

CMAP



City of Berwyn Comprehensive Plan

Adopted:
August 2012



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Partner Organizations

Active Transportation Alliance

Chicago Jobs Council

Metra

Pace

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

See www.cmap.illinois.gov for more information.

City of Berwyn Comprehensive Plan



Chicago Metropolitan
Agency for Planning

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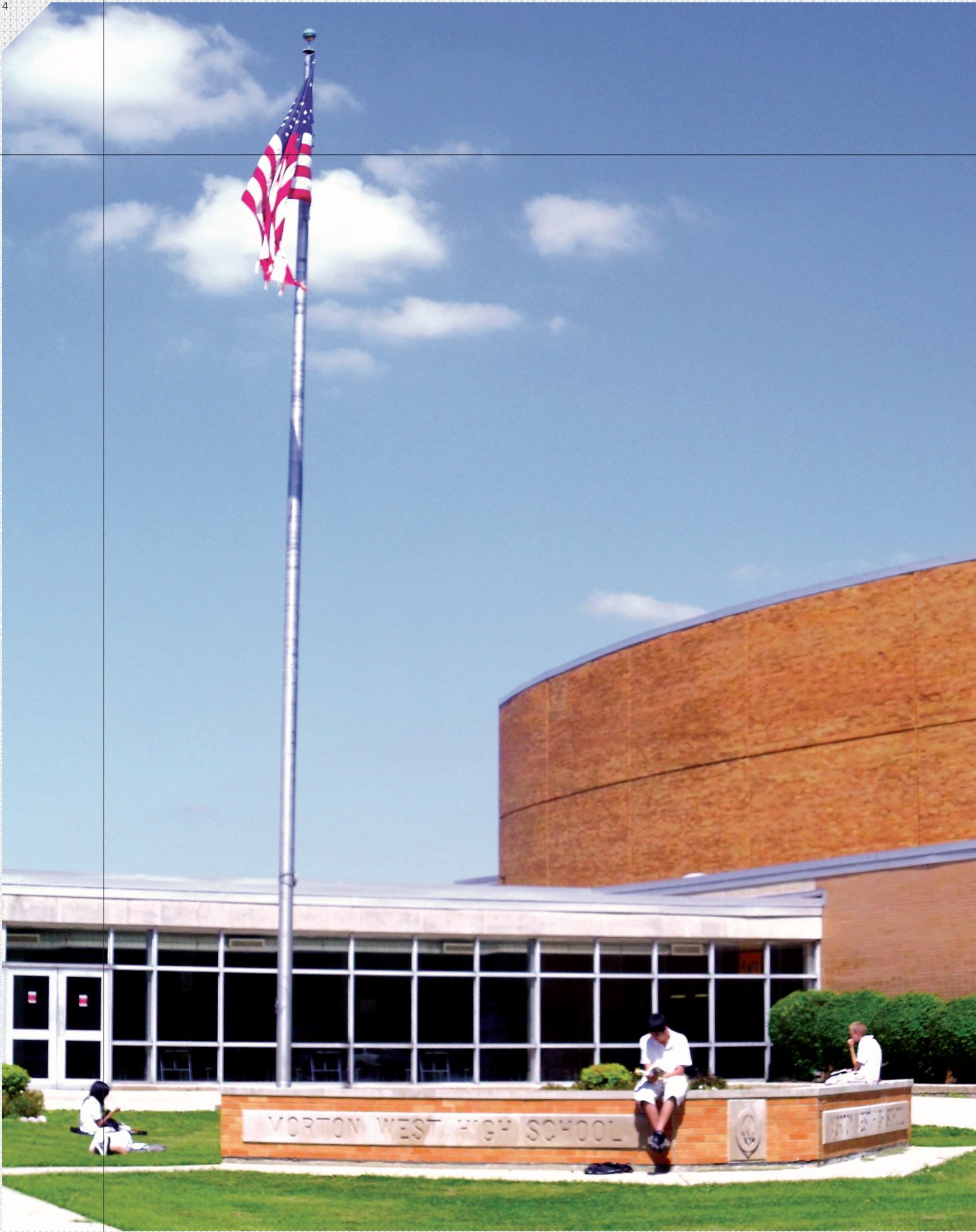


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Chapter 1:

Introduction

What is a comprehensive plan?

A comprehensive plan outlines the vision of what a community desires to become, as well as the process that will allow it to realize that vision. In addition to providing a well-defined framework for the community's development and investment goals, the City of Berwyn's Comprehensive Plan seeks to explore and promote new opportunities and changing community trends.

Typically a comprehensive plan is written to provide guidance for a community to work towards its vision over the next 10-20 years. Although the plan should be viewed as a long-term document, it should also be thought of as a plan to be used daily by the community to assist in land use and development decisions. The Plan serves as a guide for elected officials, municipal staff, community residents, business owners, and potential investors, allowing them to make informed administrative and implementation choices in community development decisions affecting land use, transportation, infrastructure, and capital improvements throughout the City.

A comprehensive plan should also be considered flexible and one that can adapt with change. At any time the municipality 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.

Elements of a Comprehensive Plan

A comprehensive plan is composed of a series of distinct yet interrelated elements defined within the Illinois Local Planning Assistance Act (Public Act 92-0768). The key elements addressed in the Berwyn Comprehensive Plan are based upon those outlined in the State Statute and include land use, economic development, housing, natural resources, transportation, community facilities, image and identity, and implementation strategies.

Under the Illinois Municipal Code (65 ILCS) 5/11-12-5(1)), a municipal plan commission is responsible for preparing and recommending a "comprehensive plan for the present and future development or redevelopment of the municipality."

Why does Berwyn Need a Comprehensive Plan?

The City of Berwyn adopted a Comprehensive Plan and Economic Development Strategy in 1993 that no longer addresses current challenges faced by the City. Similar to many communities in the region, Berwyn faces changing needs with a recent trend of shifting demographics. The retail districts and transit infrastructure are capable of attracting new revenue and residents to Berwyn, but will require several structural and aesthetic improvements. Having an up-to-date Comprehensive Plan in place provides a context in which decisions affecting the future of Berwyn can be made with some certainty that today's choices — whether large or small — contribute to achieving the long-term goals and vision of the entire community.

Building Upon Previous and Ongoing Initiatives

While the existing Comprehensive Plan is nearly 20 years old, supplementary planning studies have been undertaken in more recent years. These include:

City of Berwyn Preservation Plan (1999)

http://www.berwynpreservation.org/uploads/6/4/7/5/6475045/berwyn_preservation_plan.pdf

City of Berwyn Tax Increment Financing Districts Design Guidelines (Various Dates)

A Plan for Redevelopment of Roosevelt Road and Form-Based Code (2003, 2009)

http://www.rooseveltroad.com/documents/Roosevelt_Road_Plan_Adopted_03.21.05.pdf

Tax Increment Financing Districts Program (Various Dates)

<http://www.berwyn.net/business-assistance/tif-programs>

Berwyn Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Study (2008)

http://www.berwyn.net/images/documents/berwyn_tod_web.pdf

Cermak Road Architectural and Historical Survey (2010)

http://www.berwynpreservation.org/uploads/6/4/7/5/6475045/cermak_road_historic_resources_survey_final_report_version.pdf

Berwyn Active Transportation Plan (2011)

http://berwyn-il.gov/pdf/Berwyn_Active_Transportation_Plan_111611.pdf

City of Berwyn Complete Street Policy (2011)

<http://www.completestreets.org/webdocs/policy/cs-il-berwyn-ordinance.pdf>

Berwyn Homes for a Changing Region (2012)

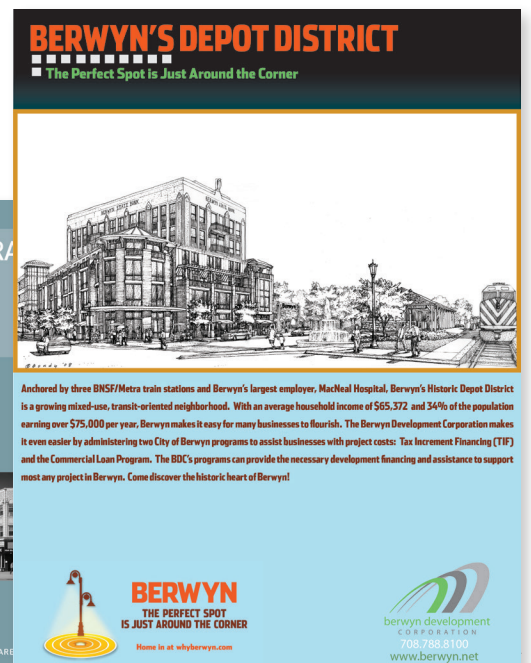
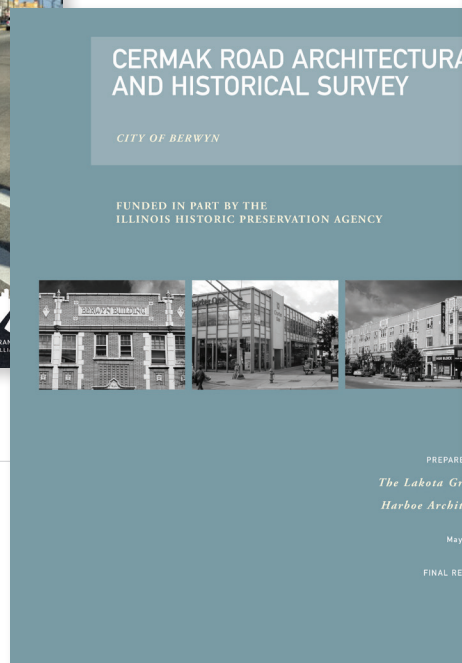
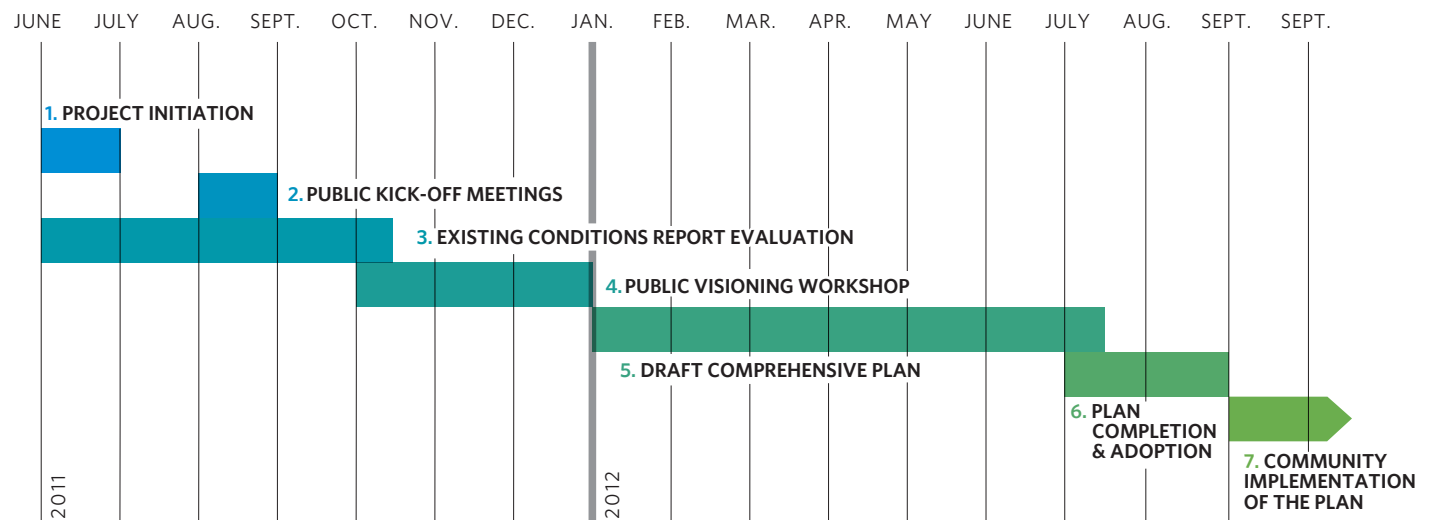
http://www.metroplanning.org/uploads/cms/documents/homes_phase3_year4_west.pdf

Berwyn Park District Strategic Plan (2012)

<http://www.berwynparks.org/downloads/BPDpln.pdf>

The new Comprehensive Plan will build upon these initiatives, bringing them together to help shape a more cohesive, community wide plan.

Berwyn planning process and timeline





Chapter 2:

A Vision for Berwyn

Vision Statement

Twenty years from today, Berwyn has established itself as a regional economic, social, and cultural destination. The heart of the City, the Depot District, is home to a number of local, regional, and national retailers, as well as high quality residential developments in proximity to the train stations.

Employees working in Chicago's Loop live in condominiums and single-family homes near all three Berwyn train stations, taking advantage of the affordable housing while being within walking distance of several retail, shopping, and recreational amenities. MacNeal Hospital has completed an attractive building and campus expansion project within the Depot District in close collaboration with the City and local businesses. Hospital personnel live in employer-assisted housing units within the District, shopping at local stores within walking distance, adding to the vibrancy of the downtown. Several healthcare related office and retail uses cater to the needs of hospital staff, employees, visitors, and patients.

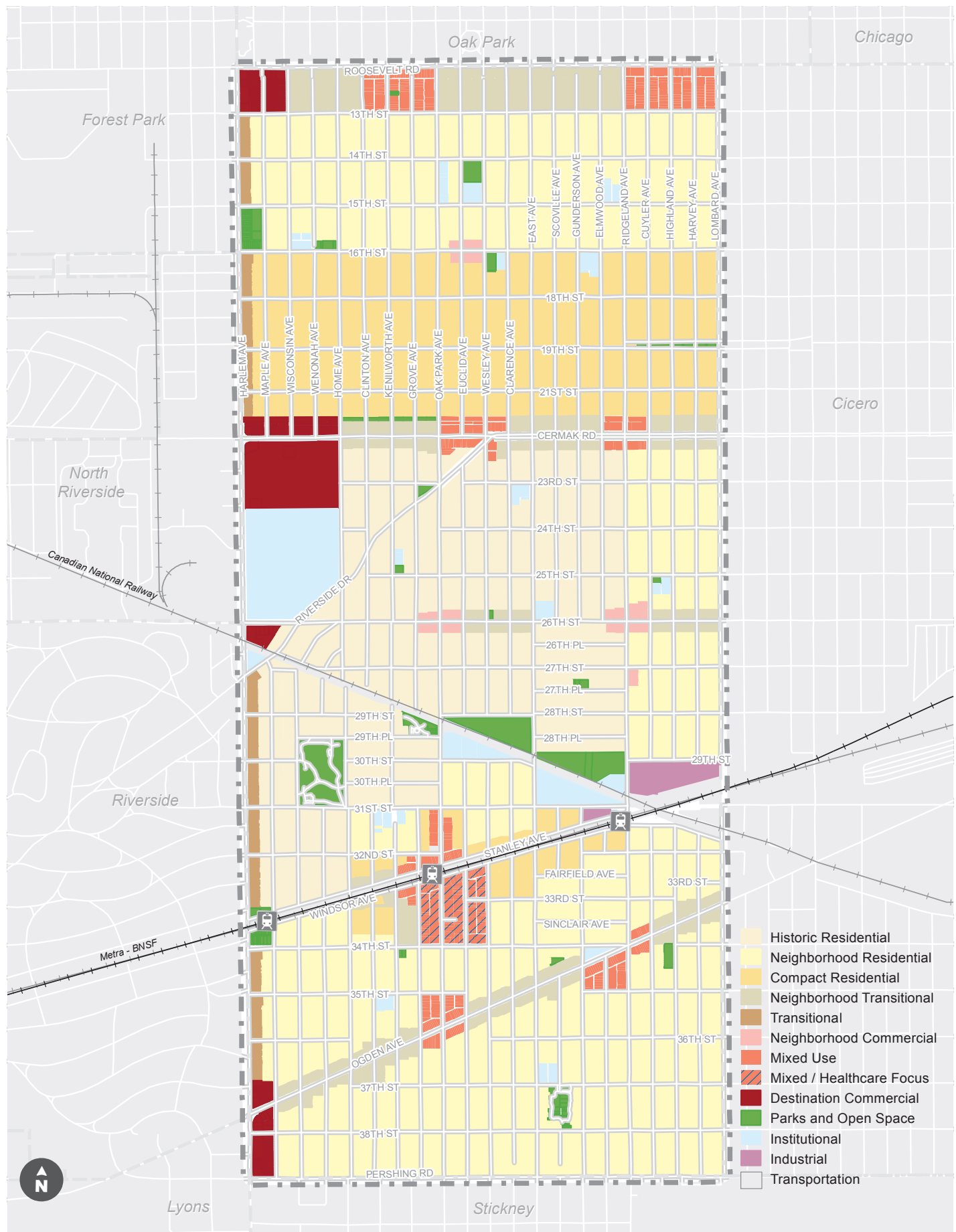
In addition to the Depot District, mixed-use nodes at major roadway intersections have resulted in pedestrian-friendly, safe, and aesthetically appealing corridors served by high-quality transit. Well-defined crosswalks, landscaped medians, and bike lanes implemented as per the Active Transportation Plan have created a safe non-motorized environment connecting residences to neighborhood parks, schools, and retail stores. The pedestrian and transit-friendly city is also the preferred location for retirees looking for transportation choices, housing options, and high-quality services.

