



# Village of Summit Comprehensive Plan

Adopted April 2015



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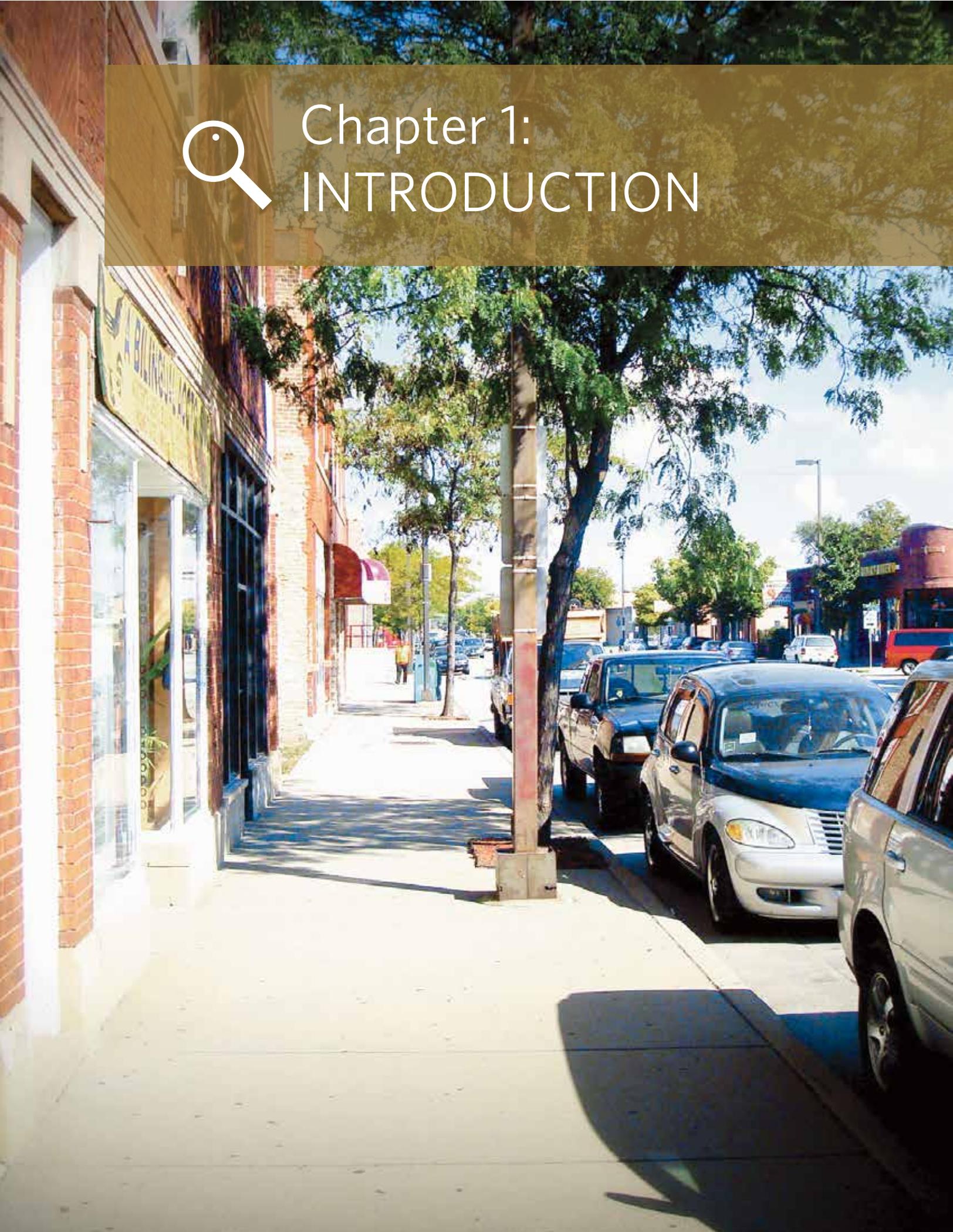


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# Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION





A Comprehensive Plan outlines the vision of the community and the policies and strategies that will allow it to achieve that vision. In addition to providing a well-defined framework for the preservation and enhancement of community assets, the plan guides development and investment decisions in the best interest of community residents.

Typically a Comprehensive Plan is written to provide guidance for a community to work toward its vision over the next 10 to 20 years. Although the plan should be viewed as a long-term document, it should also be used daily by the community to assist in land use and development decisions. The Comprehensive Plan should also be considered flexible and adaptable to changes in and around the community. At any time, the Village can update its Comprehensive Plan to match local needs, interests, or opportunities. It is typically recommended that a municipality update its Comprehensive Plan every five years to keep the plan as accurate as possible.



## Land Uses Policies and Regulations

- **Comprehensive Plans** provide a vision and policy framework to guide decision making for the community. They form the basis for establishing standards and regulations.
- **Zoning ordinances** specify the type and intensity of land uses allowed on a given parcel, such as the type, size, and density of residential or commercial development.
- **Subdivision codes** or ordinances 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.

## Why Does Summit Need a Comprehensive Plan?

Originally settled due to its strategic location between the Mississippi and Great Lakes watersheds, the Village of Summit has maintained its locational advantage as transportation methods have evolved. This ethnically diverse community grew rapidly in response to the industrial businesses that sprouted up along the Des Plaines River, the I & M Canal, the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal, several railroads, and the Stevenson Expressway (Interstate 55). Between 1900 and 1940, the community quadrupled in size in response to the growing demand for labor from nearby factories. Since 1970, the population has stabilized at approximately 11,000 residents.

But changes in manufacturing and the retail environment have led to major shifts in employment. Like other industrial centers around the nation, metropolitan Chicago saw its manufacturing employment fall by nearly a third in the past decade. At the same time, productivity has increased as a result of advanced processes and higher-valued output. Summit manufacturers continue to recognize the community's locational advantage and manufacturing remains the top employment industry for Village residents. Changes in the retail industry have also had an impact on Summit. Today, residents are traveling outside of the Village for most purchases, leaving behind underutilized or vacant storefronts along the community's commercial corridors.



To address these contemporary challenges, the Village is looking to enhance its commercial corridors, industrial areas, residential neighborhoods, and transportation network. Without an existing Comprehensive Plan to provide direction, the Village sought out technical assistance for this project from the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP).

The community's physical, economic, and social character will be determined by decisions made today and in the future. Having a plan that clearly articulates the desired character of the community will help at all levels of the decision-making process. The new Comprehensive Plan will serve as a guide for elected officials, municipal staff, community residents, business owners, and potential investors, allowing them to make informed community development decisions affecting land use, transportation, infrastructure, and capital improvements. By following the plan, those decisions can help achieve the long-term goals and vision of the community.

## Plan Implementation

The Comprehensive Plan is intended to play a pivotal role in shaping the future of the Village. Here are some practical ways to ensure that future activities are consistent with the Comprehensive Plan:

- **Annual Work Programs and Budgets:** The Village Board and Administration should be cognizant of the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan when preparing annual work programs and budgets.
- **Development Approvals:** The approvals process for development proposals, including rezoning and subdivision plats, should be a central means of implementing the Comprehensive Plan. The zoning and subdivision ordinance should be updated in response to regulatory strategies presented in the Comprehensive Plan.
- **Capital Improvements:** Capital improvement projects should be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan's land use policies and infrastructure recommendations (water, sewer, stormwater, transportation, and parks and recreation). Major new improvements that are not reflected in the Comprehensive Plan, and which could dramatically affect the plan's recommendations, should be preceded by a Comprehensive Plan update.
- **Economic Incentives:** Economic incentives should carry out Comprehensive Plan goals and policies.
- **Private Development Decisions:** Property owners and developers should consider the strategies and recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan in their own land planning and investment decisions. Village decision makers will be using the Comprehensive Plan as a guide in their development-related deliberations.

## Planning Process

The planning process to create the Village’s Comprehensive Plan included multiple steps that were undertaken over approximately 15 months. The process was crafted with assistance from Village staff and was designed to include resident and business owner input throughout. At the beginning of December 2013, Village staff met with CMAP staff to develop a scope of work for the project. A work plan established program tasks, a timeline for the program, and recommended participation by a community steering committee to assist CMAP staff in developing the final plan and recommendations. The key steps in the planning process are illustrated in **Figure 1.1**.

## Plan Overview

The Summit Comprehensive Plan provides recommendations for a number of topic areas and geographic locations. These recommendations are organized into chapters that correspond with the Village’s major land uses: residential, commercial, industrial, transportation, natural environment, and one chapter devoted to governance.

**Figure 1.1 Planning Process**



Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, 2014.

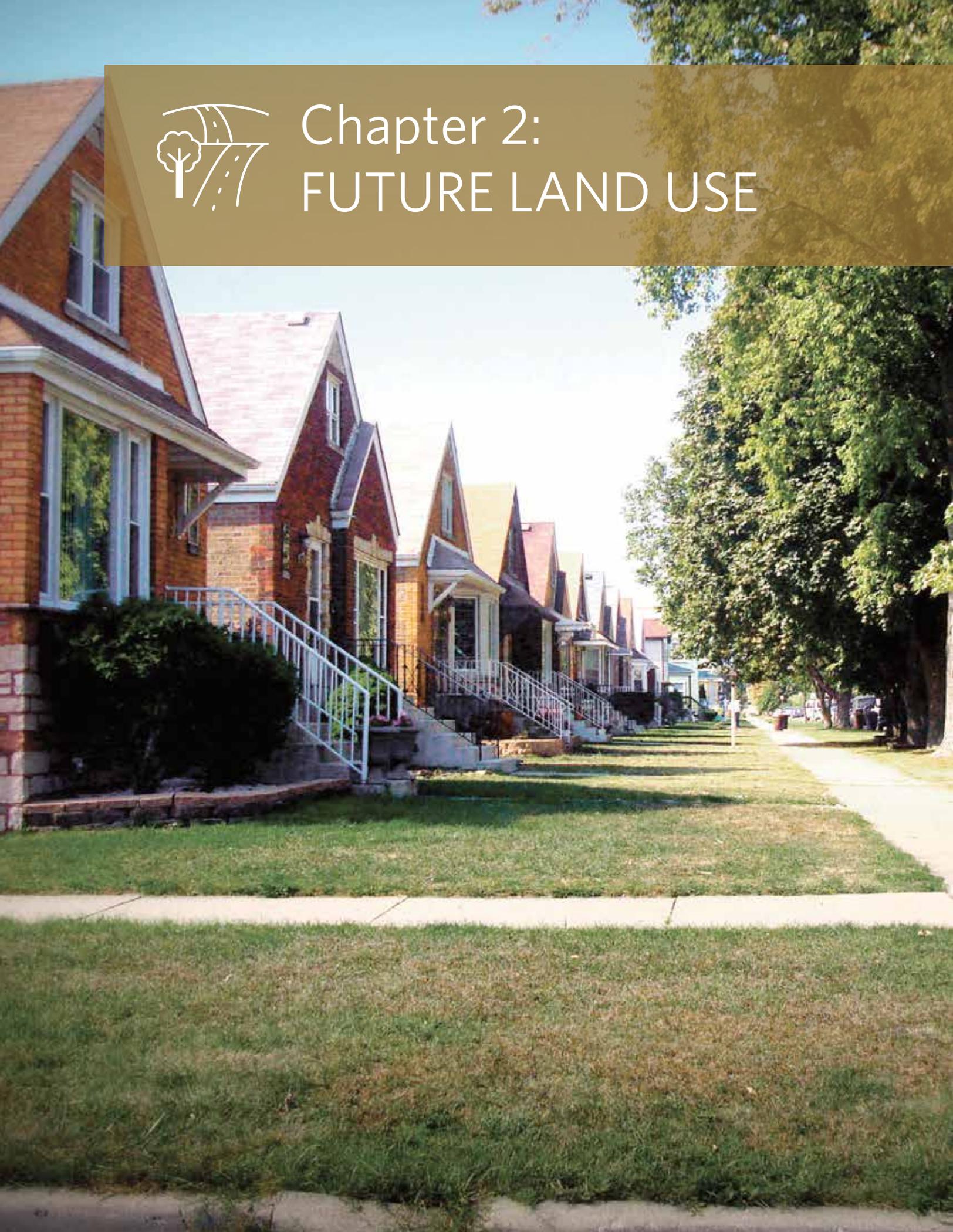
Figure 1.2 Village of Summit



Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, 2014.

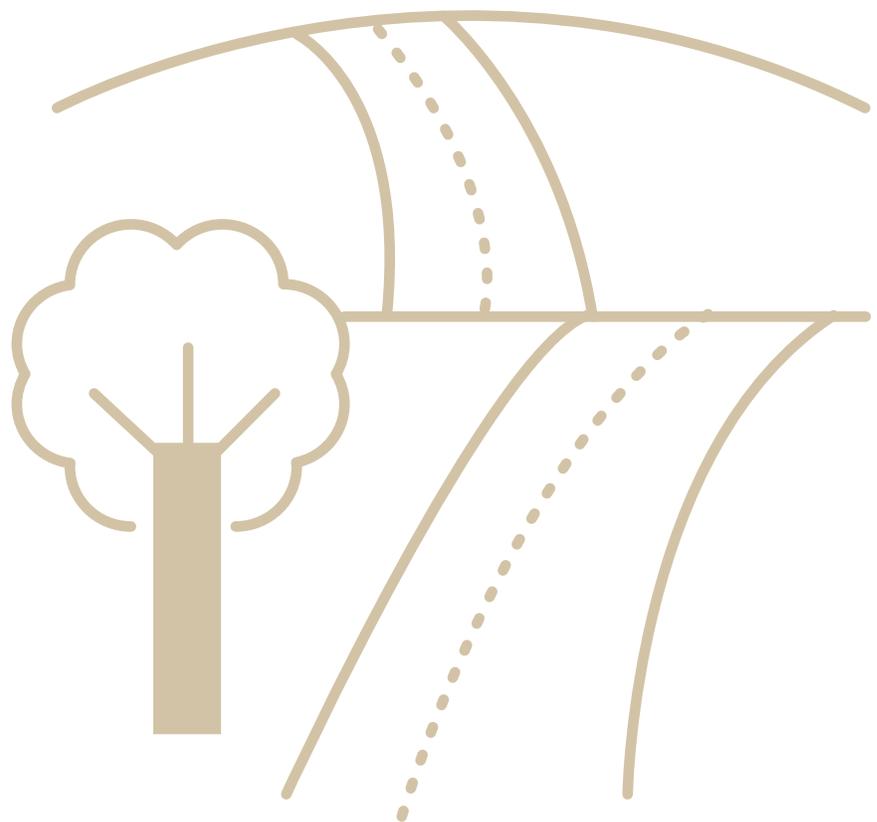


# Chapter 2: FUTURE LAND USE





The future land use plan presented in this chapter serves as the foundation for the recommendations contained within the Comprehensive Plan (see Figure 2.1). The purpose of this chapter is to translate the community's vision into physical terms by providing a general pattern for the location, distribution, and characteristics of future land uses in Summit. Given that the community is built-out, the future land use plan builds upon the existing land use pattern while proposing a combination of redevelopment and better utilization of specific areas to help the Village realize its vision over the next 15 years. Figure 2.2 illustrates the existing land uses.



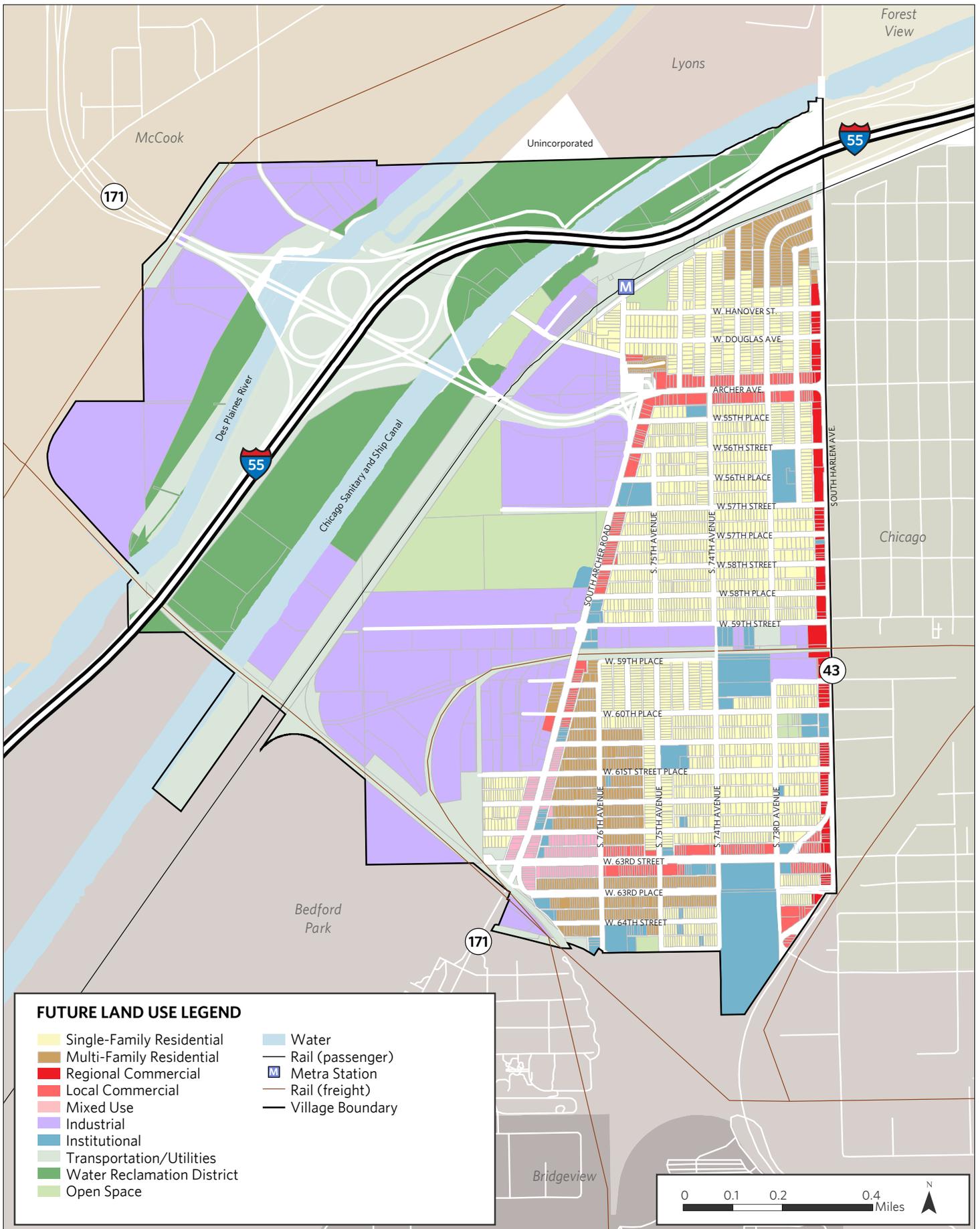
## Residential

For the most part, Summit's residential neighborhoods should retain their established character and intensity of use. The Comprehensive Plan does not recommend any significant changes in the Village's existing housing stock. The Plan recommends maintaining the existing residential types. Recommendations for residential areas are further detailed in **Chapter 3**.

