



City of Harvard Comprehensive Plan

Adopted January 26, 2016



Acknowledgements

Thank you to the following groups, entities, residents, business owners, and elected officials who participated in the creation of this Plan:

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Jay Nolan, Mayor

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Deb Szczap, City Treasurer

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Harvard Chamber of Commerce

Harvard Community Unit School District 50

Harvard Diggins Library

Harvard Economic Development Corporation

Mercy Health System

Metra

McHenry County Conservation District

McHenry Housing Authority

McHenry County Division of Transportation

Pace

Regional Transit Authority

St. Joseph Catholic Church

The Land Conservancy of McHenry County

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David A. Nelson, City of Harvard

Jay Nolan, Mayor

Carl Oppen, City of Harvard

Steve Santeler, City of Harvard

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Richard Stoxen,
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Mark Stricker, Arrowhead Industrial Park

Funding Acknowledgement

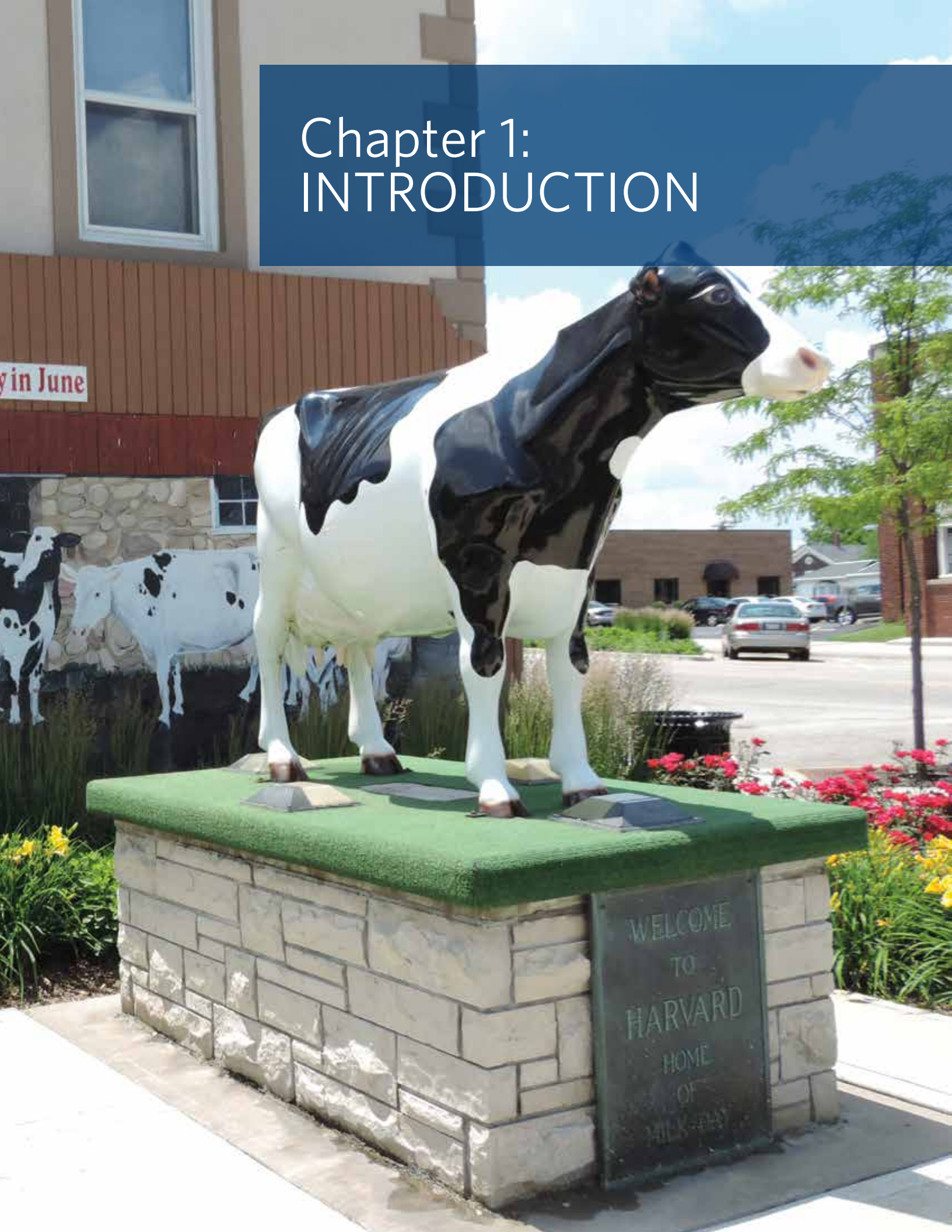
This project was supported through the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning's (CMAP) Local Technical Assistance (LTA) program, which is funded by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Federal Transit Administration (FTA), U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), and the Chicago Community Trust. CMAP would like to thank these funders for their support for this project.



Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction	4
Chapter 2: Community Vision and Future Land Use Plan	8
Chapter 3: Agriculture, Land, and Water Resources	16
Chapter 4: Economic Development	34
Chapter 5: Homes and Neighborhoods	54
Chapter 6: Community Engagement	66
Chapter 7: Transportation	76
Chapter 8: Implementation	94
Appendix	102

Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION



Purpose of the Comprehensive Plan

A comprehensive plan outlines the vision of a community's desired physical environment 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 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 15 to 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.

Plan Implementation

Here are some practical ways to ensure that future activities are consistent with the Comprehensive Plan:

Annual Work Programs and Budgets: The City Board and Administration should be cognizant of the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan when preparing annual work programs and budgets.

Development Approvals: The approvals process for development proposals, including rezoning and subdivision plats, should be a central means of implementing the Comprehensive Plan. The zoning and subdivision ordinance should be updated in response to regulatory strategies presented in the Comprehensive Plan.

Capital Improvements: Capital improvement projects should be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan's land use policies and infrastructure recommendations (water, sewer, stormwater, transportation, and parks and recreation). Major new improvements that are not reflected in the Comprehensive Plan, and which could dramatically affect the plan's recommendations, should be preceded by a Comprehensive Plan update.

Economic Incentives: Economic incentives should carry out Comprehensive Plan goals and policies.

Private Development Decisions: Property owners and developers should consider the strategies and recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan in their own land planning and investment decisions. City decision-makers will be using the Comprehensive Plan as a guide in their development-related deliberations.

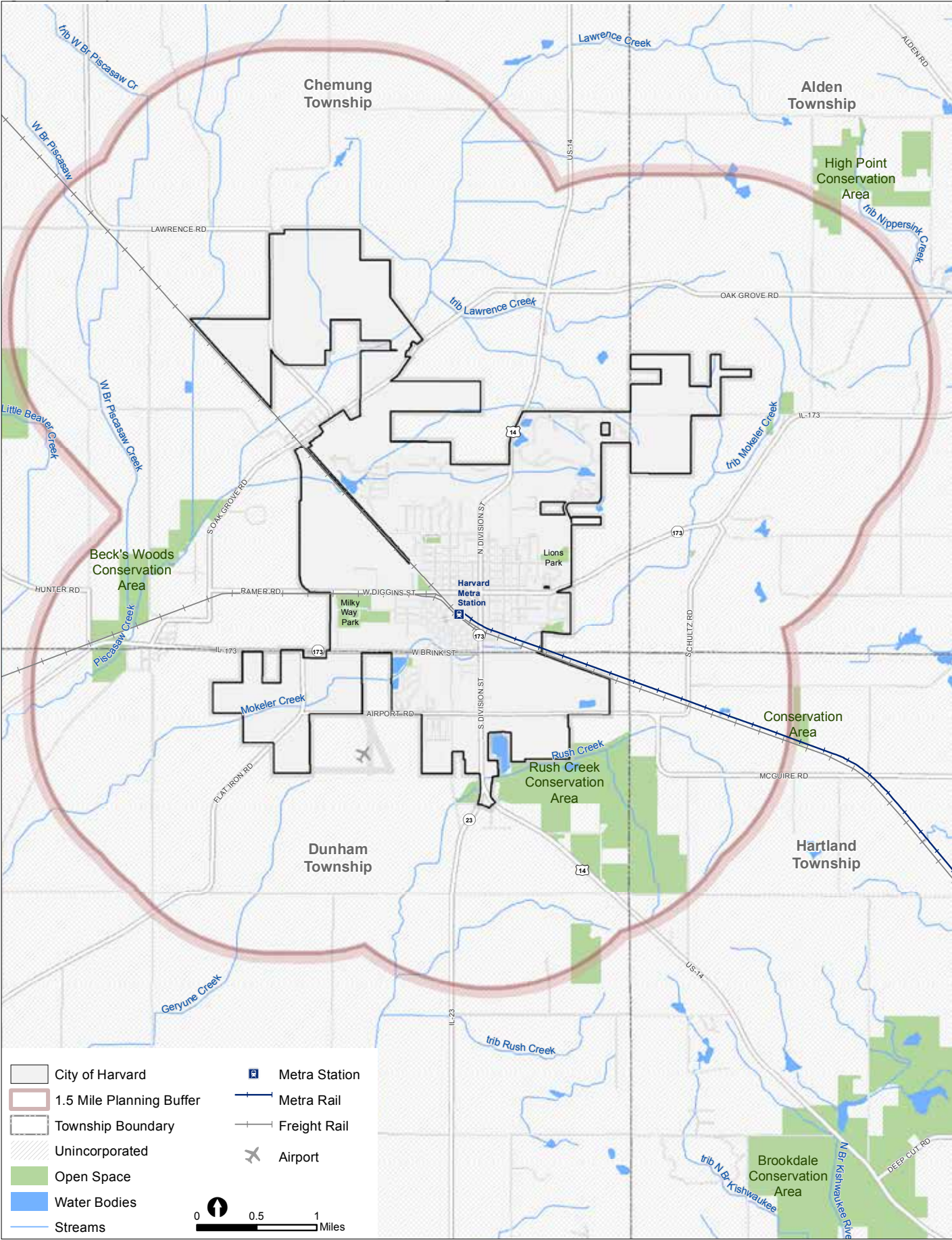
A comprehensive plan is composed of a series of distinct yet interrelated elements defined within the Illinois Local Planning Assistance Act (Public Act 92-0768). The key elements addressed in the Harvard Comprehensive Plan are based upon those outlined in the State Statute and include land use, economic 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." The planning area includes the City of Harvard as well as a 1.5-mile boundary around the existing municipal limits (Figure 1.1).

The process to create the City's Comprehensive Plan included multiple steps undertaken over approximately 18 months. The process was crafted with assistance from a Steering Committee consisting of various Harvard stakeholders and designed to include resident and business owner input throughout. At the beginning of May 2014, the Steering Committee met with the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) staff to develop a scope of work for the project. A work plan established program tasks, a timeline for the program, and recommended participation by a community steering committee to assist CMAP staff in developing the final plan and recommendations.

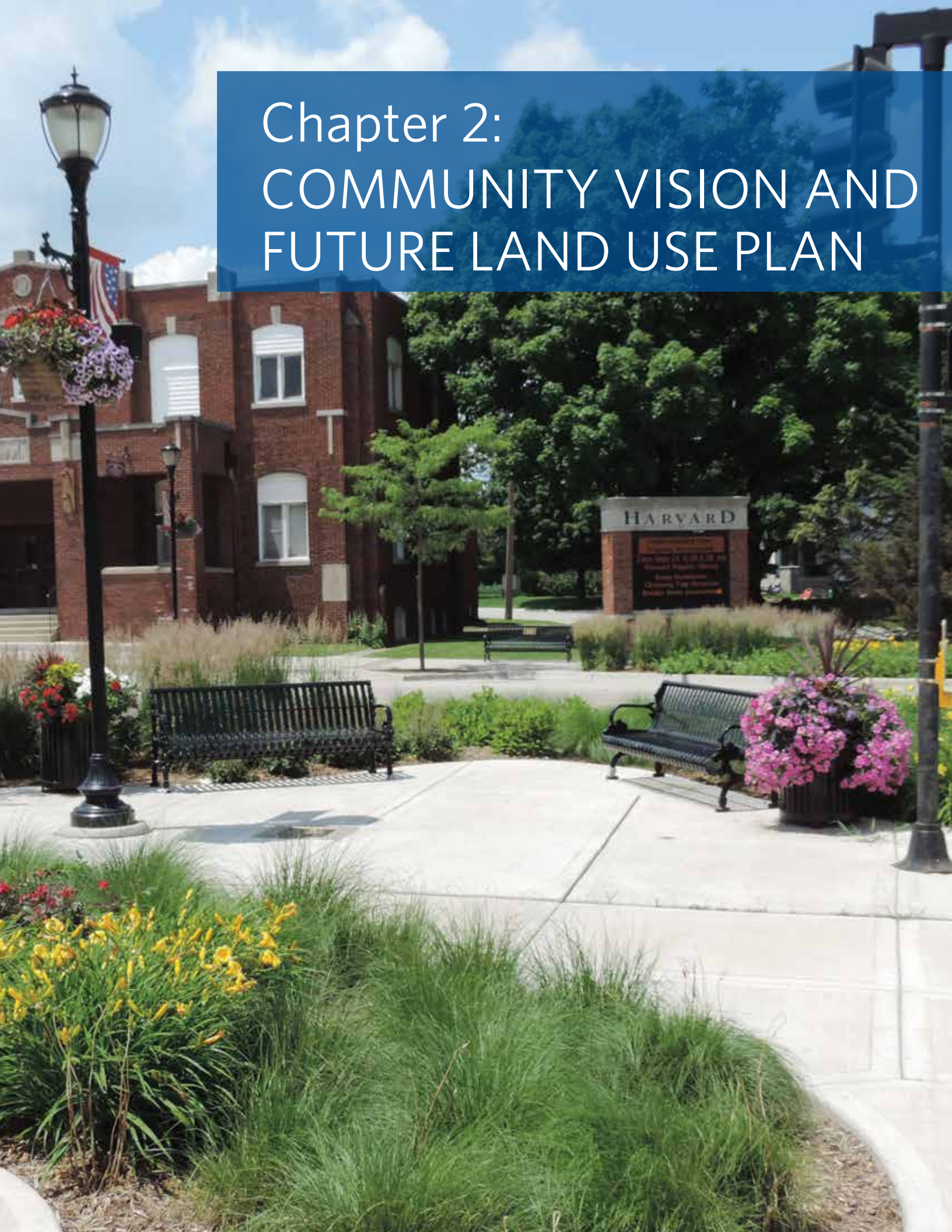
The Harvard Comprehensive Plan provides recommendations for a number of topic areas and geographic locations. Chapter 2 contains the Future Land Use Plan, the long-term policy for the use of land within the current Harvard boundary, as well as the unincorporated land within the 1.5-mile planning area boundary. Chapters 3 through 7 begin with an overarching statement of the community's vision for 5 specific topic areas: Agriculture, Land, and Water Resources; Economic Development; Homes and Neighborhoods; Community Engagement, and Transportation. Each of these chapters also includes a brief summary of existing conditions and outlines a set of recommendations. Chapter 8 is focused on implementation and includes a description of actions to be undertaken by the community after Plan adoption.

Figure 1.1 City of Harvard, Illinois and 1.5-mile planning boundary



Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, 2015.

Chapter 2: COMMUNITY VISION AND FUTURE LAND USE PLAN



This chapter translates the community's vision into physical terms by providing a general pattern for the location, distribution, and characteristics of future land uses in Harvard.

Vision statement

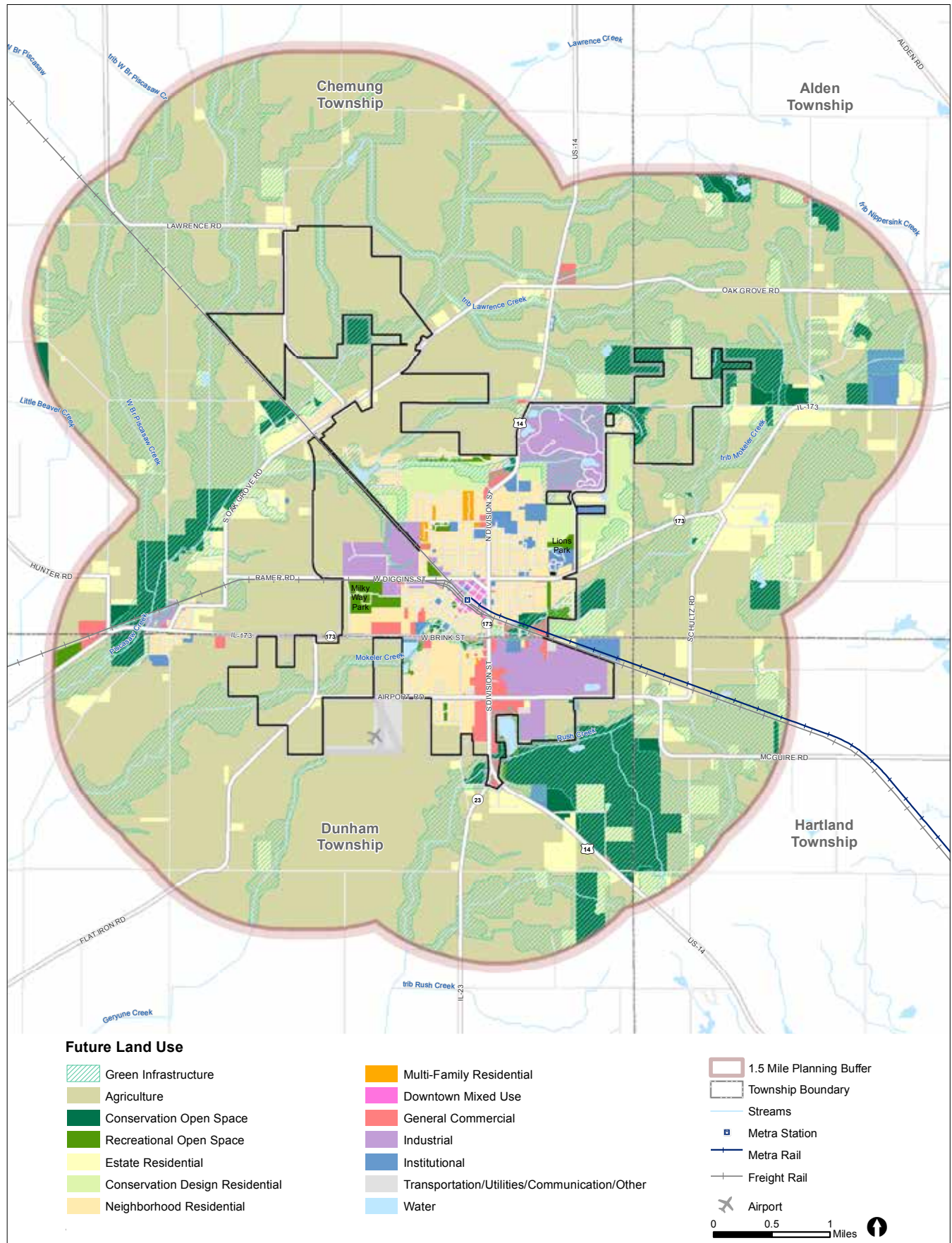
The public visioning process identified a number of desired outcomes, listed below, that serve as the foundational basis for the comprehensive plan recommendations.

- Harvard will work to maintain its abundant farmlands and natural resources, which provide multiple benefits to residents and give the community its unique character.
- Harvard will continue to create a vibrant and sustainable business community that creates new jobs and supports local entrepreneurship that builds on the natural, agricultural, and cultural assets of the community.
- Harvard will work to preserve its established neighborhoods while seeking opportunities for increasing rehabilitation and homeownership, enhancing neighborhood parks and open spaces, and ensuring new development protects community resources.
- Harvard will build an inclusive community where all residents can help contribute to the future prosperity of the city.
- Harvard will continue to ensure that the transportation network allows residents to drive, walk, or bike safely and conveniently throughout the City for daily needs and activities and accommodates the movement of goods and services.

Future land use plan

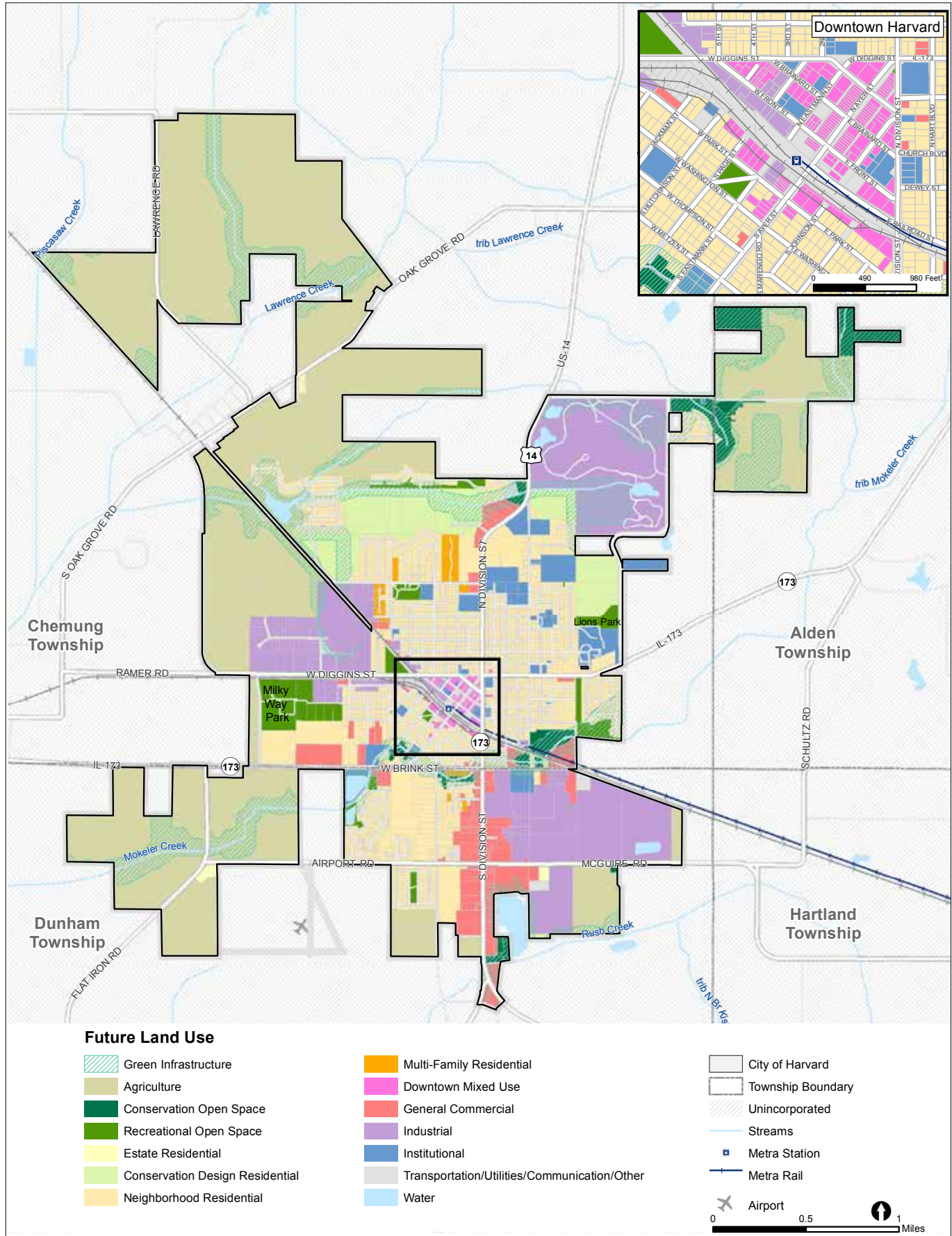
The core element of the Comprehensive Plan is the Future Land Use Plan, the long-term policy for the use of land within the current Harvard boundary, as well as the unincorporated land within the 1.5-mile planning area boundary. Figure 2.1 depicts the Future Land Use Plan at the broader scale; Figure 2.2 provides a closer look at the land use recommendations within the municipal boundary. The future land use plan builds upon the existing land use pattern (Figure 2.3), while proposing a combination of redevelopment and better utilization of specific areas to help the City realize its vision over the next 15 years.

Figure 2.1 Future land use plan in Harvard and 1.5-mile planning boundary



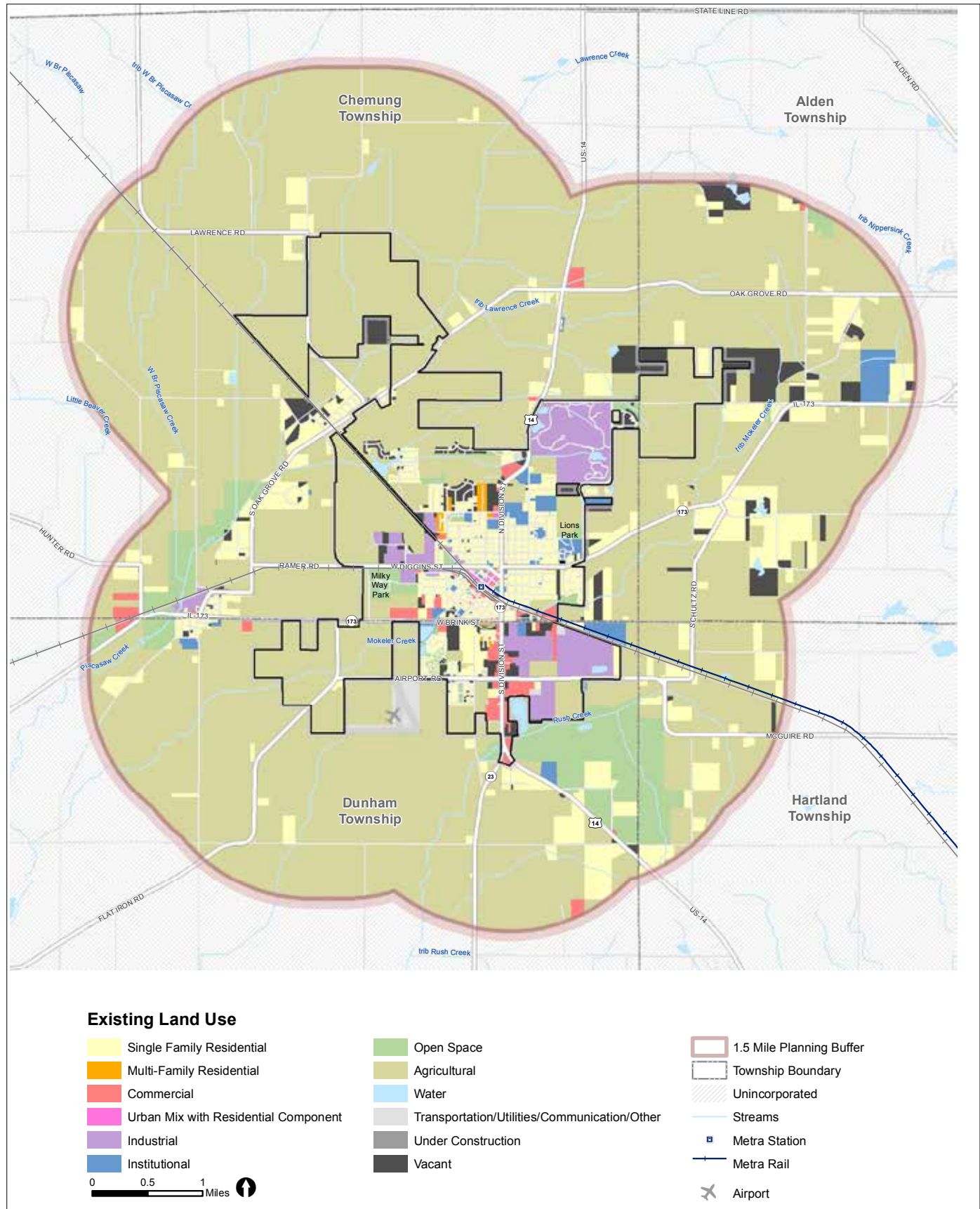
Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, 2015.

