

Initial Recommendation Directions for the Franklin Park O'Hare Industrial Corridor Plan (DRAFT)

The Village of Franklin Park has decided to create an O'Hare Industrial Corridor Plan which will define the vision for the corridor and the steps needed to achieve that vision. On March 4th, the Franklin Park O'Hare Industrial Corridor Plan Steering Committee reviewed and discussed the findings of the Existing Conditions Report. The report and follow-up discussion with the Steering Committee has provided an overall direction for formulating the Plan. The purpose of this document is to communicate the Plan's vision, goals, and recommendations for review, guidance, and general concurrence by the Village of Franklin Park and the Franklin Park O'Hare Industrial Corridor Plan Steering Committee

Summary of Key Findings

The Franklin Park O'Hare Industrial Corridor is an important industrial center for the Village, submarket, and region. In addition to its key location adjacent to the O'Hare International Airport and the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR)-Bensenville Intermodal Facility, the corridor is also home to major companies such as Life Fitness, Sloan Valve, and Allied Die Casting.

The corridor employs approximately 11,000 industrial workers in its 107 industrial businesses, which include firms in the manufacturing, transportation and warehousing, and wholesale trade industries. In this manner, the corridor represents 40-50% of the Village's total industrial workers and 25% of the Village's total industrial businesses. The strength of the corridor greatly contributes to Franklin Park's competitive position within the Inner O'Hare South/West Industrial Submarket which includes the Elk Grove Village, the Village of Bensenville, the City of Northlake, the Village of Schiller Park, as well as the Village of Franklin Park. Protecting and enhancing the economic viability of the industrial corridor is of great importance to the Village.

The manufacturing industry is of particular significance to the industrial corridor. Half of all industrial firms and two thirds of all industrial workers in the corridor fall within this sector. Most of the corridor's manufacturing businesses appear to almost exclusively utilize trucks to transport their goods to customers despite proximity to freight facilities such as O'Hare Airport and the CPR-Bensenville Intermodal Facility. At the same time, the O'Hare Airport and the intermodal facility have their own respective distribution centers, resulting in no exchange of goods between these three entities. Manufacturing, freight, and real estate dynamics and trends all contribute to the corridor's industry composition and the lack of interchange between various key players within the corridor.

Franklin Park's industrial firms and employees are supported by a variety of workforce development services. However, many of the businesses are unaware of the depth and breadth of services provided and some have expressed issues with employee attainment, training, and/or retention. Issues of program awareness and employee attainment, training, and



retention was also echoed by the Chicago Jobs Council who conducted interviews with public and private workforce development programs and services for this project.

Various roads, railways, and infrastructure connect Franklin Park to the rest of the region. A key part of this system for the O'Hare Industrial Corridor is the roadway network, as the corridor's industrial businesses rely upon trucks, more than any other freight mode, to transport goods. Designated truck routes in the corridor are Mannheim Road and I-294, however trucks traverse across several other corridor roads. The road network also serves workers, visitors, and residents traveling to and from the community and the industrial corridor.

Recent studies have shown that the roads in the community, particularly in the corridor, are in poor condition. The Village has undergone efforts to improve the roadways such as the recent repavement of Franklin Avenue, but a high volume of roadway projects remain. Village staff estimates that remaining roadway infrastructure projects amount to approximately \$290 million.

In addition to roadways, there are public transit options for commuter travel. Both Pace Suburban Bus and Metra Rail maintain service to Franklin Park and provide connections to municipalities in the surrounding areas. Businesses report that workers do not utilize these options and mainly drive to work. Potential reasons for this mode choice include the lack of connection from a designated bus stop or train station to specific businesses and the difficulty in competing with private automobiles for convenience.

A significant transportation project that will have an impact on the O'Hare Industrial Corridor will be the Elgin O'Hare Western Access (EOWA) project. The EOWA project includes the construction of a new, all-electronic toll road around the western border of O'Hare Airport, linking existing toll roads as well as rehabilitating and extending expressways in the vicinity of O'Hare Airport. A specific project feature valuable to the corridor is the Taft Connector, which provides direct access into the airport via an overpass connecting Franklin Avenue and Irving Park Road. A system interchange is planned at the western edge of King Avenue, allowing access between I-294 and the EOWA road systems. EOWA partial interchanges are also designed to be constructed in the corridor to allow northbound and southbound entrances and exits. These interchanges and connections between the O'Hare Industrial Corridor, I-294, EOWA, and Taft Avenue Connector will provide the corridor with great access to the O'Hare Airport and the entire region and make the corridor even more valuable for industrial businesses.

Flooding is a major concern for the O'Hare Industrial Corridor and the Village in general. Impervious surfaces, a sizeable amount of land designated as a Special Flood Hazard Area, and dated infrastructure all contribute to stormwater management issues. Local and regional studies have examined such issues and recommended various capital improvement projects.



