



# Village of Round Lake Heights Comprehensive Plan

**Adopted October 8, 2013**

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The Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) is the region's official comprehensive planning organization. Its GO TO 2040 planning campaign is helping the region's seven counties and 284 communities to implement strategies that address transportation, housing, economic development, open space, the environment, and other quality-of-life issues.

See [www.cmap.illinois.gov](http://www.cmap.illinois.gov) for more information.

# Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction	5
Chapter 2: Vision, Goals, and Objectives	11
Chapter 3: Land Use	15
Chapter 4: Commercial and Industrial	25
Chapter 5: Housing and Residents	33
Chapter 6: Natural Environment	43
Chapter 7: Infrastructure	53
Chapter 8: Moving Forward	59
List of Acronyms	63
Appendix A: Project Outreach Strategy	on file with the Village
Appendix B: Existing Conditions Report	on file with the Village





Chippewa Drive.

Photo credit: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning.

# Chapter 1

## Introduction

### What is a Comprehensive Plan?

A comprehensive plan outlines the community's vision for its future from a physical and economic standpoint, offering a roadmap that will allow it to realize that vision. In addition to providing a well-defined framework for the preservation and enhancement of community assets, a plan guides development and investment decisions in the best interest of community residents.

The typical comprehensive plan guides a community towards its vision over a 10 to 20 year time period. Although the Plan is a long-term visioning document, it also functions as a day-to-day guide for land use, development, and policy decisions. Keeping this in mind, it is critical for Village officials to refer to the Plan on a regular basis. The best comprehensive plans are flexible and adaptable to changing conditions. While the Plan can be updated at any time to match local needs, interests, or opportunities, an update every five to ten years is common.

### Elements of a Comprehensive Plan

A comprehensive plan is composed of a series of distinct yet interrelated elements defined within the Illinois Local Planning Assistance Act (Public Act 92-0768). The key elements addressed in the Round Lake Heights Comprehensive Plan are based upon those outlined in the State Statute.

Under the ***Illinois Municipal Code (65 ILCS) 5/11-12-5(1)***, a municipal plan commission is responsible for preparing and recommending a “comprehensive plan for the present and future development or redevelopment of the municipality.” The code continues to say “that the plan may include reasonable requirements with reference to streets, alleys, public grounds, and other improvements.”

# Why does Round Lake Heights Need a Comprehensive Plan?

Round Lake Heights stands at a key moment in its history. Since its formation in 1960, the Village and its residents have worked hard to provide good public services and infrastructure within the fiscal realities of a small community. At critical moments in the past, the Village was able to use annexation and development to improve services and infrastructure while preserving rural character and small town charm. The Village's last comprehensive plan, adopted in 1983, reflects these concepts.

Since that time, the area around Round Lake Heights has changed greatly; opportunities for the annexation and development of greenfield areas are much reduced. Development of all the remaining open space and agricultural areas in and around the Village would profoundly change the community's character. While older tools to address local issues are no longer available, concerns remain. Throughout the planning process, stakeholders consistently touched on three broad matters confronting Round Lake Heights.

- **Fiscal and Economic Health**

The Village is far more dependent on residential property taxes than many other communities in the region. This situation is due, in part, to the small number and scale of commercial properties along Rollins Road. Stakeholders discussed the need for a vibrant commercial base for both economic and social reasons.

- **Infrastructure**

Infrastructure issues have long been a driving force in Round Lake Heights. Residents first sought to incorporate due to poor water quality and service. Stakeholders cited a variety of desired improvements, including water and stormwater infrastructure and pedestrian facilities.

- **Open Space and Natural Feature Preservation**

Open spaces, parks, and natural areas are at the core of the Village's identity. A number of lightly developed properties border the western edge of Fairfield Marsh and farms remain northwest of the Village. Numerous stakeholders discussed the need to preserve these areas as part of Round Lake Heights' small town rural character.

Not surprisingly these three subjects are intertwined. The search for economic sustainability will directly impact the Village's ability to address the infrastructure concerns of residents. Expanding the non-residential tax base can threaten critical environmental areas depending on the design and type of development. This Plan allows the Village to consider how best to address such interconnected topics, finding a balance that allows Round Lake Heights to become a complete community.

## Key Plan Elements

- **Land Use**

The core element of this Plan, the Land Use chapter, provides the framework into which the policies and programs discussed in the subsequent thematic chapters fit.

- **Commercial and Industrial**

The Commercial and Industrial chapter summarizes the key local economic conditions, objectives, and strategies that address local issues and improve economic vitality.

- **Housing and Residents**

The Housing and Residents chapter describes the key existing conditions, objectives, and strategies to address issues related to the housing stock and improving the lives of all residents.

- **Natural Environment**

The Natural Environment chapter describes the key existing conditions, objectives, and strategies to preserve and enhance the Village's environmental features.

- **Infrastructure**

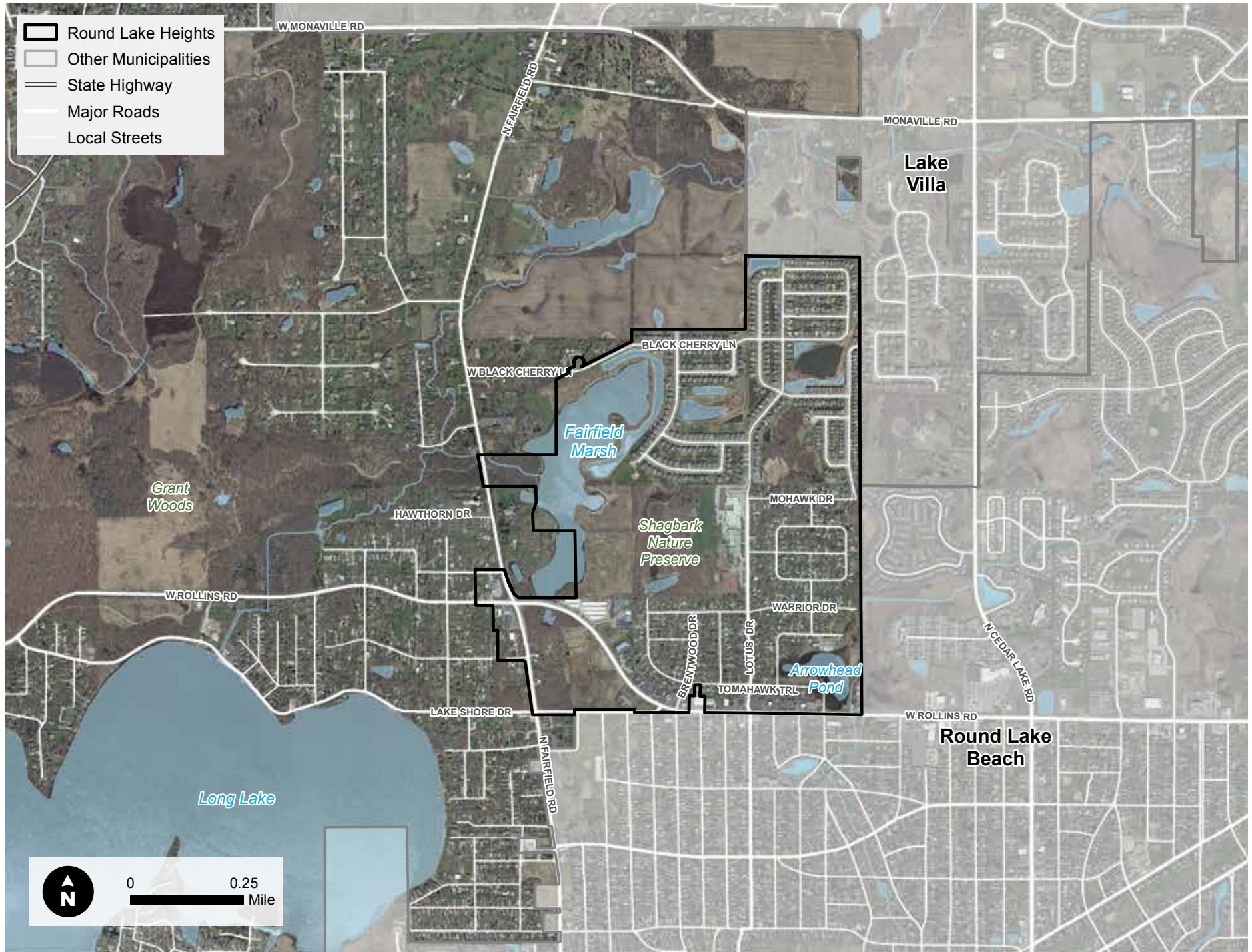
The Infrastructure chapter describes the key existing conditions, objectives, and strategies for the Village's pedestrian, automotive, and bicycle systems.

- **Moving Forward**

This final chapter outlines an implementation guide for the Round Lake Heights Comprehensive Plan, breaking down the recommendations in more manageable and achievable portions.



Figure 1.1. Aerial



Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning.

# Relationship to the GO TO 2040 Regional Comprehensive Plan

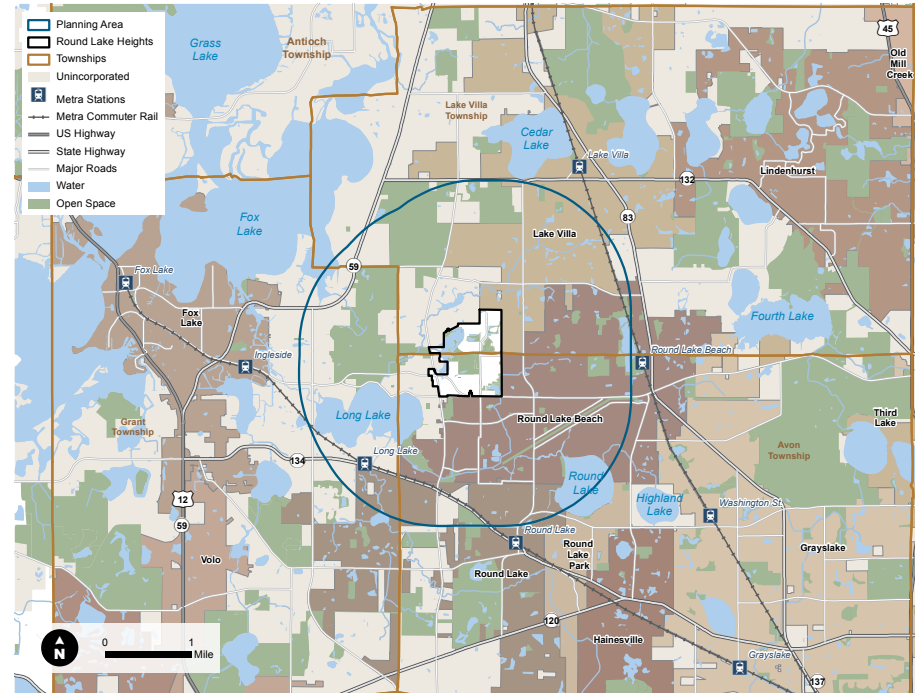
While the Comprehensive Plan is rooted in local issues, it also considers how local matters tie into the spectrum of topics facing the Chicago region. The Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) is the official regional planning organization for the northeastern Illinois counties of Cook, DuPage, Kane, Kendall, Lake, McHenry, and Will. CMAP developed and now guides the implementation of GO TO 2040, metropolitan Chicago's first comprehensive regional plan in more than 100 years. To address anticipated population growth of more than 2 million new residents, GO TO 2040 establishes coordinated strategies that help the region's 284 communities address transportation, housing, economic development, open space, environmental, and other quality-of-life issues.

While GO TO 2040 covers many topics, the most relevant themes for Round Lake Heights are Livable Communities, Efficient Governance, and Regional Mobility. Concepts discussed in this Plan that closely tie into regional themes include:

- Engaging in collaborative planning and interjurisdictional partnerships to address land use, housing, and infrastructure issues.
- Helping to protect and enhance farmland, water, and natural resources through land use planning and policy.
- Targeting and prioritizing transportation and infrastructure improvements.
- Creating a diverse local housing stock by considering new housing developments and housing types in strategic locations.

GO TO 2040 states that “municipalities are critical to the success of GO TO 2040 because of their responsibility for land use decisions that create the built environment of the region and determine the livability of its communities. The most important thing that a municipality can do to implement GO TO 2040 is to take this responsibility very seriously.” By creating a new comprehensive plan, Round Lake Heights has achieved the first step in demonstrating its commitment to help shape the future of the region. Implementation of this Plan will only further that progress.

**Figure 1.2. Regional context**



Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning.

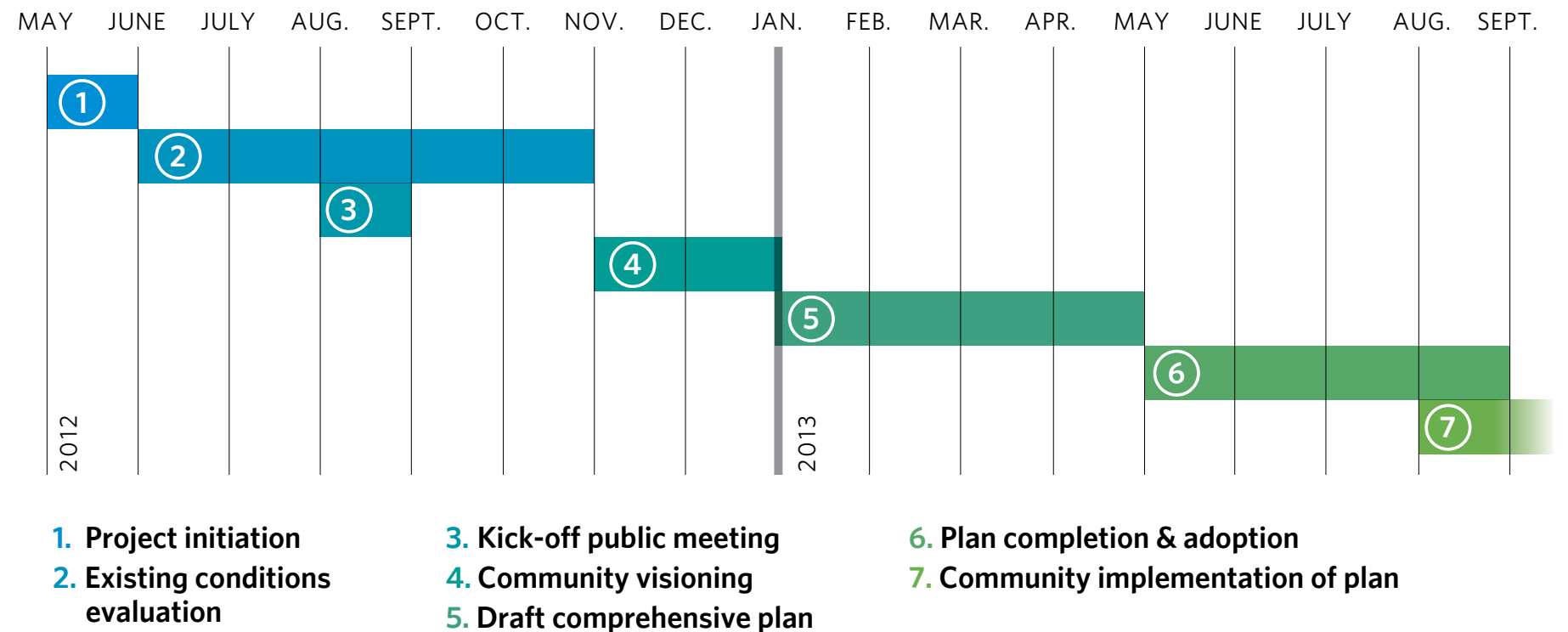


# Planning Process

A plan is only as good as the commitment to implementing it by the public and their elected representatives. Therefore, public participation was a major component of this Plan. Creating the Round Lake Heights Comprehensive Plan included multiple steps over approximately one year designed to include public input throughout. The planning process ensured that the Village Board and Zoning Board/Plan Commission, jointly operating as the steering committee for the project, assisted CMAP staff in developing the final plan and recommendations. The key steps in the planning process are illustrated in Figure 1.3.

Using the outreach strategy as a guide, staff worked to reach as many stakeholders as possible. As detailed in Appendix A, staff communicated with numerous stakeholders through various meetings, interviews, workshops, and events. The issues, concerns, priorities, and values that emerged from these meetings ultimately shaped the community's vision, goals, and strategies.

**Figure 1.3. Round Lake Heights comprehensive plan planning process and timeline**



Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning.



Cedarwood Circle.

Photo credit: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning.

# Chapter 2

## Vision, Goals, and Objectives

Round Lake Heights strives to be a complete community, with:

- **Vibrant commercial areas providing a strong fiscal base to support the Village's infrastructure needs.**
- **An infrastructure system that meets the needs of all residents and reflects the community's green identity.**
- **Superior parks and natural areas that preserve the Village's environmental character.**
- **Inclusive neighborhoods for residents of all ages.**

Throughout the planning process, residents, business owners, local leaders, Village elected officials, and other stakeholders touched on the interconnected relationship between the Village's fiscal base, infrastructure needs, and green identity. Combined, these features reflect Round Lake Heights' desire to be a complete community. Embracing these linkages, the above Vision Statement will guide future planning efforts.

