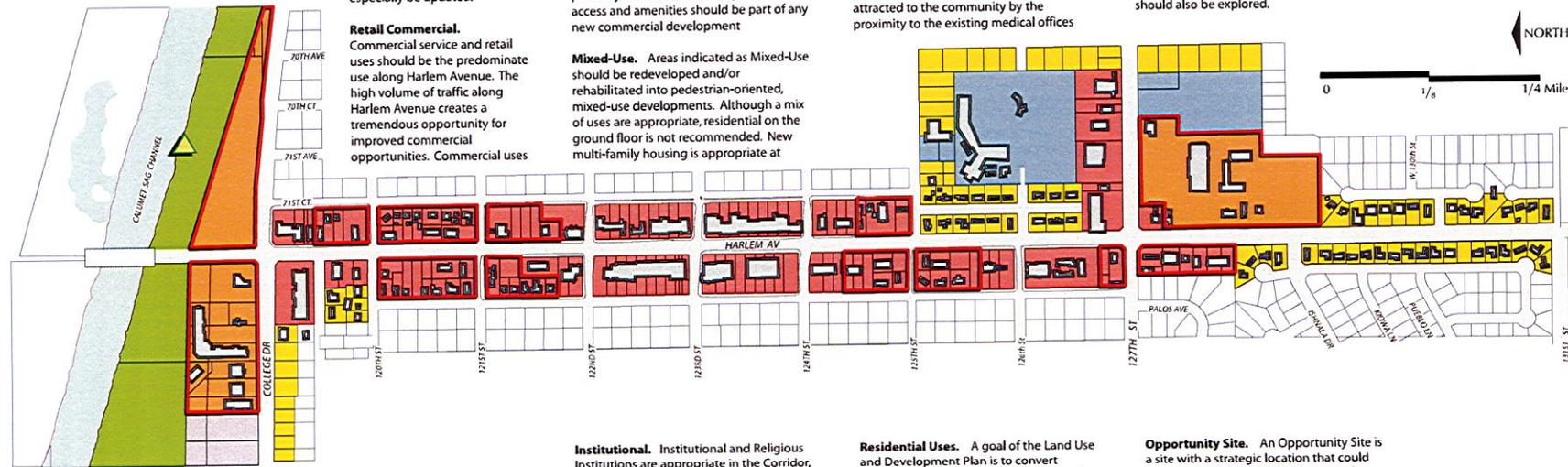
Mixed-Use. Areas indicated as Mixed-Use should be redeveloped and/or rehabilitated into pedestrian-oriented, mixed-use developments. Although a mix of uses are appropriate, residential on the ground floor is not recommended. New multi-family housing is appropriate at

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.



Land Use and Development Plan Legend

- Single-Family Residential
- Retail Commercial
- Medical Office
- Mixed-Use
- Institution
- Open Space
- Opportunity Site
- Existing Buildings
- Boat Launch/Marina
- Study Area Boundary

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.

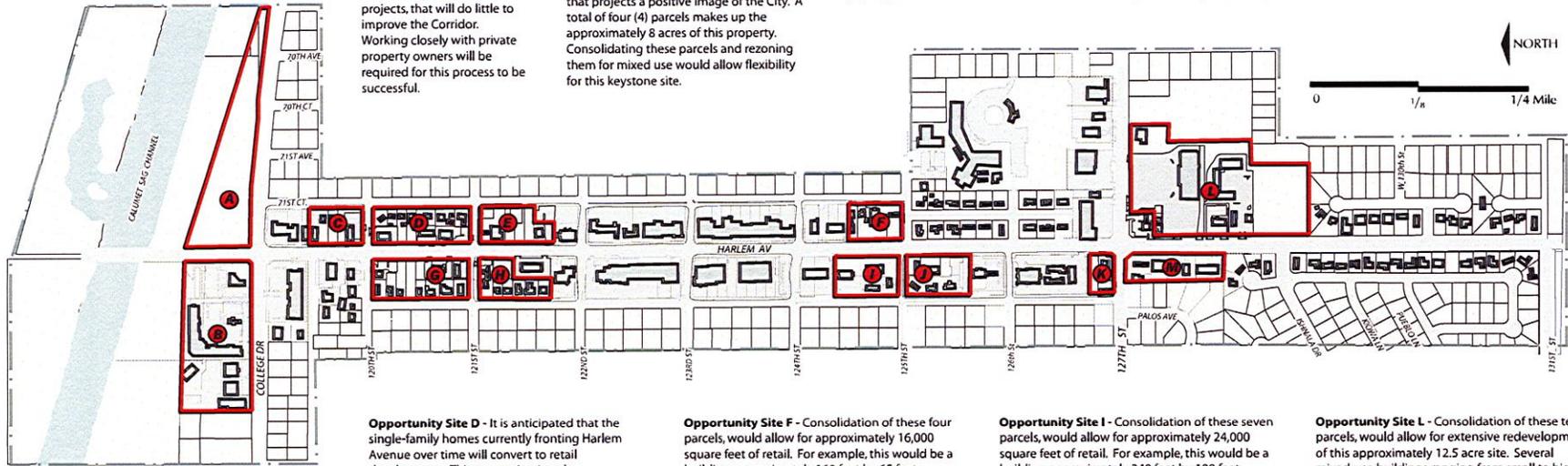
Some of these Sites consist of single-family residential uses that overtime, should be converted to commercial uses fronting Harlem Avenue. Future redevelopment of many of these Sites will require parcel consolidation. Without parcel consolidation, future development will continue to be smaller, piecemeal 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. Working closely with private property owners 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, 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.

