



LAKE STREET NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Lake Street Neighborhood Redevelopment team appreciates and acknowledges the contributions of the numerous Oak Park citizens who worked with us to identify critical planning issues and strategies, shared ideas at community meetings, and participated in consensus building efforts to successfully complete this plan. Many individuals volunteered their time to participate in business owner interviews and stakeholder focus groups to identify the specific challenges to this district. We would especially like to recognize the Village leadership for their guidance on Oak Park goals and objectives and their commitment to revitalize the Lake Street Neighborhood.

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PART 1

The District

Why Plan Now?

Goals and Objectives



Why Plan Now?

Now is the optimal time to institute a plan for the development of the Lake Street Neighborhood and Business District (the District). The current real estate trends in the Village have impacted Oak Park, which currently has one of the highest rising real estate values in the region.* At present we have the opportunity to establish a plan for the district before there is significant development pressure.

Building on the District Assets

By framing a plan for the District, the Village can position itself such that it provides goals

for development of the area in compliance with development opportunities and community requirements. Having descriptive goals and visions for the district also empowers the community by giving them a voice in the process and the ability to shape any redevelopment or new development in the area through the implementation of design guidelines.

Working with the existing businesses and recruiting new businesses into the area is a critical element that will impact the success of the Lake

Street Neighborhood Plan. A thorough market analysis of the neighborhood makes it possible to ascertain the types of businesses that benefit the area and complement the visions set forth as part of this Plan. The use of design elements and catalyst retail development projects will enliven the area and serve as the stepping stones to the district transformation. The plan aspires to create a vibrant, thriving business district which offers quality retail and residential options to its residents.



Figure 1.01: Lake Street Business Corridor

* Source: Crain's Business Chicago

Goals and Objectives

The Lake Street business corridor is one of the highest performing business districts in Oak Park. Our primary task is to transform it into a thriving district and “great place”. As Oak Park develops further, there will be considerable pressure to redevelop this corridor. The focus of the plan will be on improving existing businesses and attracting high quality retail to the area. South Boulevard is included in the Lake Street District but is separated by the CTA rail embankment. Retail along South Boulevard is concentrated at Ridgeland Avenue adjacent to the CTA station. A majority of South Boulevard is residential in character. The southside has many attractive and vintage apartment buildings while the northside is defined by the rail embankment. Creating a

unified streetscape and image for South Boulevard is one goal of this plan.

Economic Development and Increasing Sales Tax Opportunities: This district contains two grocery stores Dominick’s and Aldi’s that anchor two distinct clusters of retail along Lake Street. As described in detail in the market analysis chapter the grocery stores are high volume sales, therefore a great municipal revenue source. As the Village looks to the future, property tax relief is a major issue and increasing the sales tax revenue can be one way to lower other Village taxes. With that goal in mind, this plan seeks to find ways to increase the sales potential of the district and provide for more development opportunities.

Establishing a Compelling Vision: Besides the two

grocers, most of the Lake Street district contains many small retail businesses, some offices and numerous service based businesses. Visually there is a disparity between the quality of the residential neighborhoods to the north and south, and the image of the retail corridor. Many of the retail windows do not address the street or



Figure 1.03: Dominick’s is a large producer of revenue from taxes in the District provide visual connections into storefronts. The streetscape is inconsistent and needs upgrades and maintenance. For the overall development of the district, improvements from both a business and physical appearance perspective need to be initiated.

Development Goals: The central development goal for the District is to shape a context that will enhance private investment consistent with the vision of the plan.

Development Strengths: These strengths are based on the collective work of the project team, village staff, and the community. These district strengths



Figure 1.02: Study Area

City Boundary ——— Study Area ———

were further confirmed by selected members of the development community.

- The market and development potential of the district is strong.
- The current scale of development is appropriate for Oak Park but could be increased in density in ways which would remain consistent with the district and the Village as a whole.
- The district is not “starting from scratch.” It has a history as a business district with strong vital anchors that can support its revitalization.

Addressing Current Development Constraints: The seven blocks comprising the district do not provide the “strong compatible adjacencies” described in the market analysis as important for retail strength. The plan recommendations help offset these consequences of fragmentation:

- Fragmentation, without a plan, creates risk for investors and developers.

- Uneven rents for inconsistent properties, make it hard to support comparables in the financing of new investments;
- Predicting future nearby uses and, hence market value, is made more difficult;
- Fragmentation aggravates perceived crime as a development constraint
 - No unified, consistent front for “zero tolerance” of crime and communication with Village police;
 - No unified, consistent front on code enforcement;
 - Lacking cohesion, the district is often perceived as a transitional area to the City of Chicago rather than as part of Oak Park and a district in its own right.

Identifying Key Redevelopment Opportunities and Catalyst Projects: The district functions today as a discontinuous string of retail activity and service oriented businesses. There exist many properties

that are well located but are not serving their full potential. These under-served properties are prime redevelopment opportunities that can then serve as catalysts for more future retail development. Strengthening anchor retailers and catalysts will help trigger further growth along the corridor and set the trend for the progression of the entire business district.

These issues are addressed by the following summary of the development context recommendations, providing predictability while incorporating key redevelopment opportunities and catalyst projects:

- Create one district, book-ended with two strong retail nodes, at Austin and at Ridgeland.
- Redevelop the Austin node by supporting the redevelopment plan by Aldi grocery store with additional redevelopment of neighborhood



Figure 1.04: Existing Retail along Lake Street



Figure 1.05: Retail along Austin Blvd



Figure 1.06: Retail at Austin and Lake Street

properties and increase to the parking capacity on the new garage.

- A few property owners on the north side of Lake Street have expressed interest in redeveloping their properties on the block between Austin Avenue and Humphrey Avenue.
- New development can define the “entrance” to the district and to Oak Park in a significant way.
- Direct the Austin node to a wide variety of neighborhood serving retail including restaurants, drug store, as well as to “home” and service businesses.
- Direct the Ridgeland node to higher volume sales, where the retail reflects higher per capita spending. Encourage redevelopment of the larger parcels to higher density (4 levels) to create mixed use, retail, parking, office and residential development.
- Encourage residential dwellings within the transitional areas that can include home offices.
- Re-configure Harvey to provide a better north-south connection for both vehicles and pedestrians.
- Improve the negative impact of the rail



Figure 1.07: Harvey Street Jog



Figure 1.08: CTA Viaduct Underpass

embankment and enhance the pedestrian experience by improving the CTA entrances, transit drop off zone, parking areas, lighting in the underpasses, and streetscape along South Boulevard.

- Direct the relocation of service businesses (automotive, construction and other non storefront oriented businesses) by creating a service corridor along North Boulevard; therefore strengthening the image of properties along Lake Street to be either storefront retail shops or residential. Improve the access and provide good signage to North Boulevard.
- Encourage first floor retail development at the intersection of South Boulevard and Ridgeland Avenue. The development of this retail node will further reinforce the retail character along Ridgeland while providing convenient retail locations close to the Ridgeland CTA Station.

Development in this district is attractive, even with the knowledge that no TIF or other public funds

would be available. Redevelopment of strategic properties will require coordination by the Village and negotiations with existing owners.

Creating an Inviting Pedestrian Experience: The retail activity on Lake Street functions on a day-time schedule. There are only a few businesses that remain open after sun-down (Dominick’s, Aldi, Dance Viva, Soap Opera Laundromat). To create an active neighborhood with plenty of pedestrian activity, new uses have to be added that cater to people for both day and evening uses.

Improving the District’s Sense of Safety: Although incidents of crime have diminished over the years, the district suffers from a perception of being unsafe. The lighting on the streets is inadequate and the entire district lacks pedestrian activity and foot traffic especially at night time. In order to change this perception of a lack of safety and create a lively neighborhood, active steps to improve the lighting and the pedestrian experience of this corridor are required.

Providing Convenient Parking: The District will outgrow its current parking capacity with any additional development. It currently has a



Figure 1.09: Parking Along Viaduct

combination of parking comprising of on-street parking, a few dedicated retail parking lots and CTA parking areas. The new Aldi parking garage sets a new urban model for development with retail below and parking on the second level. The Village should coordinate with Aldi to provide additional parking for the district by adding a third floor of parking and/or second floor connection to neighboring properties so the parking garage can be expanded at a later date.

Preserving Existing Historic Structures: The District overlaps with the Ridgeland/Oak Park Historic district. Established in the early 1983 this district strives to preserve the historic character of the Village by ensuring that the historic character of building exteriors is maintained. Since some of these structures exist within this business district, they will be preserved as per the regulations of the Village. A detailed analysis of the properties in the Oak Park / Ridgeland Historic District is located in the historic preservation chapter.

Creating a Gateway at Austin Boulevard and Lake Street: The properties adjacent to Austin Boulevard are part of the Oak Park Perimeter Overlay District. The perimeter overlay district was created primarily to improve the visual quality of the perimeter areas by encouraging a mixed-use retail zone. It is also intended to limit undesirable uses and protect the neighboring residential areas.



Figure 1.10: Historic Structures of Oak Park

PART 2

Planning Process

Project Team and Process

Community Participation



Project Team and Process

A Multi- Disciplinary Team Approach:

The approach for creating this Lake Street Neighborhood Plan is a culmination of the work and collaboration of four firms: Solomon Cordwell Buenz (SCB), Business Districts Inc. (BDI), Wiss Janney, Elstner Associates, Inc. (WJE), and Fish Transportation Group (FTG). Each firm provided distinct professional expertise required to overcome the major challenges of the district. Solomon Cordwell Buenz, the prime consultant, managed the process, coordinated community participation, established an urban design approach, and created build-out scenarios for the district. BDI provided an in depth understanding of the current retail market and capacity of the district with information on retail types and sizes, as well as the spending power and number of potential customers for this corridor. WJE and Mike Iversen, local historian and architect, conducted an in-depth historical assessment and certified the buildings of significant historic character in the District. FTG provided guidance on various transportation issues including parking, traffic counts, road widths and intersection improvement schemes.

Market and Business Model

Establishing a market and business model for the district was the first step in this planning process. The model analyzed the district's current business needs and identified recruitment opportunities for

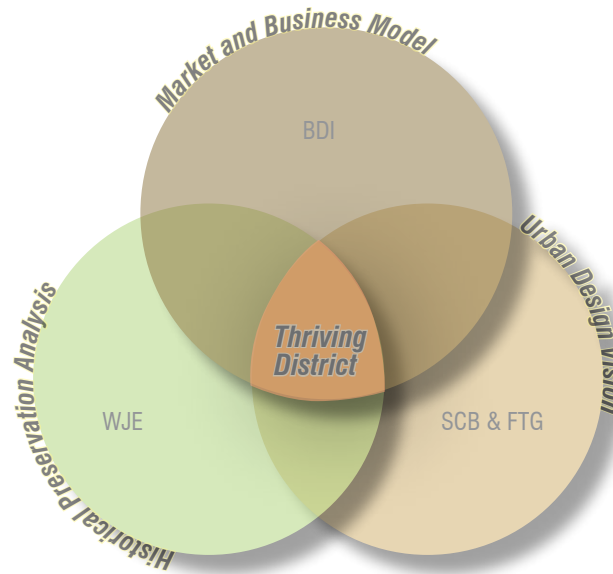


Figure 2.01: Planning Model

• *Philosophically our approach identifies and relies on three interrelated elements to create a thriving district.*

- *Creating a Market / Business Model*
- *Establishing a Urban Design Vision*
- *Developing Implementation Strategies*

future businesses based on the realities of this particular market. Every retail establishment has specific needs such as physical space requirements, visibility issues, access issues, parking, and signage. When the business goals are clearly articulated for the district then the urban design issues can be tailored to coordinate and enhance the retail plan.

Urban Design Vision

The physical design of the district plays a major role in the identity of the place and can be a significant indicator of neighborhood vitality. Creating a compelling urban design vision is important to changing the perception of any district. The Lake Street design elements include roadways, building configurations, parking layouts, traffic circulation, streetscape, landscape, storefront design, and signage. As an urban design strategy is developed for the district each component needs to be tested for development impacts, financial feasibility, and the overall implementation requirements.

Implementation Strategies

Testing ideas for impact in the market place is critical to ensuring the goals and recommendations of the plan are achievable on many levels. Early in the planning process development strategies were tested with the investment community, business owners, residents and potential customers for feasibility and desirability.

THE PLANNING PROCESS



Figure 2.02: Planning Process

Community Participation

I. Existing Conditions and Data Collection & Issue Identification

The initial phase set the stage for understanding the critical issues and concerns of the Village Administration, residents and business community. The planning team collected all critical physical planning information including a district-level, building-level and parcel-level, land use inventory and regulatory requirements. While carefully listening to the Village and community regarding their primary goals and objectives of this study an initial district assessment of all existing conditions including a zoning, land use, economic/market assessment, transportation/traffic impacts, site amenities and topography was completed. After compiling the data the team evaluated the criteria for impacts, opportunities and constraints.

Community Session I

This meeting was focused on identifying critical issues in the district. The planning team presented initial district findings, observations and development strategies with an interactive community dialogue to identify further critical issues for the Lake Street Business District.

II. Planning Strategies

The consultants examined and analyzed the economic, regulatory and physical design factors impacting the District. BDI analyzed market factors while SCB and FTG assessed the physical design factors by conducting a visual and building utilization assessment. Through these exercises

the consultants developed a realistic list of planning goals to guide the marketing and development strategy for the district. These initial goals were presented at a community session for public verification or revision.

Community Session II

The team presented a variety of planning alternatives for consideration by and feed back from the community. These alternatives included design guidelines, development ideas and business strategies for establishing a future vision for the district.

III. District Vision

The consultants with Village input identified various prioritized development and redevelopment sites. A graphic overlay of the project area was prepared with a design vision illustrating the types of improvements and enhancements required to attract new businesses and customers. The design concept enhanced the specific characteristics and objectives unique to Lake Street.

Community Session III

This final meeting was focused on reaching consensus on the plan recommendations and community priorities. This was an informative presentation by the team which summarized the plan recommendations for feedback and prioritization of key components.



Figure 2.03: Community Meeting 1 - Initial Presentation



Figure 2.04: Community Meeting 1 - Group Exercise



Figure 2.05: Community Meeting 3 - Final Meeting

IV. Implementation Strategy

The consultants prepared a District Framework Plan including the following elements:

Physical District Urban Design and Parcel Level Land Use Plan:

SCB developed a district site plan and illustrations of the final land use and parcel level recommendations for renovation, reuse and /or new development opportunities.

Target Business List:

After combining market realities and gaining input from those overseeing the study, a list of businesses potentially interested in locating in the study area was generated. This list focused on national chains, regional chains and independent businesses capable of handling another location.

Preparing the Development Context:

The data developed as a product of this study will be used to create a two page opportunity profile that will be used to market Lake Street to potential investors and new businesses.

PART 3

Market Analysis

Market Conditions

Market Characteristics

SWOT Analysis

Development Issues and Opportunities



Market Conditions

Business Districts, Inc. (BDI) has been asked to analyze existing market conditions and potential market improvements for Oak Park’s Lake Street from Austin to Ridgeland. The goal of this market review is to better capitalize on consumer demand in adjacent neighborhoods and the greater regional markets so the business district can offer a more desirable mix of stores, restaurants and services today and in the future. This market review examines three primary topics: the study of the area’s overall market potential, strategies to strengthen the area, and future opportunities for development and redevelopment. The ultimate goal is the long-term sustainability and enhancement of Lake Street as a neighborhood and community asset.

Project Area Description:

The study area currently contains 66 businesses of all types. There are three business clusters: Austin to Taylor on both sides of Lake Street and anchored by the Aldi’s; Lombard to Elmwood both sides of the street and anchored by Dominick’s

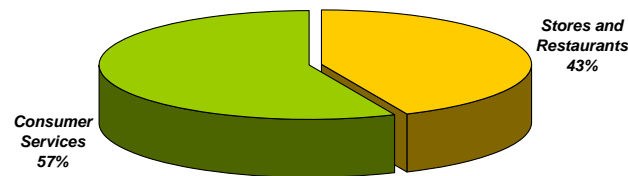


Figure 3.01: Unit Mixes of Businesses Along the Entire District

and South Boulevard centered at Ridgeland. Although the two grocery anchors dominate the corridor, consumer services are the largest category by business unit count.

The medical offices, dry cleaners, automobile repair shops, and financial services that comprise the consumer services category both capitalize on the anchors’ customers and attract destination visitors. This mixed-use is typical of a traditional neighborhood serving commercial districts and is expected to be important to the future of this District.

Rents vary greatly with vintage space leasing for \$13 to \$17 per square foot and fully renovated space commanding up to \$30 per square foot. Many of the buildings are owner occupied. Plans currently underway to expand Aldi’s and remodel Dominick’s demonstrate the strength of the area’s business environment. The business ownership in the Lake Street District mixes the strength of high volume national chains with the appeal of independent businesses.

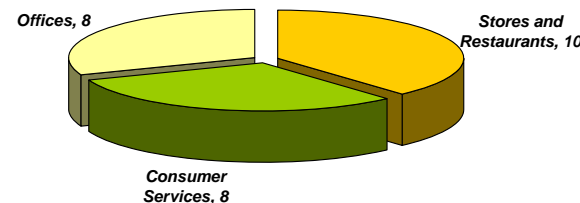


Figure 3.02: Dominick’s Cluster: Unit Business Mix

The average daily traffic (ADT) counts along Lake Street are:

- West of Ridgeland: 16,000
- Ridgeland to Harvey: 14,000
- Harvey to Austin: 12,000
- South Boulevard: 3,600

Although these values are below the 20,000 desired in purely auto supported retail clusters, there is significant mass transit use with the Metra, CTA Green Line station in the area and Lake Street bus service. The easy pedestrian access also adds significantly to the accessible customer base.