- **Residential:** these parcels accommodate a combination of detached and attached single-family homes, including townhomes and lower density multiple-family buildings containing up to six units per building. Certain parcels within this district can accommodate neighborhood parks and recreational amenities and retail uses that serve the neighborhood.
- **Multi-Family Residential:** these parcels accommodate primarily multiple-family housing types, including condominiums and apartments containing more than six units. In addition, attached and detached single-family homes are present. Certain parcels within this district can accommodate neighborhood parks and recreational amenities and retail uses that serve the neighborhood.
- **Mixed/Multi Use:** these parcels contain a mix of residential, retail, office, and institutional uses arranged in a compact and pedestrian-friendly development pattern. Buildings could be configured as single-use buildings interconnected in a pedestrian-friendly manner with complementary uses in close proximity (e.g., a residential building next to a commercial and office building) or could mix uses within the same building in appropriate locations.



Figure 2.1. Future land uses



Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, 2014.

## Commercial

Summit's commercial uses line the major arterials within the community: S. Archer Road, Archer Avenue, S. Harlem Avenue, and W. 63rd Street. Currently vacant and underutilized parcels that are located in the midst of commercial areas are recommended for either commercial or residential use in the future. Recommendations for commercial areas are further detailed in **Chapter 4**.

- **Regional Commercial:** these parcels contain retail, entertainment, and employment services supported by the greater region and surrounding communities, not only the Village of Summit.
- **Local Commercial:** these parcels contain retail, office, and service-oriented commercial uses that serve the day-to-day needs of households living within walking distance or a short driving distance.
- **Mixed/Multi Use:** these parcels should contain a mix of residential, retail, office, and institutional uses arranged in a compact and pedestrian-friendly development pattern. Buildings could be configured as single-use buildings interconnected in a pedestrian-friendly manner and with complementary uses in close proximity (e.g., a residential building next to a commercial and office building), or could mix uses within the same building in appropriate locations.

## Industrial

These parcels contain industrial uses with activities intended for both small-scale and larger scale production, warehousing, assembly, and distribution. It is important to support the Village's stable industrial sector, recognizing its enormous contribution to the local and regional economy in terms of generating revenue and creating jobs. Summit's strategic location offers proximity to Midway Airport, railroads, and Interstate 55, advantages which will continue to be primary factors in the location choices of industrial businesses. Vacant and underutilized parcels that are currently located in the midst of industrial areas are recommended for industrial use in the future. Recommendations for industrial areas are further described in **Chapter 5**.

## Transportation, Utility, Communications

The two primary areas of land dedicated to transportation include the Stevenson Expressway and the freight rail line owned by Canadian National Railway, along which both freight and passenger trains operate. Land classified as communication, waste, and utility, other than the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District (MWRD) landholdings, makes up a small portion of this, mostly utility right-of-way, alongside the Canadian National Railway. **Chapter 6** contains more detail on recommendations for transportation.





## Open Space

These parcels contain all the recreational areas under the ownership of the Summit Park District as well as the open space owned by the MWRD of Greater Chicago. **Chapter 7** addresses open space in more detail.

- **Public Open Space:** the Summit Park District maintains four parks: Hanover Park, Summit Park, Legion Park, and Argo Park. In addition, a boat launch is located on the eastern shore of the Sanitary and Ship Canal near the train station.
- **Metropolitan Water Reclamation District:** the MWRD owns the majority of the land running alongside and between the Des Plaines River and the Sanitary and Ship Canal. Much of this land is currently covered by grasses, shrubs, and trees. Other portions are devoted to construction related to the Tunnel and Reservoir Plan and drying beds associated with wastewater treatment.

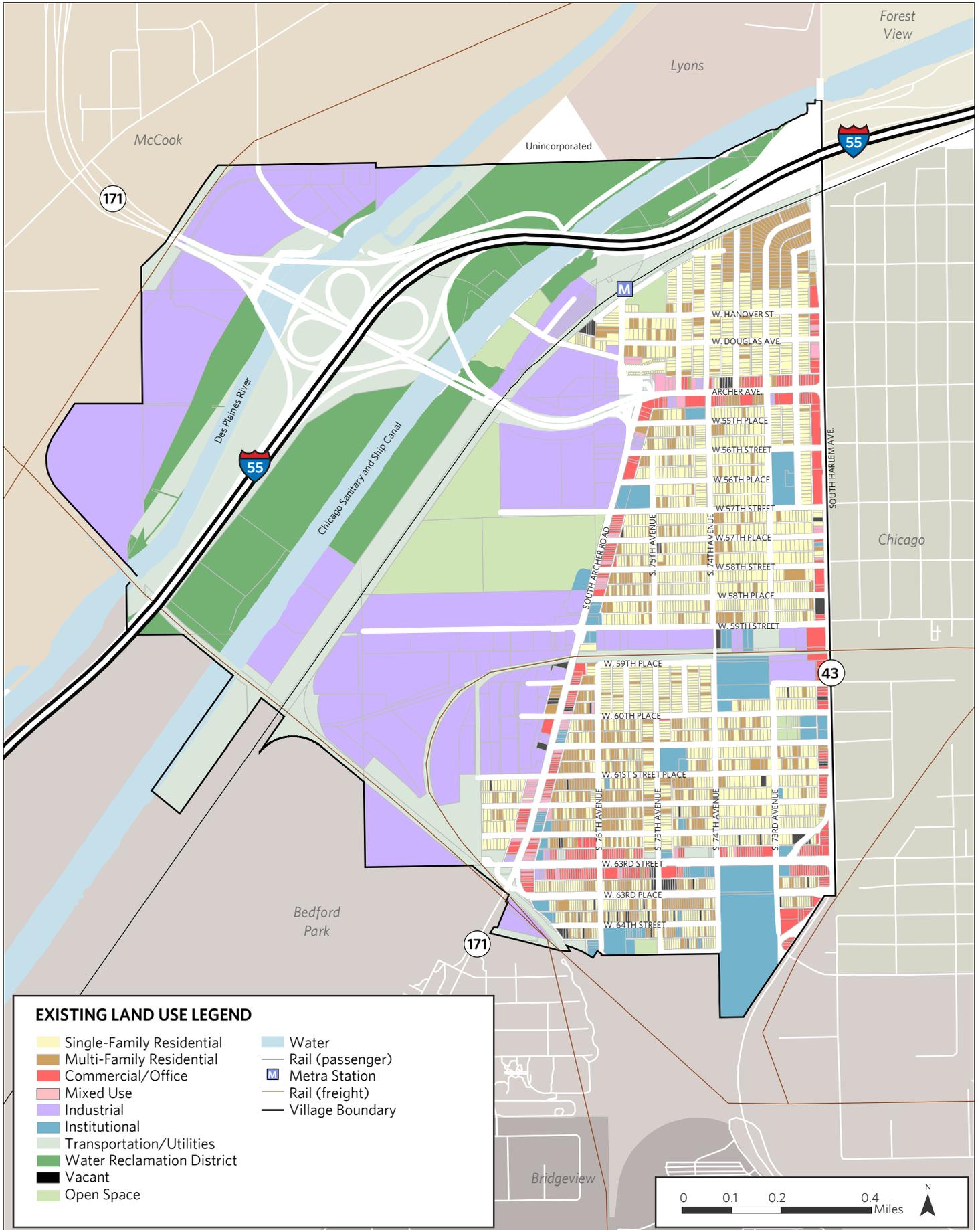
## Institutional

These parcels contain public and private schools, Village government offices and facilities, and a variety of small institutional land uses scattered along the major commercial corridors in the Village, such as the Summit Public Library, the U.S. Post Office, and the local VFW Post.

## Water

Both the Des Plaines River and the man-made Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal run through Summit.

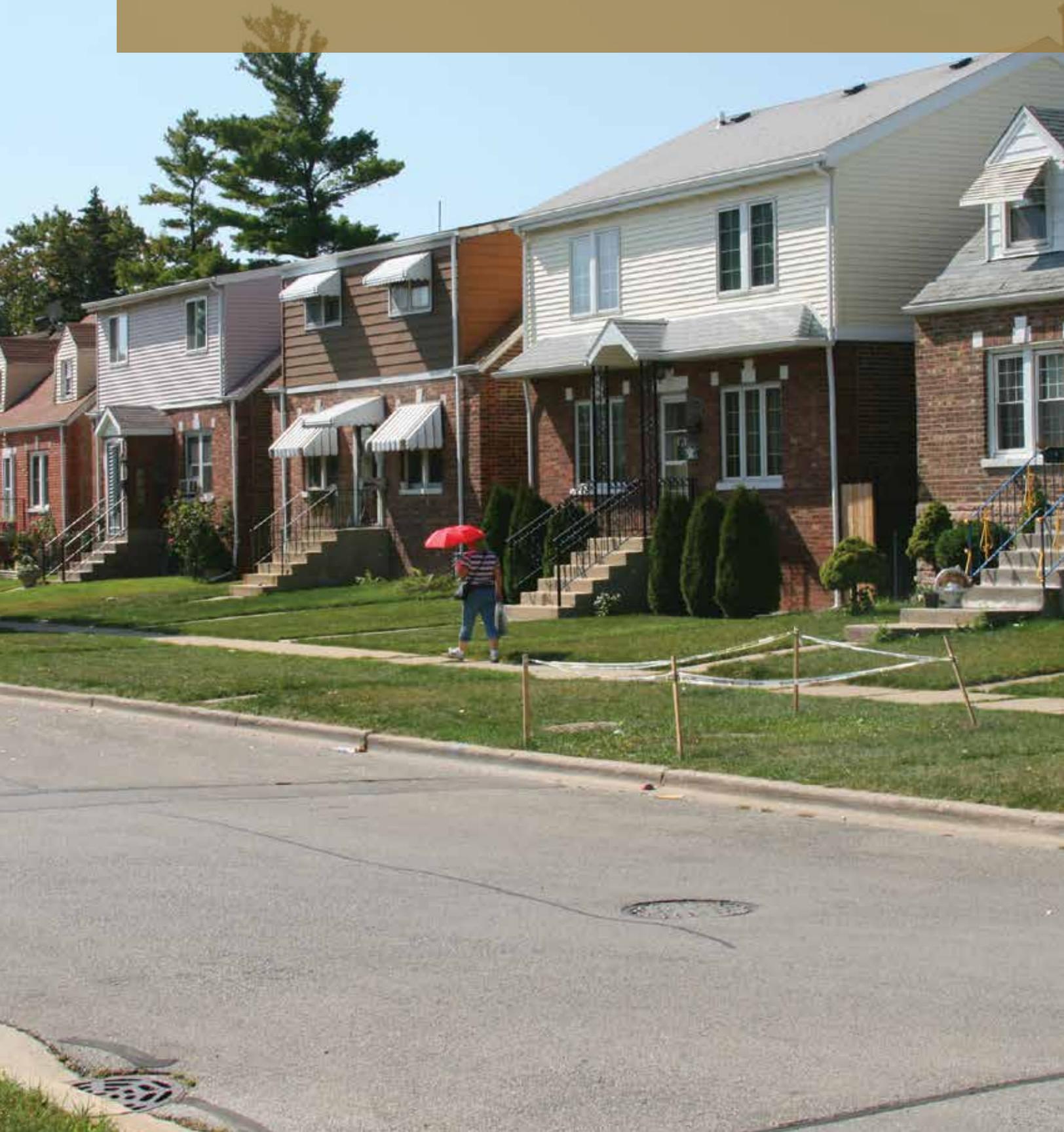
Figure 2.2 Existing land uses



Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, 2014.



# Chapter 3: RESIDENTIAL AREAS





The Village of Summit will preserve its established neighborhoods and housing diversity while seeking opportunities for increasing homeownership, helping residents who are in foreclosure, and redeveloping vacant lots.



## Key Findings

- **Like many communities in the region, Summit's housing needs are driven by demographic changes.** Two changes are particularly profound. First, the senior population region-wide is growing rapidly, and housing preferences change as residents age. Second, Latino residents now make up nearly two-thirds of residents in Summit, up from approximately half in 2000. A variety of different housing types are necessary to accommodate the changing population.
- **While a slim majority of Summit households own their own home, a significant portion rent.** Just under half (48 percent) of households rent their homes, typically in two-unit buildings. This is a higher rate than Cook County overall and can lead to concerns about code enforcement and building condition if not regulated well.
- **Foreclosures in Summit are relatively high.** Although the number of foreclosure filings in Summit has fallen since its peak, the Village still experiences a higher rate of these filings than Cook County as a whole. This creates concerns for stability.

## Summary of Existing Conditions

The population of Summit has remained relatively stable in recent years with just over 11,000 residents, composed of 3,284 households. As of 2010, two-thirds of the village identified as Hispanic or Latino, representing a 36 percent increase since 2000. Household sizes are higher than the county average and the median age is lower, indicating that a high percentage of Summit's households are families with young children.

The majority of homes in Summit are in multi-family buildings, with buildings of two to four units making up the largest share. Summit is nearly evenly split between homeowners (52 percent of households) and renters (48 percent). The average home in Summit was constructed in 1950, and less than 15 percent of homes were built after 1980. Homes in Summit are generally affordable, making it an attractive place for younger families to purchase or rent.

Similar to many other communities across the region, Summit has experienced significant foreclosure activity in recent years. In 2013, there were 56 foreclosure filings in Summit, the equivalent of 1.6 percent of its total housing units. Comparatively, in Cook County as a whole, 1.1 percent of housing units received a foreclosure filing. These numbers are significantly reduced from 2012. High levels of foreclosures can be associated with neighborhood instability, as they can lead to problems with property maintenance and bring down the values of neighboring homes.



## Recommendations

Maintain the current diversity of housing, while anticipating future demographic change

The diversity of housing tenure and options in Summit — an even mix of homeowners and renters, and a wide variety of housing types — is an asset to the community. The Village should seek to preserve its current mix of housing and also respond to emerging demographic and economic trends.

Preserve existing housing stock through rehabilitation and code enforcement

The majority of Summit’s housing stock is relatively old, with a median age of nearly 65 years. Many of these homes may require updates to improve their marketability, and some may even become unsafe or unhealthy for occupancy as they age. The Village should pair a program of increased code enforcement with a new housing rehabilitation program which provides loans or grants for lower-income property owners. These strategies are particularly important in areas that suffer from high vacancies and foreclosures.

The Village can consult with the Illinois Association of Code Enforcement (IACE) regarding relevant programs.

It is also important that the Village maintain neighborhood infrastructure, including streets, sidewalks, curbs, and storm sewers, at a high standard. This is particularly true in locations where enforcement and rehabilitation efforts are being targeted. Public investment can help attract and promote private investment in neighborhoods, as homeowners act to upgrade properties to match the quality of the surrounding area. Ideally, infrastructure investments would be programmed strategically as part of a five-year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP).

### Adopt universal design and visitability principles to support “aging in place”

People of different ages and incomes have varying household needs that evolve over time. The Village should strive to provide a diverse supply of owner- and renter-occupied homes to meet the housing needs of all residents. Of particular importance in the coming years will be “aging in place,” or the design of homes and neighborhoods to accommodate older residents. The Village should adopt visitability principles, which are specific housing guidelines that aim to accommodate disabled and senior populations, and which involve modifications to doorways, hallways, and bathrooms. The Village can use the Village of Bolingbrook’s visitability ordinance or the City of Naperville’s visitability standards for new homes as a model for these initiatives.

### Address perceived parking shortages that make neighborhoods less desirable

Streets in Summit’s residential neighborhoods typically feature on-street parking on both sides of the street. On some streets, only one side may be used for parking. The Summit Zoning Ordinance requires one off-street parking space per residential unit. As many families have multiple vehicles, some densely populated areas of the Village lack on-street parking capacity to satisfy the number of vehicles. In the southwest part of Summit, near the intersection of Archer Road and W. 63rd Street, the large number of multi-family residences and proximity to commercial uses on Archer Road can lead to competition for parking and the perception of parking shortages. A parking study should be conducted and may result in recommendations for zoning modifications, parking policy changes (such as neighborhood permitting), or education programs for residents. For more information on parking, see **Chapter 4**.