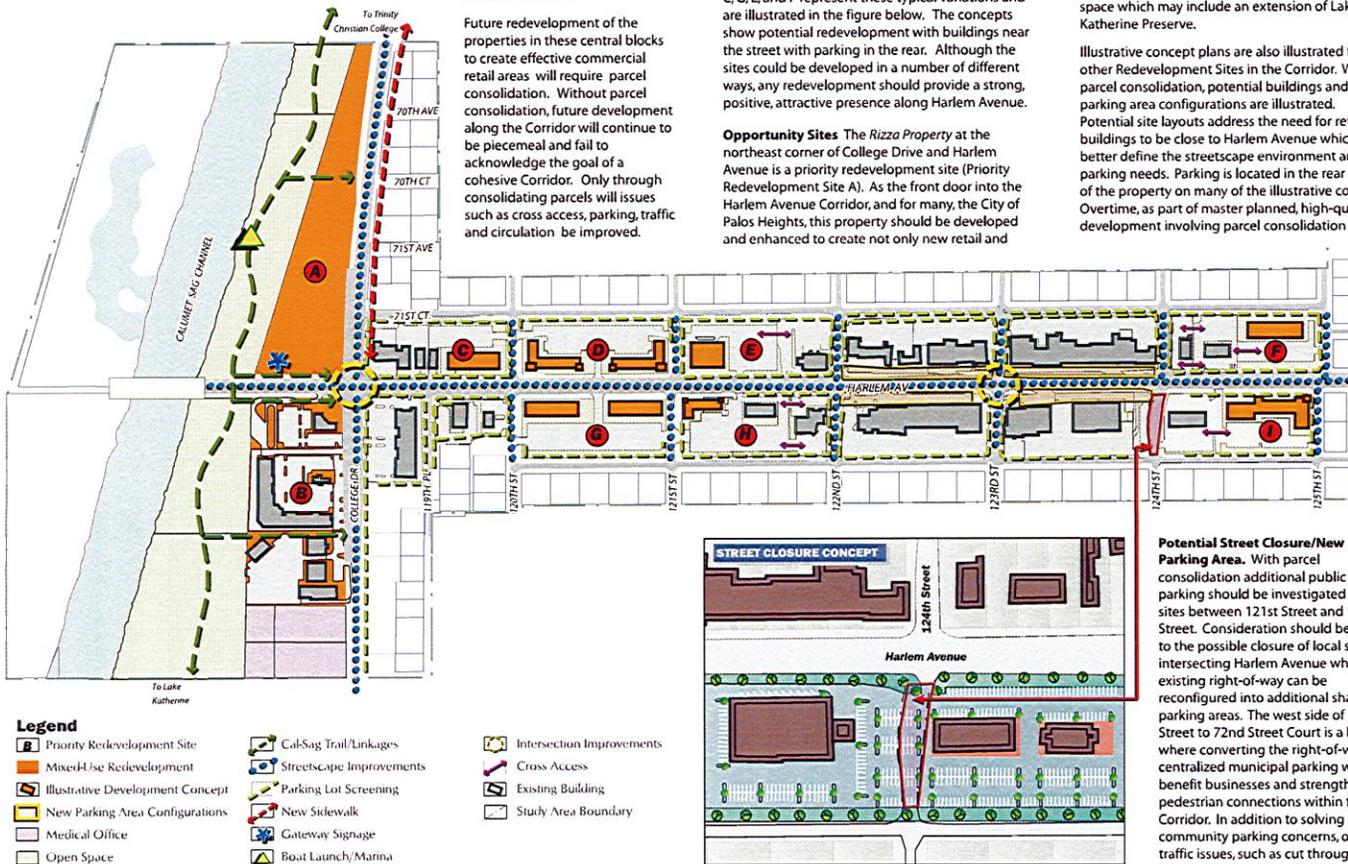
Illustrative concept plans are also illustrated for other Redevelopment Sites in the Corridor. With parcel consolidation, potential buildings and parking area configurations are illustrated. Potential site layouts address the need for retail buildings to be close to Harlem Avenue which will better define the streetscape environment and parking needs. Parking is located in the rear areas of the property on many of the illustrative concepts. Overtime, 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 MWRD 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.