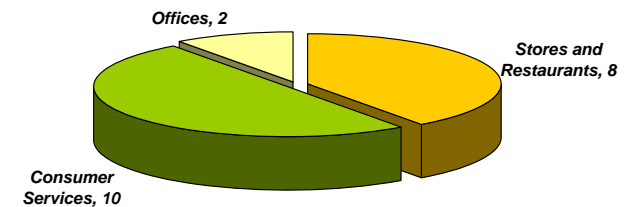


Figure 3.03: Aldi’s Cluster: Unit Business Mix

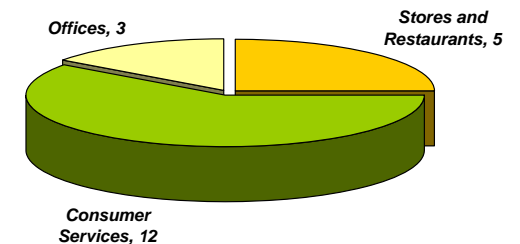


Figure 3.04: South Boulevard: Unit Business Mix

Sustainable Businesses and Districts:

The Lake Street Corridor’s anchored clusters create an environment more similar to centrally managed shopping centers than typical neighborhood clusters that depend on independent, entrepreneurial enterprises. The anchor attracts a significant customer base that adds to the more typical neighborhood residents shopping at nearby businesses. This customer base tends to moderate sales variability that often challenges independent retail business profit margins in neighborhood serving clusters.

The national chain anchors rely on regional marketing efforts and model best practices to establish a sustainable business. The independent stores and restaurants can rely on this consistent base of customer visits to the district but also must develop a unique offering that provides enough destination shoppers to sustain long-term profitability. This table applies national standards for retailer expense ratios to a \$500,000 hypothetical sales volume to illustrate how sales fluctuations impact business profitability:

The \$500,000 annual sales level shows the minimum necessary for a business that will be profitable enough for the owner to support a household. Note that if this model is applied to a store staffed by three and open 10 A.M. to 9 P.M. except Sundays when it opens noon to 6, the average hourly wage is \$8.60 including benefits. This model does not differentiate the salary of the owner from other employees. For an owner working 40 hour weeks, that is an annual base pay of just over \$18,500 suggesting a maximum annual compensation of at most \$68,500 (\$18,500 + \$50,000 before taxes and interest on investment). Considering that the investment necessary to start a retail business often exceeds \$100,000, it is apparent why the \$500,000 in sales is the minimum necessary to make opening and continuing to operate a rational business decision.

The challenge facing Lake Street’s independent, neighborhood friendly businesses is maintaining or increasing their sales despite changes in the local business environment. Relatively small fluctuations in sales critically affect profits. As figure 3.05 illustrates, increase sales 10% with no additional

costs other than the merchandise and profit increases by 50%. The owner can then choose to increase his or her own compensation or make improvements to the store. Decrease sales 5% because merchandise must be marked down to sell, change nothing else, and profits decline by half.

While sales increases are very dependent on the owner’s business decisions, factors that cause sales declines like nearby construction or the closing of a neighboring high volume store or restaurant are often outside the control of business owners. For these reasons, the best businesses choose a location with a well-crafted business district plan, supportive government services, and strong compatible adjacent businesses. A location with those conditions is unlikely to experience the overall sales declines that challenge the sustainability of independent neighborhood friendly businesses. Other factors that tend to support a consistent sales level are high volume anchor businesses that cause frequent customer trips to the area and enhanced landscaping that causes customers to linger.

The Lake Street Business District is well positioned to offer independent stores and restaurants consistent sales support. It already has Dominick’s and Aldi’s as anchors. This plan organizes future activities, the Village provides business services, and the presence of parks and other landscape improvements encourage customers to linger. Adding the parking and additional high volume retailers recommended in the Implementation Plan will add additional support for all businesses.

	Standard	Model	10% increase	5% decline
Sales	100%	\$500,000	\$550,000	\$475,000
Merchandise	50%	\$250,000	\$275,000	\$250,000
Rent	10%	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000
Employees	20%	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000
Other	10%	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000
Profit before taxes and interest	10%	\$50,000	\$75,000	\$25,000

Figure 3.05: Sustainable Store Model

Because restaurants are more complicated and require specialized staff at higher pay, the sustainable sales level for a restaurant with table service is approximately \$1 million.

Interviews with Lake Street's business owners and merchants indicated that the corridor as currently configured supports sustainable destination businesses but does not offer the compatible adjacencies or consensus on future direction that lead to a good mix of stores and restaurants. This study was initiated to create that vision and set standards for making this area better able to support desirable, sustainable, neighborhood serving stores and restaurants.

Market Characteristics

As one of 12 separate commercial districts in Oak Park, the study area is part of a well developed network of neighborhood serving commercial clusters. The key to fitting the Lake Street Business District into that system is understanding its logical market and tailoring the business offering to fit that market's needs. Figure 3.06 looks at the customers most likely to frequent the businesses along Lake Street and compares them to the Village as a whole.

	1/2 Mile Radius Aldi's Anchor	1/2 Mile Radius Dominick's Anchor	5 Minutes	Oak Park
Basic Variables				
Population	13,261	8,789	213,928	50,896
Households	5,281	4,026	71,934	21,761
Average Household Size	2.5	2.2	3.0	2.3
Population Density	16,885	11,190	13,519	10,827
Total Population Median Age	34.9	36.1	33.6	37.3
Household Income 2005				
Median Household Income	\$37,093	\$48,342	\$46,785	\$65,436
Household Average Income	\$48,936	\$69,483	\$64,090	\$87,986
% Income \$75,000 Plus	20.6%	31.0%	28.4%	43.7%
Business Summary 2005				
Total Employees	4,752	5,364	20,937	20,937
Total Establishments	399	456	2,709	2,709
Consumer Expenditure 2005				
Total Household Expenditure	\$238,871,485	\$230,916,680	\$3,858,412,279	\$1,471,461,211
Total Retail Expenditure	\$104,379,092	\$100,315,428	\$1,672,931,520	\$635,351,524
Grocery Stores	\$18,051,442	\$16,677,794	\$279,472,012	\$102,632,298
Full Service restaurants	\$5,525,180	\$5,327,732	\$87,863,289	\$33,854,483
Limited Service Restaurants	\$5,535,228	\$5,320,872	\$88,007,632	\$33,786,276
Housing Units 2005				
% Owner Occupied Units	30.3%	57.69%	49.5%	56.5%

Figure 3.06: Key Demographics: Demographic data © 2005 by Experian/Applied Geographic Solutions.

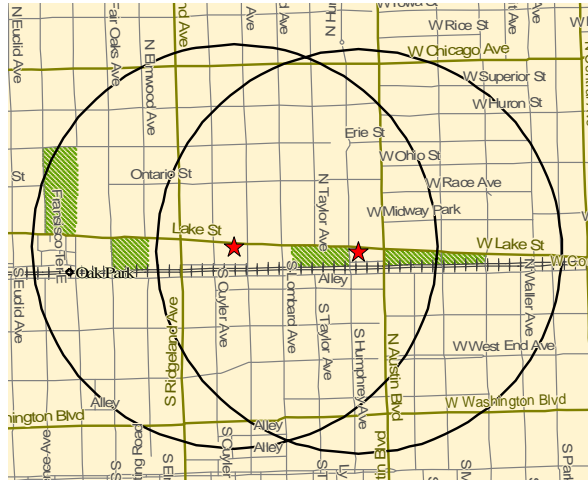


Figure 3.07: Five Minute Drive Times

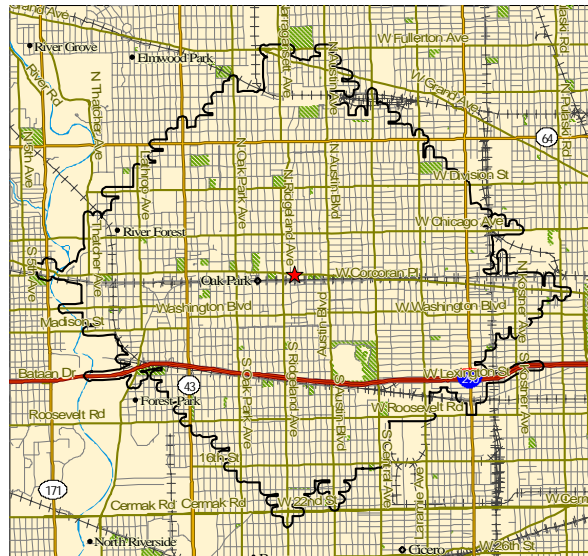


Figure 3.08: Oak Park Drive Time

It is important to note that the location of this district on the eastern border of Oak Park means that there is a significant draw to residents of the adjacent Austin neighborhood of Chicago. That market's population characteristics largely explain the variation between this district's demographics and the Village's demographics.

Although the lower incomes associated with the residents near the Aldi's Cluster may at first consideration make that market seem less attractive, the total spending within 1/2 mile of that cluster actually exceeds the spending power of residents nearest to the Ridgeland cluster, \$104 million verses \$100 million. The income difference impacts the price point of goods offered not the amount of retail space supported. For example, this data suggests that restaurants added to the Aldi's cluster would be more successful using the quick casual format where diners order centrally and carry-out or bus their own tables to keep prices down while Dominick's cluster customers would be better served by a full service restaurant with higher price points. Both could easily achieve the sustainable volume of \$1 million by attracting less than 10% of the restaurant spending within 1/2 mile. Since each customer near the Aldi's cluster spends less, that cluster's restaurant would merely need more customers to reach that level of sales.

A more detailed look at the spending power of the custom market reveals spending support for a wide variety of businesses. As Figure 3.09 reports, the total spending of the population with easy access to Lake Street supports a variety of businesses.

	5 Minutes	# Sustainable Businesses Supported
Appliances and Electronics Stores	\$27,382,093	10
Auto Parts and Accessories	\$17,739,088	5
Book Stores	\$10,755,341	3
Pubs and Restaurants	\$182,999,162	160
Furniture Stores	\$32,696,017	3
Gasoline Stations w/ Convenience Stores	\$124,732,719	30
Pharmacies and Drug Stores	\$37,710,900	9
Sporting Goods Stores	\$16,544,217	4
Tire Dealers	\$8,056,656	4
Total Aggregate Annual Retail Sales	\$1,814,466,055	

*Assumes sales at national medians for that category

Figure 3.09: Demographic data © 2005 by Experian/Applied Geographic Solutions, BDI.

As typical everywhere, this population will shop at a variety of retail locations ranging from regional malls through grocery anchored community centers and resorts they visit while on vacation. They also will frequent a mix of nationally, regionally and independently owned stores and restaurants. Those customer choices determine how many businesses succeed in each type of retail location. For the purposes of this study, the key question is which of these stores and restaurants could this population reasonably be expected to support if they opened on Lake Street. Interviews associated with this study, and feedback from the listening session revealed a strong interest in adding restaurants of all types, personal services, and home oriented businesses. The key to vitality is providing a mix of uses that attracts both destination and impulse consumption.

SWOT Analysis

In formulating an Action Plan to improve the Lake Street Business District, it is important to consider the district's relative strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, or "SWOT." These factors contributed to the district's current situation and will remain impactful for the foreseeable future.

Strengths: Assets that will most likely continue and remain key building blocks:

- \$1.7 billion of purchasing power within a 5 minute drive
- Traditional grocery anchors drawing significant, frequent customer visits

- Exceptional customer access from Metra, two CTA stations, the Austin exit from I-290, and pedestrian friendly environment
- The summer's farmer's market attracting customers from a wide area
- Owner occupied buildings adding stability and commitment
- Large parcels located between Lake Street and the railroad tracks offering opportunities for high volume retailers in large format stores
- New businesses providing renewed excitement and new customers
- Affordable rents supporting risk taking uses;
- Attractive surrounding neighborhoods supporting long-term investment
- Oak Park Development Corporation Programs adding financial support
- Parks attracting customers and enhancing the district's appearance
- Recent landscaping that improves the appearance of public areas
- Historic properties adding uniqueness and a sense of stability
- Offices providing daytime customers

Weaknesses: Liabilities which will most likely remain and must be "worked around":

- Largely impenetrable train embankment dividing the district
- Tight, previously developed parcels causing higher costs for construction staging and difficulty achieving cost efficiencies for redevelopment

Opportunities: Positive trends or elements that can become strengths if properly developed:

- Utilize high sales volume "anchors" to increase low volume businesses' sales
- Develop marketable image through signage
- Expand existing businesses into larger spaces
- Capitalize on parks by using them as event space
- Encourage Farmer's Market customer to shop district businesses
- Allow higher buildings where the "L" obscures" the density
- Small, deteriorated sites with undistinguished architecture should be replaced with new development that offers first floor office space and upper story residential units
- Encourage business owners to purchase property
- Improve the cleanliness of stores
- Organize ad hoc and planned stakeholder meetings that consolidate communication and advocacy
- Identify a reliable source for marketing funding
- Support high volume retailers by expediting the development process, enhancing access, and offering dedicated parking

Threats: Negative trends or elements that can become a weakness if not addressed:

- Crime and safety problems that scare customers
- Unorganized stakeholders that fail to communicate need and provide market support
- The loss of critical retail mass on South Boulevard
- Outdated, unkempt buildings lending air of decline

- A parking problem obsession that fails to recognize that business best practices overcome customer parking concern
- The fear of future development undermining current, needed investment
- Unresolved conflict between neighborhood residents and business owners
- One sided retail development that fails to offer the marketing inherent in viewing signage across the street

Development Issues and Opportunities

Commercial development decisions are fundamentally driven by balancing tenant requirements and project development costs. Although store and restaurant tenant requirements vary, they generally include ceiling heights of at least 14 feet, maximum street exposure, easy service and delivery, and dedicated parking of 5 spaces per 1,000 square feet of store space and 11 spaces per 1,000 square feet of dining space. Overall, individual project development costs in Oak Park vary with site land cost and staging difficulties. For a typical mixed-use development with a retail component, construction costs range from \$75-\$90 per square foot for a basic “white box” space. A tight site with difficulty accommodating construction equipment can easily raise those costs by 10%. Improvements to meet tenant requirements vary significantly by project but generally add from \$5-\$20 per square foot.

Although residential redevelopment is strong in the Village of Oak Park, interviews associated with this project revealed that there has been less interest

in property east of Ridgeland than in other areas of Oak Park. The equity residential market activity in the study area has largely been condo conversions of vintage courtyard properties. Completed units are selling for approximately \$150,000 to \$250,000 per unit depending on the size. Examples of high quality residential redevelopment in other areas of Oak Park suggest that construction costs are approximately \$105 per square foot of living space including covered garage space. With those costs and the cost of land, a market driven redevelopment needs to achieve sales prices of at least \$200 per square foot. Recent projects at Ridgeland and South Boulevard are meeting those hurdles (Figure 3.10).

With the feasibility of market driven redevelopment a prime focus of this study, it is important to evaluate the conditions that determine whether redevelopment or rehabilitation is more economically feasible for specific properties. Figure 3.10 takes a simplified look at how the net rent for the completed project affects the economics of redeveloping a full block of Lake Street. In keeping with the information that was gathered at the public listening session and the character of modern retail development, this analysis looks at modern space with on-site parking. It assumes that the project developer would only require a 10% return because the retail is pre-leased. Speculative building would require higher returns.

It is important to understand that the “Funds Available for Land” (Figure 3.10) is what an investor would pay to purchase the

	New Construction w/ On-Site Parking	New Construction No On-Site Parking
Net Rent per SqFt	\$30.00	\$20.00
Sample Project With Parking		
SqFt Store/ Restaurant Space	10,000	10,000
SqFt Parking & Public Space	30,000	30,000
Total SqFt Land	40,000	40,000
Project Value	\$3,000,000	\$2,000,000
Construction Costs	\$1,200,000	\$1,200,000
Funds Available for Land	\$1,800,000	\$800,000
Land Price/SqFt	\$45	\$20

Figure 3.10: Redevelopment Economics

	Existing Building: Good Condition No Parking	Existing Building: Bad Condition No Parking
Average Net Rent/ SqFt	\$17.50	\$8.00
Retail (Land) SqFt	40,000	40,000
Annual Income	\$700,000	\$320,000
Capitalization Rate	10%	10%
Teardown Purchase Price	\$7,000,000	\$3,200,000
Price / SqFt	\$175	\$80

Figure 3.11: Growing Concern Economics

necessary property and prepare the site for redevelopment. Figure 3.11 illustrates how a property owner would determine the sales price of an existing, occupied building.

Developments that provide well landscaped, on site parking, support each square foot of retail with approximately three additional square feet of land. The challenge for market driven Lake Street redevelopment that meets this modern standard is finding property that can be purchased for the “Funds Available for Land.” As figure 3.11 demonstrates, a reasonable owner of existing

Condo Sales Price / Unit	\$180,000
Construction Costs / Unit	\$94,500
Land Value / Unit	\$32,000
Marketing & Development Expenses	\$22,500
Parking	\$13,000
Cash Return on Each Unit	\$18,000
Units to Fill \$1.4 Million Gap	44

Figure 3.12: Residential Value Added

property would be unlikely to sell for that amount because it is far below the value of the existing property continuing with same tenanting. That value is determined by calculating how much capital would be invested to receive the same income at the same risk, which is the capitalization rate. This challenge occurs because existing buildings were constructed before parking was required and consequently the replacement project offers many fewer leaseable square feet.

Because there is a gap of at least \$1.4 million between what reasonable developers would pay for a “teardown” and what reasonable owners would accept as sales price, (\$3,200,000-\$1,800,000) redevelopment will not occur unless more value can be created in the redevelopment. Common ways to add value are:

- Upper story residential
- Upper story office space
- Upper story parking

Figure 3.12 illustrates how adding upper story residential can make the market drive redevelopment.

By adding three 15,000 square foot stories, the developer of a retail ground floor could add the 44 units averaging 900 square feet and provide the additional \$1.4 million necessary to meet the purchase price expectations of existing owners. (44 units X \$32,000 in land value)

Many underutilized one-story and two story commercial buildings along Lake Street may prove to be future redevelopment opportunities that capitalize on the improved investment economics associated with providing upper story residential development. The choice of sites will depend upon the succession plans of existing building owners. Experienced mixed-use developers will assemble sites and use the underlying economics to determine how to balance the prices paid for the property with the volume of development that must occur on the site. Although the size of the developments will vary, it is anticipated that market

	Existing Building: Good Condition No Parking	Rehab Existing Building: Bad Condition No Parking
Average Net Rent/ SqFt	\$17.50	\$12.00
Purchase Price /SqFt	\$175.00	\$120.00
Construction Costs / SqFt	\$0.00	\$50.00
Investment / SqFt	\$175	\$170.00
Value / SqFt at \$17.50 Net Rent	\$175.00	\$175.00

Figure 3.13: Rehabilitation Economics

driven development will require volumes that fit into a four-story or higher format. Since current zoning allows a maximum height of 45 feet, this type of development would not require a zoning change.