A series of goals and objectives associated with the Comprehensive Plan's primary topics (commercial, residential, natural environment, and infrastructure) are rooted in this vision statement. The following subsections outline the topical goals and associated objectives. Subsequent sections of the Comprehensive Plan will tie these concepts to both local existing conditions and recommended future actions.

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## Commercial and Industrial

**GOAL:** Create multi-faceted commercial areas that provide a strong fiscal base and fit the community's rural identity.

**Objectives:**

- Form a unified vision for the Rollins Road corridor among all key parties.
- Create a Village Center near the built-up portion of the Village, mixing multi-family residential with convenience retail.
- Capitalize on the intersection of Fairfield Road and Rollins Road to expand the local commercial base.
- Develop small industrial/ flex-space to improve the local job base.
- Improve the image and identity of the Village's commercial corridors.

## Housing and Residents

**GOAL:** Maintain vibrant neighborhoods for current and future residents through targeted support for existing units, strategic expansions of the housing stock, and supportive policies and programs.

**Objectives:**

- Maintain the quality of the current housing stock by seeking additional funding sources, connecting with new entities, and renewing ties with existing partners.
  - Support seniors seeking to stay in their homes through both rehabilitation programs and community education efforts.
  - Continue fostering inclusive neighborhoods for all residents.
  - Strategically expand the stock of multi-family housing units to support the Village Center strategy and increase housing options for all residents, including seniors.
  - Explore opportunities for the most efficient implementation of recommendations through partnerships with other units of government.
-

## Natural Environment

**GOAL:** Develop an identity built around the Village's great parks and open spaces by preserving key parcels, using sustainable practices in addressing local issues, and partnering with other entities to emphasize this identity.

**Objectives:**

- Ensure that the Village's water infrastructure continues to meet community needs.
- Address local issues, including infrastructure projects, by considering solutions that emphasize the Village's natural character.
- Explore partnerships and regulations that allow the Village to preserve key parcels.
- Leverage the educational opportunities of the Village's high quality environmental features by partnering with school districts and other education providers.

## Infrastructure

**GOAL:** Maintain and improve the local infrastructure systems to meet the Village's needs and resident desires in a way that is fiscally prudent.

**Objectives:**

- Create a complete and safe pedestrian environment for residents through a combination of infrastructure improvements and regulations.
  - Improve the safety of students and residents through infrastructure improvements and educational programs.
  - Capitalize on Round Lake Heights' key location in between two major trails to develop a local bicycle network.
-





Wetlands along Lotus Drive.

Photo credit: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning.



# Chapter 3

## Land Use

The core element of a comprehensive plan is land use policy, as represented through a future land use plan. Land use policy has a direct impact on the Village's ability to reach its aspirations, including allowing for and promoting appropriate, positive change that preserves valuable and desirable elements of the community. Such planning provides the framework into which the policies and programs discussed in the subsequent thematic chapters fit. This section links Round Lake Heights' existing land use and development conditions to future land use policy and associated recommendations.

### Land Use Policy and Regulation

While the Comprehensive Plan is a broad policy document, its land use recommendations relate to both existing conditions and possible implementation through local regulations.

- **Existing land use** refers to the activity that **currently** occurs on a given parcel. Activities are divided into broad categories (commercial, residential, etc.) to understand each how grouping relates to one another.
- The **Future Land Use Plan** represents the Village's **vision** for what activities could occur on a parcel in the future. The Future Land Use Plan must be implemented through a zoning ordinance and/or subdivision code.
- **Zoning ordinances** provide the legal **regulations** that determine the specific types and intensities of uses allowed on a given parcel (e.g. are you legally permitted to build a gas station on a particular parcel).
- **Subdivision codes** specify **development elements** for a parcel: housing footprint minimums, distance from the house to the road, the width of the road, street configuration, open space requirements, and lot size.

# Key Existing Conditions

Characterized by its wealth of open space, wetlands, water, and single-family homes, over 70 percent of the Village's land area falls into these four land use categories. Single-family residential is the largest category, making up 36.9 percent of the Village. Commercial and industrial developments comprise only 4.5 percent of the land area, primarily along Rollins Road near the existing single-family subdivisions.

**Figure 3.1. Land use in Round Lake Heights**

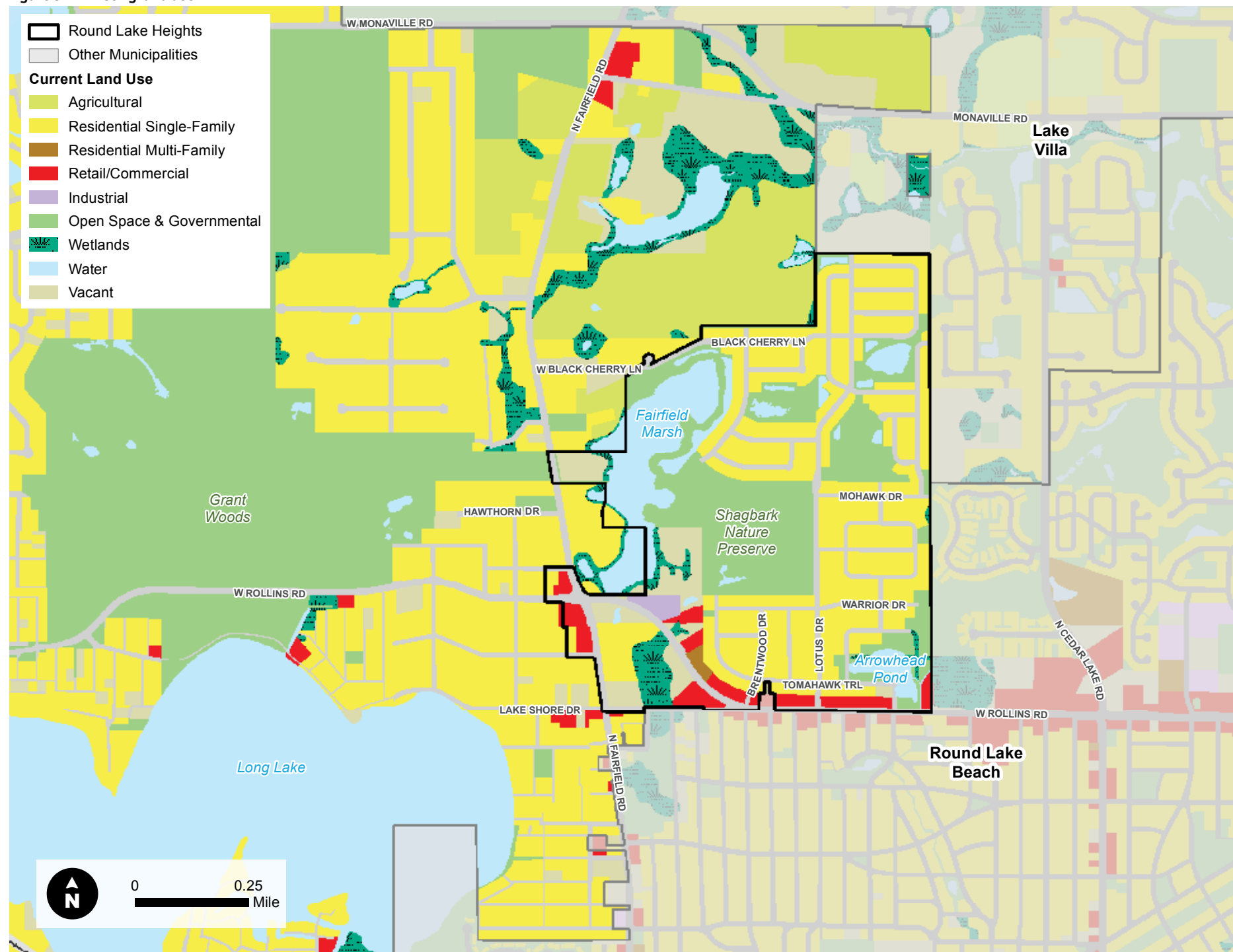
LAND USE CATEGORY	ACRES	PERCENTAGE
Single Family Residential	147.9	36.6%
Multi-Family Residential	1.4	0.3%
Government/Institutional	8.2	2.0%
Transportation	60.7	15.0%
Agricultural	0.1	0.0%
Retail/Commercial	15.4	3.8%
Industrial	2.8	0.7%
Public/Private Open Space	89.0	22.0%
Wetlands	11.9	2.9%
Water	45.0	11.1%
Vacant	21.6	5.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>404.0</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning and Lake County.

The Village grew from south to north, starting with older residential neighborhoods and supporting strip commercial development along Rollins Road. As a result, the bulk of vacant and lightly developed land within Round Lake Heights is located south and west of Fairfield Marsh. The lightly developed land outside of Round Lake Heights' corporate boundary is located to the northwest, much of which is currently used for agriculture. Unincorporated areas southwest of the Village are primarily single-family residential neighborhoods around Long Lake. Areas north, east, and south of the Village are part of either the Village of Lake Villa or the Village of Round Lake Beach. As a result of the development pattern in and around the Village, most opportunities for new greenfield development are limited to those along the eastern edge of Fairfield Road. **Outreach indicates that development of all possible greenfield sites is not desired by residents. Finding the right balance between development and preservation is a focus of this Plan.**

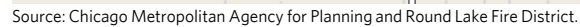
The Village's current zoning ordinance is relatively simple, containing only four different districts: Business, Limited Light Industrial, Multi-Family, and Single-Family. The design and performance standards which go along with these designations do not address issues such as parking, landscaping, and design. To address any shortcoming of the ordinance, the Village supplements by referencing the regulations of the Lake County Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) when reviewing an application. **While the small number of zoning districts helps present a simplified regulatory scheme for developers and property owners, the small number of districts obscures the unique open space assets of Round Lake Heights and conflicts with those areas identified by the public and stakeholders for future development or redevelopment.** A more nuanced approach within the ordinance would allow the Village to reflect the desired balance between development and natural preservation.

Figure 3.2. Existing land use



Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning.





## Future Land Use Plan

The Future Land Use Plan (Figure 3.4) serves as the foundation for the recommendations contained within the Comprehensive Plan. The categorizations translate the community's vision into physical terms by providing a general pattern for the location, distribution, and characteristics of future land uses in Round Lake Heights.

The State of Illinois allows municipalities to plan for unincorporated areas within 1.5 miles of their current municipal boundaries. Lake County, through its Framework Plan and UDO, has proposed land use policies and associated regulations for all of unincorporated Lake County. From feedback throughout the planning process, the focus of the Village's land use policy will be those areas within the current municipal boundaries along with unincorporated areas east of Long Lake and Grant Woods. This smaller planning area reflects a desire to focus on the future of those areas in closest proximity to the Village's current boundaries along with recognition of the natural boundaries formed by land uses to the west. Therefore Figure 3.4 only shows land use designations for a subset of the full unincorporated area within the statutory 1.5-mile limit. For all other unincorporated areas within 1.5 miles of the Village, this Plan defers to the Framework Plan, as amended by Lake County.

Given that much of the land both within and around Round Lake Heights is developed, the Future Land Use Plan seeks to maintain the essential character of the existing land use pattern, balancing opportunities for new development with preservation of remaining agricultural land and open spaces. The main difference between the current land use pattern and those proposed in the Future Land Use Plan is the development of a targeted commercial node around the Rollins Road and Fairfield Road intersection. This concept, in combination with designations that preserve the character of relatively open areas northwest of the Village, will preserve rural character while seeking fiscal sustainability to support other components of the Plan.

## Future Land Use Categories

### Agricultural

Agriculture is a highly valued and prioritized land use and this designation reflects the Village's desire to see such areas preserved, maintaining its rural heritage. To support the long-term sustainability of these farms, the designation should allow not just farms, but also agricultural retail and wholesale businesses, including flower and vegetable outlets, orchards, nurseries, small-scale farming operations, lawn and garden stores, and supporting businesses such as suppliers and equipment providers. The intersection of Monaville Road and Fairfield Road may offer the opportunity for a small commercial node for such businesses.

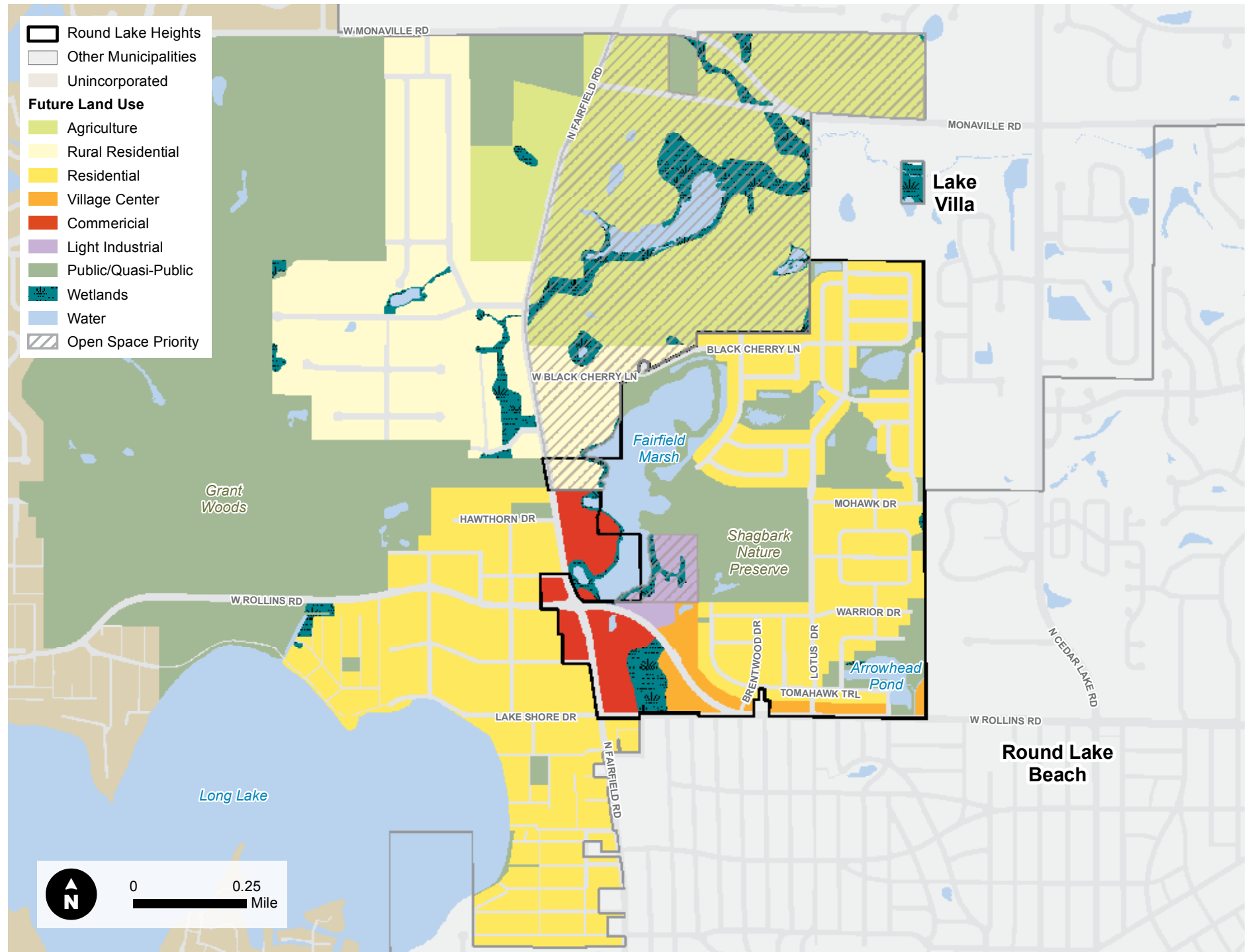
### Rural Residential

These parcels are currently developed with low-density residential development in and around important parks, open spaces, or agricultural resources such as Fairfield Marsh and Grant Woods. To balance development with environmental protection throughout the Village's planning area, these areas should remain low-intensity single-family residential uses. The impact of any new development on the quality and character of natural resources in the area should be considered.

### Single-Family Residential

Parcels in this area are single-family detached homes common to residential neighborhoods in and around the Village. This predominant housing type in Round Lake Heights will continue to serve a majority of the community's residential needs in the future. The character of the homes in the older and newer areas varies considerably due to the historical growth patterns of the Village. As parcels become available for redevelopment, they should be utilized for infill single-family homes that respect the architectural scale representative of the Village's different neighborhoods.

Figure 3.4. Future land use plan



Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning.



## Village Center

Encompassing the existing strip development along Rollins Road east of Fairfield Marsh, this designation envisions the redevelopment of currently developed commercial areas into a village center. While the street pattern and lot depth do not allow for the same scale or density found in large mixed-use areas, the parcels can provide convenience retail and office mixed with multi-family residential units. Residential is particularly encouraged toward the western end of the district. The area would be unified through strong design standards and linked with surrounding neighborhoods through a complete pedestrian environment. The area would function as the Village's eastern gateway.