Other concerns include brownfield sites, which are defined as “real property, the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse of which may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a substance, pollutant, or contaminant.”¹ Such sites are prevalent in the corridor and Franklin Park and pose an obstacle for redevelopment.

O’Hare Industrial Corridor Plan Outline

The O’Hare Industrial Corridor is facing a critical time in its growth and development. The O’Hare Industrial Corridor Plan will help the Village and industrial businesses navigate through the identified issues and poise the corridor for long-term economic stability.

The **objective** of the O’Hare Industrial Corridor Plan is to optimize the corridor to meet future demands and continue to contribute to the community and region’s economic vitality. The Plan will achieve this objective through the establishment of a vision for the corridor as well as the presentation of goals and recommendations to help achieve this vision.

The Plan will discuss goals and recommendations framed within four topic areas:

- Redevelopment
- Business Retention and Growth
- Mobility Improvements
- Stormwater Management

Redevelopment

Some of the key recommendations that will be outlined in the Plan to help Franklin Park achieve its redevelopment goal will include:

- **Modify land use regulations and policies.**
Actions and policies towards land use and development must promote growth in terms of redevelopment, improvements, expansion, and retention. The Plan will review land uses and zoning within the corridor and evaluate if the uses, height and bulk requirements, and other regulations are prohibitive for businesses and development. In addition to local zoning codes, the Plan will also take into account Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) regulations, which mainly pose height restrictions in the corridor. This type of constraint will be explored and understood within the context of land use and future development within the corridor.

Equally important is the implementation of the Village’s development regulations. The plan will review and evaluate Franklin Park’s development

¹ [Small Business Liability Relief and Brownfields Revitalization Act, 2002.](#)



approval process. Where necessary, recommendations will identify opportunities to simplify and streamline processes to allow development to break ground, redevelop, or reinvest in a timely, cost-effective manner.

- **Redevelop or reuse underutilized properties.**

Overall, the O'Hare Industrial Corridor has a relatively low vacancy rate, but some parcels can be considered underutilized properties. These properties represent key redevelopment opportunities as they can build off of the existing synergy among industrial uses, take advantage of the upcoming infrastructure plans such as the EOWA, and become economically advantageous to the Village. Alternatively, one or a few of such properties may also be ideal for alternative uses such as infrastructure projects, particularly to manage stormwater.

The plan will identify underutilized properties and propose future uses by looking at combination of property and building variables. These variables are detailed in Appendix A.

- **Address brownfields assessment and remediation issues.**

Sites containing brownfields are prevalent in the O'Hare Industrial Corridor and Franklin Park given the community's strong industrial and manufacturing history. Given the high cost of brownfield assessment and remediation, the Plan will explore and suggest cost-effective recommendations and partnerships to address these issues and minimize their impact on redevelopment.

- **Encourage more sustainable industrial development and practices.**

The Plan will recommend the Village encourage property owners and future developers to include energy efficient building technologies, processes, and practices. These additions in older buildings (as well as new buildings) can effectively reduce energy and water consumption, energy costs, and associated environmental impacts. Specific recommendations will include audits, retrofits, and appliance replacements.

Business Retention and Growth

Some of the key recommendations that will be outlined in the Plan to help achieve the corridor achieve its business retention and growth goal include:

- **Strengthen local and regional partnerships.**

Partnerships are imperative to the future success of the industrial corridor. The Plan will recommend strengthening partnerships between the Village and local businesses and property owners to provide an opportunity for all parties to identify problems, collaborate on solutions, and ultimately support and retain



these businesses. Such relationships can also transition into long-term public-private partnerships that help implement projects and other efforts.

The Plan will also suggest enhancing sub-regional and regional partnerships which can provide a platform to pool resources and leverage funding and support for regional issues. Such issues can include the regional tax policies, infrastructure projects, and regional manufacturing and freight projects and programs.

- **Connect businesses with resources for growth and advancement.**
Industrial businesses within the corridor can benefit from resources that address their operational, workforce, business, and financial needs. The Plan will explore a potential forum to connect these businesses with public-sector financial and business programs, venture capital firms, private equity firms, as well as consultants and non-profits that specialize in manufacturing productivity and growth.
- **Maintain and increase workforce development programs and accessibility.**
The evolving manufacturing landscape has created new challenges for manufacturers which include the workforce skills gap. The Plan will discuss building relationships with local workforce development programs such as community colleges, secondary schools, training programs, and manufacturing associations. In addition, the Plan will recommend the Village's participation in the Golden Corridor Advanced Manufacturing Group (GCAMG), a diverse group of employers, educational institutions, local governments, training providers, and other stakeholders along the I-90 corridor. The group formed in 2009, and CMAP recently assisted GCAMG in their strategic organization, operation, and long-term plan so they can effectively aggregate resources and bolster the area's manufacturing workforce over the next several decades. Current communities in the GCAMG are shown on Appendix B.