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



**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 outlot 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.

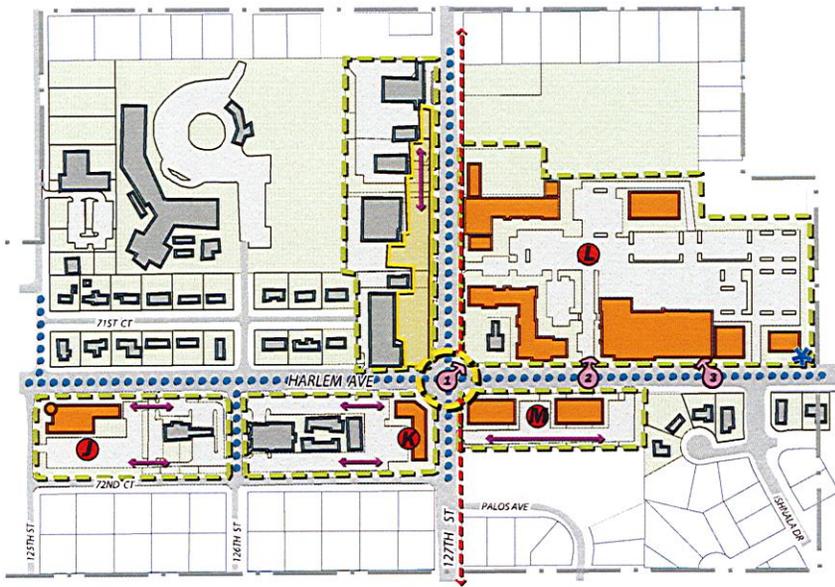
Parking Lot Screening. Parking lots should be screened from view along sidewalks and roadways through the use of low masonry walls, hedge plantings, and shrubs. Screening should be implemented not only along Harlem Avenue frontage but where parking areas are adjacent side streets, and/or residential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



- Legend**
- Opportunity Sites
 - Illustrative Development Concepts
 - Existing Buildings
 - New Parking Configurations
 - Streetscape Improvements
 - Parking Lot Screening
 - Cross Access
 - Intersection Improvements
 - Gateway Signage
 - New Sidewalk
 - Study Area Boundary
 - Concept Perspective Viewpoints



**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.

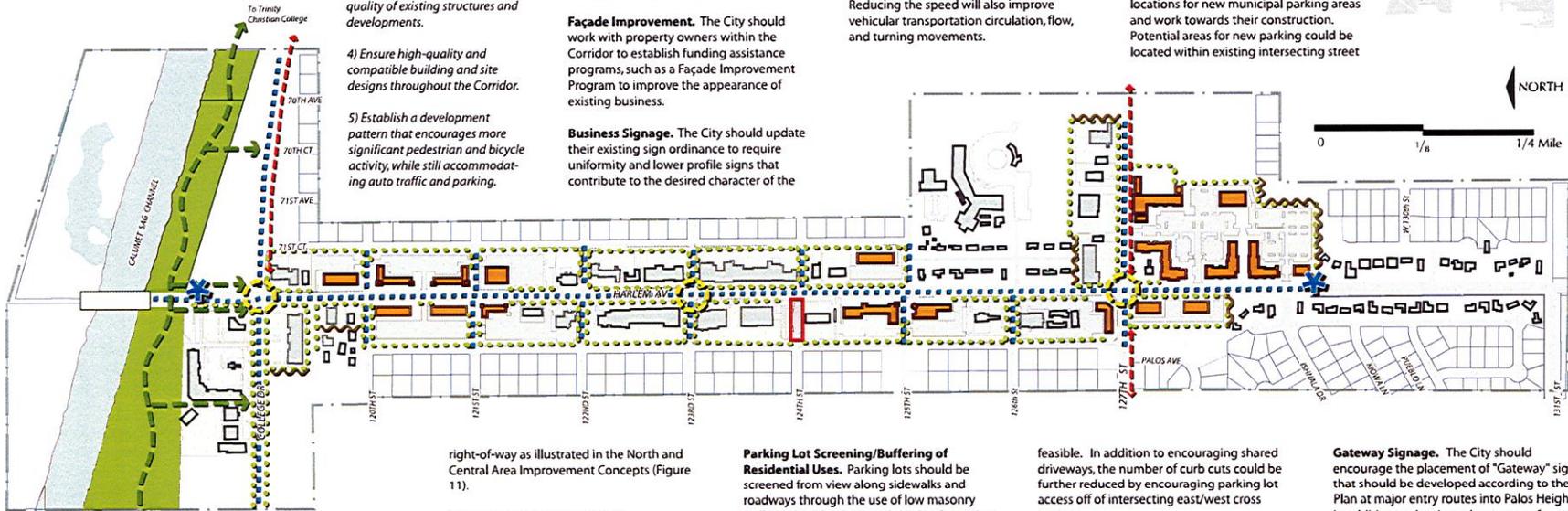
Façade Improvement. The City should work with property owners within the Corridor to establish funding assistance programs, such as a Façade Improvement Program to improve the appearance of existing business.