## Commercial

Building off of the intersection of two key roadways, Fairfield Road and Rollins Road, this designation encourages subregional commercial uses supported by select opportunities for supporting multi-family development. Properties east of Fairfield Road either abut Fairfield Marsh or are partially constrained by wetlands. Therefore, while the Village seeks commercial development for these areas, any development must be sensitive of its context. New development should encourage or require green infrastructure development and stormwater management practices that will protect resources from the impacts of the developed landscape. These may include minimizing impervious surfaces and/or the use of permeable pavement for hard surfaces, water conservation measures for homes and landscapes, biofiltration and other best management practices (BMPs) for rainwater management, use of native and naturalized landscapes, and other green building and site development practices. To help support an integrated land use scheme, limited opportunities for multi-family development should be integrated into the development, ideally situated north of Hawthorn Drive or along Lake Shore Drive. Existing smaller scale developments west of Fairfield Road could be integrated into new developments through consistent design and corresponding public improvements.

## Light Industrial

The frontage property for this area along Rollins Road is currently a self-storage facility while the parcel to the north is undeveloped. The area is bordered by both Fairfield Marsh and Shagbark Nature Preserve. Therefore, this area offers the potential for small industrial flex-space development to support the employment base, but it will need to be context-sensitive and avoid damaging the wetlands.

## Public/Quasi-Public

Areas both within and around the Village include a number of public properties owned by organizations such as the Lake County Forest Preserve District (LCFPD), Round Lake Park District, Round Lake Area School District, and the Village. This designation reflects the desire that these properties continue to be used for public and quasi-public use.

## Open Space Priority

Unlike other categories in the Future Land Use Plan, open space priority areas are an overlay designation. Properties are generally located around important natural features such as Fairfield Marsh or Arrowhead Pond and many are lightly developed. While the underlying land use category reflects the types and intensities of uses if developed, the overlay designation highlights a local desire to see these properties preserved as open space, whether through local, subregional, or County efforts. The combined effect highlights the importance of context sensitive design for any developments within the overlay.

## Water and Wetlands

Figure 3.4 includes separate land use categories for Water and Wetlands. Each of these categories reflects current physical conditions in and around the Village. Water encompasses current water bodies such as Long Lake, Fairfield Marsh, and Arrowhead Pond. The wetlands category includes areas likely to include wetlands for which development is constrained.

# Recommendations

Two broad land use recommendations correspond with the land use policy concepts discussed in this chapter.

## Zoning Ordinance and Planning/Development Services

The bulk of Round Lake Heights' zoning ordinance was adopted in 1991 and last updated in 2006. As discussed previously, the current ordinance presents a streamlined and simplified regulatory structure that does not reflect the nuance needed to implement the local vision. While changes to the ordinance itself can address some of these issues, the continued and expanded presence of technical staff is a critical piece of successfully implementing a new ordinance. To address these issues in a unified way Round Lake Heights should undertake the following:

- **First, Round Lake Heights should develop a new zoning ordinance that reflects the Future Land Use Plan, the zoning recommendations of this Plan, and the UDO.** The creation of a new ordinance would allow the Village to formally incorporate important elements of the UDO by reference. A new zoning ordinance should seek to preserve the regulatory ease of the current ordinance while providing additional elements where appropriate, such as those recommended in subsequent sections of this Plan.
- **Second, Round Lake Heights should explore an intergovernmental services agreement to have Lake County provide planning, zoning, and development services.** The key focus would be ensuring that the Village has trained planning staff available on an as-needed basis for important topics, such as administration of the new ordinance and application review for new development. Lake County currently provides building plan review and inspection services to some municipalities through intergovernmental service agreements.<sup>1</sup> Expenses for such an agreement would need to be paid out of a combination of development escrows and local general funds.

## Annexation and Boundary Agreements

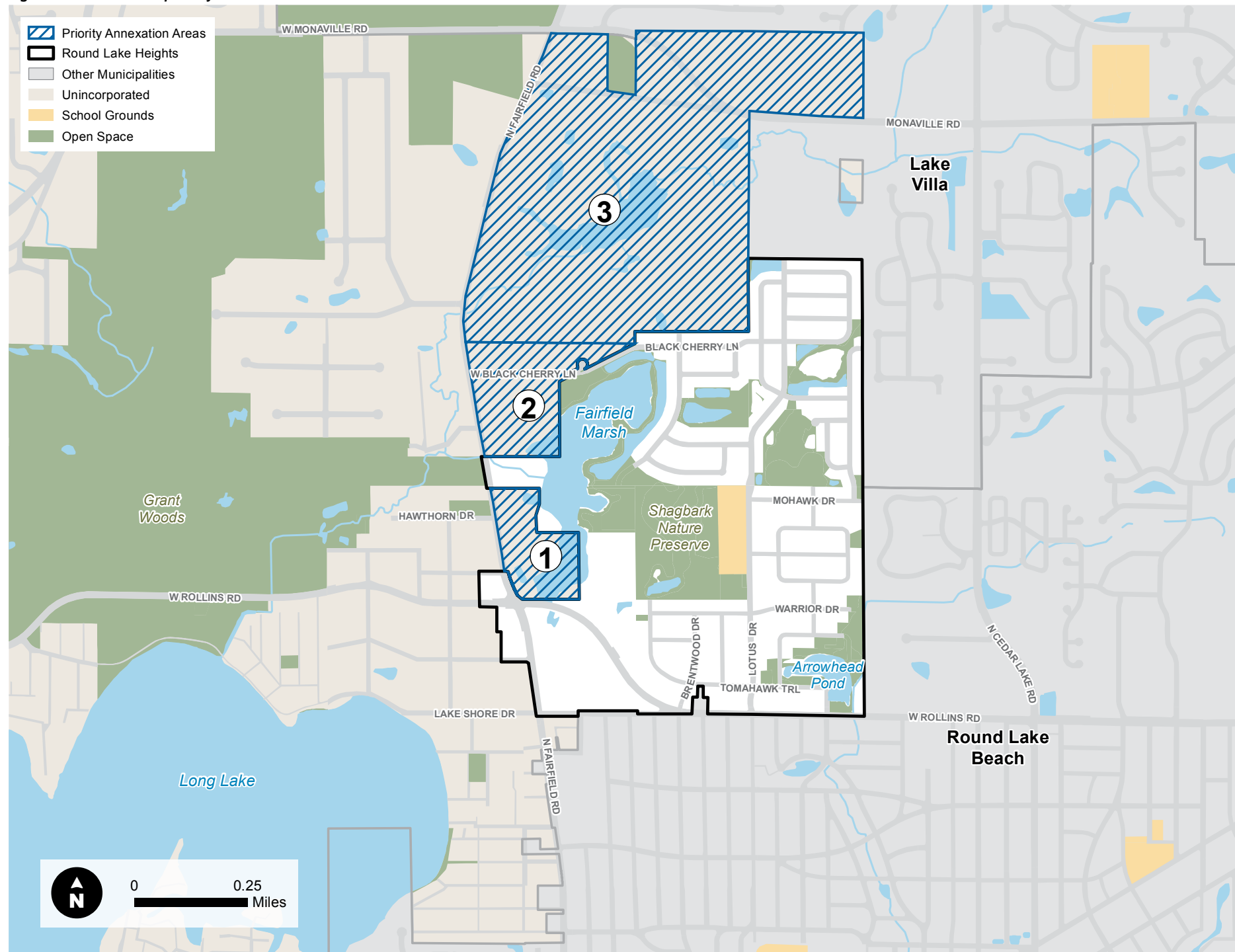
Illinois allows municipalities to both annex additional land into their boundaries and seek out boundary agreements for unincorporated areas within 1.5 miles of their border. As discussed previously, the Future Land Use Plan defines the Village's development policies for areas within its current boundaries and a select portion of the unincorporated areas within 1.5 miles of the Village. Considering annexation and boundary agreements is critical to implementing local policies within these unincorporated areas.

Figure 3.5 details those areas near the Village for which either annexation and/or boundary agreements are most critical during the life of this Plan. Area 1, northeast of the intersection of Rollins Road and Fairfield Road, represents a vital part of the area targeted for expansion of the local commercial base. Area 2, northwest of Fairfield Marsh, provides a potential linkage between Grant Woods and Fairfield Marsh. The low intensity of existing development in this area helps preserve the natural character of the Marsh. Area 3, north of the Village, includes a number of agricultural properties targeted for preservation.

Round Lake Heights should discuss the future of all three targeted areas with its neighbors, particularly Lake Villa as much of areas 2 and 3 lie within 1.5 miles of its border as well. Future annexations and boundary agreements should implement the land use policies of this Plan. The Village should establish criteria for the review process leading up to potential annexations. Understanding the complete fiscal impacts of any potential annexation, including service provision, is critical to making informed choices and maintaining fiscal stability.

1. See <http://www.lakecountyil.gov/Planning/Pages/BuildingEngineering.aspx>.

Figure 3.5. Annexation priority areas



Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning.





Rollins Road.

Photo credit: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning.

# Chapter 4

## Commercial and Industrial

The Commercial and Industrial chapter summarizes the key local economic conditions, objectives, and strategies that address local issues and improve economic vitality.

**GOAL: Create multi-faceted commercial areas that provide a strong fiscal base and fit the community's rural identity.**

### Key Existing Conditions

Beginning with the development of the Indian Hill subdivision in the 1940s, Rollins Road has served as the main commercial corridor for the residents of what would become Round Lake Heights. Today, the oldest and most developed sections of that corridor run from the eastern municipal boundary with Round Lake Beach to the eastern edge of Fairfield Marsh, centered on the intersection of Rollins Road and Lotus Drive. Older residential neighborhoods in both Round Lake Beach and Round Lake Heights surround the corridor; commercial development is interspersed by multi-family buildings and undeveloped areas.

Only 4.5 percent of the Village's land area is devoted to commercial and industrial uses. Such areas contain restaurants, stores, and other convenience uses with no anchor development. Most buildings have small footprints and feature a range of architectural styles. Properties are typically auto-oriented, with parking placed between the street and the building. Little landscaping is provided within the public right-of-way or on private property. Sidewalks are frequently interrupted by curb cuts, lights, and signs. Few intersections are accessible to the disabled.

The underlying parcels vary substantially in size, with the smallest and shallowest parcels located on the eastern end of Rollins Road and parcels becoming larger on the less-developed western end. The smallest parcels are approximately 8,000 s.f. in size, with a typical lot size of 60 ft. x 140 ft. To increase building size and provide parking or other on-site amenities, some lots have been consolidated.

The small size and scope along with the condition of the Village's existing commercial and industrial development ties directly into larger-scale findings about the employment and fiscal base. **Even accounting for the Village's small size, Round Lake Heights lacks jobs within its boundaries.** On a jobs-per-household basis, the Village contains far less than one job per household. Within the County and the region, there tends to be more jobs than households. Educational services represent 47 percent of all Round Lake Heights' jobs, by far the largest employment sector. With more than 100 teachers and administrators, Indian Hill Elementary School and Round Lake Middle School comprise nearly half of the employment within the Village.

While the Village has more than four times as many educational services jobs on a percentage basis as the County and region, this distribution likely reflects the small size of commercial and industrial developments rather than an actual cluster of educational jobs.

Figure 4.1. Total jobs per household

	ROUND LAKE HEIGHTS	LAKE COUNTY	CHICAGO REGION
2010	0.30	1.19	1.14

Source: U.S. Census, Local Employment Dynamics.

**The small size, low density, and aging condition of commercial and industrial developments reduce the local tax base.** Two important local tax sources are property taxes and retail sales taxes. According to data from the Illinois Department of Revenue, commercial and industrial properties account for only 11.5 percent of the local per capita equalized assessed value, versus 18 percent and 30 percent for the County and region, respectively. Similarly, Round Lake Heights generated approximately \$7 million in general merchandise retail sales, or about \$2,600 per resident. The per capita rate of retail sales is far below that for Lake County (\$14,200) and the region (\$9,700). A smaller tax base reduces the ability to address local issues, including the infrastructure needs discussed in this Plan.

Figure 4.2. Estimated equalized assessed value (EAV) per capita by property type, 2010

	ROUND LAKE HEIGHTS	LAKE COUNTY	CHICAGO REGION
Industrial EAV	\$72	\$1,252	\$3,430
Residential EAV	\$16,448	\$31,094	\$24,639
Commercial EAV	\$2,068	\$5,532	\$7,130
Railroad EAV	\$0	\$14	\$30
Farm EAV	\$0	\$0	\$2
Mineral EAV	\$0	\$7	\$126
Total EAV	\$18,588	\$37,899	\$35,357

Source: Illinois Department of Revenue.

Figure 4.3. Retail sales per capita, 2010

ROUND LAKE HEIGHTS	LAKE COUNTY	CHICAGO REGION
\$2,643	\$14,213	\$9,717

Source: Illinois Department of Revenue.



# Objectives and Strategies

## Objective 1

*Form a unified vision for the Rollins Road corridor among all key parties.*

The Future Land Use Plan in conjunction with the discussion in this chapter lays out Round Lake Heights' vision for the future of the Rollins Road corridor. Yet, the Village shares the future of this corridor with Round Lake Beach and Lake County. The Village's vision must be shared by these critical partners if it is to succeed. **Therefore, Round Lake Heights should lead the development of a corridor study for Rollins Road, involving Round Lake Beach and Lake County in its development.** Multiple possible funding sources for such a corridor study should be researched, including CMAP's Local Technical Assistance (LTA) program.

A critical component of any such report is a market study. This element will allow the parties to sift through the different concepts for the corridor and come to agreement on a unified vision. This vision should include common development standards and infrastructure improvements. The boundary of the study area should be determined in consultation between the parties, though Round Lake Heights should seek boundaries that include all local parcels which touch Rollins Road, with a particular emphasis on the Village Center and Commercial areas highlighted in the Future Land Use Plan. Once completed, Round Lake Heights should use the regulatory and design recommendations from the corridor study in amending the local zoning ordinance and development standards.

## Objective 2

*Create a Village Center near the built-up portion of the Village, mixing multi-family residential with convenience retail.*

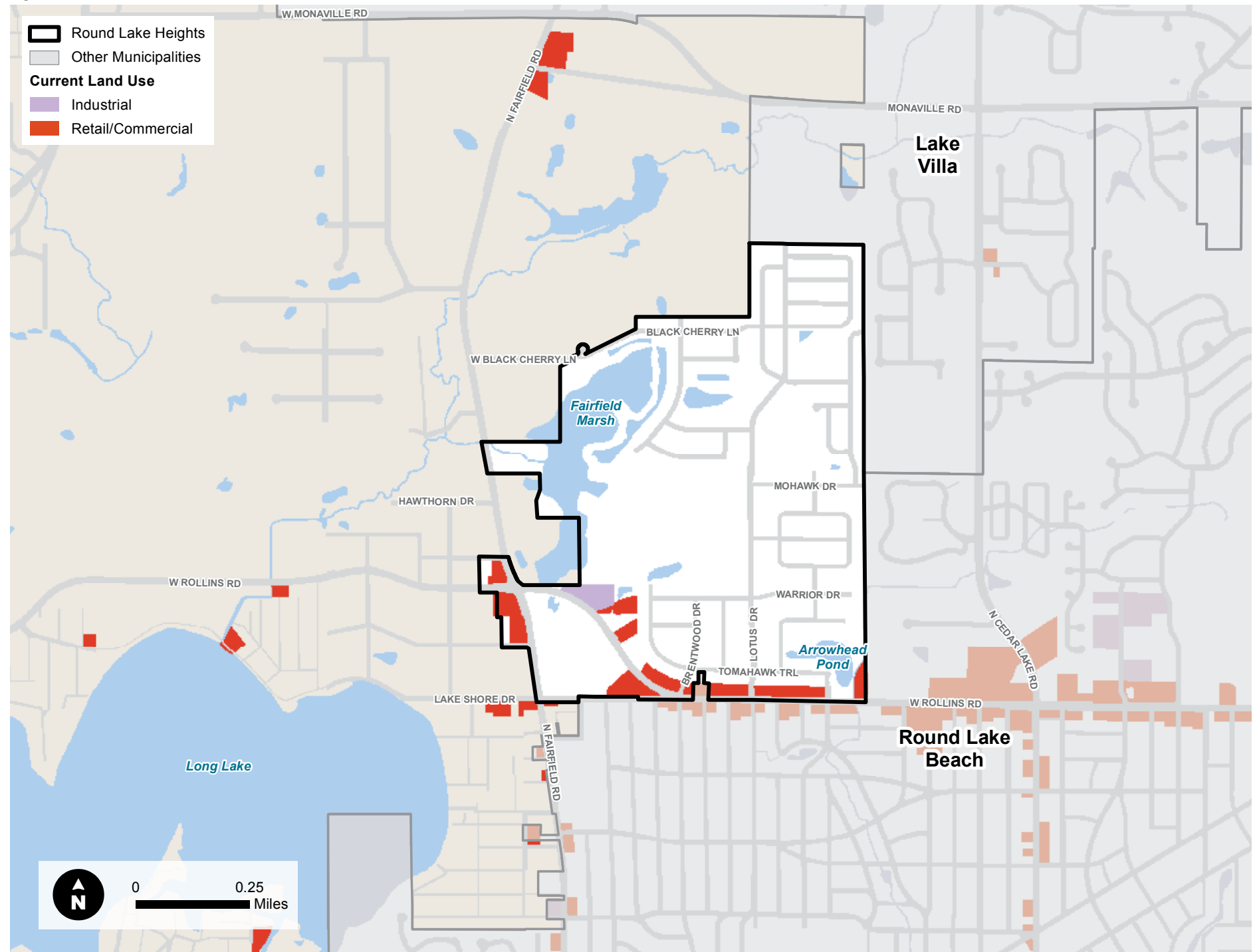
Long-term national trends in retail development along with regional land use and zoning patterns have eroded the vibrancy and attractiveness of the Rollins Road corridor in Round Lake Heights. The trend toward large, clustered shopping centers at the intersection of roadways combined with the presence of commercial zoning along most major arterial roadways creates a process whereby newer developments draw away older anchor commercial tenants, leaving behind older strip developments at "in-between" locations that could be stronger if re-envisioned.