Upper story office adds leaseable space but increases the parking demand. Upper story parking improves the investment return by allowing a larger leaseable ground floor space.

Commercial building owners are choosing to redevelop Lake Street properties because expected increases in sales will provide the profit to cover the substantial redevelopment expense. Aldi’s has announced plans to double the size of its store and thereby double its sales by redeveloping the current 6,000 square foot building into a 12,000 square foot store with second and third story parking above the new

store. This proposal confirms the market's strength and, if successful, should be a catalyst for similar redevelopment on additional large parcels between Lake Street and the "L" Tracks.

Renovation is a better option than redevelopment when the site is too small for efficient development of the upper floors. Rehabilitation is likely to be the first stage in renewing properties on the north side of Lake Street and as an interim improvement prior to redevelopment of properties between Lake Street and the "L" tracks. Figure 3.13 reveals how rent increases pay for renovation costs.

In this hypothetical example, the building in good condition retains its value while the lower priced building, improved to same condition as the well maintained property, attains a value above the total investment cost. The higher rent asked for the rehabbed property would be justified by an existing tenant's higher sales or by a new higher volume replacement tenant. It is important to note that with a value \$5 higher per square foot than the investment cost, rehabilitation makes sense even if the ultimate goal is redevelopment. The key is enough time passing for the higher rent to cover the rehab costs. In the Lake Street Business District, Dominick's plans to remodel its store in 2007 while it continues to examine future opportunities for redevelopment. This corporate decision illustrates confidence that profits from higher sales due to remodeling will exceed the cost of improvements even when the ultimate goal is redevelopment. The overall value of properties in a shopping district rises due to the improved

appearance from significant nearby renovation and redevelopment.

Rehabilitation also is an appropriate strategy when the building is owner occupied and ideally suited to its current use. Under those conditions, the rent is part of a larger return on the business and consequently the building may be more expensive as a redevelopment acquisition because the cost of finding new space for the business must be added to the reasonable price of the property based purely on its potential to generate net rent. Under those conditions, a developer cannot pay the acquisition price and gain a reasonable return by building to the density allowed by zoning.

The few vacant parcels in the study area are currently used as unattractive storage for building supplies. Ultimately, rising property values should lead to redevelopment as new, infill buildings with first floor office and upper story residential. To encourage owners to promote redevelopment any life safety codes that could restrict the use of these properties for storage should be strictly enforced. If parking is a preferred temporary use, proper screening and maintenance is necessary.

Both redevelopment and rehabilitation are likely to occur along Lake Street. The purpose of this plan is to create a vision that capitalizes on the market pressure to redevelop by establishing community standards that guide owners and potential investors as they determine the best strategy for specific parcels.

PART 4

Land Use and Zoning

Understanding the District

Current Businesses in the District

Land Use in the District

Issues with Current Zoning

Development Issues in Oak Park

District Zones





Figure 4.01: Intersection at Austin Boulevard and Lake Street

Understanding the District

In studying the character of the various places in the district – one important issue became evident about the Lake Street district. This is a “complete neighborhood” with a wide variety of residential homes, access to two CTA transit stations, a strong commercial core that serves all the daily needs of the community, a farmer’s market, numerous recreational facilities, schools, churches, many small businesses, health clinic and a hospital. All these land uses and facilities are within walking distance of the residents and provide a great framework strategically improving the district and not attempting to fundamentally change the core assets of Lake Street.

To understand the district and its various components, the planning team walked the district, met with business owners, conducted stakeholder meetings and community feedback sessions. As a result the following is an overview of the Lake Street district character, current land uses and the zoning regulations. The district has many sub-areas with similar characteristics and core assets that could be strengthened collectively. These sub-areas are organized geographically or by land use and include the following;

- Auto Oriented Businesses
 - Lake Street Residential
 - South Boulevard Retail
 - South Boulevard Residential
 - Stevenson Park
- Austin Boulevard / Lake Street Retail Node
 - Ridgeland Street / Lake Street Retail
 - Grocery Stores

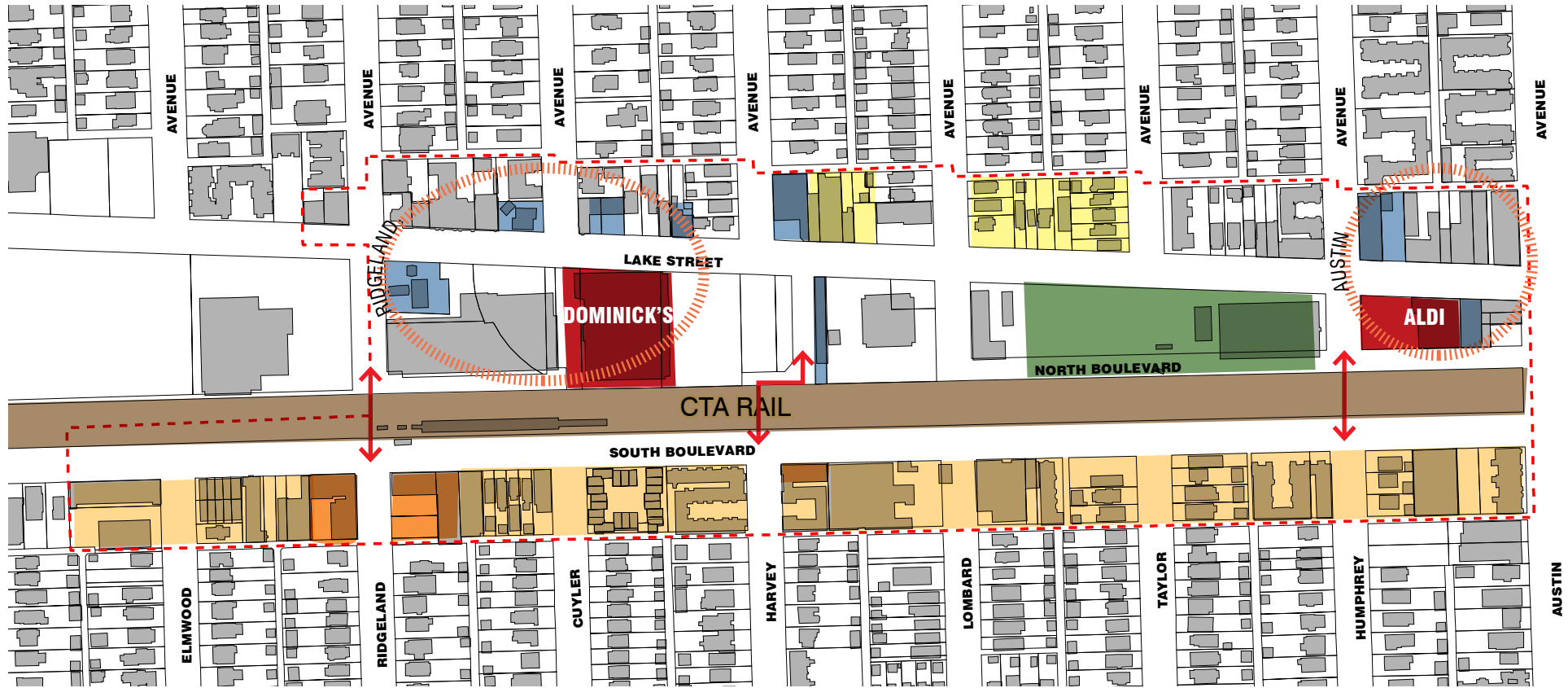


Figure 4.02: Lake St. District Analysis Map

- Auto Oriented/ Service Businesses
- Stevenson Park
- Grocery Store
- CTA Rail Embankment
- South Boulevard Retail
- South Boulevard Residential
- Lake Street Multi-family Zone
- Retail Node
- Through-way under CTA

**Austin Boulevard /
Lake Street Retail Character**

Historically this commercial district adjoining the Austin Boulevard / Lake Street intersection originates from the 1920's when it was at the crossroads of the Lake Street rail line and Austin Boulevard streetcar line. Many of the buildings in this retail node date back to this time period and are primarily 1 and 2 story brick structures. Unfortunately over time much of the significant architectural character has been lost through façade modifications where cornices were removed, windows altered and storefronts remodeled. Being on the perimeter of Oak Park and located adjacent to the City of Chicago, the Austin neighborhood has posed substantial challenges to the retail viability. Recently, stepped up enforcement efforts by the Chicago police and a resurgence of development in the Austin Neighborhood have helped to lower the crime rates in the district. Although, today many of the businesses still keep their doors locked and buzz in customers which ultimately provides the appearance of an unsafe neighborhood. In general the sidewalks are narrow; signage and streetscape elements are inconsistent; lighting is poor and the retail district would benefit from improvements to enhance the pedestrian experience through out the district.



| Retail and Businesses |





| Retail and Businesses |



Ridgeland Node Retail Character

The commercial district adjoining Ridgeland and Lake Streets is diverse and contains a variety of commercial, recreational and social services. The buildings vary greatly in height from 1 to 3 story brick structures. The northside of Lake Street has many older brick buildings that provide an interesting architectural character and scale to the streetscape such as Lickton's Cycle City, Infant Welfare Center, Oak Park Bath & Kitchen and Guitar Fun, Inc. The southside of Lake Street near Ridgeland was previously zoned light industrial and as a result contains substantially larger parcels than found elsewhere in the district or the Village as a whole. Currently the Tennis & Fitness Center, which dates from the 1970's, and the Citgo gas station is located on the southeast corner of this intersection with the Dominick's grocery store located directly to the east. The Park District pool facility is located on the southwest corner of Ridgeland and Lake Street creating a recreation hub of activities. All these businesses and facilities are within walking distance of the neighborhood and CTA transit station, but the actual physical experience of walking is unpleasant and could be much better through strategic redevelopment of specific parcels. This portion of Ridgeland is a future development opportunity to take advantage of the inherent attributes of the retail intersection which include:

- Excellent transit access
- Great architectural character on the north-side of Lake Street
- Good street exposure for retail and vehicle counts
- Some of the largest parcel sizes in the Village
- Service / parking access on North Boulevard

Grocery Stores on Lake Street

Grocery stores are wonderful assets to any neighborhood because everyone shops weekly at a grocery store. As discussed in detail in the market analysis a grocery store is a high volume sales producer and a great revenue source for the Village. The Lake Street corridor is very unique because it is home to two major grocery stores. Aldi is located close to Austin Boulevard along Lake Street. It is currently a single story warehouse style grocery store. The building appears to be outdated in its facade, lacking in stylistic signage and architectural character. Currently, Aldi is in the process of redeveloping their store property to create a new urban grocery model with retail on the first level and parking above. This will be a significant change for the retail district.

Dominick's is further down Lake Street at the Harvey intersection. This big box store model appears to be more modern yet the management recognizes the need to update the store interior and Lake Street façade. Dominick's is planning on remodeling the Lake Street façade to create storefronts for the bakery, Starbucks and florist departments. These types of renovations will create a more pedestrian oriented and aesthetic streetscape. Dominick's parking lot is very large and rarely full. As a result re-configuration of Harvey Street and connections to the underpass could be considered for this parking area.



| Grocery Stores |





| Auto Repair |



Auto Oriented Businesses and other Services on Lake Street

Lake Street has a number of automobile service businesses. Conflicts have arisen between these auto oriented land uses and their adjacent residential neighbors such as excessive noise, outside storage and general daily business activities. Most of these auto oriented businesses are located on Lake Street due to the convenient street location, original low land costs, and lack of desirability for retail usage in the past. As the image of the district improves, these auto oriented businesses and other services such as construction and plumbing companies will not want to pay the premium rents or taxes associated with being in a desirable or “up and coming” retail location. Keeping these existing businesses in Oak Park is important to the Village and as the neighborhood evolves, the Village would help find places to relocate service, auto-oriented, and constructions businesses. This is a long term goal of the plan.

CTA - Rail Stations, Embankments and Parking

Two CTA transit stations bracket each end of the district creating great access for commuters and general access into the district. The Lake Street / Austin CTA Station entrance is just across the street from Oak Park in Chicago and provides the greatest ridership and inter-modal connections to other bus routes. Many residents expressed their concern that Austin Boulevard is difficult to cross and requested an additional station be created on the Oak Park side of the platform. The Ridgeland station is well used and could benefit from an updated drop off zone for commuters and to relieve congestion.

The rail embankment is a significant barrier that psychologically divides the district into a north and south zone. The passage ways through the embankment are dark low spaces with sparse lighting that discourages pedestrian movement and creates visual barriers for vehicles. Many school children use Harvey Street to walk to the Beye School and the intersection at the embankment is off-set creating crossing obstacles for students. The wall of the embankment is in need of repairs, especially along South Boulevard adjacent to the parking zone. Streetscape improvements, pedestrian lights, street trees and landscape will add significantly to the character of the embankment edge.

| CTA Station |



| Rail Embankment |



| Single Family |



| Multi-family -
Condominiums and 6-Flats |



Lake Street Residential

This district offers a wide variety of housing types ranging from single family residents to multifamily structures and townhouses. These various residential buildings date from the 1890's to the 1970's. As a result the architectural character of the housing is very inconsistent ranging from graystones, prairie style, to utilitarian styles of the 1970's. There are two distinct residential edges bordering the district, the north side of Lake Street and the south side of South Boulevard. Lake Street has pockets of residential particularly in the blocks between Humphrey and Lombard Streets. Strengthening these residential edges is a goal of the plan. Residential buildings, especially multifamily or condo buildings can establish a smooth transition into a concentration of retail uses. Mixed use buildings with retail on the ground level can strengthen the retail nodes to create a shopping street environment. Single level retail should be avoided by providing upper level residential, where possible.

South Boulevard Retail

South Boulevard is predominantly residential except for the Public Works Building block and the retail node at Ridgeland. There are also small pockets of retail throughout the district that include small first floor shops in the older buildings. Unfortunately there is no critical mass of retail to create a vibrant retail district. This is especially evident in the fact the street can only offer one sided retail due to the CTA embankment on the north side of the street. As a result the retail viability on South Boulevard is limited and can not be considered a significant retail designation. However the ambiance of older buildings along the South Boulevard corridor can be a charming location for a retailer who does not need the walk-in traffic provided by being located in a retail district.

Additional retail is a possibility at the intersection of Ridgeland and South Boulevard adjacent to the CTA station. The station is a fundamental asset of the district and a prime location for mixed use development with retail on the ground level. A good example is the recent development at the southeast corner of Ridgeland and South Boulevard across from the CTA transit stop.



| Retail and Businesses |



| Single Family |



| Multi-family -
Condominiums and 6-Flats |



South Boulevard Residential

The south side of South Boulevard has great architectural character and scale with the circa 1920 apartment buildings. These older buildings along South Boulevard corridor create an attractive architectural setting to the street. Strengthening the residential character of South Boulevard is a goal of the plan, except at the intersection of Ridgeland adjacent to the CTA transit stop where ground level retail and mixed use buildings are viable alternatives.

Offices and Public Works Facility

The medical clinic, PCC Health Care and Infant Welfare Center social service agency contribute to the office land uses in the district. The World Data Systems office building is located in the historic structure and former bank building at the southwest corner of Lake and Austin. This office complex constitutes one of the largest office buildings in the district. There are also a few smaller offices scattered through out the district including a law firm, some second floor offices above retail and small recording studio.

Public Works Building

The current Public Works Building is located on Lombard Avenue and Lake Street. A new Public Works Building is under construction further south on Lombard Avenue and South Boulevard. The creation of the new building will provide a renovation the current Public works facility and site to a neighborhood oriented use. This parcel could be a valuable asset in creating a redevelopment of the Dominick’s site and creating a retail environment along Lake Street.



| Public Works Facility |

| Offices |





| Stevenson Park |



Stevenson Park

This district has many recreational facilities that make this area a great place to live and includes the Stevenson Park, Park District pool, neighboring High School fields, Tennis Club, and others. Stevenson Park is a great asset of the neighborhood, well used and loved by residents who attended the community meetings. Residents did express concern for limited park district programming with summer camps and wanted to make sure the park was better utilized.

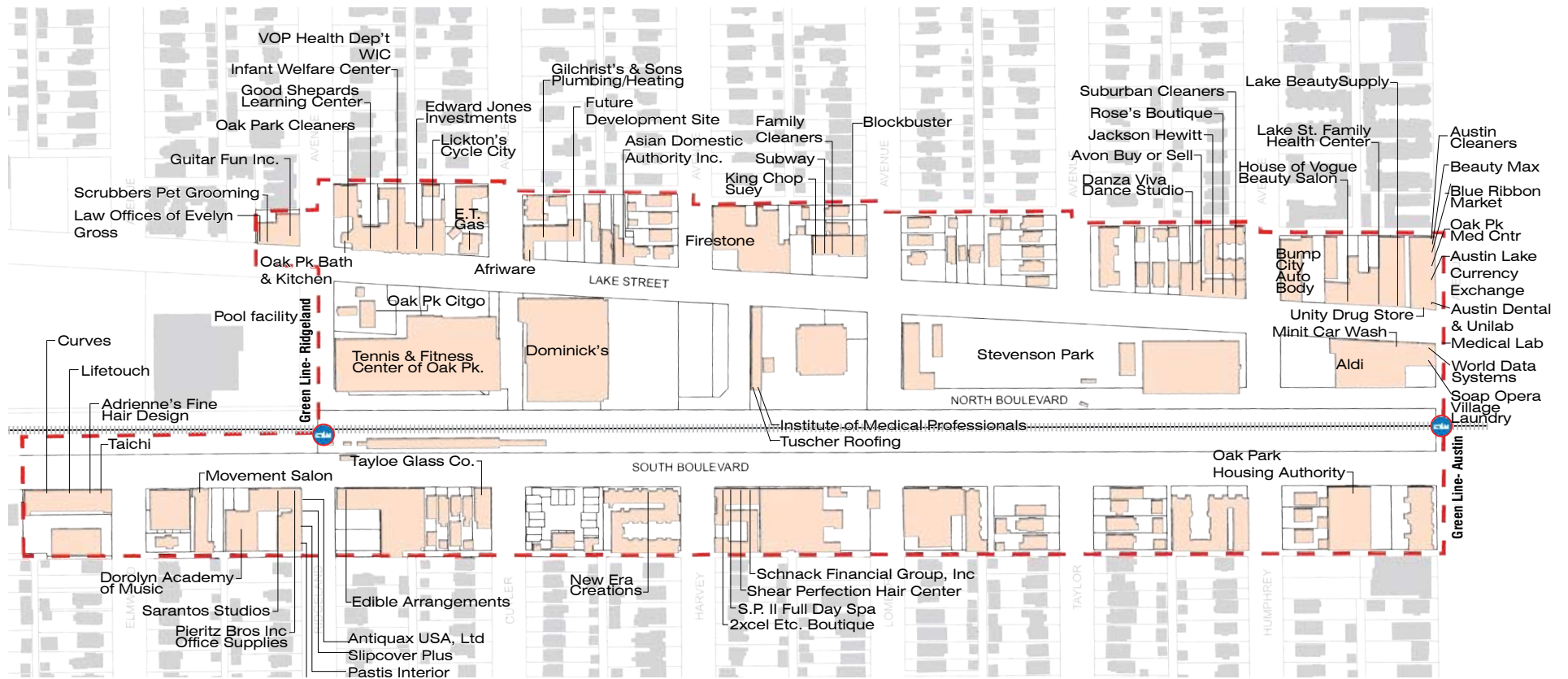


Figure 4.03: Current Businesses in the District

Current Businesses in the District

The study area currently comprises a total of 66 businesses of all types. (Refer figure 4.03 for map of businesses) Of the total, 25 cater to consumer services including a large number of dry cleaners. There are 4 restaurants in the corridor and a majority of them offer take out services only. The district completely lacks sit-down restaurants which is a common request at the community meetings. Other businesses in the area comprise of 8 retail storefronts, 15 offices, 4 auto-related businesses in the district and 2 gas stations.