Mobility Improvements

Some of the key recommendations that will be outlined in the Plan to help the corridor achieve its mobility improvements goal include:

- **Create a sub-regional truck routes system.**
Most businesses and brokers working within the industrial corridor have reported that businesses generally utilize trucks over other freight carrier modes, suggesting that local and regional trucks routes are imperative to the corridor's future.



Currently Mannheim Road and I-294 are the only designated truck routes in the corridor, although trucks traverse across several other roads in the corridor and traffic will likely increase with the upcoming EOWA. Consequently, the Plan will explore opportunities for Franklin Park to collaborate with nearby communities and evaluate the current truck routes and create a comprehensive and well-marked network of truck routes and connections within the subregion.

- **Continue to upgrade and repair roads**

Results from a series of pavement assessments illustrate that the overall condition of the roadways throughout Franklin Park has slightly improved over the last few years; however, there are many areas in need of upgrade and repair. The 2012 pavement assessment indicated that several roads within the O'Hare Industrial Corridor are in poor condition.

Maintaining and improving roads is challenge for Franklin Park as the Village is responsible for identifying and pursuing funding sources for such costly projects. The Plan will explore prioritization and potential partnerships necessary for road maintenance and improvements.

- **Enhance employee accessibility.**

In addition to the movement of goods, manufacturers value the movement of people, specifically their employees. Single occupancy vehicles appear to be a popular transportation mode for the corridor's workers. Decreased reliance and usage of automobiles and effective increases in multi-modal transportation accessibility and usage can help reduce automobile congestion and expand accessibility to a larger labor pool.

The Plan will discuss enhancing accessibility to the corridor through improved connections to suburban and regional rail and bus systems as well as promoting other transportation modes. Such connections and modes could include vanpooling, ridesharing programs, car-sharing programs, and pedestrian paths.

Stromwater Management

Some of the key recommendations that will be outlined in the Plan to help the corridor achieve its stormwater management goal will include:

- **Endorse regional stormwater projects, efforts, and partnerships.**

Flood mitigation is complex and costly, primarily due to the fact that the source of flooding extends far beyond the borders of Franklin Park to the regional scale, as well as the expense associated with underground infrastructure improvements. Increasing the overall capacity of the entire sewer system is a long-term and expensive process which is under the authority of regional agencies.



Understanding these obstacles, the Plan will recommend the Village endorse regional stormwater projects, efforts, and partnerships which include the 2013 Cook County Watershed Management Ordinance, 2007 Cook County Stormwater Management Plan, 2011 Lower Des Plaines Watershed Plan, and the construction of the TARP McCook Terminal Reservoir. The Plan will also suggest the Village continue to provide their support for subregional stormwater management in areas around O'Hare Airport given current and upcoming infrastructure projects such as O'Hare Modernization Program (OMP) and EOWA.

- **Prioritize local stormwater projects.**

In addition to larger regional projects, focus will also be placed on local stormwater infrastructure. The Village of Franklin Park's sewer system consists of 93 miles of gravity sewers including 41 miles of combined sewers, 32 miles of storm sewer, and 20 miles of sanitary sewers. The community's residential areas are served by a combined sanitary and stormwater system while the industrial corridor and other industrial areas are served by separate stormwater and sanitary systems.

The Plan will review the current flow, condition, and capacity reported within the sewer system and highlight reported areas of flooding. In addition, the Plan will highlight proposed local stormwater capital improvement projects, as well as prioritization, phasing, cost, and funding sources associated with such projects.

- **Encourage private site-scale stormwater management projects.**

In addition to regional and local governments and agencies, landowners and businesses can also participate in stormwater management efforts. Consequently, the Plan will discuss site-scale techniques for existing property owners to reduce the quantity of stormwater runoff, including green infrastructure techniques. These could include native landscaping, bioswales, rain cisterns, and green roofs. The plan will suggest updates to regulatory standards to reduce stormwater runoff of future development.



Appendix A

The plan will identify underutilized properties and propose future uses by looking at combination of property and building variables which could include but are not limited to:

Property and Building Variables

Property

- Proximity to EOWA, road improvements, and public transit
- Recommendations/acquisitions in accordance to current plans and studies
- Location within Floodplain/Floodway, TIF Districts
- Land Use
- Size of Parcel

Building:

- Ceiling Height
- Building Class
- Vacancy
- Total Building Area
- Data Constructed

Both

- Assessed Value of Improvement/Assessed Value of Land Ratio;



Appendix B

Golden Corridor Advanced Manufacturing Partnership