Much of Rollins Road in Round Lake Heights falls into this in-between status. Older commercial and residential uses are spread along the strip with the whole area zoned for commercial development on small shallow properties. Larger users have consolidated lots to provide for parking, creating a string of curb-cuts which splinter the area. Stable neighborhoods in surrounding areas are detached from the corridor; the poor quality of design features such as sidewalks and landscaping further emphasize that separation. Residents want to see this corridor revitalized.

**To create a stronger commercial base close to the developed areas, Round Lake Heights should pursue a Village Center.** The Village Center concept represents a departure from current development patterns. The small scale nature of development will contrast with any development at the Fairfield Road and Rollins Road intersection. While the market study completed as part of the recommended corridor study will provide more information on the exact size and scale of the Village Center, this Plan envisions that the core of the Village Center concept will extend from Tomahawk Trail to Brentwood Drive, centered on the Rollins-Lotus intersection. Within this area, the Village will focus creating a vibrant mix of convenience retail and service offerings with select opportunities for residential development. Acting as a transition between the core of the Village Center and larger scale development further west, parcels west of Brentwood Drive should be considered for supportive multi-family development linked to the core by consistent and high-quality streetscaping and design.

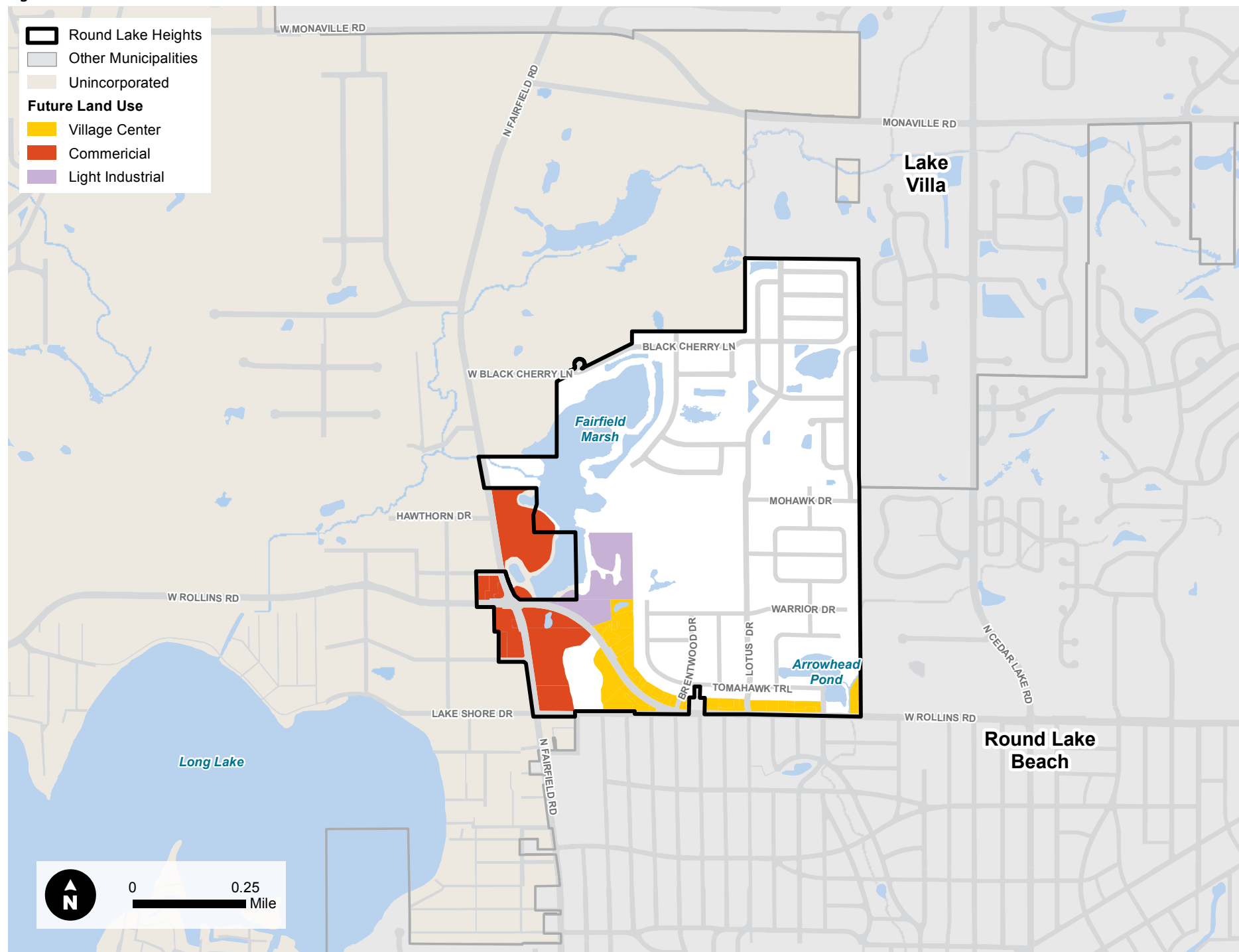
The Village Center should be a pedestrian-oriented area that contains a mix of retail, office, and residential uses and higher development densities. Due in part to the small shallow lots, design guidelines are critical to implementation. Such standards should define parameters for building massing and orientation, materials and treatments, architectural features, streetscaping, and landscaping. In essence, the guidelines would promote principles and practices associated with traditional neighborhood development, including walkable, compact, mixed-use development with a variation in architectural style. Development should include shared parking and pedestrian-friendly streetscapes, as well as a variety of other amenities. Conventional strip-mall commercial development should be avoided.

Figure 4.4. Commercial and industrial land use



Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning.

Figure 4.5. Future commercial and industrial land use



Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning.



### Objective 3

***Capitalize on the intersection of Fairfield Road and Rollins Road to expand the local commercial base.***

While parcels along the existing developed portion of Rollins Road largely contain smaller and shallower lots, parcel sizes increase further west. Lots around the intersection of Rollins Road and Fairfield Road are larger and lightly developed. The area contains an eclectic mix of smaller businesses and older homes, both detached from their surroundings. This development pattern makes the area appropriate for larger commercial developments that capitalize on the presence of two higher traffic roads.

**Therefore, Round Lake Heights should encourage the unification of the area with zoning regulations that support lot consolidation among smaller users combined with the pursuit of an anchor business at the southeastern corner to increase the local sales tax base.**

While two of the corners at this intersection are currently developed with smaller commercial users, the other two corners are lightly developed due to the presence of wetlands and Fairfield Marsh. Though the Village should focus on seeking development opportunities, it must occur in a context-sensitive fashion to ensure the preservation of environmental features. The Village may wish to consider green infrastructure improvements as part of such projects, requiring concepts such as biofiltration, reduced parking requirements, and rain gardens. The Lake County Stormwater Management Commission (LCSMC) often provides municipalities with advice on how to craft such requirements.

While the greatest development potential may lay with parcels on the southeast corner, the Village wishes to pursue development of locations further north and south along the east side of Fairfield Road. As discussed previously, stringing commercial development along arterials such as Fairfield Road reduces the development intensity at critical nodes. Therefore, Round Lake Heights should carefully approach additional development of parcels north and south along Fairfield Road, both inside and outside of its current municipal boundaries.

While a few small ancillary commercial uses currently operate south of Lake Shore Drive along Fairfield Road, ideally areas north and south of the Fairfield/Rollins intersection should focus on residential to support commercial development and increase local housing options. To help support an integrated land use scheme, limited opportunities for multi-family development should be integrated into commercial development, ideally situated north of Hawthorn Drive or along Lake Shore Drive. Development across both residential and commercial parcels should be unified through strict design requirements. Such standards should also be developed for existing commercial areas within the Village on the west side of Fairfield Road to encourage the eventual development of these areas in a fashion which creates a cohesive design.

## Objective 4

*Develop small industrial/flex-space to improve the local job base.*

Roughly half-way between the identified Lotus Drive and Fairfield Road nodes along Rollins Road is an existing self-storage facility along with a largely undeveloped property to the rear. Together, these parcels represent one of the largest contiguous areas free of wetlands in the Village. Yet, these parcels are bordered by Shagbark Nature Preserve and Fairfield Marsh.

Because of the balance of location and features, the Village is of two minds on the area.

**While ideal for open space expansion, the area also holds the potential for future development of small industrial flex-space to provide an expanded local job base.**

Although zoning and regulations for this area should be guided by the development of a Rollins Road corridor plan, the Village should focus on ensuring context sensitive design elements as part of any regulations. Such features can include preservation of selected natural areas, combined with enhanced buffering and landscape requirements along boundaries with sensitive features. Regulations should consider whether it is appropriate to require green infrastructure and design aspects, including filtering and infiltrating stormwater using landscape elements such as rain gardens or swales that allow it to seep into the ground, trees and other vegetation to soak up water, and rain barrels or cisterns to capture stormwater for reuse. Because the area is disconnected from the Village's residential neighborhoods, development should consider how potential pedestrian linkages could be created north, south, and east.

## Objective 5

*Improve the image and identity of the Village's commercial corridors.*

Aesthetics are an important aspect of any commercial corridor. Though the design guidelines recommended as part of the Village Center would be most clearly implemented through new development, a number of existing users will likely continue to operate long into the future. **Therefore, Round Lake Heights should work with existing businesses to create a façade and site improvement program.** The intent of such a program would be to improve the appearance of street-facing exteriors of commercial buildings located throughout the Village. Improvements would be required to meet the standards of any adopted design guidelines for the area.

**To fund such an improvement program, the Village should consider creating a special service area (SSA) for the Village Center.** An SSA is a defined geographic area within which additional minor levies on landowners are used to fund additional services and/or physical improvements to the area within the SSA. Typical service or physical improvements funded by SSAs include enhancements for streetscapes, commercial façades, enhanced snow and trash removal, marketing, and special events.





Navajo Street.

Photo credit: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning.



# Chapter 5

## Housing and Residents

The Housing and Residents chapter describes the key existing conditions, objectives, and strategies to address issues related to the housing stock and improving the lives of all residents.

**GOAL: Maintain vibrant neighborhoods for current and future residents through targeted support for existing units, strategic expansions of the housing stock, and supportive policies and programs.**

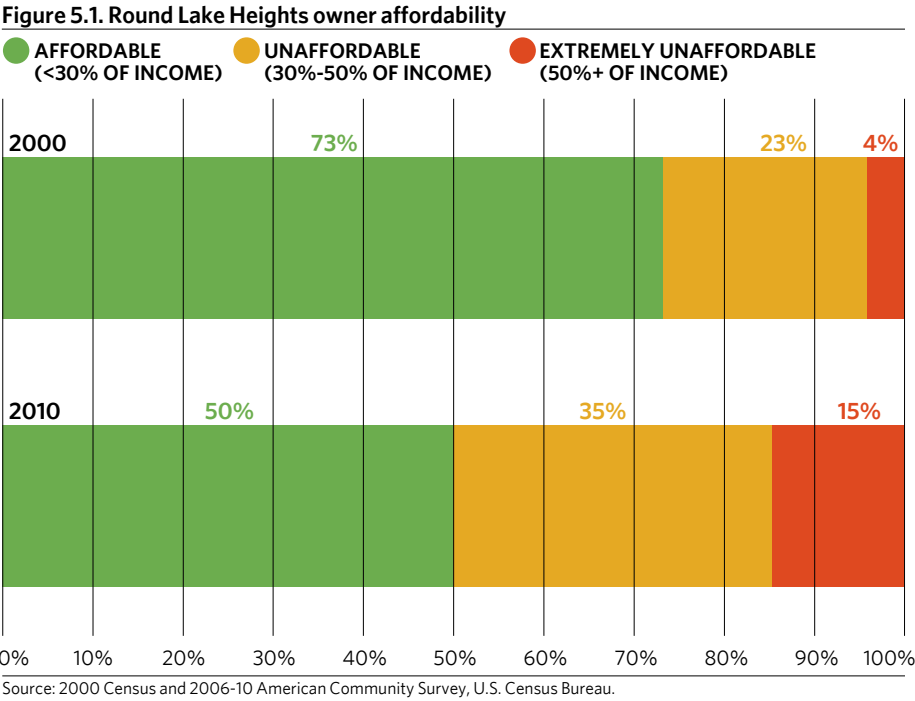
### Key Existing Conditions

Like most suburban communities, **Round Lake Heights' housing stock is predominantly single-family detached owner-occupied homes.** Such units were built primarily in two phases, depending on location. The area south of Mohawk Drive was built in the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s as part of the original Indian Hill subdivision. The area north of Mohawk Drive is comprised of two subdivisions, Fox Glen and Chesapeake Trails, built in the late 1990s and early 2000s. While the spread in age results in differing home appearances, the use of cluster residential development in the newer areas created lots that are similar in square footage to those found in the older areas.

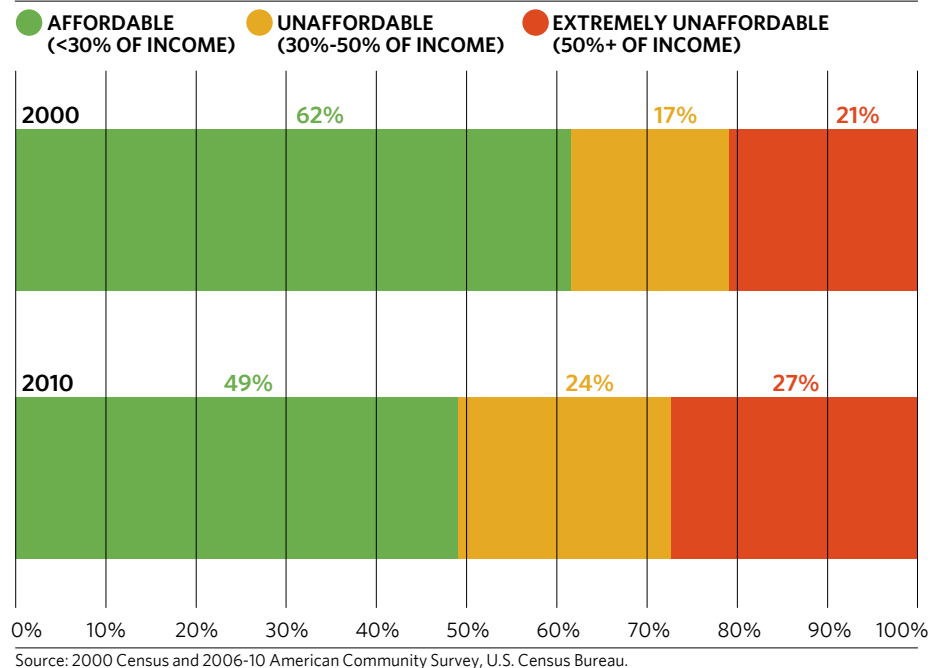
Approximately 16 percent of units in Round Lake Heights are rentals, including both single-family and multi-family units. The Village's few multi-family structures are clustered on the northern side of Rollins Road in three apartment buildings. These three buildings account for approximately 25 percent of the occupied rental units, emphasizing the point that **most rental units in Round Lake Heights are single-family homes.**

Owing in part to the developments of the 1990s and 2000s, Round Lake Heights is a young, growing, and diverse community. The Village approximately doubled in size between 2000-10. Round Lake Heights’ median age increased only slightly over the past decade from 29.4 years to 29.8 years and currently almost 39 percent of the population is younger than 19. The new single-family homes are attractive to families with children. **Yet, the lack of multi-family options reduces housing for all residents, including seniors looking to down-size.** The growing population has also allowed Round Lake Heights to become more diverse, as the proportion of Latinos, African Americans, and Asians in the Village increased significantly. As of 2010, approximately 36 percent of Village residents are Latino and 51 percent are white; these are the two largest ethnic groups in the community.

**Regardless of whether a Village household owns or rents, housing affordability has decreased over the last decade.** The measure of whether a unit is “affordable” is relative, depending on the percentage of income that a household spends on housing costs. The typical standard, rooted in U.S. Census guidelines, is that a household should spend no more than 30 percent of its income on housing costs. More than 50 percent of both renters and owners in the Village spend greater than 30 percent of their household income on housing costs. While this increase is consistent with national trends, according to analysis by Harvard University, “the recession... did little to reduce housing outlays for many Americans,” due in part to declining incomes, slow employment growth and more stringent credit requirements.<sup>2</sup>



2. Joint Center for Housing Studies. (June, 2012). *State of the Nation's Housing 2012*. Harvard University. See <http://tinyurl.com/c83qjxi>.