Parking Concerns

Retail activity in the district is not supported by any significant pedestrian traffic and according to businesses owners most customers arrive by cars.

In general there is sufficient parking in the district, although some specific businesses such as PCC Health Care have very limited access to parking and their clients and staff need parking close by. The location and configuration of parking lots are not always benefiting the district or pedestrian experiences.

For example some retailers provide parking lots in front of their businesses, thereby setting back the building from the edge of the street. This further disrupts any pedestrian activity due to the large number of curb cuts that are associated with this type of development.

Maintenance and Building Quality

A majority of the retail businesses along the Lake Street corridor occupy single-story structures. Poor maintenance is a common issue with many of the existing retail structures which have unattractive storefronts and lack adequate signage, and awnings. Other renovation issues associated with mechanical systems, roofs, brick work could make these properties expensive to renovate and prime candidates for demolition and redevelopment. However many older commercial buildings still have aesthetic and architectural value as noted with the residential buildings in the district and should be considered for renovation.





Current Land Use

- Single Family
- Multi-Family
- Commercial
- Park / Recreation

LAND USE	AREA (sqft)
Commercial	525,370
Park/Recreation	121,868
Multi-family	330,422
Single family	187,285

Figure 4.04: Existing Land Use

Land Use In The District

Figure 4.05. shows the percentages of land use area on the corridor. Of the 122 parcels in the District, 77 parcels are zoned B-1/ B-2, 27 are zoned C, 16 are zoned R-7, and 2 are zoned R-2. The total land area of the parcels on the corridor is 26 acres of which over 30% is zoned for multi-family residential. Currently 100% of the parcels that are zoned for R-7 multi-family uses have single family homes or townhouses on them.



Figure 4.06: Residential building on Lake Street



Figure 4.07: Single Family housing on Lake Street

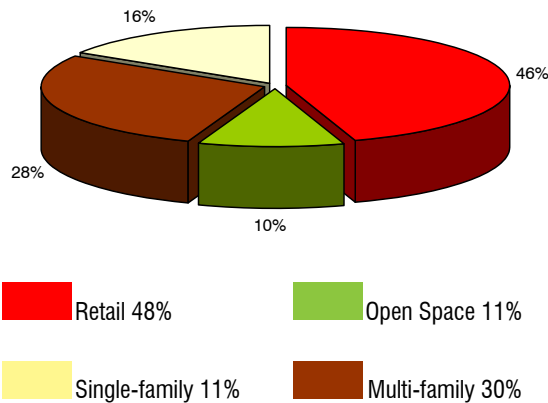


Figure 4.05: Land Use for parcels that front on Lake Avenue. (refer Figure 3.04)



Figure 4.08: The Dominick's on Lake Street is developed on a parcel that is currently zoned for B1-B2 uses

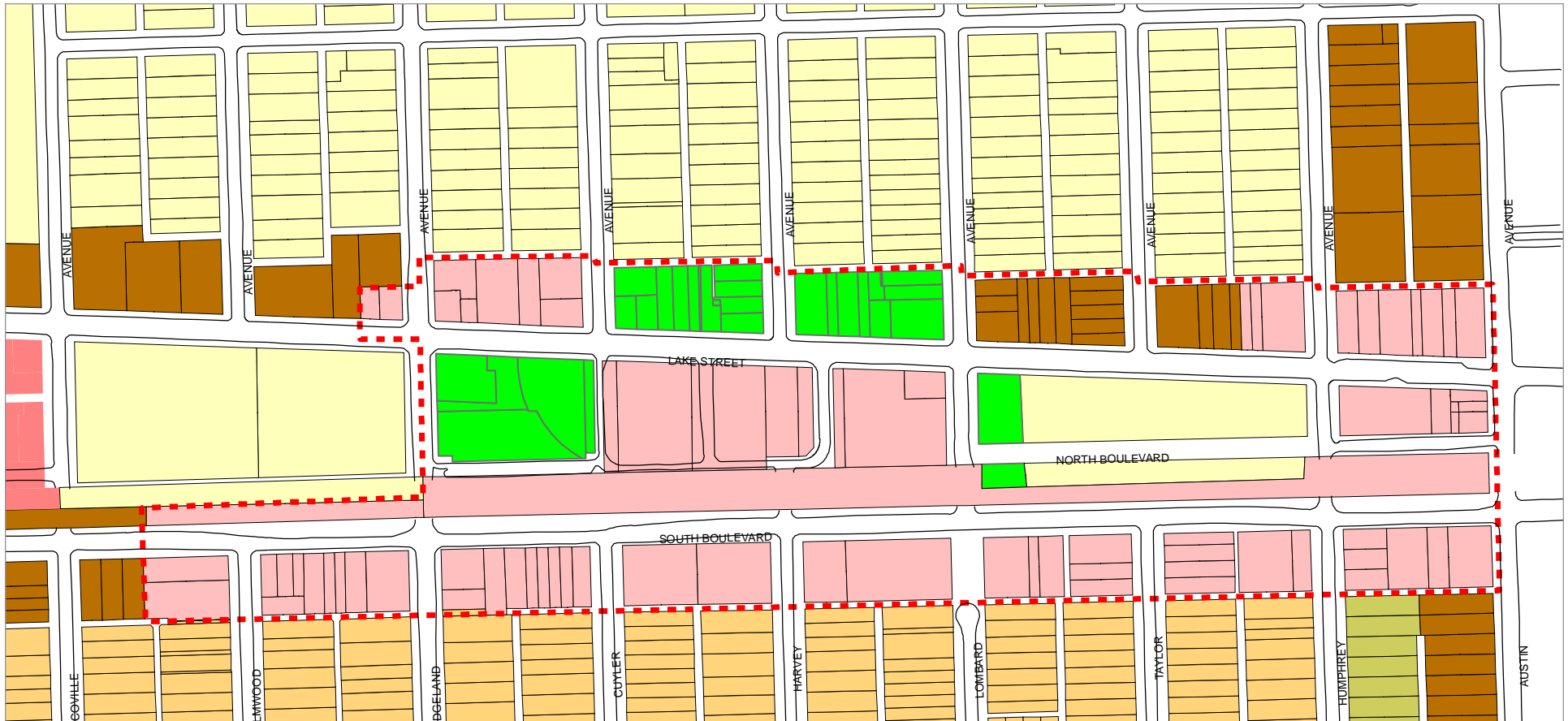


Figure 4.09: Existing Zoning

- R-2 Single Family
- R-5 Single Family
- C Commercial
- B-3 Central Business
- R-3 Single Family
- R-7 Multi-family
- B-1/B-2 General Business

Figure 4.09 illustrates the current zoning for the district. The north side of Lake Street is zoned with a mix of general business category (B-1, B-2), commercial (C), and multi-family (R-7). The south side of Lake Street is zoned similarly with general business (B-1/B-2), commercial (C), and single family (R-2). The majority of the portion of the district along South Boulevard is zoned B1, B-2, general business, though the use is primarily multi-family residential. There are 122 parcels of varying sizes in this district of which 77 are currently general business, 16 are multi-family residential, 27 are commercial, and 2 are single family.

Issues with Current Zoning

Current Retail Zoning:

A good portion of the district is zoned for commercial uses. The zoning works well with the current land uses. The general business zoning at the Austin intersection allows for the development of this area as a potential retail node for the district. Similarly the commercial/general businesses zoning at the Ridgeland intersection is ideal in the redevelopment of this node as a major retail node for the Village. Increasing the height of development to 50 feet in general business would allow 4 story development with a high retail floor height.

Stevenson Park:

The zoning of the Stevenson Park is currently single family residential and should be zoned for open space. The zoning of the parcels on the north side of Lake Street across from Stevenson Park is primarily multi-family residential. It is appropriate

to have multifamily residential zoning across from an open space.

Multi-family Structures:

Though zoned R-7, there are a few structures on the north side of Lake Street that are currently occupied by single-family units. These would be encouraged to redevelop as multi-family residential buildings in the future as they become available for redevelopment. If in a retail node, mixed-use multi-family structures are encouraged to be developed in areas that are already zoned as R-7.

Development Issues in Oak Park

The district's revitalization plans will benefit from existing commercial and mixed-use structures in Oak Park. Many of the properties that were built within the past 10-15 years are three or four stories and of high quality materials, setting a standard for subsequent structures. These structures also provide needed comparables for investment and financing decisions, even if none of them exist in the district itself. A four-story structure in the district would not be inconsistent with the character of Oak Park or the district, especially since some of the most-loved buildings in the district are of four stories.

The district will also benefit from Oak Park's older commercial properties, including those in the district itself. Although lack of parking and inefficient retail space may present a long-term reinvestment issue, older income-producing properties can be successfully upgraded in the shorter term as the district evolves. This ability to retain a mix of property types in the district

consistent with the fabric of the rest of Oak Park can have a stabilizing effect.



Figure 4.10: Mixed Use Residential Building with multi-family residential above retail uses

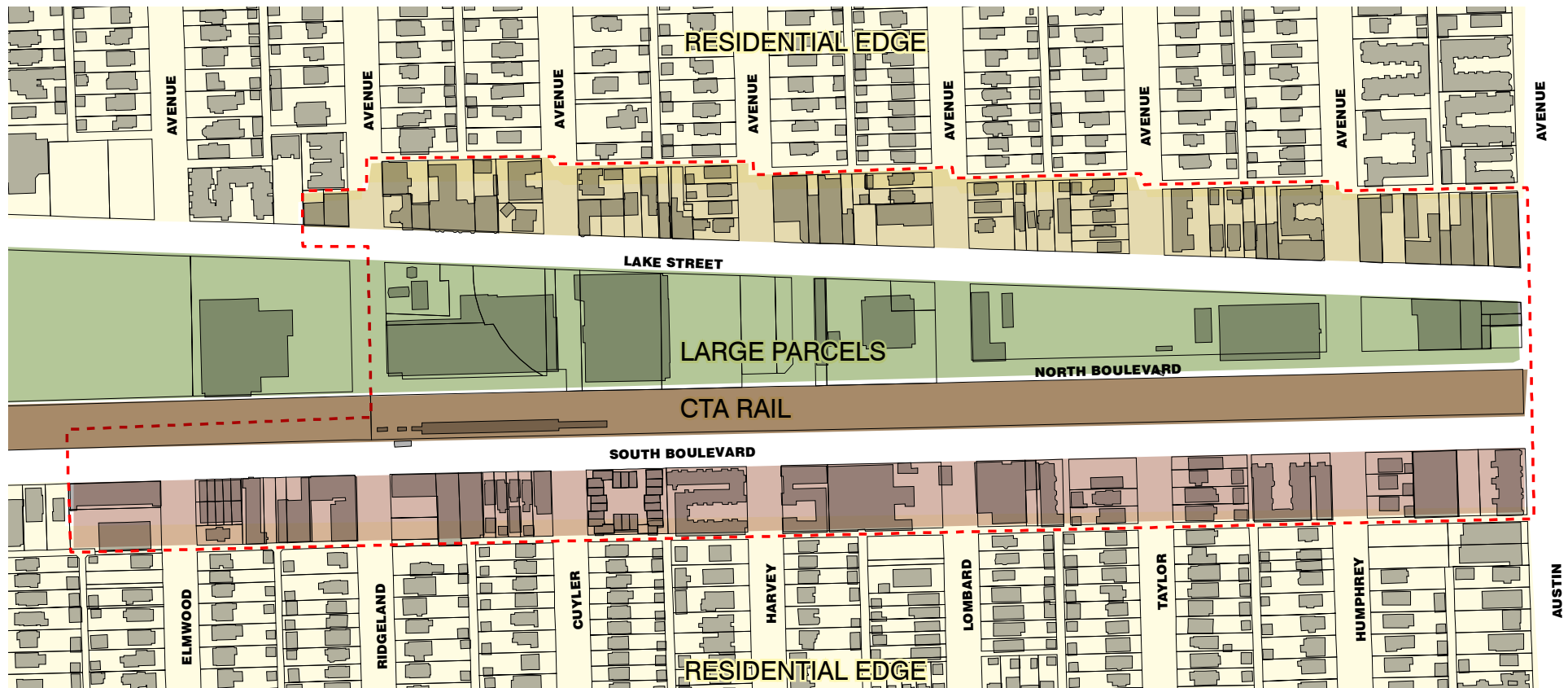


Figure 4.11: District Zones Map

- Residential
- Large Parcels (South side of Lake Street)
- CTA Rail Embankment
- Lake Street Mixed Use District
- Multi-family residential (South Blvd.)



Figure 4.12: P.C.C. health care center on Lake Street

District Zones

Many of the parcels along Lake Street create a transition zone between the residential fabric of the neighborhood and business/ retail frontage along Lake Street. The development of mixed use, multi-family residential on the northside of Lake Street helps the area transition from a residential to a retail district.

The larger parcels on the southside of Lake Street were previously developed to house larger light industrial uses. As these sites become available for redevelopment, they could be developed to house larger stores as they are perfectly suited for the use by high volume retailers. Other service oriented uses in the district are also encouraged to consider locating on the south side of Lake Street. The presence of the rail embankment provides a unique opportunity for development in Oak Park. The parcels on the southside of Lake Street do not front on to a well established residential neighborhood as do many of the other retail corridors in the Village. Since these parcels have 'no neighbors' and are up against the embankment, several uses

that may not be appropriate for most other places in the Village could be accommodated here. These include some automobile oriented services, parking garage access, loading areas for high volume retailers, and even taller residential structures.

The southside of South Boulevard is currently occupied primarily by multi-family residential uses. The developments closer to the Ridgeland intersection have some retail on the first floor of these residential buildings. The new public works building is being redeveloped along South Boulevard as well. This edge also acts as a transitional area between the rail embankment and the residential fabric. As it is already a well established multi-family residential area, the future development of this model is encouraged along this edge keeping a focus on first floor retail at the Ridgeland intersection. The development of retail at the Ridgeland intersection is advantageous owing to the proximity of the train station in this location.

Historic Preservation

The Lake Street District has a significant amount of historically prominent buildings. In the belief that these buildings should be preserved, a section has been dedicated to select and administer suggestions to buildings that need protection. This section can be found in Part 5 (page 55).

PART 5

Historical Preservation

Historic Overview

Preface

District Background

Project Methodology

Survey Summary





A view of the Ridgeland business district on the north side of Lake Street east of Ridgeland Avenue, circa 1903. Only Ridgeland Hall, the building with the tall tower in the distance in the photograph at left, survives today.

Historic Overview

The Lake Street Business District resides along a Native American trail that was followed by Joseph Kettlestrings from Chicago in 1833 when he first laid claim to land in what is now Oak Park. In 1857, the Township of Cicero was established, which governed early settlements which had not been previously incorporated into Chicago in 1837. This included the settlement known as Ridgeland, which included the current Lake Street Business District, along with Austin, Cicero, Berwyn, and Oak Ridge (now Oak Park).

At that time, the land beyond Oak Park's eastern boundary (East Avenue) was still largely undeveloped prairie with only an occasional farmhouse. However, this area was served by the Galena and Chicago Union Railroad which ran

from Chicago as far west as Oak Park beginning in 1848.

In the late 1860s, a group of farsighted businessmen led by James Scoville formed a venture capital company that purchased large tracts of land east of Oak Park for residential development. They named the area 'Ridgeland' because much of the land was located along a ridge formed from a glacial lake. This land was subdivided in 1872, and bound by East Avenue, Austin Boulevard, Chicago Avenue and the railroad tracks along Lake Street. This area became the basis for the Village of Ridgeland, and later expanded southward to Madison Street.

It was only a matter of time before this prairie would be developed. This was foretold by the following passage from the Oak Park Vindicator (1871), "Farmers were cutting hay on the open squares of Ridgeland this week, blocks that will some day be covered with handsome residences."

The Village of Ridgeland became a prosperous community, known at that time as a "silk-stocking" town. The center of the village's social life was a brick community hall known as Ridgeland (or Cummings) Hall, built in 1890 and located at the current address of 310 Lake Street. So many residents from neighboring Oak Park, Austin and River Forest attended the dances held regularly at Ridgeland Hall that special street cars were scheduled to accommodate the additional demand for transportation.

At the turn of the century, most residents of Ridgeland and Oak Park were frustrated with the governing control of the Cicero Township Board. In 1902, Ridgeland and Oak Park consolidated and separated from Cicero Township and became established as a self-governing municipality known as the Village of Oak Park.