The City's historic bungalows are well-maintained and continue to be a regional draw. Several Cermak Road properties are registered on the national and state registry of historic places. A number of historic buildings along Cermak Road have been restored to their original condition, while new buildings complement their scale and character.

Residential neighborhoods are stable, and vacant properties have been successfully redeveloped in a context-sensitive manner, retaining the architecture and housing mix that endeared them to earlier residents and visitors. While the community is growing in population, the neighborhoods are distinctly pedestrian-scale and immensely pedestrian-friendly. The supply and location of parks in the City place a park less than a five-minute walk away from nearly every resident. The Berwyn Park District, North Berwyn Park District, and City Recreation Department have successfully increased the amount of open space in the community, as well as improved accessibility for residents to regional open areas as outlined in the Berwyn Park District Strategic Plan.

A number of events are held throughout the year to celebrate the City's diversity and attract visitors from all over the country. Public art, combined with arts and culture events, continue to draw in a variety of artists and art forms, making Berwyn a regional draw.

Figure 1. Future land use map



Land Use and Development Goals and Objectives

The City of Berwyn will achieve a high quality of life for residents, business owners, and visitors through a diversity of land uses and balance between the built and unbuilt environment.

Specific land use objectives are described later in this chapter within different themes. The future land use map shows the recommended pattern of land use in the City. The following definitions describe each land use category proposed in the future land use map.

- **Historic Residential (HR)**

The City's stock of historic bungalows is both a defining symbol and a tremendous asset. The HR designation reflects the importance of the historic single-family housing stock in the area south of Cermak Avenue and north of the Depot District through the preservation and protection of the neighborhood's predominantly single-family character. Redevelopment and rehabilitation within this district will result in residential buildings that respect and complement the scale and architecture of the historic bungalows.
- **Neighborhood Residential (NR)**

While the neighborhoods south of Ogden Avenue and north of 16th Street contain both single-family and multi-family housing, the essential character of these areas will remain single-family, with select opportunities for multi-family development.
- **Compact Residential (CR)**

It is important that the City maintain its diverse housing stock and support revitalization efforts in its commercial corridors by expanding opportunities for multi-family development. The CR designation provides for both single-family and multi-family development with the intent of supporting the market-driven transition of current single-family neighborhoods to multi-family neighborhoods, as identified within the Homes for a Changing Region report. The areas identified for this classification include the area bounded by Cermak Road, Harlem Avenue, 16th Street, and Lombard Avenue, the neighborhoods north of Ogden Avenue, and the area surrounding the Depot District. Multi-family residential development can provide a level of density surrounding commercial and mixed use corridors such as Ogden Avenue, the Depot District, and Cermak Road, which is important to the success of these corridors.
- **Mixed-Use Healthcare District (MUHD)**

Within the City's Depot District, the MUHD caters to a number of healthcare related institutional and commercial spaces within mixed-use buildings. This will enable the MUHD to accommodate the needs of Berwyn's growing healthcare providers while maintaining a vibrant and pedestrian-friendly Depot District.
- **Mixed Use (MU)**

Incorporating the recommendations in the TOD study for the Depot District, Homes for a Changing Region report, and Form Based Code for Roosevelt Road and the importance of nodes at key intersections (e.g. Cermak Road and Ridgeland Avenue, Ogden Avenue and Ridgeland Avenue, Cermak Road and Oak Park Avenue, Ogden Avenue and Oak Park Avenue), this designation reflects traditional urban design. These areas will have a significant density of residents, employees and visitors through the construction and preservation of mixed-use buildings that are not auto-oriented.
- **Destination Commercial (DC)**

This designation encompasses the large-scale retail developments along Harlem Avenue. The separate designation mirrors the regional nature of these retail uses along with the associated parking, access, and setback requirements.
- **Neighborhood Commercial (NC)**

While not at the same scale or density found in the MU districts, a successful nodes/transition strategy for corridors such as 16th Street and 26th Street requires that the NC areas provide exclusively for retail uses that serve residents in the immediate neighborhood in a form that is context-sensitive.
- **Transitional (T)**

This designation reflects and maintains the current mix of smaller-scale auto-oriented commercial and residential developments along Harlem Avenue.
- **Neighborhood Transitional (NT)**

Consistent with a nodes strategy, the NT designation abuts MU and NC areas with the intention of allowing a mix of uses, including retail, services, office, and residences. Such flexibility allows retail and office uses to congregate in the nodes while maintaining attractive and supportive residential uses within walking distance.



- **Industrial (I)**

This designation maintains the City's current industrial areas along the railroad lines near the eastern border.

- **Institutional (IN)**

The future land use map identifies major institutions within the community. Smaller institutions including elementary/middle schools, religious institutions, and municipal buildings are permitted throughout the City and are therefore not individually identified.

- **Parks and Open Space (O)**

An evolution of the City's current P-Public zone, this designation encompasses local parks and recreation facilities. New open spaces are proposed between 15th and 16th Street, along Harlem Avenue, within the Depot District, and north of the LaVergne Metra station.

The purpose of creating these unique classifications is to allow the City to achieve the following land use and development goals and objectives:

- Concentrate pedestrian-friendly mixed-use development to major nodes and transition in between parcels to complementary uses.
- Preserve the character of established and historic neighborhoods while exploring opportunities for higher-density redevelopment in areas adjacent to the Depot District and major mixed-use nodes.
- Build new parks at limited locations while focusing on improvements to existing park infrastructure and connections to regional open spaces.
- Define a healthcare focused sub-area within the Depot District to be developed in close collaboration with MacNeal Hospital and to include uses that complement medical service providers and medical professionals.

Image and Identity Goals and Objectives

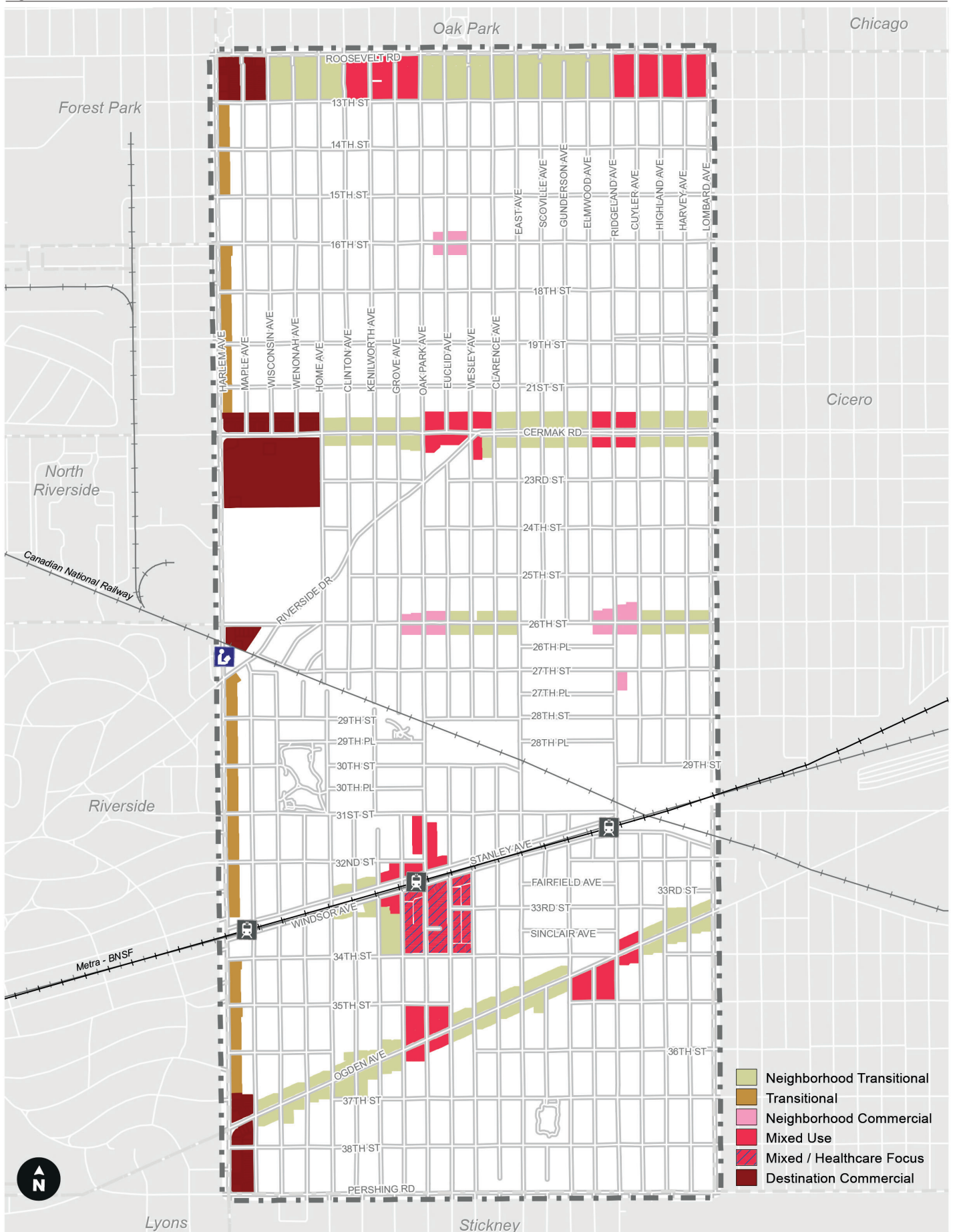
The City of Berwyn will highlight unique assets of the City and restore the community's historic sense of place.

To accomplish this, the City and its partners will:

- Install signage and wayfinding programs that identify and direct visitors to key destinations within the community. Install gateway signs at entranceways into the community at key roadway, railway, and non-motorized entrances into the City.
- Support preservation of historic commercial properties along Cermak Road, historic residential properties (e.g. Chicago-style bungalows, Victorian homes), and character or residential neighborhoods that make Berwyn a unique community.
- Continue regional marketing programs to promote the City's unique assets such as the historic architecture, affordable housing stock, thriving business climate, strategic location, and diversity of residents.
- Support the growth of arts and culture in the community by encouraging local artists, attracting artists from around the nation, and displaying art in public places throughout the community.



Figure 2. Future commercial areas



Economic Development Goals and Objectives

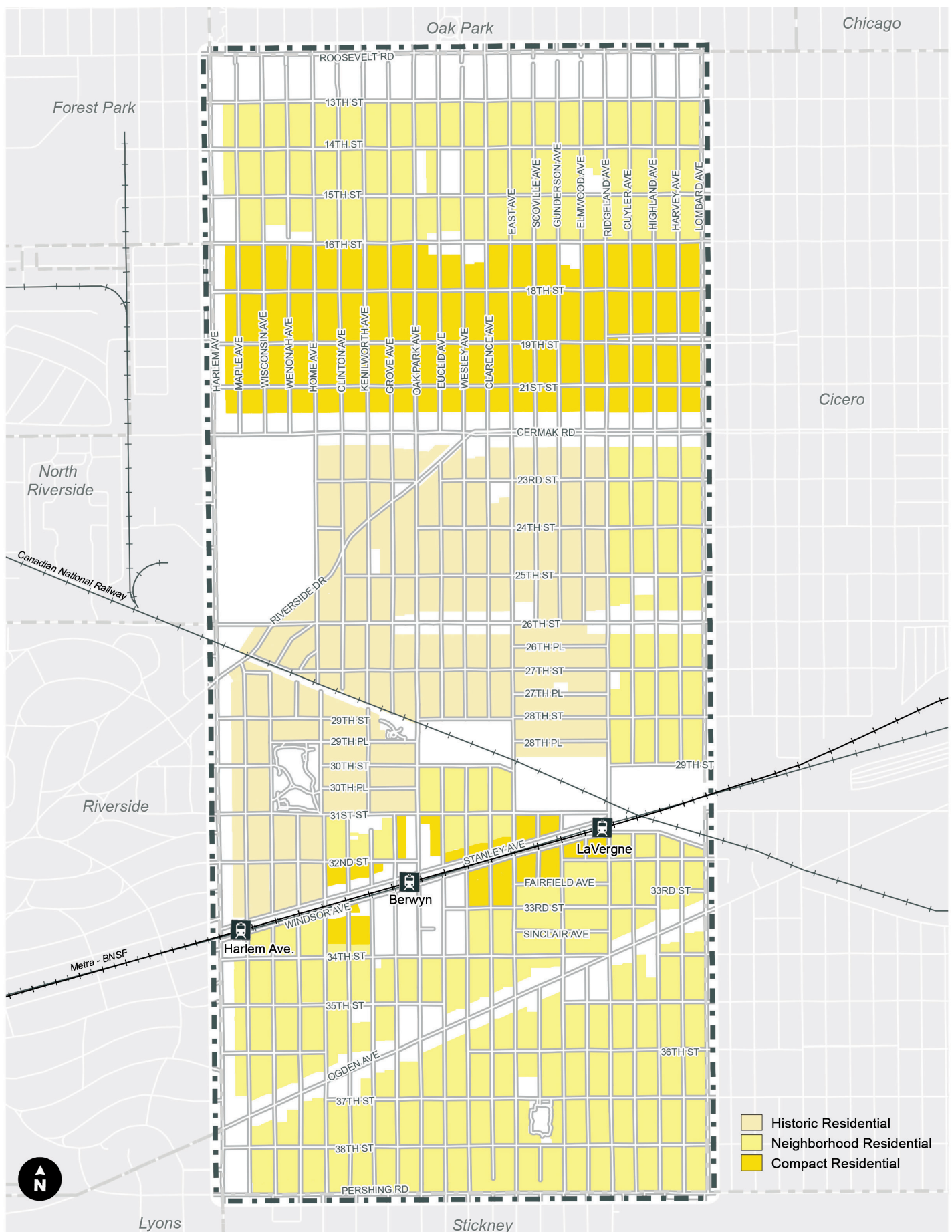
The City of Berwyn will continue to work towards creating a vibrant and sustainable business environment that enables it to become one of the region's leading economies.

To accomplish this, the City and its partners will:

- Continue to foster a positive environment for retail, service, and entertainment businesses at key locations in the City. Consolidate commercial developments at major nodes in order to create high-density development nodes with a mix of pedestrian-friendly retail, residential, and institutional uses.
- Promote high density, mixed-use, and walkable TOD within the Berwyn Metra station area. Designate a sub-area within the Depot District for healthcare related uses to support the success and growth of healthcare facilities.
- Maintain a diversity of retail and housing options in order to attract a broad spectrum of investors and new residents. Additional opportunities for mid-format and large format development should be supported, wherever possible.
- Support expansion of medical facilities within the community in order to attract employees, utilize vacant parcels, and support local business growth.
- Focus on workforce development opportunities that will allow local labor force to be employed by local businesses, as well as attract new businesses to locate within the community.
- Make Berwyn a center for arts and culture, both in terms of promoting local artists and attracting new artists to the City, and beautification of the community using public art. Economic benefits would include increased tourism activity, retail sales of art, and demand for housing for artists and young families attracted to the City's arts culture.