**Figure 5.2. Round Lake Heights renter affordability**

**The growing number of cost-burdened owners and renters feed into the community's higher foreclosure auction rate.** When compared to both nearby communities and Lake County as a whole, Round Lake Heights has a higher rate of foreclosure auctions per 1,000 homes. While the trend in Lake County was for reduced action in 2011, some of that decrease can be traced to a pause in mortgage holders filing new foreclosure actions until systems were put into place in response to "robo-signing." These foreclosures contribute to a number of local vacant units, which concerns residents.

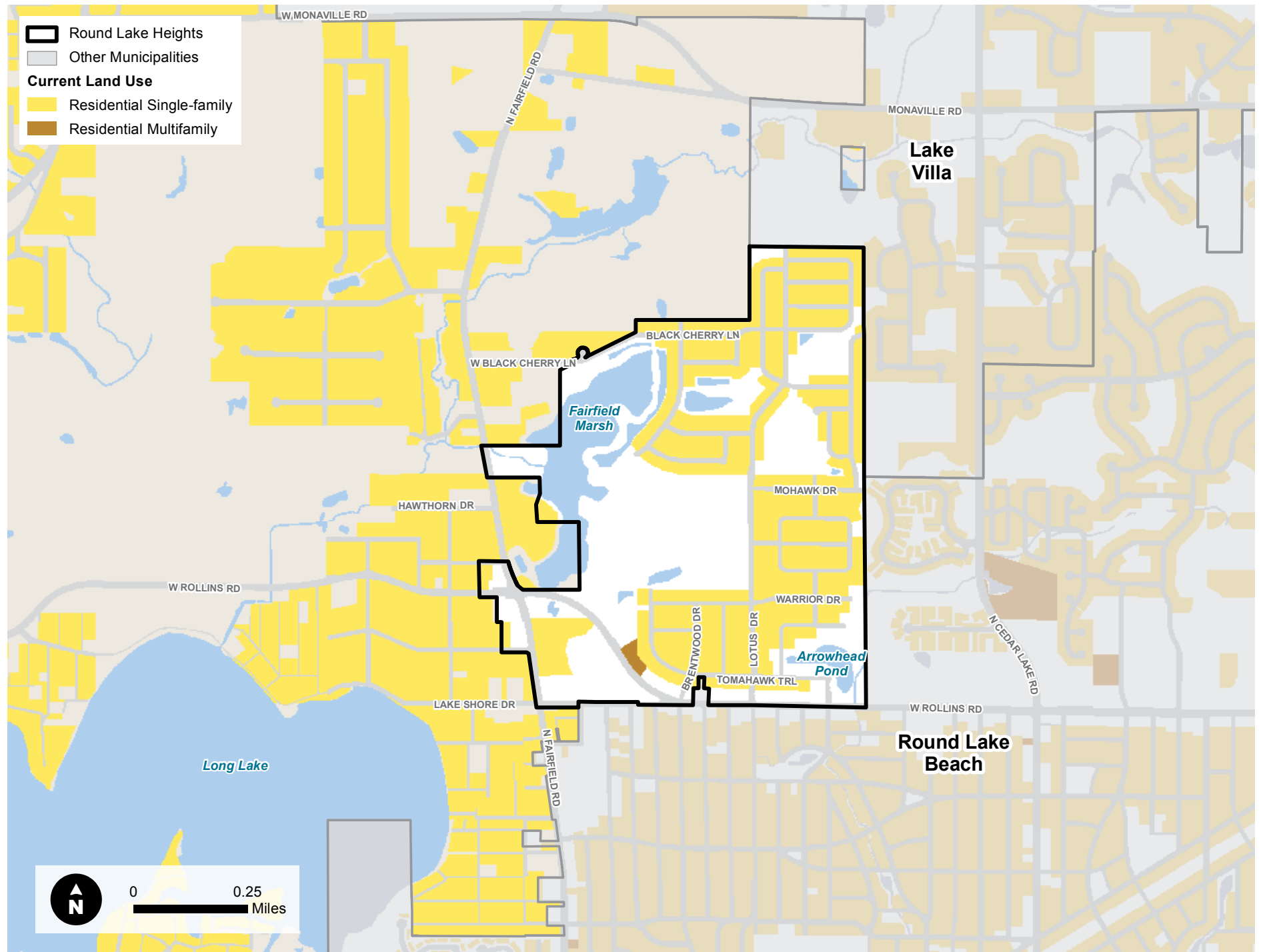
**Figure 5.3. Foreclosure auction rate per 1,000 homes**

	ROUND LAKE HEIGHTS	ROUND LAKE BEACH	ROUND LAKE	LAKE VILLA	LAKE COUNTY
2009	16.6	19.8	10.5	2.8	7.8
2010	19.2	24.0	11.6	6.9	9.5
2011	23.0	15.4	6.3	5.7	6.0

Source: Woodstock Institute and 2010 Census, U.S. Census Bureau.

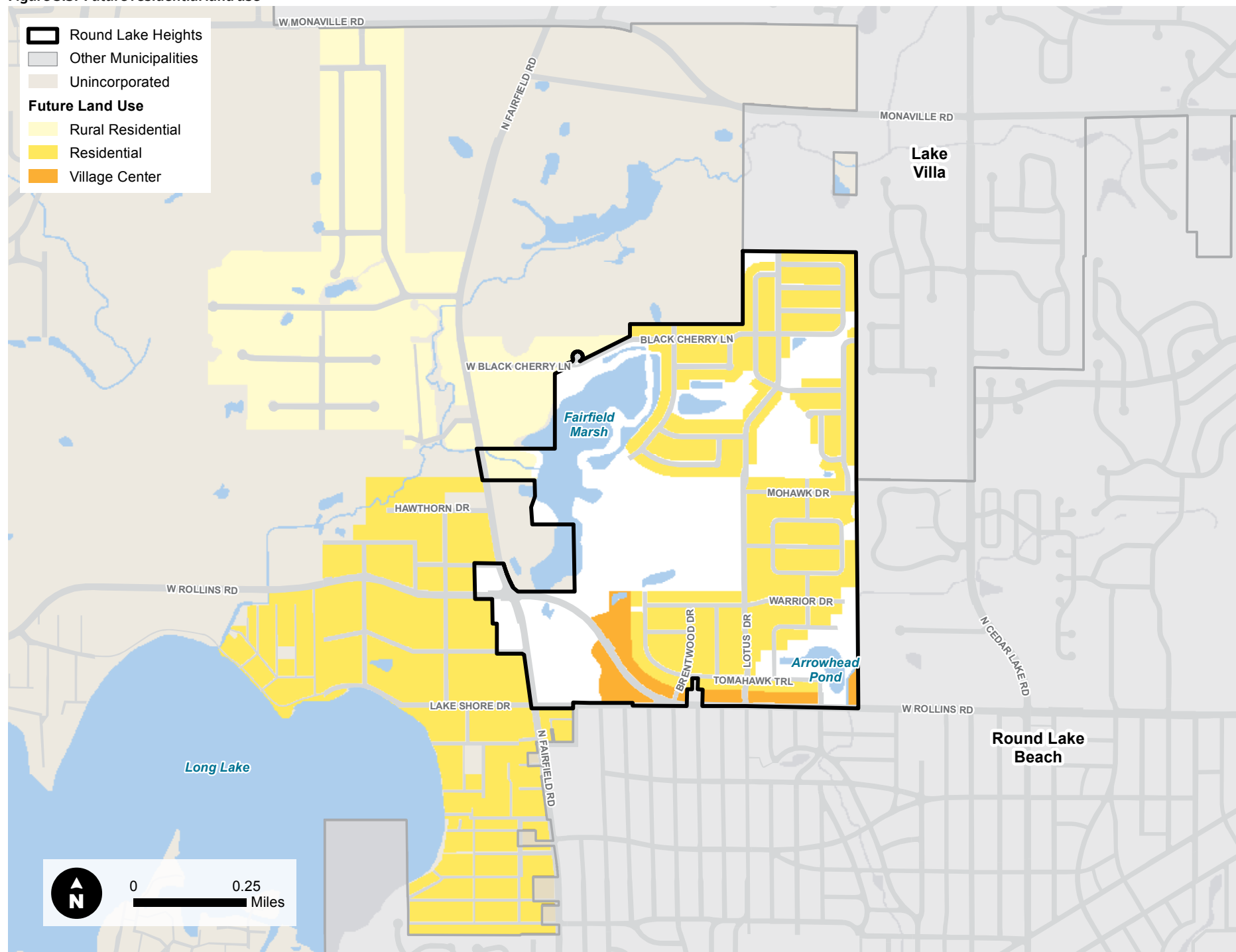


Figure 5.4. Residential land use



Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning.

Figure 5.5. Future residential land use



Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning.

# Objectives and Strategies

## Objective 1

*Maintain the quality of the current housing stock by seeking additional funding sources, connecting with new entities, and renewing ties with existing partners.*

With residential property providing nearly 90 percent of the Village's equalized assessed value, maintaining the quality of the existing housing stock is an important part of ensuring long-term fiscal health. Therefore, the Plan recommends multiple ways to maintain and improve the quality of the local housing stock.

- Since 2009, Round Lake Heights has purchased two homes as part of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) Dollar Home initiative. Dollar Homes are single-family units acquired by the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) as a result of foreclosure auctions. Single-family properties are made available through the program whenever FHA is unable to sell the homes for six months. In each case the Village has spent money to rehabilitate the unit and subsequently resold the property for a profit, using the return on a variety of programs to benefit residents. **The Village should continue acquiring and rehabilitating Dollar Homes when available.**
- Beyond Dollar Homes, the Village has a long-standing relationship with the Affordable Housing Corporation of Lake County (AHC). This non-profit agency increases and preserves affordable housing opportunities in Lake County. Programs include foreclosure prevention counseling, homebuyer education classes, downpayment assistance loans, and housing rehabilitation loans. In recent years, AHC expanded its offerings by purchasing, rehabilitating, and reselling foreclosed units in hard-hit areas of Lake County. Round Lake Heights' residents have used the organization over the past 20 years to purchase new homes and rehabilitate existing units. **It is important that the Village continue to build its relationship with AHC.** Local residents will continue to need many of AHC's programs, particularly foreclosure prevention, homebuyer education, downpayment assistance, and housing rehabilitation. Further relationship building could include joint service advertisements or offering classes at a location in the Village. Round Lake Heights should continue supporting efforts by AHC to seek funding for these programs.

- More than 50 percent of both owners and renters pay more than 30 percent of their incomes on housing costs. Reducing local utility costs through energy retrofits offers one way to help make local housing more affordable to both owners and renters. A retrofit is a whole-system approach to reducing energy consumption throughout a building, often involving multiple energy conservation measures (ECMs). Typical ECMs are intended to limit energy loss, improve the comfort and safety of a home, and, in some instances, increase property values. Simple measures, such as installing programmable thermostats or low-flow showerheads, are offered for free or for a reduced fee through Nicor Gas. Most homes will see the greatest benefit through larger upgrades, such as increasing insulation, improving air sealing, and replacing old appliances/furnaces/boilers with energy efficient models.

The Energy Impact Illinois program is the joint effort of various public and private agencies aimed at helping individuals reduce energy consumption to make their homes, neighborhoods, and communities a better place. **The Village should partner with Energy Impact Illinois to hold informative workshops to educate residents about ECMs, incentives, and rebate opportunities, with the goal of reducing energy costs for households, thereby helping to reduce housing costs. More information can be found at [www.energyimpactillinois.org](http://www.energyimpactillinois.org).**



- While the historic focus of the Village's rental housing enforcement efforts have been on apartment buildings along Rollins Road, single-family homes are the largest local source of rental units. With higher foreclosure rates and a number of presently vacant units, the quality of single-family homes rented may increase in coming years, a trend other communities in the region are already experiencing.<sup>3</sup>

The Metropolitan Planning Council (MPC) produced a paper in June 2013 titled *Managing Single Family Rental Homes*.<sup>4</sup> This paper outlines a number of different strategies to manage local single-family rentals depending on the owner/investor driving the local rental market. While the strongest strategy, licensing rental units, is not possible because Round Lake Heights is not a home rule community, other concepts such as targeted code enforcement are possible options.

**The Village should explore the creation of a more in-depth landlord education program that covers topics beyond those which are part of crime-free housing. Moreover, the Village should continue to monitor both the number of single-family rental units and the property owners, particularly in the case of individuals or companies that own multiple units.** If the Village experiences issues related to single-family rentals, it can then respond to these problems using the strategies outlined in this report. Complementing these efforts, the Village should also support the offering of tenant educational programs.

- While many of the previous recommendations focus on how the quality of the existing housing stock can be maintained and improved through grants, loans, or other programs, regulations also impact rehabilitation trends. **In order to encourage the rehabilitation of units, the Village should consider incorporating an existing building code into its code structure.** Currently, the Village has adopted the 2003 International Residential Code (IRC) as part of its building code. The IRC covers “the design and construction of one- and two-family dwellings and townhouses” and is best suited for new construction. Therefore, some communities adopt existing building codes that are specifically designed for the rehabilitation of existing structures in a safe and efficient fashion. An existing building code could be created in collaboration with other communities in the region or with the assistance of a coding body (e.g. the International Existing Building Code from the International Code Council). While the coding change will encourage rehabilitation activity, the Village should also promote the new code and its key features to contractors, relators, and property owners.



Managing rental housing must include a focus on single-family homes.  
Photo credit: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning.

3 *Single-Family Housing Tenure Changes in the CMAP Region*. (February, 2013). Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning. See <http://tinyurl.com/d5zzfd5>.

4 *Managing Single-Family Rental Homes*. (January, 2013). Metropolitan Planning Council. See <http://tinyurl.com/d5zzfd5>.

## Objective 2

*Support seniors seeking to stay in their homes through both rehabilitation programs and community education efforts.*

While many of the recommendations discussed under Objective 1 focus on maintaining the quality of the local housing stock, the needs of senior residents are important to consider specifically. CMAP projected that the number of residents over 65 will double in the region by 2040. Although Round Lake Heights is currently a younger community, it too will be impacted by an increasing number of senior citizens. Improving livability for residents of all ages includes allowing senior citizens to successfully age-in place for those who wish to stay in their homes.

The community already understands that many local senior citizens find it difficult to stay in their single-family homes. The Village attempts to assist by providing services such as plowing snow from the driveways of seniors. Most homes have been designed for adults raising families and the current design of units pose difficulties for older adults and people with disabilities.<sup>5</sup> While the previously discussed rehabilitation programs offered by organizations such as AHC can help some seniors pay for critical improvements, many programs include restrictions on income or home equity.

Therefore, to help all local seniors, **the Village should work with other interested parties, including municipalities and non-profits, to develop an “aging in place” guide.** Such a guide should focus on the important modifications needed to improve accessibility, eliminate barriers, and create safer spaces. The National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) collaborated with the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) to develop the Certified Aging-in-Place Specialist (CAPS) program.<sup>6</sup> In creating the document, the Village and its partners should reach out to local CAPS contractors and home improvement stores about participating in its creation through advertising or discounts.

5 A Blueprint for Action: developing a Livable Community for All Ages. (May, 2007) Partners for Livable Communities. See <http://tinyurl.com/d2jd7na>.

6 Certified Aging in Place Specialist. National Association of Homebuilders. See <http://tinyurl.com/72sjtmr>.

## Objective 3

*Continue fostering inclusive neighborhoods for all residents.*

- While the previously discussed “aging in place” guide would focus on the physical aspects of remaining in an existing home, truly encouraging livability for seniors requires also tackling issues of transportation and supportive services. The Lake County Coordinated Transportation Services Committee works with a number of northwestern Lake County townships, including Avon and Lake Villa, along with Pace, to provide dial-a-ride service to senior and disabled residents. **Round Lake Heights should continue to support the operation of this service by encouraging local usage through targeted advertising and outreach.**
- The Round Lake Area Park District’s (“Park District”) senior center is located off of Hart Road in Round Lake. The location provides an array of activities and services, including health screenings, computer training, and exercise programs. The Park District has partnered with other organizations, such as the new Oak Hill Supportive Living Community, to provide periodic bus service to the facility. **Round Lake Heights should explore the interest of the Park District and local seniors in establishing periodic bus service from the Village to the senior center.**
- Similar to the rest of the region, Round Lake Heights has become more diverse over the last decade. Recognizing that the changing composition of communities throughout the region brings challenges and opportunities, the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus (MMC) has partnered with CMAP to produce a Diversity Toolkit. This document will provide best practices for many topics, including eliminating language barriers and fostering community engagement. **When this toolkit is developed, the Village of Round Lake Heights should review the document for best practices that would allow the promotion of an inclusive community for all residents. To implement the selected aspects, the Village should partner with local organizations, such as Mano a Mano and Nicasa.**
- Universal design reflects the broad concept that building, products, materials, and environments should be inherently accessible to people with and without disabilities. As applied to housing, the idea is embodied by “visitability,” creating homes which accommodate those with and without physical impairments, such as construction modifications to doorways, hallways, and bathrooms. Communities such as the Village of Bolingbrook and the City of Naperville have adopted visitability ordinances to ensure that new construction or major housing renovations can provide for the needs of the disabled and growing senior populations. **Therefore, Round Lake Heights should adopt a visitability ordinance to incorporate these principles into local codes and ordinances.**

## Objective 4

*Strategically expand the stock of multi-family housing units to support the Village Center strategy and increase housing options for all residents, including seniors.*

As discussed previously, the Village currently only has a few multi-family housing options with three smaller apartment buildings located along Rollins Road. Yet a key component to any successful Village Center concept is multi-family residential to support nearby businesses. Moreover, not all senior citizens want to stay in their single-family home; providing denser housing options allows older residents to move out of their home but remain in the community.