The Village of Ridgeland has historically been a self-reliant community, autonomous for the most part from Oak Park before and after their consolidation in 1902. In the early days of Ridgeland, this self-reliance was demonstrated through self-imposed taxation via the formation of associations that issued stock for the purpose of building community essentials such as stores, a fire station, a community hall, and a sewer system.

* Image Source : The Historical Society of Oak Park and River Forest (prepared by Michael Iversen)

Preface*

This architectural historical survey identifies buildings with historic character and significance that should be preserved during future redevelopment. Most but not all of the study area is included within the Ridgeland-Oak Park Historic District. The study area includes numerous contributing buildings for the district, as well as non-contributing contemporary structures.

District Background

After the Chicago Fire of 1871, residential development accelerated in Oak Park, and the population grew to 4,589 persons by 1890. Numerous churches, social clubs, and fraternal organizations were established in the 1870s, and the first high school class graduated in 1877.

As suburban residential development continued in the 1880s and 1890s, streetcars and elevated trains supplemented the original main line steam railroads to connect Oak Park commuters to jobs in downtown Chicago. One of the first streetcar lines was the Chicago, Harlem, & Batavia “dummy” line, which ran approximately along the present-day route of the Eisenhower Expressway. The “dummy” trains used a miniature steam locomotive with a false cladding designed to conceal most of the moving parts and avoid startling horses. This line first began operation in 1881, but did not provide direct commuter service to downtown Chicago until June 1888. A more extensive streetcar network throughout Oak Park was opened in 1890. In the future Village of Oak

Park, this system ran east-west on Madison Street and Lake Street, with a north-south connection on Harlem Avenue.¹ Streetcar service was discontinued in 1947, to be replaced by buses.²

The Lake Street Elevated Railroad (today’s CTA Green Line) was extended into Oak Park in 1899–1901, although the trains ran at ground level until the 1960s. The Metropolitan West Side Elevated Railroad (today’s CTA Blue Line) was extended into Oak Park in 1905, providing local service over tracks originally placed by the Chicago Aurora & Elgin electric interurban train. The “Met” line moved onto new tracks along the Congress (Eisenhower) Expressway in 1958.³

Oak Park separated from Cicero Township and was organized as an independent municipality in 1902. The village limits included large sections of vacant land, much of which was developed in the first decades of the twentieth century. Oak Park Hospital opened in 1907. Lake Street in downtown Oak Park was the original commercial area. This western end of Lake Street developed into a major retail center during the 1920s, with branches of major Chicago department stores such as Marshall Field & Company. By 1930, the population of Oak Park had reached 64,000 persons.

Following World War II, Oak Park was affected by larger developmental trends in the Chicago metropolitan area. The construction of the Eisenhower Expressway cut through the southern portion of the Village in the mid 1950s. Starting in the 1960s and 1970s, Oak Park made a conscious effort to accommodate changing demographics and social pressures while maintaining the suburban character that has long made the Village a desirable residential location. New developments in recent decades have consisted of replacement of earlier buildings with new construction, as well as the restoration and preservation of Oak Park’s historic architectural heritage.

¹ *Halley’s Pictorial Oak Park* (1898), 88–92.

² LeGary, *Improvers and Preservers* (1967), 166.

³ www.Chicago-L.org

* Prepared by Wiss, Janney, Elstner Associates, Inc.

Development of the Ridgeland Community

The 340 acre tract of land north of the Chicago & North Western Railroad between Austin Boulevard and East Avenue was purchased by James Scoville, W.B. Ogden, Joel D. Harvey, and Josiah Lombard around 1868. The real estate developer E.A. Cummings moved to the area in 1869 and subdivided the property in 1872, naming the area Ridgeland.⁴ The first houses were built in the area in the 1870s. The northside of Lake Street between Ridgeland and Cuyler Avenues developed as the small business district serving this community. A four-room depot was constructed along the railroad just west of Ridgeland Avenue.

In 1876, local homeowners formed the Ridgeland Improvement Association to help build up the infrastructure of the unincorporated Village. Around 1878, the association established a cooperative

store at the corner of Lake and Ridgeland, with F. Dore as proprietor. The second floor of the wood frame building was used as a social hall. (In 1902, this building was relocated to 115 South Ridgeland Avenue, and it survives as a single-family house.) Later, the Ridgeland Hall Association was formed to construct a large brick community hall on Lake Street between Ridgeland and Cuyler. This building, completed in 1890 and still existing, is at 310 Lake Street. The upstairs social hall was used for dances and plays. The association also financed sewers, street paving, streetlights, and other improvements in the Village.



Figure 5.01: Two views of the Ridgeland business district on the north side of Lake Street east of Ridgeland Avenue, circa 1903. Only Ridgeland Hall, the building with the tall tower in the distance in the photograph at left, survives today. Photos courtesy of the Historical Society of Oak Park and River Forest (Philander Barclay collection).



Figure 5.02: Ridgeland Hall was constructed in 1890 by the community association on Lake Street between Ridgeland and Cuyler.

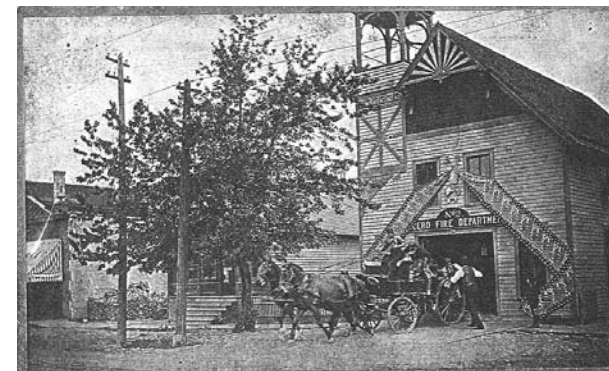


Figure 5.03: Other nineteenth century businesses on this block of Lake Street included a grocer, an ice and coal supply company, and the 1886 firehouse; none of these buildings survives today.

⁴ Gertrude Fox Hoagland, ed., *Historical Survey of Oak Park, Illinois* (Oak Park Public Library, 1937), 9.

In 1886, Cicero Township Fire Company No. 2 was established in Ridgeland, and a wooden station house was built on Lake Street between Ridgeland and Cuyler Avenues (a location with the present-day address 322–324 Lake). This station was replaced by a large brick and stone structure on the south side of Lake Street at Lombard Avenue in 1898. The use of the building as a firehouse was discontinued in 1916. Oak Park had agreed to buy Lake Michigan water from Chicago in 1908, and a pumping station was established behind the firehouse in 1912 to increase water pressure. This use of the building continues today.

The Cicero and Proviso Street Railway Company began operation of the first streetcar lines along Lake Street in 1891. The car barn for the streetcar system was constructed in 1890 on the southside of Lake Street at Cuyler Avenue. In the 1950s when buses replaced streetcars on Lake Street, the former car barn was reused as a bus garage. The building was ultimately demolished in 1987 for



Figure 5.04: The Cicero Township Fire Company No. 2 building, shortly after its completion in 1898.

the construction of a Dominick’s grocery store on the site.

The Lake Street elevated railroad was extended through Ridgeland in 1898–1900. The Ridgeland area became part of the new Village of Oak Park in 1902. The Chicago & North Western Railroad tracks were elevated on a concrete embankment through the Village in late 1911. Around 1900, large areas of vacant land along Lake Street and South Boulevard were developed with a mixture of commercial, industrial and apartment buildings. Industrial uses were located on the south side of Lake Street between Ridgeland and Lombard, where easy access to the railroad was possible. Businesses included Borden’s Condensed Milk Company plant, W.G. Davis Coal Company, and Bedard & Morency wood planing mill.

The Park District of Oak Park was established in 1912, and among its first actions was to purchase the former cricket grounds owned by James



Figure 5.05: The building today, which now houses the Oak Park main water pumping station.

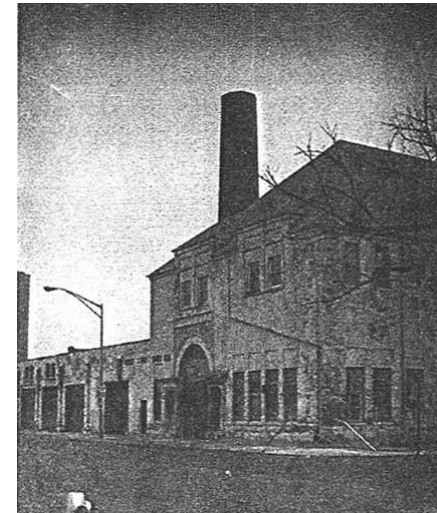


Figure 5.06: View of the Cicero and Proviso Street Railway Company car barn, shortly before its demolition in 1987.



Figure 5.07: Streetcar on Lake Street at Austin Boulevard, 1940s.

Scoville at the southwest corner of Lake and Ridgeland, which became “Ridgeland Commons.” The Village purchased land along Lake Street west of Humphrey Avenue in 1918 as one of the first components in the village playground system, and the park opened in 1921. A fieldhouse was built in the park in 1927, which was renamed the “Robert Louis Stevenson Playground.” This building was replaced by the present Fieldhouse in 1966.



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Figure 5.08: Top: Borden’s Condensed Milk Co. was located on the southwest corner of Lake Street and Cuyler Avenue. This view, looking northeast from the Chicago & North Western Railroad, shows the Cicero and Proviso Street Railway car barn in the background. Photograph from *Oak Park in Vintage Postcards*. Bottom: The Bedard & Morency Mill Co. was located on the southwest corner of Lake Street and Lombard Avenue. Illustration from the 1905 Oak Park directory.

Since 1970, the former industrial uses along the south side of Lake Street have been replaced by a variety of recreational, retail, and residential uses. The Borden’s plant and coal company site became the Racquet Club of Oak Park and River Forest in 1973. The fourteen story Heritage House apartment tower was constructed on the former planing mill site in 1979. The former streetcar car barn was demolished to make way for a Dominick’s grocery store in 1987.

New residential apartment and condominium buildings have continued to be built in the Ridgeland area. In the 1960s, this included more modest apartment buildings, which were usually constructed as infill buildings on previously vacant



Figure 5.09: The fourteen story Heritage House was constructed in 1979.



Figure 5.10: The infill apartment building at 114 Lake Street was constructed in 1961.

sites, such as the buildings at 114 Lake Street or the corner of Taylor Avenue and South Boulevard. In the 2000s, with limited vacant land remaining, new development has typically involved the replacement of earlier buildings with larger residential or mixed-use projects, such as the building at Ridgeland Avenue and South Boulevard, which replaced several earlier commercial buildings, or the townhouse building at Cuyler Avenue and South Boulevard, which replaced a former auto service building. In 2006, construction began on a new Oak Park Public Works Facility on South Boulevard between Taylor and Harvey Avenues.



Figure 5.11: Twenty-first century development in the corridor has included multi-unit residential and mixed use buildings such as this recently completed four-story building at Ridgeland Avenue and South Boulevard.



Figure 5.12: A new Oak Park public works facility is now under construction on South Boulevard.

Project Methodology

Architectural Survey Historical Research

Historical research for this project was conducted at the Oak Park Public Library (OPPL) and the Historical Society of Oak Park and River Forest (HSOPRF). The collection at OPPL includes published books, local newspapers, and village directories on microfilm. The collection at HSOPRF includes extensive and partially indexed local newspapers (*Oak Leaves* and *Wednesday Journal*), historic photograph collections, ephemera files organized by street name, and Sanborn maps. Additionally, Mr. Michael Iversen, local historian and architect, provided access to his extensive collection of historic materials related to the history of Ridgeland.

Field Survey

The field survey work was conducted in August 2006 by Laura Kraft and Kenneth Itle of WJE. The entire corridor was surveyed on foot. Each building was photographed using digital cameras. As appropriate, additional photographs were taken of notable details or features of the building. Written notes were made identifying existing materials and existing business occupants. Obviously contemporary buildings on the corridor, such as gas stations, were not surveyed.

Database and Map Preparation

The survey and research data were compiled and presented in a Microsoft Access database. Digital field survey photographs were inserted electronically into the database. Also, a map was

prepared in ArcGIS using aerial photography and parcel lines provided by the Village. The complete survey database is georeferenced into the GIS software, to allow for simple comparison and geographic analysis of the survey information.

Presentation

The draft historic survey was presented to the Village Historic Preservation Commission at a regular public meeting on October 12, 2006, at the Oak Park Conservatory. Following receipt of comments from the Commissioners and additional historical background information, and further review of the survey results to ensure consistency, the final report and survey forms have been prepared.

Summary Report and Submittals

Based on the results of the survey and research, this summary report was prepared. The survey forms are attached as an appendix. Included under separate cover with the final submittal will be a CD-ROM containing the report, maps, and survey forms as .PDF files; the survey photography as .JPG files; the survey geodatabase as .MDB file; and the summary report as .DOC file. The results of the survey have been considered by the planning team as part of the overall Lake Street Corridor Plan.

Terminology

The categories used to designate the historical significance of individual properties are based upon the categories used in the "Architectural Survey of Downtown Oak Park and the Avenue Business District" prepared by the Village of Oak

Park, as approved November 21, 2005. The categories of significance used herein are as follows:

Significant (National Register): A significant property that has potential to be eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. Generally, National Register Criterion C, relating to architectural design or character, has been considered in making this designation. Other properties may be eligible for the National Register under other criteria; however, more detailed research on the individual property would be required. All properties in this category are also eligible for listing as Oak Park landmarks.



Figure 5.13: A property considered National Register-eligible as part of this study: the former Ridgeland Hall (1890).



Figure 5.14: A property considered National Register-eligible as part of this study: the former Cicero Township Fire Company No. 2 (1898)

Significant: The 2005 survey of downtown Oak Park defines a Significant property as “any property and/or improvement which has special character or significant historical, cultural, architectural, archeological, community or aesthetic value and is worthy of preservation. The property is important enough to warrant individual Oak Park Landmark designation.”

The buildings designated “Significant” as part of the present survey have the potential to be eligible for listing as an Oak Park landmark under



Figure 5.15: An example of a building designated Significant as part of this study: the retail building at 128–136 North Ridgeland Avenue.



Figure 5.16: An example of a building designated Significant as part of this study: the retail/apartment building at South Boulevard and Ridgeland Avenue

one or more of the criteria defined in the Historic Preservation Ordinance. The building has a high level of integrity, with minimal changes to major historic features. One exception is alterations to storefronts; replacement of the storefront does not necessarily disqualify a property, as long as the original pattern of openings has been maintained.

Structure of Merit: The 2005 survey of downtown Oak Park defines a Structure of Merit property as “a building which has historic or aesthetic character but to a lesser degree than a Significant building, or that has had alterations affecting its integrity. Such a building may contribute to a broader historic character or provide historic context to a larger group of buildings and is worthy of preservation.”

As part of the present survey, the term “Contributing” is used when the building is located within the boundaries of the existing Ridgeland-Oak Park Historic District; the term “Structure of Merit” is used when the building is located outside



Figure 5.17: The apartment building at 118–126 North Taylor Avenue, although somewhat altered, still retains a noteworthy historic character and is contributing designated contributing.

the district boundaries. Oftentimes, a building designated Contributing or Structure of Merit could be raised to the Significant level by the removal of inappropriate later alterations, such as the remodeling or filling in of storefronts. Other buildings designated Contributing or Structure of Merit may ultimately qualify as Significant pending further research (beyond the scope of this study) to establish their original architectural character, to identify other historic associations, or to better understand the architectural and historical context of the building.

In 2002, the Oak Park Historic Preservation Commission adopted a revised listing of contributing structures within the Ridgeland-Oak Park Historic District. In general, the results of the present survey agrees with the designation of individual buildings as contributing and non-contributing. A very small number of properties have been considered contributing in the present survey in spite of being designated non-contributing in 2002, and at least one property is



Figure 5.18: The former garage building at 21 South Boulevard, now used as offices, retains its basic simple historic character. This building is designated Contributing.

considered non-contributing in the present survey in spite of being designated contributing in 2002. Comments on individual survey forms reflect these differences. Also, a checkbox on each survey form indicates if that property is physically located within the boundaries of the Ridgeland-Oak Park Historic District, and if so, if it was designated contributing in 2002.

No Merit: The 2005 survey of downtown Oak Park defines a No Merit property as “a building which is less than fifty years old, or a building which never originally had aesthetic character or significance, or that has had alterations that destroy its integrity. While the [Historic Preservation] Commission is not necessarily advocating the demolition of these buildings, they are not considered worthy of preservation from an architectural standpoint.”

As part of the present survey, the term “Non-Contributing” is used when the building is located within the boundaries of the existing Ridgeland-Oak Park Historic District; the term “No Merit” is used when the building is located outside



Figure 5.19: Non-contributing buildings include mainly post-World War II buildings like 222 Lake Street



Figure 5.20: Non-contributing buildings include mainly post-World War II buildings like small number of drastically altered older buildings, such as the retail building at the corner of Lake Street and Austin Boulevard.

the district boundaries. While many of these buildings may be well-built, prominent, or useful structures, they do not warrant special protection as historically significant properties.

There are a few older buildings on the corridor which are currently identified as No Merit, generally due to the presence of contemporary facade overcladding materials. It is possible that historic materials may still exist on these buildings, concealed beneath the contemporary materials. With appropriate restoration work, these properties may deserve re-assessment as Structures of Merit or Significant structures.⁵

Stylistic terminology use in this report is based on the style names and definitions used in the publication *How to Complete the Ohio Historical Inventory*.⁶ In addition, the term “Commercial” style has been used, similar to the use of this term in the October 2005 survey of downtown Oak Park.

Generally, the style name Commercial has been assigned to masonry buildings from the period 1900 to 1930, usually one to three stories in height, with flat roof and ground level storefronts, and minimal decorative detailing in the masonry based loosely on Classical style moldings and trim. These are often builder-designed structures and are ubiquitous in the Chicago area along major commercial streets such as Lake Street.

Survey Summary

Historical Significance

The Ridgeland area developed in the 1870s, 1880s, and 1890s as a distinct community that was perceived as somewhat independent of the settlement of Oak Park to the west. The physical center of Ridgeland—the Lake Street and South Boulevard corridor that is included in the present study—included a limited number of commercial, social, and public buildings that served the Ridgeland community. Several of the important public buildings from the nineteenth century still survive today, including the Cicero Township Fire Company No. 2 building and the former Ridgeland Hall. This time period also included the construction of many single family houses in the larger neighborhood; a few of these houses are included in the boundaries of the present study.