Figure 2.2 Future land use plan in Harvard



Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, 2015.

Figure 2.3 Existing land uses in Harvard and 1.5-mile planning boundary



Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, 2015.

2.1 Future land use classifications

- **Agricultural**

Agriculture is a highly valued and prioritized land use that is considered a highest and best use for the designated areas for the time horizon of this plan. The Plan designates land for agricultural use if the land is currently used for this purpose, contains prime soils, and/or is located on the edges of the community. Agricultural retail and wholesale businesses that support agricultural activities should be allowed in these areas and could include flower and vegetable outlets, orchards, nurseries, small scale farming operations, lawn and garden stores, and supporting businesses such as suppliers and equipment providers.

- **Green Infrastructure**

This overlay land use category highlights those lands identified in the McHenry County Green Infrastructure Plan as containing significant natural resources, such as wetlands, marshes, oak groves, and streams. This land use category is similar in scope, though more comprehensive, than the Environmentally-Sensitive Area land use category in the McHenry County 2030 Comprehensive Plan. These lands may not be currently protected or regulated and many support other uses, including agricultural, residential, commercial, or industrial on portions of the parcel.

- **Conservation Open Space**

Primarily composed of lands owned by either the McHenry County Conservation District (MCCD) or preserved through conservation easements, these parcels are designed to maintain habitat and other natural resources, though active and passive recreation may be a secondary use. The Plan identifies further opportunities to expand conservation open space, based on the presence of natural resources as identified in the McHenry County Green Infrastructure Plan, either through easements or acquisition.

- **Recreational Open Space**

These parcels are primarily designed to provide active or passive recreational space and are composed of the City's nine parks as well as private clubs devoted to active recreational uses.

- **Estate Residential**

Lower-density, detached single-family housing, many of which are associated with nearby agricultural fields, is sprinkled throughout the Harvard planning area and these existing uses are expected to continue in the future.

- **Conservation Design Residential**

This residential land use category is intended to allow for some flexibility in lot size and density to help preserve the community's open character and natural resources while accommodating a reasonable degree of growth and development. This flexibility could result in the concentration of allowable density on a portion of a development site to create larger areas of open space preserved for a variety of uses including small-scale food production, recreation, open space, and conservation. Development within this land use category should utilize green infrastructure practices at the site and neighborhood scale to minimize stormwater runoff. It is primarily located in areas recognized as having significant resources by the McHenry County Green Infrastructure Plan, including wetlands, groundwater recharge areas, and oak groves.

- **Neighborhood Residential**

More compact than estate residential, the neighborhood residential land use category includes the early neighborhoods of Harvard as well as the more recent subdivisions that build off of the City's gridded street network. This land use accommodates detached and attached single-family homes on a variety of lot sizes. Certain parcels accommodate neighborhood parks and recreational amenities that serve the neighborhood.

- **Multi-Family Residential**

This land use category consists of the Northfield Court Apartments, Creekside Square Apartments, Autumn Glen, and apartment buildings along 8th Street that make up most of Harvard's existing multi-family dwellings. The Plan does not envision a large expansion of multi-family residential in the planning horizon, except for units associated with mixed-use development in the downtown.

- **Downtown Mixed Use**

Harvard's historic downtown consists of a mix of retail, commercial, office, institutional, and residential uses arranged in a compact, moderately dense, and pedestrian-friendly development pattern. Many of the commercial buildings have two stories, minimal front setbacks, multi-family residential or office above, and access to on-street parking or off-street parking located nearby. The Plan supports additional development in this area that fits within this historic context. Buildings could be configured as single-use buildings with complementary uses in close proximity (e.g., a residential building next to a commercial building). Alternately, the development pattern could mix uses within the same building (either vertically or horizontally) in appropriate locations. While commercial and service uses within the Downtown are encouraged, automobile-oriented uses such as drive-throughs and auto services are not appropriate for this area.

- **General Commercial**

While not at the same scale or density found in Harvard's Downtown, these parcels contain retail, office, and service-oriented commercial uses that serve the needs of households within a walking or short-driving distance of residential neighborhoods as well as visitors from other areas.

- **Industrial**

These parcels include smaller-scale manufacturing and warehouse operations, as well as mineral extraction. The Plan builds on the existing industrial land use areas which are found in three general areas: the Arrowhead Industrial Park and surrounding parcels, the former Motorola Plant (currently vacant), and the area southeast of the Brink and Division Street intersection, which includes a mineral extraction operation.

- **Institutional**

These parcels contain all existing institutional uses (religious organizations, hospitals, schools, and public facilities) in the City.

- **Transportation, Utility, and Communications**

This land use category includes land dedicated to transportation, such as the Union Pacific Railroad along which freight and passenger (Metra) trains operate, Metra and City off-street parking lots, and the Dacy Airport. It also includes parcels used for communication, electric, and gas utilities.

- **Water**

Mokeler and Lawrence Creeks are the major waterbodies that flow through Harvard. Rush and Piscasaw Creeks are also natural water features within the planning boundary.

Chapter 3: AGRICULTURE, LAND, AND WATER RESOURCES



Farmfields are a prominent feature of
Harvard's landscape.
Photo credit: Tony Alter.

Harvard will work to maintain its abundant farmlands and natural resources, which provide multiple benefits to residents and give the community its unique character.

Summary of Existing Conditions

The network of land and water resources within and around Harvard performs natural ecosystem functions and provides a variety of services and benefits to people and wildlife. These resources are commonly referred to as green infrastructure to highlight their importance to society and have been documented in the McHenry County Green Infrastructure Plan as well as the Chicago Wilderness Green Infrastructure Vision.¹ Encompassing 10,287 acres or nearly half (47 percent) of the land within the Harvard 1.5-mile planning area, these resources provide approximately \$87.8 million of ecosystem services annually.² Most of these lands are currently in private ownership and are centered on riparian corridors, high-quality wetlands, and other natural resources; all of which also contribute to the character of the community (see Figure 3.1).

Within Harvard, approximately 2,647 acres or 50 percent of the existing municipal land area is classified as agriculture. In addition, a majority of the planning area is agricultural land, much of which is designated as Prime Farmland by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) because it has the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for producing food and other agricultural products (Figure 3.2). Most farms are growing corn or soybean; however, several farms are producing food for direct human consumption.

Harvard is located within the north-central portion of the Kishwaukee River Basin. The City is roughly subdivided between the Lawrence Creek Watershed to the north and the Mokeler Creek and Rush Creek Watersheds to the south. A watershed plan was developed for Lawrence Creek in 2008 and endorsed by the Harvard City Council in April 2009. The plan makes several recommendations to improve water quality including the use of agricultural best management practices (BMPs), and urban runoff BMPs related to stormwater management, as well as riparian ecosystem restoration.³

Like other McHenry County communities, the people and economy of Harvard are 100 percent dependent on groundwater resources for their drinking water supply. McHenry County, recognizing the importance of protecting the quality and availability of their drinking water, led the development of a multi-stakeholder effort that resulted in creation of the Water Resources Action Plan in 2007.⁴ With the exception of the northeastern portion of the City and planning area, much of Harvard and its planning area are situated atop a groundwater recharge area that is classified as either “high potential” or “moderately high potential” for aquifer contamination.

Deep aquifer head levels are in decline in McHenry County, particularly in the area of Marengo, just south of Harvard. Presently, head level measurements do not show any decline around Harvard, but all users of deep wells in the region should remain aware of ongoing studies by the Illinois State Water Survey (ISWS), their findings, and the general conclusion that at the regional scale, the deep-bedrock aquifer is being mined.⁵

¹ McHenry County, 2012. “Green Infrastructure Plan,” see www.co.mchenry.il.us/home/showdocument?id=7773 and Chicago Wilderness Green Infrastructure Vision, see www.cmap.illinois.gov/livability/sustainability/open-space/green-infrastructure-vision.

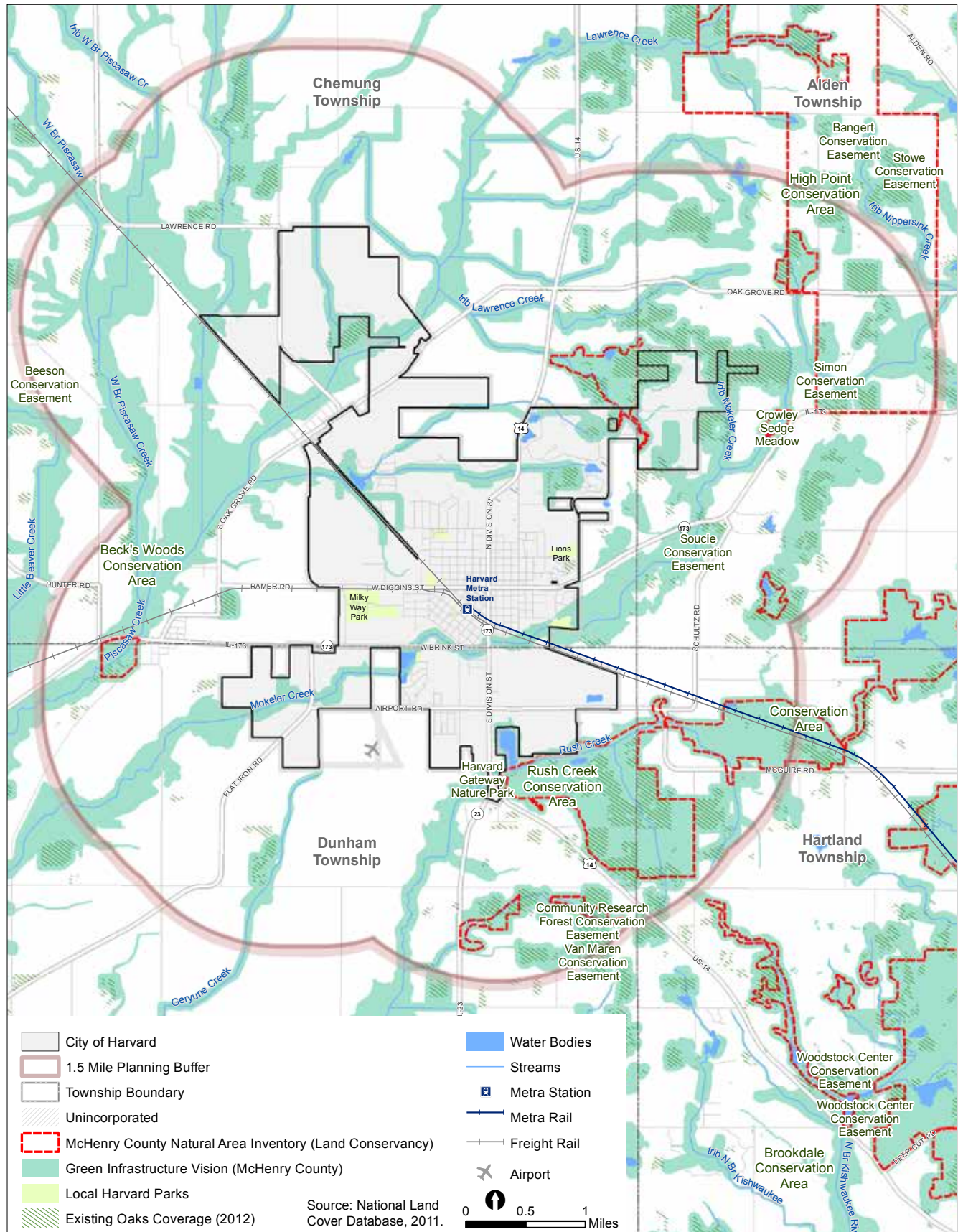
² CMAP, GIV 2.3 2015, which estimated the value of four ecosystem services, flood control, groundwater recharge, water purification, and carbon storage.

³ CMAP, 2008. “Lawrence Creek Watershed Plan: Technical Report,” see www.cmap.illinois.gov/livability/water/water-quality-management/watershed-planning.

⁴ McHenry County, 2007. “Water Resources Action Plan,” see www.co.mchenry.il.us/county-government/departments-j-z/planning-development/divisions/water-resources/water-resource-action-plan.

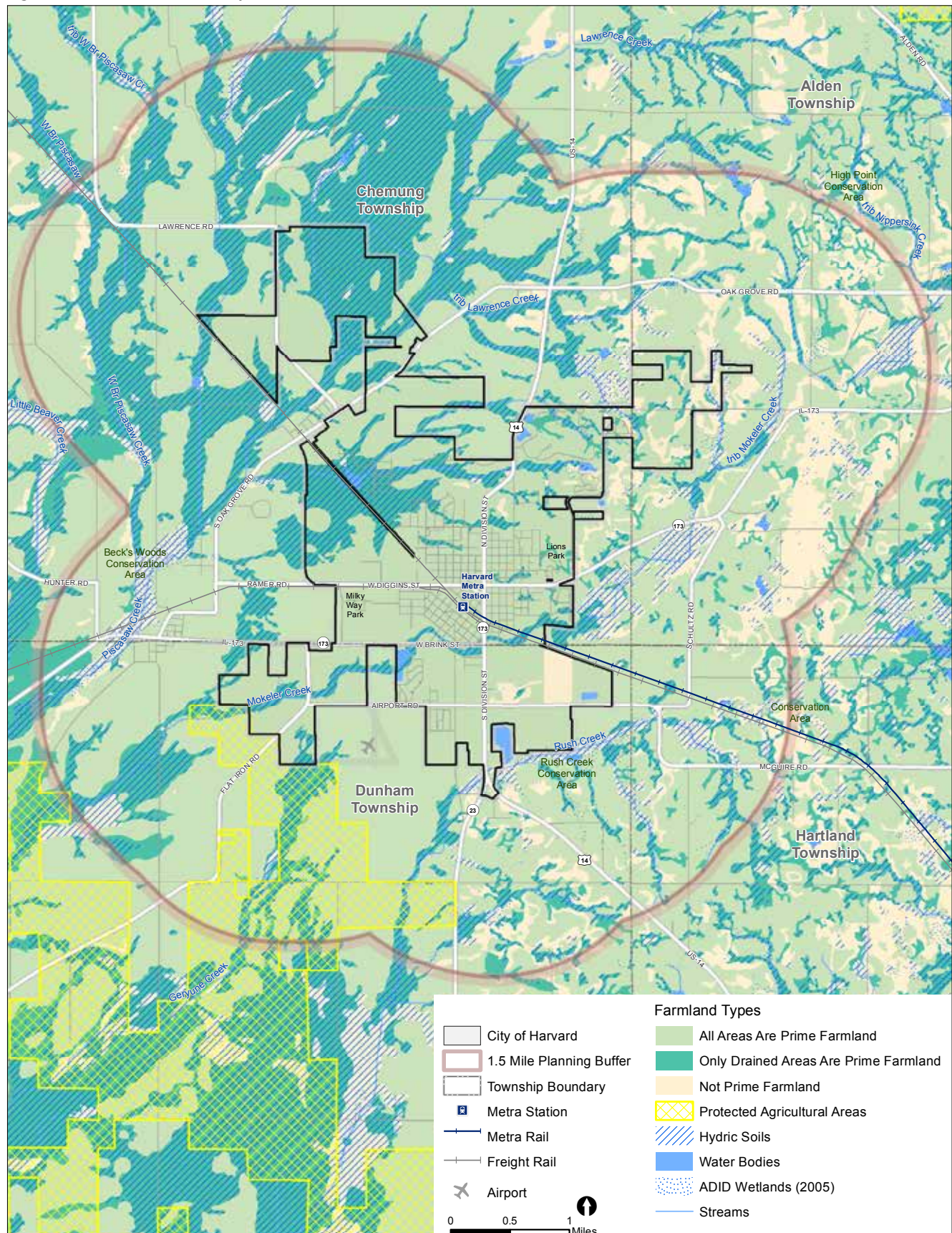
⁵ The latest findings of synoptic measurement of the sandstone aquifers were presented by ISWS at the Water 2050 Regional Forum held at CMAP on January 15, 2015, see www.cmap.illinois.gov/livability/water/water-2050-implementation/regional-forum.

Figure 3.1 Green infrastructure



Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, 2015.

Figure 3.2 Prime farmland and hydric soils



Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, 2015.

Recommendations

3.1 Work with agricultural landowners to protect farmland

Over the past two decades, prime agricultural lands throughout the county have been converted to development. This pattern stalled in the late 2000s, but has the potential to re-emerge as the economy improves. McHenry County has emphasized the need to preserve agricultural lands as they contribute to the County's economy and its rural character. In the Harvard area, many agricultural parcels are held by landowners who wish to continue to farm their property or maintain the rural character or open space that is prevalent in the community.

This section focuses on a set of strategies to protect farmland, while Chapter 4 outlines recommendations to support the local agricultural economy. As a first step, Harvard has designated those areas it wishes to remain primarily agricultural on its Future Land Use Plan (Figure 2.1). A number of additional strategies can assist in preserving farmland, farmsteads, and agricultural uses as a means of protecting open space, rural character, and scenic, cultural, and historic assets.

Adopt regulatory changes to support agricultural uses

The City should update the zoning map and ordinance to reflect the vision of the future land use plan. The uses allowed in the agricultural zoning district should be reviewed carefully to ensure they are compatible with maintaining agricultural production. Once that is complete, the City should carefully consider rezoning requests for land zoned as agricultural to ensure that high-quality farmland is preserved when possible.

In order to preserve agricultural use and the quality of life of nearby residents, Harvard should review ordinances to ensure a balance between the sometimes conflicting needs of farmers and residents. This regulatory update should continue to support the economic viability of agriculture activities while also buffering existing residential areas from the impacts of agricultural operations, and should be coordinated with those highlighted in Chapter 4 to promote the agricultural economy.

Green Infrastructure

The term "green infrastructure" refers to related but distinct concepts that work together to conserve natural ecosystem values and functions, contribute to clean air and water, and provide a variety of benefits to people and wildlife. At the community, regional, or watershed scale, green infrastructure is the interconnected network of preserved or restored natural lands and waters that provide essential environmental functions, such as habitat corridors and water resource protection. At the neighborhood scale, green infrastructure incorporates planning and design approaches such as compact, mixed-use development, parking reductions, and street trees and other vegetation that reduce impervious surfaces, help manage stormwater, and make communities greener, more livable, and more attractive. At the site scale, green infrastructure practices (also known as stormwater BMPs) mimic natural systems by filtering and infiltrating stormwater using landscape elements such as rain gardens or swales that allow it to seep into the ground, using trees and other vegetation to soak up water, and using rain barrels or cisterns to capture stormwater for reuse.

Promote voluntary land dedications or easements

Landowners should be encouraged to voluntarily dedicate land or easements to the county, a rural preservation trust, or other organization, provided that the appropriate management structure is in place and to enact limitations on how the land can be used, for agriculture or otherwise. These easements typically result in lower property taxes for the landowner. McHenry County has a number of groups that the City and interested landowners could work with to preserve farmland, including McHenry County's Agricultural Conservation Easement and Farmland Protection Program and the Land Conservancy of McHenry County. Harvard should maintain communication with agricultural landowners to discuss preservation options with those who are interested. The City should engage local and regional land trusts to identify priority areas for agricultural easements as a way to protect land.

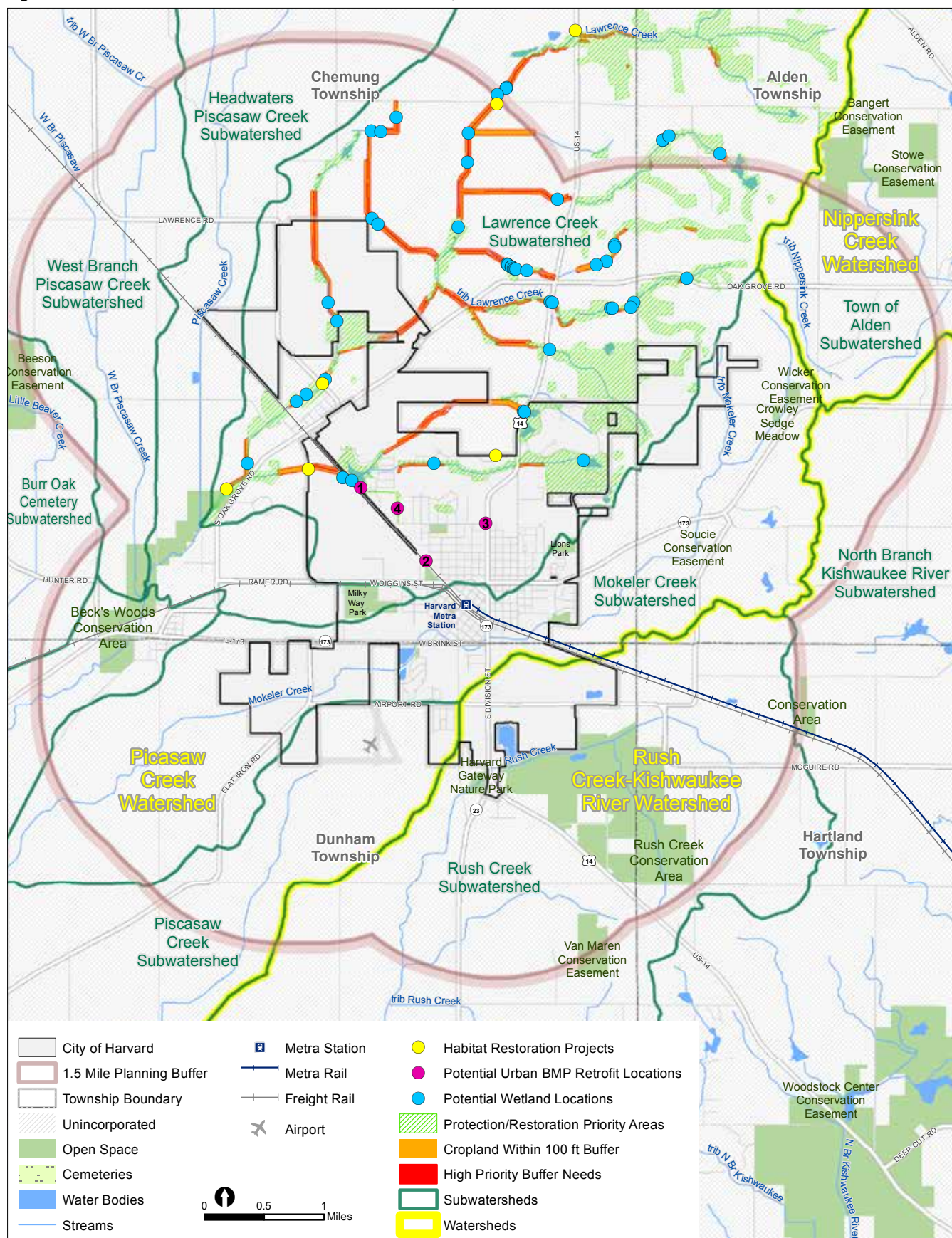
⁶ For more information, see 2008 Lawrence Creek Watershed Plan, section 5, www.cmap.illinois.gov/documents/10180/27573/Lawrence_Final_draft_Sept08.pdf.

3.2 Encourage sustainable agricultural best management practices

In addition to preserving agricultural land and activity, Harvard should encourage landowners and farmers to adopt sustainable, conservation-based farming practices that preserve prime agricultural top soil and minimize the use of pesticides, insecticides, chemicals, non-organic fertilizers, and irrigation. Appropriate agricultural operations can help to protect the quality of streams, rivers, wetlands, and lakes, encourage recharge of groundwater resources, and minimize the loss of topsoil and soil organic matter.

The 2008 Lawrence Creek Watershed Plan identifies a number of the most effective BMPs that could be used, which would be applicable to most of the agricultural lands in the planning area (Figure 3.3). These strategies include conservation tillage, filter strips, nutrient management, and wetland construction.⁶ Conservation tillage leaves the soil covered with crop residue between growing seasons and could be targeted for those areas with higher erosion potential. Filter strips are grass or forest buffers installed along streams that can help intercept rainwater runoff from agricultural fields. The Lawrence Creek Watershed Plan identified targeted areas for filter strips, and that criteria could be used to identify other areas in need which are outside of the watershed planning area. Further details on the recommended BMPs can be found in the watershed plan. The City should partner with McHenry County, the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, and the McHenry County Soil and Water Conservation District for information.

Figure 3.3 Lawrence Creek Watershed Plan recommendations, 2008



Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, 2015.

3.3 Promote open space and natural resource preservation

Unlike other parts of the Chicago region, Harvard is fortunate to have over 1,000 acres of protected open space and over 9,000 acres of additional natural resources within and adjacent to the City. The City should work alone and with partners to protect valuable natural resources, including scenic landscapes, woodlands, native trees, aquifer recharge areas, high sensitivity aquifer areas, fens, wetlands, streams, and native plants and animals. Priorities for protecting and connecting private and public open spaces and corridors both within and outside developed areas should be given to those identified in the McHenry County Green Infrastructure Plan and the McHenry County Natural Areas Inventory (see Figure 3.1). A number of strategies exist to promote open space and natural resource preservation:

- **Acquire land or easements to protect open space.** Land acquisition is the most protective strategy, yet it is also the most costly method to protect open space and is unlikely to be used by the city on a large scale. However, Harvard should work with partners (primarily Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR), MCCD, and the Land Conservancy of McHenry County) to acquire additional acres that are sensitive or strategic. The purchase or donation of easements to protect land and resources is a less costly but a highly effective strategy. Unless designated as open to the public, an easement provides protection while keeping the land in private ownership. In some cases, land or an easement can be held by an open space preservation trust such as The Land Conservancy of McHenry County or other conservation organization. The City may also use development impact fees to fund the acquisition of land or easements. In addition, there are several grant programs that could provide funding, including the IDNR Open Space Lands Acquisition and Development program and the Illinois Trails Grant Program.⁷ Private funders, such as Openlands and the ComEd Green Region program, may be another option.

A number of open space areas are worthy of protection, and the Future Land Use Plan (Figure 2.1) with its Green Infrastructure overlay, should be used to guide development and preservation as opportunities arise. Within the City's boundary, Harvard should investigate the viability of a greenway along Mokeler Creek (Figure 3.4). There are several existing properties along the creek that are currently vacant and have a substantial portion of land within the floodway and floodplain where new development should be restricted. Other properties will likely remain in residential use, but could contribute to a naturalized greenway to help improve water quality and habitat. There may be the opportunity to include a pedestrian trail component along a portion of the creek, which could add a recreational feature for residents. See Strategy 5.5 for more information.