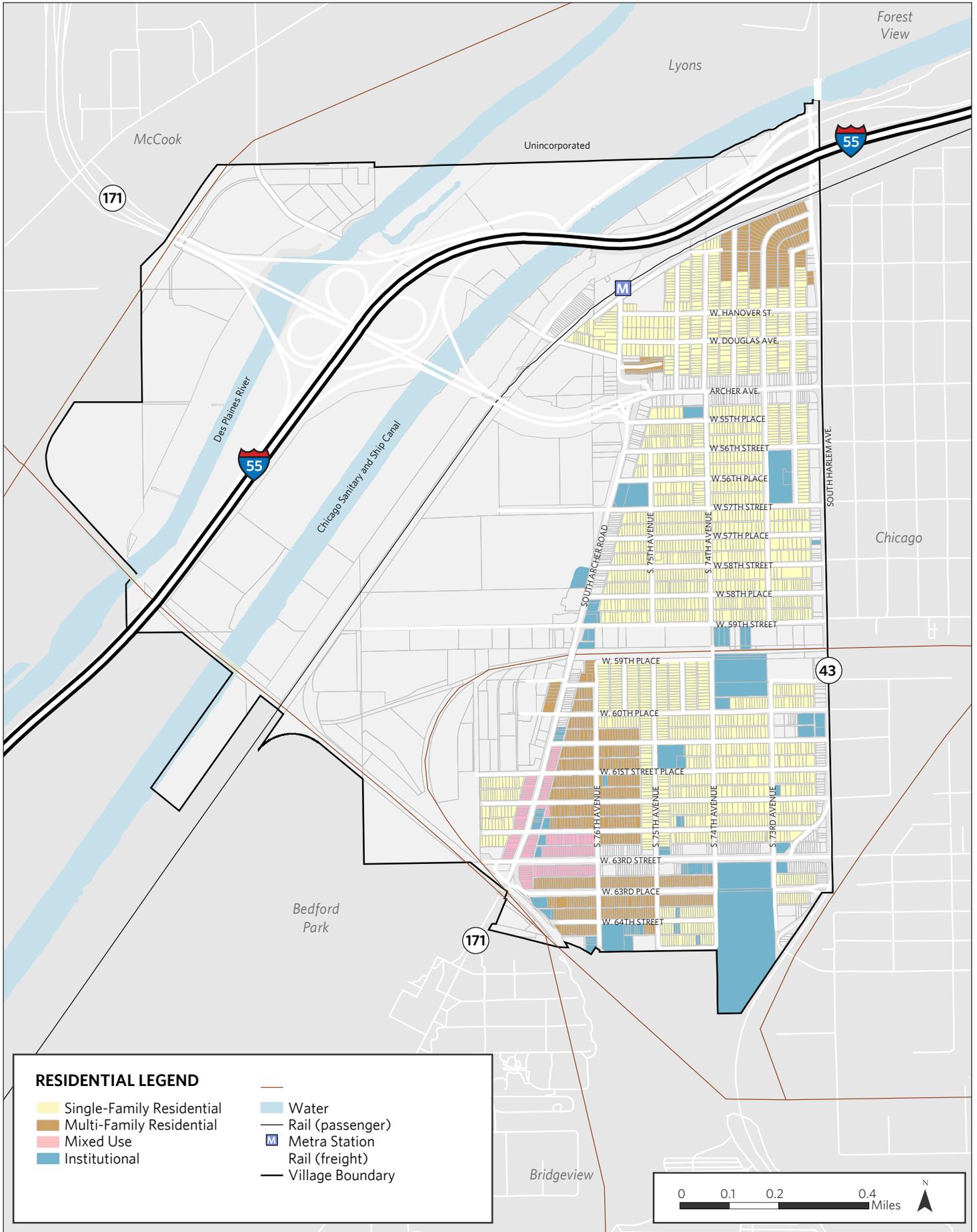
### Redevelop vacant housing units and lots with appropriate housing types

While high levels of vacancy can lead to neighborhood instability, they also provide an opportunity for new housing development. The Village should seek to attract residential developers looking for opportunities to develop single-family, small multi-family, or senior housing. To do this, the Village should review its policies and regulations to determine whether any of them might constrain housing production, affordability, or maintenance. Overall, multi-family and senior housing should be located close to local amenities such as commercial nodes, public facilities, and parks and open space.

### Work with local and regional partners to address housing issues

Housing issues do not stop at municipal boundaries, and many economic and demographic changes affect Summit and its neighbors alike. All of the above recommendations would benefit from a multi-jurisdictional approach. The Village should reach out to public agencies, such as the Cook County Department of Planning and Development and the Cook County Land Bank and Development Authority, as well as nonprofit groups like the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus, the Preservation Compact, and the Metropolitan Planning Council, to discuss shared sub-regional strategies. These may include formal collaborative efforts, informal information-sharing between neighboring communities facing similar issues, or opportunities to publicize countywide or statewide programs to residents.

Figure 3.1 Residential areas



Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, 2014.



# Chapter 4: COMMERCIAL AREAS PLAN





The Village of Summit will work toward creating a vibrant and sustainable commercial business environment that enables it to flourish and expand within the community, create new jobs for the local population, and support growth in other sectors of the Village’s economy.



## Key Findings

- **Summit lacks a strong retail base but could expand restaurants to serve the daytime employee market.** Summit residents travel outside of the village for most of their shopping. Additional restaurants could tap into the daytime-employee market for those working in Summit, Bedford Park, and the Garfield Ridge/Clearing industrial area.
- **Summit has several sites that have good retail potential but require investment.** A number of properties are for sale, but they are not in good condition, need to be rehabbed, may have environmental issues, and have high property taxes.
- **The intersection of W. 63rd Street and Archer Road has the makings of a pedestrian-oriented main street.** A number of retailers are located here, and it is a logical connection between the stretch of W. 63rd Street a few blocks to the east and retail and civic buildings, notably the Summit Public Library, to the north on Archer Road up to 60th Street.

## Summary of Existing Conditions

Summit has three primary retail corridors — Harlem Avenue, W. 63rd Street, and Archer Road. Archer Avenue also has retail establishments mixed in with multi-family residential. The larger retailers in the village include Supermercado La Villita on W. 63rd Street, Wagner Hardware on Archer Road, Portillo's restaurant, and Advanced Auto Parts on Harlem Avenue.

There are limited retail choices in Summit and correspondingly low retail sales. Summit's 2013 total retail sales were \$123.6 million, of which \$111.1 million were consumer-oriented retail sales. Nearby Hodgkins, with \$507 million in consumer-oriented sales, and Bridgeview, with \$373 million, dwarf those in Summit despite Summit's larger number of households. However, between 2010 and 2013, the village's total retail sales increased by 20 percent and consumer-oriented retail sales increased by a very strong 32 percent, with the largest numerical increases in lumber, building and hardware (almost \$7 million) and drugs and miscellaneous retail (almost \$14 million since 2011).

In addition to vehicle counts, retailers assess potential locations based on population density and other demographic characteristics. Harlem Avenue locations have the potential to serve a more densely populated area; there are an estimated 23,670 people living within one mile of the intersection of W. 57th Street and Harlem Avenue. This population density is more than double the population within a mile of W. 63rd Street and Archer Road intersection, which has 10,638 people. The difference is largely due to the adjacent industrial uses west of Archer Road. In addition, the population near Harlem Avenue has a median household income that is 8 percent higher and a population notably older than the population near Archer Road. The Archer Road location does have a sizable daytime employment base nearby that could be served by additional restaurants.



The following provides an overview of each of the primary retail corridors:

- **Harlem Avenue:** Harlem Avenue is characterized by smaller retailers, fast food, and auto-oriented businesses, which include gas stations, auto repair, and used car and motorcycle sales. Properties along this corridor have high visibility, with over 45,000 vehicles passing through per day. The Chicago side of Harlem Avenue is home to a Walgreens and Joe and Frank's Market. There are two vacant sites that offer retail development opportunities, and existing retail space is generally in good condition.
- **W. 63rd Street:** W. 63rd Street between Harlem Avenue and Archer Road is a walkable, neighborhood-oriented retail district adjacent to stable residential blocks. In addition to the grocery store, businesses between S. 74th and 76th Avenues include Family Dollar, several banks, a laundromat and the post office. It carries considerably less traffic than Harlem Avenue or Archer Road, with 13,800 vehicles a day.
- **Archer Road:** Businesses are highly visible to the 29,700 vehicles, including many trucks, using this street each day. However, the street design is not pedestrian-friendly and can be difficult to cross. There are a number of vacant storefronts and buildings for sale, many in relatively poor condition. Brokers report that it is difficult to sell or lease space in these buildings due to their condition and relatively high taxes. While on-street parking is permitted, parking in the rear of buildings is not visible and not well marked.

The intersection of W. 63rd Street and Archer Road has the makings of a pedestrian-oriented main street and is close to major civic destinations. Several independently owned restaurants, a smaller grocery, hair salons, thrift shops, pawn shop, bakery, bars, and small offices line both sides of Archer Road. The Summit Public Library at W. 62nd Street and Summit Park off of Bulldog Drive are strong non-retail draws.

## Recommendations

### Support existing businesses

Unlike other nearby commercial streets, a majority of the current businesses along Archer Road, W. 63rd Street, and Archer Avenue are locally owned. With smaller lots and lower rents, the street has ideal components for small businesses just starting out. Supporting the expansion of existing businesses and helping homegrown enterprises get off the ground will be integral to the revitalization of Summit's commercial corridors, especially for Archer Road, W. 63rd Street, and Archer Avenue. Attracting regional or national retailers will likely be more feasible on Harlem Avenue. Village staff or a local chamber of commerce (if one is established) could provide support to existing businesses through the following strategies.

### Support the creation of a local chamber of commerce

Revitalizing Summit's commercial corridors will depend on coordinated efforts between merchants, landowners, and the Village. Formally engaging these stakeholders to collaboratively work together as a local chamber of commerce will be essential to implement this plan. The Village should support the creation of a local chamber by building connections between potential leaders within the business community. Given limited staff resources at the Village level, a local chamber of commerce could take on many of the recommendations identified in this chapter. In some commercial districts, local chambers are able to hire staff to lead and manage operations and initiatives. While that might be possible for Summit at some point in the future, it is unlikely to happen in the near term. Therefore, the activities and success of the new group are likely to be based on the voluntary involvement and leadership of its members. However, the Village can provide a forum for the business community to meet and start the discussion.



If a local chamber of commerce is not deemed viable in the short term, the business community and the Village should consider joining or forming a sub-regional chamber of commerce with nearby municipalities. A sub-regional chamber of commerce could help connect business owners with practical training and information. It also has the potential to reduce competition between municipalities.

**Connect business owners with practical training and information**

Many of the corridor’s business owners could likely benefit from training and information designed to help them grow their businesses. A number of organizations and resources exist to provide training and advice for businesses, yet many business owners may be unaware of their existence or unable to devote the time away from their establishments. A local of chamber of commerce could be the needed mechanism to connect business owners to these practical trainings in a format that is tailored to their timeframe. The Village or chamber of commerce should determine what specific training topics are most needed and most useful. Examples of potential topics include how to create a business plan, how to navigate the Village’s permit process, or how to effectively market your business to potential customers. Potential partners include Moraine Valley Community College and the Chicago Southland Economic Development Corporation (CSEDC).



### Enhance coordination between the Village and business owners

Providing a regular forum for discussion between business owners and the Village can help improve service provision, tackle issues as they arise, and provide a mechanism for sharing information about resources or funding sources. A local chamber of commerce could devote a segment of their regular meetings for this type of information exchange with Village staff. For example, business owners could inform others of recent problems they may have had with crime or damage to property, concerns about vacant buildings, or issues with municipal services, such as broken streetlights, severe potholes, or damaged sections of sidewalk. Relevant Village staff could then act on this information and respond appropriately. This forum could also provide an opportunity for Village staff to inform business owners of new Village processes, availability of commercial properties, and the status of other projects in the community.

### Maintain and market inventory of vacant commercial parcels

Village staff should maintain and publicize an inventory of commercial properties and market them accordingly. Currently, the Village website provides a link to a commercial real estate website, Loopnet. The Village should consider periodically confirming the listings by obtaining records of vacant commercial parcels through the Cook County Assessor's office. This information should be field verified and mapped by Village staff or a local chamber of commerce. Parcels could be classified into categories based on size, type of business, or other appropriate parameters. The resulting database of parcel records will help the Village identify potential sites for redevelopment as well as market them effectively to potential developers and existing businesses looking to expand their facilities.

This inventory should be advertised on the websites of the Village of Summit, the local chamber if established, and other commercial real estate websites. Information for parcels and/or buildings should include location, Parcel Identification Number, size of parcel, size of building, condition of building, age of building, current zoning, property taxes, and photos of the property. Once the data is collected, proactive marketing will play a vital role. Village staff and officials should work closely with business owners to promote the Village's assets and infrastructure. The Village should also coordinate with the Cook County GIS department or South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association for additional data needs and the Cook County Bureau of Economic Development for marketing on the Bureau's website. This activity could be funded by the Village within the annual budget. Funds would be utilized to hire a GIS technician or consultant to create an inventory of vacant and underutilized parcels, field verify the information, and create a map.

In the short term, there are a number of properties along Harlem Avenue that offer significant redevelopment potential. At this time there are no known plans for developing either site, but both have good access and visibility.

- The former Krispy Kreme, which is now owned by Fifth Third Bank. It occupies a full block which will be more attractive to potential retailers than a mid-block site.
- The mid-block vacancy between W. 58th and 59th Streets, which was once considered for a potential retail and residential building prior to the recession.

## Investigate establishing a facade improvement matching grant program

While many of the commercial buildings along Summit's commercial corridors are in good condition and are well-maintained by their property owners, there are several buildings that could use façade and sign improvements to make the properties more appealing to potential tenants and customers as well as to improve the appearance of the corridors. The quality and speed of physical improvements to private property will depend a great deal on owner participation and funds available. To help with the rehabilitation of older properties, the Village should consider developing financial incentives for businesses to spur additional investment and rehabilitate existing facilities.

Maintaining high-quality building façades and business signage is a common problem facing many communities. Some property and business owners may not have the resources to cover the full cost of an upgrade that improves the appearance of a building. Yet visible investments in commercial properties not only improve perceptions of an area, they can also spur improvements to nearby businesses and attract new businesses. Many communities use façade improvement matching grants to leverage private investment in commercial properties and, in many instances, use these grant programs as a business recruitment tool. Summit should investigate developing a façade and sign improvement matching grant program for specific segments of the community's commercial corridors.

In order to make a noticeable impact and not spread resources too thin, the Village should initially focus on specific nodes along the commercial corridors. The area around the intersection of Archer Road and W. 63rd Street already has a number of businesses and community destinations and would be a prime location for concentrated improvements. In following years, the program could be expanded to additional locations.

The program should be designed with the explicit goals of beautifying and revitalizing the commercial corridors through permanent improvements to buildings, attracting and retaining businesses, and enhancing the pedestrian-scale streetscape. Established as a rebate program that reimburses participants for a portion of approved activities, a matching grant program will provide an incentive for specific improvements that contribute to revitalization. The program should designate eligible properties and improvements as well as establish clear design guidelines to ensure that the funded improvements directly improve the physical appearance and sidewalk appeal of the corridors.

The amount of the rebate will depend on available funding. The program could potentially be funded through the Tax Increment Financing (TIF) district that is already established on Archer Road and W. 63rd Street. The Village could use Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds or partner with local banks to help finance the improvements. If limited funding is available, the Village may need to initially focus efforts in strategic locations or limit improvements to signage upgrades only.



## Manage parking

On-street and off-street parking provides an essential service for visitors who are driving to businesses on Summit's commercial corridors. Harlem Avenue and Archer Avenue do not allow on-street parking and most businesses provide off-street parking. Archer Road offers on-street parking only between W. 63rd Street and the Indiana Harbor Belt Railroad, while W. 63rd Street provides on-street parking from Archer Road to S. 73rd Avenue.

With many pedestrian-oriented buildings along Archer Road and W. 63rd Street, the existing on-street parking spaces providing a valuable service to businesses and should be maintained and expanded where possible. Studies have shown that users of commercial areas with pedestrian-oriented buildings consistently select on-street parking over off-street parking, even when an on-street parking space costs more or takes more time to find. Visitors are more inclined to use on-street spaces because of their ease of use and the proximity to the front door of establishments. On-street parking also provides a low-cost way to improve the pedestrian environment by creating a buffer between moving vehicle traffic and pedestrians along a sidewalk.

Off-street parking is also important, but the placement and amount of parking can have a dramatic impact on the feel and overall activity of a street. Too much parking, where off-street parking lots are left unused for long portions of the day, can lead to underutilized land that could have been used for other, more productive purposes. In addition, off-street parking lots located along the sidewalk can diminish the pedestrian-friendliness of a street due to the large gaps in active uses. However, too little parking can deter people from visiting the corridor, especially given the common expectation that parking should be an easy proposition.

Business owners and residents identified parking as an issue near the intersection of Archer Road and W. 63rd Street. With higher residential densities nearby and older historic commercial uses on Archer Road, there is a real or perceived sense that there is a parking shortage in this area. In addition to the on-street parking, there are a number of off-street surface lots that offer limited additional parking, two of which are maintained by the Village. At this time, a parking study has not been completed so the extent of the parking issue is unknown.

The following activities outline key steps to ensure a balance of parking so that visitors can easily park while pedestrians have a pleasant experience walking along the corridor.

- **Extend on-street parking.** When possible, such as during local road reconstruction or restriping, the Village should consider adding additional on-street parking in areas where parking is a concern. For example, the Village has successfully installed diagonal on-street parking on W. 62nd Place, which allows for more parking spaces than parallel on-street parking. This technique may be applicable in other locations as well, including the west side of W. 62nd Street.
- **Promote the use of existing off-street parking.** Many visitors to Summit businesses may be unaware of the existing off-street parking lots that they could use, including the municipal lots located off of W. 63rd Street. This free, off-street parking is conveniently located near destinations on both Archer Road and W. 63rd Street. However, these parking lots currently lack obvious signage indicating that they can be used by visitors free of charge, likely contributing to why they appear to be underutilized during much of the day and evening. The Village should make small improvements in signage to help customers and businesses take advantage of this existing asset. Further marketing of this well-located, free parking could also be included in materials developed by a local chamber of commerce as well as by individual businesses.



- **Promote shared parking.** As new businesses fill vacant or underutilized storefronts along the corridor, the Village should look for shared parking opportunities on existing off-street parking lots located nearby. Shared parking allows new businesses to take advantage of existing infrastructure and avoid the potential construction and/or maintenance costs of new parking, which can add a substantial expense to an enterprise right as it is getting off the ground. As many of the existing off-street parking locations appear to be underutilized during portions of the day, shared parking agreements could also lead to the sharing of maintenance costs, lowering costs for existing businesses. The Village should update municipal ordinances to allow and promote the use of shared parking.