**Therefore, the Village should consider new multi-family housing developments that support revitalized commercial nodes and increase housing options for local residents, including seniors and multi-generational families.** The Future Land Use Plan identified two primary areas for such developments. The first area is on the western edge of the Village Center. The second area is within the northern or southern ends of the commercial area, north of Hawthorn Drive or along Lake Shore Drive. The Village should support the creation of multiple types of housing options within these areas, including townhomes, apartments, and condominiums.

Given the detached single-family nature of most local housing units along with a desire to provide additional housing options for seniors, one alternative type of housing the Village should explore is multi-generational housing. Such units offer households with three or more generations the flexibility needed to cohabitate. Features of such units often include more private areas for independent living such as small kitchenettes, private bathrooms, and even multiple living areas.



Multi-family housing options in Round Lake Heights are limited. Expanding alternatives would allow the Village to retain seniors and attract families. Photo credit: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning.

## Objective 5

*Explore opportunities for the most efficient implementation of recommendations through partnerships with other units of government.*

Many of the ideas and concepts contained throughout this Plan, including this chapter, are best implemented through collaboration with other communities facing similar issues. Federal, state, and private granting agencies have begun emphasizing interjurisdictional collaboration as a criterion when considering whether to fund project and program requests. **Therefore, the Village should apply for CMAP technical assistance to undertake a Homes for a Changing Region study in collaboration with potential partners, such as Round Lake, Round Lake Beach, Round Lake Park, Hainesville, Grayslake, or Lake Villa.**

The Homes initiative charts future housing demand and supply trends for participating communities and develops long-term housing policy plans for each community. These plans aim to create a balanced mix of housing types, serve the needs of current and future residents and workers, and enhance livability. MPC, MMC, and CMAP are jointly supporting the evolution of Homes by encouraging neighboring communities to work together to develop interjurisdictional solutions to housing challenges and by using transparent community engagement strategies to develop these solutions. The Village should undertake this initiative by partnering with neighboring communities that face similar housing challenges, such as foreclosures, vacant units, and housing cost burden.







# Chapter 6

## Natural Environment

The Natural Environment chapter describes the key existing conditions, objectives, and strategies to preserve and enhance the Village's environmental features.

**GOAL: Develop an identity built around the Village's great parks and open spaces by preserving key parcels, using sustainable practices in addressing local issues, and partnering with other entities to emphasize this identity.**

### Key Existing Conditions

Natural environmental features are a defining characteristic of Round Lake Heights. Throughout the outreach process, residents and stakeholders were asked to identify what first came to mind when thinking of Round Lake Heights. The most common answers were small community and open space. **These answers embody the local support for making Round Lake Heights a “state of the art green community.”** Residents repeatedly cited the importance of the open areas around Shagbark Nature Preserve. This park is adjacent to Indian Hill Elementary and Round Lake Middle School, creating one large contiguous community center with natural areas, trails, play fields, and school facilities. The Park District and School District 116 partnered to expand the school facilities to include a gym.

Approximately 36 percent of the Village's land area is occupied by wetlands, open spaces, and water. While parks are located throughout the residential neighborhoods, the bulk are located in the western half of the Village, particularly as part of Fairfield Marsh and the associated wetlands, which extend to the lightly developed areas south of Rollins Road. **Because of this development pattern, many of the developable parcels within the Village's current boundaries are located in areas which contain or abut sensitive environmental areas.** As stated in Chapter 3, outreach indicates that development of all possible greenfield sites is not desired by residents.

Between parks and open areas owned by Round Lake Heights and the Park District, the Village contains 89 acres of publicly owned parks and open spaces. **With 2,676 residents, this amount of open space equates to a ratio of 33.3 acres per 1,000 people, significantly exceeding the national standard of 10 acres per 1,000 people.** Just outside of the Village is LCFPD’s 1,070 acre Grant Woods, holding a mixture of prairie, forest and wetlands that link critical environmental areas with Long Lake. The park includes more than six miles of trails; one trail head is located along Fairfield Road.

**Flooding issues are primarily around Arrowhead Pond** due to the volume of water that flows from wetlands located in Round Lake Beach through the Arrowhead Pond area before continuing south of Rollins Road and into the Round Lake Drain. While the Village has tried several efforts to address these issues (Community Development Block Grant [CDBG] funded infrastructure improvements and the demolition of flood prone homes), flooding remains a problem. Additionally, during heavy rains the lower elementary school parking lot (east of the tennis courts) floods.

Stormwater runoff in the Village is handled differently depending on the age of the area. In newer areas, the water is handled through a curb and gutter system along with a series of detention ponds scattered throughout the neighborhood. Within older areas, a combination of roadside ditches and underground piping capture and move the water. **The need to improve stormwater infrastructure throughout the older neighborhoods was discussed frequently by stakeholders and the public.** In Lake County, stormwater management is overseen by LCSMC which created the Watershed Development Ordinance (WDO). Local communities that adopt the WDO as part of their code, among other requirements, can be certified by the County to perform local administration. Round Lake Heights is a certified community.

As a member of the Central Lake County Joint Action Water Agency (CLCJAWA), Round Lake Heights receives all of its drinking water from Lake Michigan. CLCJAWA is an intergovernmental body which provides water to nine municipalities and some communities in unincorporated Lake County. Round Lake Heights is a member of the organization as part of a consortium with Round Lake Park.

**Unique among the CLCJAWA communities, Round Lake Heights does not have direct access to water supplied by the agency.** The nearest regional water main is along Route 83 at its intersection with Rollins Road. The Village’s water is supplied by passing through Round Lake Beach infrastructure. The Village maintains no storage capacity of its own and relies upon water storage facilities in Round Lake Beach. Water costs in Round Lake Heights are higher than for other CLCJAWA communities, as the local rate includes both the water charge from CLCJAWA along with a transmission and storage fee charged by Round Lake Beach.

Figure 6.1: CLCJAWA 2010 water rates per 1,000 gallons

COMMUNITY	RESIDENTIAL	COMMERCIAL
Grayslake	\$5.21	\$4.96
Gurnee	\$4.45	\$4.45
Lake Bluff	\$5.85	\$5.85
Libertyville	\$4.78	\$4.79
Mundelein	\$5.34	\$5.34
Round Lake	\$2.32	\$2.32
Round Lake Beach	\$5.48	\$5.48
Round Lake Heights	\$6.25	\$6.25
Round Lake Park	\$6.25	\$6.25
Unincorporated Lake County	\$5.69	\$5.69

Source: Illinois Department of Natural Resources 2010 Water Rate Survey.

# Objectives and Strategies

## Objective 1

*Ensure that the Village's water infrastructure continues to meet community needs.*

- The lack of Village controlled access to both the regional water main and water storage increases water costs for residents. **Therefore, Round Lake Heights should research the pros and cons of creating its own water access and storage.** Because of the large costs associated with such an expansion, the full life-cycle infrastructure costs of any alternative should be compared against the water costs paid by Round Lake Heights through its current arrangement.

When considering the best long-term strategy for providing stable and affordable water service for residents, the Village should also consider the changing framework of water usage in western Lake County. Lake Villa is one of ten communities in northern and western Lake County that received a Lake Michigan water allocation in 2011. These communities are currently exploring options for using this allocation, including potentially joining CLCJAWA. Such an expansion of CLCJAWA could open up options for Round Lake Heights to consider when determining how best to access its water.

- Because of the cost and time involved in any potential alternatives to the Village's current water situation, **Round Lake Heights should promote and implement water conservation and reuse strategies to reduce local water demand,** thereby lowering the water costs paid by local residents and by extension reducing the percentage of local incomes paid toward gross housing costs.

Conservation strategies can take many forms. High efficiency plumbing fixtures, such as those promoted by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (U.S. EPA) WaterSense program, can be used to reduce the use of potable water for residential and commercial developments. According to the U.S. EPA, 30 percent of daily water consumption is used for landscaping.<sup>7</sup> Rain barrels, cisterns, or detention areas can help provide irrigation. Planting landscaping native to this region and replacing or reducing water-thirsty turf grass lawns can reduce the demand for irrigation. Scheduling watering days and times can help make the most use out of limited resources.

Implementing these concepts can occur through both regulation and community education. CMAP produced a model water conservation ordinance that offers recommended methods on many practices that can be mandated through local regulations.<sup>8</sup> The LCSMC has sold rain barrels to support their use by local residents. The Lake County Municipal Conference, of which Round Lake Heights is a member, is a partner in the WaterSense program. Partner status allows the Village access to a variety of water conservation outreach materials including bill inserts, magnet designs, press releases, public service announcements, guidance on how to run a rebate program, water savings tip brochures, fact sheets, and web banners.

Beyond technological and design concepts, reducing water conservation can be tied to metering and pricing. The Village already requires meters for all water users with consumers paying a set rate based on the level of consumption. Additional pricing models to encourage further conservation (such as tiered pricing with higher rates for heavy users) could be implemented on an as-needed-basis, such as those outlined in CMAP's *Full-Cost Water Pricing Guidebook*.<sup>9</sup>

7. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. See <http://tinyurl.com/dx584fa>.

8. *Model Water Conservation Ordinance*. (March, 2010). Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning. See <http://tinyurl.com/bfvpggr>.

9. *Full-Cost Water Pricing Guidebook for Sustainable Community Water Systems*. (December, 2012). Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning. See <http://tinyurl.com/cvvfyys>.

## Objective 2

*Address local issues, including infrastructure projects, by considering solutions which emphasize the Village's natural character.*

- The area occupied by Arrowhead Pond was intended for development as part of the Indian Hill subdivision. In part because the area is a natural peat bog, construction never occurred and the expanse subsequently became Village owned open space. With the development of the Countryside Lane and Meadow Green developments in Round Lake Beach in the mid-1980s, flooding in the bog increased due in part to the increase in impervious coverage. The Pond itself was not created until the mid-1990s to address the flooding problems.

As discussed previously, the Village has taken important steps to reduce flooding from Arrowhead Pond. Yet, stakeholders still voiced concerns about the flooding, including its impact on users of Arrowhead Park and its role as the eastern gateway into Round Lake Heights. Because flooding is due in part to the volume of water that flows into the area from parcels in Round Lake Beach, addressing the issue requires an inter-jurisdictional solution. **Therefore, the Village should explore additional improvements which could mitigate flooding while allowing for aesthetic improvements for Arrowhead Pond and restoration of the natural peat bog.** A potential partner in such research would be LCSMC. Actual improvements may require discussion with Round Lake Beach and the homeowners associations for Countryside Lane and Meadow Green. **Funding sources for improvements will vary depending on the solutions proposed.**

## Park Forest Central Park Wetlands

Round Lake Heights is not the only community in the region to consider restoration of a peat bog. Central Park, located in the heart of Park Forest, is a natural peat bog and wetlands. The land for the park was dedicated to the Village by the original developer of Park Forest in the 1950s. Over the subsequent 40 years, the area was graded, seeded with turf grass, and mowed to provide an open area.

After debating many uses for the 90-acre property, including a golf course, pond, and recreational fields, the Village decided to move forward with natural restoration of the bog in the 1990s. Through funding support from many entities, including the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR), the South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association (SSMMA), and private fundraising, the bog was successfully restored, becoming a point of pride for the Village. For more information visit <http://tinyurl.com/c7frym3>.



Central Park today.  
Photo credit: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning.



- The older and newer sections of the Village were subdivided and platted approximately 50 years apart. Within those 50 years, the surrounding development context changed dramatically. When the Indian Hill section was created, much of the surrounding area was farmland and the Village had not been incorporated. When the Fox Glen and Chesapeake Trails developments were created, northwestern Lake County had grown, changing the character of the area from rural to suburban. The infrastructure within the older and newer areas reflects the changing surroundings. While newer areas have curbs and gutters, older areas use roadside swales.

Stakeholders from the older sections of the Village consistently discussed a desire to make the streetside areas more attractive, citing the appearance of similar areas in the newest sections. While installing a curb and gutter system similar to that in newer areas would make the areas visually consistently, the older area would lose its rural design character. Moreover, the cost of creating a new stormwater system in the older areas could be significantly more expensive than the maintenance and improvement of the current system.<sup>10</sup>

**Therefore, to both preserve the rural character of the roadside swales while also making it more attractive, the Village should work with homeowners to improve the attractiveness and functionality of the current swale system.** Most existing swales contain mown turf grass which can be replaced with deep rooted native plant species to increase attractiveness and encourage infiltration. The Village should look to LCSMC and the State of Illinois as potential partners for the implementation such improvements with street right-of-ways. Funding may be available through the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) green infrastructure grant program.

- Round Lake Heights is a member of the Solid Waste Agency of Lake County (SWALCO). Widely recognized as a leader in the region and beyond in the field of waste management, SWALCO and the County have committed to achieve a 60 percent recycling rate by 2020. In 2008, only 18.2 percent of the Village's residential waste was diverted from landfills for recycling, scrapping, or composting. Not only is this figure below the 2008 County average of 27.8 percent, but this figure is also among the lowest for SWALCO members. **Therefore, Round Lake Heights should partner with SWALCO to help increase local knowledge about the benefits of recycling, scrapping, and composting.** Reducing the amount of waste that is landfilled lowers associated costs while also making the most of the space available in landfills, which have finite capacity.

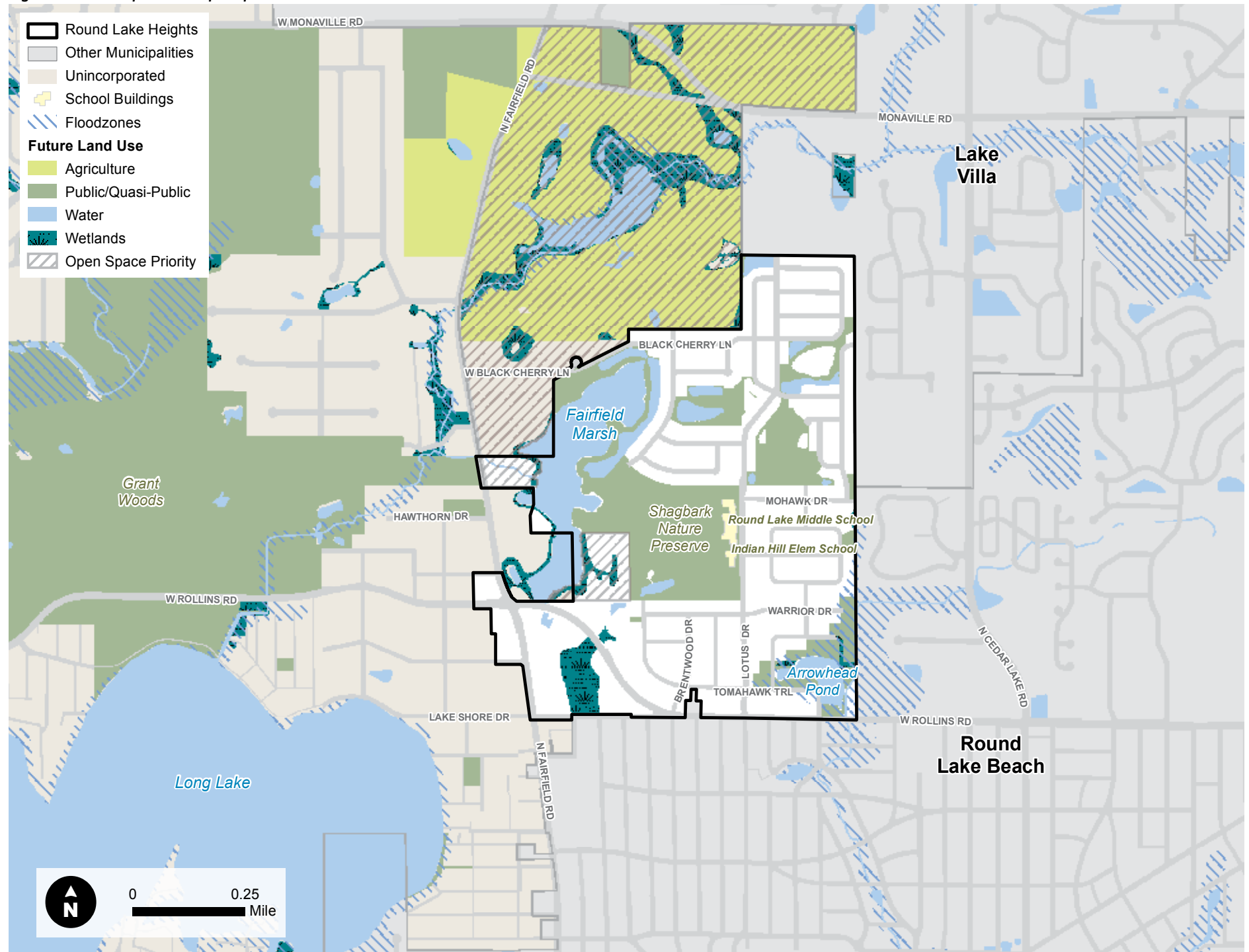
SWALCO recently created a new "recycle first and trash last" program in conjunction with the Curbside Value Partnership to help educate residents about the value of recycling.<sup>11</sup> The program includes a number of components that can be implemented at the local level, including community posters, event displays, and promotional materials in English and Spanish. Round Lake Heights should meet with SWALCO and determine what materials may best work to reach Round Lake Heights' residents. One outreach option maybe to include a SWALCO table at the Village Festival. As this recommendation is implemented, the Village should monitor recycling, scrapping, and composting statistics gathered by SWALCO to understand the success of education efforts, adjusting the methods based on progress.