Figure 3. Future housing map



Housing Goals and Objectives

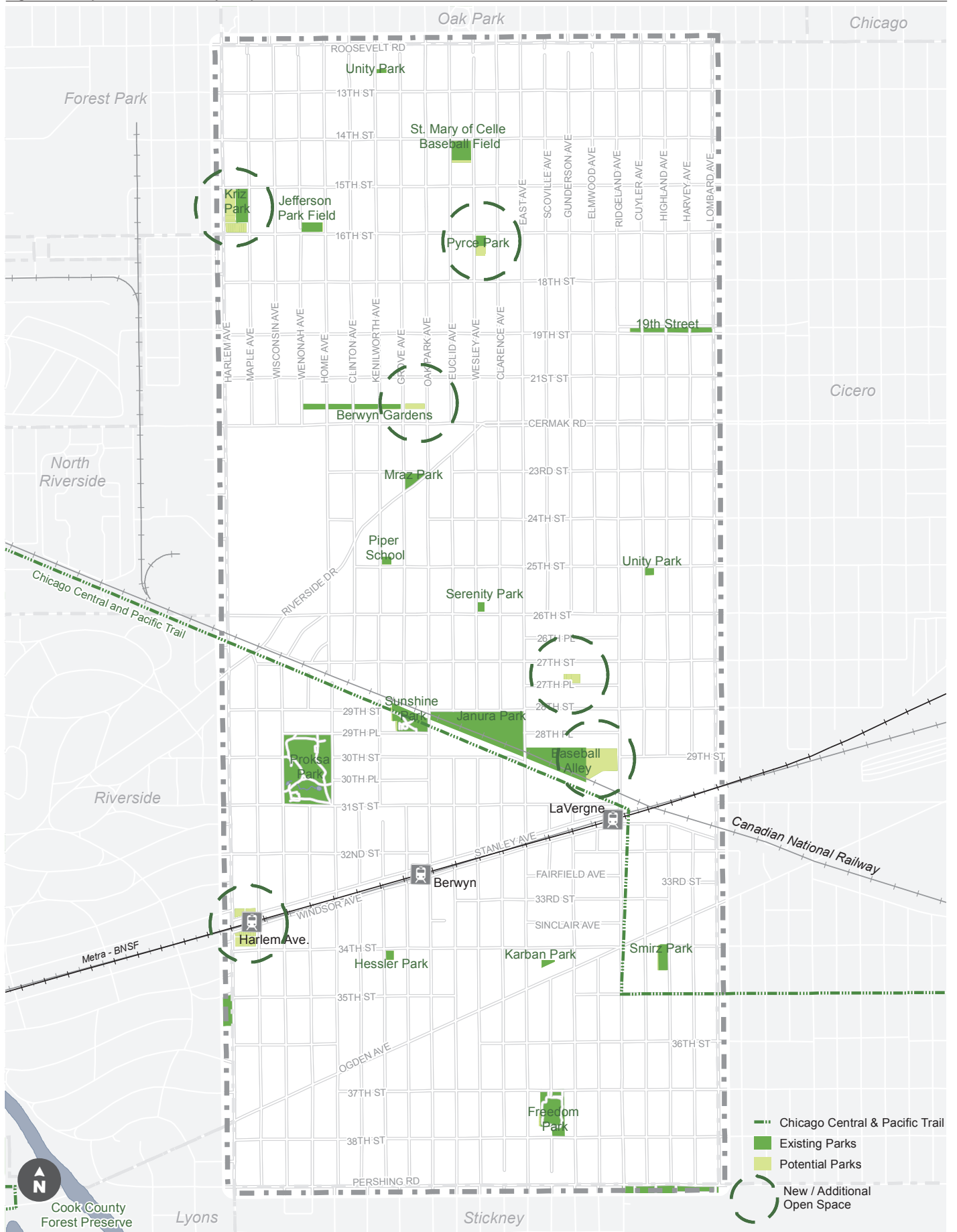
The City of Berwyn will balance housing needs by preserving its unique housing mix and neighborhood diversity while seeking opportunities for new housing that complement the established character and meet future market demands.

To accomplish this, the City and its partners will:

- Retain housing mix in terms of typologies and price points. Maintain the City's historic single-family housing stock through proactive housing preservation programs. Rehabilitate existing multi-family units that are in need of improved maintenance, or external façade or internal infrastructure improvements.
- Seek opportunities for well-designed, higher density development in areas around major transit nodes and commercial corridors with the goal of creating compact, walkable neighborhoods.
- Broaden the range of housing types to include senior housing and employer-assisted housing at strategic locations that are within easy access of transit, community services, and retailers.
- Identify comprehensive strategies and partnerships that would help in stemming residential foreclosures and mitigate the impact of vacancies on the overall neighborhood character.



Figure 4. Proposed additional open spaces



Natural Environment, Open Space, and Recreation Goals and Objectives

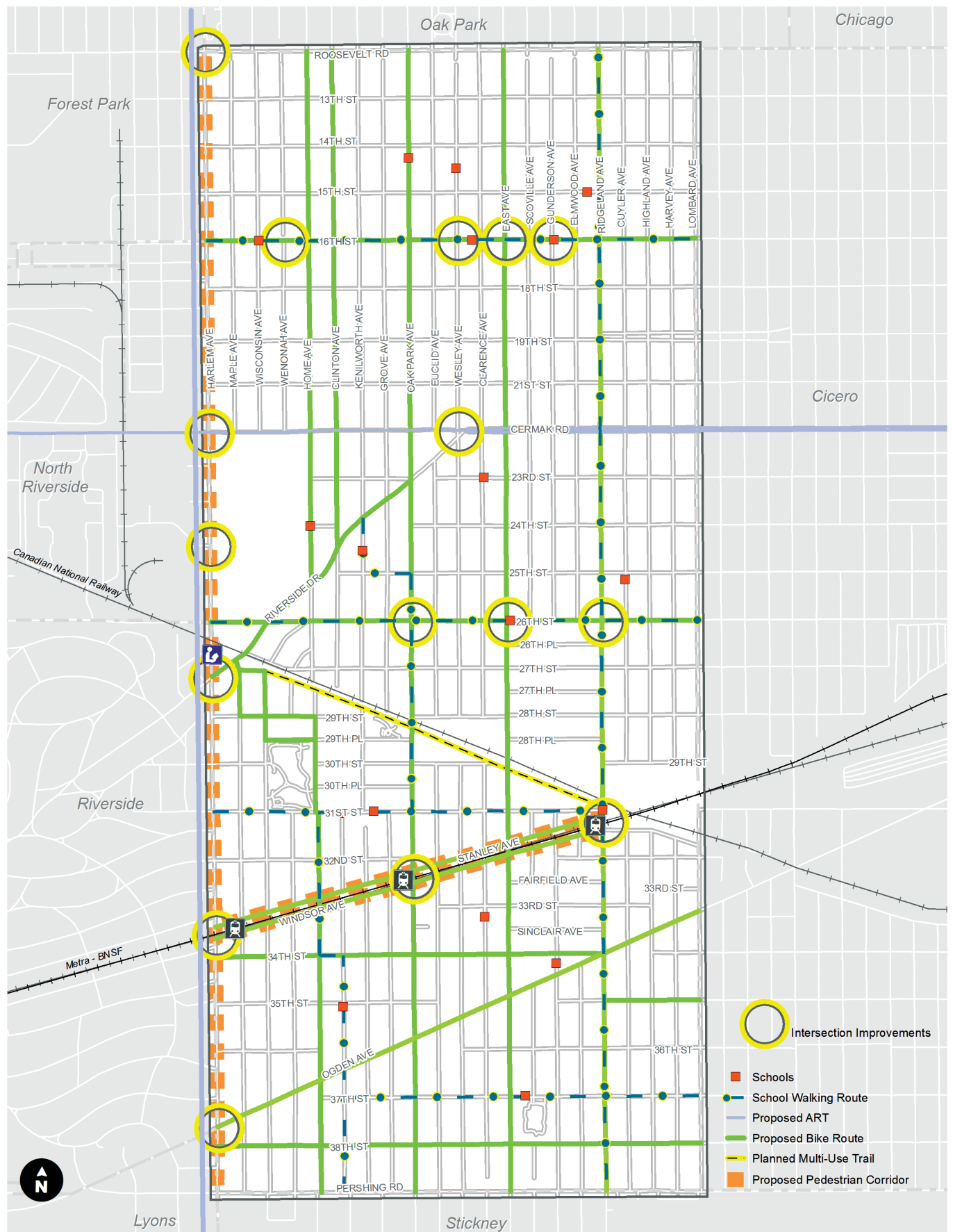
The City of Berwyn will strive to improve the community's health by developing neighborhood parks in underserved areas and enhancing access to regional open spaces and recreational amenities using bike and pedestrian connections.

To accomplish this, the City and its partners will:

- Create non-motorized transportation connections in the form of bike lanes, bike trails, pedestrian sidewalks, and pedestrian trails that connect Berwyn residents to region-wide amenities including those in North Riverside, Riverside, Stickney, and Oak Park.
- Continue to promote community gardening and local food production in vacant parcels as well as open spaces maintained by the North Berwyn Park District, Berwyn Park District, and Berwyn Recreation Department.
- Create additional parks and recreation facilities throughout the City. Locations include the Depot District and parcels along Harlem Avenue north of Cermak Road.
- Protect the natural environment and City's infrastructure by incorporating best management practices aimed at reducing stormwater runoff, flooding, and environmental impacts of new developments within the community. Within existing developments, create incentives for property owners to retrofit using best management practices at the site or building level.



Figure 5. Transportation improvements map



Transportation Goals and Objectives

The City of Berwyn will provide each resident, business, and visitor with a viable option to choose among multiple modes of transportation that enable them to navigate the community and connect to regional transportation systems.

To accomplish this, the City and its partners will:

- Pursue a high-quality multi-modal transportation system throughout the community. Implement Complete Streets Policy and the Active Transportation Plan that improve community health and provide sustainable alternatives to vehicular circulation.
- Promote regional bike trail connections that connect Berwyn to neighboring communities, allow residents to access amenities outside its boundaries, and attract visitors from throughout the region.
- Support transit through continual coordination with Metra and Pace. Provide new bus shelters and rider amenities such as bike parking, route maps, and informational signage at Pace bus stops along Roosevelt Road, Cermak Road, Harlem Avenue, Oak Park Avenue, Ridgeland Avenue, Stanley Avenue, and 26th Street. Support transit projects such as the arterial rapid transit (ART) initiative along Cermak Road and Harlem Avenue.
- Continue to enhance local connectivity by creating safer pedestrian and bike links between residential neighborhoods and commercial, institutional, and recreational amenities.



Photo by David Wilson. <http://www.flickr.com/photos/davidwilson1949/5918796068/>.



1) Issues or Concerns

- Vacancies/Foreclosures
- Crime
- High School - education
- Elementary Schools
- Increase in taxes
- Mental - Division
- Park Districts
- School Districts
- North Branch

North Branch is a young
Car dealerships are under attack
Businesses are starting to go bankrupt
Consume - Better than the city
1. School System - HS / education
Leaves young families - School Board's
HS curriculum issues / safety in HS
Crime - Senior
North Branch is a young
English & Spanish - bilingual
City services is it enough?
Do (something) they feel engaged

Latino/Hispanic - Migration
Services - young with
Engagement - how can we engage them
No - Senior
Parental F
Menstrual
Breastfeeding
Social

City of Berwyn
Sustainability
Working/Walkability
Partnerships - more active with
the Schools
Governance - presence in the surrounding
areas - More active in Berwyn
No More
After

Chapter 3:

Plan Recommendations and Implementation Strategies

Organization of Recommendations and Implementation Strategies

This chapter of the Plan presents the recommended strategies for achieving the vision for the City of Berwyn.

The recommendations are categorized into four themes:

Theme #1: Redevelopment

Theme #2: Community Health

Theme #3: Neighborhood Preservation and Enhancement

Theme #4: Image and Identity

Each of the themes include the following information:

- Overview of the theme.
- A summary of the existing conditions and characteristics of the City with respect to that particular theme.
- Policies that would help achieve the goal of the theme.
- Proposed strategies for implementing the policies and achieving the City’s goals.
- Prioritization of strategies for implementation in the first two years. The prioritization of strategies is meant for the use of City of Berwyn and BDC officials to clearly identify roles, assign responsibilities, designate resources, and check the progress in completing tasks.

This matrix below is meant to demonstrate how the themes contained in this chapter relate to the goals and objectives laid out in Chapter 2, which correspond to recommendation sections typically contained in comprehensive plans. As this shows, although the structure of the Berwyn Comprehensive Plan is unusual, it does address the topics that are traditionally found in comprehensive plans.

Topics covered by plan themes

	LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT	ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	HOUSING	NATURAL ENVIRONMENT, OPEN SPACE, AND RECREATION	TRANSPORTATION	IMAGE AND IDENTITY
Theme #1: Redevelopment	X	X				X
Theme #2: Community Health	X			X	X	
Theme #3: Neighborhood Preservation and Enhancement	X		X			X
Theme #4: Image and Identity		X				X

Theme #1: Redevelopment

Overview

As a built out community, the City of Berwyn should focus its redevelopment efforts on existing underutilized and vacant parcels to accommodate community needs. The GO TO 2040 regional comprehensive plan supports re-investment within existing municipalities in order to allow for compact and walkable developments. Infill sites, like those in Berwyn, require minimal infrastructure investments, create limited strain on municipal services, and have much lower environmental footprint compared to greenfield sites, making their redevelopment economically and environmentally beneficial for municipalities.

In addition, consolidation of parcels should be encouraged to allow for a variety of parcel sizes, creating more development options. Commercial parcel consolidation will allow for construction of larger stores, improved vehicular and pedestrian access, and increased visibility.

Redevelopment and parcel consolidation is applicable primarily to commercial and mixed-use redevelopment. A combination of finite administrative and funding resources make it imperative that the City prioritize near-term redevelopment in certain focus areas. Dedicated efforts in these focus areas will ensure success in the near term while setting the platform for longer-term redevelopment initiatives in other parts of the community.

Commercial redevelopment and parcel consolidation should be focused on the following areas:

- Berwyn Station Area, including the Depot District.
- Commercial Nodes along Ogden Avenue, Cermak Road, and Roosevelt Road.
- Neighborhood Commercial areas along 26th Street.

Certain strategies identified in this theme are applicable to redevelopment efforts in residential, institutional, and open space areas as well.

Summary of Existing Conditions

Key findings from the existing conditions analysis that informed recommendations proposed for this theme are summarized in this section.

The City of Berwyn has a considerable amount of retail uses lined along the major thoroughfares running through the community or along its municipal boundaries. These include Harlem Avenue, Roosevelt Road, Cermak Road, 26th Street, and Ogden Avenue. Each of these corridors is distinct in terms of retail mix, architectural character, and right-of-way widths. In total, 60 percent of the City's commercial real estate space is devoted to retail uses, compared with an average of 25 percent for the Chicago region.

Despite this large percentage, Berwyn generates substantially less in retail sales on a per capita basis than the regional average. This may be in part due to land use factors. The community is built out and landlocked, restricting opportunities to attract new development or expand existing developments. The commercial corridors are unable to accommodate large national and regional chain stores.

In addition, existing businesses looking to increase their footprint have to build vertically due to the small parcel sizes. Retail vacancies have increased in the past few years and are higher than county or regional averages. Recently however (2010-12), the City has successfully redeveloped some of the larger vacant parcels including the former Circuit City parcel, Dodge and Ford car dealership parcels, and Service Merchandise parcel. This has resulted in a decrease in the retail vacancy rates, although they still remain higher than the County and region. It should also be noted that one large vacant parcel can significantly increase vacancy rates due to the fact that a majority of retail parcels in the community are small, e.g. the vacant Service Merchandise store is equivalent to 20 occupied Berwyn storefronts.

Vacant parcels and buildings create economic challenges but at the same time present excellent opportunities for redevelopment or consolidation. The parcels available range in size from just over an acre to less than 5,000 square feet, with potential for infill development, TOD, neighborhood parks, and retail expansion.