CMAP's *Parking Strategies to Support Livable Communities*<sup>1</sup> provides guidance on establishing shared parking ordinances. The Village and/or local chamber of commerce, if established, should work to connect the property owners and advise them on how to establish a shared parking agreement. If specific parking shortages are appearing along the street, the Village should use a parking survey to make sure that decision making is based on observed parking behavior. CMAP's parking strategies guidebook includes resources for establishing such a survey.

- **Update parking requirements.** As part of the overall zoning ordinance update recommended in **Chapter 8**, the Village should also consider updating the existing parking requirements to create standards that are more compatible with the commercial development pattern. For example, the ordinance currently allows commercial parking to be located within the front setback, does not exempt businesses with small building footprints, and sets high parking ratios — all of which are standards that are better suited for lower density development patterns.

As a longer-term project, the Village should consider updating the regulations so that future development builds on the existing assets and character of the classic street frontages that can be seen in Summit, especially for the area around the intersection of Archer Road and W. 63rd Street. The ordinance should enforce building setbacks that match those that exist between W. 63rd Street to W. 61st Street along Archer Road. If new parking is created, the landscaping provisions should require trees and encourage the use of green infrastructure practices, like bioswales and other natural drainage systems, in parking lots that meet a certain size threshold.

<sup>1</sup> Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, *Parking Strategies to Support Livable Communities*, 2012. Available at <http://www.cmap.illinois.gov/programs-and-resources/local-ordinances-toolkits/parking>.

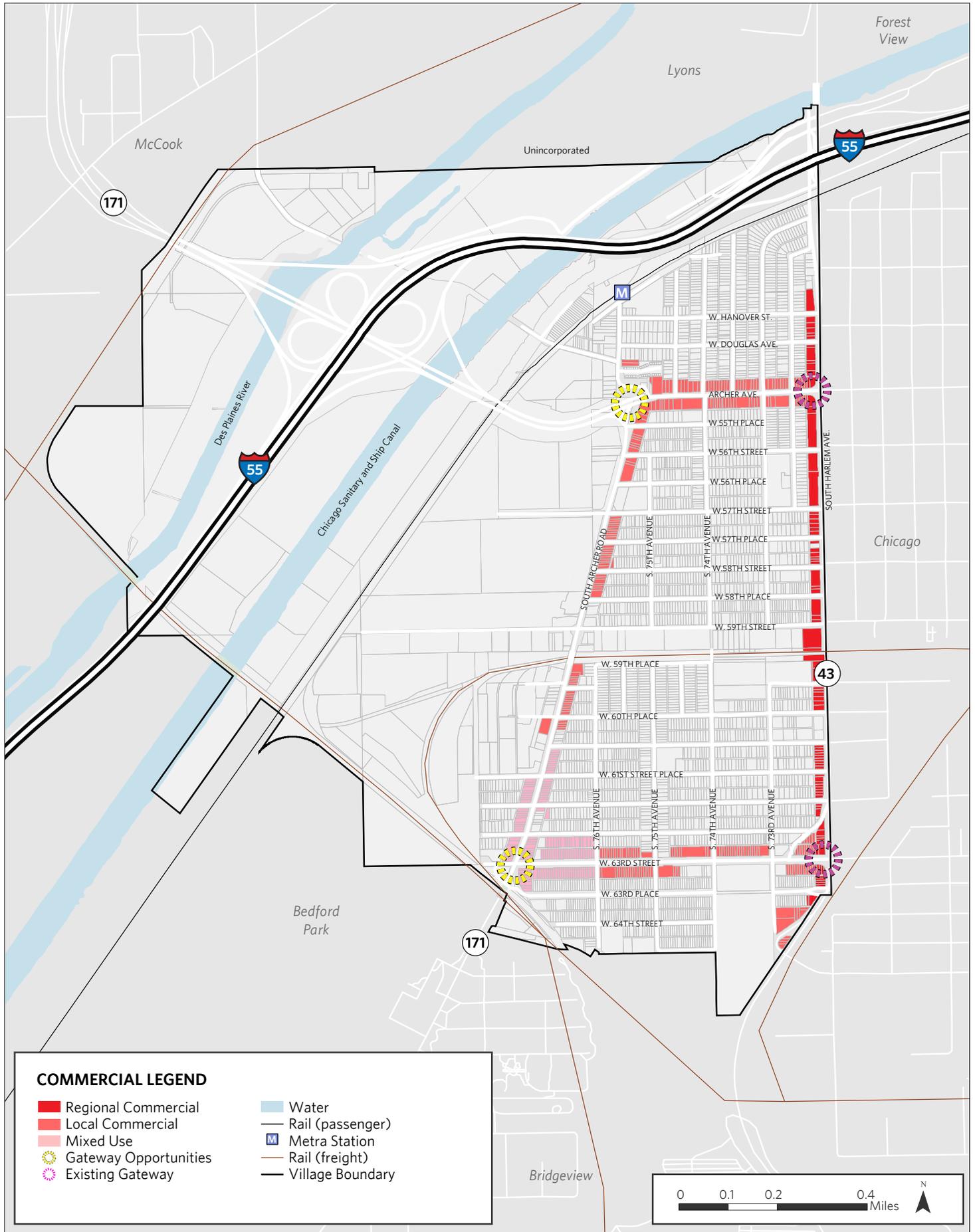
### Improve community image and identity

Many stakeholders mentioned the importance of developing a positive community image and identity for Summit. Many of the above recommendations, such as a façade improvement program, can help build that identity. Additional activities could be in coordination with a local chamber of commerce, if established, or other community organizations.

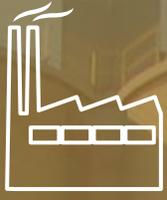
- Promote activities and programs that foster community spirit and identity.
- Promote the historical significance of Summit by preserving historical structures and sites and calling attention to this history at the Summit Public Library and other locations.
- Improve entry points into the Village through distinctive signage and landscaping of gateways and entry routes.



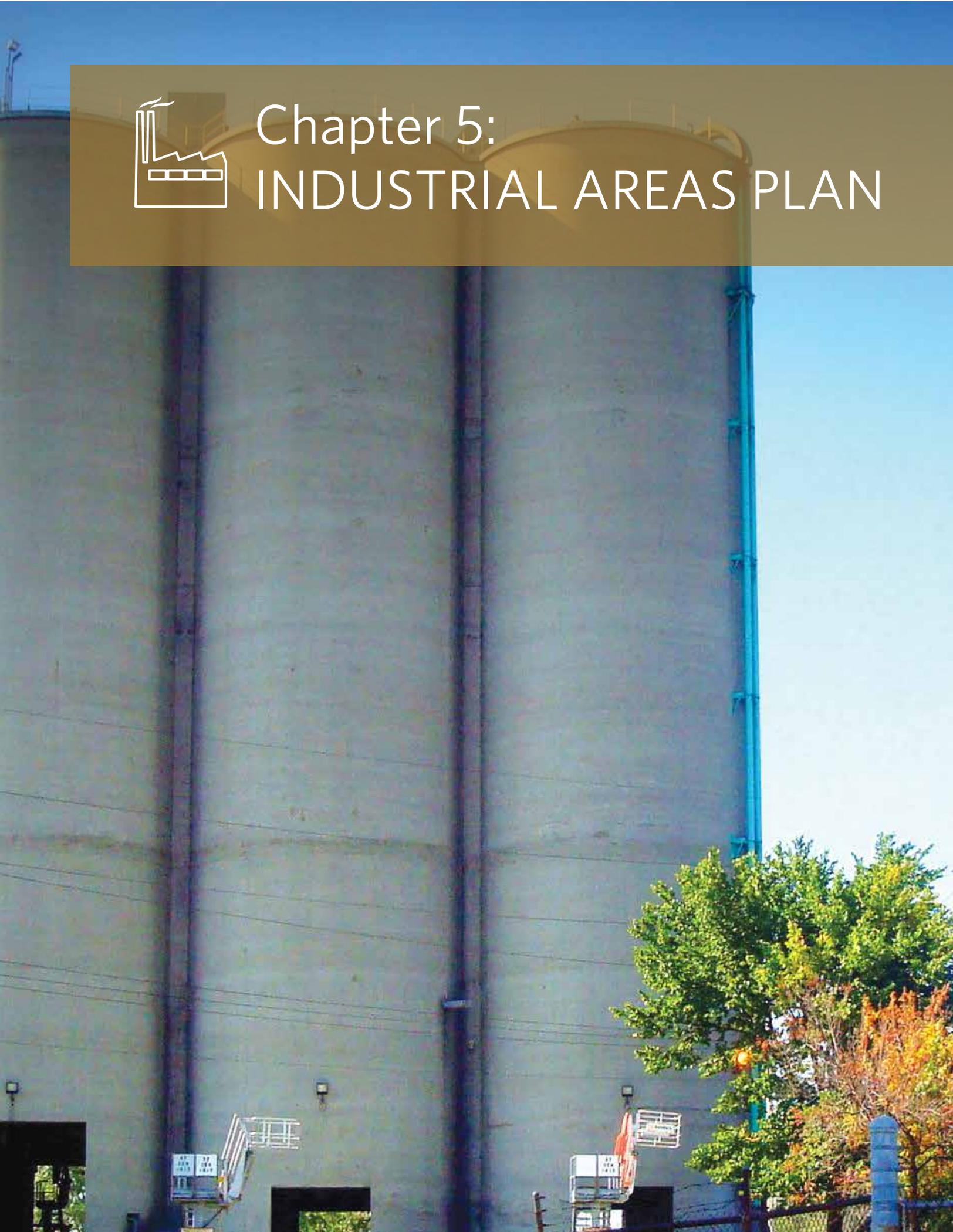
Figure 4.1 Future commercial areas map



Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, 2014.

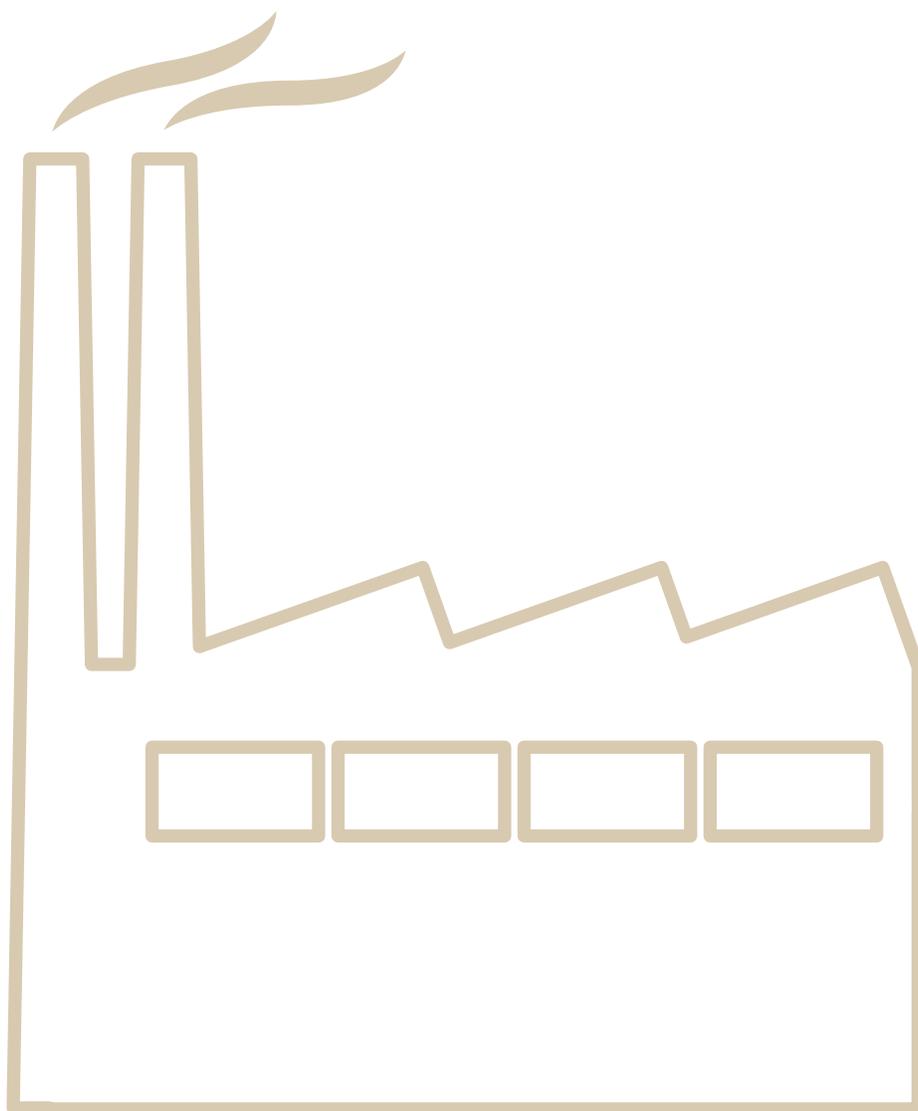


# Chapter 5: INDUSTRIAL AREAS PLAN





The Village of Summit will implement policies and programs that allow its industrial sector to continue to flourish and expand within the community, create new jobs for local residents, and support growth in other sectors of the Village's economy.



## Key Findings

- **Summit has locational advantages that make it attractive for industrial businesses.** Good access to highways, major regional arterials, railroads, and Midway Airport, as well as significant amounts of land designated for industrial use, create a strong market for industrial development in Summit. Other communities with similar locational advantages, like McCook and Bedford Park, have seen significant industrial growth but may be reaching the limits of their capacity, making Summit a potential next choice for industrial development.
- **Local infrastructure and site conditions currently dampen the potential for industrial investment.** A fragmented local road network in the industrial areas makes access to some sites difficult, and poor conditions of existing sites leave a negative impression on potential industrial developers. There is also a significant need for remediation of some vacant sites, which can be resolved if the market is strong enough.
- **Summit has not actively marketed itself to industrial developers.** While there is a strong market for industrial businesses, the community has not taken an active role in creating a supportive climate for industrial development. Participation in the County's 6b tax incentive program, creating direct relationships with industrial brokers, and investing in infrastructure in industrial areas would create a more positive environment for business development.

## Summary of Existing Conditions

Summit contains over 5,000 jobs and 400 businesses, many of them in the industrial sector. Of the 424 businesses identified in Summit, transportation and warehousing (53), professional, scientific and technical services (40), wholesale trade (24), and manufacturing (21) make up a substantial portion of the business base and are generally found in the industrial areas west of Archer Road. The large number of firms in transportation and warehousing, which include trucking, vehicle storage, auto parts, and truck and tank servicing and equipment, are likely drawn to the area due to Summit's proximity to I-55. Summit's overall employment increased by 21.5 percent, or 1,041, between 2010 and 2013, with sizable gains in transportation and warehousing (667), wholesale trade (190) and manufacturing (178). The largest non-governmental employers are Frito-Lay with 200 employees, Owens-Corning with 150 employees, and Bork Transport with 110 employees.

Summit is located within the southwest suburban sub-market as delineated by CB Richard Ellis, an international commercial real estate firm that tracks the Chicagoland industrial market. The sub-market includes the near southwest suburbs of Alsip, Bedford Park, Bridgeview, Burbank, Chicago Ridge, Countryside, Evergreen Park, Hickory Hills, Hodgkins, Indian Head Park, Justice, Lyons, McCook, Oak Lawn, Palos Hills, Stickney, Western Springs, Willow Springs, and Worth, in addition to Summit.

This sub-market has almost 68 million square feet of industrial space, representing 6.1 percent of the metro area's total. The industrial vacancy rates in both the sub-market and region have dropped since the height of the recession when they peaked at 11.7 percent and 10.3 percent respectively in 2010. Net absorption (the difference in occupied space from one period to the next) in the sub-market had been increasing steadily from 2010 to 2012, when 1.6 million square feet were absorbed. However, in 2013 absorption was a negative 315,000 square feet, meaning less space was occupied at the end of the year compared to a year earlier.



According to data from CoStar, Summit has 1.6 million square feet of industrial space in 46 buildings. Its vacancy rate as of March 2014 was 1.0 percent with only 16,000 square feet vacant (Table 5.1). This is an extremely low rate, well below other nearby communities, which range from 3.9 percent in McCook to 11.5 percent in the Garfield Ridge/Clearing area. Since much of the space in Summit is devoted to owner-occupied, heavy industrial use, it is likely that the CoStar database does not include all of the industrial property in the village.

Most of the industrial space in Summit is old and inefficient compared to space in the rest of the market area. According to industrial brokers active in the near southwest suburbs, most users looking for existing space require buildings of 50,000 to 100,000 square feet. Newer buildings are typically in excess of 300,000 square feet, and brokers report that it is difficult to find sites of 20 to 50 acres that can accommodate these larger buildings. Since 2000, Summit Cold Storage, Frito-Lay, and Chicago Mack Sales have developed facilities in Summit.

**Table 5.1 Industrial characteristics in Summit and neighboring communities, March 2014**

MUNICIPALITY	NUMBER OF BUILDINGS	RENTABLE BUILDING AREA (SF)	VACANT SPACE (SF)	VACANCY RATE
Bedford Park	192	21,508,999	1,290,062	6.0%
Garfield Ridge/Clearing	173	7,860,749	900,114	11.5%
McCook	38	5,236,189	202,960	3.9%
Summit	46	1,572,612	15,971	1.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>449</b>	<b>36,178,549</b>	<b>2,409,107</b>	<b>6.7%</b>

Source: Village of Summit, 2014.

Because of the Village’s proximity to interstate highways, rail lines, Midway Airport, and sizable industrial areas in Summit and surrounding communities, such as McCook and Bedford Park, freight traffic has a profound impact on Summit. With 67 percent of all freight movement in the Chicago region done by truck, many local industrial businesses use trucks as their main method of transportation. To handle stress from container-size shipping trucks, the freight industry recommends having Class I and II roads accessing industrial land uses. Within Summit, state-designated truck routes include I-55 and Harlem Avenue, yet the main industrial businesses are located along Archer Road (IL 171). Also, the local streets providing direct access to industrial properties tend to be dead-end roads running east-west.