- As noted previously, Round Lake Heights has adopted Lake County's WDO and is a certified community. **In anticipation of forthcoming new national stormwater rules, the Village should work in cooperation with Lake County, which already has strong stormwater regulations in place, to adopt new regulations which control and manage the stormwater impacts of new development.** Changes could include the establishment of incentives to encourage the installation of green infrastructure approaches (e.g., allow green infrastructure to count against stormwater and landscaping requirements).

10. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Best Management Practices. See <http://tinyurl.com/clmpty9>.

11. See <http://www.recyclefirsttrashlast.org/>.

Figure 6.2. Future parks and open spaces



Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning.

### Objective 3

*Explore partnerships and regulations which allow the Village to preserve key parcels.*

- **Round Lake Heights should work on its own and in collaboration with partners to protect valuable natural resources**, including scenic landscapes, woodlands, native trees, aquifer recharge areas, high sensitivity aquifer areas, fens, wetlands, streams, and native plants and animals.

The Future Land Use Plan designates the Open Space Priority overlay for targeted areas of the Village and unincorporated areas which should be targeted for preservation and protection. Designated areas are parcels which either border Fairfield Marsh and/or could expand Grant Woods or Shagbark Nature Preserve. Therefore, continuing to work with Park District and LCFPD is particularly important. Such partnerships may include joint funding application along with advocacy to both organizations when they engage in long-range planning for future acquisitions.

The Open Space Lands Acquisition and Development (OSLAD) and Park and Recreation Facility Construction (PARC) grants have been used in previous acquisition efforts. The OSLAD and PARC grants are offered through IDNR and provide funds to acquire and develop land for parks and open space purposes as well as construct recreational facilities.

- This Plan envisions select new residential development in support of the Village Center and around the Fairfield/Rollins node. **By amending the subdivision ordinance to require the donation of land or funds for open space and recreational purposes to provide for the need created by the development of new homes and neighborhoods, Round Lake Heights could use new developments to help pay for the preservation of open space priority areas.**

Moreover, development of properties as part of the Fairfield/Rollins node would include parcels abutting Fairfield Marsh. **Amending the current subdivision ordinances to promote the re-establishment, restoration, and use of trees and native, deep-rooted vegetation through stronger landscape standards can help reduce contamination and runoff from nearby development into the Marsh.** IDNR and Chicago Wilderness are potential sources of assistance for implementing this strategy.



Protecting agricultural land north of the Village is a priority.  
Photo credit: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning.



## Objective 4

*Leverage the educational opportunities of the Village's high quality environmental features by partnering with school districts and other education providers.*

Building relationships with schools offer some of the most fertile ground to make Round Lake Heights a “state of the art green community.” Benefits come not only from educating students about the value of local natural resources, but also from the stronger funding support that such interconnected projects typically receive. Students from Round Lake Heights currently attend three different school districts, Lake Villa School District 41, Round Lake Area School District 116, and Grant Township Community High School (District 124). While the presence of Indian Hill Elementary School and Round Lake Middle School in the heart of the Village makes relationship building with District 116 important, consideration should be given to involvement with all local school districts when implementing these recommendations.

- Older residents frequently talk about their fond memories of exploring the parks, wetlands, and open spaces in and around Round Lake Heights, learning to value these natural areas. More formally, both the Round Lake and Lake Villa school districts work closely with the Park District on a number of programs, including use of an existing nature museum which is located in the Aquatics Center in Round Lake.

To build off of the unique environmental nature of both Village and Park District-owned spaces adjacent to the elementary and middle schools, **Round Lake Heights should work with all three institutions to explore the creation of a small nature center for Park District and school district educational programs.** Such a facility could include a small educational room with instruction space and information about the environmental features located in Round Lake Heights, such as Shagbark Nature Preserve and Fairfield Marsh. By connecting the facility to walking trails, groups could then move from the facility into guided tours of the nearby natural areas. The exact location for such a center should be determined jointly by all involved entities; the Village may wish to offer use of a small municipally owned property in the area for a site. Funding for such a center could be found through a combination of funding sources of collaborating entities along with grant funding from organizations such as IDNR, the Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation, and the Audubon Society.

## Environmental Education Center

Highland Park, NJ recently completed a small local environmental education facility. The center is dedicated to creating awareness, understanding, and appreciation of local environmental features, particularly those around the adjacent Raritan River. The Environmental Center building features a green roof and space for future solar panel installation. With a capacity of 19 people, the facility is used for local educational efforts, including community and school groups. The project was funded with a combination of state and county grants and loans. For more information visit <http://tinyurl.com/bvjpa7g>.



Highland Park Environmental Education Center.  
Photo credit: Arnold Clayton Henderson.



- One of the locations stakeholders identified with flooding issues is the lower elementary school parking lot. While this property is used by the elementary school for parking and loading, the property is owned by the Park District and used for parking for Shagbark Nature Preserve.

**To address isolated flooding issues and introduce the concepts behind green infrastructure, the Village should work with District 116 and the Park District on a green infrastructure demonstration project to alleviate the flooding issues.** Concepts that should be explored include retrofitting the parking lot with rain gardens, buffers, vegetated swales, and other techniques that allow for reductions in flooding but still meet parking needs. By pursuing improvements so close to the elementary and middle schools, they could be used by school teachers as outdoor classrooms to aid in teaching lessons about the natural environment and the benefits of using civil engineering and landscape architecture to shape the built environment and mitigate the effects of urban development.

- There are many benefits to developing community gardens in Round Lake Heights. The gardens can enhance neighborhood character, foster a sense of community, and decrease costs of mowing and other maintenance on Village-owned properties. A community garden would offer an excellent forum to engage Latino parents and bring all Village residents together. **Round Lake Heights should work with the Round Lake Area School District and the Park District to explore locations of community gardens in the Village that could be used by residents and students. Ideal locations include existing open space areas and locations in or around school facilities.**

There are many different ways to organize community gardening programs. Some communities offer garden space at no cost to residents in return for maintenance and upkeep. Another approach is to establish a lease program whereby a not-for-profit organization, or group of individuals with a not-for-profit sponsor, creates gardens for a low fee. Round Lake Heights should pursue grant opportunities as they arise, preferably as a joint effort.

## Community Garden

In a partnership between Murphy Elementary School and Mano-a-Mano Family Resources Center, a community garden was developed in Round Lake Park in 2009. Starting with twenty 20 foot by 20 foot plots on land donated by the school, the plot has been expanded to include over 25,000 square feet of space. Programing run by Mano-a-Mano provides gardening classes and field trips to farm incubators and farmers markets. Some teachers at the adjacent school maintain plots in the garden and use the facility to teach students about local food production. For more information, visit <http://tinyurl.com/d6caby2>.



Community garden in Round Lake Park.  
Photo credit: Mano-a-Mano Family Resources Center.



Rollins Road.

Photo credit: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning.



# Chapter 7

## Infrastructure

The Infrastructure chapter describes the key existing conditions, objectives, and strategies for the Village's pedestrian, automotive, and bicycle systems.

**GOAL: Maintain and improve the local infrastructure systems to meet the Village's needs and resident desires in a way that is fiscally prudent.**

### Key Existing Conditions

Round Lake Heights is served with a complete network of County and locally maintained roads. The largest roads which serve the Village are both County-maintained: Rollins Road and Fairfield Road. Lotus Drive, which runs through the heart of the Village, includes sidewalks along its entire length, connecting schools, residents, parks, jobs, and services. Transportation issues are largely similar whether in residential neighborhoods or along regional roads.

**The quality and availability of sidewalks within Round Lake Heights varies by the age and location of surrounding development.** The oldest residential areas of the Village (south of Mohawk Drive) have an inconsistent network of sidewalks. While Lotus Drive has sidewalks, the networks on other streets are more scattered. Portions of Warrior Drive and Brentwood Drive have sidewalks on one side of the street. Newer subdivisions

to the north have an extensive sidewalk network connecting all residential units to neighborhood parks. Along major regional roads such as Fairfield Road and Rollins Road, a four- to five-foot paved asphalt shoulder is provided on each side of the street. Pedestrian facilities are frequently interrupted by curb cuts, lights, and signs. Few intersections are accessible to the disabled. Parking lots and driveways separate many buildings from the adjacent sidewalk.

**The width, traffic volume, and design together create a physical barrier which reduces non-automotive access to areas both along and south of Rollins Road.** Poor pedestrian and bike facilities on the road combined with few signalized intersections reduces non-automotive traffic to businesses in both Round Lake Heights and Round Lake Beach.

The signalized intersection of Rollins Road and Lotus Drive provides a key pedestrian access point for the area south of Rollins Road. Numerous students from both Round Lake Heights and Round Lake Beach use Lotus Drive to access Indian Hill Elementary School and Round Lake Middle School. The intersection includes crosswalks, drop curbs, and pedestrian activated signals. **Yet, because of the north-south pedestrian and bicycle traffic flows, residents would like to see changes along Rollins Road and Lotus Drive to better protect drivers, walkers, and bikers.** Of particular concern are the morning and afternoon peak flows of students.



Adding sidewalks in conjunction with improved swales would improve the walkability and image of the Village's oldest neighborhoods. Photo credit: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning.

## Objectives and Strategies

### Objective 1

***Create a complete and safe pedestrian environment for residents through a combination of infrastructure improvements and regulations.***

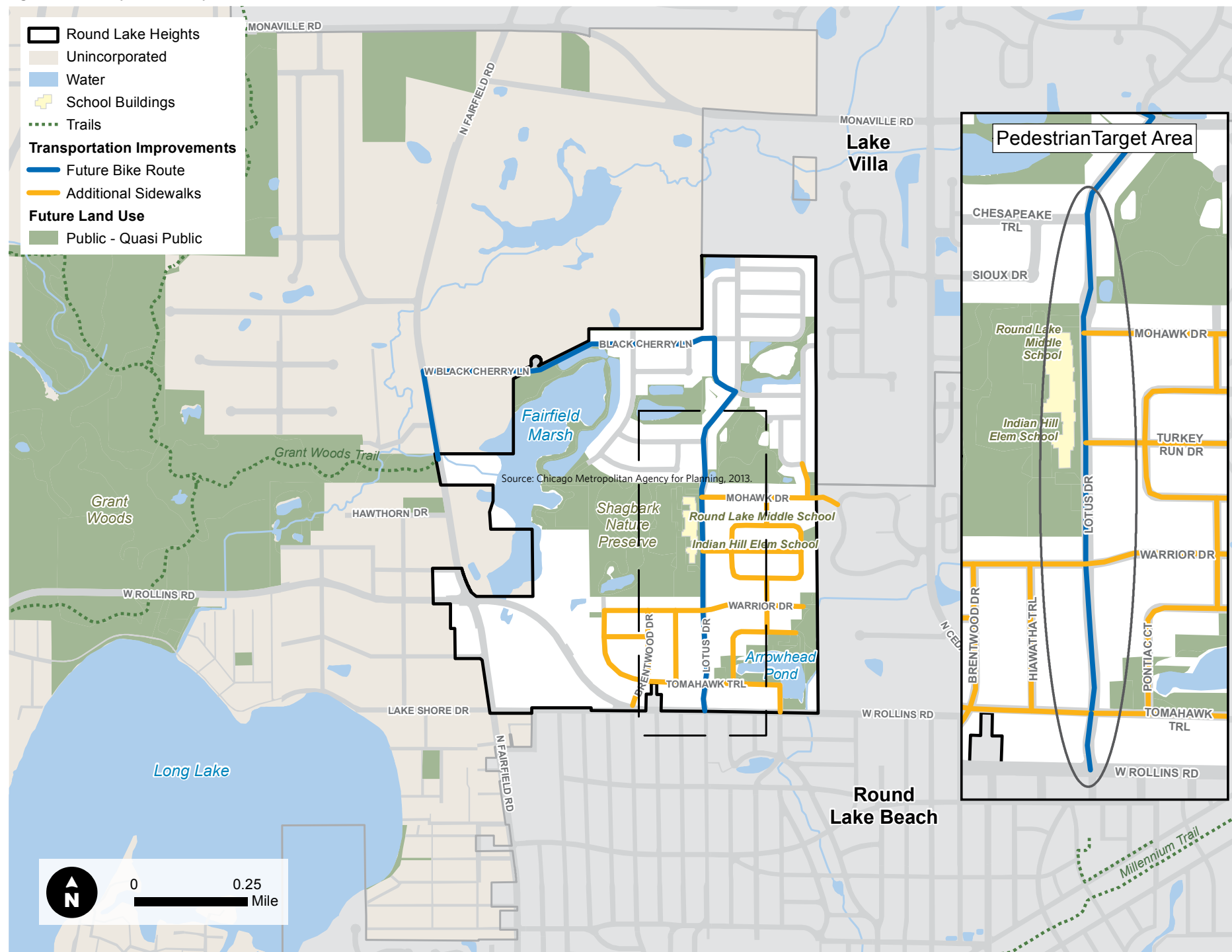
Residents repeatedly discussed the need to address a handful of key pedestrian topics throughout the Village. While many of the specific issues are along Rollins Road and in older areas, concern for pedestrian problems was reflected by residents throughout the community. **Therefore, reflecting the central importance of creating a complete and safe pedestrian network, as a matter of policy, the Village should require that all development in Round Lake Heights be linked via sidewalks.**

While such a policy can guide improvements required from future development and redevelopment, it does not address current pedestrian infrastructure gaps or safety issues around local walkers (and bikers). Combined, the following physical and programmatic improvements will allow the Village to create a complete local pedestrian network safe for users of all ages.

- The most important gap in the local pedestrian network is the lack of a complete sidewalk network in the older sections of the Village. **Therefore, Round Lake Heights should plan to install sidewalks throughout this area. Completion of the network, with sidewalks on both sides of all streets, would result in the need to add over five miles of additional sidewalks.** Because of the size of such an undertaking, the Village should phase the improvements, focusing on completing sections which link parks to natural features first. Such improvements should be done in concert with other street improvements as part of a long-term capital improvement plan, including improvements for the street-side swales present in the area.
- As discussed previously, the pedestrian environment along Rollins Road is also in need of improvement. **Any physical enhancements to the pedestrian environment along Rollins Road should be considered as part of the proposed corridor planning process between Round Lake Beach and Round Lake Heights along with the Lake County Division of Transportation (LCDOT).** The Village should also bear in mind that LCDOT will work with municipalities to approve pedestrian and streetscape improvements via permit for County roadways if Round Lake Heights later decides that it wishes to make such changes along Rollins Road independent of any development or redevelopment.



Figure 7.1. Transportation improvements



Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning.

- In addition to physical improvements, **the Village should consider adopting regulations that would protect bicyclists and pedestrians from vehicular traffic.** Examples of ordinances that have been adopted by Illinois communities include:
  - *Snow Removal Ordinance:* As the Village expands its network of sidewalks, it should also consider the regulations which govern their maintenance and upkeep. Stakeholder discussions have focused on the particular need to ensure that sidewalks are free of snow and ice in the winter, as students and other pedestrians often walk in the streets when sidewalks are not clear. Currently snow removal for sidewalks is done by the Village. Regulation could require residents to clear snow from public sidewalks abutting residential properties.
  - *Distracted Driver Ordinance:* The Village should consider adopting and publicizing a distracted driver ordinance restricting the use of mobile communication devices while driving on local roadways. Safety goals could be further bolstered by a partnership with neighboring communities to pass similar policies throughout the region.
  - *Safe Park Zone Ordinance:* To ensure safe access to neighborhood parks, school playgrounds, and recreational facilities, the Village should adopt a Safe Park Zone ordinance. As per Active Transportation Alliance, a non-profit bicycle advocacy group, this strategy entails enforcing higher penalties for traffic violations when children are present on streets adjacent to parks. The Illinois Vehicle Code section 5/11-605.3 allows municipalities to use revenue generated from the higher fines to establish and maintain safety infrastructure within the zone and to fund safety programming.<sup>12</sup>
  - *Bicycle Parking Ordinance:* In order to encourage residents to ride their bikes, a key component is to place adequate supportive infrastructure. Bicycle parking is one such component. The Village should therefore revise the zoning ordinance to require bicycle parking at key commercial, residential, and industrial sites. Minimum bicycle parking standards can be correlated to existing motor-vehicle parking standards, e.g. requiring that at least one bicycle parking space for each ten of the required off-street automobile parking spaces be provided in all districts.