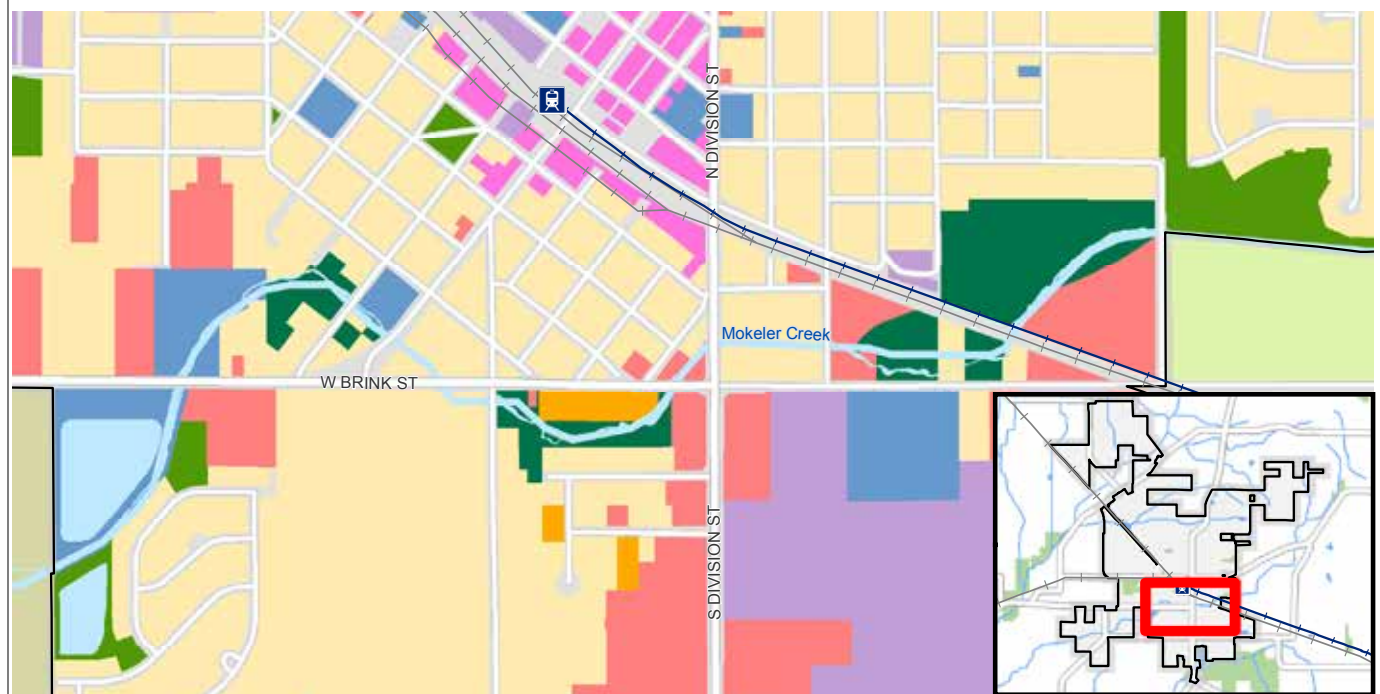
⁷ Budget cuts by the State of Illinois have prompted IDNR to temporarily suspend awarding grants in 2015. However, these programs, or a similar one, are anticipated to be available over the long term.

Figure 3.4 Mokeler Creek Greenway

Environmental Features



Future Land Use



Future Land Use

- Agriculture
- Conservation Open Space
- Recreational Open Space
- Estate Residential
- Conservation Design Residential
- Neighborhood Residential
- Multi-Family Residential

- Downtown Mixed Use
- General Commercial
- Industrial
- Institutional
- Transportation/Utilities/Communication/Other
- Water
- Streams

Environmental Features

- Green Infrastructure
- Floodway
- Floodplain
- City of Harvard
- M Metra Station
- Metra Rail
- Freight Rail

0 0.1 0.2 Miles



Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, 2015.



Abundant natural areas surround the City of Harvard.

Photo credit: Mary Lou Endres.

- **Promote infill and conservation design principles.** Redevelopment of previously developed land—known as infill—is one of the best ways to create vibrant downtowns and neighborhoods while also minimizing the impacts of the built environment on natural resources. When combined with stormwater BMPs, prioritizing infill development over greenfield development can actually lead to a net improvement in watershed conditions. Continuing to encourage infill development is recommended and should be seen as an important technique for improving environmental health, in addition to adding vitality to the City's existing neighborhoods and commercial areas.
- **Update subdivision and zoning ordinance to protect natural resources.** While the first priority is to complete the development of Harvard's existing neighborhoods (see Strategy 5.4), greater flexibility within the zoning and subdivision ordinances should be allowed to encourage clustering of buildings and preservation of natural areas, features, and open space when new subdivisions are proposed. As detailed in Chapter 5, the City should create a new conservation design zoning district for areas with green infrastructure. In addition, conservation design principles should be required if sites outside of these designated areas are found to contain priority natural resources. As Harvard updates and adopts development standards and ordinances to implement the policies outlined in this Comprehensive Plan, it should consider a number of principles and practices to guide development in a way that protects the community's natural resources.
 - *Strengthen the natural resource assessment in the subdivision ordinance.* Harvard should update the natural resource assessment process to subdivisions to ensure that new development properly identifies natural features during site review (Ord 16.16.30 G). Harvard's ordinance should outline the types of resources that should be protected and provide additional guidelines for setting aside open space and maintaining natural areas, natural features, common open space, buffers, and stormwater best management practices in perpetuity.
 - *Minimize land modification and respect site topography in site design.* Development and construction can result in excessive quantities of soil eroding from a site, which can clog sewers and ditches and pollute and impair rivers, streams, lakes, and wetlands. The City should require development to minimize modification and alteration of the land and landscape as preparation for development including geographic contours, large trees, native vegetation, and habitat areas (Ord 16.52.080).

- o *Minimize development in the floodway and floodplain.* Alterations within the floodplain often result in increased flood and stormwater hazards, reduced water quality, and the loss of habitat and recreational opportunities. While the City follows the minimum requirements established by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and IDNR Office of Water Resources, the Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission (NIPC) Model Floodplain ordinance further minimizes impacts by regulating additional modifications that could increase flood damages, interfere with natural functions of floodways, and/or impair water quality and habitat.⁸
- o *Protect streams and wetlands.* Harvard uses the McHenry County Stormwater Management Ordinance, which requires natural vegetation buffer strips along streams and wetlands to allow surface runoff to be filtered by vegetation before it enters waterbodies. Harvard should also consider establishing development setbacks of 75 to 100 feet from the ordinary high water mark to further minimize adverse water quality, habitat, and drainage impacts. Conservation design, described in Strategy 5.4, allows for site designs that can more easily accommodate these objectives.
- o *Promote natural landscaping.* Harvard should consider adding landscaping provisions to the City ordinance and encourage and/or require native landscaping, where appropriate, in common areas in lieu of conventional turf grass landscapes. In addition, Harvard should consider adding a tree protection and replacement ordinance to provide for the protection of native and desirable trees. The City could require a survey of trees on the property with the application of a building permit or other construction activity to trigger the protection of desirable trees.

⁸ NIPC Floodplain Ordinance, see www.cmap.illinois.gov/livability/water/supply-planning/resources.

3.4 Promote water resource protection and conservation

It is imperative that the community work to maintain the quantity and quality of its drinking water resources into the future. Future development has the potential to negatively impact the water supply that the City currently enjoys by reducing groundwater recharge, contributing to over withdrawals, and polluting the groundwater via inappropriate land use activities. These negative impacts could have significant financial implications for the City should its water supply be contaminated or depleted. In addition, the City should promote water efficiency and conservation measures, including reducing water loss within the drinking water system, to reduce demand on the existing water supply.

Manage land use change to protect water supply

Harvard should manage the location and intensity of land use change to ensure that an adequate supply of high-quality groundwater will continue to be available to current and future residents in the long term future and that adequate and appropriate water service capacity exists before new development is approved. McHenry County's Water Resources Division and their Groundwater Management Plan are valuable resources for the City.⁹ Figure 3.5 of sensitive aquifer recharge areas illustrates that 25 percent of the municipal area has a high potential for contamination and nearly 40 percent has a moderately high potential for contamination. These areas are also important locations to maintain groundwater recharge by minimizing impervious cover. The County can help the City navigate groundwater studies and appropriate best practices, including establishing regulations for activities within sensitive groundwater aquifer recharge areas, prohibiting phosphorous fertilizers on turf areas, and managing salt storage and handling. Additional partners include the ISWS and the Northwest Water Planning Alliance (NWPA), a consortium of municipal and county governments (including the City of Harvard and McHenry County).

⁹ McHenry County Groundwater Management Plan, see www.co.mchenry.il.us/county-government/departments-j-z/planning-development/divisions/water-resources/groundwater-management-plan.

Develop an asset management plan for drinking water

While Harvard's drinking water infrastructure is of sufficient capacity to meet demand, the City should develop an asset management plan to ensure sound management of this vital system over the long term. An asset management plan essentially answers critical questions about the system inventory and condition as well as life-cycle costs and funding strategies. The benefits of following a plan often include prolonging the life of system components, setting rates based on sound operational and financial planning, and reducing overall costs for both operations and capital expenditures. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) Reference Guide for Asset Management Tools is a compendium of resources designed for small-sized drinking water systems.¹⁰

Harvard's Public Works Department should also conduct a water loss audit, using the M36 tool developed by the American Water Works Association,¹¹ to identify where water loss is occurring in the system and use this information to inform the asset management plan. When implemented, the asset management plan will also serve to minimize nonrevenue water, which is currently estimated to be roughly 18 percent of pumpage.

Promote water conservation and efficiency

Groundwater withdrawals can negatively impact wetlands, streams, and lakes, as well as lead to drinking water shortages. While the techniques outlined in the previous sections can promote natural groundwater recharge and wise management of drinking water infrastructure, additional measures are needed to reduce the quantity of groundwater withdrawn for every day uses. With growing concerns about groundwater shortages for portions of McHenry County by 2030, water efficiency and conservation measures are recommended for sections of the City's building and subdivision ordinance.¹² High-efficiency fixtures are recommended for new development and redevelopment that meet a specific threshold. CMAP's Model Water Use Conservation Ordinance can be used as a reference for a number of updates within the municipal ordinance. Conservation measures, such as establishing landscaping irrigation days and schedules, have been proposed by the NWPA. Harvard should adopt the outdoor watering ordinance recommended by the NWPA and continue to practice monthly water-use reporting.¹³

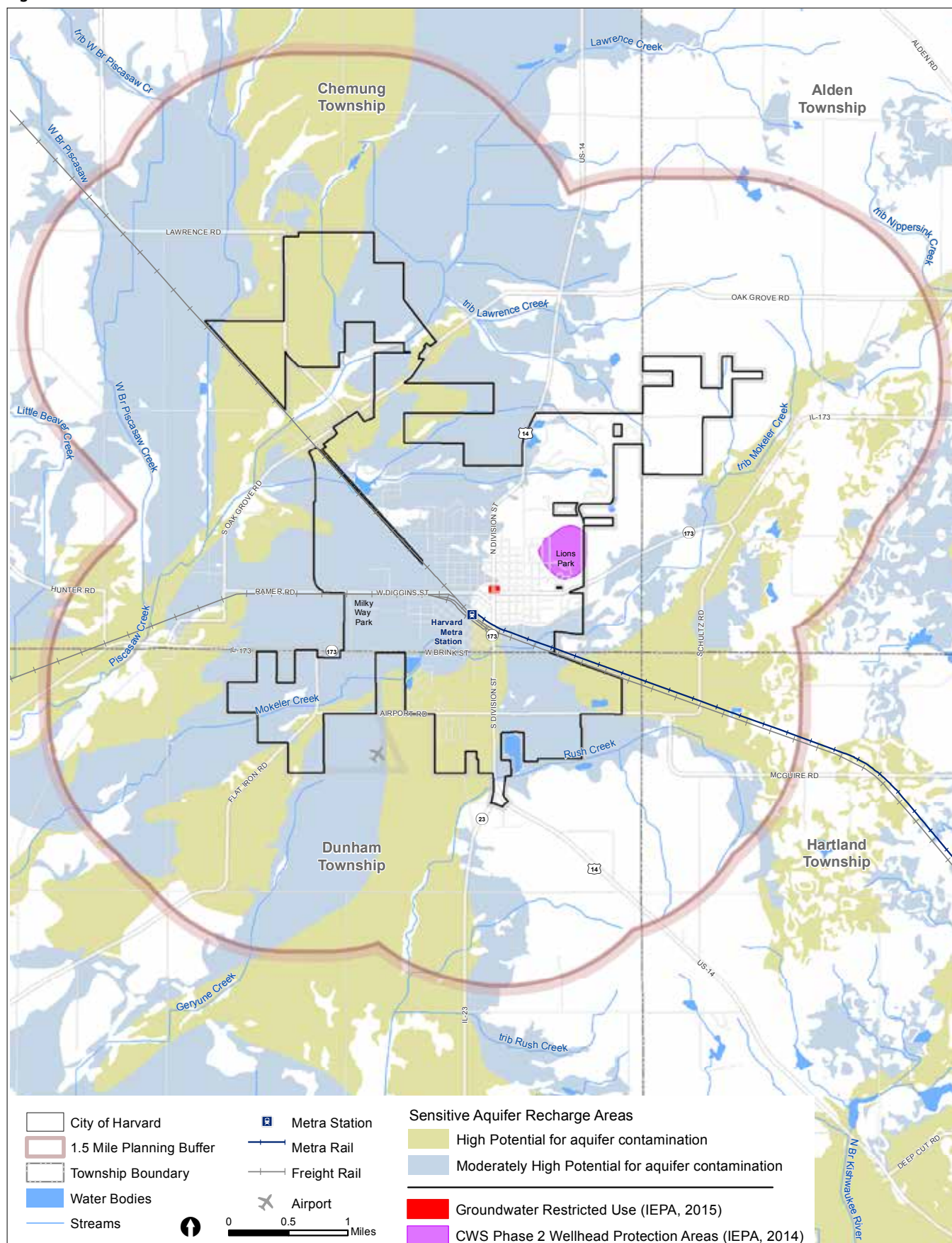
¹⁰ U.S. EPA Reference Guide for Asset Management Tools: Asset Management Plan Components and Implementation Tools for Small and Medium-sized Drinking Water and Wastewater Systems, see <http://water.epa.gov/type/drink/pws/smallsystems/upload/epa816b14001.pdf>.

¹¹ American Water Works Association M36 Water Audits and Loss Control Programs, www.awwa.org/resources-tools/water-knowledge/water-loss-control.aspx.

¹² CMAP Model Water Conservation Ordinance, see www.cmap.illinois.gov/livability/water/model-water-conservation-ordinance.

¹³ NWPA Resource center includes the Regional Lawn Watering Ordinance as well as other tools such as the NWPA/ISWS Water Reporting tool and water bill inserts, see www.nwpa.us/resource-center.html.

Figure 3.5 Groundwater resources



Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, 2015.

3.5 Enhance stormwater management

Harvard, like all communities in McHenry County, is responsible for its participation and adherence to requirements in the National Flood Insurance Program. Harvard does not qualify for regulation as a municipal separate storm sewer system (MS4) under Phase 2 of the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES). Nonetheless, Harvard is a Certified Community, which means the City is responsible for upholding and implementing the McHenry County Stormwater Management Ordinance. Harvard should encourage development to use, to the extent practical, the natural landscape and naturalized drainage and detention features to filter and infiltrate stormwater runoff from impervious surfaces on site. It is also important to reduce the effective impervious area of a site, which means the amount of impervious area that drains water directly into pipes, channels, and sewers without flowing over pervious areas. In particular, it is desirable to route runoff from parking lots, roads, and rooftops through such practices as bioswales, rain gardens, naturalized detention basins, natural landscaping, green roofs, filter strips, level spreaders, and rain barrels and cisterns. These practices are allowed within the County ordinance and should be utilized in Harvard. Additional updates to the City's zoning and subdivision ordinance may be necessary to remove barriers to implementation.

Stormwater detention facilities should be designed as multi-purpose, naturalized, wet or wetland basins, naturally landscaped above and below the water line. These practices serve multiple functions including but not limited to recreation, habitat, and improved aesthetics. The City should create a formal inventory of existing detention basins and assess their ability to provide stormwater storage as well as other environmental benefits. The Lawrence Creek Watershed Plan also identified four locations for urban runoff BMPs (Figure 3.3); when opportunities arise, through street reconstruction or redevelopment, the City should investigate adding these stormwater facilities. A drainage study performed in 2000 to investigate street flooding on the west side of the city proposed a new system of curbs, gutters, and storm sewers which was partially implemented, but remains largely uninstalled.¹⁴ The City should continue to implement this long-term plan. McHenry County Community Development Block Grants may continue to be available for this work; the Illinois Green Infrastructure Grant Program for Stormwater Management may be an additional funding source.

¹⁴ Drainage Study: Ratzlaff, West Metzen, Ayer, and West Park Streets, 2000. Prepared by Smith Engineering Consultants, Inc. for the City of Harvard.



3.6 Ensure adequate wastewater service

Wastewater collection and treatment systems are important components of the public infrastructure that supports the Harvard population and protects environmental resources. As a designated wastewater agency, the City is responsible for wastewater treatment as well as for protection of natural resources by controlling for both point and nonpoint sources of water pollution. Harvard is currently completing a 2015 Wastewater Master Plan which will evaluate the City's wastewater conveyance and treatment needs. Harvard should work to implement the needed improvements identified in the Master Plan. Low-interest loans may be available through the Illinois State Revolving Fund, specifically the Water Pollution Control Loan Program.¹⁵

¹⁵ Illinois State Revolving Fund, Water Pollution Control Loan Program, see www.epa.illinois.gov/topics/grants-loans/state-revolving-fund/index.

3.7 Adopt sustainable practices in municipal activities

While Harvard has limited control over private property, it can demonstrate its commitment to protecting natural resources and reducing water quality and quantity impacts by applying sustainable practices to City property and operations and by working with partner agencies and authorities to do the same. The Harvard Diggins Library, which incorporates a community garden, rain garden, and other sustainable elements, should be a model. There are multiple areas where sustainable practices could be incorporated into City practice:

- **Green city parks.** Existing and new city parks and open spaces should include green infrastructure components. For instance, the creation of a Mokeler Creek Greenway should include native landscaping and buffers to help improve water quality. The City could use native habitat restoration work events as a volunteer activity for the community to improve parks and natural areas.
- **Use green deicing chemicals.** Studies of groundwater contamination reveal that the biggest contributor to pollution is road salt. Harvard has reduced their use of road salt in recent years. If road salt is needed, the City should consider substituting natural/green deicing chemicals on roads, drives, and paths for snow and ice control where feasible.
- **Minimize stormwater runoff from streets.** Streets compose a substantial proportion of the impervious surfaces in Harvard and generate stormwater runoff. New and reconstructed roads should include green infrastructure components. For example, a redesigned streetside area along South Division Street could include a bioswale and street trees to promote rainwater infiltration. The City should look to McHenry County and the State of Illinois as potential partners for the implementation of green infrastructure practices within street right-of-ways. Funding may be available through the Illinois Green Infrastructure Grant Program for Stormwater Management.¹⁶
- **Investigate dark sky standards and practices.** With the large open spaces within and surrounding Harvard, this area provides a rare opportunity in the region to see the night sky. Light pollution is a concern for a number of reasons: stray light inhibits astronomy, disturbs animals, wastes energy, and detracts from rural character. As the City replaces or adds lighting fixtures to parks and streets, it should follow best practices to minimize light pollution. Harvard should look to the Illinois Coalition for Responsible Outdoor Lighting and the International Dark-Sky Association, which have created model ordinances and outlined suggested lighting practices.¹⁷

¹⁶ IEPA, Illinois Green Infrastructure Grant Program, see www.epa.illinois.gov/topics/grants-loans/water-financial-assistance/igig/index.

¹⁷ Illinois Coalition for Responsible Outdoor Lighting, see www.illinoislighting.org.

Chapter 4: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



Harvard's walkable downtown.
Photo credit: Flickr user Vxla.

Harvard will continue to have a vibrant and sustainable business community that creates new jobs and supports local entrepreneurship that builds on the natural, agricultural, and cultural assets of the community.

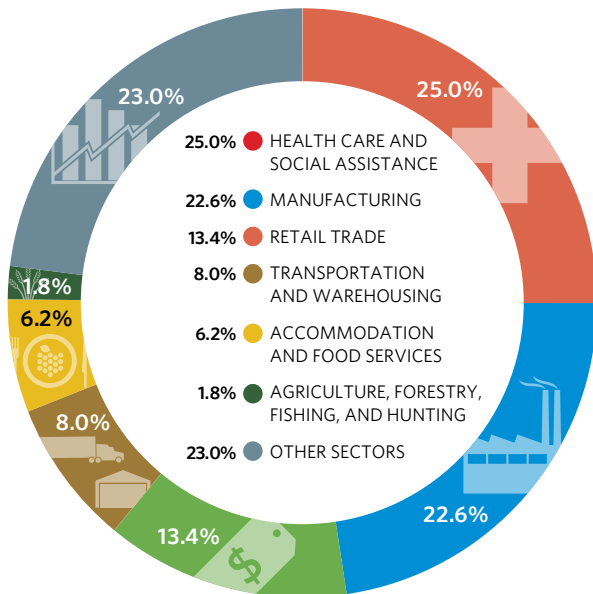
Summary of Existing Conditions

Harvard's jobs are highly concentrated in Health Care and Social Assistance, Manufacturing, and Retail Trade (Figure 4.1). Approximately 61 percent of Harvard's jobs are in the above sectors, with the remainder distributed among several other sectors. As the single largest private employment sector, Health Care and Social Assistance accounts for 25 percent of all of Harvard's jobs, which can in part be attributed to the presence of the Mercy Harvard Hospital within the City. Harvard's private sector employment base experienced significant decline between 2002 and 2011, losing over 300 jobs or 8 percent of the workforce. The employment decline can be attributed in part to the closing of the Motorola facility in 2003.

Despite Motorola's departure, the manufacturing sector of the Harvard economy has done well in recent years. Five out of the top ten employers in Harvard are manufacturing companies. The relatively new Arrowhead Industrial Park has seen many new tenants move in over the past few years, while other existing tenants have expanded operations. Local officials have also helped to market the Motorola campus to a variety of prospective investors that included a water park, veteran's assistance, and manufacturers. Once the facility does secure a permanent tenant, it will be an economic driver for the community.

Harvard's retail development is predicted to be modest until the City population increases. However, short-term demand exists for a wider variety of restaurants and grocery stores in the City that target lower and moderate price points. The City is currently home to two main commercial areas: Downtown and South Division Street (US 14). Downtown, with its traditional buildings and updated streetscape, offers a unique setting for additional restaurants and stores. South Division Street is characterized by more auto-oriented retail development, primarily owner-occupied and single-tenant space or small shopping centers, and serves as the southern gateway to Harvard. While this commercial corridor is an important economic node in the community, it is aesthetically cluttered and disjointed and could benefit from coordinated design and landscaping as well as pedestrian improvements.

Figure 4.1. Employment of private sector workers in Harvard by industry sector, 2012



Source: Illinois Department of Employment Security.

Harvard has a rich history of farming, and agriculture remains a key component of the local economy. The viability of agricultural use is highly dependent on a number of factors, including access to land, capital, and a consumer base. Despite these challenges, significant opportunities exist for agriculture in Harvard, especially for locally grown foods. Studies show that farm income and per acre net revenue for fresh market vegetables surpass that for commodity crops by 5 to 50 times.¹⁸ Of the \$48 billion spent by Illinois consumers on food each year, only 4 percent comes from food grown locally. A recent survey of McHenry County residents pointed towards an increasing and un-met demand, revealing that 31 percent felt there was a shortage of local food options. While the vast majority of the crops grown in and around Harvard are corn and soybeans (accounting for 97 percent of cropland acres in the Harvard study area),¹⁹ there are a number of farmers in the Harvard planning area that already grow and sell food for direct human consumption. In addition, a number of food processing and agriculture-related manufacturing businesses are central to the food supply chain in Harvard.

¹⁸ CMAP, The Local Food System see www.cmap.illinois.gov/livability/sustainability/local-food.

¹⁹ CMAP analysis of the USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service 2014 Cropland Data Layer.

Recommendations

The City of Harvard is fortunate to have a wide economic base that stems from a number of successful agricultural, industrial, and commercial businesses. The following sections highlight ways in which the City can support these industries within the community.

4.1 Support the agricultural economy and local food system

During the last few decades, there has been a significant decline in the number of farms and fluctuations in farming income in the region. While larger economic forces are at work, there are significant opportunities in the regional agriculture sector for coordination, local food production, and agritourism. Harvard can take the following steps to support this vital economic sector.

Form a Harvard Local Food and Farming Commission

In order to coordinate efforts and address barriers, Harvard needs a group that will guide the community in the development of a more robust agricultural and local food system. A self-organized, central group of community members with specific knowledge of the food system can assist in facilitating coordination, communication, and collaboration across this network.²⁰ This group would be a resource for the City and the Harvard Economic Development Corporation to consult and collaborate on agriculture related economic development strategies by providing technical assistance, leadership, and guidance in the development of policies and initiatives. Tentatively titled the Local Food and Farming Commission, this group's broad mission should include guiding the City to create business opportunities around agriculture and local food, to provide a venue for collaboration amongst farmers and residents, and to increase residents' access to local food.

The make-up of the commission and the activities it undertakes will ultimately reflect local community needs and desires. However, it should contain a diverse group of stakeholders from the City, the farming community, and local businesses. The commission should seek to partner with efforts and organizations within McHenry County, the region, and state, including: the University of Illinois Extension, MCCD, McHenry County Farm Bureau, McHenry County Agricultural Conservation Easement and Farmland Protection Commission, Openlands, and the Illinois Department of Agriculture (IDA). The commission should also seek funding opportunities available through programs such as the U.S. EPA's Local Foods, Local Places program²¹ and the USDA's Local Food Promotion program.²²

²⁰ Local Food Policy Councils are a key recommendation offered by the American Planning Association, after a study of the experiences of 25 local governments who engaged in food system planning and development.

²¹ U.S. EPA, Local Food, Local Places: Federal Assistance for Sustainable Communities, see www2.epa.gov/smartgrowth/local-foods-local-places.

²² U.S. Department of Agriculture, Local Food Promotion Program, see www.ams.usda.gov/services/grants/lfp.

Update ordinances to promote local food production and sales.

Local ordinances can present barriers to food production, processing, and/or retail sales by restricting these activities to certain portions of the community, requiring excessive permitting processes, and creating conflict with other regulations. As Harvard reviews and updates its ordinances, it should work to ensure that regulations do not present unnecessary hurdles and help foster a healthy agricultural economy. The contribution of the Local Food and Farming Commission as well as City staff will be critical to identify barriers in the existing ordinance. The City should work closely with McHenry County Department of Planning and Development to ensure compliance with County and State rules as well as clarify issues in the unincorporated sections of the planning area. While a full review of Harvard's ordinance is required, the following recommendations were identified in the *County Land, County Food: McHenry County Local Food Assessment*²³ and represented common issues faced in the County. Additional guidelines are available from CMAP's Model Food Ordinance Toolkit.²⁴

- **Review and update the agricultural uses allowed in different zoning districts.** Regulations around local food should be flexible and allow for activity to occur in a multitude of places. Harvard should review where local food products can be grown, processed, and sold in the City. It should also consider what approval processes are necessary for each of those activities. If a conditional use permit is required, the City should consider simplifying the process, as they can be time-consuming, complicated, and costly for farmers.
- **Review and update the ordinances related to local food production, processing, and sales.** The City should establish clear guidelines on temporary and "cottage food" vendors and producers that align with recent changes to Illinois State law.²⁵ Harvard should also update its sign ordinance to allow farms and agribusinesses to install signs that increase the visibility of their businesses, while retaining the rural character of the community. Additionally, Harvard should also establish clear guidelines on creating and using compost, a common product that is created and used by local food farms and gardens.

²³ McHenry County Agricultural Conservation Easement and Farmland Protection Commission, 2014. "County Land, County Food: McHenry County Local Food Assessment," see www.co.mchenry.il.us/home/showdocument?id=24252.