Figure 6. Existing commercial areas map

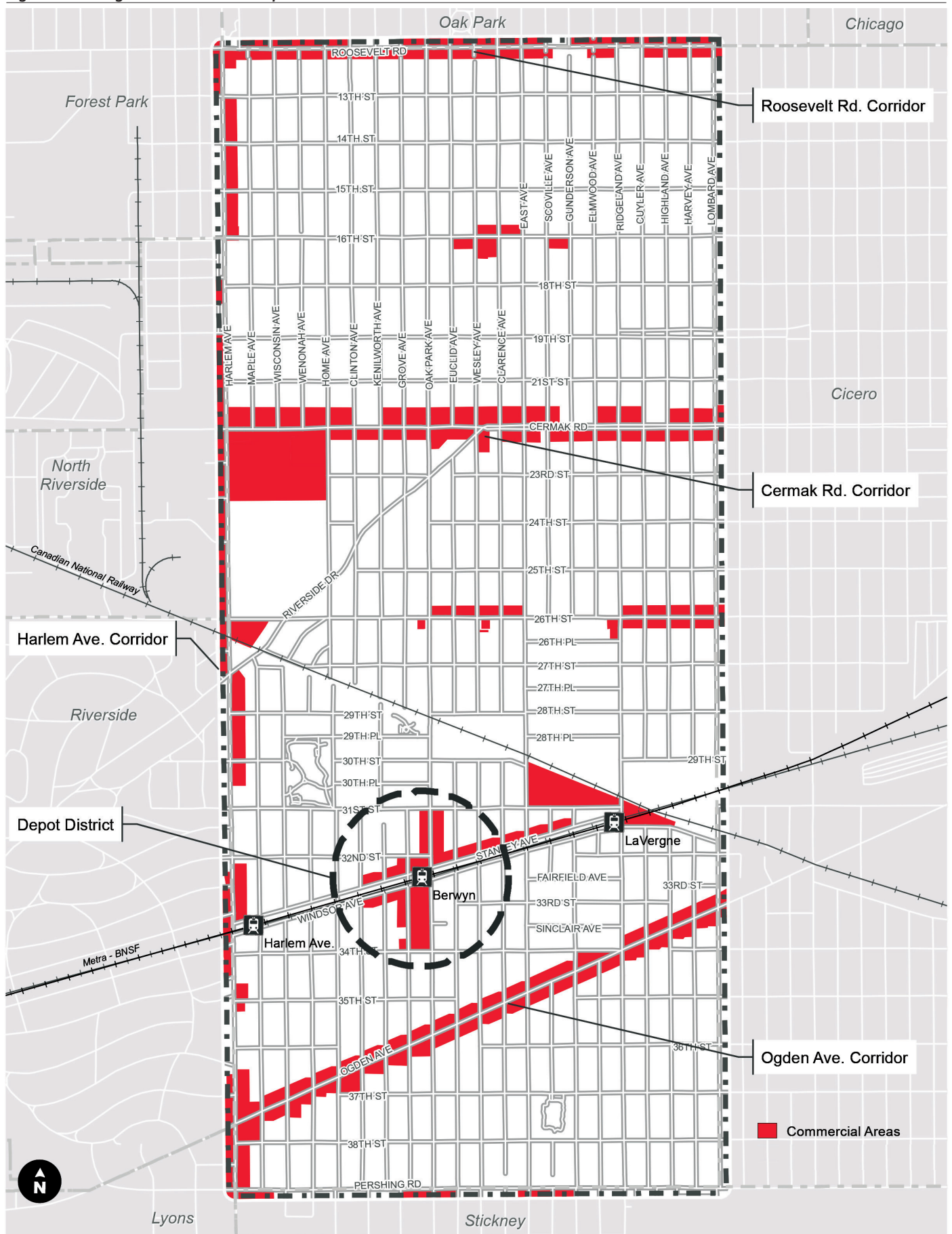


Table 1: General merchandise retail sales, 2010

AREA	RETAIL SALES	PER CAPITA
Berwyn	\$189,305,026	\$3,341
Cook County	\$43,862,512,484	\$8,444
Chicago Region	\$79,788,703,832	\$9,463

Source: Illinois Department of Revenue.

Berwyn's traditional downtown, known as the Depot District, contains a variety of higher density mixed use and institutional buildings. The District is built around the Berwyn Metra Station and has had some success in creating a pedestrian friendly environment using streetscape improvements and architectural design. However, commercial and residential occupancies are relatively low in this area.

Table 3: Top 5 Berwyn employment by NAICS sector, 2010

BERWYN WORKERS, 2010, NAICS SECTOR	COUNT	PERCENT
Health Care and Social Assistance	4,244	50.0%
Accommodation and Food Services	1,241	14.6%
Retail Trade	965	11.4%
Other Services (excl. Public Administration)	382	4.5%
Manufacturing	319	3.8%

Source: Illinois Department of Revenue.

Table 2: Commercial real estate square footage and vacancy by type, second quarter 2012

	BERWYN		SUBMARKET CLUSTER*		CHICAGO REGION**	
	TOTAL RBA	VACANCY RATE	TOTAL RBA	VACANCY RATE	TOTAL RBA	VACANCY RATE
Retail	1,583,051	10.8%	16,999,756	7.5%	504,744,382	8.4%
Industrial	296,677	4.0%	62,526,633	9.6%	1,113,851,224	10.2%
Office	328,617	2.0%	5,119,452	16.3%	457,462,725	14.6%

* The submarket includes Oak Park, Maywood, Bellwood, Melrose Park, Berwyn, Cicero, Riverside, and Lyons, as well as other communities.

** CoStar's Chicago region includes portions of northwest Indiana and southwest Wisconsin.

Source: CMAP Analysis of CoStar data.



Policy Statements

The following policy statements serve as guiding tenets for this theme. Each policy statement is addressed by at least one strategy below:

- 1 Convert existing vacant and underutilized commercial properties into high-quality developments that cater to the needs of residents and visitors. Seek opportunities to consolidate underutilized and vacant parcels that would allow the City to attract a greater diversity of mid and large-size retailers.
- 2 Concentrate commercial uses along major intersections to create pedestrian and transit-friendly development nodes at major street intersections that contain a variety of retail and residential typologies within easy access of adjacent residential neighborhoods.
- 3 Evaluate the costs and benefits for targeted public investment in order to encourage infill development in appropriate locations. Wherever possible, create symbiotic public-private partnerships for implementation and build support among community members.
- 4 Continue to develop the Depot District as Berwyn's cultural and economic hub in partnership with MacNeal Hospital and existing stakeholders within the District.
- 5 Provide tools that would allow elected and appointed officials to accurately and effectively evaluate individual redevelopment projects and ensure that each project has a positive impact on the community.

Recommended Strategies

The following strategies represent action steps to accomplish the policy statements identified for redevelopment and parcel consolidation. Strategies are organized into two categories; actions to be undertaken by City departments to support and promote redevelopment; and alignment of regulations and policies to help guide elected officials realize the intended redevelopment goal.



Promotion of Redevelopment

Create and maintain vacant parcels and structures inventory.

In order to effectively market available sites, as well as identify sites that could be consolidated for redevelopment, the BDC should create an inventory of vacant parcels by size. The City should obtain records of vacant parcels through the Cook County tax assessor's office. This information should be field verified and mapped by the BDC. Parcels could be classified into categories based on location (e.g. Cermak Road properties, Depot District properties, etc.), size (less than one acre, greater than one acre), or other parameters that the BDC may deem appropriate. The resulting database of parcel records will help the City and BDC identify potential sites for redevelopment, as well as market them effectively to potential developers and existing businesses looking to expand their facilities.

Creation of the database should focus at first on the Depot District, building from initial work being conducted by the West Cook County Housing Collaborative (WCCHC), of which Berwyn is a member. While the database may be updated every two years for the City as a whole, information for parcels within the Depot District should be updated as often as possible. This will allow the City and BDC to strategically evaluate how best to redevelop and market vacant parcels and structures.

This activity could be funded by the City or the BDC within either organization's 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.

This short-term strategy supports policies 1 and 2.

Identify priority areas for consolidation and redevelopment.

As discussed previously, an excess of undersized retail spaces along commercial corridors reduces community and economic vibrancy. Spurring redevelopment through parcel consolidation is paramount. The BDC and the City should evaluate the redevelopment and consolidation potential within the City's commercial areas based on a variety of parameters including, but not limited to:

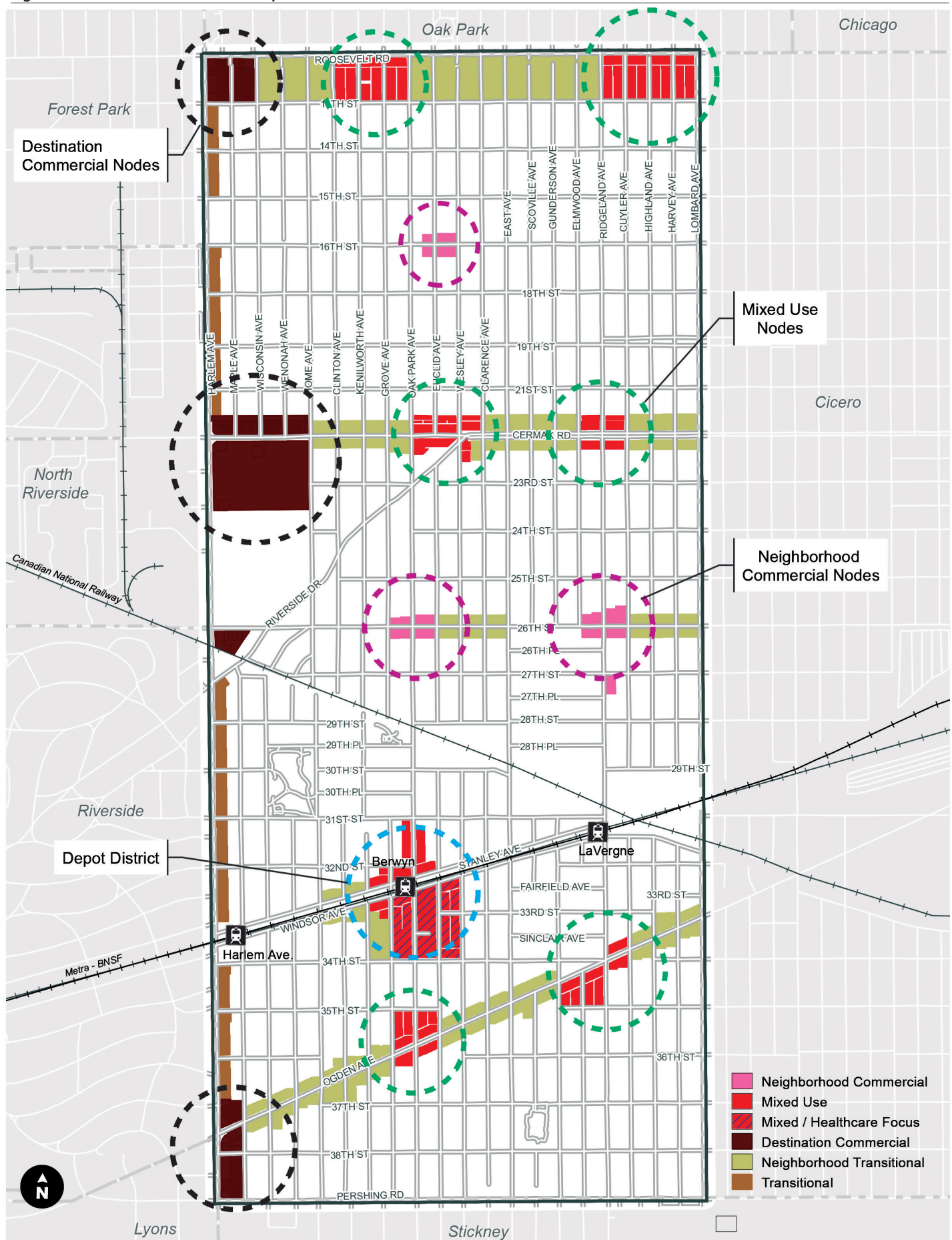
- Size of parcel.
- Location of parcel.
- Land use and condition of adjacent parcels.
- Site remediation costs.
- Parcels under single or multiple ownership.

This analysis will allow the City and BDC to prioritize specific sites within each area for consolidation and redevelopment. Due to the number of possible commercial nodes within the City, initial efforts should focus on completing this analysis for the Depot District.

The significant investments made in the past decade to revitalize the Depot District, including an innovatively funded municipal parking garage, attractive mixed-use buildings, and streetscape improvements, need to be sustained in order to ensure the successful creation of this District as the City's cultural and economic epicenter.

This short-term strategy supports policies 1 and 2.

Figure 7. Commercial consolidation map



Identify public-private partnership/ joint development opportunities.

Joint development is an excellent way for the City of Berwyn to leverage public dollars. The City has entered into public-private partnerships before, most notably with the Depot District for construction of the parking garage.

Land banking

Land banking allows a municipality or local development non-profit to acquire and assemble land suitable for development and hold it until a suitable user is identified. The City or BDC could fulfill this role by acquiring priority redevelopment sites for consolidation with the intent to develop them at a future date to implement the Comprehensive Plan. Funding to purchase and improve properties could be obtained from a variety of sources including general or local bonds, Tax Increment Financing (TIF) funds, Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds, Special Assessments (SA), and Business Improvement Districts (BID). Acquisition of sites for mixed-use or residential development is also possible through the land acquisition fund recently initiated by the WCCHC. The City should also follow regional efforts to create funds to support transit-oriented predevelopment activities, as these could provide future sources for land acquisition.

As recommended within the recently completed TOD study, the City should consider entering into a land swap with owners of the surface parking lot which would allow it to redevelop surface parking south of the Berwyn station building as public plaza while accommodating the “lost” spaces in the City-owned parking structure.

Cooperative Marketing

Redevelopment efforts in Berwyn would receive a significant boost by the partnership of the City, BDC, and major employers to create a collaborative marketing strategy for specific sites. Parcels within the Depot District could be co-marketed by the BDC and MacNeal Hospital as excellent locations for medical-related service providers. Cooperation would enable both stakeholders to reach a broader range of investors and developers than each could individually. Similarly, parcel consolidation is another mutually beneficial strategy on which the City and Hospital should collaborate within the Depot District. The City and BDC could assist hospital officials with promoting their facility plan to the broader community and individual stakeholders within the Depot District in order to build trust and support for redevelopment.

This on-going strategy supports policies 2, 3, and 4.



Coordinate Depot District plan with MacNeal Hospital facility plan.

MacNeal Hospital is in the process of creating a Facility Plan that will help modernize and expand its existing facility along Oak Park Avenue. The Facility Plan will have a significant physical and economic impact on the Depot District, given that MacNeal Hospital is the largest property owner within the District. BDC and City officials should meet with hospital officials and coordinate the following:

- Review the Hospital's Facility Plan and its compatibility with the Depot District Vision.
- Determine the Hospital's future needs in terms of space, parking, and access.
- Discuss the creation of a Healthcare Sub-District within the Depot District that complements the Hospital by providing healthcare supportive office, medical, and retail uses.
- Identify implementation steps that the City and Hospital could partner on, e.g. meeting with property owners and Metra, co-marketing of sites, and workforce development

A public-private partnership will be crucial to the success of the Depot District. A committee comprised of members of area businesses, BDC staff, City staff, and hospital officials should be created and meet regularly to monitor progress and, more importantly, gain community buy-in for the joint venture.

This mid-term strategy supports policies 3 and 4.



Continue to support transit improvements.

Public transit will play a major role in the sustained success of high-density mixed-use developments at key nodes. As identified in Pace's Vision 2020 Plan, and reinforced by more recent studies and plans, Cermak Road and Harlem Avenue have been prioritized as potential Arterial Rapid Transit (ART) corridors. These corridors are a component of a regional 24 arterial corridor network throughout the suburban area of northeastern Illinois.

The ART is an integrated transit system including Transit Signal Priority (TSP) (providing green extensions for transit vehicles at signalized intersections), "queue jump" lanes (roadway geometry used to provide preference to buses at intersections), transit stations, real time transit information, improvements in pedestrian and bicycle access and dedicated vehicles with all components designed around a strong identity and unique image.

The Cermak/22nd Street Corridor operates from the 54th/ Cermak CTA Pink Line station to Danada Square in Wheaton serving employment areas of North Riverside, Oak Brook, Yorktown, and Wheaton. The Harlem Corridor operates between Tinley Park and Glenview providing a North – South regional Corridor serving employment areas, entertainment venues and connections to various bus and rail corridors.