⁵ If redevelopment is proposed for sites of this type, further investigation of their potential historical significance is recommended

⁶ Stephen C. Gordon, *How to Complete the Ohio Historic Inventory* (Columbus, Ohio, Ohio Historic Preservation Office, 1992).

When Cicero Township broke apart into independent municipalities in 1902, Ridgeland was included in the new Village of Oak Park. The development of much of the study corridor occurred after the incorporation of the village, especially in the decade of the 1920s. New buildings in the study area in the early twentieth century included residential apartment buildings, retail buildings serving the everyday needs of the neighborhood, and some automobile-oriented businesses such as filling stations and garages. With easy access to railroad transportation, the central strip of the corridor was developed with industrial uses.

The significant buildings of the corridor therefore date mainly to the fifty years from 1870 to 1930. Relatively little new construction occurred in the corridor in the period 1930 to 1960. Since 1960, some infill construction or redevelopment has occurred.

Commercial Properties

The survey corridor has a variety of historic small scale commercial buildings, especially near Austin Boulevard and Ridgeland Avenue, which correspond to elevated train station locations. These historic retail buildings generally were designed to serve the needs of the residents of the surrounding neighborhood, rather than serving as a regional retail center. Architecturally, the design and construction of these twentieth century masonry buildings is very typical of the type of commercial structures found throughout the Chicago region on major thoroughfares like Lake Street.

Residential Properties

Although Lake Street has traditionally been zoned for commercial and industrial uses, the corridor did include some residential properties. The survey included historic apartment buildings, many of which are located on corner lots along Lake Street or South Boulevard. The survey also included a number of single family houses, many of which face the perpendicular avenues, rather than Lake Street or South Boulevard. An assessment of historic significance has been made for the single family houses and apartment buildings included in the survey.



Figure 5.21: Part of the commercial strip on Lake Street near Ridgeland Avenue.



Figure 5.22: The former First National Bank building anchors the commercial strip at the corner of Austin Boulevard and Lake Street.



Figure 5.24: Other residential properties include 1920s apartment buildings such as this building at Harvey Avenue and South Boulevard.



Figure 5.23: The survey included some single family houses that date back to the earliest development of Ridgeland in the 1870s, such as this house on South Elmwood Avenue.

Survey Statistics

A total of 96 properties were surveyed in detail as part of this project. Obviously contemporary buildings along the corridor, such as gasoline filling stations and fast food restaurants, were excluded from the scope of work for this survey. These buildings are classified as “Non-Contributing” or “No Merit” due to their age, and depending upon if they are located within the boundaries of the Ridgeland-Oak Park Historic District.

By date of construction:

- 1870–1899: 9 properties
- 1900–1909: 18 properties
- 1910–1919: 21 properties
- 1920–1929: 26 properties
- 1930–1945: none
- 1946–1959: 7 properties
- 1960–2006: 15 properties

By significance:

- Significant (National Register): 2 prop.
- Significant: 11 properties
- Contributing or Structure of Merit: 53 prop.
- Non-contributing or No Merit: 30 properties

Refer to the terminology section above for the definition of the terms used to designate historical significance and the use of these terms in the present study.

By building use:

- Commercial, typically 1 or 2 stories: 33
- House (single family or two-flat): 35
- Apartment building: 17
- Mixed use commercial and apartments: 11

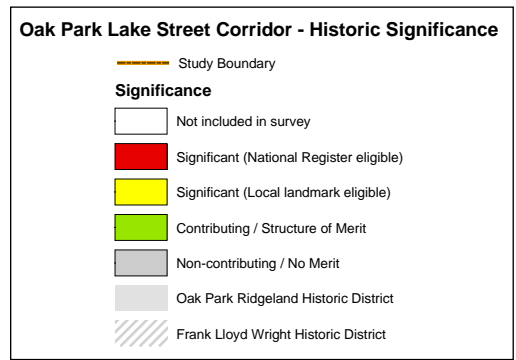


Figure 5.25: Historic Significance of Buildings in the in Lake Street Corridor

PART 6

Transportation and Parking

Traffic Volumes

Transportation and Parking Issues

Existing Parking Counts



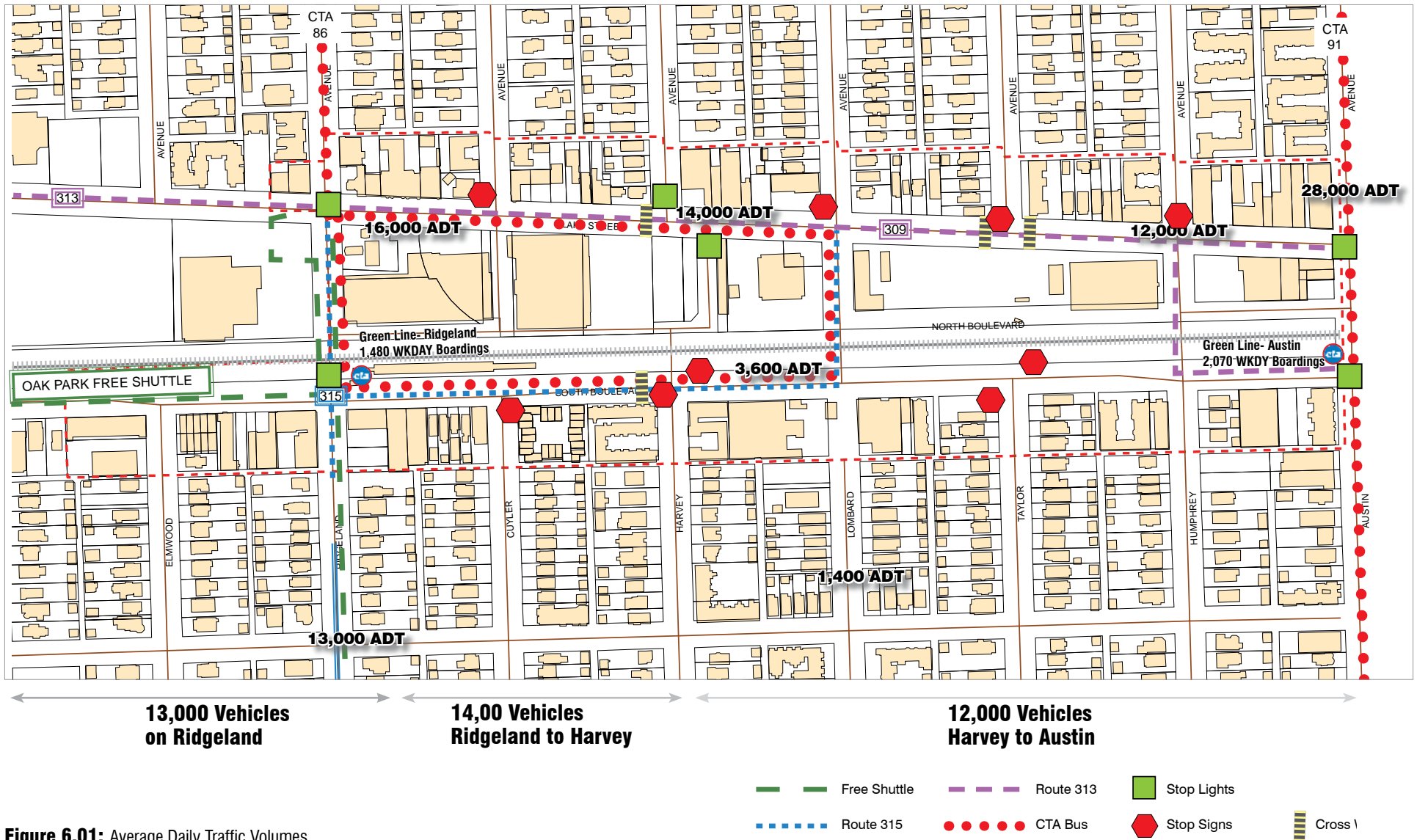


Figure 6.01: Average Daily Traffic Volumes

Traffic Volumes

As presented in Figure 6.01, traffic volumes generally increase east to west (volumes are closer to 18,000 ADT near Harlem). Cross-street volumes (north-south streets) vary; Ridgeland south of Lake Street carries about 13,000 ADT; Lombard south of Lake Street carries around 1,400 ADT and Austin just north of Lake Street carries around 28,000 ADT. Traffic signals are located on Lake Street at Ridgeland, Harvey, and Austin. Two traffic signals are located on South Boulevard at Ridgeland and Austin. While roadway capacity is available to accommodate new growth, improvements may be needed at intersections.

Transportation and Parking Issues

The following section outlines some of the strategies that could be adopted to improve the traffic and parking in the district.



Figure 6.02: Jog on Harvey and Lake

1. Reconfiguration of Harvey Street

Harvey Street originally traveled directly across

Lake Street south under the viaduct. When Dominick’s moved to the District, additional parking was required. The existing parcel was enlarged and the street’s edge shifted east creating an “S” shaped pattern in the roadway. As the area redevelops and Dominick’s plans to undergo renovations; the plan recommends instituting an ‘urban model’ providing structured parking thereby removing the Harvey Street offset and reinstating the original street pattern and creating a direct link under the viaduct.



2. Beye School walking route

Beye School is located on Cuyler and Ontario with two official crossing locations for students walking south across Lake Street. The school crossing zones on Lake Street are located at Harvey and Ridgeland Avenues (Figure 6.05). The safe routes as prescribed by the school indicate that students either walk east/west on Ontario to Harvey or Ridgeland and travel south on these roads using the crossing locations provided at Lake Street. Students using the Harvey location to cross Lake have to make an additional crossing across Harvey to negotiate the jog in the street. This creates a confusing situation for the children using this route. Straightening Harvey will help the school’s crossing zones and simplify the walking routes.

3. Potential parking garage locations

At the corner of Austin and Lake Street the number of on-street parking spaces becomes fully utilized



Figure 6.03: Aldi Parking Lot on Lake Street

most of the time. Further, there is a greater need for additional parking from the PCC (PCC Community Wellness Center) and other retailers. As development and redevelopment occurs, more parking spaces will be needed throughout the district. As the area redevelops, additional parking should be provided in structures (Chapter 7, Figure 7.06 shows the potential location for parking structures in the District).



Figure 6.04: PCC Community Wellness Center on Lake Street



Figure 6.05: Existing Transportation and BEYE Safe Walking Routes

As Aldi’s redevelops its store, the new design is proposed to follow the ‘urban model’. This ‘urban model’ will replace the existing retail structure and surface parking by adding a new grocery store with two levels above for parking. Structural provisions that will allow for more parking floors in the future are recommended. Other additional parking locations in the district include the parcel on the southeast corner of Harvey, accomplished by straightening the jog on Harvey. Since this would reduce the current amount of parking for Dominick’s, it is recommended that Dominick’s considers using an ‘urban model’ store and incorporate a parking structure as part of the redevelopment.

4. North Boulevard

North Boulevard is currently discontinuous and generally used as permit parking and a service drive. By extending North Boulevard, additional parking spaces could be created and used for commuters as well as more opportunities for



Figure 6.06: Green Line entrance off Ridgeland

service locations for additional developments in the district.

5. Improvements to the CTA Green Line stations at Ridgeland and Austin

To encourage additional use of transit services and to facilitate bus to rail transfers, improvements should be considered to the area surrounding the rail stations. This would include improving the pedestrian environment between Lake Street and the rail line (improved viaduct lighting, improved street crossings, bus shelters), adding bicycle parking including bike lockers, and addressing the grade issue with the Austin station which currently prohibits access to the west.

6. CTA Viaduct

The rail embankment between North Boulevard and South Boulevard creates a disconnected sense of feeling in the Lake Street Corridor. The viaduct interrupts sightlines going north and south. It also produces dark underpasses making



Figure 6.07: Viaduct Underpass

it uncomfortable to cross through during all hours of the day. Aesthetically, the viaduct looks old and unsightly. Despite the negative aspects, the rail embankment can be helpful in creating a positive solution to hide parking structures that will be needed in the future.

Existing Parking Counts

In general, adequate parking is available to meet the current needs of the district. As presented in Figure 6.09, there are just over 700 parking spaces within the district, comprised of about 340 off-street spaces and about 370 on-street spaces. The on-street spaces include about 130 spaces on Lake Street and about 240 spaces along South Boulevard. Many of the spaces on South Boulevard are included as village-owned lots, which allows for both meter and permit parking. Overall, parking spaces in the district are about 60 % to 70% occupied, with the percentage of occupied on-street spaces generally increasing towards the Austin/Lake Street intersection.

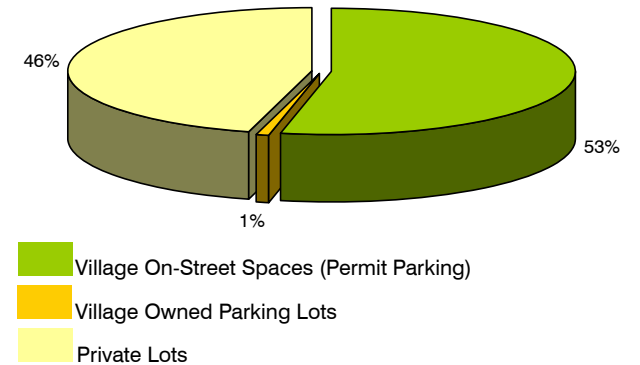


Figure 6.08: Existing Parking in the District

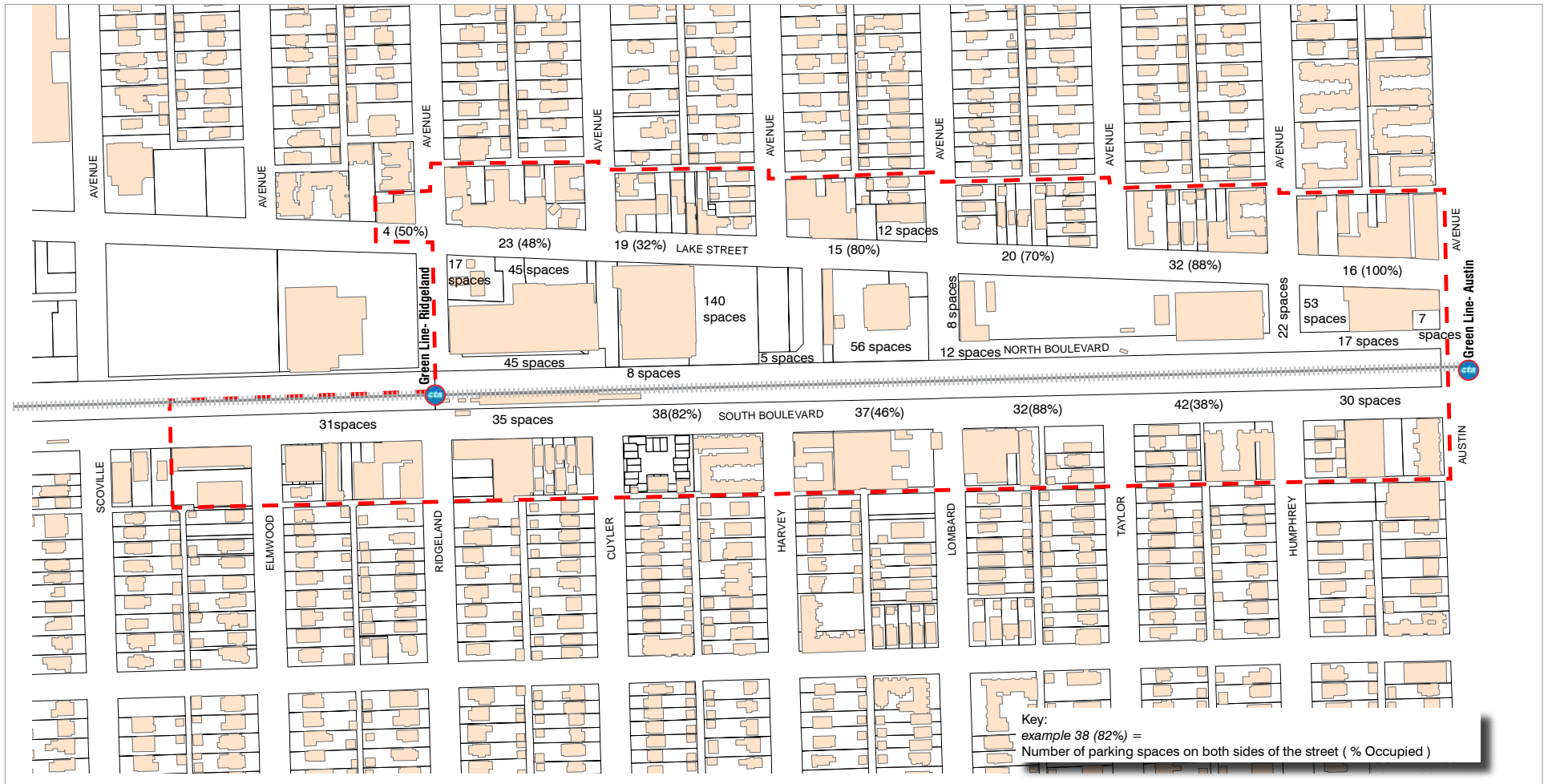


Figure 6.09: Existing Parking Counts

TOTAL PARKING IN THE DISTRICT : 714 spaces
 IN PARKING LOTS : 341 spaces
 ON STREET PARKING : 373 spaces