²⁴ CMAP, 2012. "Municipal Strategies to Support Local Food Systems: Model Food Ordinance", see www.cmap.illinois.gov/livability/sustainability/local-food/model-food-ordinance.

²⁵ Illinois General Assembly, Public Act 097-0393, see www.ilga.gov/legislation/publicacts/fulltext.asp?Name=097-0393.

Promote local food farming and related businesses.

Consumers are showing a preference for locally grown products, while innovations in production methods and new marketing channels mean that local food has economic potential. In addition, the production of local food creates further economic activity; agricultural retail of unprocessed food is assumed to create 60 to 70 cents of additional activity for each dollar generated.²⁶ The City and the Food and Farming Commission can support local food production by connecting farmers interested in diversifying their production with resources to do so, creating more connections between farmers and consumers, and by assessing local food processing and distribution infrastructure within the community.

²⁶ Swenson, David. (2010). Selected Measures of the Economic Values of Increased Fruit and Vegetable Production and Consumption in the Upper Midwest. Research Department of Economics, Iowa State University, Ames: Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture.

- **Support agricultural diversification.** A majority of farmers in the Harvard area grow commodity crops using conventional methods. Harvard should find ways to support farmers who are interested in diversifying their farm products or transitioning their farm from conventional agriculture to sustainable and organic practices. In addition to providing more food, diverse production methods and sustainable and organic practices have fewer negative impacts on the land and surrounding waterways and can provide farmers with new marketing opportunities. Harvard should partner with organizations, including the University of Illinois Extension, who can provide support to farmers who are considering transitioning their operations through workshops, field days, and other opportunities.
- **Connect local producers to marketing opportunities.** Local food is increasingly in demand, but farmers might not have the market knowledge to access customers and customers may be unaware of the range of producers in the area. Harvard should work with area restaurants, grocers, and other retailers to help streamline farm-to-table collaborations. The City should work with the Harvard Economic Development Corporation (HEDC) and the Chamber of Commerce to explore the opportunity to form a collaborative marketing group that could engage area restaurants to tour local farms, farmers' market or other local food events that expose buyers to producers.

- **Investigate reestablishing a farmers' market.** Farmers' markets provide direct-to-consumer outlets for local farmers and food producers and increase resident's access to fresh fruits and vegetables. Markets provide a low-cost venue for local food farmers and small businesses to easily access consumers. A market also creates more foot traffic for nearby businesses and can become a social hub for residents and visitors. Ideally, the Market should be located downtown and near the Metra station to build off the existing activity there and potentially bringing more people and vibrancy to downtown.

There are several organizations that can assist with the creation and support of a farmers' market, including the University of Illinois Extension, the Illinois Farmers Market Association,²⁷ and IDA. The USDA Agricultural Marketing Service provides grants through its Farmers Market Promotion Program (FMPP) that can be used to develop new market opportunities for local farm and ranch operations, including the development of a farmers' market.²⁸ A farmers' market can also increase food access. Harvard should aim to provide direct assistance and incentives for low-income residents and senior citizens to purchase fresh local produce from area farmers using programs like the USDA Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and Illinois Link Card (SNAP),²⁹ and the USDA Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Farmers' Market Nutrition Program.³⁰

- **Assess processing and distribution infrastructure for local food.**

Infrastructure is a key element that allows local food businesses to form and expand. Often, farmers lack the necessary infrastructure to scale up and reach larger markets without significant capital investment. Farmers might be unwilling or unable to make that investment, which limits their potential. Shared facilities such as food hubs or commercial kitchens provide a space where local food can be processed, stored, and distributed for a number of farms in one place. Such infrastructure allows for farms and food businesses to create value-added products and access a larger customer base without investing alone. The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) and IDA developed a planning guide, *Building Successful Food Hubs: A Business Planning Guide for Aggregating and Processing Local Food in Illinois*.³¹ The HEDC and the Harvard Chamber of Commerce will also be critical partners.

²⁷ The Illinois Farmers Market Association has a training manual designed to help communities looking to start a farmers market or improve and support an existing market, see ilfarmersmarkets.org/online-resources/.

²⁸ USDA, Farmers Market Promotion Program, see www.ams.usda.gov/services/grants/fmpp.

²⁹ USDA Food and Nutrition Service, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), see <http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program-snap>. For information on accepting Illinois Link at Farmers' Markets, see www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=47207.

³⁰ USDA Food and Nutrition Service, WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program, see www.fns.usda.gov/fmnp/wic-farmers-market-nutrition-program-fmnp.

³¹ Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity and Illinois Department of Agriculture, 2012. "Building Successful Food Hubs: A Business Planning Guide for Aggregating and Processing Local Food in Illinois," see www.familyfarmed.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/IllinoisFoodHubGuide-final.pdf.



Angelic Organics Learning Center's Farmer Training Initiative supports beginning and transitioning farmers.



Loyola University's Retreat and Ecology Campus in Woodstock, Illinois, offers training programs.

Support new and beginning farmers

In addition to supporting existing and long-time farmers, the City and the Food and Farming Commission should explore ways to support new and beginning farmers in the Harvard area. According to the USDA's 2012 Census of Agriculture, the average age of farmers in the United States is 58 and 33 percent of all farmers are 65 and older. The farming population is rapidly aging, while there is a smaller population of new and beginning farmers and a shortage of affordable land—one of the most significant barriers to new and beginning farm operations.³² A combination of high cost, difficulties negotiating land deals, and mismatches in the size and existing infrastructure create an environment that can stifle local food production. For instance, local food is generally grown on smaller plots of land than conventional agriculture, which makes transitioning farms from a conventional owner to a small local food farmer difficult. Harvard should work towards creating a supportive environment and provide resources for the creation of new farms and farm businesses.

- **Partner with organizations that work with farmers and farmland.**

To help with land access issues, Harvard should seek assistance from organizations such as The Land Conservancy of McHenry County, The Land Connection, the University of Illinois Extension, the Liberty Prairie Foundation, and land trusts in the region to connect new and beginning farmers with available farmland and work with aging farmers to create transition plans for their properties. Land trusts have technical knowledge and experience that can help to get new and beginning farmers on the land. The Land Conservancy's Farmer Landowner Match Program is designed to make connections between beginning farmers and landowners.³³ The Land Connection maintains a classifieds page connecting farmland sellers with buyers and farm owners who are seeking on-farm labor.³⁴

³² CMAP and Conserve Lake County, 2013. "Lake County Sustainable Local Food Systems Report," see <http://libertyprairie.org/impact-areas/sustainable-local-food/lake-county-sustainable-local-food-systems>.

³³ The Land Conservancy of McHenry County, Farmer Landowner Match Program, see www.conservemc.org/what-we-do/preserve-farms-and-farming/362-matches-farmers-and-landowners-program.

³⁴ The Land Connection, Farmland Classifieds, see <http://thelandconnection.org/farmland/farmland-classifieds>.

In addition, new and beginning farmers sometimes lack the business and financial knowledge to lease or purchase land, acquire loans, and take other necessary steps to get a farm up and running. Harvard should explore ways to partner with organizations that provide business and financial support to these farmers. Educational institutions, the University of Illinois Extension, the Illinois Farm Bureau, and the USDA are some of the many resources for training opportunities for new and beginning farmers in business and finance.³⁵

³⁵ Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission, 2014. "Guide on Financial and Technical Assistance for Beginning Farmers," provides information regarding existing financial and technical assistance for small and beginning farmers, highlights a few nontraditional farm financing resources, and provides recommendations for improving access to land and capital for beginning farmers. See www.dvrpc.org/asp/pubs/publicationabstract.asp?pub_id=14048.

- **Promote and connect with agricultural training programs.** Increased training and education in agriculture is needed to support a robust local food system and institutions are serving that need with dedicated training programs. The following training programs are active near Harvard:
 - Angelic Organics Learning Center offers a Farmer Training Initiative. See www.learn-grow-connect.org/farmer.
 - Loyola University in Chicago operates a Retreat and Ecology Campus in Woodstock, which includes a student-run organic farm where they offer gardening classes, plant sales, and operate a farm stand. See www.luc.edu/retreatcampus/farm/.
 - The Liberty Prairie Foundation's Farm Business Development Center, in Grayslake, provides an incubator space for farmers who are just starting out. See <http://libertyprairie.org/programs/farmer-training/>.
 - University of Illinois Extension, Local Food Systems and Small Farms. See <http://web.extension.illinois.edu/smallfarm/>.
 - McHenry County College, Horticulture curriculum will offer new courses in fruit and vegetable production, hydroponics, organic productions systems, and urban agriculture. See www.mchenry.edu/horticulture/grapevine.pdf.
 - Upper Midwest Collaborative Regional Alliance for Farmer Training (CRAFT), offers farmer to farmer training. See www.craftfarmer.org.

Harvard should promote the use of these training programs as they can help equip the next generation of farmers in the community. In addition, the Harvard community should connect with these training providers so that new students are aware of the opportunities in Harvard. Possibilities for partnership include training workshops and seminars, field days, and the establishment of a farm business incubator within the community.

Promote agritourism

Harvard's rural and agricultural character is a key component of its identity and is cherished by its residents. In fact, Milk Days has celebrated this agricultural heritage each year for the past 75 years. There are additional ways Harvard can leverage this unique character as an economic asset. The public is increasingly interested in visiting farms to learn about food production, take part in farming activities, or to enjoy a day out in the countryside. Harvard's proximity to Chicago and the Lake Geneva resort area present opportunities to attract tourists and generate economic activity by leveraging Harvard's rural assets.

Agritourism can encompass farm tours, farm wineries and breweries, "pick-your-own" operations, farm stands, and other forms of direct marketing, as well as hospitality services such as bed and breakfasts, venue rental, and on-farm dining. The Food and Farming Commission should identify farmers near Harvard who are interested in agritourism and work with them to facilitate this activity. Of those farms interested in having visitors, the Commission can help assess whether the farm has the potential to be of interest to tourists and if the needed facilities are in place to host visitors. Items could include road conditions to the farms and adequate restrooms and facilities. Additional amenities could include a sound system for tours and vehicles to transport visitors around the farm once they have arrived. The Commission could consult existing farms that host agritourism activities to determine the essential ingredients needed and should look into possible funding through the USDA Agricultural Service's Local Food Promotion Program.³⁶

The City, HEDC, and Food and Farming Commission should also investigate the potential for a local marketing plan to promote area farms and consider partnering with the McHenry County Convention & Visitors Bureau and Illinois' AgFun. In addition to standard marketing materials and coordination with regional tourism boards, Harvard could work with the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) to install tourism-oriented directional signing that could connect travelers to area farms off of the state highway.³⁷ In addition, the commission could explore the possibility of operating a shuttle between the Metra station and area farms, especially if Metra is a partner in the marketing plan.

³⁶ U.S. Department of Agriculture, Local Food Promotion Program, see www.ams.usda.gov/services/grants/lfpp.

³⁷ IDOT Special Sign Programs, see www.idot.illinois.gov/doing-business/permits/special-sign-programs/index.



4.2 Maintain a supportive business environment for industrial development

Manufacturing, transportation, and warehousing industries dominate the industrial areas and are important to Harvard's overall economy. The recent passage of the Harvard and Woodstock Enterprise Zone will be a useful tool in attracting new businesses. The following strategies are designed to help the industrial sector continue to flourish and expand within the community (Figure 4.1).

Continue to support and market development at Arrowhead Industrial Park

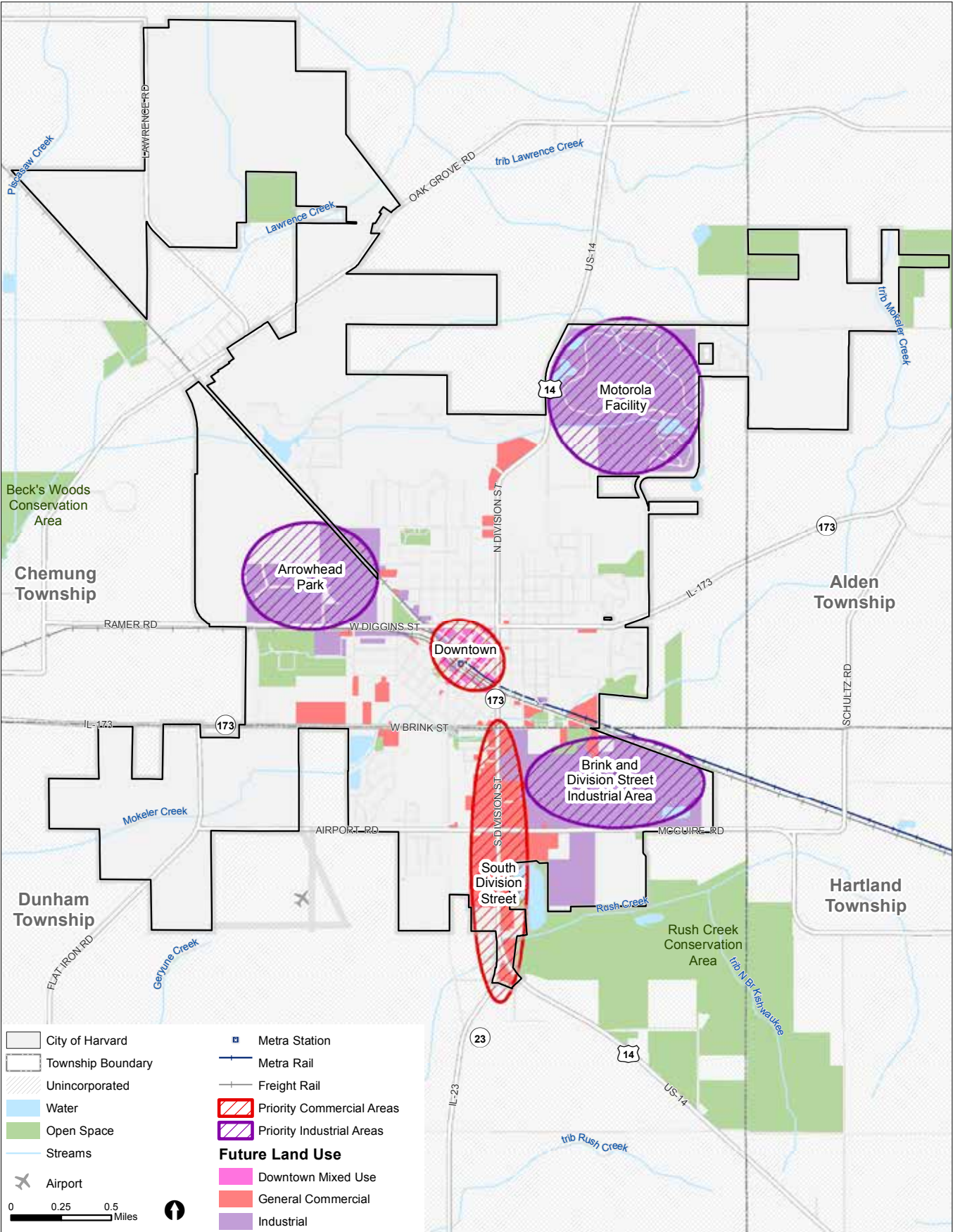
The Arrowhead Industrial Park has seen steady growth with a variety of successful industrial businesses. Currently, the third phase of the Arrowhead Industrial Park is being actively marketed by the HEDC and offers a number of fully-improved, high visibility parcels with underground utilities, ranging from 1.5 to 100 acres in size, some with rail access. The HEDC updates available industrial lots on its Harvard Land & Sites online database so that interested businesses and investors can easily find this information. In addition to continuing to market vacant parcels in the Arrowhead Industrial Park, Harvard should coordinate with the McHenry County Economic Development Corporation (MCEDC) on industrial initiatives.

MCEDC serves as a liaison between public and private sectors, providing business information on ongoing projects, creating an online database of available sites and spaces, and providing information on a variety of resources. The City should partner with MCEDC to understand the range of services that could be beneficial to local businesses, e.g. business retention programs, financing programs, and workforce training resources. MCEDC representatives could be invited to share information on the resources they offer at City Council meetings or business networking events.

Continue to support industrial uses in the Brink and Division Street Area

The Brink and Division Street industrial area is an older industrial development to the southeast of Downtown Harvard along the Union Pacific Northwest (UP-NW) railroad. As the fifth largest employer in Harvard, the True Value Company distribution center occupies the majority of the industrial space at this location with the Meyer Material Company and Hartwig Plumbing & Heating Inc. occupying the remaining space. The City of Harvard should continue to support the industrial businesses in this area.

Figure 4.1 Priority commercial and industrial development locations



Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, 2015.

Work with utility providers to improve energy efficiency

Improving energy management in Harvard's industrial businesses can help reduce annual costs and improve their economic competitiveness. On average, making energy efficiency improvements on existing buildings improve the return on investment by about 20 percent and new building projects by about 10 percent.³⁸ The City of Harvard should encourage new businesses to adopt energy efficiency designs as they construct their buildings and should promote existing resources to businesses to improve energy efficiency in existing buildings. The City should reach out to utility providers to assist building owners in obtaining professional energy audits. Both Commonwealth Edison and Nicor Gas run programs to help businesses conserve energy and reduce energy bills. The primary role of the City and the HEDC would be to act as a resource for businesses seeking information on the various components of these programs including auditing, funding, and implementation. The U.S. EPA Energy Star program is also a valuable resource.³⁹

- ComEd's Smart Ideas for Your Business program offers a portfolio of incentives, services, and solutions to help identify energy-saving technologies and operational improvements for businesses.⁴⁰
- Nicor Gas helps businesses determine their energy needs from the site selection stage and provides energy saving strategies to maximize operational efficiency and lower operating costs.⁴¹

Continue to actively market the Motorola Facility

The former Motorola Facility remains vacant despite efforts by the City to market the property to a number of potential tenants. The 1.5 million square foot campus contains eight manufacturing pods, over 500,000 square feet of office space, two day-care facilities, a 1,100-seat cafeteria, a 500-seat auditorium, a health club with a dance room, nine elevators, a keyless security system, indoor parking, and two heliports. Once a tenant is found, the site will provide numerous economic development benefits to the City. The community has sought a variety of prospective investors, including a water park, veteran's assistance, and manufacturers, but some other potential tenants could be a higher education facility or an agricultural based business or food hub.⁴²

The City of Harvard and the HEDC should partner with the MCEDC as it markets the former Motorola Facility plant. The MCEDC's resources will expand the pool of potential investors that can be reached and will aid in the marketing process. The City of Harvard, HEDC, and MCEDC should talk with the owner, currently Optima International, to discuss the possibility of splitting up the site to allow for multiple tenants to share the space. This would increase the odds of filling the site in the near future as the pool of possible tenants would increase.

³⁸ U.S. Green Building Council, 2015. "The Business Case for Green Building," see www.usgbc.org/articles/business-case-green-building.

³⁹ U.S. EPA, Energy Star Program for industrial energy management, see www.energystar.gov/buildings/facility-owners-and-managers/industrial-plants.

⁴⁰ For ComEd's Smart Ideas for Your Business program information, see www.comed.com/business-savings/programs-incentives/Pages/default.aspx. For examples of successful projects, see www.comed.com/business-savings/resources/Pages/case-studies.aspx.

⁴¹ For Nicor Gas program information, see www.nicorgas.com/business and www.nicorgasrebates.com/community/Campaign.

⁴² See Strategy 4.1 for information on food hubs.



4.3 Utilize existing workforce development programs

In order to support agricultural, industrial, and healthcare sector growth specifically, the City needs a robust and skilled workforce. The City's leadership should work with the McHenry County Workforce Network and non-profit organizations such as the Chicago Jobs Council to identify workforce development services available to Harvard residents. The City should also coordinate with educational organizations such as McHenry County College to create education and training programs in collaboration with Harvard's existing agricultural, industrial, and healthcare businesses, allowing them to hire locally.

4.4 Support existing commercial nodes

With modest additional retail expected in the near term, it is critical that when new businesses are added they are located to strengthen existing commercial areas. This will help build a critical mass of destinations, help support and retain existing businesses, and keep businesses in central locations in close proximity to Harvard's neighborhoods. The City of Harvard should work to attract new businesses and infill development to the two main commercial areas in Harvard—Downtown and South Division Street (see Figure 4.1). Adding commercial development to these areas will also help avoid isolated commercial development in outlying areas that may lack necessary infrastructure. While additional opportunities for commercial development will exist in other areas, the City should focus staff and funding resources in these two sub-areas.

The City should encourage infill development that complements the existing businesses in Harvard and meets the needs of the community. The City and the HEDC should continue to take an active role in attracting new businesses by keeping the online database of available retail properties updated regularly (see Strategy 4.5). During the planning process, many residents expressed the desire for a wider variety of restaurants, clothing stores, and entertainment options in the city. While the market in Harvard currently won't support any large establishments in these sectors, there is room for small-scale establishments to open stores that target lower and moderate price points given the community's income profile.

Continue to enhance Downtown Harvard

With the completion of a number of streetscape improvements in 2008 that were funded by Tax Increment Financing (TIF) district revenues, Downtown Harvard continues to see a good amount of economic activity. The streetscape changes included new lighting, landscaping, and planters that sought to enhance the historic look and feel of the central downtown district. In order to provide a more compelling retail mix, several of the underutilized ground floor storefronts within the district should convert from vacant or service businesses to include retail, restaurants, and artisanal food businesses that complement the local character whenever possible.

- **Promote art scene.** The Starline Factory, with their live-work, gallery, and event spaces as well as the Fourth Friday events, has brought attention to the art scene in and around Harvard. The entrepreneurial efforts of the Starline Factory are commended by residents and businesses alike and the community would like to see them supported and expanded in the future. Downtown Harvard is a good location to develop a local art and craft culture. There are several activities the City can take to partner with area artists and downtown landowners to further enhance this potential. For example, the City should work with building owners to activate vacant storefronts with art. Installing art in storefront spaces has proven to be a great way to draw positive attention to an empty retail space and allow artists to exhibit their work. Potential partners include the HEDC, the Harvard Chamber of Commerce, the Harvard Diggins Public Library, Harvard Community Unit School District 50, and the Starline Factory.

Basic Components of Design Guidelines

Site Design: This refers to the placement of buildings, parking lots, sidewalks, and landscaping on a parcel.

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.

Building Design: This should address both new construction, as well as renovation of existing façades. Façades 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.

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, design elements, and type of signage with illustrative examples. When possible these signs should be oriented towards pedestrians and automobiles.

- **Continue to support community events.** Harvard has a number of community events throughout the year that bring residents and visitors into Downtown Harvard. These events, like Milk Days and the Starline Factory's Fourth Fridays, help activate the downtown area and bring potential customers past existing businesses. The City should continue to work with partners to support community events and investigate ways to expand or add more events to the community calendar in Downtown Harvard. The City and partners should look for ways to strengthen the connection between the community events and district's businesses, whether through local procurement practices or direct engagement during events. During the planning process, residents envisioned creating additional community events that engaged the Latino population, related to the agricultural and artistic aspects of the community, and brought the community together. Some possible ideas included reviving the Cinco de Mayo festival, starting a holiday craft fair, or organizing a farmer's market (see Strategy 4.1). The City should continue to work to harness volunteer energy from throughout the community as it develops these events.

- **Extend downtown streetscaping.** Harvard should continue to look for additional opportunities to make the downtown area attractive, especially the entry points. Specifically, the City should improve the appearance of the section of the downtown area that faces Division Street (US 14) so that it is more inviting. This can be done by installing landscaping, sidewalks, and building signs along the western side of Division Street. These streetscaping improvements should align with the design standards already used in Downtown and should increase access for people travelling by bicycle or on foot. Likewise, the City should plant additional street trees as needed to create a consistent canopy. The City can encourage local individuals and groups to plant and care for these trees as a part of Arbor Day celebrations in April.

Create a cohesive identity for the South Division Street corridor

The South Division Street corridor stretches from Harvard's southern border north to Brink Street and is dotted with national, regional, and local retailers such as Wal-Mart, Tractor Supply, Walgreens, car dealerships, gas stations, fast food restaurants, and beauty salons. Currently, the corridor looks disjointed with establishments that were constructed in a piecemeal fashion, presenting the City with an opportunity to make this commercial corridor more vibrant. Listed below are strategies that the City should pursue to improve the South Division Street Corridor to better meet the needs of Harvard residents.

- **Support addition of a grocery store at Division and Brink Street intersection.** The City of Harvard recently contracted with Perkins Marketing Company to complete a grocery store assessment within the community. The study ultimately recommended the Southwest corner of Division Street and Brink Street as an ideal site given its central location and other parcel characteristics. Given Harvard's demographic and economic profile, the City should pursue grocery stores that sell food at a lower price point such as Aldi or Save-A-Lot and should also be cognizant of the large Latino population. Additionally, City administrators should contact IFF, a real estate consultant and lender, to see if Harvard is eligible for their Healthy Food Access program. This program helps developers and operators of full-service grocery stores, as well as food cooperatives, locate or expand in food deserts and low-access communities.
- **Develop design guidelines.** New commercial development and redevelopment should enhance the aesthetics of this corridor to create a cohesive identity. The City should adopt design guidelines to provide further guidance to potential developers and create a more coordinated and visually attractive feel to the South Division Street corridor. Features typically covered in design guidelines include pedestrian amenities, business signage, lighting, and architectural details and these design guidelines should work in tandem with the streetscaping improvements (see Strategy 7.4). The new First National Bank and Walgreens stores should be utilized as models for future redevelopment. Ultimately, the design guidelines should aim to transition to a commercial corridor that maintains auto-access, but is also accessible to pedestrians and bicycles. Off-street parking and service areas should largely be placed behind buildings so that the businesses are more visible from the street and pedestrians feel safe walking between stores.

4.5 Enhance coordination between the City and business owners

⁴³ For MCEDC's Certified Sites Program website, see <http://certifiedsitesillinois.com>.

Increased coordination between the City and the Harvard business community can help existing businesses grow and will lead to a stronger local economy. City staff and local business owners should work together regularly to communicate their needs and share knowledge concerning available resources in order for Harvard businesses to become more successful.

Establish a regular discussion forum between businesses and the City

A regular meeting between business owners and the City can help improve service provision, tackle issues as they arise, and provide a mechanism for sharing information about resources or funding sources. The HEDC or Chamber of Commerce could devote a segment of their regular meetings for this type of information exchange with City staff. For example, business owners could inform others of recent problems they may have had with crime or damage to property, concerns about vacant buildings, or issues with municipal services, such as broken streetlights, severe potholes, or damaged sections of sidewalk. This forum could also provide an opportunity for City staff to inform business owners of new City procedures, potential funding opportunities from grants or outside sources, availability of commercial properties, and the status of other projects in the community.

Maintain inventory of vacant and available properties

HEDC's Land and Sites online database provides an essential mechanism for promoting available properties in Harvard and should be continued. Maintaining this database will help the City identify potential sites for redevelopment as well as market them effectively to potential developers and existing businesses looking to expand their facilities. As recommended in Chapter 5, the database could also be expanded to market the buildable residential lots in Harvard's incomplete subdivisions, see Strategy 5.1. This database should continue to be advertised on the City of Harvard and HEDC's website and should begin to be advertised on the Harvard Chamber of Commerce website and other commercial real estate websites in addition to HEDC's website. HEDC should collaborate with MCEDC to include Harvard properties on the MCEDC's Certified Sites Program website.⁴³

Continue and expand the façade improvement program

Maintaining high-quality buildings façades and business signage is a common problem facing many communities. Yet visible investments in commercial properties not only improve the perception of an area, they can also spur improvements to nearby businesses and attract new businesses. The City should continue its program which offers no interest loans of up to \$50,000 per project to downtown buildings owners to enhance the historic look and feel of the central downtown. Harvard could investigate the expansion of this program to businesses along the South Division Street corridor, if potential funding sources, like a new TIF district, are viable.