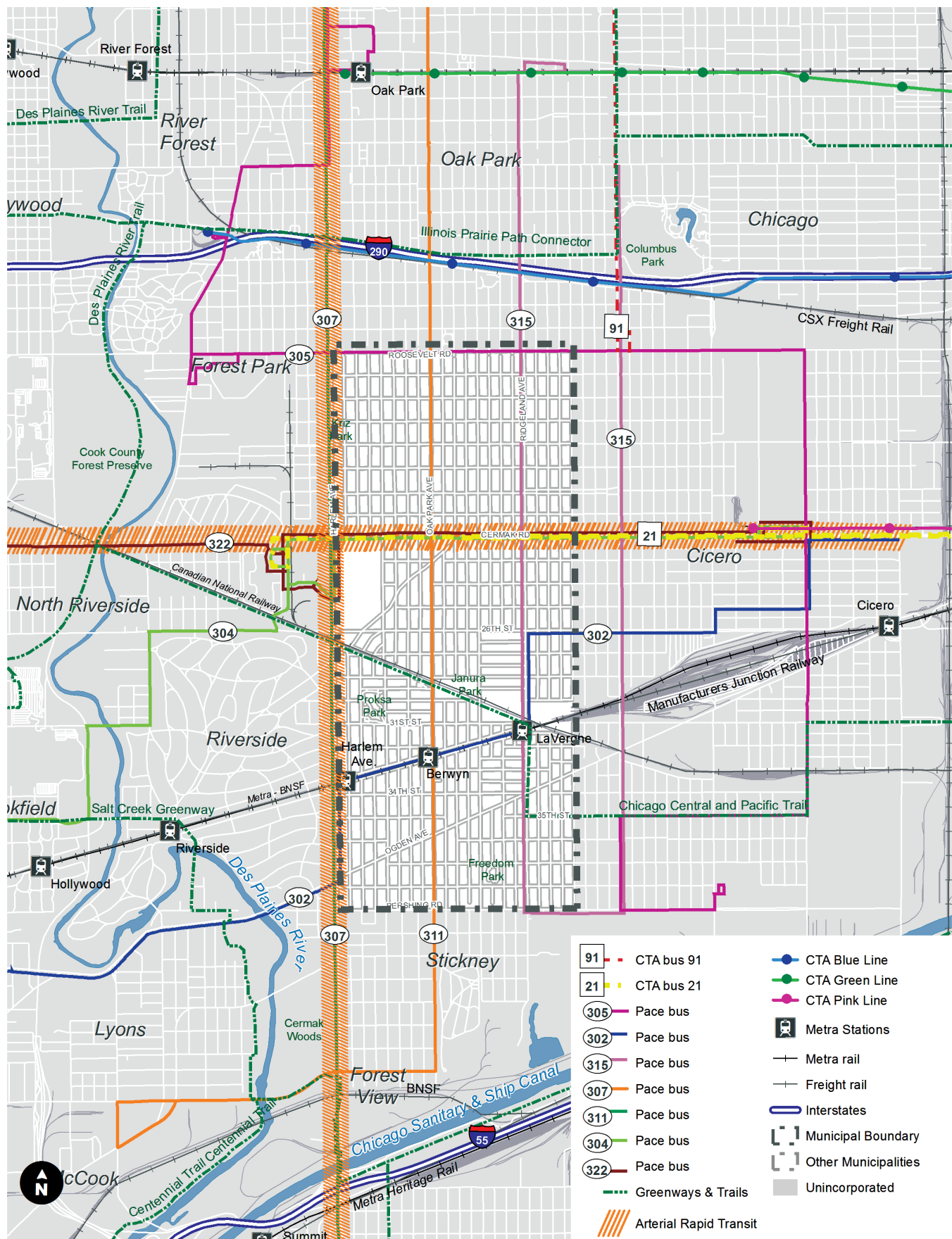
The City should continue to support the ART project as it would greatly benefit residents by providing improved regional mobility, connections to CTA Rail and Metra and faster access to employment-rich areas. Businesses along the Cermak and Harlem corridors would also benefit from faster access for employees and patrons.

Cermak Road has also been proposed as a future "Smart Corridor" in a recent study conducted by the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) in coordination with Cook and DuPage County. According to the RTA, Smart Corridors are key arterial roadways where information technology, intersection improvements, and traffic management strategies are undertaken to speed the flow of traffic for all users: autos, transit, commercial, and truck. Potential improvements to Cermak Road would include signal coordination/interconnects, access control, time of day parking restrictions, real time transit information, transit vehicle priority at traffic signals, and intersection improvements for turning movements.

The City should support both these projects as they will have a positive impact on the City's redevelopment efforts. The Comprehensive Plan's recommendations include clustering higher-density development in mixed-use nodes that include Pace ART stations and providing a walkable environment nearby. Through these actions, the City can create a land-use pattern that supports the use of transit, making Berwyn a more attractive place for transit agencies to invest. Additionally, the City should continue to work with its neighbors to support transit improvements in its transportation corridors, which require intergovernmental coordination to be most effective.

This on-going strategy supports policies 2 and 3.

Figure 8. Regional transportation map



Alignment of Regulations

Create vacant storefront ordinance.

There are a number of vacant commercial properties that have gone into a state of disrepair. The City should adopt an ordinance for vacant and underutilized properties that requires landlords to install some form of decorative display to obstruct direct view into the first floor of vacant properties within 60 days of the tenant vacating the premises. Potential options for screening could include:

- Decorative paper applied to the window.
- Public art displays advertised by other retailers (see Theme #4).
- Art and historic imagery displays submitted by Berwyn Arts Council, Route 66 Museum, City of Homes, Berwyn Historic Commission.
- Seasonal decorations.

The display may be utilized by local businesses to promote their merchandise as long as they are not large advertisements or signage. The ordinance should provide illustrative examples of acceptable and unacceptable types of displays. The City of Highland Park adopted a similar ordinance in 2010 and could be referred to as an example by Berwyn officials.

This short-term strategy supports policy 5.

Revise zoning ordinance.

The existing zoning ordinance classifies a majority of the commercial parcels within Berwyn as either C-2 General Commercial or C-3 General Services. These districts cannot accommodate the type, density, or quality of development set forth within the goals of the Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Plan's future land use map should be used as a reference guide to revise the zoning ordinance. The development guidelines created for commercial districts should also be included within the zoning ordinance in order to ensure that private and public properties are redeveloped as per the vision of the community. The ordinance should be designed to permit and encourage development that meets Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design-Neighborhood Development (LEED-ND) rating system.

The LEED for Neighborhood Development Rating System integrates the principles of smart growth, urbanism, and green building design at the neighborhood level. Among other things, LEED-ND will help the City establish standards for water conservation, energy efficiency, and other green infrastructure to support sustainable commercial growth and development in a built out environment.

This mid-term strategy supports policies 2 and 5.

Create development guidelines for commercial nodes and transitional zones.

The commercial nodes identified in the future land use plan are envisioned as pedestrian-oriented areas that contain a mix of retail and residential uses and higher development densities. Transitional zones vary from the nodes in that they allow for a broader range of land uses at lower densities. For both these land use categories, it is critical for the City to create guidelines that will clearly communicate development expectations to potential business owners and developers, while limiting impediments to growth.

Development guidelines should address physical design elements ranging from the blockface to building signage. The key elements to be included in the guidelines 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 in both categories.
- **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 commercial nodes and transitional zones with shared parking placed behind. Parking structures should be encouraged in the commercial nodes with landscaped surface parking in the transitional zones.
- **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 with scale, proportion, and details being outlined in this section of the development guidelines.
- **Building Height:** The guidelines should allow flexibility to build taller buildings in the commercial nodes and transitional zones 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. Guidelines should outline the location, size, and type of signage with illustrative examples.

Similar guidelines should be created for public property adjoining buildings that include streetscape and pedestrian amenities. Guidelines should be realistic from a maintenance and repair standpoint in addition to high quality design.

- Street lighting.
- Planters and landscape.
- Pavement.
- Furnishings (benches, trash receptacles, bicycle stalls).
- Signage (including wayfinding signs).

This long-term strategy supports policies 1, 2, and 5.

Create Capital Improvement Plan

In order to accommodate the desired character and intensity of development envisioned herein, the City will need to update aging infrastructure. This will include the sewer and water lines that are approaching close to 100 years and need continued repairs. The Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) is a short-range plan, typically five years, that identifies capital projects to be implemented or planned for, provides a planning schedule, and identifies options for financing projects outlined in the plan.

The Berwyn CIP should be a joint effort led by the City with assistance from the BDC, Park Districts, and School Districts to ensure a comprehensive understanding of priority projects. The CIP will also help the City plan and budget proactively for TIF districts that will be expiring in the coming years.

Create Community Facilities Plan.

Revitalization will have a direct impact on services provided by the City to residents and business owners. In order to maintain a high level of service, the City should create a Facilities Plan that will evaluate the future increase in service demand and plan to expand its personnel and update its equipment and facilities accordingly. The City departments to be evaluated under the facilities plan include the Fire Department, Police Department, Recreation Department, and Public Works Department.

Implementation Phasing

The strategies in the previous section included recommendations for phasing. This has been done in order to set realistic and achievable targets for the City given the finite staff time, resources, and funding available. The agencies/individuals responsible for implementation of redevelopment strategies include appointed officials in the BDC as well as elected officials including City Aldermen and the Mayor.

Immediately after adoption of the Plan, the City should undertake several major new tasks identified as short-term strategies: Create an inventory of basic vacant parcels and structures; use this to prioritize focus areas for parcel consolidation and redevelopment; and assign staff to draft a vacant storefront ordinance. In addition, some currently ongoing activities should continue: The City should continue its work with WCCHC to identify land for acquisition and redevelopment in the Depot District; and relationships with the transit agencies that provide service to Berwyn (Metra, Pace, and CTA) should be strengthened so that the actions of the City and these agencies are mutually beneficial. Other strategies will require continuous or long-term efforts that will extend beyond the initial two-year implementation period.



Photo by Eric Rogers. <http://www.flickr.com/photos/reallyboring/5636333765/>.

Theme #2: Community Health

Overview

Community health and planning are natural allies in the common cause of creating sustainable communities. Berwyn's unique healthcare infrastructure and health-focused initiatives present it with a unique opportunity to improve residents' physical health and enrich human capital.

From a physical health standpoint, strategies are provided to help improve open space recreational amenities and to support non-motorized transportation and transit options. Providing residents with greater access to open areas is a critical component of residents' quality of life, even more so in a built out community like Berwyn. Along with providing a location for outdoor activity, it also allows for a greater degree of social interaction and results in strengthening the sense of community. Similarly, extensive bicycle and pedestrian circulation networks, combined with convenient transit access help improve residents' physical health and develop connectivity to local and regional destinations. The City has undertaken non-motorized transportation and transit plans aimed at creating a safer environment for pedestrians and bicyclists while also encouraging an active/healthier lifestyle for residents. Recommendations outlined in this section build upon these initiatives and proposing additional strategies, where required.

The Plan also recognizes the importance of the health sector to Berwyn's economy and builds upon this asset. Strategies to enhance the City's human capital are focused on improving the local labor force. A well-equipped workforce is closely associated with economic growth of a community. Given the presence of major institutions within City limits, there is an opportunity to train and educate the local workforce so that their skills match the needs of local employers, and also so that the presence of a skilled workforce can attract new businesses to relocate to the City. The Plan's workforce recommendations are not unique to the health sector, but are presented for workforce development systems as a whole.

Summary of Existing Conditions

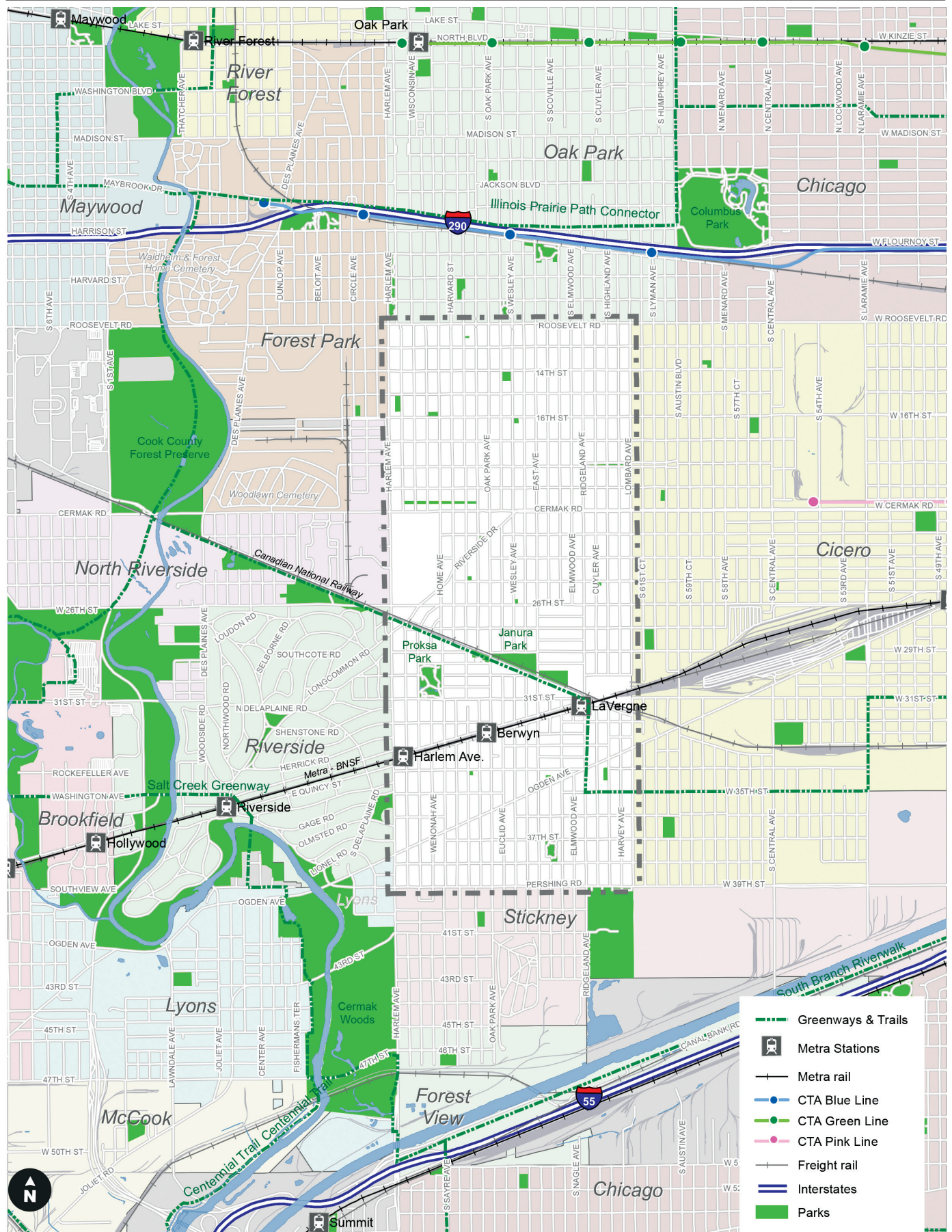
Open space and recreation.

The existing neighborhood parks in Berwyn are in good physical condition and are well-utilized. The City is served by two park districts. Neighborhoods north of Cermak Road are served by the North Berwyn Park District while the rest of the community is served by the Berwyn Park District. In addition to these entities, the City runs its own recreational department that maintains and staffs several parks, pools, and play lot grounds. According to residents, both Park Districts and the City Recreation Department have done an excellent job of maintaining existing parks, providing youth amenities at each park, and supporting programs that attract a large number of area residents. Both Park Districts host a variety of highly successful programs for residents including educational programs, group activities, youth workshops, and senior events. Additionally, the School Districts have an intergovernmental agreement with both Berwyn Park Districts, allowing students free access to parks for summertime school activities, use of school facilities during the school year for the Park District, and joint development of playgrounds at several school sites.

The School Districts, Park Districts, and City Recreation Department provide approximately 58 acres of open space within Berwyn, or about 1.1 acres per 1,000 people. Berwyn is in need of more parks and open areas. With the exception of Janura Park, Freedom Park, and Proksa Park, there are no large open spaces in the City. This has limited the number of recreational and cultural activities that can be organized in the summer months, and there is no central open space for community events that would attract people to spend time in the Depot District.

Proximity to regional open space areas and natural features compensate, to a certain degree, for the lack of open space areas within the community. Parks and open spaces along the Des Plaines River are well-utilized and easily accessible from the City via a network of regional trails.

Figure 9. Regional open space



Active transportation.

The City of Berwyn has developed a number of transportation-related initiatives and programs designed to improve community health, including a Complete Streets Ordinance, non-motorized transportation plan, Safe Routes to School plan, and the creation of Safe Park Zones. These programs all serve to improve the safety and enjoyment of traveling throughout Berwyn, regardless of mode.

The recently adopted Active Transportation Plan highlights ways to improve Berwyn's non-motorized network including improved bicycle access to the Depot District, MacNeal Hospital, and Metra stations, safe pedestrian zones around schools and parks, and upgraded pedestrian amenities at major roadway intersections. The Plan recommends a combination of infrastructure improvements, policy initiatives, and programming actions that will make it safer and more convenient for residents to walk, bike, and use transit in Berwyn.

Human capital.

Beyond the links between health and the built environment described previously, Berwyn's economy is heavily oriented toward the healthcare sector, as already noted in Theme #1. A comprehensive approach to health also needs to address the contribution of healthcare employment to the community. Therefore, the Comprehensive Plan also addresses workforce development as an issue that contributes to health.

Despite the availability of support services, there are some issues that act as barriers to entry into the labor market for participants in Berwyn's workforce development system. Chief among these is a lack of collaboration among regional businesses and non-profit training and education service providers. Although some communication does exist between these two entities, there are no formalized relationships or standardized processes through which participants in workforce and education programs can directly connect with employment opportunities in local businesses.

Berwyn residents are currently unable to access existing workforce development services due a lack of information and communication. Taking measures to increase the profile of these existing services, and developing stronger modes of communication among service providers would be immensely beneficial to job seekers in the City.

Berwyn is served by an excellent health care provider in MacNeal Hospital. Its location, combined with the diversity of services provided, serves the needs of a majority of the community. The Township Public Health District is working with the City to increase awareness regarding healthy living and is providing a number of basic healthcare services for free to residents.

Policy Statements

The following policy statements serve as guiding tenets for this theme. Statements are organized into three categories: human capital, active transportation, and natural environment/open space/recreation.