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

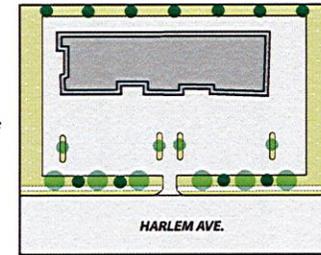
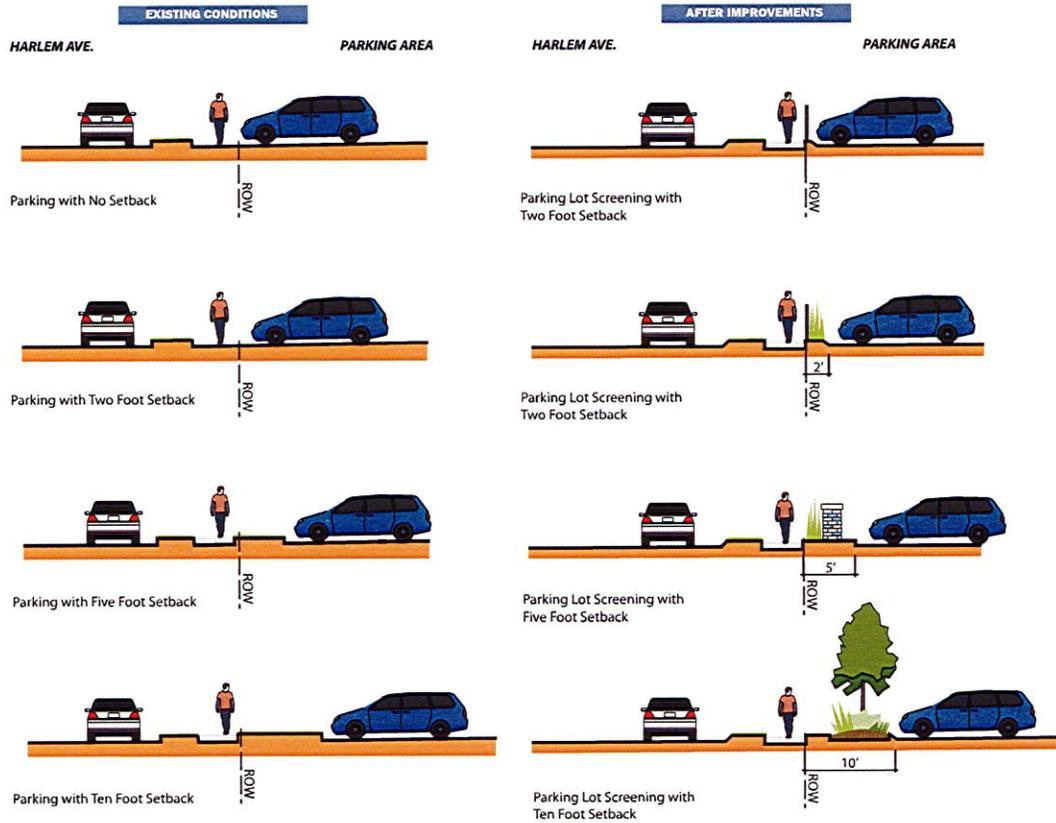
form of barrier. Examples are shown in the following illustrations of typical barriers between parking and pedestrian paths. Examples are shown for right-of-way distances of 2', 5' and 10' from the ROW to the parking area. Even for areas where there is almost no separation, a decorative rod iron

fence could be installed between the pedestrian and vehicular realm.

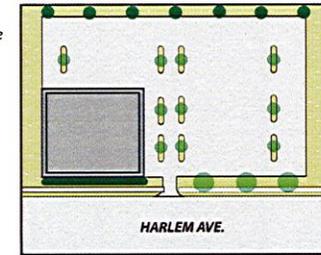
Parking Locations. The location of the parking area, in relation with the building and Harlem Avenue is also a major factor in the type of

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,

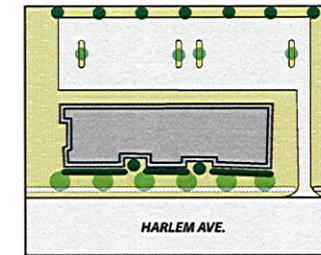
while still allowing sufficient visibility for businesses in the Corridor.



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 hedge row, 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.