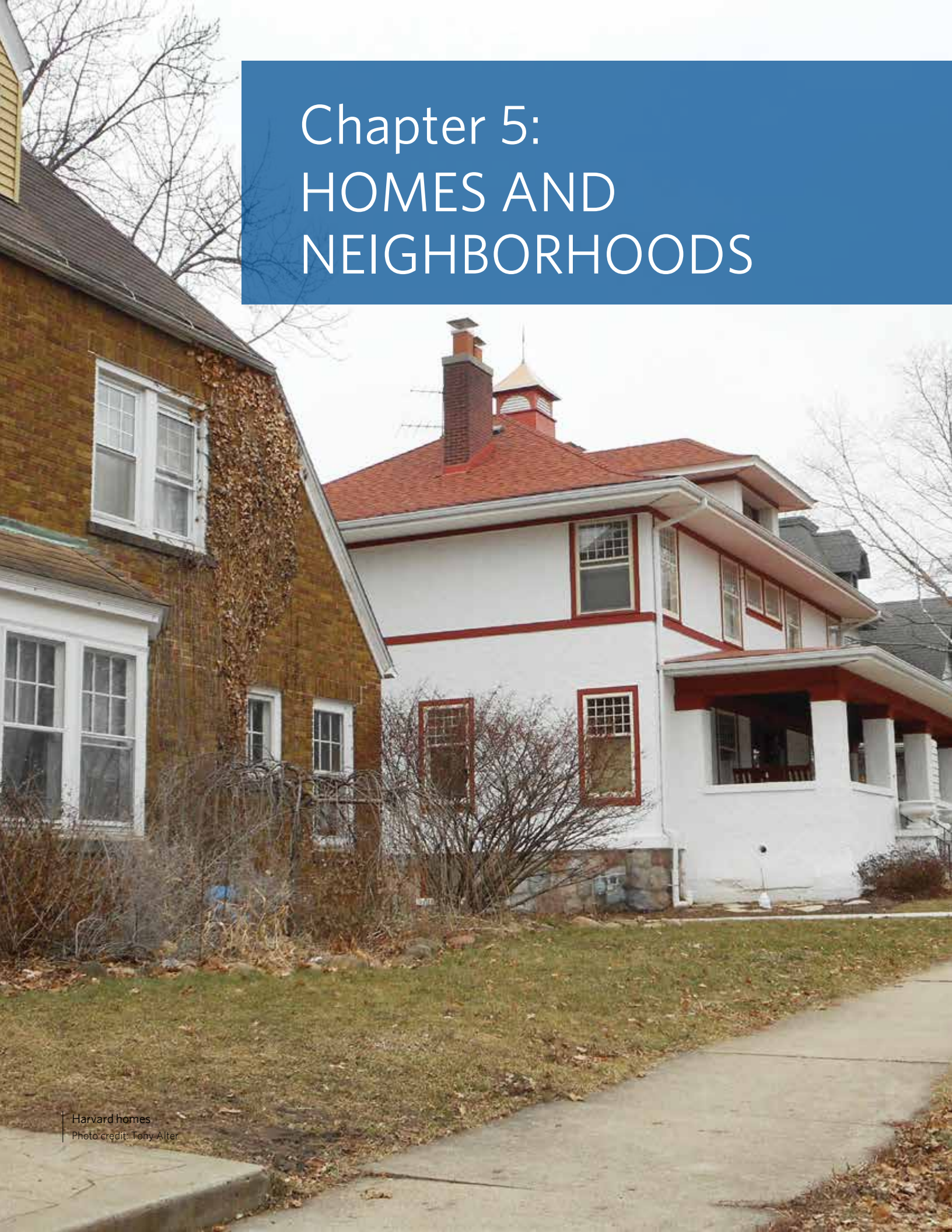
Encourage Latino-owned businesses and businesses that serve the Latino population

As the Latino population has grown in Harvard, businesses targeting this population represent a significant growth area in the local economy. The City should work towards increasing support to existing and potential businesses serving this population and look for ways to encourage all residents to support these local businesses. The City, HEDC, and the Chamber should make a concerted effort to reach out to Latino-owned or Latino-focused businesses to get a better understanding of the issues this group may be facing and involve them with overall economic development efforts. This will be essential to ensure that a significant portion of Harvard's businesses have effective strategies to coordinate their business efforts with the larger business community.

To foster a more inclusive business environment that allows many different types of stores to succeed, the City of Harvard should ensure that all helpful and necessary business resources, permits, forms, and websites are available in Spanish (see Strategy 6.3). Additionally, the City of Harvard should allow and encourage businesses to display bilingual signage. This will allow Spanish-speaking business owners to access many resources that will help their companies succeed.

To help implement these changes, the Chamber of Commerce and the HEDC should ensure that the Latino business community is represented on their Boards of Directors. Additionally, the Chamber of Commerce and the HEDC should work together to complete a detailed inventory of Latino businesses in and around Harvard to identify gaps in the existing market and should develop an advertising campaign targeted to the potential Latino customers living and working in the sub-region that is disseminated through Spanish-language media outlets. Lastly, these organizations should encourage the development of a McHenry County Hispanic Chamber of Commerce similar to the Hispanic Chamber of Lake County, to coordinate Latino business efforts. In the interim, Harvard should partner with the Illinois Hispanic Chamber of Commerce to utilize their resources and consult with Lake County on effective strategies.

Chapter 5: HOMES AND NEIGHBORHOODS



Harvard will work to preserve its established neighborhoods while seeking opportunities for increasing rehabilitation and homeownership, enhancing neighborhood parks and open spaces, and ensuring new development protects community resources.

Summary of Existing Conditions

Harvard residents value the City's existing neighborhoods, particularly the uniqueness of the older homes and tree-lined streets. Approximately 78 percent of Harvard's residential units are single-family attached or detached homes, and almost 40 percent of homes in Harvard are renter-occupied. With over 40 percent of the housing stock built before 1959, ongoing maintenance and upgrades of these older homes can be difficult, particularly for rental properties and low-income households. Residents would like to preserve the character of the community by maintaining the existing housing stock, which will also help stabilize and increase property values.

Similar to the rest of the County, the City of Harvard experienced dramatic population growth between 2000 and 2010. However, since 2010 Harvard's population has remained relatively constant and has started to decline. Consequently, several subdivisions planned during the height of the housing boom now have a significant number of unbuilt lots, have fallen into foreclosure, or have high vacancy rates. Currently, foreclosures and short sales represent a sizable share of Harvard's resale market. The share of distressed sales has declined from 62 to 43 percent of all sales between 2013 and 2014, but is still much larger than the rest of the Chicago region (28 percent). Despite a recent rise in home prices, the cost of building a new home cannot be recouped at today's prices. Until the housing market stabilizes and non-distressed sales no longer comprise a large share of total sales, Harvard should focus its efforts on increasing existing home values and maintaining the current housing stock.

Parks and open spaces are an integral part of Harvard's neighborhoods. Harvard's Parks and Recreation Department owns and maintains a number of recreation-oriented open spaces within the City, which are highly valued and heavily utilized. Often programmed by volunteer organizations, Harvard's park system includes a swimming pool facility and a recently expanded Milky Way Park. As residents look to the future, they see the need for improved maintenance, the creation of a central gathering place for outdoor events, and a role for community gardens.

Recommendations

5.1 Maintain and promote homeownership

Residential neighborhoods in Harvard are generally stable, but there are a few areas where vacancies compromise the character of neighborhoods and the value of surrounding properties. Harvard has a number of residential units in foreclosure, including some recently constructed units. To address this issue, the City should proactively implement strategies to help stabilize residential neighborhoods. The following strategies are focused on connecting existing homeowners with resources to stay in their home, increasing homeownership, and strategically marketing vacant housing and lots.

⁴⁴ CMAP Policy Update, 2011. "Demographic and Housing Trends in Latino Population," see www.cmap.illinois.gov/about/updates/-/asset_publisher/UIMfSLnFfMB6/content/demographic-and-housing-trends-in-latino-population.

Help residents remain in their homes

Over the short term, Harvard should work to reduce the amount of distressed sales and foreclosures in the community by connecting residents with existing resources. The City should work with the County and State housing agencies, nonprofit organizations, local banks and lending institutions, and other community service providers to offer foreclosure avoidance and refinancing counseling. Potential partners include the Illinois Foreclosure Prevention Network, the Illinois Housing Development Authority, and the Consumer Credit Counseling Service of McHenry County.

Support first-time and minority homebuyers

Current Harvard residents represent the greatest opportunity to increase homeownership, as they have already chosen the City as their home. Engaging renters to become homeowners can help the community increase the number of owner-occupied units. Harvard should work with County and State Housing agencies to connect renters in the community to home-buying support services so that they can be encouraged and supported to purchase some of the foreclosed and vacant houses in the community.

Based on 2010 U.S. Census data, most of Harvard's Latino population appears to be renting. In McHenry County, from 2000 to 2010, Latino renter-occupied housing grew by 57 percent, while Latino owner-occupied housing grew by 108 percent. For the region as a whole, the growth rate for Latino owner-occupied housing was almost double that of Latino renter-occupied housing (47 and 24 percent, respectively), which may suggest increasing homeownership among the region's Latino community.⁴⁴ Harnessing this trend in Harvard can help strengthen the local housing market.

The City can also continue to engage community banks and non-profit organizations to provide additional home buyer seminars and counseling in Harvard. Harvard State Bank and Habitat for Humanity of McHenry County offer incentives and down payment assistance for first-time homebuyers. Habitats for Humanity's programs actively engage renters in the County, increasing homeownership while maintaining affordable rental housing opportunities. Habitat for Humanity also provides financial literacy counseling to improve the financial health of low-income residents by educating them about mortgages and budgeting, whether they are participating in Habitat for Humanity programs or not.

5.2 Enhance existing housing stock through rehabilitation

Harvard's housing stock is one of its strongest assets; enhancing existing homes will be essential to improving the housing market. Harvard can facilitate residential rehabilitation by connecting residents with existing resources, promoting a culture of rehabilitation among residents, and continuing code enforcement efforts.

Connect residents to existing rehabilitation resources

To better support the quality and longevity of its older homes, Harvard should connect residents with existing programs to aid in the rehabilitation and maintenance of residential properties. McHenry County offers a variety of assistance programs that can assist residents with rehabilitation and maintenance expenses. The following list is of a variety of programs aimed to reach community members in need of home rehabilitation. These resources should be promoted on Harvard's website. Harvard should partner with the McHenry County Housing Authority to reach out to qualified homeowners and encourage them to apply to County programs. By helping residents access these funds, the City can ensure the continued vibrancy of residential neighborhoods.

- **Energy Impact Illinois** is a collaborative program designed to help residents, businesses, and nonprofits reduce energy use in their buildings. All Harvard residents, including renters, may be eligible for a variety of rebates and low-interest loans to renovate their homes and make them more energy efficient.
- The **McHenry County Housing Authority's HOME and CDBG Owner Occupied Rehabilitation Programs** provide forgivable loans to low to moderate-income homeowners for the rehabilitation of existing homes and emergency repairs. Eligible households must meet the income requirements and reside in the home. Through this program up to \$48,000 in repairs can be done via a zero interest no payment loan, which is only paid back when the title of the qualified home is transferred.
- **Habitat for Humanity of McHenry County** offers several programs—A Brush with Kindness, Ramps and Rails, and Repair Corps—to provide home maintenance and home accessibility modifications for low-income and veteran residents. Already active in Harvard, volunteer groups work alongside able-bodied homeowners to assist in completing repairs and modifications.
- The **Illinois Home Weatherization Assistance Program** provides qualified households assistance with energy conservation assistance. Retrofit programs make homes more energy efficient and some available financing options spread costs over several years to allow the improvements to pay for themselves.
- **Senior Services Associates and Senior Care Volunteer Network** assist homeowners in McHenry County ages 60 and older with small home repairs. While Harvard is a younger community, it has a sizeable older population that could take advantage of these services. Harvard should partner with the Senior Services Associates and Senior Care Volunteer Network to encourage the installation of aging in place fixtures and design elements.

- The **USDA Rural Development** offers Single Family Housing Repair Loans and Grants⁴⁵ in the Harvard area to very-low-income homeowners to repair, improve, or modernize their homes or grants to elderly very-low-income homeowners to remove health and safety hazards. In addition, through the Housing Preservation Grants program⁴⁶, the City of Harvard is eligible to receive grants as a sponsoring organization for the repair or rehabilitation of housing occupied by low and very low income people.
- The **Illinois Historic Preservation Agency** offers a property tax assessment freeze program for owner-occupied buildings that are listed on a National or Local Register of Historic Places or are a contributing property within a National or Local Historic District.⁴⁷ Establishing a local historic district program within the City could assist in taking advantage of this property tax reduction. Additional programs are available for income producing properties.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ USDA Rural Development offers Single Family Housing Repair Loans and Grants, see www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/single-family-housing-repair-loans-grants/il.

⁴⁶ USDA Rural Development provides Housing Preservation grants to sponsoring organizations, including municipalities, see www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/housing-preservation-grants.

⁴⁷ Illinois Historic Preservation Agency, Property Tax Assessment Freeze, see www.illinois.gov/ihpa/Preserve/Pages/taxfreeze.aspx.

⁴⁸ Illinois Historic Preservation Agency, Historic Preservation Financial Incentives, see www.illinois.gov/ihpa/Preserve/Pages/taxfreeze.aspx.

⁴⁹ Change Lab Solutions, 2015. "Up to Code: Code Enforcement Strategies for Healthy Housing," see www.changelabsolutions.org/sites/default/files/Up-to-Code-Enforcement-Guide_FINAL-20150527.pdf.

Foster a culture of home rehabilitation

While maintenance is ultimately the responsibility of the homeowner, the Harvard community can encourage home rehabilitation by celebrating the community's history and engaging residents in neighborhood activities. Residents may be unaware of the historic nature or significance of their homes. The Greater Harvard Area Historical Society and the McHenry County Historical Society could help the community identify unique housing in the City. This information could be shared with homeowners and neighbors, perhaps even on neighborhood walking tours. Harvard is already home to restored homes and nicely landscaped gardens and yards; these could be featured on home or garden tours organized by interested neighbors. In addition to celebrating attractive homes, these community events can be useful for sharing techniques and resources. Harvard could model this effort after the Neighbors Helping Neighbors program active in the Village of McCullom Lake. Based on community interest, Harvard could investigate the creation of a local historic district to celebrate the community's history and preserve important structures.

Continue code enforcement

Code enforcement helps to ensure the safety and quality of housing in a community. Harvard's Community Development Department should continue to enforce codes that effectively uphold values of the community and region. In the face of budget constraints, strengthening the enforcement capacity can be difficult but it is a key component for maintaining the quality of the housing stock in Harvard. ChangeLab Solutions has created *Up to Code: Code Enforcement Strategies for Healthy Housing*, which outlines creative steps that Harvard could pursue.⁴⁹ In addition, the Illinois Association of Code Enforcement offers Code Enforcement Officer Certifications and quarterly training sessions and is a good resource for the City to consult regarding programs, codes, and ordinances.

5.3 Maintain and enhance rental housing

With older homes and nearly 40 percent of Harvard's housing stock occupied by renters, maintaining the quality of housing is a top priority. Harvard can utilize its rental registration program to support code enforcement, connect landlords with resources and training, and provide residents with additional services and resources.

Continue rental registration program

Recently, the City established a rental registration program that allows Harvard to build and maintain an inventory of rental units. Continuing this program will help the City monitor the location, types, ownership, and management of units being rented. As a non-home rule municipality, Harvard has the legal authority to require landlords to register rental properties but cannot license landlords.⁵⁰ Harvard will have to rely on inspections, citations, and liens to pressure problem investors and landlords into compliance with their property. The City can encourage the owners of those properties to participate in crime-free housing and landlord training programs.

The Metropolitan Planning Council and the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus have developed an online guide, *Up to Code*, for rental property regulation strategies.⁵¹ While this online guide focuses on South Suburban Cook County, many strategies are applicable to Harvard. Harvard should investigate Ancel Glink's *Quick Guide to Non-Home Rule Enforcement: Legal Strategies for Targeting Blighted Property* and the Center for Community Progress report, *Raising the Bar: A Short Guide to Landlord Incentives and Rental Property Regulation*, which outline strategies that could be used in the community.⁵²

In the short term, Harvard should work on building and maintaining a rental property information system so that resources can be targeted most effectively. This database, based on the information from the rental registration form, can be supplemented with information about code compliance, police calls, and tax and fee payment status. The most immediate task is to get landlords to register their properties. With the housing crisis and corresponding foreclosures, the City is likely seeing more single-family, owner-occupied homes converted to rental units. One of the primary challenges of single-family detached rental management is finding all of the properties, which must be registered. When most rental units are located in complexes, it is easier to identify non-licensed units. Therefore, to build a comprehensive rental unit inventory, Harvard should encourage residents to report rental units which are not registered, supplementing the City's own investigative efforts. Success of the system will be built upon citizen involvement; the City should consider posting the registered list of landlords on the City website and asking for additional information.

⁵⁰ A registration system is informational only, and does not affect the right of a landlord to own and operate rental property. A licensing system conditions that right on compliance with appropriate public interest standards, and raises the bar for landlords in the community.

⁵¹ Metropolitan Planning Council, *Up to Code*, see www.metroplanning.org/uptocode/.

⁵² Ancel Glink, 2014, "Quick Guide to Non-Home Rule Enforcement: Legal Strategies for Targeting Blighted Property," see www.metroplanning.org/uploads/cms/documents/quick-guide-non-home-rule-enforcement.pdf and Center for Community Progress, 2015. "Raising the Bar: A short guide to landlord incentives and rental property regulation provides ideas," see www.metroplanning.org/uploads/cms/documents/raising-the-bar.pdf.

Enhance opportunities for communication

Harvard's existing renters and landlords are an essential asset in maintaining the community's housing stock. Providing a means of communication with and between these groups will help the City identify emerging concerns and disseminate information and resources.

In collaboration with the McHenry County Housing Authority, Harvard should consider organizing a Landlord/Tenant Commission for renters and landlords to jointly discuss rental concerns. Harvard should also explore providing renters a venue to express their concerns with local landlords and property management companies. Given Harvard's Latino population, the City should strive to obtain pamphlets, ideally bilingual, explaining tenant and landlord rules, responsibilities, and rights. Providing a venue for communication would strengthen the effectiveness of code enforcement by providing a direct link between renters and the Community Development Department.

5.4 Design new housing to protect community and natural assets

Residents highly value both the rural character of their community as well as the original neighborhoods built on a gridded street pattern. Yet existing zoning and subdivision regulations may hinder open space protection as well as traditional neighborhood design when new residential development comes to the City. Harvard should update existing ordinances to ensure that new construction or infill development uses conservation design and/or traditional neighborhood design principles based on the location within the community. In addition, the subdivision ordinance should be updated to ensure street connectivity within future subdivisions as well as to the existing street network.

Focus new housing starts in existing neighborhoods

As Harvard works to maintain the value of existing homes and support new and existing businesses and employers, the demand for existing and new housing may increase. As the housing market grows, Harvard should encourage new housing starts in existing, yet incomplete, subdivisions (see Figure 5.1). Completing these subdivisions is a priority as it will help to enhance existing neighborhoods and home values. In addition, these subdivisions already have the necessary infrastructure and receive municipal services; building new subdivisions before the existing ones are complete should be avoided as it would add to municipal service demands. The City should focus first on those subdivisions, like Turtle Crossing, which are in close proximity to other residential neighborhoods and already have a critical mass of developed lots.

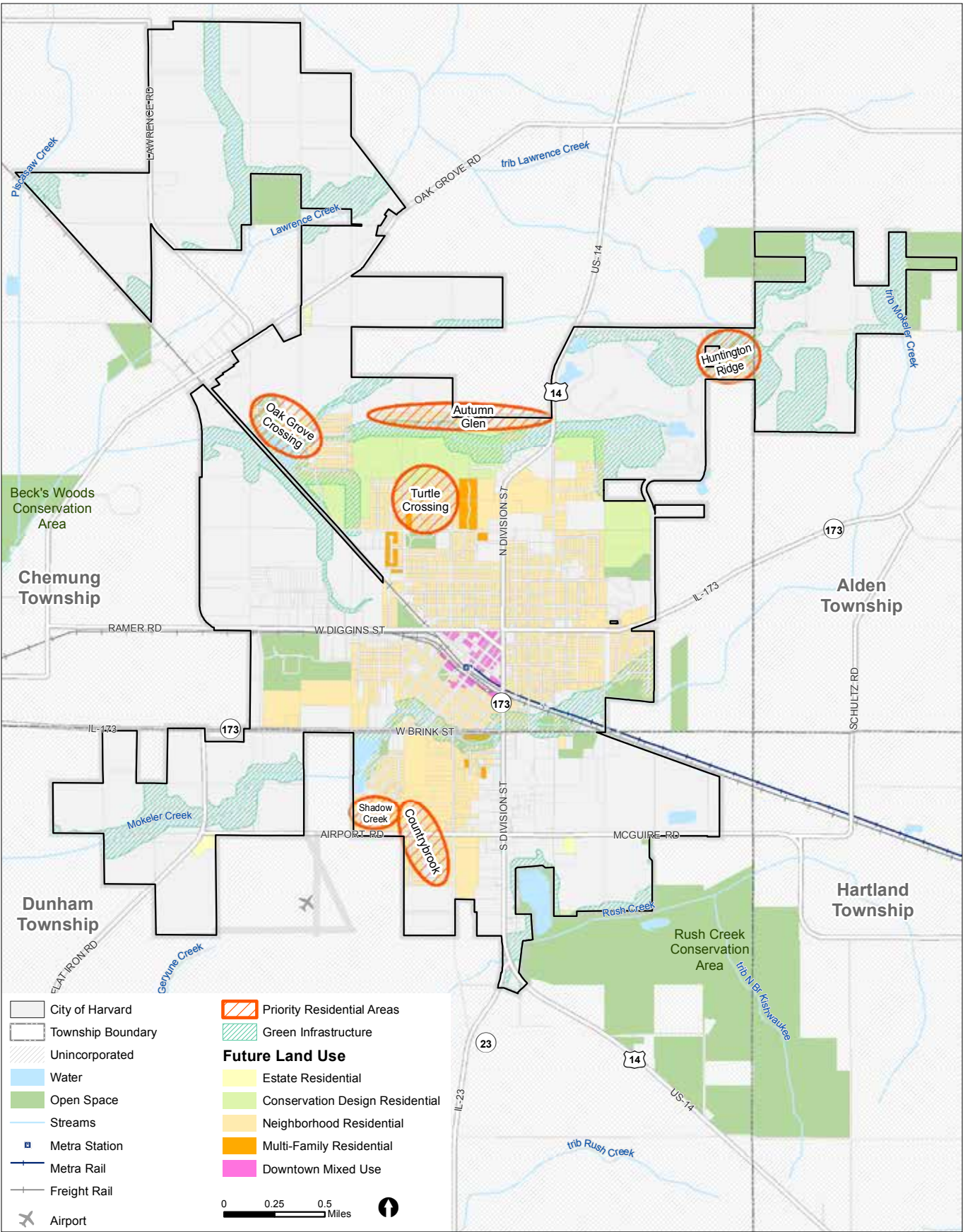


Promote infill development that complements community character

The development of the vacant lots within Harvard's older neighborhoods and newer subdivisions represent an opportunity to strengthen the existing neighborhoods. However, development should complement the existing character of the surroundings. The older sections of town were originally developed following traditional neighborhood principles; however, these design standards are not currently reflected in the existing zoning ordinance. The City should update the dimensional standards to allow traditional neighborhood designs in new development; as well as a diversity of housing types to allow for multi-family housing in the mixed-use downtown.

In newer subdivisions, potential homebuyers have come to expect a consistent look among the residential units. This is often achieved by having one or a small number of homebuilders construct several or all of the buildings. Given the diverse ownership of many of the unbuilt lots in Harvard, it is likely that multiple homebuilders will be involved in the completion of these subdivisions. Harvard should review the existing design requirements for these areas to ensure some level of consistency, while also looking for opportunities to reduce barriers to new construction.

Figure 5.1 Priority residential development locations



Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, 2015.

Incorporate conservation design principles in new subdivisions

Harvard has many valuable natural resources that contribute significantly to the overall character of the community. Conservation design is an effective way to protect these natural resources while still permitting residential development. Harvard's abundant oak groves, wetlands, prime farmland, and other natural features can be integrated into the design of new housing developments and can become a unique asset. Once the existing subdivisions are complete, new residential subdivisions should be constructed to take advantage of natural vistas and other features of the land, and incorporate attractive and functional design elements through streetscapes, landscapes, greenways, waterways, and other natural or designed features.

Harvard's subdivision and zoning ordinance should be updated to use conservation design principles for development near valuable natural resources. The City should establish a new conservation design zoning district and update the zoning map to correspond with the Future Land Use Plan (Figure 2.1). In addition, conservation design guidelines should be required if sites outside of these designated areas are found to contain priority natural resources (see Strategy 3.3).

5.5 Enhance existing neighborhood parks and open spaces

Parks are an essential ingredient of a neighborhood and residents are interested in continuing to maintain and enhance the City's existing parks. The City of Harvard is currently creating a parks master plan, which will identify a number of activities to address the long term fiscal health of the local park system. Harvard also has a number of vacant lots and underutilized open spaces that are likely to remain in an undeveloped state for the short term. The following strategies outline creative approaches to activate parks, vacant lots, or underutilized open space.

- **Activate vacant lots with community gardens.** With a large number of unbuilt lots in several of Harvard's subdivisions, the community should begin to look for ways to activate these spaces so that they add to the surrounding neighborhoods. Community gardens can enhance neighborhood character and foster a sense of community. Gardens can also help improve access to fresh foods by providing more opportunities for residents to grow their own food within Harvard. The City should consider passing an ordinance to allow temporary or alternative uses and/or lot expansions for parcels that are anticipated to remain undeveloped for a longer period of time.
- **Create a central gathering place.** Residents identified the need to establish a central, outdoor gathering place in the community for community events. At the same time, residents frequently mentioned Mary D. Ayer Park as a park needing assistance with vandalism control, repair equipment, and infrastructure improvements. Given its location, the City and the Harvard Events Committee should investigate the use of Mary D. Ayer Park as a community gathering location. If a more central location is needed, Harvard should investigate whether an underutilized vacant lot or surface parking lot in the downtown could be used.
- **Restore Mokeler Creek.** As recommended in Strategy 3.3, restoring Mokeler Creek would create an important neighborhood asset. The several vacant properties along the creek represent an opportunity to create a greenway along the waterway. Neighboring properties will likely remain actively used, but the riparian buffer could be restored with native landscaping. In addition, physical improvements to the streambed itself may be necessary. Given the array of different property owners, resident leadership and participation will be critical to successful implementation. The City should also reach out to MCCD and The Land Conservancy of McHenry County as potential partners in land acquisition and easements as well as native landscaping education. IDNR and IEPA may also be key partners.