Natural Environment/Open Space/Recreation

- 1 Identify opportunities for creating new recreational amenities and open space programs in the form of parks, community gardens, and indoor recreational amenities within easy access of residents and visitors.
- 2 Maximize utilization of the existing open space by forging mutually beneficial partnerships between public agencies and between public and private stakeholders wherever possible.
- 3 Provide innovative solutions to preserve and protect natural resources.

Active Transportation

- 4 Create non-motorized transportation opportunities in the form of bikeways and pedestrian infrastructure to help improve community wide circulation, as well as connect residents to regional destinations.
- 5 Provide residents and employees with greater transportation options by continuing to grow the transit network within the community and strengthen connections between the community and greater region.

Human Capital

- 6 Support the City's healthcare providers and related businesses, recognizing their major contributions to Berwyn's economy.
- 7 Increase collaboration between workforce trainers and improve connections between residents in need of workforce services and workforce service providers to streamline the way in which Berwyn job seekers connect to the labor market.
- 8 Improve the educational attainment levels among Berwyn residents to increase the number of employment opportunities to which they have access/for which they are qualified.

Recommended Strategies

The following strategies represent action steps to accomplish the policy statements identified for community health. Strategies are organized into three categories: Natural Environment, Open Space, and Recreation; Active Transportation; and Human Capital.

Natural Environment, Open Space, and Recreation Create and adopt a Citywide Parks and Open Space Master Plan.

The North Berwyn Park District, Berwyn Park District, and City Recreation Department should work together to create a Citywide Parks and Open Space Master Plan. The intent of this exercise is to identify common issues faced by each organization and potential partnerships to create solutions. The Plan will evaluate all existing facilities and natural resources, assess public needs via surveys and workshops, and develop recommendations related to pedestrian and vehicular access and circulation to parks, parking, recreational activities, and options for facilities.

One of the key issues that should be addressed within the Plan is access to open space and the distribution of open space within the community. There are significant differences in the amount of open space under each of the Park Districts, and one way to address this is by ensuring sufficient pedestrian, bike, and transit access to regional open space areas near the City. The Plan will build upon recommendations contained within recently completed studies such as the Active Transportation Plan, Complete Street Policy, and Safe Park Zones Plan.

The Master Plan should identify opportunities for creating additional open space. The City recently donated part of the Old Vacin Fairway to the North Berwyn Park District, which was converted into a linear green space named Berwyn Gardens. The open area acts as a buffer between the Cermak Road commercial properties and residential neighborhoods further north. The Comprehensive Plan recommends creating a neighborhood park between 15th and 16th Streets and Harlem and Maple Avenue. Similarly, a central open space is recommended within the Depot District to facilitate community activities and attract residents to the Depot District.

The City and Park Districts should continue to apply for grants such as KaBOOM! that will allow it to build additional open spaces as well as new facilities within existing parks. KaBOOM! is a national non-profit dedicated to developing the nation's recreational infrastructure for children. Additional funding opportunities include Open Space Lands Acquisition and Development (OSLAD) grants, Lake and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), and Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Development (DCEO) grants.

This short-term strategy supports policies 1 and 2.

Figure 10. Berwyn Station Central Plaza before and after graphics



BEFORE

AFTER



Source: Fregonese Associates for CMAP Homes for a Changing Region.

Expand the community gardening program.

There are many benefits to developing community gardens in Berwyn, including enhanced neighborhood character and sense of community, increased access to locally grown produce, and decreased City costs associated with maintenance. The Berwyn Park District initiated a community gardening program to facilitate garden development in appropriate locations, such as within open space areas and available portions of schoolyards. Moving forward, the City should ensure that its development regulations permit community gardens within most or all zoning districts. Another important consideration is determining who will be responsible for maintaining and managing the gardens, whether it is the City's Recreation Department, Park Districts, nonprofit organizations, or a joint effort between them. The responsible organization(s) should establish criteria for lot suitability and garden development standards, and resolve pertinent logistical issues.

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

This mid-term strategy supports policy 1

Modify zoning ordinance to create open space requirements within Planned Developments.

The existing Planned Development (PD) regulations within the zoning ordinance apply to any new development that contains a grouping of multiple land uses. The designation and regulations therein will apply to mixed-use, walkable developments proposed in the Plan, primarily the mixed-use nodes. At present, the regulations do not require developers to provide any open space as part of the approval of the PD. The City should modify the ordinance to require a minimum percentage of the total PD site area allocated for open space which may include recreation amenities and community facilities, either dedicated to the City or retained under private ownership.

Depending on ownership, the open space or recreational facility should be available either for the residents and business owners that are part of the PD or for the entire community, depending on the type of agreement with the City. Improvement and maintenance of recreational facilities and amenities should be decided accordingly.

This mid-term strategy supports policy 1.

Continue shared use of open space and recreational amenities with schools.

The Park Districts and school districts have been proactively partnering on shared use of their open spaces. Intergovernmental agreements between the Park Districts and schools have allowed the general public to access a wide variety of recreational programs for all ages. This agreement has allowed the City to provide its residents activities that would be otherwise prohibitive. This excellent model of government cooperation, which is designed to maximize use of resident tax dollars, should be continued and enhanced over time.

This ongoing strategy supports policies 1 and 2.

Incorporate stormwater best management practices.

Given the limited amount of permeable surfaces available to accommodate stormwater and surface water runoff, the City's Public Works Department should continue its ongoing efforts to incorporate best management practices (BMPs) into the development process. The City should work closely with the Metropolitan Water Reclamation Department (MWRD) and neighboring communities to implement policies and programs identified within the County Stormwater Management Plan to new and existing developments with assistance from the City and MWRD. Examples of strategies to be implemented based on recommendations within the MWRD Plan include:

- Infiltrate or retain certain amount of rainwater within the limits of a new development project via BMPs.
- Implement a community-wide rain barrel program to capture rainwater at the site level.
- Incorporate minimum open space requirements within the PD approval process.
- Specify landscape requirements in surface parking lot standards to reduce surface runoff.

To create a comprehensive list of BMPs that the City can adopt and implement, the City's engineering department should review similar initiatives undertaken by other communities in the region. From a regional perspective, the City should collaborate with neighboring communities within its watershed and MWRD to devise regional stormwater management solutions. Implementation of some initiatives within the best management plan will require regional assistance as well.

This mid-term strategy supports policy 3.

Active Transportation

Implement Active Transportation Plan and Complete Streets Policy.

One of the major indicators of community health is the amount of non-motorized access to key destinations. Berwyn's residential neighborhoods have an excellent network of pedestrian sidewalks and crosswalks that allow safe movement. However, there is a need to improve pedestrian movement between neighborhoods and commercial areas, especially high traffic east-west corridors that restrict pedestrian movement from one neighborhood to another.

The Complete Streets Policy Ordinance and Active Transportation Plan provide policy and programming recommendations to help improve pedestrian and bike movement through the community. The Active Transportation Plan identifies implementation priorities in the short, mid, and long term. The City should prioritize the implementation of short-term policy, education, community encouragement, and enforcement actions identified within the Plan and ensure that they are funded within the City's annual budget. Short-term policies include adopting a Safe Park Zones Ordinance, establishing pedestrian right-of-way on sidewalks, designating bus stops as no-parking zones, adopting an official Traffic Calming Policy, and conducting community events to encourage ridership and increase awareness. The Comprehensive Plan supports these actions and recommends that the City pursue them expeditiously.

This strategy, which includes both short-term and longer-term elements, supports policies 4 and 5.

Human Capital

Support new and expanded healthcare businesses.

The Reinvestment theme of the Comprehensive Plan highlights the importance of the healthcare sector to Berwyn, and identifies MacNeal Hospital in particular as a major partner in the ongoing redevelopment of the Depot District. While it is discussed in that context as an economic and community development opportunity, the expansion of this major hospital can also have positive health impacts for the residents of Berwyn, so deserves reinforcement in the Health theme as well.

This ongoing strategy supports policy 6.

Identify and coordinate available workforce training resources.

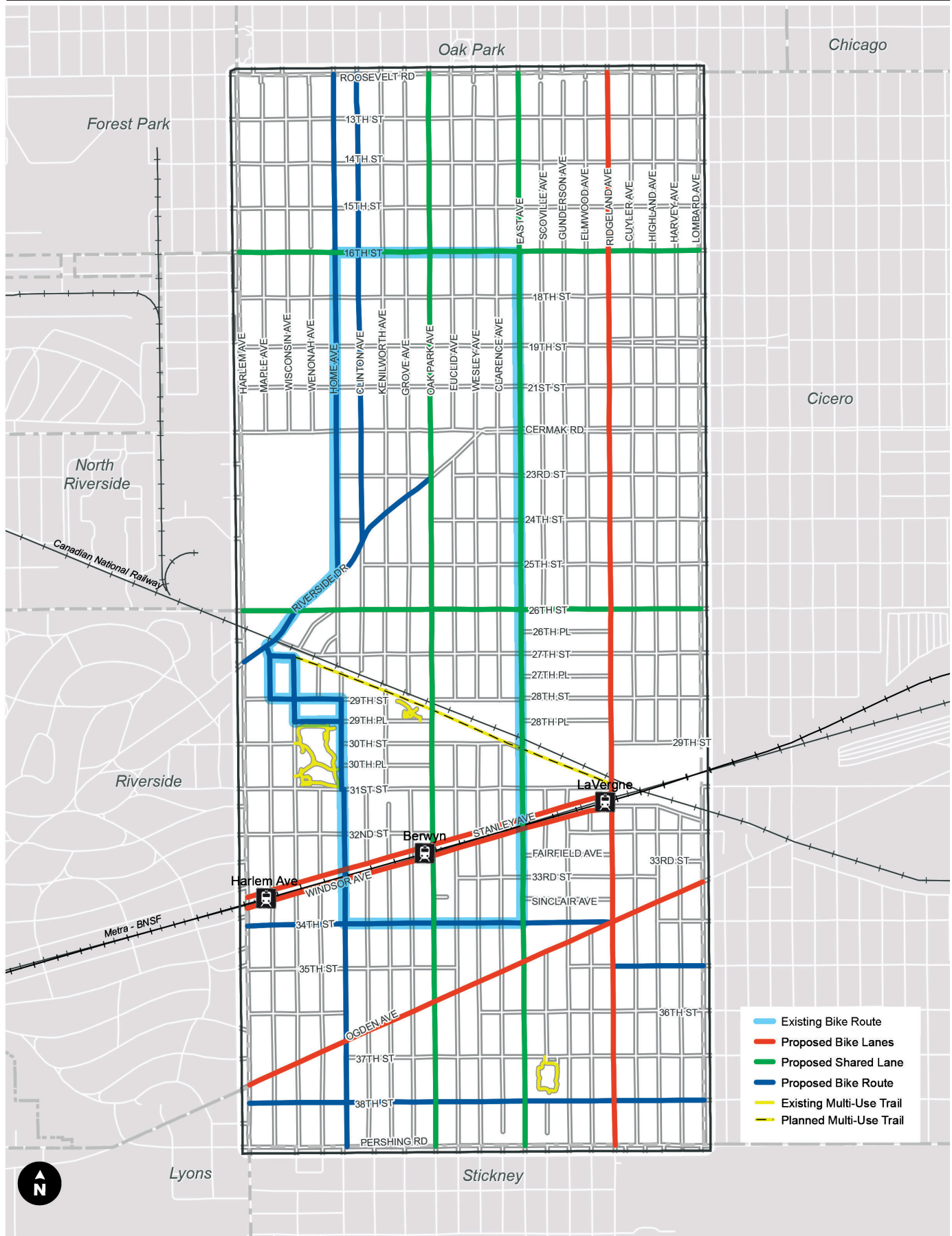
While there are a significant number of workforce development and related services available to residents of Berwyn, individual workforce programs indicated that very few residents are aware of all of the resources available to help them connect to the labor market. It was also apparent that most workforce development service providers and training entities who serve residents of Berwyn are not well aware of the services provided by other organizations in the area. Implementing a way for providers to connect with each other will enable all service providers to better serve their clients by making informed referrals when they are not the most appropriate service provider for a particular individual.

Currently, the most common means of circulating information among Berwyn residents is through word of mouth: people who have had positive experiences at programs tell their friends and family and they in turn come in to receive services. Creating a regular, centralized information area — online or through a permanent resource center — would help to ensure that all Berwyn residents in need of workforce services not only know what programs exist, but also understand all of the services for which they are eligible. It would also better coordinate existing services between programs. Berwyn Township already has social support resources and is coordinating with the closest regional workNet center; the City of Berwyn should coordinate with both of these entities to identify regional workforce development resources for job seekers and increase the communication between these groups. Additionally, the Berwyn Public Library (BPL) has the potential to be an ideal location for a centralized workforce information area.

BPL currently has a job center with a variety of resources that are available for job seekers to directly connect to jobs. Because this infrastructure already exists, it would be a relatively simple addition to also include information on regional workforce training supports. This centralized information area would strengthen the existing social support structure network available to Berwyn residents who are job seekers.

This short-term strategy supports policy 7.

Figure 11. Proposed bicycle network



Connect workforce training providers to employers.

Currently, the top ten largest employers in Berwyn connect to job seekers through their online systems or through word of mouth from other employees. Workforce training programs do not have relationships with these employers to enable them to connect job seekers to employment opportunities. The City of Berwyn and BDC should explore different means of forging connections between employers and workforce service providers as a resource to businesses. This type of connection would increase the efficiency with which Berwyn residents connect to employment opportunities. It could also create a more efficient system for employers seeking to hire, as training providers can act as screening entities for job candidates. A place to begin implementing these connections could be with neighboring Morton College, which periodically brings several regional employers onto campus for job fairs. The City of Berwyn and BDC should work with Morton College to educate regional businesses on the skills training services currently offered by regional workforce training entities. They should also evaluate how these services can benefit local businesses and proceed in establishing appropriate connections based on the feedback received.

This mid-term strategy supports policy 7.

Educate Berwyn residents on resources that are available to help them go back to school.

There are significant portions of Berwyn's working age population who either do not have a high school diploma or equivalency (20 percent) or who began college but do not have a degree (an additional 20 percent). Frequently, employability is attached to educational credentials. Helping Berwyn residents attain diplomas and degrees would increase the number of jobs in the region for which they qualify. The City of Berwyn should assess the potential causes of these gaps in educational attainment. There should also be an assessment of Berwyn's current educational resources (e.g. GED preparation, remedial education services). This would help the city determine if additional educational resources are needed or if it is a matter of communicating more effectively to residents about the resources already available. After completing this assessment, the City should proceed according to the feedback received and either work with regional educational institutions and training entities to inform residents on available educational resources or develop a plan to connect Berwyn residents to the needed educational services.

This long-term strategy supports policy 8.

Implementation Phasing

The strategies in the previous section included recommendations for phasing. This has been done in order to set realistic and achievable targets for the City given the finite resources and funding available. Responsibility for successful implementation of strategies outlined in this theme will fall mainly upon identified lead agencies/ individuals including the North Berwyn Park District, Berwyn Park District, City's Recreation Department, Community Development Department, School Districts 98, 100, 201, Morton College, and BDC.

Immediate actions to be undertaken upon Plan adoption include pursuit of several strategies identified as short term: beginning the planning process of the collaborative Parks and Open Space Master Plan; implementing the short-term activities recommended in the Active Transportation Plan; and coordinating among workforce service providers. Additionally, several actions that are already underway should continue as priorities, including coordination with schools on open space access, and supporting the community's healthcare providers and related businesses.

Theme#3: Neighborhood Preservation and Enhancement

Overview

Berwyn's historic building stock and well-established neighborhoods are among its primary real estate assets. Given its proximity and convenient access to Chicago's downtown, the City's diverse housing stock makes it an attractive place to live. However, both the building stock and neighborhoods face challenges due to rising commercial vacancies and housing foreclosures, in large part due to prevailing economic conditions that are beyond the community's control.

The City and local non-profit agencies continue to be proactive in highlighting the need for preservation of the historic bungalow homes and Cermak Road commercial corridor. The Chicago-style bungalow is the predominant architectural style in Berwyn and enables residential neighborhoods to retain a unique sense of place. Similarly, commercial properties along Cermak Road display a diversity of architectural styles and offer a physical documentation of the evolution and growth of the corridor and City from the early 1900s to the 1960s. Supporting efforts to maintain and enhance these unique assets will be important in ensuring that Berwyn can retain its unique character in the face of future growth.

This theme outlines policies and strategies to help the City continue preservation efforts while identifying areas and methods for neighborhood revitalization. Strategies outlined herein partly build upon previously completed studies conducted by the Historic Preservation Commission and regional planning agencies.