The Village also has freight rail access provided by the Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) Railroad, the Canadian National Railway, Canadian Pacific Railway, and Indiana Harbor Belt Railroad. Rail service is an asset for an industrial area. Most businesses do not need rail, but for those that do, it is a critical factor in their location decision. This gives Summit an important advantage in the attraction of these types of businesses.

Given the fact that there is no more land available for new industrial development in McCook, industrial brokers feel that Summit could be a very reasonable option for companies that need at least 25 acres of land proximate to I-55 and close to Chicago. Summit has easier access to I-55 than Bedford Park and is comparable to McCook in that regard.

## Recommendations

### Strengthen relationships with existing businesses and build relationships to attract new ones

While Summit has important locational advantages and is in an excellent position to retain existing businesses and attract new ones, this may not occur without strategic action by the Village. The Village should seek to thoroughly understand the needs of existing industrial businesses, and the conditions and opportunities in the industrial areas and the market for redevelopment.

### Create partnerships with existing businesses and collect information on existing conditions

The Village should develop a thorough understanding of existing conditions in the industrial areas. This activity should include interviews with industrial businesses to understand the most critical opportunities and challenges that they face. The Village should create and continually update an inventory of industrial properties which can be used to prioritize concerns of existing businesses and also identify the most appropriate sites for redevelopment.

The Village should also use this process as a way to strengthen relationships with industrial businesses to ensure that they feel valued by the community and included in Village decision making. It is recommended that the Village host periodic meetings, such as industrial business breakfasts, which would allow for direct communication between the Village and businesses and create networking opportunities among businesses.

### Partner with experienced industrial brokers or developers

The Village should develop partnerships with industrial brokers to keep abreast of industrial market trends and properties. The Village staff should try to schedule meetings with brokers twice a year to provide updates on opportunities for redevelopment and encourage brokers to discuss any issues, challenges, or opportunities regarding development and properties in the industrial areas from their perspectives. This could be done in conjunction with the business breakfasts described above or through a separate forum.

### Prioritize sites for short-term redevelopment

From the above information and activities, the Village can identify sites as immediate targets for redevelopment. With this knowledge, and with the assistance of an industrial broker, the Village should begin to market these to potential developers.

Already, the market analysis conducted for the Comprehensive Plan has identified some higher-priority redevelopment areas. Summit has redevelopment opportunities in the industrial area west of Archer Road south of W. 59th Street and in the area on the west side of the river. Both locations will need improved local access to accommodate new development. The environmental remediation of the Pielet site (portion on an industrial property at the end of Pielet Drive currently covered by a tarp) is a priority for the Village, but some developers are highly experienced in working with challenging contaminated sites, and contamination may not preclude developer interest. Most of the newer development in McCook was on sites that needed significant remediation.

The property on the west side of the river has the added advantage of being directly adjacent to McCook. Access from Joliet Road off of IL 171 is easy and leads to the industrial area on Lawndale Avenue. This area could transition to higher quality industrial uses over time, should the Village invest in infrastructure improvements in this area.

### Improve infrastructure and site conditions in the industrial areas

Summit's broader locational advantages are limited by insufficient infrastructure and poor site conditions in the community. A broad program of infrastructure improvements, mostly — but not exclusively — related to truck access, would improve the function and desirability of the industrial areas.

### Improve truck access to Summit's industrial areas

The Village should focus on improving roadways that serve the industrial areas. Rail freight is utilized by only a small number of businesses, and most businesses move goods by truck. Summit should continue to improve its roadway network to accommodate the volume and types of truck traffic needed by businesses. These improvements should include both enhancements to existing roads, in partnership with the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) and Cook County Department of Transportation and Highways (CCDOH), as well as investigation of local street connections within the industrial areas west of Archer Road, which currently have many dead-end roads and lack internal connectivity. More detail on these recommendations is provided in the Transportation chapter of the Comprehensive Plan.

### Improve the appearance of public rights-of-way in the industrial areas

The visual appearance of the industrial areas does not provide a good first impression for potential developers and new businesses. While extensive streetscaping is not necessary or recommended, small improvements, such as gateway signs in appropriate locations, or installation of landscaping, such as trees or shrubs, would create a more favorable impression of the industrial areas.



### Assess and mitigate brownfield sites

Many of the properties in the industrial area are brownfields, meaning that they are contaminated and must be remediated before further use. In many cases, if the market for redevelopment is strong, remediation is done by the private sector as part of the redevelopment process. However, proactive investment by the public sector in brownfield cleanup can make redevelopment more likely to occur. The Village should partner with the Cook County Department of Planning and Development and nonprofits like the Center for Neighborhood Technology (CNT) to investigate applying for state and federal grants to support remediation of key brownfields in Summit.

### Create a supportive business environment for industrial development

Industrial development in Cook County faces challenges because of tax rates that are significantly higher than in neighboring counties. The Village should both take advantage of County incentives for industrial development as well as participate in larger discussions of overall tax rates.

### Encourage use of the Cook County Class 6b designation

According to the Cook County Assessor's office, the Class 6b program is designed to "encourage industrial development throughout Cook County by offering real estate tax incentives for the development of new industrial facilities, the rehabilitation of existing industrial structures, and the industrial reutilization of abandoned buildings." Class 6b allows industrial properties, which are typically assessed at 25 percent of their market value, to be assessed at lower rates for a 12-year period. While applying for Class 6b classification is up to the property owner, the municipality must pass a supporting resolution. The Village of Summit has not historically participated in the Class 6b program but is encouraged to do so.

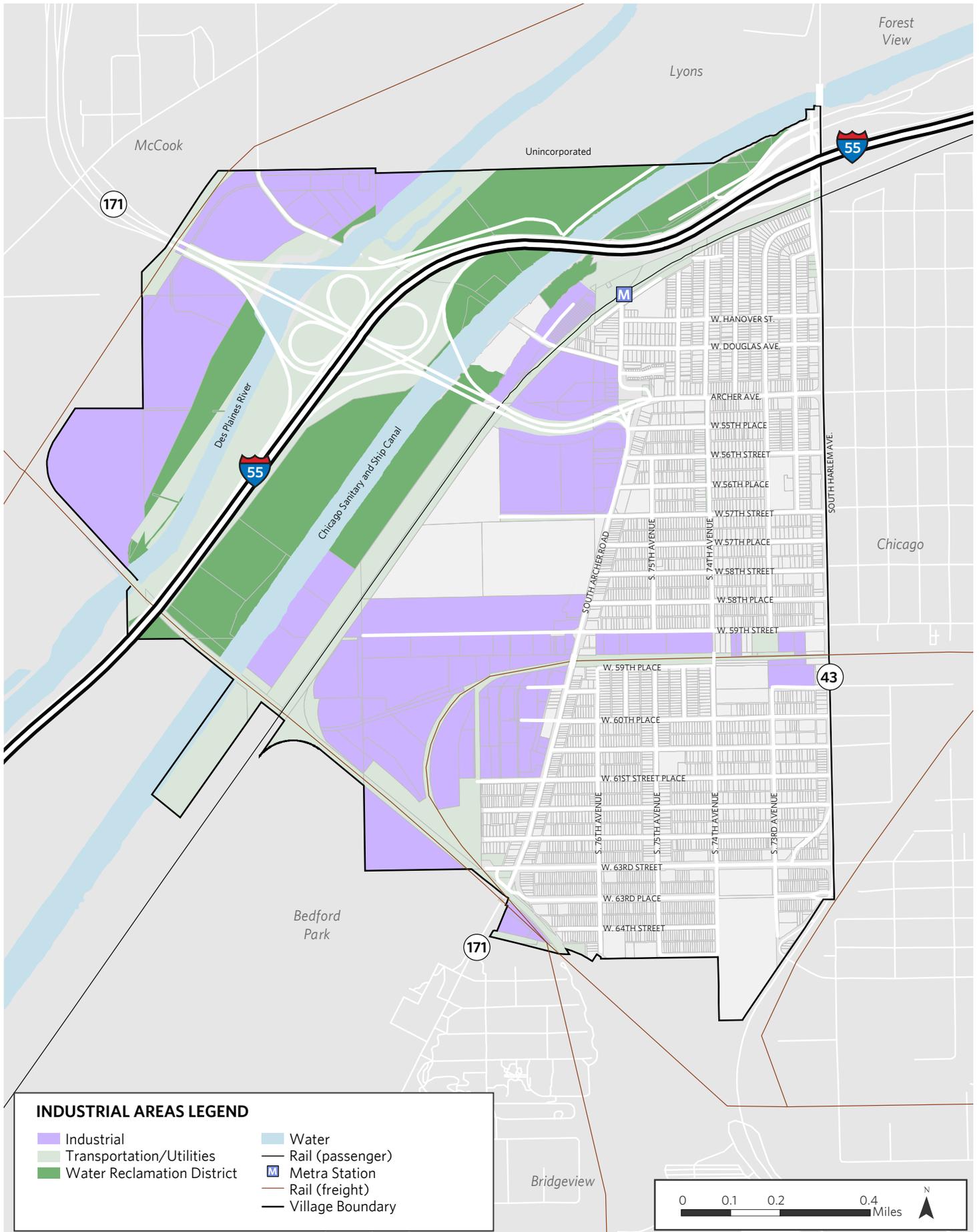
### Participate in broader regional discussions of tax reform

As relevant, the Village's leadership should participate in discussions of the impacts of Cook County's tax policies and structures, including the impact of the property tax classification system. This is a longer-term recommendation but should be monitored by Village staff and elected officials.

### Participate in larger regional efforts to strengthen the industrial sector

Industrial businesses within Summit are impacted by regional manufacturing and freight infrastructure trends, issues, projects, and opportunities. While Summit may compete with McCook or Bedford Park on individual development opportunities, it should also partner with these neighboring communities to strengthen the overall industrial sector. The Village should participate actively in the West Suburban Chamber of Commerce and Industry and should support larger infrastructure, workforce, or institutional efforts that emerge from this group.

Figure 5.1 Future industrial areas plan



Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, 2014.

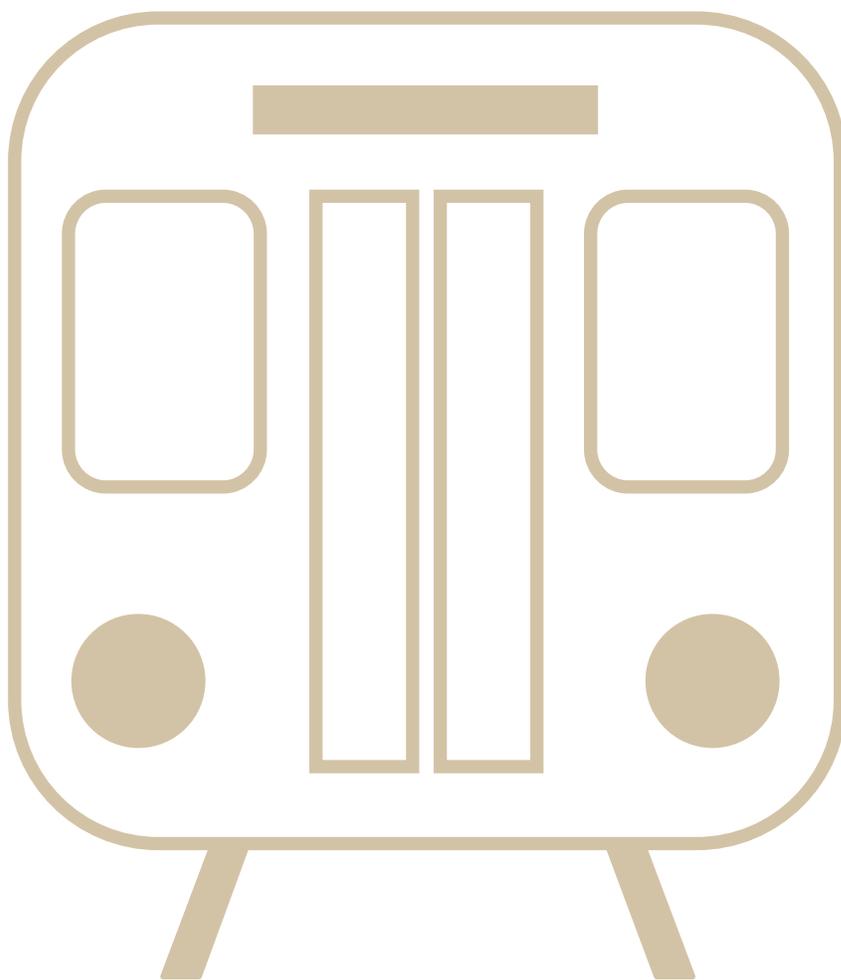


# Chapter 6: TRANSPORTATION





The Village of Summit will provide its residents and businesses with safe and efficient transportation options to navigate the community and connect to regional transportation systems. Residents will have convenient access to local and regional shopping and recreational destinations while businesses will be able to transport freight regionally and nationally in a timely manner.



## Key Findings

- **Summit’s streets and railroads require investment to enhance the industrial economy.** The poor condition of streets within Summit’s industrial areas requires improvement in order to retain and attract businesses. In addition, improvements to passenger and freight rail infrastructure are needed within Summit.
- **The pedestrian environment in Summit is difficult to navigate safely.** Summit’s regular grid of local residential streets and well-maintained sidewalks make it conducive to walking and biking, yet street connectivity is impacted by a series of wide roads and railroads. In addition, the sidewalks and intersections on the commercial corridors can be unpleasant for pedestrians. Steps to enable Summit residents to get around more easily within the Village can help spur economic development and ease traffic congestion.
- **Summit has public transit resources, but they are underutilized.** Summit is served by a number of transit routes, but low ridership points to issues with infrequent service and poor connections between destinations.

## Summary of Existing Conditions

Summit contains a wide range of transportation options. The following provides a summary of the streets, transit, and pedestrian facilities in the community; trails are covered in **Chapter 7**.

### Streets

Interstate 55 (the Adlai E. Stevenson Expressway) passes through Summit and provides a significant advantage in terms of easy access from the surrounding region, but it also impacts the flow of traffic on local roadways. As a Class I Truck route, the interstate draws heavy truck traffic to and from industrial and freight businesses in the Village and surrounding communities. East First Avenue (IL 171)/Archer Avenue and S. Harlem Avenue (IL 43) are principal arterials that connect to Interstate 55 and are part of the Illinois Strategic Regional Arterial (SRA) system. Summit also has three minor arterials — Archer Road, W. 63rd Street, and Center Avenue — and two collector roads — Lawndale Avenue west of the Des Plaines River and W. 59th Street west of Archer Avenue.

Street network connectivity is a key issue in Summit. The Stevenson Expressway, Des Plaines River, and Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal divide the Village. While the residential areas of Summit largely feature a regular street grid, the Indiana Harbor Belt Railroad south of 59th Street divides the grid and the neighborhoods. Only the busy arterials of Archer Road and Harlem Avenue, as well as 74th Avenue with its pedestrian bridge, connect the length of the Village. Archer Avenue, a principal arterial, also cuts across quieter local roads.



In addition, the industrial areas west of Archer Road are served by dead-end streets running east-west. This alignment forces all traffic onto Archer Road in order to make north-south movements. The same problem occurs in the northwest part of the Village; only Lawndale Avenue is available to access the private driveways to the industrial areas along the Des Plaines River. There are two private roads, one of which is unimproved, that provide access to different parcels in this area.

## Transit

Many transit services pass through Summit, providing rail and bus connections to Chicago and nearby communities. Ridership by Summit residents remains low, as shown by the low percentage of workers commuting by transit and high number of commuters driving alone or carpooling. While several modes of transit are available in the Village, infrequent service and poor connections between them may contribute to low ridership.

Summit is home to one Metra station on the Heritage Corridor Line, which runs from Chicago to Joliet. The station also serves the Amtrak Lincoln Service line, connecting Chicago to St. Louis. Metra runs only three Heritage Corridor trains in each direction per day with no weekend service. Four northbound Amtrak trains stop at Summit daily, but only when discharging passengers, making it an unreliable commuting option to Chicago. Located in a residential neighborhood at the north end of Center Avenue, the Summit Metra station suffers from poor connectivity to the rest of the Village. The station is far from the commercial and civic nodes of Summit, and no bus routes connect to the station — making it a poor candidate for transit-oriented development. Four Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) bus routes and three Pace bus routes pass through or very near Summit.

## Sidewalks

Summit has an extensive network of sidewalks, particularly in its residential areas. The greatest barrier to pedestrian movement in Summit's residential neighborhoods is the Indiana Harbor Belt Railroad, which disrupts the sidewalk and street grid. Between Archer Avenue and Harlem Avenue, only a narrow pedestrian footbridge aligned with 74th Avenue allows passage over the tracks. In commercial areas, fast-moving, heavy traffic combined with frequent curb cuts and sidewalk gaps can create dangerous conditions for pedestrians. Archer Avenue, Harlem Avenue, and Archer Road are all busy streets with high volumes of truck and car traffic and, while they all have sidewalks, they often lack parkways with street trees or on-street parking that would serve as a buffer for pedestrians. This roadway design creates a street environment that is not conducive to shared use by motorists, cyclists, and pedestrians.

In addition, these major arterials lack frequent pedestrian crossings. To cross these streets, pedestrians often must walk a great distance to find a signaled crossing or quickly cross without the safety of a well-marked crosswalk. Of particular concern is Archer Road, which features many commercial uses and community facilities on the west side of the road. When signaled intersections with crosswalks are present, the road width can make crossing difficult for slower pedestrians. Archer Avenue/1st Avenue features two intersections in close proximity — with Center Avenue and Archer Road — that present pedestrians with confusing paths and difficult crossings. While the intersection was once a simpler four-way intersection, the rerouting of Center Avenue created two T-intersections, complicating the route for pedestrians trying to reach important destinations such as Summit Park and the Summit Metra Station.