PART 7

Recommendations

Land Use Recommendations

Transportation and Parking Recommendations

Block by Block Recommendations



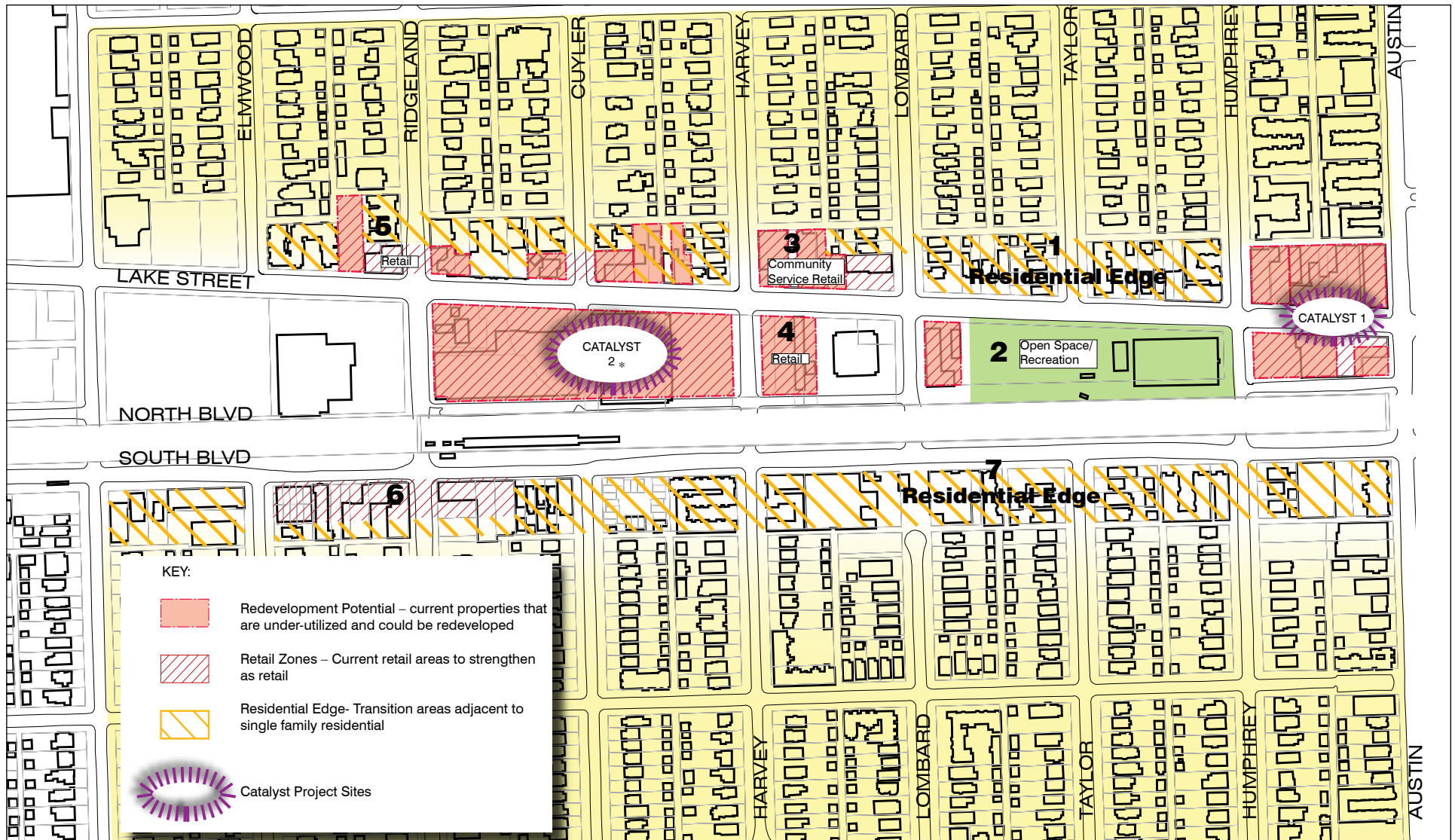


Figure 7.01: District Recommendations

* At this time, the current property owners in the Catalyst 2 area are not interested in redevelopment. The planning team and Village respect the owner's opinions and appreciate the quality contributions their businesses make to the district. However, the planning team has kept the ideas in the plan because it is a prime property for mixed use retail redevelopment within the Village as a whole. It is important to note this is a long range plan and could be a great opportunity for the property owners and the Village in the future.

Land Use Recommendations

The overall strategies for the district were devised based on considering various contributing factors including current land uses and existing businesses in the district.

The following are some general strategies for the retail land uses for the Lake Street Neighborhood Plan (refer to Figure 7.01)

Catalyst 1

The two blocks along Lake Street between Austin Boulevard and Humphrey Street serve as a “Gateway” to Oak Park. Since Austin Boulevard is the dividing line between Chicago and Oak Park, there are several Chicago Austin neighborhood issues that directly impact Oak Park. Many of the businesses located at this intersection directly serve the Chicago market and are not typically utilized by the residents of Oak Park. The current mix of retailers are under-serving the total market

potential of the community. Many of the buildings need basic improvements and the district has the potential for significant retail tenant upgrades and recruitment. Through interviews with local businesses along Lake Street, the planning team learned that many businesses were engaged in expansion plans including the primary tenant of the south block Aldi and north block PCC Community Wellness Center. The renovation of the Aldi will serve as a catalyst to improve the quality of retail at this node. The new store is planned to be modeled along the ‘urban’ format featuring structured parking. The fact that Aldi is willing and financially able to build a parking structure over a grocery store is a major signal that the market is ready for greater investment in the district.

This block of the shopping district is at maximum parking capacity, with the on-street parking occupied a majority of the time. Additional parking would improve the business and retail potential of this block. As the parcels on this block become

available for redevelopment they should be developed in a comprehensive manner to address the parking requirements of the various businesses. It is important that there is coordination with Aldi to expand their proposed parking structure to serve the adjacent businesses on the block. The garage should be designed to expand floor plates to other parcels or to provide additional floors of parking. Increased density in this block could be realized because there are no adjacent residential buildings and the parcel is next to the Austin CTA Station. The former Bank Building at the corner is historic and should be considered for renovation. Creating one block of mixed use development with a strong retail node in this area would further serve as a symbolic “Gateway” to the Village.

Some of the existing service businesses along Lake Street that have inherent conflicts with their residential neighbors, which include noises, storage of cars and storage of materials.



Figure 7.02: Existing Gateway at Austin



Figure 7.03: Historic Bank Building at Austin and Lake



Figure 7.04: PCC Health Care on Lake Street

Most of these businesses have existed in this district for a long time. They have a loyal clientele and do not require visibility on Lake Street for retail exposure. Over time, the Village is encouraged to work with these businesses to relocate them to appropriate locations where they would not have residential adjacency issues. Redefining North Boulevard as a service zone could provide a perfect relocation area for some of these land uses. The adjacency of the rail embankment provides screening and no neighborhood concerns. These land uses could be well served in the first floor of a parking structure with good signage to direct clients to businesses.

Residents and businesses have voiced concerns about safety in this district. Many businesses have locked doors and require that customers be buzzed into the store.

There are a number of safety improvements for the district that will change the public perception of safety including:

- 1) Greater police presence in the district
- 2) Additional evening lighting from pedestrian fixtures and storefront ambient light
- 3) Increasing night time activities in the district through additional restaurants or other retailers

1. Residential Neighborhood Edges

The blocks along the north side of Lake Street and the south side of South Boulevard are transition zones between commercial and single family housing districts. A good percentage of the north side of Lake Street is existing residential buildings, both multi-family and single-family structures.

Any development on this side of Lake Street should compliment the residential use with first floor neighborhood serving retail. New development should ideally be 3 - 4 levels of upper level residential development with retail, office or residential first floor uses. The architectural design of buildings on both these edges should be of a compatible in scale and character with the adjacent neighborhood. Good examples of compatible buildings include figure 7.05 which is a mixed use building with ground level retail and residential above or a high quality multifamily building such as figure 7.09.

2. Open Space and Recreation

Preserve and enhance Stevenson Park (Figure 7.06) as a vital neighborhood amenity in the district. At the community meetings many residents stated that the programming of the park was inadequate and not serving the needs



Figure 7.05: Mixed Use Building at the corner of Humphrey



Figure 7.06: Stevenson Park



Figure 7.07: Existing Community Retail at Lombard

of the neighborhood. It is important to understand park use/programming and ways to enhance the access to the park and any streetscape opportunities.

3. Strengthen Existing Retail

Strengthen the existing community service retail through the addition of retail and structured parking that serve in adjacent properties.

4. Reconfiguration of Harvey

The potential reconfiguration of Harvey will allow for a more substantial retail development on the South East corner of Harvey and Lake Street. This area could develop into another retail area that serves the community and would function well with the existing community service retail center across the street.

5. Preserve Neighborhood Edge

Preserve the residential buildings and allow some infill neighborhood oriented retail uses on the first floor of a new development.

Catalyst 2:

Consider redevelopment opportunities for the large block between Harvey and Ridgeland Avenue. This 4.5 acre property is currently underutilized with single level structures. Large redevelopment retail sites are a rare commodity in Oak Park and this could be a great opportunity to create a mixed use development with a parking structure.

However it is important to note that a few of the property owners in the Catalyst 2 area have responded to the planning recommendations

and specifically stated they are not interested in redevelopment at this time.

Dominick's is a very valuable retailer to this district and it is critical that they be included in any future planning of the site. In 2007 Dominick's will undertake a major renovation of the interior of their store with some façade/storefront improvements on Lake Street. This store remodeling will provide a greater pedestrian presence on Lake Street with storefronts for the bakery, Starbucks and florist. It is important to note that even with these upcoming improvements Dominick's is willing to revisit the store design and consider opportunities in 5 years to redevelop the store into a larger 4.5 acre site redevelopment project.

Some of the land uses for consideration in a mixed-use redevelopment of this 4.5 acre site could include the following:

- Level 1: Grocery (50,000 – 60,000 GSF), a high volume sales retailer(20,000 – 40,000), 3-4 mall retailers (1,800 – 3,000 each) and structured parking.
- Level 2: Health Club, Tennis Facility, Office and Parking
- Level 3 & 4: Residential

Dominicks has co-tenancy requirements that will restrict some retail uses. Some of the high volume retailers for consideration for the Dominicks site include electronics, office supplies and home wares.

6. Retail on South Boulevard

Enhance a small cluster of retail uses at the intersection of South Boulevard and Ridgeland Avenue. Take advantage of the close proximity to the CTA Ridgeland station with uses such as a premier coffee shop, restaurant(s) and other neighborhood serving retailers.

7. Residential Edge on South Boulevard

Preserve the largely residential character of South Boulevard with façade improvements and strategic infill of residential projects that are in keeping with the character of the district.



Figure 7.08: Current configuration of Harvey Street



Figure 7.09: Multi-family building on Austin Blvd.

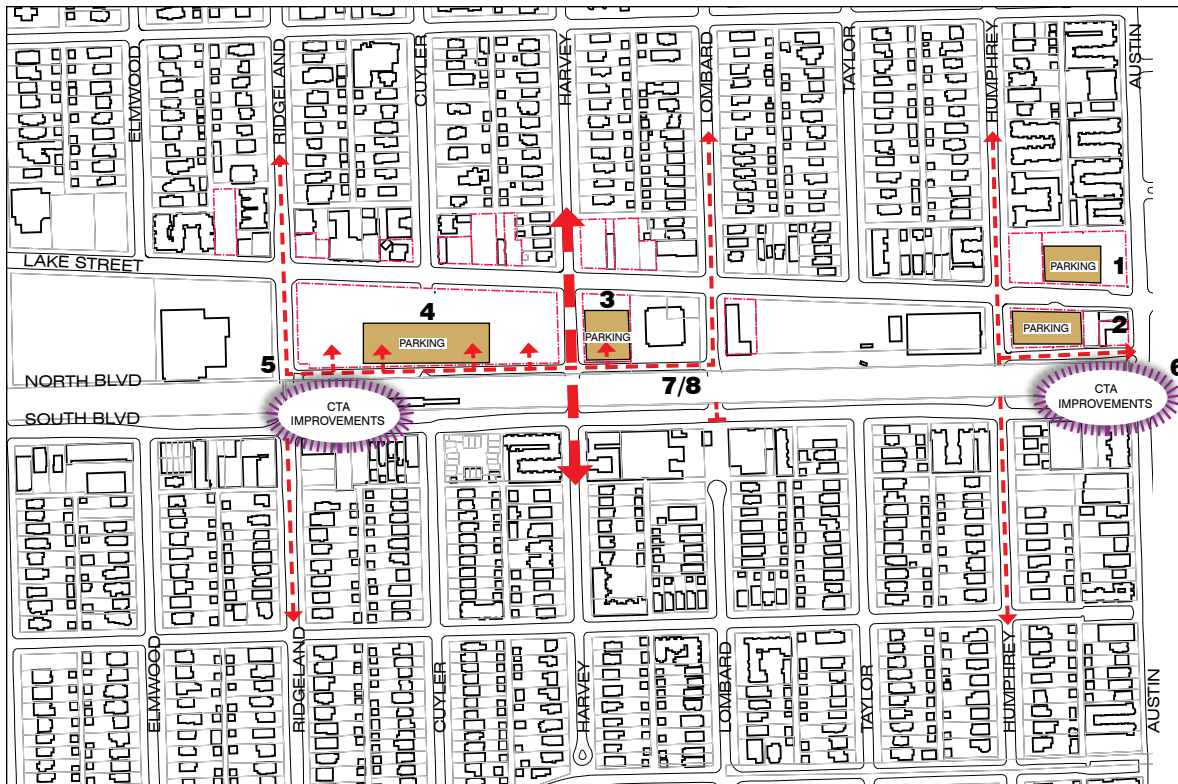


Figure 7.10: Transportation and Access Recommendations

Transportation and Parking Recommendations

The following are some general strategies for transportation and parking in the district (refer to Figure 7.10):

1. Provide a parking garage behind retail frontage to address the needs of PCC Community

Wellness Center and any new retailers that are added at this corner.

2. Provide additional structured parking as part of the Aldi garage to serve the needs of the district.
3. Structured parking to support the existing service retail and additional retail uses.

4. Structured parking to support the redevelopment of the Dominick's and any new development on the block between Harvey and Ridgeland Avenue.
5. Work with CTA to improve the pedestrian access, provide a better and larger drop off area, enhance the entrance design of the CTA station at Ridgeland Avenue.
6. Work with CTA to improve transit station at Austin Boulevard. Consider the option of extending the platform and providing an entrance and access to the station from the Oak Park side of Austin Boulevard. This would allow riders to cross the street at the platform level.
7. Improve the streetscape and parking areas along South Boulevard.
8. General repair and upgrade the rail embankment wall, under-passes and streetscape to improve the transit parking areas and pedestrian experience on South Boulevard.

Access Recommendations: North Streets that run through the viaduct in the district are Humphrey, Lombard and Ridgeland. The straightening of Harvey could provide better access through the viaduct. North Boulevard is a discontinuous street that does not continue through Stevenson Park and the Dominick's block. Making North Boulevard a continuous street would provide a better access location for loading and service related businesses.

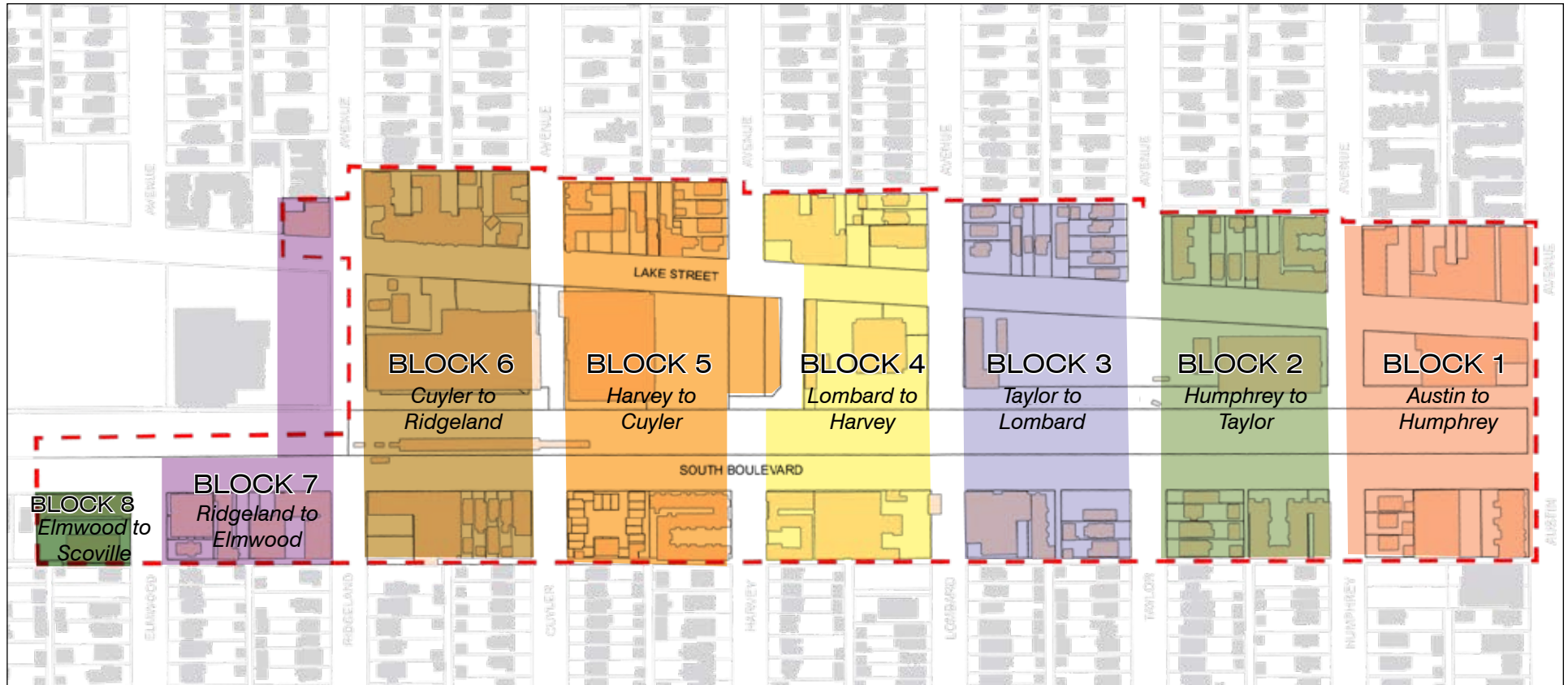


Figure 7.07: Block by block break up of the District

Block by Block Recommendations

The following is a list of general recommendations presented to the community and approved by voting at the September 19th community meeting.