Summary of Existing Conditions

Key findings from the existing conditions analysis that have informed recommendations proposed in this theme are summarized in this section.

Berwyn's single family housing stock represents the largest total acreage of any land use in the City (70 percent of the City). Although a majority of single family homes are historic bungalow style brick buildings, the socioeconomic character of each of the single-family residential neighborhoods is unique. Unlike the single-family housing stock, multi-family units are diverse in terms of age, scale, and architectural style. Housing types include townhomes, two to three story condominiums, rental apartments, and newer high rise mixed-use buildings.

Housing in Berwyn is significantly older than in Cook County and the region. In 2009, the median age of a home in Berwyn was 70 years. Homes in Berwyn are older than the average home in Cook County (53 years) and the region (46 years).

According to the Homes for a Changing Region report, Berwyn's housing stock is well balanced between single-family and multi-family dwellings. Approximately 60 percent of the city's housing is owner-occupied and 40 percent rented. Approximately 70 percent of the multi-family units are rented. Conversely, over 90 percent of the single-family homes are owner-occupied. Based on the common affordability standard that residents should pay no more than 30 percent of their income for housing, of 57 percent of Berwyn's owner-occupied housing and 49 percent of its rental housing is affordable. These percentages have gone down over the last ten years.

On the positive side, if household transportation costs are taken into account, affordability numbers improve. According to figures from the Center for Neighborhood Technology (CNT), 77 percent of Berwyn's households pay less than 45 percent of their household income on housing and transportation costs combined. Viable transit options and proximity to downtown Chicago reduces transportation costs related to commuting to work, increasing the overall affordability of living in Berwyn.

Berwyn's historic housing stock is dominated by one particular style — the Chicago bungalow. Berwyn's Historic Preservation Commission is actively engaged in preservation of bungalows and educating homeowners about the significance of their properties. In 2008, the Historic Preservation Commission created a master list of historically and architecturally significant structures in Berwyn. The information was collected from various sources, which are cited within the existing conditions analysis.

The City of Berwyn also completed a survey of architecturally significant historic properties along Cermak Road in 2011. This area is comprised of 18 blocks of commercial, residential, and institutional buildings between Lombard Avenue and Harlem Avenue. A total of 155 properties were surveyed. According to survey results, the Cermak Road corridor has sufficient historic structures to warrant a National Register of City Landmark District. However, the relatively high number of non-contributing buildings (36 percent) makes it difficult to establish a regular set of boundaries.

Policy Statements

The following policy statements serve as guiding tenets for this theme. Each policy statement is addressed by at least one strategy below:

- 1 Preserve the community's historic architectural heritage that includes the Chicago-style bungalow homes and commercial properties along Cermak Road.
- 2 Facilitate the preservation and maintenance of historic properties for property owners and tenants using a combination of incentives and regulations. Enhance preservation efforts by retrofitting buildings with energy efficient systems that preserve affordability.
- 3 Ensure the vibrancy of residential neighborhoods by supporting the rehabilitation of vacant and abandoned properties and regulating new developments such that they complement the existing neighborhood character. Promote a range of residential types based on a context-sensitive analysis of neighborhoods (e.g. rehabilitation efforts in neighborhoods surrounding Metra stations may differ from those in neighborhoods proximate to major roadways).
- 4 Highlight the City's unique historic heritage and diverse housing stock in order to instill community pride among the citizenry and attract new residents and investment from around the region.
- 5 Create alliances among municipal, non-profit, private, and regional organizations in an effort to strengthen advocacy and implementation efforts related to historic preservation and residential rehabilitation.

Recommended Strategies

The following strategies represent action steps to accomplish the policy statements identified for community health. Strategies are organized into three categories, covering strategies that involve research, marketing, or encouragement by the City and the BDC; those that involve regulatory change; and those that involve direct financial investment by the City. Strategies within each category address multiple policies identified above.

Research, Marketing, and Encouragement Strategies

Create a prioritized list of historic properties for landmark designation.

While historic preservation efforts have focused on specific styles and districts, Berwyn's historic resources exist throughout the community. Because local preservation efforts require a partnership between the site owner and the City, Berwyn should work closely with local property owners to increase the number of landmark properties. The first step would be the creation of a prioritized list of properties in Berwyn which the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) believes should be landmarked. Such a list should incorporate the findings of the City of Berwyn Preservation Plan, the Cermak Road Architectural and Historic Survey, and the Art Institute's recent survey of mid-century buildings within Berwyn. Once the HPC has created the list, it should begin contacting property owners based on priority for designation. Property-owner outreach should include a discussion of the history of the structure, why the structure is important, and the benefits of preservation.

This short-term strategy supports policies 1, 2, and 4.

Coordinate marketing efforts with the BDC and regional entities.

In order to promote Berwyn's affordable housing stock and unique historic assets, the City should continue to work closely with the BDC in marketing these assets as part of a larger marketing strategy. The BDC has implemented a number of successful marketing campaigns in the past, highlighting the community's historic resources to the greater Chicagoland region. Their expertise would greatly benefit the City, not only in terms of creating materials and accessing different media outlets, but also in identifying regional partners to collaborate with and effectively reach out to.

The BDC will also be a vital partner in marketing Berwyn's assets to local businesses and residents in an effort to boost community confidence and retain businesses. Potential strategies could include hosting educational sessions with business owners, annual events, historic landmark tours for the bungalows or Cermak Road properties, and informational articles in newsletters and online media.

This ongoing strategy supports policies 4 and 5.

Provide employer-assisted housing.

Several Illinois communities have created employer-assisted housing programs that allow employees to live close to their place of employment and contribute to local economic development, a desirable situation for all parties involved. For example, the Village of Riverdale worked with the non-profit Regional Redevelopment Corporation to initiate its Employer-Assisted Housing Program.

Despite its diverse and affordable housing stock, a majority of Berwyn's workers live outside the City and commute to their place of employment on a daily basis. The City should work with major employers such as MacNeal Hospital to initiate an employer-assisted housing program similar to Riverdale. The Metropolitan Planning Council (MPC) is a regional nonprofit organization with experience in employer-assisted housing, and the City and BDC should reach out to MPC to help design an appropriate program for Berwyn. State and federal funding opportunities that could help the program include the Illinois Affordable Housing Tax Credit Program and Regional Employer-Assisted Collaboration for Housing (REACH) program.

The Illinois Affordable Housing Tax Credit Program provides employers with a 50 cent tax credit on state income tax liability for every \$1 invested in an employer-assisted housing (EAH) program. The types of programs that are eligible for the tax credit include down payment assistance, reduced interest mortgages, individual development accounts, and rental subsidies to help employees find and finance homes near work. Tax credits are also available to defray costs related to homebuyer counseling and outsourced EAH program administration. It is also possible to transfer the tax credit, enabling a tax-exempt employer (such as a hospital, university, or municipality) or one with limited tax liabilities to transfer or "sell" the credits to an individual or corporation that has a tax liability. REACH Illinois partners apply to the Illinois Housing Development Authority (IHDA) or the Chicago Department of Housing and Economic Development for tax credits that are allocated to the employer.

This long-term strategy supports policy 3.

Regulatory strategies

Designate a bungalow-focused historic district.

Building from the value embodied in Berwyn's historic structures, the City has been more aggressive in promoting and preserving its historic structures in recent years. However, as one of the City's primary assets, there is great potential for additional preservation efforts. While the City's historic properties extend beyond those within the area designated for "Historic Residential" (HR) on the Berwyn Land Use Plan Map, this area contains most of Berwyn's iconic bungalows and single-family, owner-occupied housing stock. This designation recognizes the need to preserve its unique character. The HR designation reflects the importance of preserving and protecting the historic single-family housing stock in the area south of Cermak Avenue and north of the Depot District. To ensure that this area is preserved, the City should create a local historic district with boundaries that match the "Historic Residential" area, including a survey identifying all contributing structures within the HR area.

Most importantly, the district should include strong design standards which would apply to the rehabilitation of existing structures and the construction of new structures. Using these standards, the HPC could then review applications within the district for a Certificate of Appropriateness, Certificate of Advisory Review, or Certificate of Economic Hardship based on the design requirements. The revised Zoning Ordinance combined with the district-specific design standards should present one unified vision for the rehabilitation of existing single-family bungalows and the construction of new "bungalow style" homes within the HR area.

Creating a historic district provides many benefits. Currently, homeowners within the City must actively apply to the HPC for landmark designation of their home to access the Property Tax Assessment Freeze sponsored by the State of Illinois. Homeowners of contributing properties within a local historic district would be able to skip the local landmark designation process and proceed with an application to the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency (IHPA), provided the unit meets the other designation criteria.

While creating a historic district will improve the accessibility of the Property Tax Assessment Freeze for Berwyn homeowners, a key part of a cohesive district is the creation and adoption of design guidelines, described further below.

This mid-term strategy supports policies 1, 2, 3, and 4.

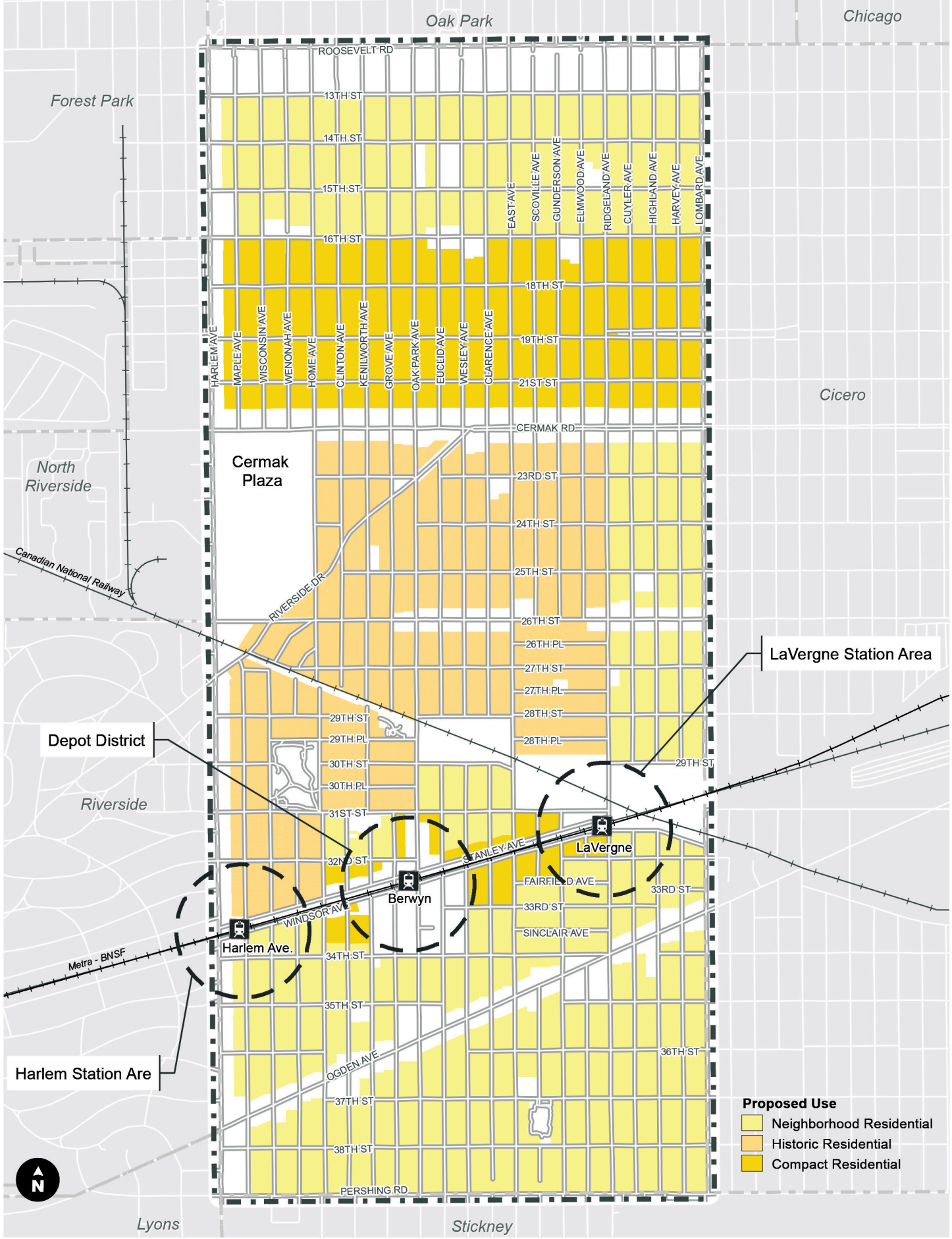
Create redevelopment guidelines for residential neighborhoods.

In order to preserve the unique character of Berwyn's neighborhoods, the City should create a series of redevelopment guidelines, using the Future Land Use Map as a guide. The three major residential land use categories in the Plan are neighborhood residential (NR), compact residential (CR), and historic residential (HR). The desired residential character of each land use category is distinct and unique.

- Within the NR district, the redevelopment guidelines should focus on single-family uses that complement the blockface in terms of the proportion, scale, height, and architectural features of existing single-family homes. Guidelines for multi-family units should also be included in this district to allow for small scale two-three story buildings.
- Within the CR district, redevelopment guidelines should allow for increased density of residential development that could include a combination of compact single-family detached and attached buildings and mid-rise multi-unit buildings.
- The redevelopment guidelines for the HR district should be similar to the neighborhood residential district, with an additional section on architectural elements and details that is intended to ensure that redevelopment projects respect the historic Chicago-style bungalow and multi-family residential units.

This mid-term strategy supports policies 1, 2, 3, and 4.

Figure 12. Compact residential, historic residential, and neighborhood residential areas



Investment Strategies

Develop financial incentives for property rehabilitation and maintenance.

There are a number of federal and state programs currently available for rehabilitation of historic properties. The Property Tax Assessment Freeze sponsored by the State of Illinois provides a property tax freeze for up to eight years to homeowners who substantially rehabilitate their historic home in accordance with the Secretary of Interior's "Standards for Rehabilitation." The historic building must be registered (whether at the local, state, or federal level or whether individually or within a district) and the rehabilitation must incur eligible expenses which equal or exceed 25 percent of the property's fair cash value. The Federal Historic Preservation Tax Credit provides a 20 percent tax credit for the substantial rehabilitation of commercial, agricultural, industrial or rental buildings. The historic property must be listed on the National Register or be a contributing property within a National Register District and the building must be used for an income providing purpose (e.g. owner-occupied single-family homes are not eligible).

While any strategy for long-term historic preservation must include encouraging property owners to access these federal and state incentives when possible, it is important that the City develop a local program with greater capacity to encourage rehabilitation efforts. The City has funded a small scale rehabilitation program for historic properties with CDBG funds. In its 2011 Annual Action Plan, the City allocated \$20,000 for the rehabilitation of a certified Berwyn Bungalow for a low or moderate-income qualified buyer.

Energy Impact Illinois is a collaborative program led by CMAP aimed to help residents, businesses, and non-profits reduce energy use in their buildings. The program would allow Berwyn residents to be eligible for a variety of incentives, rebates, and low-interest loans from various partners to renovate their homes and make them more energy efficient in the process. Examples include low interest loans from GreenChoice Bank for energy efficient retrofits and discounts on home improvements recommended by a certified energy auditor.

Beyond these publicly funded programs, the City should reach out to non-profit groups such as the Preservation Compact. The Preservation Compact is an organization created by Community Investment Corporation (CIC) with support from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. The organization seeks to preserve and improve existing affordable rental homes that might otherwise be lost to condominium conversion, demolition, or rising costs.

The City should consider supplementing its CDBG efforts with a combination of local and private funds to operate a broader historic preservation revolving loan fund. Such a program would provide low-interest rehabilitation loans for owner-occupants of homes within the HR area. As the loans are repaid to the City, the City should use the revenues to fund additional loans. While any strategy for long-term historic preservation must encourage property owners to access these federal and state incentives when possible, it is important that the City develop a local program with greater capacity in terms of funding and accessibility to encourage rehabilitation efforts.

This mid-term strategy supports policies 1, 2, and 3.

Identify and define specific areas for rehabilitation and redevelopment.

As previously mentioned in Theme #1, the City should work closely with the Cook County Assessor's office to create an inventory of vacant, foreclosed, and abandoned residential properties. A similar inventory of buildings in poor physical condition should be created by the City's Building Department.

Once created, the City should allocate its annual CDBG funds for two types of neighborhood revitalization programs. The first should focus on improvements to existing and occupied buildings that are in need of renovations. The second should identify abandoned and foreclosed properties for demolition and reconstruction of new housing units. CDBG funds are not typically allowed to pay for new building construction projects but rather fund public infrastructure in support for these projects or site acquisition costs. However, they can be utilized for new construction that is part of a larger neighborhood revitalization project. As the ultimate goal of undertaking new construction in Berwyn is to stabilize established neighborhoods, the funds should likely be available for new construction projects.