## Transportation Improvement Program and Major Capital Projects

The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is metropolitan Chicago’s agenda of surface transportation projects. The TIP lists all federally funded projects and regionally significant, non-federally funded projects programmed for implementation in the next four years. There are four active TIP projects in Summit and all are road resurfacing projects, including almost the full length of the major commercial and trucking routes. Two of the projects are being programmed by the Central Council of Mayors and two by IDOT, as shown in **Table 6.1**.

**Table 6.1 Active Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) projects in Summit**

PROJECT LOCATION	PROJECT TYPE	PROGRAMMING AGENCY	COST TOTALS
Lawndale Avenue from Joliet Road to the Des Plaines River	Road Resurface (with no lane widening)	Central Council of Mayors	\$410,000
W. 59th Street west of Archer Road	Road Resurface (with no lane widening)	Central Council of Mayors	\$300,000
Archer Avenue from Archer Road to 73rd Avenue	Road Resurface (with no lane widening)	IDOT – District 1 Division of Highways	\$505,000
Harlem Avenue from I-55 to W. 63rd Street	Road Resurface (with no lane widening)	IDOT – District 1 Division of Highways	\$2,125,000

Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning TIP Database (<http://tip.cmap.illinois.gov/tip/default.aspx>). Projects listed as “Active” as of April 2014.

## Recommendations

### Update industrial roadway network

Summit’s industrial areas are a key asset of the community, but they need reinvestment. Two road projects programmed in the TIP would enhance conditions in Summit — the resurfacing of Lawndale Avenue and W. 59th Street. Summit should support the completion of these projects with other improvements discussed in Chapter 5. In future years, Summit should consider upgrading and redesigning Bulldog Drive, Pielet Drive, and W. Lincoln Avenue. In addition, the Village should consider strengthening the road network by adding north-south streets where feasible. Establishing such a network will be complicated given the locations of the railroads, utility lines, and Summit Park. Also, the Village should review and confirm locally-designated truck routes. Ideally, these routes, in addition to other size, weight, and load prohibitions, should be listed directly in the Village Code to be more effectively communicated to the trucking industry.



## Support CREATE projects

The U.S. DOT, State of Illinois, City of Chicago, Metra, Amtrak, and the nation's freight railroads have initiated the Chicago Region Environmental and Transportation Efficiency Program (CREATE), which will invest billions in critically needed improvements to increase the efficiency of the Chicago region's passenger and freight rail infrastructure and enhance quality of life for Chicago-area residents. CREATE will reduce train and auto delays throughout the Chicago area by focusing rail traffic on four rail corridors that will be improved with track, signal, and switch upgrades, grade separations, and other system investments. The program will increase freight rail speeds throughout the region, improve safety, and reduce the delays caused by conflicts between freight rail, passenger rail, and the region's roadways. There are three remaining CREATE projects in or near Summit that directly impact the Village and could improve vehicle traffic flow and the efficiency of the rail network. The Village should support the implementation of these projects.

**1. Argo Connections.** Currently in IDOT's final design phase, this project will improve the connection between the Belt Railway of Chicago (BRC) and the Indiana Harbor Belt (IHB) at Archer Road and W. 63rd Street in Summit. The project will construct a new double track connection and crossovers, pairs of switches that allow trains to switch between two parallel tracks. The project also proposes improvements to Argo Yard to increase capacity that crossover installation will reduce. By increasing speeds and giving flexibility to dispatchers, the Argo Connections project will improve efficiency of freight traffic to and from the Ingredion facility in Bedford Park. The project is linked with the Clearing Main Lines project (EW1) in the East-West Corridor, which proposes new main tracks in Bedford Park and Chicago.

**2. Canal Flyover.** The flyover is a double-tracked bridge that will carry two main tracks over or under the IHB railroad where it crosses the Canadian National railroad. The project, which is in Phase I engineering, is proposed on either side of the Canadian Pacific Canal Interlocking, west of Archer Road. Current conditions at the Canadian National/IHB crossing create delays due to conflicts between passenger and freight rail. The Canal Flyover will allow trains to increase speeds from 50 mph to 70 mph and reduce delays to Amtrak and Metra passenger service between Chicago and points south.

**3. 63rd Street and Harlem Avenue & Belt Railway of Chicago Grade Separation.** Over 17,000 vehicles and 192 CTA and Pace buses pass through this crossing each day. Currently awaiting funding availability, the project will examine grade separation where two BRC tracks cross 63rd Street, just east of Harlem Avenue. Because of the crossing's proximity to Clearing Yard, trains are moving very slowly along this stretch of tracks, lengthening crossing time and exacerbating conflicts with road traffic. The project would include an overpass or underpass for vehicles traveling 63rd Street, which is a state designated truck route and a 911 Critical Crossing for emergency vehicles.



## Enhance the pedestrian environment

The benefits of providing a safe environment for pedestrians are numerous. Residents benefit from this healthy form of exercise and low cost form of transportation. Pedestrians also provide more eyes on the street and can improve perceptions of neighborhood safety. As residents can more easily get around the Village on foot, they reduce the demands on Summit's main arterials. In addition, businesses are shown to benefit from pedestrian-friendly locations. Summit should prioritize the enhancement or addition of pedestrian facilities based on proximity to major destinations, such as schools and parks, as well as the ability of new sidewalks to connect existing neighborhoods. The Village should develop a multi-year pedestrian and bicycle capital improvement plan to implement these circulation improvements. Additional funding may be available from the Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program (ITEP), Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ), and Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP). The Village should work with IDOT and CCDOTH, where appropriate. Summit can also access Surface Transportation Program (STP) funds, which are quite flexible in their use, through the Central Council of Mayors. There are a number of techniques the Village can employ to enhance the pedestrian environment.

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, Manual for Uniform Traffic Control Devices, 2009.



### Update crosswalks and shorten crossing distances

Frequent pedestrian crossings allow residents and visitors to easily access different parts of a commercial corridor. While adding pedestrian crossings will be difficult to do on Summit's primary arterials given that they are important truck routes, the Village should work to update the existing crossings so that they are clearly visible to both pedestrians and drivers. This will help promote the use of the designated crossings and increase pedestrian safety. Many of the existing crosswalks in Summit are marked with minimal treatments; further improvements will make pedestrians more visible to drivers. High-visibility ladder, zebra, and continental crosswalk markings are preferable to standard parallel or dashed pavement markings. The Village should follow the high-visibility crosswalk guidelines detailed in the 2009 Manual for Uniform Traffic Control Devices.<sup>3</sup> Of immediate concern is the intersection of Archer Road and W. 57th Street. Given its proximity to Summit Park, this intersection should be equipped with high-visibility ladder crosswalk markings so that pedestrians can navigate this key intersection safely.

In addition, new or updated crosswalks on the arterials could be designed with curb extensions that extend the sidewalk and reduce the crossing distance for pedestrians wherever possible. Improvements that shorten the pedestrian crossing distance should be considered for areas with on-street parking along Archer Road and W. 63rd Street. Curb extensions also add a gateway feature that signals to drivers that this is an area where pedestrians are present. They could also be designed to handle stormwater (see **Chapter 7**).

### Maintain and enhance north-south pedestrian routes.

The greatest barrier to pedestrian movement in Summit's residential neighborhoods is the Indiana Harbor Belt Railroad. The Village should work to maintain the pedestrian footbridge aligned with 74th Avenue, as this provides an essential connection between the neighborhoods. As the footbridge ages, the Village should be prepared to make investments to ensure that the structure is sound.

The bridge on Archer Road over the Indiana Harbor Belt Railroad has very narrow sidewalks that make crossing this bridge uncomfortable for pedestrians and perhaps quite difficult for pedestrians with physical limitations. The Village should coordinate with IDOT to update the sidewalks on the bridge to better meet the needs of Village residents. The at-grade crossing along Harlem Avenue with the Indiana Harbor Belt Railroad should also be improved to provide a clear and safe route for pedestrians.

### Position Archer Road & W. 63rd Street as a pedestrian-oriented Main Street

The Archer Road and W. 63rd Street area already has many of the basic features that are necessary for creating a pedestrian-oriented Main Street. This is largely due to the existing building stock, especially where pedestrian-oriented buildings line the sidewalks with storefronts, and a number of destinations are within close proximity, such as the Summit Public Library and several bus routes. Summit should build upon the existing foot traffic in this area by promoting and reinforcing this area as a pedestrian-oriented Main Street.

In addition to the recommendations outlined in **Chapter 4** for this area, the W. 63rd Street retail area should be connected to the blocks of Archer Road north of W. 63rd Street through streetscape improvements. Residents of all ages should feel comfortable walking and taking transit within this area. The following strategies are designed to address gaps in the connections and amenities for pedestrians.

### Assess sidewalks and crosswalks leading to this area

Summit should ensure that it is easy for people within the surrounding neighborhoods to access the businesses near this intersection. Upgrading the existing crosswalks on the arterial streets, as outlined earlier in this chapter, will help pedestrians navigate both Archer Road and W. 63rd Street. The Village should also investigate the conditions of sidewalks and intersection crossings of local neighborhood streets leading up to this area so that residents can safely walk from their homes.

### Increase street trees and landscaping

Attractive street trees can play a vital role in the atmosphere of a commercial corridor. In addition to helping manage stormwater and reducing the heat island effect, trees enhance the beauty of streets, which can help entice people to walk along them and spend more time in the area. Street trees have also been shown to increase property values and have been connected with increased retail sales. For example, research has shown that consumers have expressed a willingness to pay 9 percent more in small cities for equivalent goods and services in business districts with an urban tree canopy. This differential can be helpful for local businesses that are often competing with national chains. In addition, there's growing evidence that increases in the urban tree canopy are associated with decreases in crime. Overall, while street trees do represent an added maintenance expense, they are known to bring larger economic benefits to a commercial street and signal reinvestment.

Currently, while street trees are present on Archer Road and W. 63rd Street, there are some sections that lack street trees. Given the upfront expense of adding tree wells, the Village should prioritize the replacement of street trees where tree wells already exist or in the parkway along W. 63rd Street where tree wells are not necessary. Due to the density of businesses and frequent storefronts in this area, the addition of a street tree can bring benefits to multiple adjacent properties. Street trees will continue to advance the walkability of this core area, and over time, the Village should expand tree planting efforts outward from this section.

### Assess street lighting

Residents expressed concerns about the lack of lighting in some sections of the Village. When the Village assesses the street lighting as recommended in **Chapter 4**, the area around the intersection of Archer Road and W. 63rd Street should receive particular attention. The Village should investigate if there are lighting issues, particularly from the vantage point of a pedestrian on the sidewalk. As opportunities arise to address locations with low levels of street lighting or as street lights need to be replaced, the Village should consider using more pedestrian-scaled lighting to create an inviting atmosphere along the street. Pedestrian-scaled streetlights can provide more even levels of lighting for people using the sidewalk, add visual interest for both pedestrians and drivers, and be used to distinguish this area as a unique destination.



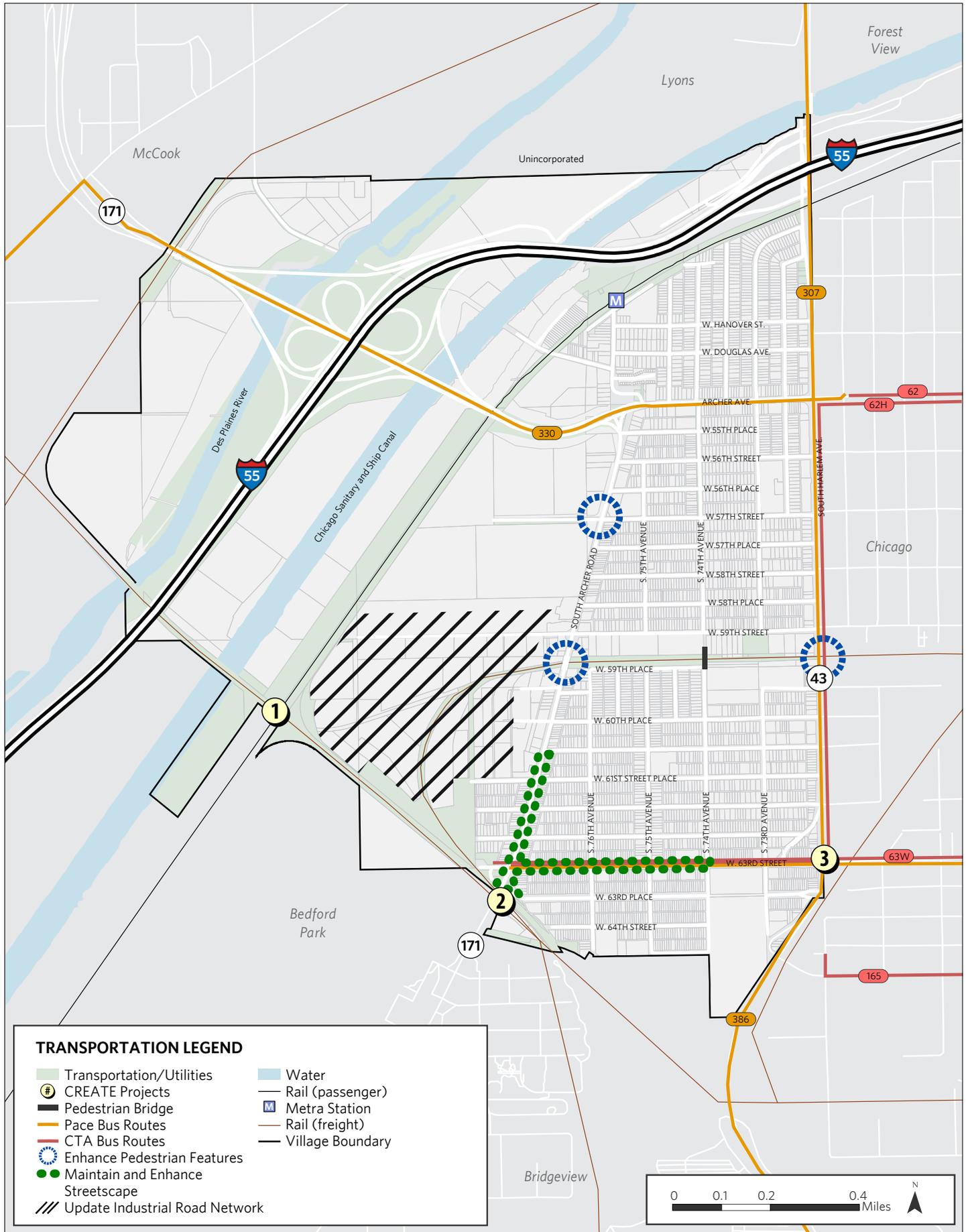
## Work with transit providers to enhance transit service

While a low percentage of Summit residents rely on transit for every day trips, transit provides an essential service and can lower transportation costs for Village residents. The Village should work with Pace to improve bus service connections to Midway Airport, hospitals, shopping centers, and institutions in the surrounding areas. Providing direct bus service to the Summit Metra Station may prove difficult given the width of Center Avenue, the lack of a bus turnaround, and infrequent train service. Summit should continue to advocate for increased Metra service on the Heritage Corridor Line and, if successful, work with Pace to understand how to improve bus service to this location. It should be noted that Metra has an interest in enhancing service on the Heritage Corridor Line, but this will require coordination with Canadian National, which owns the right of way. In addition, the Village should work with Pace to investigate the return of a bus route on Archer Road, which could help provide better access to the industrial employers located to the west, as well as to the retail and restaurants lining this street.

Further improvements to the existing bus stops along Harlem Avenue, W. 63rd Street, and Archer Avenue can assist residents and visitors using the bus. The addition of benches at specific locations can provide a resting spot for older residents and visitors, and covered shelters can help to protect all riders from the elements. Pace offers shelters (which include benches) through their Pace Ad Shelter program, and the Village should work with Pace to strategically locate them along the corridor. While the final placement will depend on a variety of factors, shelters should serve the stops most heavily used. The bus stops on W. 63rd Street that are within a block or two of the Summit Senior Village are excellent candidates for a shelter given the older age of the nearby residents. Pace's *Transit Supportive Guidelines for the Chicagoland Region*<sup>3</sup> provides design guidelines that the Village can reference when working with Pace to add transit amenities.

<sup>3</sup> Pace Suburban Bus, Transit Supportive Guidelines for the Chicagoland Region, 2013.

Figure 6.1 Future transportation map



Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, 2014.