Pedestrian improvements are needed along Rollins Road. Photo credit: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning.

## Objective 2

### ***Improve the safety of students and residents through infrastructure improvements and educational programs.***

As the major local pedestrian, bicycle, and car traffic generator, the unique set of safety and infrastructure issues related to the operation of Indian Hill Elementary School and Round Lake Middle School must be specifically addressed through targeted solutions.

Unlike other streets within the older areas of the Village, Lotus Drive contains two five-foot sidewalks on each side of the street. At intersections, crosswalks delineate the potential for pedestrian activity. Of the over 1,500 students attending either the elementary or middle school, many walk or bike along Lotus Drive, passing from neighborhoods south of Round Lake Beach and into Round Lake Heights during the morning and afternoon. The volume of students at the peak hour periods exceeds the capacity of current sidewalks. Students walk in the street rather than the sidewalks, particularly in the winter if snow-covered sidewalks have not been cleared. Bicyclists ride on both the sidewalk and in the street. **A combination of educational efforts, regulations, and physical improvements can improve the current situation on Lotus Drive.**

<sup>12</sup> *Creating Safe Park Zones for Communities in Illinois.* (January, 2012). Active Transportation Alliance. See <http://tinyurl.com/cyak5lz>.

- The existing design of the corridor, with its sidewalks, crosswalks, and low speed limits already do much to improve bicycle and pedestrian safety. Yet, additional improvements, ranging from small to large scale, could further improve the safety of the corridor. **A relatively simple improvement could be the addition of “sharrows” along Lotus Drive.** These images painted on the roadway signal the location and presence of bicyclists on the roadway.
- **While the Village should focus on immediate low intensity improvements such as “sharrows,” over the long-term, the Village should explore the value of more significant infrastructure improvements.** Traffic calming is an effective way to increase safety on local roads. It is a common misconception that streets with a high volume of traffic are less safe for pedestrian activity. While volume of traffic may be a contributing factor, vehicular speeds and width of streets are the primary factors in pedestrian fatalities nationwide. As a general practice, the Village should continue complying with the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) when making any infrastructure improvement. Potential traffic calming measures include speed humps, reduced vehicular speeds, increased policing/fines/penalties, visible pedestrian crosswalks, and street trees/landscaping.
- **The Round Lake Heights Police Department should craft both adult and youth walking and biking education programs.** Youth programs can be provided through both the elementary school and middle school, detailing how to safely walk and bike. Reviews could include a free inspection program of youth bicycles with recommended safety improvements. Adult programs could be provided through the parent teacher organizations at the schools, local non-profits and at local events, such as the Village Festival. Programs should be provided in both English and Spanish.
- While the bulk of student pedestrian traffic flows south along Lotus Drive, some students live east, in neighborhoods such as Countryside Lane. Currently, pedestrians have worn a dirt path through the wooded boundary area, linking Mohawk Drive with Countryside Lane. **Due to safety concerns around this informal connection, the Village should work with other interested parties to improve the access, creating a formal sidewalk with lighting.** Because any sidewalk connection would require crossing land owned by the Countryside Lane Homeowner Association, Round Lake Heights should start by reaching out to this organization, but the involvement of Round Lake Beach will also be important in the final development of any solution.

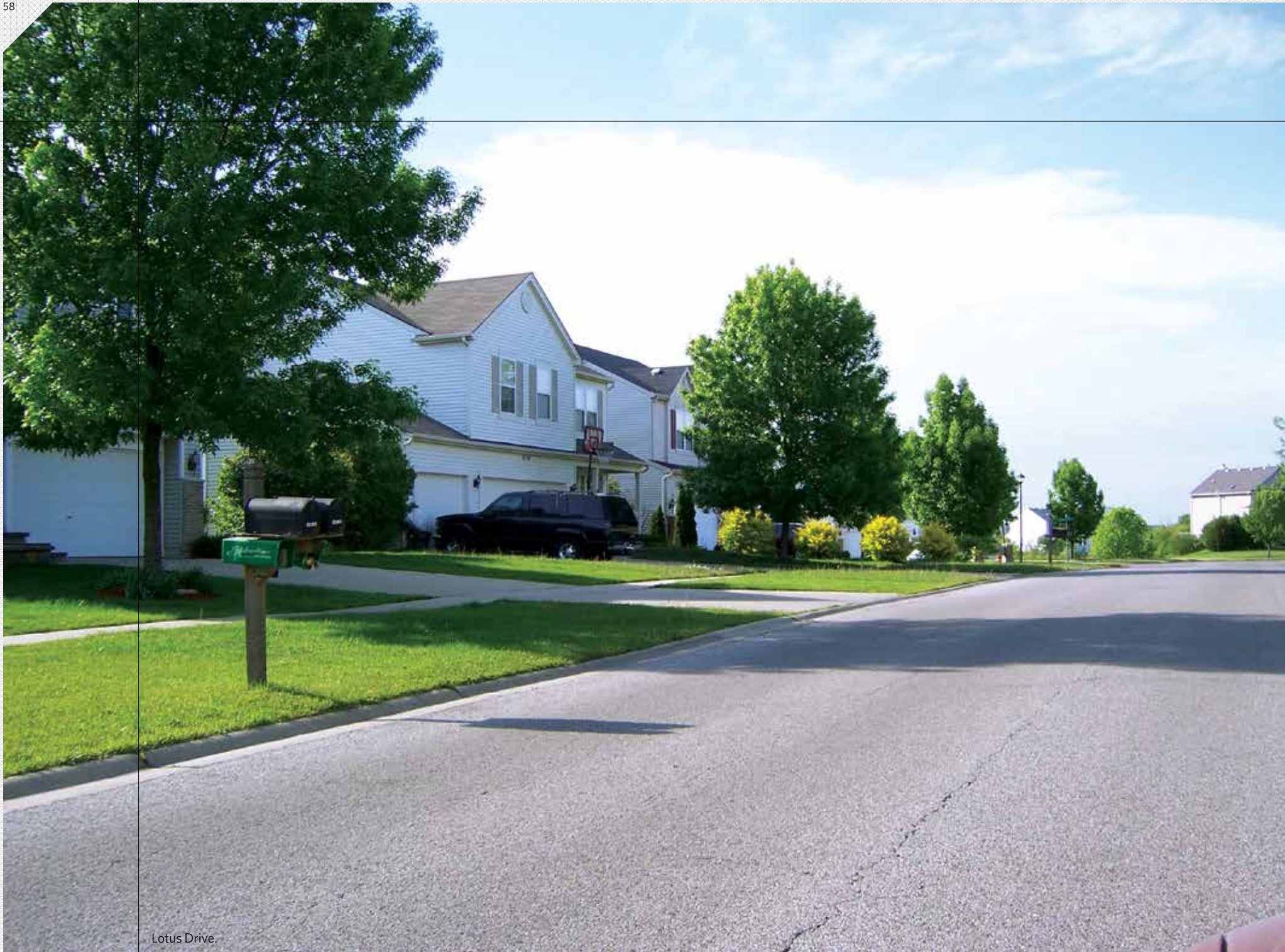
### Objective 3

***Capitalize on Round Lake Heights’ key location in between two major trails to develop a local bicycle network.***

The Village is bracketed by two extensive bicycle networks. The Grant Woods trail system to the west ends with a trail head along Fairfield Road opposite the Village boundary. Managed by LCFPD, this park includes more than six miles of trail. Southern portions of the Grant Woods trail link to the Chain-o-Lakes bicycle path that parallels Rollins Road west of Long Lake. The Millennium Trail is a 35-mile trail that will connect central, northern and western Lake County communities. The trail starts along Route 176 in Mundelein, curving through the western parts of Lake County before coming back east through Round Lake and Round Lake Beach. Completed portions include bike trails in the ComEd right-of-way along Hawthorne Drive in Round Lake Beach.

**Located in between these systems, the Village can play a key role connecting the two while also providing greater biking options for residents.** While the focus should be on fostering a northwest-southeast connection through the Village, the best route for both the Village and any partners must still be decided. From the Village’s perspective, a focus should be in creating on-street connections along Lotus Drive. Because of the number of potential options, the Village should remain open to working with LCFPD, Round Lake Beach, and LCDOT. Consideration for the best local design should be given when considering how to implement previous recommendations related to bicycle and pedestrian improvements along Lotus Drive.





Lotus Drive.

Photo credit: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning.



# Chapter 8

## Moving Forward

The concepts presented throughout this Plan represent only the first efforts necessary to implement Round Lake Heights' vision of the future. While potential funding sources and partners are discussed for many recommendations, the burden of pursuing implementation falls on the Village. Only it can advocate for critical projects and programs. To succeed, the Village must take ownership of the implementation of this document.

For a smaller community such as Round Lake Heights, implementation can be inherently challenging due to the resources and capacity (whether time, financial, or expertise) needed to implement a plan. This final chapter outlines an implementation guide for the Round Lake Heights Comprehensive Plan, breaking down the recommendations in more manageable and achievable portions.

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# Implementation Framework

Within the Plan, recommendations fall into three board categories: threshold recommendations, follow-up recommendations, and other recommendations. The following subsections explain each of these categories and how they fit together in implementing this Plan.

## Threshold and Follow-up Recommendations

Threshold recommendations are critical tasks which need to be tackled first before moving on to smaller, more fine grained recommendations. Follow-up recommendations are those subsequent recommendations for which the best implementation method is contingent on the threshold recommendation outcome. The Plan contains three threshold recommendations; the Village should strive to complete all threshold recommendations within the first three years of this Plan. Implementation methods and timeframes for follow-up recommendations will be addressed through the completion of each threshold recommendation.

### Rollins Road Corridor Plan

As discussed previously, the Village must ensure that its vision for the future of Rollins Road is shared by key stakeholders such as Round Lake Beach and Lake County. Therefore completing a corridor study with the involvement of these partners is a key step before the Village can implement other concepts like the Fairfield/Rollins node or the creation of a new zoning ordinance. A critical component of any such report is a market study to help cement a unified vision. To implement this recommendation, within the first year of the Plan Round Lake Heights should meet with Round Lake Beach to develop a boundary and general scope for the project, followed by embarking on research for funding sources, including CMAP’s LTA program.

Figure 8.1. Rollins Road Corridor Plan related recommendations

THRESHOLD RECOMMENDATION	ROLLINS ROAD CORRIDOR PLAN
Follow-up recommendations	Create a new zoning ordinance
	Village Center concept
	Fairfield/Rollins Commercial Node
	Light Industrial zone
	Diversify the local housing stock
	Explore Lake County development service agreement
	Façade Improvement Program/SSA

### Homes for a Changing Region

As emphasized in Chapter 5, many of the housing recommendations, ranging from pursuing housing rehabilitation to monitoring local rental units, could be implemented either by Round Lake Heights itself or in partnership with other entities, including municipalities. The potential for collaboration to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of potential recommendations is why it is important that Round Lake Heights participate in a *Homes* study before embarking on implementation of these areas. Such a study should be completed within the first three years of this Plan so as to provide an appropriate time horizon for the implementation of the housing recommendations.

To meet this timeframe, within the first year after adoption, the Village should reach out to potential partner municipalities, including Round Lake, Round Lake Beach, Round Lake Park, Hainesville, Grayslake, and Lake Villa, to discuss regional interest in completing a *Homes* plan. Many of these municipalities were part of a 2012 CMAP LTA application to conduct a *Homes* plan, in which the Lake County Community Foundation played a key role. As part of the discussions amongst potential municipalities, Round Lake Heights should seek the involvement of the Community Foundation in coordination with MMC and MPC, the organizers of many previous collaborative *Homes* projects. The purpose of all discussions should be to finalize a core group of communities — ideally, four or five municipalities — committed to undertaking a *Homes* plan.

**Figure 8.2. *Homes* related recommendations**

THRESHOLD RECOMMENDATION	HOMES FOR A CHANGING REGION STUDY
Follow-up recommendations	Dollar home rehabilitations
	AHC relationship building
	Encourage energy efficient retrofits
	Landlord Education
	Monitoring single-family rentals
	Aging-in-place guide
	Senior bus service with the Park District
	Adopt an existing building code

### Capital Improvement Plan

Potential infrastructure projects and programs along with possible major capital expenditures are discussed throughout this Plan. Given the number, size, and scope for improvements which should be studied combined with the small size of the Village, the potential program is ambitious. A capital improvement plan would help organize and conceptualize implementation. Such a document is a community's plan for matching the cost of large-scale improvements, such as fixing roads and water and sewer mains, to anticipated revenues. While such plans typically cover a five year period, such a document can include much longer periods.

The infrastructure recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan (see Figure 8.3) should be organized by the Village into a new capital improvement plan. While the plan would include all potential improvements, the document would focus on funding options for achieving development of the most critical and feasible improvements within an initial five year implementation period. The Plan could then be updated with each subsequent 5 year period, reflecting the fiscal impact of efforts such as the development of the Rollins Road and Fairfield Road intersection on the Village's ability to undertake all desired improvements.

**Figure 8.3: Capital Improvement Plan related recommendations**

THRESHOLD RECOMMENDATION	CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN
Follow-up recommendations	Address Arrowhead Pond flooding
	Improve roadside swale system
	Create a small nature center
	Address lower elementary school parking lot flooding
	Research pros and cons of creating local water access and storage
	Complete the Village sidewalk network in both residential areas and commercial areas
	Add "sharrows" on Lotus Drive
	Explore traffic calming improvements along Lotus Drive
	Improve connection between Mohawk Drive and Countryside Lane
	Create a bicycle link between Grant Woods and the Millennium Trail through Round Lake Heights

Other Recommendations

Beyond the three threshold recommendations, the Plan includes numerous smaller recommendations which the Village could consider implementing at any point during the life of the Plan. These recommendations are shown in Figure 8.4. Because the largest barrier to implementing this subset of recommendations comes from the allocation of local resources, it is recommended that the Village consider implementing these ideas gradually over the life of the Plan alongside work on associated threshold and follow-up recommendations. The ordinance category reflects recommended ordinances that the Village should consider adopting. To implement these recommendations Round Lake Heights should engage its existing professional staff, including the Building Inspector and Engineer, to develop standards for adoption.

Because of the Village’s size, implementation of the policies and programs will generally need to be led by elected leaders. A good strategy may be for the Village Board to annually identify one elected-led concept that the community will pursue to completion along with a trustee who will oversee its implementation. Additional elected-led recommendations should not be taken on unless the Village has completed the previous effort.

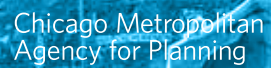
Figure 8.4. Other recommendations

ORDINANCES	Promote and implement water conservation strategies
	Update stormwater regulations
	Consider bicycle and pedestrian protection ordinances
	Adopt visitability ordinance
POLICIES/PROGRAMS	Explore annexation and boundary agreements
	Review and implement Diversity Toolkit
	Support Pace dial-a-ride service
	Partner with SWALCO to increase recycling
	Protect natural resources/ Open Space Priority Areas
	Create a community garden
	Police Department adult and youth walking and biking education



# List of Acronyms

<b>AARP</b>	American Association of Retired Persons	<b>LCDOT</b>	Lake County Division of Transportation
<b>ADA</b>	Americans with Disabilities Act	<b>LCFPD</b>	Lake County Forest Preserve District
<b>AHC</b>	Affordable Housing Corporation of Lake County	<b>LCSMC</b>	Lake County Stormwater Management Commission
<b>BMP</b>	Best Management Practice	<b>LTA</b>	Local Technical Assistance Program
<b>CAPS</b>	Certified Aging in Place Specialist	<b>MMC</b>	Metropolitan Mayors Caucus
<b>CDBG</b>	Community Development Block Grant	<b>MPC</b>	Metropolitan Planning Council
<b>CLCJAWA</b>	Central Lake County Joint Action Water Agency	<b>NAHB</b>	National Association of Home Builders
<b>CMAP</b>	Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning	<b>OSLAD</b>	Open Space Lands Acquisition and Development
<b>EAV</b>	Equalized Assessed Value	<b>PARC</b>	Park and Recreation Facility Construction
<b>ECM</b>	Energy Conservation Measure	<b>SSA</b>	Special Service Area
<b>FHA</b>	Federal Housing Administration	<b>SSMMA</b>	South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association
<b>HUD</b>	U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development	<b>SWALCO</b>	Solid Waste Agency of Lake County
<b>IDNR</b>	Illinois Department of Natural Resources	<b>UDO</b>	Unified Development Ordinance
<b>IEPA</b>	Illinois Environmental Protection Agency	<b>U.S. EPA</b>	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
<b>IRC</b>	International Residential Code	<b>WDO</b>	Watershed Development Ordinance



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