Traditional Neighborhood Design

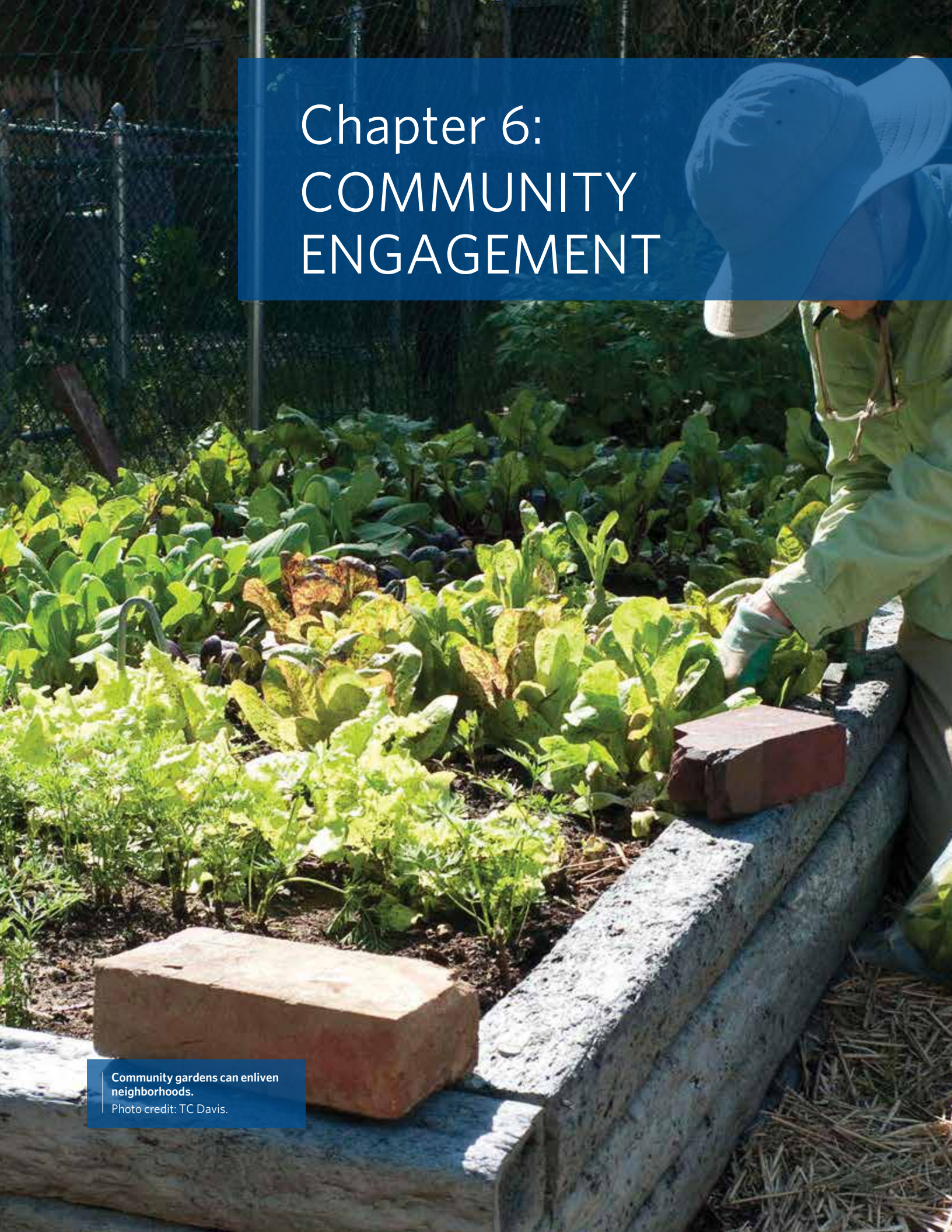
A planning concept that calls for residential neighborhoods to be designed in the format of small, early 20th Century villages and neighborhoods. Those traditional formats were characterized by one-family and two-family homes on small lots, narrow front yards with front porches and gardens, and detached garages in the backyard. In contrast to most contemporary development, which is characterized by an orientation to the automobile, separation of land uses, and low intensities, traditional neighborhood design calls for compact, pedestrian-oriented neighborhoods with a variety of housing types, and public places where people have opportunities to socialize and engage in civic life. The automobile is still accommodated, with ample parking and efficient circulation, but it no longer dominates the landscape.

Conservation Design

Conservation design is an alternative approach to the conventional lot-by-lot division of land, which typically spreads development evenly throughout a development site regardless of natural features. Conservation design enables a developer to concentrate units on the most buildable portion of a site, preserving natural drainage systems, agricultural resources, open space, and environmentally sensitive areas. Generally, conservation design allows for an adjustment in the location of residential dwelling units on a parcel of land as long as the total number of dwelling units does not exceed the number of units otherwise permitted in the zoning district. The remainder of the site is preserved as open space, farmland, or as an environmentally sensitive area. This clustering of the homes is made possible by reducing individual lot sizes, and in exchange, open space is permanently protected and held in common ownership.

Conservation design would ideally incorporate a six-step site design process:

1. Identify all natural resources, conservation areas, open space areas, and physical features on the site through a site analysis.
2. Perform a site capacity analysis based on the remaining developable land after removing floodplains, streams, wetlands, and other legally undevelopable land. This allows for a more objective analysis of the number of units that the zoning allows and the starting point for density bonuses for design excellence.
3. Locate the buildable area to minimize impacts on natural areas and highly permeable soils and to take advantage of open space and scenic views that were identified in the site analysis.
4. Design the street network to minimize encroachment into sensitive natural areas while still maintaining internal and external connectivity.
5. Allow flexibility in lot and block layouts to provide the required open space and accommodate naturalized stormwater management features and natural landscapes, while also maintaining a connected street network.
6. Minimize clearing, grading, and modification of the site and ensure compatibility with the site's natural areas, features, topography, soils, and water resources.

A photograph of a community garden. In the foreground, there are concrete blocks and a brick forming a raised bed. The garden is filled with various green leafy plants, including lettuce and herbs. A person wearing a green long-sleeved shirt, a light-colored hat, and green gloves is visible on the right side, working in the garden. The background shows a chain-link fence and more foliage.

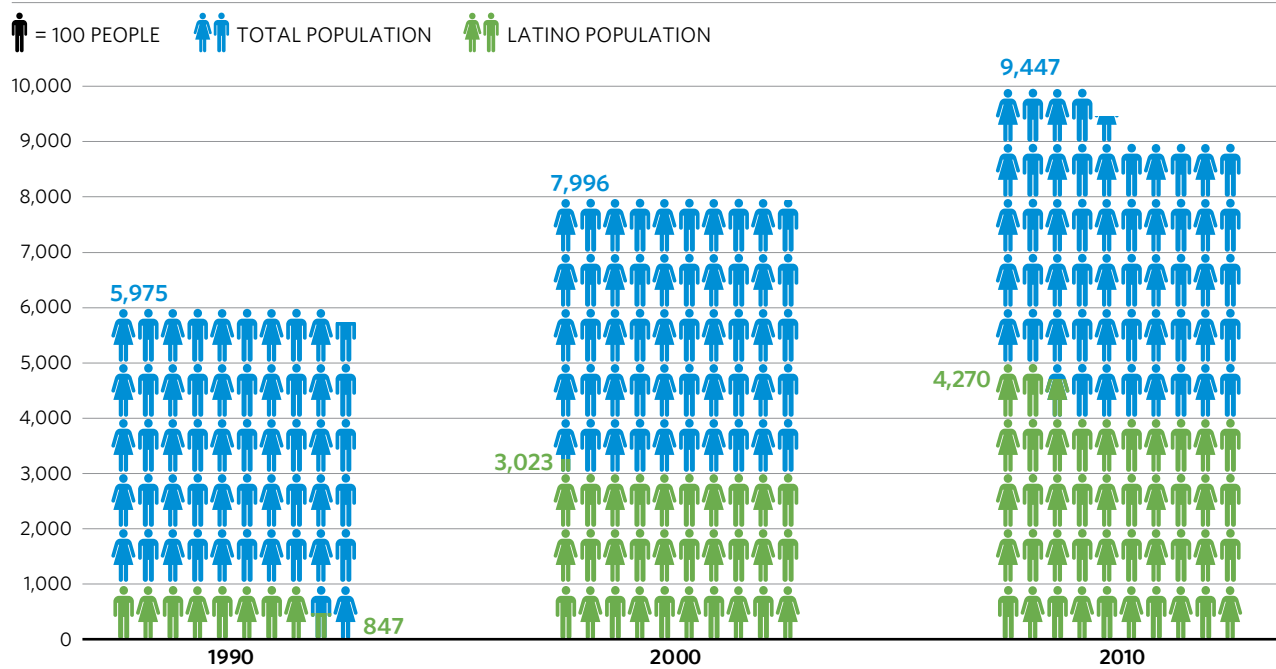
Chapter 6: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community gardens can enliven neighborhoods.

Photo credit: TC Davis.

Harvard seeks to build an inclusive community where all residents can help contribute to the future prosperity of the city.

Figure 6.1. Harvard's population including Latinos for years 1990, 2000, and 2010



Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2010, 2000, and 1990 Census.

Summary of Existing Conditions

Community engagement is a fundamental component of every community's quality of life. Limited participation in public processes and community life can contribute to, or exacerbate, groups feeling unwelcome or unable to participate in public processes. Further, it could lead to isolation from the broader community and contribute to social problems.

Similar to the rest of the County, the City of Harvard experienced population growth and demographic changes between 2000 and 2010. The City of Harvard has experienced significant population growth of its Latino community (Figure 6.1). Today, 45 percent of Harvard residents are of Hispanic or Latino descent, and a majority of this population was born in this country (40 percent) or are now naturalized citizens (18 percent).

Throughout the planning process residents expressed a desire for more cultural integration in Harvard. As seen in other communities, if the Latino community is not represented in government agencies or on boards and commissions and if they do not participate in public processes and decision-making, it can mean that their priorities and needs may not be addressed, leading to challenges in all areas, from housing and health to education and employment.

Engaging Latinos and other underrepresented groups in community life also means that their ideas and contributions can be heard by the greater community.

The City of Harvard has a mayor-council form of government and is organized into four wards, with two Aldermen per ward. While one of the eight councilmembers is Latino, there is low representation of Latinos in municipal staff, boards, and commissions and participation at public meetings, events, and local organizations, like the Chamber. The lack of representation is likely due to a number of factors. Municipalities often have a hard time recruiting Latino residents to participate in civic leadership positions. With few Latinos in leadership positions, it is even more difficult for Harvard to connect with and engage the Latino community. In some cases, low Latino participation in civic life stems from different cultural norms, experiences, and language needs.

Recommendations

The following strategies, many of them low-budget and involving strategic partnerships, offer concrete ways that the City of Harvard can better engage and involve the community in projects and decision-making. Successful implementation of this Comprehensive Plan itself will rely in large part on community engagement. Given the City's demographics, several strategies are targeted to specifically engage the Latino community.

6.1 Strengthen local capacity

The contribution of residents, businesses, and organizations in Harvard make the community larger than the sum of its parts. Enhanced local capacity will help the City as it works to provide regular municipal services as well as longer term projects, such as implementing this plan. Additional partners and engaged residents will help the City address the needs of its residents.

Expand partners

Developing strong partnerships with organizations can help the City enhance cooperation and utilize the existing capacity, expertise, and knowledge of community-based organizations. The City already has established relationships with organizations active in Harvard and should continue to expand the list of partners, particularly those who work directly with Latino groups. To do this, Harvard should keep an up-to-date list of local organizations that serve and support the Latino community and become familiar with the services they provide. The City should work with these groups to keep informed and support efforts to develop Latino leadership and participation. Potential organizations include:

- Business organizations or chambers
- Church clergy and congregations
- Community or neighborhood groups
- Consulates
- Cultural and hometown organizations
- Ethnic media
- Health organizations or centers (county and community)
- Latino leadership, organizing, or advocacy groups
- Schools and libraries
- Unions

Harvard already has relationships with many, but maybe not all of these groups. By building or strengthening relationships with these front-line organizations, Harvard can gain a better understanding of how local government can assist with existing challenges. One of the best ways to establish a relationship is by having municipal staff and elected officials attend events, especially those that are important to the Latino community. The City could also utilize the *Latino Landscape: A Metro Chicago Guide and Nonprofit Directory* as a resource to build knowledge about the Latino community in the Chicago region.⁵³ Face-to-face meetings and calling people, as opposed to sending impersonal correspondence, helps build relationships and trust with community residents. Sometimes finding adequate space to host activities like English as a Second Language (ESL) classes or programs for children is expensive for service providers. Harvard should evaluate municipal facilities and determine if space is available to community groups to assist them in their work.

⁵³ Alejo, Berenice, Institute for Latino Studies, University of Notre Dame "The Latino Landscape: A Metro Chicago Guide and Non-Profit Directory," 2008. https://latinostudies.nd.edu/assets/95296/original/latino_landscape_final2.pdf.

Organize a citizens leadership academy.

Harvard has a younger population; 60 percent are under 35 years of age and may not have experience in municipal leadership. The City can build local leadership capacity by offering training and leadership development opportunities for residents. A citizen academy teaches local residents about how city operations and departments, such as police and fire departments, work. Citizen academies can help residents feel empowered to reach out to public agencies when issues arise and to get more actively involved by participating in meetings and events or even serving as volunteer. It can also give residents a better understanding of the fiscal impacts of different municipal decisions.

Harvard should work with the Harvard Community Unit School District 50 or other partners, like the Harvard Diggins Library, to help coordinate the development of a program like this in the community. This is a great way to train residents and the next generation of leaders to serve on boards or commissions. In addition to connecting with other municipalities who have run an academy, like the Village of Oswego, there are other resources available that Harvard can rely on, including already developed curriculums. The U.S. Hispanic Leadership Institute offers a free-of-charge Grassroots Leadership Development Program designed to bridge the gap between citizens and local government.

Create a Latino advisory council

Localities have found success establishing advisory committees comprised of Latino members of the community. Such entities can broaden the perspective and enhance municipal leaders' ability to focus on the challenges affecting residents. The key is not being overly prescriptive so that the committee can develop its own ideas and identify possible solutions. Advisory groups can be guided by a charter and mission statement, calling for improved communication, identifying gaps in access to services, developing trust between local government and the Latino community, or other identified priorities.

Harvard should establish a Latino Advisory Council and work with the Latino community to identify issues and prioritize potential strategies that can be implemented in the next year to address these needs. The Advisory Council should represent Latino residents, municipal staff, and local organizations who work directly with the Latino community. A first task of the Advisory Council should be to address communication barriers and language access needs, (Strategy 6.2). Next steps could include celebration of holidays and festivals that promote inclusiveness and diversity, (Strategy 6.3).

Encourage participation in municipal elections

While almost 75 percent of Harvard's adult population is registered to vote, voting turnout in recent municipal elections has been low. While not unique to Harvard, low voter turnout in local elections can contribute to uneven representation, which in turn affects government spending priorities. Encouraging participation in municipal elections can help the City become a stronger, more representative government. There are a number of strategies Harvard can use to increase voter turnout. The City could post election reminders in water bills and/or electronic newsletters, partner with community groups to host meet and greets with local candidates, and work with the Harvard Community Unit School District 50 to hold mock elections for local students to get young residents interested.

Evanston's Parent Leadership Institute

The City of Evanston, in partnership with School District 65, coordinates a leadership program in Spanish for bilingual parents. The program runs two to three times a year, and each session brings parents together to meet on a weekly basis for two hours over a nine week period covering various topics relating to leadership, education, and the community as a whole. The program enriches parents' knowledge and understanding of the community in which they live and gives an opportunity to voice their issues and concerns to municipal government officials. Each session ends with a graduation ceremony where the mayor recognizes participants' accomplishments. Graduates are encouraged to take the next step and become involved in the City's decision making process by volunteering for a board or commission.

Aurora Hispanic Heritage Advisory Board

The Aurora Hispanic Heritage Advisory Board (AHHAB) is a non-partisan, community-based panel funded by the City of Aurora. The group organizes events that celebrate Hispanic culture, educates the public on the ways Hispanic residents have shaped Aurora, and seeks to involve diverse voices in the City's planning processes.

The AHHAB hosts a community breakfast with awards and scholarships for community leaders and students, produces Fiesta de Luces to celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month, and sponsors the "Wall of Memories," an exhibit on the first Mexican families in Aurora. The AHHAB has also dedicated two streets with honorary names recognizing Hispanic law enforcement officials.

Harvard has an opportunity to encourage greater civic participation among underrepresented groups. This in turn helps foster inclusion and cross-cultural awareness, and helps to getting more diverse representation on City Council and committees. The City should partner with community organizations that organize and conduct nonpartisan voter registration and turnout campaigns. The U.S. Hispanic Leadership Institute provides voter registration trainings and materials available in different languages free of charge. The Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights coordinates voter registration campaigns at naturalization ceremonies to educate and encourage new citizens to exercise their constitutional rights. Harvard should work with these and other organizations to leverage resources to encourage voter participation.

6.2 Address communication barriers

For many localities, achieving successful public engagement is one of the biggest challenges. Often municipalities do not have the staff capabilities or resources to conduct effective public participation processes. This becomes a much greater challenge when trying to engage underrepresented groups. With Harvard's diverse population, it is important to address communication barriers, strengthen relationships with residents, and set a tone of inclusivity.

Make public engagement accessible

A critical component to making public engagement accessible is to make public meetings and materials appropriate for participants. Harvard should solicit input from leaders and organizations in determining the best models of engagement. The Latino Advisory Council could help mediate this process by serving as a sounding board to assist and guide City staff, offering input on existing issues and opportunities based on their institutional knowledge, and reviewing outreach strategies and meeting materials.

Outreach strategies may need to vary depending on which community groups a municipality is trying to engage. For example, phone calls may be more effective than emails. In addition, the City may need to reach out to specific radio stations, newspapers, and electronic media outlets that target the Latino community. In addition to the standard practices for engagement, like choosing meeting sites that are welcoming, safe, and accessible and selecting dates and times for meetings when more people can participate, Harvard should also consider the following practices:

- **Location:** Rather than hold meetings in public agency office buildings, which may be intimidating, consider using public schools, the public library, churches, or parks.
- **Outreach:** Ensure that outreach and other meeting materials are available in other languages. Mention if there will be translation services available at an event. Social media, such as Twitter and Facebook, is a good way of connecting with the Latino community.
- **Incentives:** Provide small incentives as a way to increase participation. Examples include providing food and childcare, holding raffles for donated items, and recognizing participation.
- **Agenda:** Create an agenda that reflects the community's priorities, including those of the Latino population. Ensure that there is a common understanding about the goals and processes of the meeting.

Enhance communication between Latinos and emergency services

Frequent, two-way communication between the police and fire departments and the Latino community is essential. Latinos should feel assured they will be contacted when necessary and that they may contact local authorities with safety concerns. Possible strategies to increase communication with the local Latino community include:

- Partner with neighboring community public safety agencies as appropriate to leverage limited resources and avoid coverage gaps.
- Many immigrants are likely to turn to spiritual or community leaders if they are a witness or victim of a crime. Harvard should work with key leaders who might serve as a conduit of valuable public safety information.
- Increase media relations or public service announcements. Regularly reach out to ethnic radio and television stations, blogs, and print media to make them aware of local initiatives.
- Cultural sensitivity training and diversity awareness should be included in police and fire academy curricula. Offer language training programs to officers, cadets, and recruits. Encourage a pipeline of ESL and multilingual personnel by noting such opportunities in marketing and recruiting material.
- Provide a hotline that does not require callers to leave contact information to promote crime reporting.

It is also important that the Latino community knows who to go to when they have questions. The City should appoint a Latino affairs liaison for police, fire, and emergency management departments. Some communities have a designated community liaison position within their police or fire departments to assist with outreach to local community groups. The liaison role could be filled by current employees who are bicultural and bilingual or volunteers from local community-based organizations. Such positions also serve as a tool for recruitment to bolster diversity within local government.

Addison's Community Emergency Response Team

The Village of Addison's Police Department offers an eight-week Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) training taught in Spanish at the Henry Hyde Resource Center. The two classes each train 30 local Hispanic leaders to supplement the capacity of first responders. This ensures that language access is not an issue should a major disaster or emergency occur. The CERT training is also a resource used by the Police Department during traffic stops and at community events and celebrations.

Improve language access

⁵⁴ U.S. Census Bureau, 2009-2013 5-Year American Community Survey.

Harvard has a foreign born population of 26.2 percent, with 10.6 percent identified as Limited English Proficiency (LEP) households.⁵⁴ The top languages spoken at home are Spanish, French, German, Polish, Tagalog, and other Pacific Island languages. While Harvard has a diverse immigrant population, 29.3 percent speak Spanish as their first language, of which 1,601 stated that they speak English less than “very well.” Improving language access is a critical aspect of integrating newcomers. It is important from a public safety, civic life, and economic perspectives. The following activities are designed to assist immigrant’s ability to access information in a language they understand and the City’s ability to communicate effectively with residents who speak limited or no English, also known as LEP individuals.

Utilize community interpreters and establish a volunteer language bank. Community volunteers are an important and all too often untapped resource for municipalities. Harvard should consider reaching out to its Latino residents, inviting them to serve as volunteers offering language and cultural guidance or informal translation or interpreting services. A good way to connect with potential volunteers is to partner with local faith-based organizations, community-based organizations, and community college student groups. The City could partner with the Harvard Community Unit School District 50 Dual Language program to offer certification, including language proficiency assessment and basic training, in order to help ensure and improve the quality of volunteer services. Engaging young people is a great way to get entire families involved in the community. When recruiting interns and volunteers, communities should take advantage of younger residents’ cultural diversity and language abilities.

Provide information in the languages your community needs. Harvard should ensure that emergency communications systems can include a Spanish option or other widely used language. Simple strategies, such as signs in municipal offices indicating that assistance in other languages are available, can help spread the word and set a tone of inclusivity. Additionally, communities should ensure that key safety signs, brochures, and informational materials are translated into the languages the community needs.

Hire bilingual and bicultural staff. The hiring process is a key opportunity to increase staff diversity and resources. By hiring bilingual, and if possible, bicultural staff, the City can immediately expand their capabilities without having to pay for additional services. In the absence of other resources, or as a supplement to other resources, staff members who speak another language and have personal familiarity with another culture can be a huge resource.

They can provide basic information, help establish trust, and make the City feel more welcoming. Harvard could review personnel plans to include provisions that promote cultural and language diversity and prioritize which staff provisions need bilingual staff. It is important that positions involving frequent integration with residents—front-desk, water billing, cashiering, call centers, or police department positions, for instance—be filled by bilingual individuals.⁵⁵ Then, when positions become available, the City could indicate a preference for bilingual candidates and expand their capacity on this issue.

55 It is also important to emphasize that while a staff member may be bilingual, that does not mean s/he replaces professional translators or interpreters. Particularly when it comes to life and safety and legal issues (e.g., fire calls, police reports, medical documents, board meetings, etc.), only bilingual employees who are professionally trained and certified in translating and interpreting should be contracted.

In cases where municipalities do not have bilingual staff and volunteer resources or may wish to supplement these, there are a variety of communications technology options available. A simple practice is the translation of municipal websites through professional or basic and free options like Google Translate.

6.3 Organize community building activities

In many cases, the most effective way to engage residents is through community events. Block parties, street fairs and festivals, and community gardens can all help bring different groups together and help residents feel more integrated. Harvard already hosts a number of community events and can use these as opportunities to bring different segments of the population together. The City should continue to work with partners, including the Latino Advisory Council, to figure out ways to engage Latino residents in event planning and organizing as well as event promotion to involve more residents.

The Harvard community may also want to add events or components to existing events to help draw different audiences. Some events could be more low key. For instance, the Village of Skokie has sponsored “Know Your Neighbor Week,” during which residents are encouraged to invite their neighbor over for coffee in their homes. The Village provided host “kits” that included invitations, conversation starters, and coupons to local bakeries.

Harvard can also help raise cultural awareness so that all residents are aware of the rich diversity of the community. An annual Festival of Cultures celebrating the heritage of Harvard’s residents could be added to the festival list or as a component of an existing festival. Harvard could also consider celebrating new citizens in naturalization ceremonies, as is done in other local communities like Evanston, Schaumburg, and Hanover Park. The City could establish relationships with cities in the countries of origin of some of the community’s largest immigrant groups.

Chapter 7: TRANSPORTATION



Metra train in Harvard's station.
Photo credit: Kyle Krinninger.

Harvard will continue to ensure that the transportation network allows residents to drive, walk, or bike safely and conveniently throughout the City for daily needs and activities and accommodates the movement of goods and services.

Summary of Existing Conditions

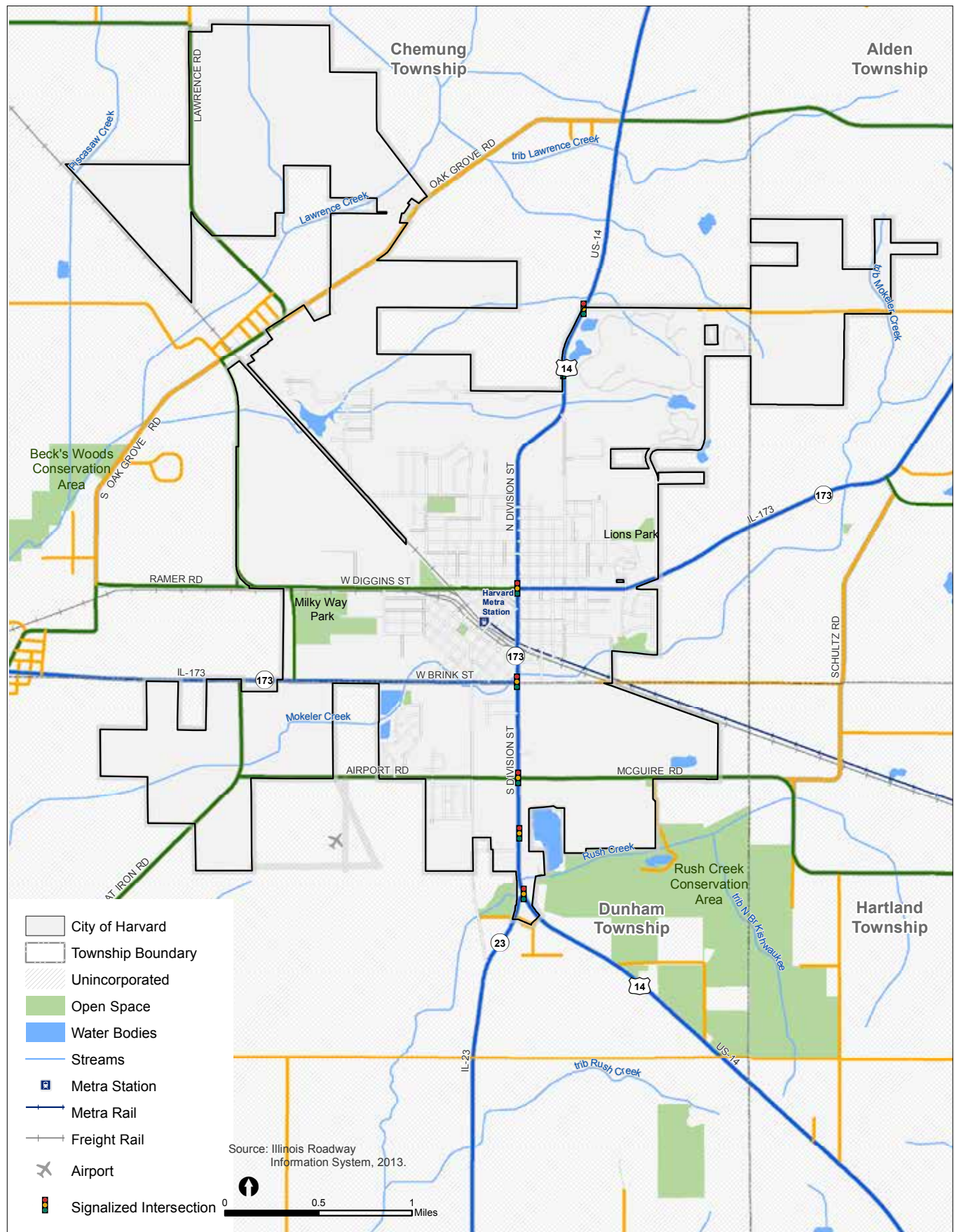
The City of Harvard contains a diverse network of streets, from local roads to U.S. highways. Situated along US 14, Harvard is located approximately 16 miles north of the Jane Addams Memorial Tollway (Interstate-90) and 15 miles south of Interstate-43 in Wisconsin. Additionally, IL 173 and IL 23 also run through Harvard and intersect with US 14. The streets carrying the highest volumes of vehicles include the principal arterials of US 14, IL 173, and IL 23. With several streets or street segments outside of the City's jurisdiction, its ability to make improvements, control access, or unify the streetscape requires cooperation and coordination between different entities. Figure 7.1 identifies which streets are maintained by IDOT, the McHenry County Department of Transportation (MCDOT), and the four townships in the area, as well as the City of Harvard.