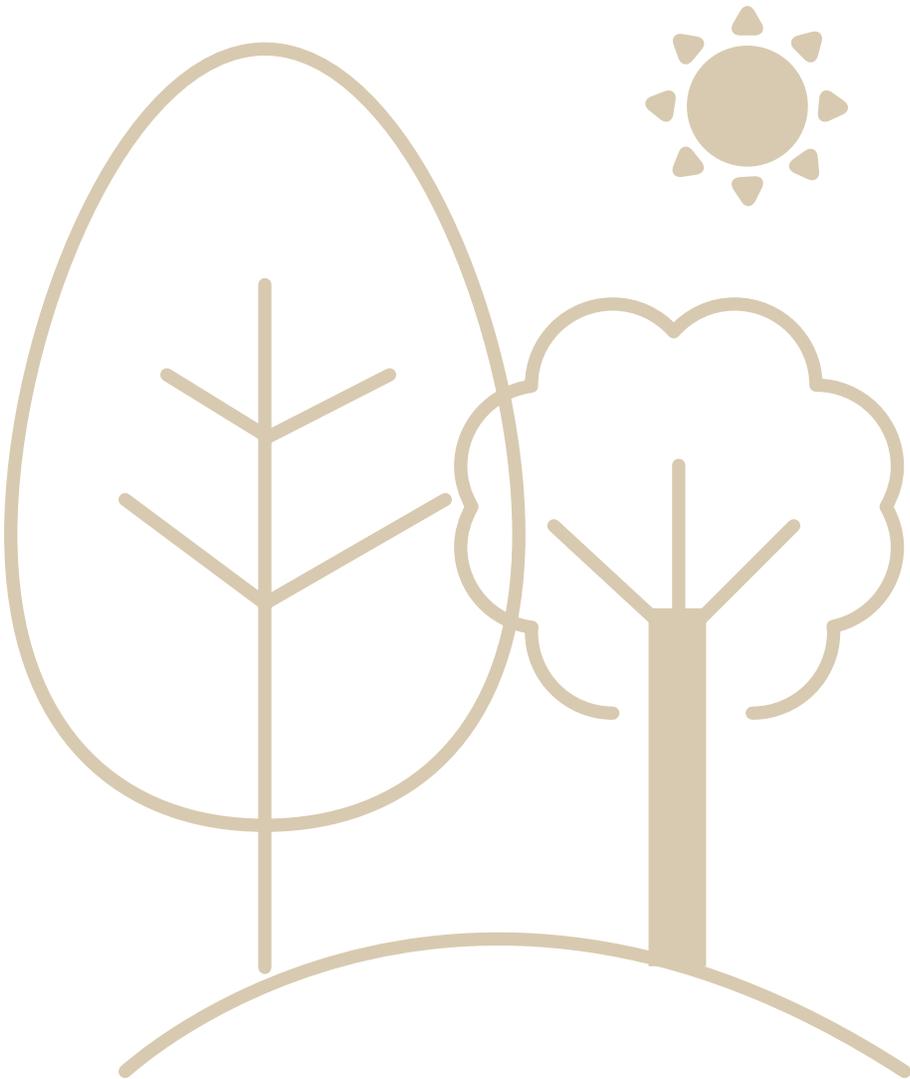


# Chapter 7: NATURAL ENVIRONMENT





The Village of Summit will finance, operate, and manage essential services to protect public safety, promote sanitation, health and welfare, and improve the quality of life. The sustainable provision of these services is essential to the community's long-term future.



## Key Findings

- **Summit's aging water infrastructure requires repair.** The Village is exceeding its water loss thresholds and is currently in violation of its permit through the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) Office of Water. In addition to a waste of a natural resource, lost drinking water reduces revenues and adds a strain on the Village budget.
- **Street and basement flooding are major concerns in Summit.** Aging infrastructure, development patterns, and poor drainage cause frequent and sometimes damaging flooding in the Village. Summit has invested in infrastructure and improved maintenance to mitigate flooding, but it remains a common concern among residents and Village officials.
- **The Summit Park District offers many recreational opportunities, but they are concentrated in Summit Park.** The Summit Park District has extensive recreational offerings for a Village of its size, with most amenities located at Summit Park. However, residents report that some of the neighborhood parks require repairs and investment to improve their condition and safety. Additionally, many of the larger open spaces in the Village are private land or under the control of the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District (MWRD), limiting residents' access to the Des Plaines River and the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal.

## Summary of Existing Conditions

The Village of Summit receives its drinking water from Lake Michigan via the City of Chicago's Department of Water. The IDNR's Lake Michigan Water Allocation Program is responsible for the management and use of Lake Michigan water resources for more than 200 permittees through the Illinois. Summit has been within its allocation and the Village currently assesses a minimum quarterly rate of \$59.15 for water use up to 7,000 gallons, plus \$9.25 per additional 1,000 gallons.

Whether water is lost through leaks in pipes or metering inaccuracies, it represents inefficient resource usage and lost revenue for the Village. Water that is pumped to the system but does not reach a billed customer is considered unaccounted-for flow (UFF), while maximum unavoidable leakage (MUL) is an estimate of water loss based on the age and type of pipe and counted among other accounted-for water factors. In 2013, Summit lost 9 percent of its net annual pumpage as UFF and another 8.1 percent to MUL — meaning that over 17 percent of water that the Village purchased from the City of Chicago was lost. Summit's UFF amount exceeds IDNR's current target maximum of 8 percent UFF; therefore the Village is in violation of its permit. In coming years, IDNR will be replacing both the UFF and MUL thresholds with a single non-revenue water standard of 12 percent in 2015, decreasing to 10 percent by 2019.



While little of the Village of Summit lies in the 100-year floodplain of the Des Plaines River or the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal, large storm events sometimes overwhelm the capacity of Summit's stormwater and sewer system, causing street flooding and basement backups. Recently, the Village has made efforts to more actively clean storm drains and sewers, which has reduced flooding incidents. The Village has used federal funding through the Community Development Block Grant program to make stormwater improvements in the area around Argo Community High School and south of W. 63rd Street and has recently applied for additional funding. Summit has also applied for assistance in constructing an additional combined outfall relief sewer and connection to the MWRD Tunnel and Reservoir Plan (TARP) system.

While much of the land in Summit features industrial and residential development, the Village does contain significant amounts of open space. A large amount of the undeveloped land in Summit is included in the 177 acres owned by MWRD. MWRD owns land on the banks of both the Des Plaines River and the canal, including most of the land between the two, the site of the Stevenson Expressway. Other open space in the Village offers recreational opportunities and park space, through the Summit Park District.

The Summit Park District maintains four parks within the Village, including the 60-acre Summit Park on Archer Road. Other parks include Hanover Park (7530 W. Hanover Street), Legion Park (61st Street & 73rd Avenue), and Argo Park (64th Place & 75th Avenue). Summit Park stretches from Archer Road to the railroad tracks next to the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal, offering a wide variety of recreational opportunities in the center of the Village. While Summit Park offers extensive recreational opportunities, it is separated from most of the Village's residential neighborhoods by heavily trafficked Archer Road.

The Des Plaines River and the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal offer Village residents unique opportunities for outdoor recreation. While not public parkland, the 177 acres of MWRD land along the river and canal offer considerable wildlife habitat, flood protection, and preserved open space. The Port of Summit Boat Club maintains a boat launch on the canal that includes a public launch ramp and a picnic area. It is the primary way Summit residents can utilize the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal.

The Forest Preserves of Cook County has no facilities within Summit itself, but numerous Forest Preserves are within a few miles of the Village. To the north, the Village of Lyons contains several large preserves, including Cermak Woods, White Eagle Woods, Ottawa Trail Woods, and Portage Woods. Sited along the Des Plaines River, the preserves in Lyons feature an aquatic center, fishing, trails, and the Chicago Portage National Historic Site. To the south, some of the largest contiguous forest preserves in Cook County are sited between the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal and the Cal-Sag Channel. Currently, Summit lacks adequate bicycle connections to either area of regional open space, but proposals to extend the Centennial Trail and Illinois & Michigan Canal Trail could connect Summit residents to considerable recreational opportunities.



Figure 7.1 Localized street flooding in Summit, July 2010  
Photo Credit: Sergio Garcia

Several planned or proposed bike trails are identified in the region’s *Northeastern Illinois Greenways and Trails Plan*<sup>4</sup> that would pass through Summit, improving connections to regional bike infrastructure and increasing access to open space within the Village. The Centennial Trail is an existing trail that extends along the Des Plaines River from Joliet to Willow Springs. While temporarily closed, MWRD plans to reopen the trail in 2016 and extend the trail through Summit on the west bank of the Des Plaines River. Even though this trail will run through the Village, it may be hard for residents to access given its location. There are additional planned connections of the Illinois & Michigan Canal Trail from Justice along the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal to Summit Park. From Summit Park, the trail would connect to planned trails along the canal to Chicago and south through Oak Lawn to the Cal-Sag Trail.

<sup>4</sup> CMAP. “Northeastern Illinois Greenways and Trails Plan.” See <http://www.cmap.illinois.gov/mobility/walking-and-bicycling/greenways-and-trails>.

## Recommendations

### Reduce water loss from the Village water system

In recent years, the amount of water lost from Summit’s water system has been steadily increasing. Whether due to leaks in the system, metering inaccuracies, billing errors, or theft, the high percentage of unaccounted-for water causes lost revenue for Summit. Reducing the amount of unaccounted-for loss would capture additional revenue for the Village and bring Summit into compliance with its IDNR permit.



The Village should conduct a review of its existing assets and develop an asset management plan to bring the system into a good state of repair. At the same time, Summit should conduct a review of the cost of providing water service, which may identify areas to reduce costs and/or require adjusting water rates to cover the full cost of providing the service. Both of these steps will help the Village demonstrate to IDNR that Summit has a plan for reducing water loss.

This recommendation is in line with recent Village Board policy. In June 2014, the Village Board approved a set of financial policies that outline how the Village will manage its financial operations, which states that the Village will set fees and user charges for the Water Fund at a level that fully supports the total direct and capital cost of the activity. There are a number of resources available for the Village to begin this process. The Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) is hosting Water Loss Audit seminars that provide free training on how to use the American Water Works Association's M36 water audit tool.<sup>5</sup> CMAP has also developed a number of resources the Village can use to ensure that the water system is fully supported, including the *Full-Cost Water Pricing Guidebook for Sustainable Community Water Systems*.<sup>6</sup> At the same time, Summit should implement a water conservation program so that residents have ways to actively conserve water. CMAP has developed the *Model Water Use Conservation Ordinance*,<sup>7</sup> which provides a guide for adopting measures to promote better water use.

## Enhance stormwater management

Flooding events and their corresponding damages are a drain on the financial resources of both the Village and private landowners. In addition to continuing to maintain the existing sewers and to seek assistance from MWRD, the Village should perform additional activities that are designed to prioritize the most effective projects, ease the implementation of green infrastructure, and encourage residents to contribute to the solution.

<sup>5</sup> For more information on the Water Loss Audit Seminars, visit the Illinois Section of the American Water Works Association website: [http://www.isawwa.org/?page=Water\\_Loss\\_Training](http://www.isawwa.org/?page=Water_Loss_Training).

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.cmap.illinois.gov/documents/10180/14452/Full-Cost+Water+Pricing+Guidebook.pdf/db899e98-e567-42bb-b51b-57573e41ac02>.

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.cmap.illinois.gov/livability/water/model-water-conservation-ordinance>.

### Conduct a stormwater management assessment

In order to reduce street flooding and basement backups, the Village needs to learn more about the locations and the corresponding causes of flooding events. Currently, the Village has a general sense of where flooding occurs, but the drainage areas contributing to the flooded areas have not been determined. Once these areas are identified, the Village can more effectively locate grey and green infrastructure to address flooding problems.

Upgrading the capacity of the underground system of pipes that create the local sewer system — or grey infrastructure — can be very expensive. The Village has requested assistance from MWRD to build an additional combined outfall relief sewer and connection to the MWRD TARP system. If constructed, the project would aim to expand sewer capacity for a large portion of the neighborhood north of W 59th Street. Additional sewer capacity may be needed elsewhere and the assessment will identify those potential locations.

The assessment should look for land-use-based solutions to mitigate flooding issues in Summit. Reducing the amount of impervious surfaces and increasing the potential for rainwater to infiltrate into the ground are known as green infrastructure techniques. Green infrastructure is typically sized to capture the first half-inch to one inch of rainfall and is therefore best suited for smaller storm events. Unlike grey infrastructure, green infrastructure is above ground and can contribute to neighborhood greening and enhanced streetscaping. In addition, the assessment should look for opportunities to address stormwater management issues in conjunction with street reconstruction, water main replacement, and other capital improvements, such as upgrading residential alleys.

The assessment should result in a detailed plan of prioritized projects the Village should undertake to reduce local flooding. Once complete, the Village should incorporate the recommendations into a Capital Improvement Plan, as noted in **Chapter 8**, and begin to work with relevant partners, which will likely include MWRD, the Summit Park District, and private property owners.

### Update zoning ordinance to encourage green infrastructure on private property

While improvement of the Village's aging infrastructure will be an ongoing and long-term project, there are non-structural and cost-effective measures to reduce the burden on the existing infrastructure. Chief among these is to reduce the amount of stormwater generated from redevelopment. The recently updated Cook County Watershed Management Ordinance puts further emphasis on addressing stormwater management through green infrastructure techniques. While it establishes standards for managing stormwater runoff once it is generated, Summit's zoning ordinance has the potential to reduce the amount of impervious surfaces associated with new construction — making it easier for developers to meet the requirements outlined in the Cook County Watershed Management Ordinance. The Village should update its zoning ordinance to ensure that the zoning, landscaping, and other ordinance provisions are working together to make it easier for developers to meet multiple requirements simultaneously.

### Encourage residents to participate in MWRD Rain Barrel Program

MWRD is encouraging residents living in its service area to purchase rain barrels to reduce the amount of rainwater entering the sewers during a storm event. Homeowners can collect and reuse stormwater year-round by installing a rain barrel, now available for a nominal price. The price includes an installation kit and home delivery for all residents living in the MWRD's service area.

Rain barrels are repurposed plastic barrels designed to collect rainwater from rooftops for reuse. The rain barrel program is a part of the MWRD's green infrastructure initiative to help municipalities with managing stormwater and reducing water pollution. Summit should advertise this program to its citizens using a variety of techniques such as announcements on the Village, Park District, and School Districts websites, community newsletters, water bills, Village and Park District bulletin board displays, etc.



## Work with Summit Park District to activate existing parks and open spaces

Although a large amount of land in Summit is dedicated to parks and open spaces, many residents want the Village to enhance the use of existing parks and open spaces. Residents expressed satisfaction with Summit Park but want to see more programmed activities as well as passive recreation improvements at the local neighborhood parks. There is also an opportunity to integrate green infrastructure practices in existing parks to tackle localized flooding. The Village should coordinate with the Summit Park District to improve the condition, activity, and lighting of the public open spaces, conduct regular maintenance of parks, and potentially address stormwater management issues. In addition, residents expressed an interest in community gardening, which could take place on park district land or on vacant parcels within neighborhoods.

<sup>8</sup> CMAP. "Northeastern Illinois Greenways and Trails Plan." See <http://www.cmap.illinois.gov/mobility/walking-and-bicycling/greenways-and-trails>.

## Support greenway connections along the Des Plaines River and canal

The Des Plaines River, Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal, and the land surrounding these two waterbodies provide essential habitat connections between larger preserved open spaces held by the Forest Preserves of Cook County. Greenways provide the opportunity to connect natural areas and maintain and enhance ecosystem functions, such as stormwater management, air quality, and biodiversity. With climate change, greenways may provide the essential connections between larger habitat areas as species migrate in response to changing environmental conditions. The Village should work with MWRD, Forest Preserves of Cook County, and the Summit Park District, to preserve and restore this habitat corridor.

These assets also have the potential to offer Village residents unique opportunities for outdoor recreation. Several planned or proposed bike trails are identified in the region's *Northeastern Illinois Greenways and Trails Plan*<sup>8</sup> that would pass through Summit, improving connections to regional bike infrastructure and increasing access to open space within the Village. The Village should support work to implement the Illinois & Michigan Canal Trail from Justice along the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal to Summit Park. From Summit Park, the trail would connect to planned trails along the canal to Chicago and south through Oak Lawn to the Cal-Sag Trail. In addition, the Village should continue to support the existing boat launch and look for ways to improve resident access to this location.

Figure 7.1 Natural environment map



Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, 2014.



# Chapter 8: GOVERNANCE





The Village of Summit is committed to transparency, meaningful public participation, and collaboration with the public. A high-quality community is dependent upon proactive policies and standards, a participatory process, and a responsive government.



## Key Findings

- **The Village Zoning Board of Appeals was recently established in June 2014.** The current Zoning Board of Appeals is relatively new. Throughout the planning process, residents expressed concern about overall transparency and responsiveness.
- **Summit currently lacks staff dedicated to community development.** As currently structured, the Village may lack capacity to perform economic and community development functions, such as implementing this Comprehensive Plan.

## Summary of Existing Conditions

Summit's governing body is composed of the Village President and Trustees, who together comprise the Village Board. The Village Board has established nine standing committees to address various Village concerns; a number of the committees overlap with Village departments. By Village ordinance, each standing committee is meant to consist of two members of the Board of Trustees, who are appointed by the Village President. Current committees include:

- **Private Buildings and Zoning**
- **Municipal Grounds and Public Buildings**
- **Public Works and Water**
- **Public Safety**
- **License and Business Regulations**
- **Finance**
- **I and M Canal**
- **Community Development**
- **Human Resources**

The Village administrative offices, commonly referred to as the municipal center, are located at 7321 W. 59th Street, and the Village Board chambers are located within the Police Department and Courthouse building at 5810 S. Archer Road (see **Figure 5.1**). The Village is composed of the following departments:

- **Public Works Department:** The public works department oversees all building and code enforcement, a 50/50 sidewalk repair program, local street repairs, snow plowing, tree trimming, Village building maintenance, garbage collection, and street closures.
- **Water Department:** The Water Department distributes drinking water and maintains sewer service throughout the Village. The Village maintains a water tower on W. 59th Street within the Village's municipal center.
- **Fire Department:** The Fire Department, located at 7339 W. 59th Street, provides service within the municipal boundaries and has mutual aid agreements with the surrounding communities and MWRD.
- **Police Department:** The Summit Police Department is located at 5810 S. Archer Road. Summit has a Neighborhood Watch group that meets every third Thursday of the month to provide an opportunity for the Police Department and residents to discuss current issues.
- **Community Development:** The Community Development Department oversees the three tax increment financing (TIF) districts (**Figure 8.1**) and associated projects within the Village, as well as administering the Community Development Block Grants Summit has received in recent years.



During the course of the planning process, it was common for stakeholders to suggest that the current governance composition and structure was inhibiting positive changes in Summit. Many expressed frustration with the lack of transparency and responsiveness in Village governance and operations. Others raised specific concerns with the performance of essential Village services, such as code enforcement, street maintenance, and water management, as well as the ability of staff to respond to potential developers and promote economic development. In addition, many stated that they found it difficult to learn more about Village operations given the structure of the Village Board meetings and a lack of communication about current events and how to get involved. In particular, stakeholders noted a need for increased transparency related to the use of TIF funds, casino revenues, and the overall Village budget.

Additional conversations revealed that the Village Board is performing the functions of a Zoning Board of Appeals and Planning Commission, despite the fact that Summit's ordinance establishes a separate Board of Appeals with the purpose of conducting hearings and making recommendations on any request for a variation, modification, special use or any proposed amendment to the provisions or application of the terms of the zoning ordinance. Village ordinance specifies that the Board of Appeals should consist of seven members appointed by the Village President under staggered terms of service. In 1996, the Village repealed its Plan Commission and granted those powers to the Board of Appeals. Currently, the Board of Appeals is not in operation, and the Village Board is handling all requests.