Identifying specific areas for rehabilitation is also a good short-term strategy for the City to allocate funds in prioritized manner. The completion of finite projects in specific areas will allow the City to demonstrate success and gain community support in further implementation of the program. Moreover, targeting rehabilitation efforts is consistent with the strategy of the West Cook County Housing Collaborative (WCCHC), of which Berwyn is a member. The WCCHC is currently focusing on encouraging transit-oriented development within all five member communities, increasing transportation choice and the availability of affordable housing, through a HUD Sustainable Communities Grant. Targeted rehabilitation efforts by Berwyn within or around the Depot District would support and strengthen the work of the WCCHC, as described in the Reinvestment theme.

This short-term strategy supports policies 3, 4, and 5.

Target deployment of CDBG funds to revitalize key neighborhoods.

In FY2012, the City of Berwyn will receive \$1,023,353 in CDBG funds as an entitlement community, a portion of which is spent on services and housing each year. The City should target its CDBG funds to provide the greatest benefit to specific neighborhoods, identified by need-based analysis conducted by City officials. As discussed in the Homes for a Changing Region report and existing conditions analysis, the City needs to expend additional resources on housing rehabilitation, housing counseling, foreclosure mitigation, and homebuyer assistance.

Recently, the National Housing Services (NHS) of Chicago has focused on short-and-medium term targeted neighborhood efforts using its size and scope as a provider of housing rehabilitation, lending, education, and foreclosure prevention services to bring all of these tools into a neighborhood. A similar approach in Berwyn, with a non-profit organization operating from a neighborhood location to provide housing and education services in the surrounding areas over a limited time horizon (approximately three years), will allow the City to focus one of its most valuable funding sources to stabilize its areas of greatest need.

Given the location of target areas, potential office locations for the nonprofit organization could be considered along the Roosevelt Road, 14th Street, or Cermak Road corridors. By locating the office within the targeted neighborhood, the office can act as an anchor for the revitalization of the corridor, in particular the neighborhood commercial and the mixed-use nodes identified on the Land Use Plan map. Given the proximity of these corridors to other entitlement communities, portions of which are experiencing similar issues, Berwyn should explore partnerships with Cicero and/or Oak Park to fund activities in multiple communities from one neighborhood location.

While there is no current service provider in Berwyn which has the capacity to undertake all of these tasks, it should be the long-term goal of the community to develop such a provider. For example, the WCCHC could evolve to provide such services, with the goal of creating the institutional capacity to move among targeted neighborhoods in members over time. In the short-term, the City should partner with an established service provider(s) with a track-record of success in providing all of the following:

- Homebuyer education.
- Foreclosure counseling.
- Homebuyer assistance.
- Housing rehabilitation and resale/rental.

This long-term strategy supports policies 3 and 5.

Implementation Phasing

The strategies in the previous section included recommendations for phasing. This has been done in order to set realistic and achievable targets for the City given the finite staff time, resources, and funding available. Responsibility for initiating and sustaining implementation efforts for strategies outlined in this theme will fall mainly upon identified lead agencies/individuals including the HPC, BDC, and City's Community Development Department.

Some of the key tasks to be undertaken immediately upon adoption of the Plan include several strategies identified as short-term: creating a prioritized list of properties (both historic and non-historic) for rehabilitation; and identifying areas where rehabilitation investments will be focused. Also, the Plan recommends considerable coordination with external organizations, such as the Preservation Compact, WCCHC, MPC, and state agencies; continuing or building relationships with these organizations should also be pursued as a high priority.

Theme#4: Image and Identity

Overview

The City of Berwyn is recognized throughout the Chicagoland region for its historic architectural heritage, affordable housing stock, strategic location, and vibrant business environment. Several organizations and agencies have played a pivotal role in marketing the City's unique characteristics to the region over the years. The BDC is at the forefront of this effort, launching a number of successful marketing and branding campaigns aimed at attracting additional economic investment into the community. Non-profit groups such as the Berwyn Historic Preservation Commission, City of Homes, Berwyn Arts Council, Berwyn Park Districts, and other community organizations have continually undertaken initiatives aimed at improving the City's cultural heritage and, in the process, making the City attractive to a wider demographic.

This theme recommends a combination of policies, programs, and implementation action items that support these past initiatives while identifying additional tasks that could enhance the community's image and identity. This could be accomplished by improving communication with Berwyn residents, partnering with neighboring communities, and coordinating with regional service providers such as Metra, Pace, and MacNeal Hospital, among others.

Summary of Existing Conditions

Some of the key findings from the existing conditions analysis that have informed recommendations proposed in this theme are summarized in this section.

History and Architecture

Berwyn's historic architecture and urban character can be seen throughout its residential and commercial districts. During the construction boom of the 1920s, Berwyn's strict building regulations resulted in the most significant collection of Chicago-style bungalows in the country. Block upon block of Cermak Road displays a variety of architectural styles. The corridor earned the nickname "The Bohemian Wall Street" due to the large number of banking and financial organizations located there in the early 1900s.

Ogden Avenue is also known as the Historic Route 66 that runs east-west through Berwyn. The Berwyn Route 66 Museum, located on Ogden Avenue, aims to present and preserve the history of Route 66 as it passes through the City. The modest gallery is maintained by a small staff of volunteers and assisted by partner organizations such as the BDC, Berwyn Historical Society, Berwyn Arts Council, Berwyn School District 100, City of Berwyn, and Berwyn Public Library.

The Berwyn Route 66 Car Show takes place annually along Ogden Avenue, highlighting the corridor's historic value and landmarks. Recently improved signage and street lighting along the corridor help to complement its history.

Arts and Culture

Over the past decade, Berwyn has seen a growth in activities related to arts and culture. The relatively low cost of living, strategic location in the Chicago metropolitan region, and available resources for local artists has resulted in a significant influx of artists to the City of Berwyn.

Streetscape

The City has concentrated most of its streetscape improvements along its major commercial corridors, such as Ogden Avenue, Cermak Road, Roosevelt Road, and 26th Street. These improvements have included installing banner signs, crosswalks at intersections, benches, planters, and decorative street lights. There are portions of other major rights-of-way that have been improved for pedestrians, including Oak Park Avenue and Ridgeland Avenue. There is a need to incorporate additional streetscape along major thoroughfares so as to create a pedestrian friendly environment. The City has recently adopted a Complete Streets ordinance that provides recommendations for improving the overall safety, function, and look of key streets throughout the City.

Marketing and Branding

In addition to the physical elements that create a sense of place, branding and marketing play a crucial role in distinguishing a community from its neighbors and identifying it to the greater region. The BDC does an excellent job of marketing the City's businesses and amenities to the greater region. Marketing campaigns have been effective in attracting visitors, new residents, and shoppers to the City. However, according to stakeholders, local businesses, and amenities need to actively promote Berwyn's businesses to its own residents.

The BDC is an active participant in the business community and has launched a number of marketing initiatives aimed at creating awareness among local residents and promoting Berwyn to the Chicago metropolitan region. The BDC, working with partner organizations such as Berwyn Main Street, also actively promotes cultural events that take place in the City via its website and social media. These events have historically attracted a large number of visitors and sponsors to the City.

Policy Statements

The following policy statements serve as guiding tenets for this theme. Each policy statement is addressed by at least one strategy below:

- 1 Establish a strong sense of pride in the community through beautification of major entranceways into the community, preservation and maintenance of historic features, and high quality design features.
- 2 Foster a collaborative environment among the various units of government, BDC, community organizations, as well as private enterprise that encourages working together, inclusion, engagement and participation, and combining individual assets to build up the capacity of the greater community.
- 3 Combine and coordinate initiatives of existing organizations that offer cultural activities to make it easier for residents to access information and easier for organizations to promote them.
- 4 Provide a platform for community involvement that allows a wide demographic including adults, seniors, and children to work together in taking ownership of the community's cultural well-being.
- 5 Encourage the incorporation of arts and culture in the community using multiple channels that include arts education programs, supporting infrastructure such as small screen theaters, promotion and marketing of local arts and artists, artist assistance programs, and a regulatory environment that makes it easy for artists to do business in Berwyn.



Recommended Strategies

The following strategies represent action steps to enhance the community's image and identity and accomplish the policy statements identified above. Each policy statement is addressed by at least one strategy below.

Identify partners and form alliances.

Creating partnerships will be critical for the City to move forward with improvements outlined in this theme. From a physical improvements perspective, the City will need to coordinate with regional entities such as the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), Metra, and Pace to create attractive gateway signage and landscaped rights-of-way along Cermak Road, Harlem Avenue, and Roosevelt Road.

Additionally, implementing physical improvements within the municipality such as park amenities and public art displays will require the cooperation and participation of local businesses and residents, be it from the perspective of supporting improvements, or providing funds to build the improvements. TIF funds should be allocated to improvements identified within the Wayfinding Signage Plan (see more in this section) and other related studies aimed at improving the overall image and identity of Berwyn.

This short-term strategy supports policy 1.

Allocate staff time and resources for promoting arts and culture.

The City or the BDC should allocate funds within its budget that would allow the City to devote more resources to arts and culture promotion. This individual would be the City's liaison with all entities looking to improve the image and identity of Berwyn and would be responsible for, among other things, keeping the City's website updated with event and program information, outreach efforts with local non-profits and private stakeholders, and facilitation of local arts and culture activities within the community and outside. Similarly, the HPC should be allocated staff time and resources to help market and promote the community's historic resources as a cultural amenity.

This short-term strategy supports policies 1, 3, and 5.

Encourage display of art in public places.

Over the past decade, Berwyn's population has seen a significant influx of artists. To highlight the artist population as an asset and also enhance public space, the City should work with artists to display artwork, either temporarily or permanently, in the public realm. These works could be housed in the display windows of vacant or underutilized storefronts, public parks, commercial and cultural hotspots such as the Depot District, and locations along commercial corridors including Ogden Avenue, Cermak Road, and 16th Street.

Permanent public art installations should be encouraged, either through a small allocation of City capital funds and/or through the private sector. Developers could be required to install public art on developments over a certain size or pay a fee into a municipal fund for future installation of public art. Several cities, including the City of Chicago, require developers to pay one percent of their total development cost towards public art installations. The City of Berwyn should include such requirements within its newly created Public Art Ordinance (outlined further in this section).

Temporary exhibits of art should occur as opportunities arise, such as in conjunction with community events and festivals. One successful and innovative model of temporary storefront art installations can be found in the Chicago Loop Alliance's Pop-up Art Loop program in downtown Chicago, which features gallery, exhibition, and interactive space in vacant storefronts in the Loop. The spaces are available by application for no fee; the program's art installations are now a prominent feature of the Loop area.

This mid-term strategy supports policies 1 and 5.

Create a centralized guide to increase awareness of community events for residents and visitors.

At present, there are several organizations that organize and host arts, recreation, and entertainment related events and programs in Berwyn. Each organization advertises their own events through their own website and promotes their activities with marketing materials. Although the BDC advertises many of the City's large events on their website and the City of Berwyn's online events calendar also lists many events and programs, there is a need for a comprehensive and centralized portal that provides information to residents and visitors regarding all city-wide events and programs, including those hosted by local non-profits and community organizations.

The City and BDC should work together with all active community organizations to create a guide that features web-based, thematic, and multimedia resources for Berwyn residents and visitors in order to increase public awareness of community events as well as arts and culture activities. Another strategy to improve the effectiveness of communication and marketing procedures is to integrate the various organizations' websites and link them to a common source, potentially the City's website. This would allow users to easily access information about programs and events being hosted by the various organizations at a central location.

This mid-term strategy supports policies 1 and 3.

Create a comprehensive marketing and branding strategic plan.

Over the years, the BDC has developed several marketing and advertising campaigns to promote Berwyn's businesses to the region and attract additional investments into the community. This strategy should be broadened beyond business development to promote the City's cultural, community, and quality-of-life assets. The strategic marketing and branding plan should include the following key components:

- **City Attributes**

This section would identify the various assets of the community that need to be highlighted and marketed. A two-pronged strategy should be adopted, one looking to identify assets that should be promoted locally and another to be promoted regionally. For example, community gardening and farmers market events should be actively marketed to local residents, while annual art festivals and public art displays should be marketed to the entire Chicago region.

- **Marketing Tools**

This section would discuss the various ways for the City and BDC to advertise events, e.g. monthly newsletters, trade show booths, business incentives packet, new resident information packet, web and multi-media advertising, etc.

- **Roles and Responsibilities**

This section would assign leadership roles to individual organizations in order to create accountability and clarity as the plan is implemented.

- **Alliances and Coordination**

This section would identify business organizations, civic institutions, non-profits, educational institutions, and other organizations that could be potential partners for the implementation of strategies.

If staff commitments and resources allow, the BDC should lead this initiative and potentially work with a marketing and branding consultant.

This long-term strategy supports policy 1.

Create a Wayfinding Signage Plan.

The City of Berwyn has a regular influx of visitors, employees, and commuters frequenting its medical, retail, entertainment, and recreational destinations. A city-wide Wayfinding Signage Plan would help these various groups to conveniently and easily find their destinations. The Plan should identify key locations and attractions that could benefit from directional signage and also propose potential designs and locations for such signage to be installed. One potential approach to developing signage is to divide the City into districts using the future land use map as a reference and create a signage design for each district, e.g. Historic District Wayfinding Signage, Destination Commercial Wayfinding Signage. This would ensure uniformity in the overall Wayfinding Signage design while allowing customization as per the character of each district. Local artists should be involved in the planning and design phase of the project, and also employed to help execute some of the key components of the signage plan.

The Wayfinding Signage Plan should also consider the design and placement of gateway signs to create an attractive entranceway into Berwyn. Potential locations for installing gateway signage should be identified within the Plan along with the physical design of the sign itself. Locations should include major roadways as well as non-motorized and transit (such as the Berwyn Metra station) entry points into the community.

This mid-term strategy supports policy 1.

Create a Public Art Ordinance and an Arts and Culture Committee.

The City should adopt a Public Art Ordinance detailing the criteria for art installation in public places. Criteria will ensure that installed art does not obstruct pedestrian travel or vehicular lines of sight, is aesthetically pleasing, and is appropriate for public display. Policies to promote arts-related businesses would be outlined, e.g. allowing artists housing in mixed-use and residential districts as a permitted use. The Ordinance should be illustrative and include examples of acceptable and unacceptable public art.

The Ordinance should outline the procedure that artists or private entities need to undertake in order to display their artwork in public areas. Additionally, the ordinance could potentially outline regulations to fund and promote public art within the community, e.g. a fee imposed on new development that could be deposited in a Municipal Arts Fund and utilized for the production and installation of permanent and temporary public art displays.

Revenues within the Municipal Arts Fund would be utilized by the City to commission local artists to create works of art consistent with the requirements of the Public Art Ordinance as well as display art in public spaces. Revenues within the fund would not be utilized for maintenance of artwork, which should be budgeted separately within the City budget. The Arts and Culture Committee should review all City proposals before making recommendations to the City Council for approval/denial of funds.

The City should create an Arts and Culture Committee that would serve the following functions:

- Propose the purchase, commission, execution and/or placement of works of art to the City Council, and recommend payment from the Municipal Arts Fund.
- Review artwork proposals from individuals or organizations and whether they qualify for funding from the Municipal Arts Fund.
- Review the level of maintenance required for artwork and coordinating with department heads responsible for such maintenance before recommending for approval to City Council.

The Committee members would be appointed by the Mayor and City Council and meet on a regular basis. The BDC and City of Berwyn would be in close communication with the Committee.

This short-term strategy supports policies 1 and 5.

Implementation Phasing

The strategies in the previous section included recommendations for phasing. This has been done in order to set realistic and achievable targets for the City given the finite staff time, resources, and funding available. Responsibility for initiating and sustaining implementation efforts for strategies outlined in this theme will fall mainly upon identified lead agencies/individuals including the Berwyn Arts Council, BDC, and City's Community Development Department.

For organization purposes, actions have been divided into two categories: 1) coordination and administrative actions that will move forward efforts related to the marketing and installation of public art and cultural activities and 2) policy actions that will provide a regulatory framework for the elected officials to evaluate, approve, and regulate arts and culture activities in the City. In the first category, increasing the staff resources devoted to arts and culture by the City is an important short-term activity, as is the ongoing development of partnerships, both locally and regionally. In the second category, beginning to undertake the creation of an ordinance to support public art in the City should be pursued in the short term.



"Bee Tree" sculpture by George Rhoads.

Photo by Eric Rogers: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/reallyboring/4533604834/in/set-72157623886119220/>.



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