Harvard is served by Metra's Union Pacific Northwest Line (UP-NW), Pace Bus Route 808, and MCRide, all of which provide transit connections to nearby communities as well as downtown Chicago. Passenger rail service continues to be important to the development of Harvard. The Pace Bus Route 808 provides service to Harvard Metra Station and Harvard Mercy Hospital using Ayers Street, IL 173, and US 14 as it runs between Harvard and Crystal Lake. The MCRide Dial-a-Ride service is McHenry County's shared-ride service covering many communities in the County.

The City's sidewalk network is extensive with many streets having sidewalks on one or both sides of the street. However, there are several areas that have significant gaps in the sidewalk network. While Downtown Harvard has a robust sidewalk and crosswalk network, the commercial corridor along US 14 lacks sidewalks and other pedestrian-friendly design elements. In addition, almost all of the existing signalized intersections lack crosswalks and existing crosswalks are infrequently spaced.

There are a number of regional bicycle routes and off-street paths planned in the Harvard area and two existing bicycle facilities, the regional Udder Century Bike Route and the Stone Mill Trail. Many of the neighborhood streets are already designed in a bicycle-friendly way, with low speeds and low traffic volumes. However, bicyclists will likely have to cross or use some of the larger, busier arterials in order to access different parts of the city, which could present barriers to many riders.

Figure 7.1 Jurisdiction of Harvard streets



Recommendations

7.1 Adopt a complete streets policy

The design of streets influences the character, value, and use of properties, as well as the health and vitality of surrounding neighborhoods. Designing streets for all users, such as cars, bikes, and pedestrians, has been shown to create highly-valued streets. Harvard should encourage developers and transportation partners, such as MCDOT and IDOT to use the principles of complete streets, green streets, and context sensitive street design for road resurfacing and construction projects. The McHenry County 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan (2040 LRTP) identifies most of Harvard as a Complete Streets area where bicycles and pedestrians should be expected users of the streets and highways and therefore accommodated in street design.⁵⁶ IDOT has a similar policy that could be used for projects within Harvard. In the future, when the City or partner agencies are reconstructing a street segment, pedestrian and bicycle facilities, such as sidewalks, bikeways, and crosswalks, should be included in the design process, especially in areas where pedestrians are expected and encouraged.

In Harvard, the design of streets and sidewalks should reflect the surrounding context. Some roads should maintain the open and rural character of specific parts of the community and work to preserve the scenic views and vistas. Other streets should be designed to reflect the small town character that is prevalent through the downtown and older residential neighborhoods. These principles should be formalized in zoning and subdivision regulations and through the adoption of a Complete Streets ordinance.

7.2 Expand and maintain the sidewalk network

Harvard is on its way to being a very walkable community, but crosswalk and sidewalk network gaps may deter residents from using this form of transportation. The benefits of providing a safe environment for pedestrians are numerous. Residents benefit from this healthy form of exercise and low cost form of transportation. As residents can more easily get around the City on foot, they reduce the demands on Harvard's main arterials. In addition, businesses are shown to benefit from pedestrian-friendly locations. Residents are interested in improving the conditions of the existing sidewalk network as well as expanding it to provide safe facilities, such as crosswalks and pedestrian countdown signals, for those walking in Harvard's neighborhoods. The City should focus on the following strategies to improve the sidewalk network.

⁵⁶ For complete street resources, see the Active Transportation Alliance's Complete Streets Policy, see activetransportationpolicy.org/complete-streets-policy.

Prioritize sidewalk investments

Harvard should prioritize the enhancement or addition of pedestrian facilities based on proximity to major destinations, such as schools and parks, as well as the ability of new sidewalks to connect to the existing network. During the public engagement process, several areas were highlighted as priorities, (Figure 7.2). Within neighborhoods, segments of Harrison Street, Blaine Street, Garfield Road, and McKinley Street were identified as locations where additional sidewalks could provide students with a safe way to walk to the nearby schools and library. A sidewalk connection to Milky Way Park, along Diggins Street as an extension of the Stone Mill Path, was also identified as a priority as it would allow residents to walk to this large park. A number of additional sidewalk connections to and along the South Division Street corridor were also seen as a way to increase the accessibility of nearby residents to commercial destinations. Improvements to US 14 are described in more detail in Strategy 7.4.

Street Design Principles

Complete Streets are streets designed and operated to enable safe access for all users of all ages and abilities. Pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and transit riders of all ages and abilities must be able to safely move along and across a complete street.

Green Streets are streets designed with features that manage stormwater and protect water quality by reducing the volume of water that flows directly to streams and rivers; use street trees to intercept rain, provide shade to help cool the street, and improve air quality; and provide a visible element of the green infrastructure system.

Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) design is an interdisciplinary approach to transportation projects that involves all stakeholders and considers a range of goals that extend beyond the transportation problem, such as community livability and sustainability. CSS considers automobile traffic needs as well as the setting and character of the area; the values and goals of the community; the needs of transportation users; historic sites and landscapes; view sheds and scenic character; rivers, streams, and natural drainage features; landscape edges, fences and tree lines; distant vistas and natural land forms; agricultural areas and open space; utilities; and adjacent land uses.

The City should investigate the potential of additional sidewalk segments in these identified areas as well as other locations. There are a number of options to help fund these improvements, including reestablishing the sidewalk repair program, where residents share a portion of the construction costs. For locations near schools, Safe Routes to School Funding may be reinstated at the state level. The McHenry County Health Department awards “We Choose Health” grants to local school districts and municipalities for “complete streets” projects.⁵⁷ Coordination with partner agencies will be essential in completing the sidewalk network along arterials. The Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program (ITEP) can also provide financial assistance. Harvard can also access Surface Transportation Program (STP) funds, which are flexible in their use, through the McHenry County Council of Mayors.

⁵⁷ McHenry County Department of Health, We Choose Health, see www.co.mchenry.il.us/county-government/departments-a-i/health-department/nursing/health-promotion-education-services/we-choose-health.

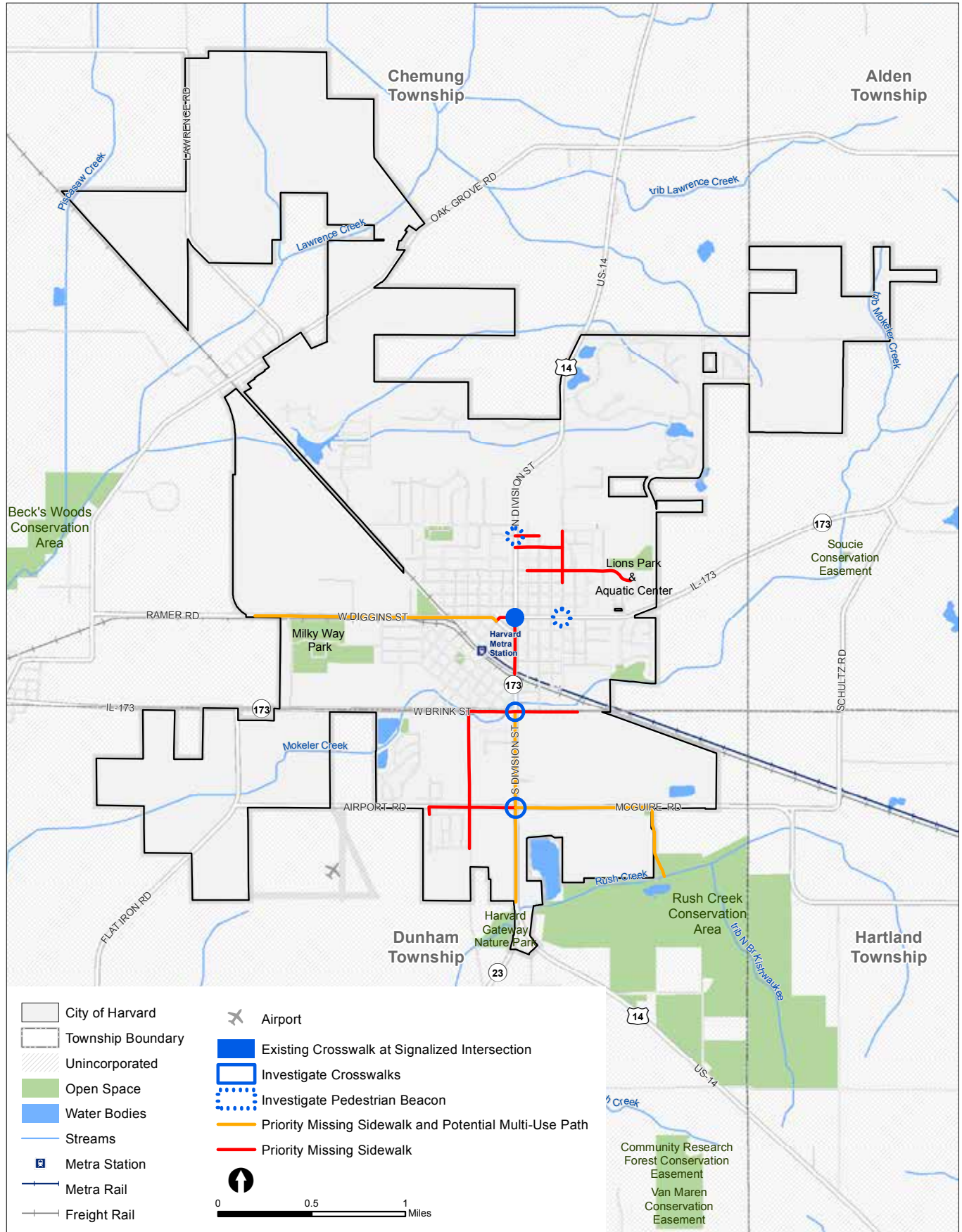
⁵⁸ U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, Manual for Uniform Traffic Control Devices, 2009. See <http://mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov>.

Expand pedestrian crossings

Frequent pedestrian crossings allow residents and visitors to easily access different parts of the community. The City should work to update the existing signalized and non-signalized crossings so that they are clearly visible to both pedestrians and drivers. This will help promote the use of designated crossings and increase pedestrian safety. Many of the existing crosswalks in Harvard are marked with minimal treatments; further improvements will make pedestrians more visible to drivers. High-visibility ladder, zebra, and continental crosswalk markings are preferable to standard parallel or dashed pavement markings. The City should follow the high visibility crosswalk guidelines detailed in the 2009 Manual for Uniform Traffic Control Devices.⁵⁸

Of immediate concern are two intersections along US 14—McGuire/Airport Road and Brink Street. These signalized intersections lack crosswalks and pedestrian countdown timers. When sidewalks are installed at and around these locations, the City should work with IDOT and MCDOT to include pedestrian facilities at these priority locations. The City should also investigate options for the intersections of US 14 and Harrison Street and IL 173 and Garfield Road. Given the connection these streets have with Harvard’s schools, the use of pedestrian countdown timers may be warranted to help younger residents cross these arterials.

Figure 7.2 Priority sidewalk and crosswalk gaps



Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, 2015.

7.3 Connect regional bikeways

Completing planned regional bikeways through and around Harvard will allow residents to use these facilities and can also help draw cycling enthusiasts into the community, specifically downtown. The Northeastern Illinois Regional Greenways and Trails Plan,⁵⁹ 2040 LRTP,⁶⁰ and the McHenry County Green Infrastructure Plan⁶¹ all identify conceptual corridors in and around Harvard to connect to larger regional trails. Figure 7.3 illustrates the options of most interest to the Harvard community.

1. Extend Stone Mill Path from Milky Way Park to Downtown.

Maintained by the MCCD, the Stone Mill Path is an off-street, multi-use path that follows a railroad corridor. Extension of this facility from its current eastern point at Milky Way Park further east along Diggins Street will connect bicycle riders as well as pedestrians to Downtown Harvard as well as provide a path for residents to access the largest park in Harvard's Park system. The City should work with MCCD to find funding for this project. In addition, further extension of the Stone Mill Path west from its existing terminus near Beck's Woods should also be supported.

2. Establish path on McGuire Road to Rush Creek Conservation Area.

Harvard residents would like to access the Rush Creek Conservation Area by bicycle or by foot. Adding an off-street, multi-use path along McGuire Road could provide an access point to the main entrance to this significant conservation area. The City should work with MCCD and the MCDOT to connect residents to this resource.

3. Investigate bikeway along US 14 to Woodstock.

The 2040 LRTP calls for a side path to be constructed along US 14 which would connect Harvard to Woodstock. A similar side path is currently being constructed along US 14 between Woodstock and Crystal Lake. The City should support the extension of this side path north to increase access between these major communities in McHenry County. This facility could also improve pedestrian access between Harvard's neighborhoods and the commercial destinations on this portion of South Division Street (see Strategy 7.4).

4. Investigate bikeway along IL 173 to Hebron.

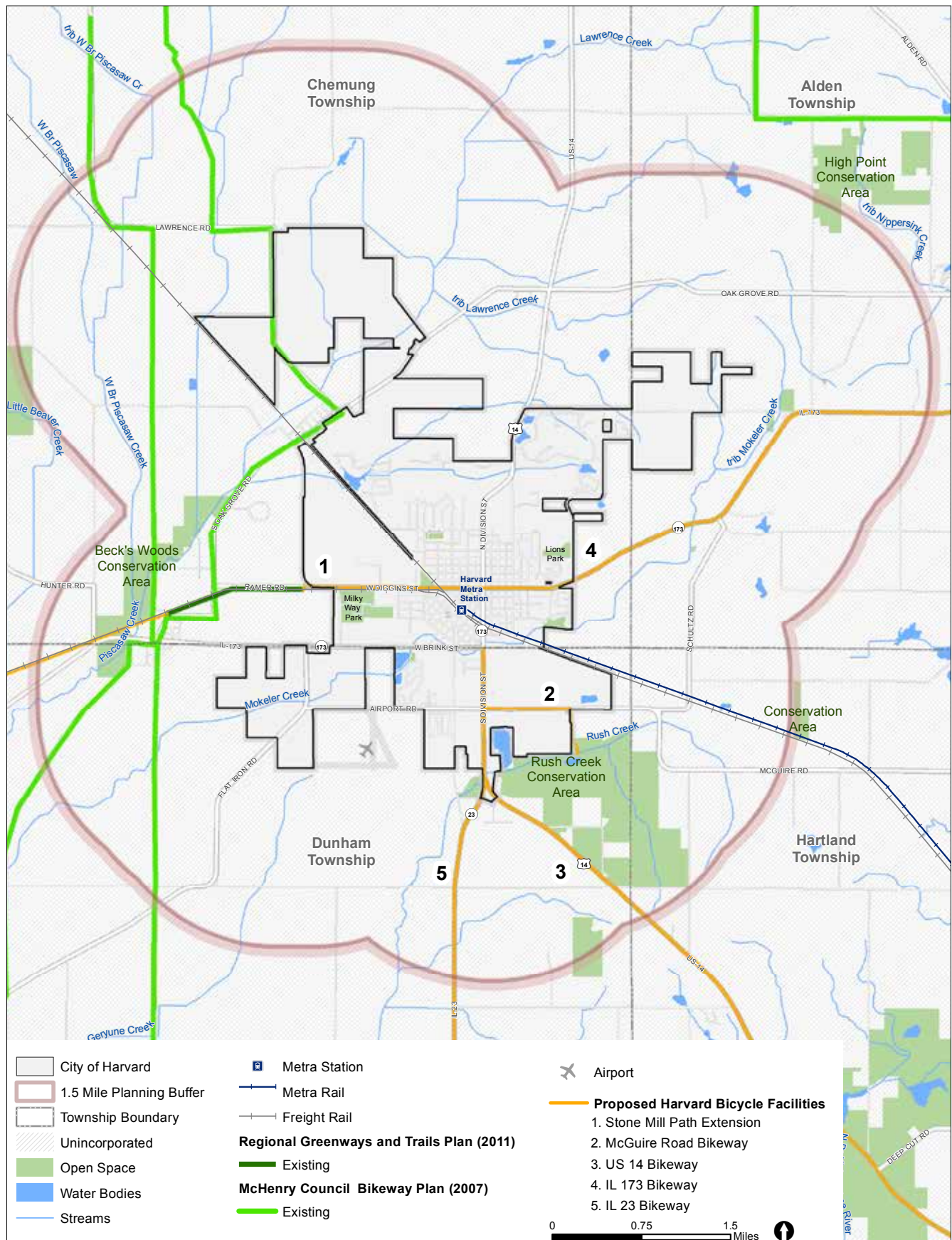
A number of previous plans highlight the importance of connecting Harvard to Hebron via a bikeway. 2040 LRTP identifies IL 173 as a location for a side path between these two communities. The City should work to support MCDOT in their planning efforts to add this component. An alternate route may ultimately be more suitable given site conditions. Harvard should work with partners to ensure that the finalized route connects to Downtown Harvard to provide the most accessibility to residents as well as promote connections to the Harvard Metra station and commercial areas.

⁵⁹ Northeastern Illinois Regional Greenways and Trails Plan, see www.cmap.illinois.gov/mobility/walking-and-bicycling/greenways-and-trails.

⁶⁰ McHenry County 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan, see www.co.mchenry.il.us/county-government/departments-j-z/transportation/transportation-plans/long-range-transportation-plan.

⁶¹ http://www.booking.com/hotel/jm/montego-bay-resort.en-us.html?aid=336408;label=jm-montego-bay-4z%2Ad4agSqSN%2A2MOgUbd2lwS45882930476%3Apl%3Aa%3Ap170%3Ap2%3Aac%3Aap1t%3Aneg%3Afi%3Atikwd-124832440%3Alp1016367%3Al%3Adec%3Adm;sid=b2798b4641df8c32a9359579fad2a541;dcid=12;checkin=2016-08-12;checkout=2016-08-16;dest_id=3752832;dest_type=city;dist=0;group_adults=2;highlighted_

Figure 7.3 Potential bikeways



Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, 2015.

5. Investigate bikeway along IL 23 to Marengo. Similarly, a number of plans have identified the need to connect Harvard and Marengo, including the McHenry County Green Infrastructure Plan and the 2040 LRTP. The Green Infrastructure Plan saw potential for a path down Menge Road which would connect the Rush Creek Conservation Area with the Marengo Ridge Conservation area. The 2040 LRTP identifies IL 23 as a location for a side path. Further investigation of the best route is required. Harvard should work with partners to ensure that the selected route connects to neighborhoods and provides access for residents.

⁶² NACTO Urban Bikeway Design Guide, see nacto.org/cities-for-cycling/design-guide.

As more bikeways are constructed, the City should consider adding bicycle parking at popular destinations, such as Milky Way Park, Downtown, and commercial locations along South Division Street. In addition, the City could also investigate the addition of posted bike routes and road markings to guide users to destinations and regional off-street trails.⁶²

7.4 Enhance South Division Street corridor

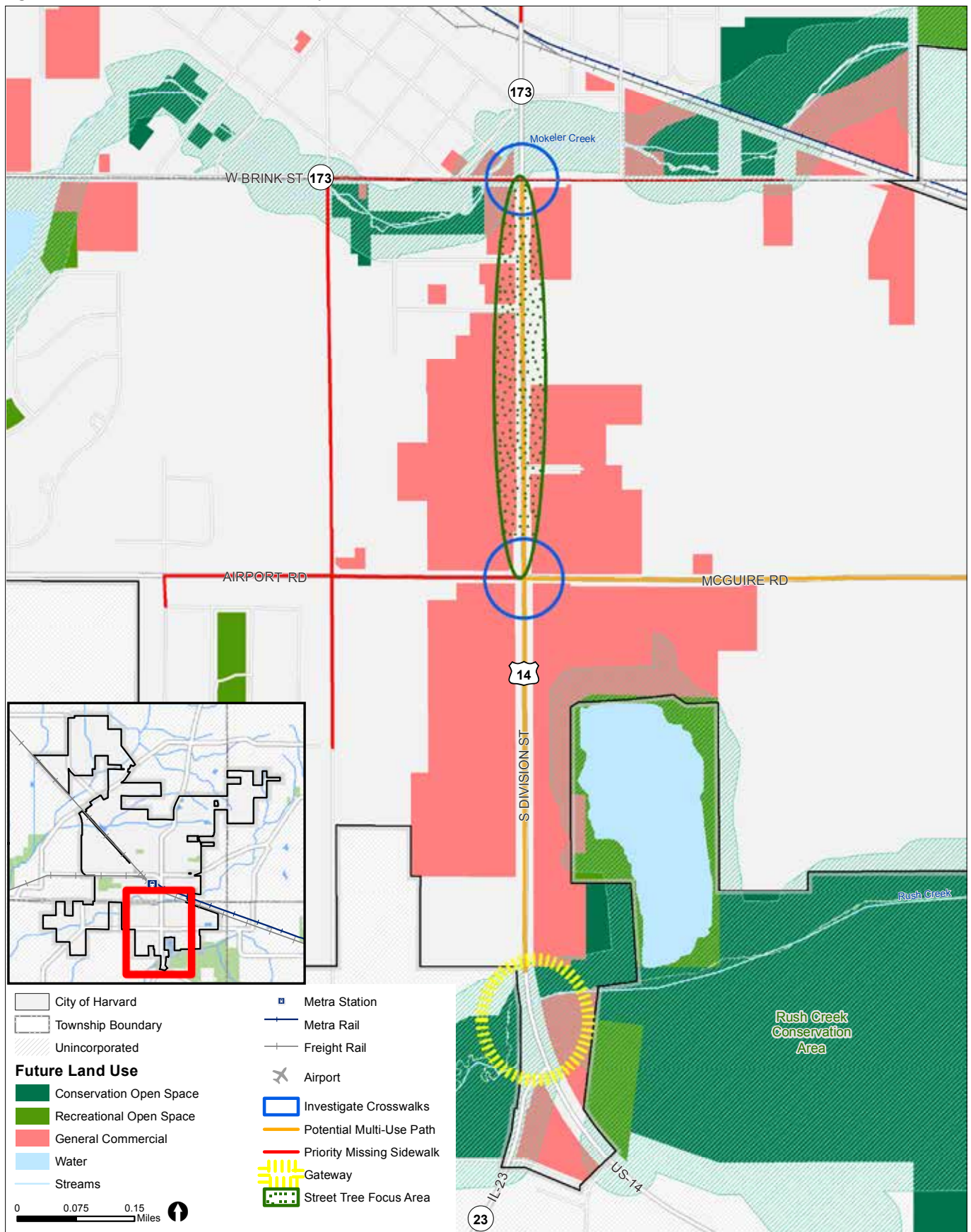
South Division Street (US 14) is the north-south spine of Harvard and one of the main ways residents and visitors experience the community. It is also a key entryway into the city and a main commercial corridor—from Gateway Park to Downtown—that could benefit from improved aesthetics and pedestrian amenities. Unifying this corridor, similar to the successful project the City completed in the Downtown area, will help improve the appeal of this commercial district.

Harvard has limited control over the types of modifications that can be made in the right-of-way because US 14 is controlled by IDOT and is designated as a strategic regional arterial. However, the City can provide a vision for a preferred street design, execute components that are under City control, and work with IDOT to ensure that the vision is clearly expressed when roadway improvements are proposed. Figure 7.4 highlights several streetscaping strategies to enhance South Division Street. Strategy 4.4 also recommends using design guidelines to unify the look of redevelopment as it comes to the corridor.

Amplify the gateway

Residents would like the main entrance into Harvard, located near the intersection of IL 23 and US 14, to more clearly articulate to travelers that they have arrived at a special place. Residents also appreciate the rural character surrounding the community and value that the highway corridors leading into Harvard still maintain scenic views of the natural and agricultural surroundings.

Figure 7.4 South Division Street Corridor improvements



Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, 2015.

Figure 7.5 Examples of gateway elements in landscaped medians



Source: Left: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, Right: Los Angeles Neighborhood Initiative.

Using these two concepts as a framework, the City can use a number of land use and transportation design strategies to heighten the distinction from rural to town at this location. The presence of Rush Creek—with the Rush Creek Conservation Area to the east and the new Harvard Gateway Nature Park to the west—provide a significant opportunity to accentuate that rural character and the sense that Harvard is nestled among abundant natural resources. Harvard should work with existing property owners, particularly those east of US 14, to improve natural landscaping along the creek and visually connect these two natural areas together.

North of Rush Creek, the design of the right-of-way could change from a rural highway to one that incorporates urban components—signaling to drivers that they have entered the City of Harvard. For example, this segment of US 14 includes a left-turn median, which near this location, could be raised and landscaped as a gateway and could include the City’s welcome sign, see Figure 7.5. Additional design cues, listed below for the whole corridor, would also contribute to this transition.

Add sidewalks and crosswalks

Harvard should ensure that it is easy for people within the surrounding neighborhoods to access the businesses within this important commercial corridor. As discussed above, sidewalks and crosswalks are needed along US 14 as well as along other streets leading up to this area so that residents can safely walk from their homes to businesses. A multi-use path, as recommended in Strategy 7.3, could be a component of this sidewalk network. Ideally, sidewalks would be located on both sides of the street to increase access. At intersections, the crossing distance should be kept as short as possible to decrease the amount of time a pedestrian is in the street. The Institute of Transportation Engineers’ *Designing Walkable Urban Thoroughfares: A Context Sensitive Approach* has guidance on intersection design that could be useful along this corridor.⁶³

⁶³ Institute of Transportation Engineers, 2010. “Designing Walkable Urban Thoroughfares: A Context Sensitive Approach,” see <http://library.ite.org/pub/e1c43c-2354-d714-51d9-d82b39d4dbad>.

Increase street trees and landscaping

Attractive street trees can play a vital role in redefining a commercial corridor. Street trees also manage stormwater and improve air quality as well as enhance the beauty of streets, which can help entice people to walk along them and spend more time in the area. Street trees have also been shown to increase property values and have been connected with increased retail sales. For example, research has shown that consumers have expressed a willingness to pay 9 percent more in small cities for equivalent goods and services in business districts with a tree canopy.⁶⁴ Overall, while street trees do represent an added maintenance expense, they are known to bring larger economic benefits to a commercial street and signal reinvestment. Trees are present on Division Street, but they are generally not lining the public right-of-way. There are some sections north of McGuire Road that could benefit from the addition of street trees. As sidewalks or multi-use paths are added to the corridor, street trees should be located in the parkway between the curb and the sidewalk to provide a barrier between pedestrian and vehicular traffic.