## Recommendations

### Improve the Village's community development process

In order to implement the Comprehensive Plan and attract investment and development in Summit, the Village needs to establish clear guidelines and processes for developers, business owners, landowners, and residents. The following steps outline essential strategies to achieving the plan and creating a transparent process.

### Support Village staff dedicated to community development

With staff focused on community development, the Village will have designated personnel with the overall responsibility of assuring the proper planning and development of high-quality residential and business neighborhoods, as well as designing the transportation system to serve them, together with planning for a comprehensive system of open spaces, and other enhancements to the city's image. The functions of the department should include community planning, economic development, administration of the zoning ordinance, and building plan review and inspections. The functions currently performed by the Village's current Building Department could be handled within this new department.

This department would be responsible for carrying out many of the recommendations within this Comprehensive Plan, and the department's annual work plan should be based on the recommendations outlined here. This department would also administer and enforce the zoning ordinance, subdivision code, and building codes. It would also oversee the development of plans for three TIF districts<sup>9</sup> in the community. This Department should also be responsible for providing staff assistance to and coordinating the work of the Board of Zoning Appeals and the Community Development Committee.

### Support the Zoning Board of Appeals

The Village established a Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) in June 2014 as outlined in Summit's municipal code as well as Illinois state law.<sup>10</sup> The ZBA should conduct hearings and make recommendations on any request for a variation, modification, special use, or any proposed amendment to the provisions or application of the terms of the zoning ordinance. Summit's ordinance states that the ZBA should consist of seven members appointed by the Village President under staggered terms of service. A functioning ZBA will establish a clear and transparent review process.

Along with elected municipal officials, the appointed members of the ZBA play an important role in protecting the health and safety of their community. They will be making important decisions that can have a serious effect on the use and value of land. As many ZBA members may not be familiar with the scope of their role and responsibility, the Village should provide them with an understanding so that they can capably perform their duties within the law. For example, members may not have experience or knowledge in how to interpret a zoning ordinance, types of variances, or preparing for and conducting meetings. There are a variety of educational resources available, and the Village of Summit should ensure that the ZBA receives training on a regular basis. CMAP and the Illinois Chapter of the American Planning Association offer trainings that outline the roles and responsibilities of all planning officials. Summit should utilize this resource and host a training for both the newly appointed ZBA as well as the Village Board.

<sup>9</sup> The TIF District boundaries presented in Figure 8.1 are based on information accessed on the Cook County Clerk website on January 2, 2015. See the following website for more information, <http://www.cookcountyclerk.com/tsd/tifs/Pages/default.aspx>.

<sup>10</sup> See 65 ILCS 5/11-13-5 and CMAP, "Handbook of Planning Law Principles and Practices for Northeastern Illinois."



### Establish a transparent development review process

As the Village updates the zoning ordinances (see later in this chapter), it should also take the opportunity to streamline the development review process and ensure that the steps are clear and transparent for developers, business owners, landowners, and residents. The Village website should make it easy for developers and businesses to navigate the different components, and residents should also be able to see what projects are up for review and how they can participate. The Community Development Department, ZBA, and Village Board should be involved in designing the process, and new staff and appointed and elected officials should be regularly trained on how it works.

### Develop and annually update a Capital Improvement Plan

Proactive, strategic investments in the Village's assets are necessary to support health, safety, economic performance, and general quality of the community. In June 2014, the Village Board approved a set of financial policies that outline how the Village will manage its financial operations. A large portion of this policy document is devoted to developing a Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), stating that the Village will make all capital improvements in accordance with the CIP. The CIP will be developed for a five-year period and updated annually. In order to develop and update the CIP, the Village will be assessing the condition of all major capital assets and infrastructure, including buildings, streets, alleys, water mains, and sewer lines.

A CIP provides a strategic framework to assess, prioritize, fund, and implement major infrastructure projects and is one of the main methods for implementing the vision of the Comprehensive Plan. The success of several recommendations, outlined in **chapters 6 and 7**, will depend upon this activity. The following outlines the main steps of developing a CIP:

- 1. Prepare a fiscal analysis.** Identify the sources and approximate levels of funding that could be used for capital projects based on past years and future expectations.
- 2. Assess the conditions of all major capital assets and infrastructure.** Each of the Village departments should assess the conditions of the Village's capital assets and infrastructure in order to provide a comprehensive list of future maintenance and replacement work.
- 3. Identify a "wish list" of potential projects.** Identify all of the capital projects that should be considered for inclusion in the CIP.
- 4. Develop criteria for project selection.** Develop criteria to evaluate potential projects, which could include impact on operating costs; timeliness; economic impact; safety and health impact; grouping with similar projects; consistency with local plans; availability of external funding; and whether the project is required by mandate. Projects could also be classified in terms of whether they primarily involve maintenance or replacement of existing assets, as opposed to construction of a new facility. Projects that address immediate safety and health concerns could be given particular priority.
- 5. Use criteria to prioritize projects.** Evaluate each project against the identified criteria, using this to prioritize projects in terms of their benefit to the community. This scoring exercise will result in a list of priority projects that fit within the Village's funding ability. Projects that are not included within the CIP based on funding constraints could be a priority for further external grant applications.
- 6. Create program of projects.** Finally, assign the priority projects to years within the five-year period of the CIP. This should result in a spreadsheet with year-by-year funding allocations by project and source, which will then be summarized into the CIP document.

## Update development standards, zoning ordinance, and guidelines to be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan

Specific regulatory provisions and standards need to be developed as a next step following the adoption of this Comprehensive Plan to specify site development and building practices consistent with Summit's priorities. This is a significant task that will give clear direction to land owners, developers, and consultants who may be proposing land use changes and will also provide well-defined criteria for staff and appointed and elected officials to evaluate development proposals. These standards should reinforce all of Summit's stated priorities, including preserving the community's established neighborhoods and housing diversity, creating a vibrant and sustainable commercial business environment and fostering a flourishing industrial sector.

As identified in **chapters 3 through 7**, Village ordinances should be updated to more accurately represent existing land uses and to accomplish development goals. The revised zoning code should prescribe the type of development that is desired within each zoning district so that the desired result is achieved through the zoning code alone and not through the Planned Unit Development (PUD) process. An overall update of the zoning districts and their attributes, including the zoning map, would assist the Village in carrying out the vision outlined in this plan. A zoning update could also correct inconsistencies that have developed over the years. For example, the Village created a C1 — Conservation/ Recreation District, but this district was never included on the zoning map.

In terms of commercial revitalization, the ordinance should be designed to help development blend in with the existing pattern yet also accommodate the demands of contemporary businesses. Development standards that address physical design elements ranging from the block face to building signage can address this issue. The key elements to be included in the standards are:

- **Blockface Design:** The placement and appearance of buildings contribute to the character of the entire block and also the character of the right-of-way. Closely spaced or contiguous buildings are encouraged.
- **Site Design:** This refers to the placement of buildings, parking lots, sidewalks, and landscaping on a parcel. Buildings placed closer to the street should be encouraged in both the mixed/multi-use districts and local commercial/business districts, with shared parking placed behind.
- **Building Design:** This should address both new construction as well as renovation of existing facades. Facades should preferably be designed to provide a strong sense of place. Guidelines regarding scale, proportion, and details should be outlined in this section of the development standards.
- **Building Height:** The guidelines should allow flexibility to build taller buildings in the downtown while complementing the existing character of the adjacent neighborhoods.
- **Signage:** Building signage should fit with and enhance the character of the building and overall character of the right-of-way. Standards should outline the location, size, and type of signage with illustrative examples.



Similar standards regarding streetscape and pedestrian amenities should be created for adjoining buildings on public property. The elements to be addressed within this section should include:

- Street Lighting
- Planters and Landscape
- Pavement
- Furnishings (benches, trash receptacles, bicycle stalls)
- Signage (including wayfinding signs)

This activity could be funded by the Village within the annual budget. Funds would be utilized to hire a zoning consultant to revise the existing ordinance and create development standards, field verify the information, and create a map. The Community Development Department should manage this project in consultation with the Village's Zoning Board of Appeals.

### Enhance communication with Village residents and stakeholders

Good governance depends on responsiveness and accountability; Village activities should respond to the needs of citizens, and citizens and the private sector should have the ability to review Village actions and hold them accountable. Communication is at the heart of good governance activities and allows residents and stakeholders to assess how responsive the Village is to their needs and hold them accountable. Summit should strive to keep residents informed, seek their opinions, and actively involve them in decision making. Residents expect opportunities to express their viewpoints and to influence important public decisions; in order to do so effectively, government activities must be transparent.

The Municipal Research and Services Center (MRSC)<sup>10</sup> has a number of resource materials and guides on designing effective communication, including topics like public meeting formats, newsletters, online technology, and engaging youth. Busy schedules mean that residents will appreciate convenient ways to stay informed and to comment on issues. Technology has changed how people communicate. Summit should harness the Village website to communicate government activities. Summit’s website should be its “home base” to organize information and to involve residents in local decision making. The Village should review and redesign the website to improve transparency and accessibility of information about public meetings and ensure that community members can easily find the issues they care about and sign up for updates. There are a number of resources available to assist the Village in developing new communication strategies. The Institute for Local Government has created a *Local Official’s Guide to Online Public Engagement*<sup>11</sup> that outlines key strategies to inform the public using online tools.

<sup>10</sup> Municipal Research and Services Center. Effective Communication and Public Participation. Available at <http://www.mrsc.org/subjects/governance/participation/participation.aspx>.

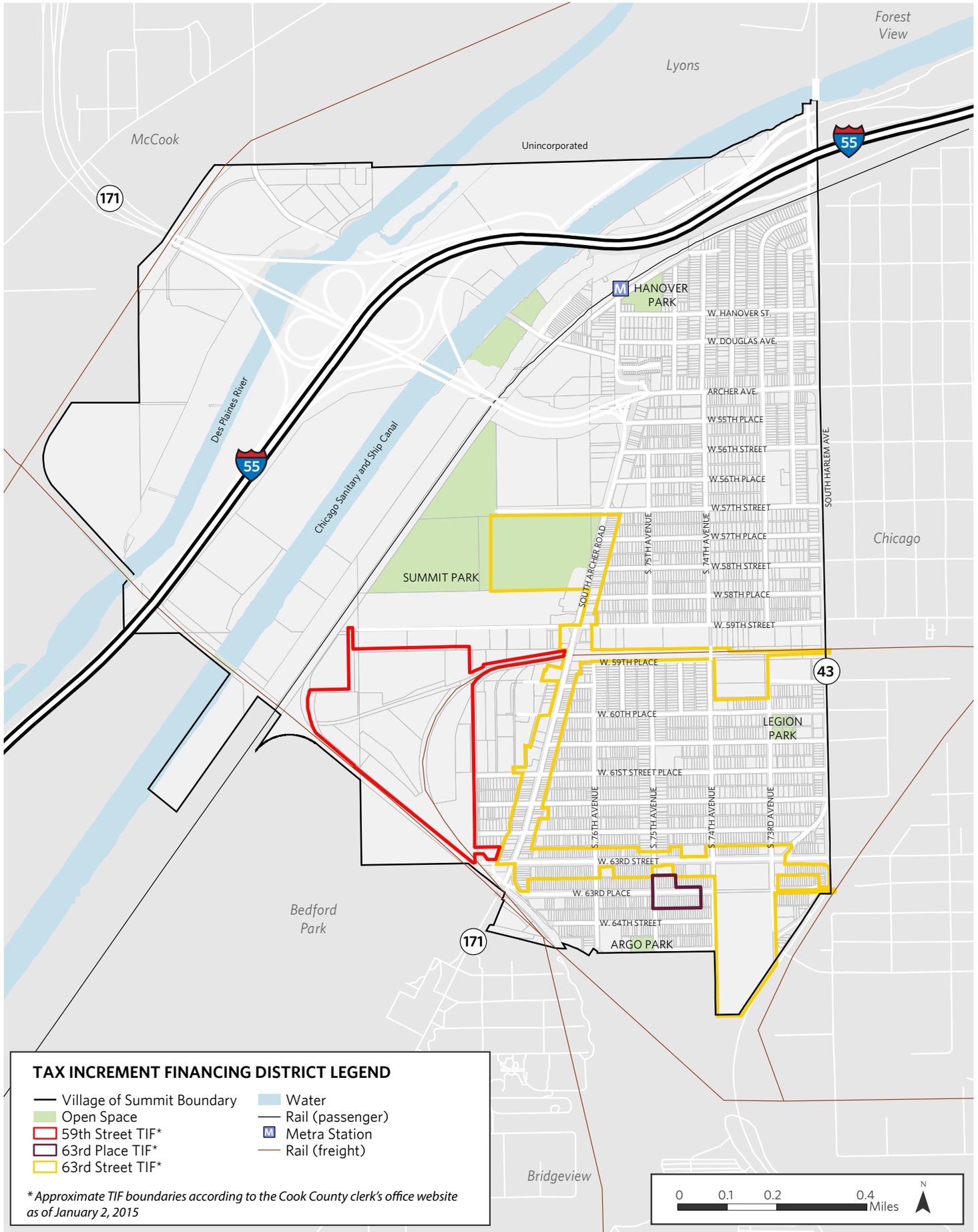
<sup>11</sup> Institute for Local Government. 2012. Local Officials Guide to Online Public Engagement. Available at [http://www.ca-ilg.org/sites/main/files/file-attachments/a\\_local\\_officials\\_guide\\_to\\_online\\_public\\_engagement\\_draft\\_.pdf](http://www.ca-ilg.org/sites/main/files/file-attachments/a_local_officials_guide_to_online_public_engagement_draft_.pdf).

### Coordinate with partners to ensure high-quality services and facilities

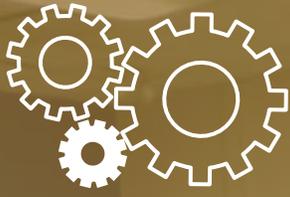
Summit should continue to work with partners, service districts, other jurisdictions, organizations, residents, and other stakeholders to ensure high-quality services and facilities in the most effective and efficient manner possible. These include services and facilities related to education; safety and emergency response times (fire and police); open space; and waste disposal, waste/resource recovery, and recycling. With the array of jurisdictions Summit works with, this is both a challenge and an opportunity. Partners for this strategy include the MWRD, Summit Park District, Cook County, and neighboring municipalities, particularly Chicago, Bedford Park, Justice, McCook, and Lyons.

Given that new infrastructure and increases in service provision may change the tax burden on residents, the Village should strive to involve the community in facilities and service decisions to make sure that the public has adequate opportunity to provide input. While the Village will continue to depend on its operating budget for new services and facilities it wishes to provide on its own, it should also seek out grant funding for such community improvements. Pooling resources and partnering on grant applications may be a successful strategy where shared resources, facilities, and services are desired.

**Figure 8.1. Tax increment financing districts**



Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, 2014.



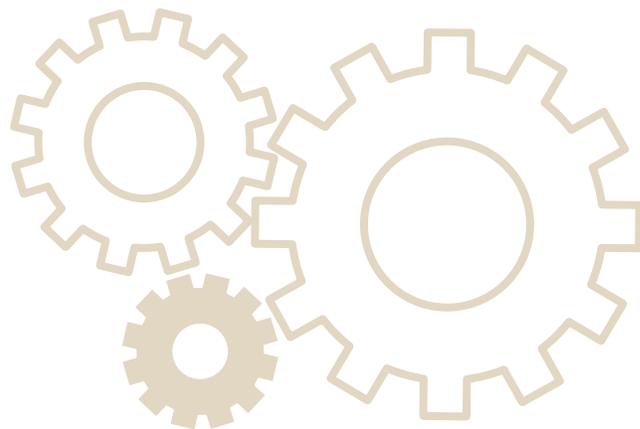
# Chapter 9: IMPLEMENTATION





The Comprehensive Plan is intended to be used as the guide for future development decisions. Its real value, however, will be measured in the results it produces. To accomplish the goals, objectives, and policies of the plan, specific implementation measures should be taken to ensure that the Village of Summit's actions meet the desires of the Comprehensive Plan.

The Comprehensive Plan, as set forth on the preceding pages, has little or no value unless it is implemented. Therefore, the success of the plan will depend to a large extent on proper administrative action to carry out its proposals and recommendations — especially enforcement of the various regulating ordinances. It will be effective and useful only if active steps are taken to carry out its proposals and recommendations so they can be used by the citizens of Summit in making everyday decisions. Every community is developed as the result of countless individual decisions to buy or sell land; to subdivide land; to build homes and businesses. Each day, decisions are made that will affect the future of the Summit. They are made by landowners, lawyers, realtors, public officials, and citizens. Whether these individual actions will add up to a well-developed, attractive, and economically sound community will depend on how well they are coordinated with the Village's vision of its future.





## Comprehensive Plan Adoption Procedures

The Village Board should formally adopt the Comprehensive Plan by adopting a resolution by a majority vote of the Board. The vote should be recorded in the official minutes and the resolution should refer to maps and other descriptive materials that relate to one or more elements of the plan. Upon adoption by the Board, the adopted Comprehensive Plan should be filed with the Summit Village Clerk and should be accessible from the Village website as well as the Summit Public Library. The Village should establish a Community Development Department, as recommended in this plan, which should be the official repository for the plan and all accompanying maps and data.

## Comprehensive Plan Implementation

Upon formal adoption of the Comprehensive Plan by the Village Board, the Village should undertake a review of its regulatory tools (zoning ordinance, subdivision regulations, etc.) for compatibility and consistency with the various goals, objectives and policies of the adopted Comprehensive Plan and identify any sections of the documents that may need updating to accomplish this. In addition, the Village Board should prioritize the development of a Capital Improvement Plan and organize the annual activities of the Community Development Department around the recommendations of this Comprehensive Plan.





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