⁶⁴ Kathleen L. Wolf, "Roadside Urban Trees, Balancing Safety and Community Values," *Arborist News*, Dec. 2006, 56-57. Accessed Feb. 1, 2013, www.naturewithin.info/Roadside/ArbNews_TreeSafety.pdf.

Continue access management principles

Access management is the control of the location, spacing, design, and operation of driveways, median openings, and street connections to improve arterial and collector traffic flow. Each access point creates potential conflicts between through traffic and traffic using that access, which in turn can lead to traffic congestion and reduce safety. Recent redevelopment on US 14 has been designed using sound access management principles. Walgreens and First National Bank, located at the corner of McGuire Road, used a consolidated driveway which helps improve traffic flow on US 14. The City should continue to deploy these principles as the corridor redevelops. However, it should also ensure that redevelopment of driveways are also friendly to pedestrians by reducing the driveway curb radius in order to reduce the vehicular speed and crossing distance at these locations.

7.5 Support transit expansion

While a low percentage of Harvard residents rely on transit for every day trips, transit provides an essential service and can lower transportation costs for City residents. Harvard is unlikely to see a significant expansion of transit service in the timeframe of this plan. However, the City recognizes the valuable services Metra, Pace, and MCRide provide to the community and is committed to maintaining and advocating for strategic expansion of service as well as supporting current transit riders. The following strategies are designed to further enhance the transit system in Harvard.

⁶⁵ Pace Suburban Bus, 2013. "Transit Supportive Guidelines for the Chicagoland Region," see www.pacebus.com/guidelines/about_tsgs.asp.

- **Promote transit use.** Harvard was developed in conjunction with the extension of the railroad, which provided essential access to other parts of the region. While the economy has shifted, the advantage of transit remains within the community. Harvard should continue to provide transit information on its website and look for additional ways to promote transit use in the community.
- **Add bus shelters.** While Pace Bus 808 currently travels through the community, many residents are unaware of this service. Adding physical bus shelters or other amenities to existing bus stops will provide a service to existing riders and also highlight the existence of the route to others. The bus stop locations on South Division Street should be considered when reviewing the overall streetscaping of this area, (Strategy 7.4). Pace's Transit Supportive Guidelines for the Chicagoland Region provide design strategies that the City can reference when working with Pace to add transit amenities.⁶⁵
- **Explore weekend connections.** The City should work with Pace to investigate the potential of providing Pace bus 808 service on weekend days in addition to the existing weekday service. Weekend service would help connect Harvard to the additional UP-NW weekend service runs that terminate at the Crystal Lake Metra station.
- **Support improvements to Metra UP-NW service.** Harvard should continue to advocate for improvements to Metra service on the UP-NW line, as identified in GO TO 2040. Two improvements are planned on the UP-NW line: infrastructure upgrades and a 1.6 mile extension to Johnsburg from McHenry. Infrastructure upgrades include improvements to the existing signal system and additional crossovers and other track improvements designed to increase operating capacity and reliability.

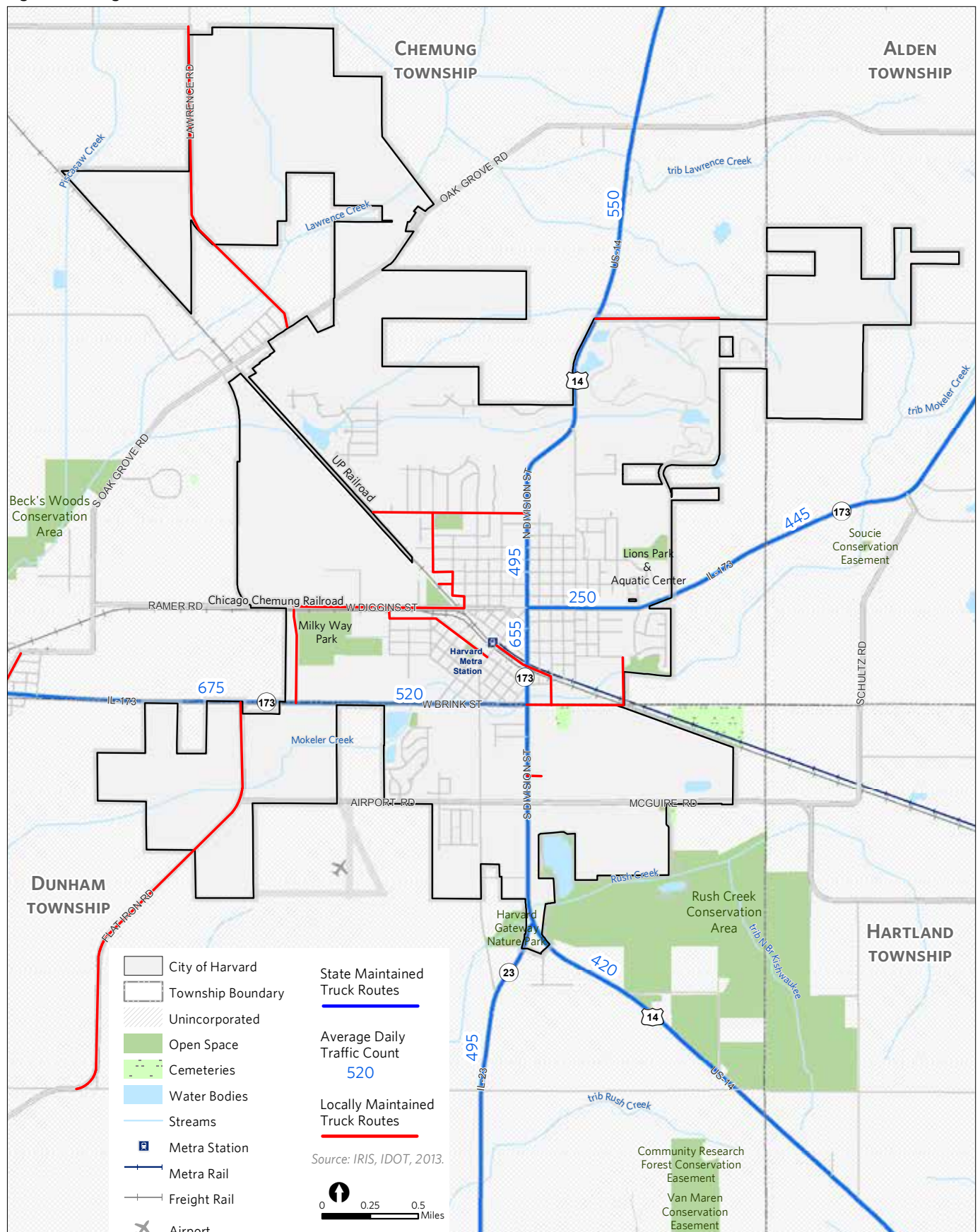


7.6 Coordinate with trucking industry on local truck routes

Harvard has over 580 acres of land dedicated to industrial uses and many of these businesses employ Harvard residents. Many also rely on freight movement to conduct their business, making efficient and safe freight movement an important component of the City's economy. In addition to the UP and Chicago Chemung Railroad, US 14, IL 23, and IL 173 provide trucks with access to the national highway system. With 67 percent of all freight movement in the Chicago region done by truck, truck movement within Harvard is important to the local industrial businesses as it is likely their main method of transportation. Industry trends in container sizes stress the importance of having Class I and II roads accessing industrial land uses. At the same time, trucks bring wear and tear on local roads, especially if they are not designed to accommodate these larger vehicles.

Providing easy access and good facilities for trucks is essential and this can be done in a way that minimizes damages to infrastructure and disruptions to local residents. The City of Harvard already has a system of locally maintained truck routes that are codified in ordinance and contribute to the larger trucking industry maps (Figure 7.6). In addition, there are several streets within Harvard where weight restrictions have been designated. However, local truck routes may not always be utilized by trucks moving in and out of the community. In partnership with HEDC and the Chamber, Harvard should work with local shippers and receivers to promote the use of designated routes and investigate if there are issues with the current routes. Harvard does have the ability to add further weight restrictions if there are legitimate reasons to do so.

Figure 7.6 Freight and truck routes



Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, 2015.

Chapter 8: IMPLEMENTATION



The success of Harvard's Comprehensive Plan is the combined responsibility of City leadership, City staff, businesses, community organizations, and residents. This chapter provides a prioritized list of steps that should be undertaken within the next two years to begin implementation of the Plan. In recognition of the role different organizations play within the community, this chapter includes a quick reference guide of the Plan's strategies and identifies which groups could play a role in specific steps. Financing the Plan is an essential component and this chapter also includes a summary of currently available grant programs as well as potential City and community organization contributions. A list of potential regional and national partners and reference guides are also included.

8.1 Priority projects

Several projects were identified as priority projects that the City should aim to complete within the next two years. Harvard's current zoning and subdivision ordinance needs to be updated to reflect existing development trends and the community's vision for the future. There are a number of general items that should be done, including updating the zoning districts and map to reflect the future land use pattern as shown in Figure 2.1 as well as updating and simplifying the list of uses in the zoning districts. Chapters 3 through 7 identified a number of additional ordinance updates that should be addressed to meet the vision of the Plan, which are summarized in Table 8.1.

In addition to the ordinance update, several other strategies were identified as priorities. The strategies listed in Table 8.2 are those that can be significantly advanced in the next two years and should be prioritized by the City for proactive implementation. Other strategies should also be pursued as opportunities arise.

Table 8.1 Recommended ordinance updates

CHAPTER AND RECOMMENDATION	STRATEGIES	RECOMMENDED ORDINANCE UPDATE
Agriculture, Land, and Water Resources		
3.1 Work with agricultural landowners to protect farmland.	Adopt regulatory changes to support agricultural uses.	Update agricultural district in zoning map to reflect Future Land Use Plan; review uses in agricultural district to ensure compatibility with agricultural production.
3.3 Promote open space and natural resource preservation.	Update subdivision and zoning ordinance to protect natural resources.	Strengthen the natural resource assessment in the subdivision ordinance; minimize land modification and respect site topography in site design; minimize development in the floodway and floodplain; protect streams and wetlands; promote natural landscaping.
3.4 Promote water resource protection and conservation.	Manage land use change to protect water supply.	Review regulations for activities within Sensitive Aquifer Recharge Areas; restrict phosphorous fertilizers and salt storage and handling.
	Promote water conservation and efficiency.	Review regulations for activities within Sensitive Aquifer Recharge Areas; restrict phosphorous fertilizers and salt storage and handling.
3.5 Enhance stormwater management.		Encourage natural landscaping and naturalized drainage and detention features; remove barriers in other sections of ordinance to promote these practices.
3.7 Adopt sustainable practices in municipal activities.		Review lighting requirements to minimize light pollution.
Economic Development		
4.1 Support the agricultural economy and local food system.		Review where local food products can be grown, processed, and sold to remove barriers; establish clear guidelines on food vendors and producers, signage, and compost.
4.4 Support existing commercial nodes.	Create a cohesive identity for the South Division Street corridor.	Review design standards and create a cohesive set of guidelines for this area.
4.5 Enhance coordination between the City and business owners.	Encourage Latino-owned businesses and businesses that serve the Latino population.	Review sign ordinance to allow bilingual signage.
Homes and Neighborhoods		
5.4 Design new housing to protect community and natural assets.	Promote infill development that complements community character.	Update residential dimensional standards to ensure new development matches surrounding neighborhood.
	Incorporate conservation design principles in new subdivisions.	Establish conservation design zoning district to allow for clustering of buildings and preservation of natural areas; map in locations with known green infrastructure; also provide a trigger if significant natural resources are found outside of those areas.
5.5 Enhance existing neighborhood parks and open spaces.		Allow for temporary or alternative uses, such as community gardens, on parcels anticipated to remain undeveloped.
Transportation		
7.1 Adopt a complete streets policy.		Review ordinance for opportunities to improve street design principles in new subdivisions to accommodate all users, including pedestrians and bicyclists.
7.2 Expand the sidewalk network.	Expand pedestrian crossings.	Update pedestrian crossing standards.
7.3 Connect regional bikeways.		Consider adding bicycle parking requirements.
7.4 Enhance South Division Street Corridor.	Continue access management principles.	Update driveway design to accommodate both access management principles and pedestrians.
7.6 Coordinate with trucking industry on local truck routes.		Consider updating local truck routes.

Table 8.2 First implementation steps of the Harvard Comprehensive Plan

STRATEGIES	DESCRIPTION	TIMELINE	LEAD IMPLEMENTER	KEY PARTNERS
4.1 Support the agricultural economy and local food system				
Form a Harvard Local Food and Farming Commission.	Composed of members with farming and food system expertise; this group will help coordinate efforts to create business opportunities around agriculture and local food.	Short term (1-2 years)	Farmers, Harvard Economic Development Corporation	City, McHenry County Farm Bureau
Promote local food farming and related businesses.	Promote agricultural diversification, connect local producers to marketing opportunities, investigate reestablishing a farmer's market, and assess processing and distribution infrastructure for local food.	Short term (1-2 years)	Harvard Local Food and Farming Commission, Harvard Economic Development Corporation	Farmers, Harvard Chamber of Commerce
Support new and beginning farmers.	Partner with organization that work with farmers and farmland; promote and connect with agricultural training programs.	Mid term (3-5 years)	Harvard Local Food and Farming Commission	The Land Conservancy of McHenry County
Promote agritourism.	Identify farmers near Harvard who are interested in agritourism and work with them to facilitate this activity.	Mid term (3-5 years)	Harvard Local Food and Farming Commission	McHenry County Convention & Visitors Bureau, Illinois AgFun
5.2 Enhance existing housing stock through rehabilitation				
Connect residents to existing rehabilitation resources.	Promote the use of existing programs to aid in the rehabilitation and maintenance of residential properties.	Short term (1-2 years)	City Staff, Elected Officials	McHenry County Housing Authority
Foster a culture of home rehabilitation.	Encourage home rehabilitation by celebrating the community's history and engaging residents in neighborhood activities.	Mid term (3-5 years)	City, residents	Greater Harvard Area Historical Society, McHenry County Historical Society
Continue code enforcement.	Investigate creative or low-cost steps to continue code enforcement.	Short term (1-2 years)	City Staff	
6.1 Build local capacity				
Expand partners.	Continue to expand the list of partners, particularly those who work directly with Latino groups.	Short term (1-2 years)	City Staff; Elected Officials	Asamblea Apostolica de la Fe en Cristo Jesus, St. Joseph's Catholic Church
Organize a Citizens Leadership Academy.	Organize a civic and leadership development training to introduce local residents on how the city operates.	Mid term (3-5 years)	City Staff, Harvard Community Unit School District 50	Harvard Diggins Library
Create a Latino advisory council.	Composed of members of the Latino community, this group will help coordinate efforts and identify community issues.	Mid term (3-5 years)	Residents, City Staff	Asamblea Apostolica de la Fe en Cristo Jesus, St. Joseph's Catholic Church

8.2 Partners

- American Water Works Association
- Chicago Jobs Council
- Commonwealth Edison
- Consumer Credit Counseling Service of
- McHenry County
- Habitat for Humanity of McHenry County
- Harvard Historical Society
- Harvard Mercy Hospital
- Harvard State Bank
- Illinois AgFun
- Illinois Department of Transportation
- Illinois Foreclosure Prevention Network
- Illinois Housing Development Authority
- Illinois State Water Survey
- Land Connection
- Liberty Prairie Foundation
- McHenry County
- McHenry County College
- McHenry County Convention & Visitors Bureau
- McHenry County Department of Planning and Development
- McHenry County Division of Transportation
- McHenry County Economic Development Corporation
- McHenry County Soil and Water Conservation District
- McHenry County Workforce Network
- McHenry County's Water Resources Division
- Nicor Gas
- Northwest Water Planning Alliance
- Prairie State Legal
- U.S. Hispanic Leadership Institute
- University of Illinois Extension
- USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

8.3 Potential funding sources

Harvard has a long history of utilizing grant funding to complete projects. The City and community organizations should continue to look for these funding sources as they work to implement the plan. The following list of grant programs could potentially fund many of the projects outlined in the plan.

- **ComEd Green Region Program, Openlands:**
Awards grants for municipal efforts to plan for, protect, and improve openland in ComEd's service area. The grants, of up to \$10,000 each, will support existing open space projects that focus on conservation, preservation and improvements to local parks and recreation resources. Grant recipients can use Green Region grants in combination with other funding sources to cover a portion of the expenses associated with developing and/or supporting their open space programs. Program information: www.openlands.org/greenregion.
- **Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ), CMAP:**
Funds surface transportation improvements design to improve air quality and mitigate congestion. CMAP considers the implementation of GO TO 2040 comprehensive regional plan in its program development process. Program information: www.cmap.illinois.gov/mobility/strategic-investment/cmaq.
- **Energy Impact Illinois:** Helps residents, businesses, and nonprofits reduce energy use in their buildings. All Harvard residents, including renters, may be eligible for a variety of rebates and low-interest loans to renovate their homes and make them more energy efficient. Program information: <http://energyimpactillinois.org/residential/?reload=y>.
- **Farmers' Market Promotion Program, USDA:**
Offers grants to help improve and expand domestic farmers' markets, including marketing, signage, vendor equipment. Local governments and nonprofit organizations are eligible. Program information: www.ams.usda.gov/services/grants/fmpp.

- Habitat for Humanity of McHenry County:**
 Offers several programs – A Brush with Kindness, Ramps and Rails, and Repair Corps – to provide home maintenance and home accessibility modifications for low-income and veteran residents. Already active in Harvard, volunteer groups work alongside able-bodied homeowners to assist in completing repairs and modifications. **Program information:** <http://www.habitatmchenry.org/services/>.
- Historic Preservation Tax Incentives, Illinois Historic Preservation Agency:** Offers a 20 percent tax credit for the substantial rehabilitation of commercial, agricultural, industrial, or rental residential buildings that are certified as historic in the district and follow the U.S. Secretary of the Interior's standards for rehabilitation. The credit may be subtracted directly from federal income taxes owed by the owner. Program information: www.illinois.gov/iHPA/Preserve/Pages/Funding.aspx.
- Housing Preservation Grants, USDA:**
 Provides grants to sponsoring organizations for the repair and rehabilitation of housing occupied by low and very low income people. Program information: www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/housing-preservation-grants.
- Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation:**
 Supports nonprofit organizations and local governments in their efforts to reduce energy consumption in buildings. In 2013, the foundation will continue to support lighting upgrades in Community Centers. Historic buildings prioritized. Program information: www.IllinoisCleanEnergy.org.
- Illinois Green Infrastructure Grant Program for Stormwater Management, IEPA:** Provides funding to local units of government and other organizations to implement green infrastructure best management practices to control stormwater runoff for water quality protection in Illinois. Projects must be located within a MS4 or Combined Sewer area. Funds are limited to the implementation of projects to install BMPs. Under the Green Infrastructure Small Projects Category, projects require a local match of 25 percent. Program information: www.epa.illinois.gov/topics/grants-loans/water-financial-assistance/igig/index.
- Illinois Home Weatherization Assistance Program, McHenry County Housing Authority:** Provides qualified households assistance with energy conservation assistance. Retrofit programs make homes more energy efficient and some available financing options spread costs over several years to allow the improvements to pay for themselves. Program information: www.mchenrycountyhousing.org/WEATHERIZATION/_layouts/15/start.aspx#/.
- Illinois Trails Grant Program, IDNR:** Offers 5 different grants as a funding source for trail and related facility development, including bike path development. The program also prioritizes projects that involve land acquisition, tie into a trail network, provide a linear trail connection, are identified in bikeway plans, provide quality bike facilities, have minimal adverse impact, are new facilities, are scenic, demonstrate maintenance capacity, and have not received other federal/state funding. The program's matching funds are not to exceed 50 percent of the required local match or \$200,000, per successful application. The applications for the funding cycle are due on March 1st of each year. Program information: www.dnr.state.il.us/ocd/newtrail2.htm.
- Illinois Water Pollution Control Loan Program, IEPA:** Offers low interest loans through the State Revolving Fund for the design and construction of a wide variety of projects that protect or improve the quality of Illinois' water resources. Program information: www.epa.illinois.gov/topics/grants-loans/state-revolving-fund/index.
- Local Foods, Local Places, U.S. EPA:** Offers grants for boosting economic opportunities for local farmers and businesses, improving access to healthy local food, promoting childhood wellness, and creating walkable, healthy, economically vibrant neighborhoods. Program information: www2.epa.gov/smartgrowth/local-foods-local-places.

- Local Food Promotion Program, USDA:**
 Offers grant funds with a 25 percent match to support the development and expansion of local and regional food business enterprises to increase domestic consumption of, and access to, locally and regionally produced agricultural products, and to develop new market opportunities for farm and ranch operations serving local markets.
 Program information:
www.ams.usda.gov/services/grants/lfpp.
- Open Space Lands Acquisition & Development and Land & Water Conservation Programs, IDNR:**
 Offers funding for acquisition and/or development of land for public parks and open space. Projects vary from small neighborhood parks or tot lots to large community and county parks and nature areas. Applications must be received between May 1 and July 1 of each calendar year. Program information:
www.dnr.state.il.us/ocd/newosladi.htm.
- Our Town Grants, National Endowment for the Arts:** Organizations may apply for creative placemaking projects that contribute to the livability of communities and place the arts at their core. An organization may request a grant amount from \$25,000–200,000. Program information:
www.arts.gov/grants/apply/OurTown/index.html.
- Owner Occupied Home Rehabilitation Program, McHenry County Housing Authority:** Provides forgivable loans to low to moderate-income homeowners for the rehabilitation of existing homes and emergency repairs. Eligible households must meet the income requirements and reside in the home. Through this program up to \$48,000 in repairs can be done via a zero interest no payment loan, which is only paid back when the title of the qualified home is transferred. Program information:
www.mchenrycountyhousing.org/HomeRehab/_layouts/15/start.aspx#/.
- Single Family Housing Repair Loans and Grants, USDA:** Provides loans to very-low-income homeowners to repair, improve, or modernize their homes or grants to elderly very-low-income homeowners to remove health and safety hazards. Program information:
www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/single-family-housing-repair-loans-grants/il.
- Surface Transportation Program, McHenry County Council of Mayors:** Assists municipalities with local surface transportation improvements. Programmed annually, STP can be used for constructing pedestrian facilities, off-street multi-use trails, and bicycle parking and typically funds up to 70 percent of the project costs. Program information:
www.mchenrycountycom.org/stp-program/.
- Transportation Alternatives Program, CMAP:** Provides funding for non-motorized transportation, specifically bicycle and pedestrian facilities. Program information:
www.cmap.illinois.gov/mobility/strategic-investment/transportation-alternatives.

8.4 Reference Guide

A number of plans and guides could be useful to the Harvard community as it begins to implement the plan. The following resources were highlighted in the plan recommendations as being particularly relevant.

- **Land and Water Resources**

- o Chicago Wilderness Green Infrastructure Vision
www.cmap.illinois.gov/livability/sustainability/open-space/green-infrastructure-vision
- o CMAP Lawrence Creek Watershed Plan: Technical Report
www.cmap.illinois.gov/documents/10180/27573/Lawrence_Final_draft_Septo8.pdf
- o McHenry County Green Infrastructure Plan
www.co.mchenry.il.us/home/showdocument?id=7773
- o McHenry County Groundwater Management Plan
www.co.mchenry.il.us/county-government/departments-j-z/planning-development/divisions/water-resources/groundwater-management-plan
- o McHenry County Water Resources Action Plan
www.co.mchenry.il.us/county-government/departments-j-z/planning-development/divisions/water-resources/water-resource-action-plan
- o NIPC Floodplain Ordinance
www.cmap.illinois.gov/livability/water/supply-planning/resources

- **Water Infrastructure**

- o American Water Works Association M36 Water Audits and Loss Control Programs,
www.awwa.org/resources-tools/water-knowledge/water-loss-control.aspx
- o CMAP Model Water Conservation Ordinance
www.cmap.illinois.gov/livability/water/model-water-conservation-ordinance
- o U.S. EPA Reference Guide for Asset Management Tools: Asset Management Plan Components and Implementation Tools for Small and Medium-sized Drinking Water and Wastewater Systems
<http://water.epa.gov/type/drink/pws/smallsystems/upload/epa816b14001.pdf>

- **Agriculture**

- o CMAP Municipal Strategies to Support Local Food Systems: Model Food Ordinance
www.cmap.illinois.gov/livability/sustainability/local-food/model-food-ordinance
- o Building Successful Food Hubs: A Business Planning Guide for Aggregating and Processing Local Food in Illinois
www.familyfarmed.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/IllinoisFoodHubGuide-final.pdf
- o County Land, County Food: McHenry County Local Food Assessment
www.co.mchenry.il.us/home/showdocument?id=24252

- **Housing**

- o Metropolitan Planning Council, Up to Code
www.metroplanning.org/uptocode/
- o Quick Guide to Non-Home Rule Enforcement: Legal Strategies for Targeting Blighted Property
www.metroplanning.org/uploads/cms/documents/quick-guide-non-home-rule-enforcement.pdf
- o Raising the Bar: A short guide to landlord incentives and rental property regulation provides ideas
www.metroplanning.org/uploads/cms/documents/raising-the-bar.pdf
- o Up to Code: Code Enforcement Strategies for Healthy Housing
www.changelabsolutions.org/sites/default/files/Up-to-Code_Enforcement_Guide_FINAL-20150527.pdf

- **Community Engagement**

- o The Latino Landscape: A Metro Chicago Guide and Non-Profit Directory
https://latinostudies.nd.edu/assets/95296/original/latino_landscape_final2.pdf

- **Transportation**

- o Institute of Transportation Engineers
Designing Walkable Urban Thoroughfares: A Context Sensitive Approach
<http://library.ite.org/pub/e1cff43c-2354-d714-51d9-d82b39d4d4bad>
- o Pace Transit Supportive Guidelines for the Chicagoland Region
www.pacebus.com/guidelines/about_tsgs.asp

Appendix A

Local Food Producers



List of local food producers in the Harvard Area*

Ainger Farms
Ben's Christmas Tree Farm
Brook Farm
Bumblebee Acres
Cody's Farm and Orchard
Cripple Creek ranch
Davidson Brothers
Davidsons' Giant Pumpkin Patch
Dean Foods
Four Friends Farms
Growing Together Garden
Harvard Eggs Feed and Produce
Holbric Holsteins
Jones Packing Company
Nichols Farm and Orchard
Perkins Dairy Farm
Richard Davidson Farm Partnership
Royal Oak Farm Orchard
Spring Oak Farms
The Pound Bakery
Three D Holsteins
Twin Garden Farms
Unicorn Farm
Wallace Acres Farms

* Known as of November 2015.

Acronyms

AHHAB	Aurora Hispanic Heritage Advisory Board
BMP	Best Management Practice
CERT	Community Emergency Response Team
CSS	Context Sensitive Solutions
EPA	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
ESL	English as a Second Language
HEDC	Harvard Economic Development Corporation
IDA	Illinois Department of Agriculture
IDNR	Illinois Department of Natural Resources
IDOT	Illinois Department of Transportation
ISWS	Illinois State Water Survey
LEP	Limited English Proficiency
L RTP	Long Range Transportation Plan
MCCD	McHenry County Conservation District
MCDOT	McHenry County Department of Transportation
MCEDC	McHenry County Economic Development Corporation
MS4	Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System
NIPC	Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission
NWPA	Northwest Water Planning Alliance
STP	Surface Transportation Program
TIF	Tax Increment Financing
USDA	U.S. Department of Agriculture
WRAP	Water Resource Action Plan





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