BLOCK 1 AUSTIN TO HUMPHREY

- Make block 1 a gateway to Oak Park
- Keep the viable businesses; add and improve to the retail mix
- Encourage residential compatible businesses
- Redevelop with new buildings (in scale with the neighborhood)
- Increase density with mixed use retail / residential buildings
- The former bank building is the only significant building with architectural character and should be preserved
- Provide adequate and convenient parking
- Create a pedestrian friendly streetscape and building facades



BLOCK 2 HUMPHREY TO TAYLOR

- Make block 2 a transition block (retail node to residential)
- Encourage businesses to expand and improve their establishments
- Work with property owner to improve ground floor businesses
- Work with property owner to improve apartment quality / maintenance
- Encourage park district to improve programming to Stevenson Park
- Improve viaduct for pedestrians and sense of safety (lighting)
- Coordinate streetscape and strategically make improvements
 - Incorporate the existing trees
 - Enhance the pedestrian environment
 - Provide better visibility and access to skate board park



BLOCK 3 TAYLOR TO LOMBARD

- Promote the neighborhood residential and park character of block 3
- Encourage residential property owners to improve properties
- Work with the park district to improve Stevenson Park
- Encourage park district to improve programming to Stevenson Park
- Strategically improve streetscape maintaining existing trees



BLOCK 4 LOMBARD TO HARVEY

- Make block 4 a transition block (retail node to residential)
- Promote neighborhood oriented retail / residential character in block 4
- Relocate businesses that are a residential nuisance to appropriate sites
- Improve shopping center to be less strip mall oriented
- Redevelop single level – underutilized and vacant retail sites
- Consider developing residential buildings similar to South Boulevard
- Realign / re-design Harvey Street and adjacent parcel
- Coordinate streetscape and strategically make improvements



LAKE STREET - NORTH



LAKE STREET - SOUTH

BLOCK 5 HARVEY TO CUYLER

- Promote the neighborhood oriented retail character in block 5
- Redevelop single level – underutilized and vacant retail sites
- Develop north side to be neighborhood oriented retail or residential
- Relocate north side businesses that are a residential nuisance to appropriate sites
- Improve Dominick's façade to have storefront design
- Improve tennis club façade to have storefront design and improve parking lot
- Consider redevelopment of one story buildings on large parcels to create more value to village
- Consider developing residential buildings similar to South Boulevard
- Realign / re-design Harvey Street and adjacent parcel
- Coordinate streetscape and strategically make improvements



LAKE STREET - NORTH



LAKE STREET - NORTH

BLOCK 6 CUYLER TO RIDGELAND

- Promote the neighborhood oriented retail character in block
- Redevelop single level – underutilized and vacant retail sites
- Develop gas station to be neighborhood oriented retail
- Village encourage retail recruitment

BLOCK 7 RIDGELAND TO ELMWOOD

- Promote the neighborhood oriented retail character at the Ridgeland corner
- Redevelop single level – underutilized retail sites
- Improve building facades and parking areas that front on to Lake Street
- Village work on retail recruitment
- The residential building at Elmwood is a potential district residential prototype

Part 8

Design Guidelines

Urban Design Guidelines

Image Preference Survey

Streetscape Guidelines

Retail Guidelines



Urban Design Guidelines

Any redevelopments in the Lake Street District are intended to accommodate a mix of pedestrian-oriented retail shops, service stores, restaurants and office and residential uses focused in a vital, main street-like environment that promotes active street life. The guidelines and standards of this section address the key place-making components of pedestrian-oriented, mixed-use developments.

Urban Design

The following building images (Figure 8.01- Figure 8.03) were selected by residents and business owners who attended the community meetings for this plan. These illustrations are examples of the types of buildings that are community approved for redevelopment opportunities along Lake Street. The following are general guidelines and with any new development being proposed for Lake Street, the Village should require detailed narrative and graphic information about the proposed design theme, land use and land use relationships, streets, parking, focal points, open space, amenities and design to fully define the critical features of the design theme to be utilized. In general, the architectural design should create active “street or building walls” lining Lake Street and be a maximum of four levels. Buildings on corner sites should be located close to both street frontages to help “hold” and “frame” the corner. Complementary uses should be placed close together to facilitate walking between uses. The physical design of buildings



Figure 8.01: Community Image Preference Survey Results, top choices



should occur in a manner that does not create undue adverse land use impacts on residential areas.

Streetscape

The streetscape along Lake Street and South Boulevard should create a sense of place and pleasant walking environment. A common streetscape design with street trees, pedestrian lights and signage should be established for the entire district so such elements will be consistent from block-to-block. Where possible, all significant and mature trees should be preserved in the streetscape design. Common streetscape elements should be used to connect and unify retail, mixed use and residential buildings block-to-block and building-to-building. Landscaping shall be provided at primary entries to serve as a focal point and to highlight major entrances.

Loading / Service Areas

Loading areas, refuse areas, mechanical equipment and similar service facilities shall be located and screened to minimize their visibility. Off-street loading and service areas for commercial buildings should be located away from primary entrances and residential buildings so as to minimize the effects of noise, odor, and appearance. Rooftop and other mechanical equipment should be screened from view of adjoining properties and areas accessible by the general public. Noise-generating features should be located away from neighboring properties, especially residences, or noise barriers or other means

Figure 8.02: Community Image Preference Survey Results, top choices

of reducing noise-related impact should be employed. North Boulevard is a designated service access street but should be designed to be as efficient and attractive as possible.

Parking

Large fields of surface parking between uses should be avoided. Parking should be located in a parking deck accessible from North Boulevard and behind buildings where practical. This is especially true for uses located on the south-side of Lake Street adjacent to the rail embankment. Parking decks should be constructed to allow easy access to one or more buildings and multiple storefronts/uses. Multi-level parking structures are preferred over large surface parking lots. Parking areas should be designed and laid out to minimize interference with pedestrian access and connections to adjoining developments.

Building Design

Elements such as cornices, belt courses, window bays, variations in wall plane and roof features should be used to create interesting attractive buildings. If a development includes multiple buildings that are designed to be consistent with one overall architectural theme, they should be varied with different roof lines, façade treatments and sign bands. Architectural design should articulate and enhance buildings, especially those located at intersections due to their prominence and visibility. Large expanses of blank walls should be avoided in areas where pedestrian movement is expected. If open storefronts

are not possible, building façades should be well articulated at ground level with design elements or other features to enhance pedestrian areas and views. Transparent glass windows (storefronts) should be included on front facades and near side entrances where practical. Street-facing façades of buildings should be broken up by using bays that give the appearance of small, individual storefronts. Bays should have a width of 25 to 40 feet to reduce the visual impact of larger buildings and create a more pedestrian friendly environment.

Awnings and canopies should be used at the storefront level to provide weather protection and add visual interest. Awning and canopy colors should be coordinated and integrated into a building's overall design scheme.

Materials

Building materials, textures, patterns, colors and details should be varied to break up the mass of large buildings. Except as otherwise stated in these guidelines and standards all walls, enclosures, sign structures, and other structures shall be clad with brick, architectural cast stone, natural stone, glass or other comparable, durable materials approved by the Village. Materials should be consistent on all sides of a building that are generally visible to the public and residents. Concrete Masonry Units, architectural pre-cast panels, and similar materials shall be allowed in service areas and on exterior walls that are not generally visible to the public.



Figure 8.03: Community Image Preference Survey Results, top choices

Image Preference Survey

Mixed Use Grocery Store Development

This exercise was presented to the residents at the first community session that was held at the beginning of the planning process. The goal of the exercise was to establish the scale and image of the new grocery/mixed use development on the corridor.

Several images were presented under the following categories to the community:

- Set backs;
- Parking garage locations;
- Site configurations.

The residents assessed these images and simply stated whether the type of development was appropriate or inappropriate to the neighborhood. The results of the survey are as follows.

The diagram shows the preferred grocery store mixed use options that were selected as examples of best practices for the neighborhood by the residents when presented to them at the Community meeting held on the 19th of September 2006.

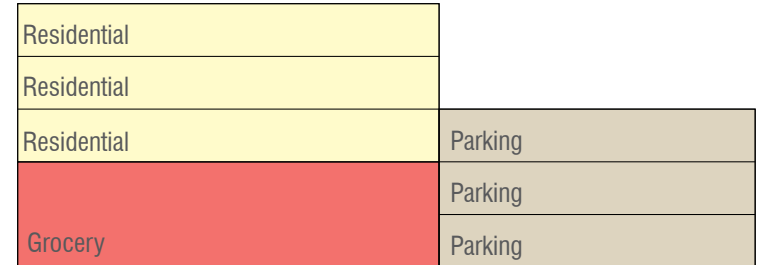


Figure 8.04: Example of Grocery Store Mixed Use Building Preferred by the Residents of the District by a 90% Approval Rating

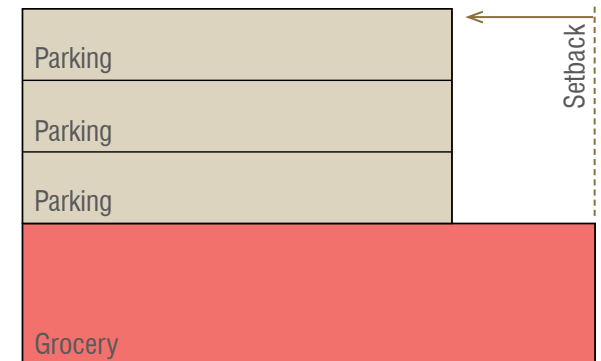


Figure 8.05: Example of Grocery Store Mixed Use Building Preferred by the Residents of the District by a 71% Approval Rating

| Gateways
and Directory
Information |



| Banners -
District
Character |

Figure 8.06: Gateway and Banner Examples Existing in Oak Park

Streetscape Guidelines

The district is very fragmented and lacks character. It functions as a collage of uses that come together on a corridor with no common thread bringing them all together harmoniously. By rendering a certain character to this corridor and creating an identity to the retail in this area, it is possible to have a coherent blend of uses sharing the universal foundation of streetscape and design elements.

Gateways and Directory Information

Being a gateway to Oak Park from the City of Chicago, the Austin intersection provides the opportunity for the placement of markers that proclaim ones entry into the Village. The type and scale of markers were discussed at the community meeting and the residents preferred an understated, yet distinctive column marker. Several types of markers are seen throughout the Village (Figure 8.03). Another type of gateway marker that was thought appropriate was a directory listing of all businesses on the corridor.

Banners - District Character

Banners help lend character to any district and their occurrence along the length of the corridor serve as an indicator that one is still in the district. They are also informational and can serve as advertisements to local retailers and sponsors.



| Pedestrian Fixtures
- Lighting |

Pedestrian Fixtures - Lighting

Pedestrian fixtures are presently found throughout Oak Park. The street fixtures in downtown Oak Park are specially designed to support banners and flags. The residential neighborhood in the Lake Street Business District has pedestrian fixtures as does the corridor along Austin Boulevard. The pedestrian lights on Austin are decorative luminaries that are mounted at an 18 foot height on existing street lighting fixtures. It is suggested that pedestrian fixtures be implemented along the corridor, as part of the streetscape in the District.

Way Finding - Signage

Way finding signage is a vital requirement for the success of the retail on Lake Street. Future parking will be located in parking structures and can be accessed off North Boulevard. These parking structures require clear directive signage that can lead customers to the right retail parking areas. Currently the district lacks informational signage directing people to certain parking areas that are located behind the businesses. Figure 8.04 shows some of the existing way finding signs in downtown Oak Park.



| Way Finding
- Signage |

Figure 8.07: Lighting and Signage Existing in Oak Park

Existing Issues with Retail Storefronts

Many storefronts on Lake Street are not pedestrian oriented and would benefit from basic storefront and facade improvements such as:

- Greater transparency
- Improved signage and awnings
- Upgrades to storefront designs and lighting
- General maintenance and aesthetic modifications



Figure 8.08: Storefront Opportunity Improvements

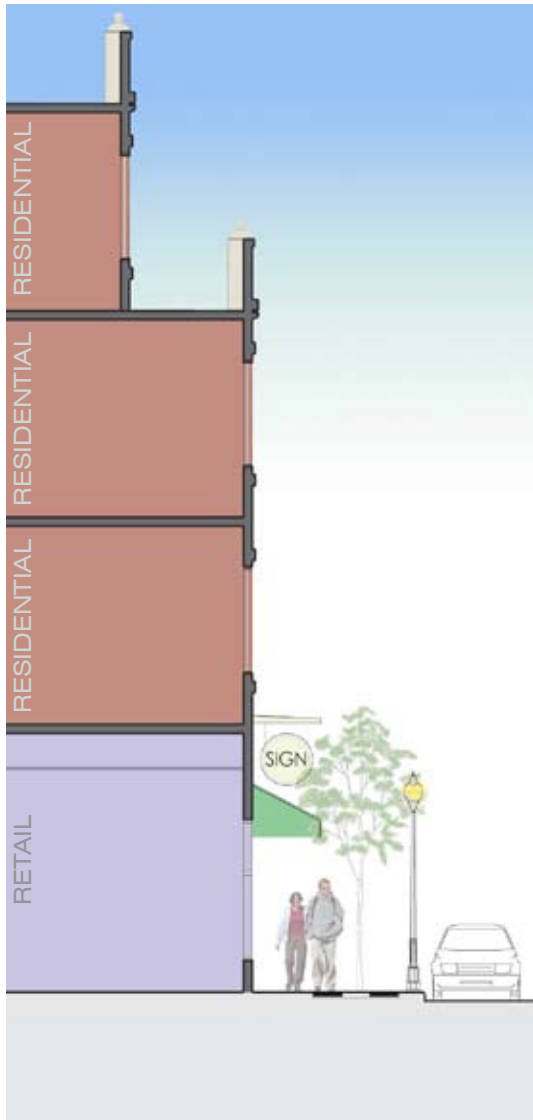


Figure 8.09: Section through Storefront Window

Storefront Facade Elements

Storefront façades are the primary street-level element in a retail district. Therefore special attention should be paid to ensure that all the storefronts work together to create a harmonious and visually pleasing district.

- Windows
- Awnings
- Signage
- Entrances
- Lighting
- Security Features

Retail Guidelines

- Create a sign band and restrict placements of signs within this band on the façade. This prevents oversized signs from dominating the building front.
- Encourage signage that is clear and uncluttered.
- Create an awning band to set the maximum height of the awning. This helps create a consistent frame for the awnings of different storefronts on the same building façade.
- Create storefront zone with 70% minimum area for transparent glass to promote visibility within a storefront.
- Encourage lighting which creates an inviting appearance and accentuates entries, signage and displays
- Coordinate security elements, lighting, signage, and entries with architectural elements.

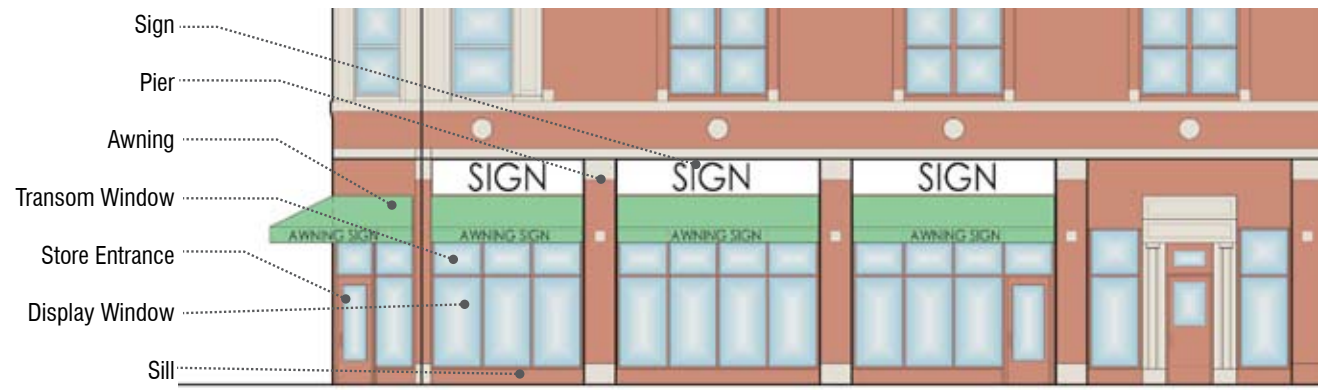


Figure 8.10: Components of a Storefront Elevation

PART 9

Sustainable Design Practices - LEED

What is LEED®?

LEED for Neighborhood Development

Location Efficiency

Environmental Preservation

Encourage Compact, Complete, & Connected Neighborhoods

Resource Efficiency



This section is a synopsis of sustainable design guidelines for neighborhood development that is part of the LEED pilot program.

What is LEED®?

The Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Green Building Rating System™ is the nationally accepted benchmark for the design, construction, and operation of high performance green buildings. LEED gives building owners and operators the tools they need to have an immediate and measurable impact on their buildings' performance. LEED promotes a whole-building approach to sustainability by recognizing performance in five key areas of human and environmental health: sustainable site development, water savings, energy efficiency, materials selection, and indoor environmental quality.

LEED provides a roadmap for measuring and documenting success for every building type



and phase of a building lifecycle. Specific LEED programs include:

- New Commercial Construction and Major Renovation projects
- Existing Building Operations and Maintenance
- Commercial Interiors projects
- Core and Shell Development projects
- Homes
- Neighborhood Development
- Guidelines for Multiple Buildings and On-Campus Building Projects
- LEED for Schools

LEED for Neighborhood Development

Sustainable guidelines are organized into the following categories

1. Location Efficiency
2. Environmental Preservation
3. Encourage Compact, Complete, & Connected Neighborhoods
4. Resource Efficiency

Location Efficiency

The goal is to reduce energy consumption and derogation of the environment by promoting the following location efficiency initiatives.

1A. Transportation Efficiency: Reduce air pollution, energy consumption, and greenhouse gas emissions generated by transportation by encouraging new development in locations that reduce automobile dependence. Promote public health by encouraging new development in locations that provide increased opportunities for

walking.

1B. Water and Storm Water Infrastructure

Efficiency: Conserve natural and financial resources required for construction and maintenance of infrastructure. Encourage new development within and near existing communities, in order to reduce multiple environmental impacts caused by haphazard sprawl.

1C. Clean up and Encourage Contaminated Brownfields Redevelopment:

Conserve land and reduce air, water, and land pollution from contaminated land.

1D. Adjacent, Infill, or Redevelopment Site to Reduce Automobile Dependence:

Encourage development within existing communities and already-developed places to reduce multiple environmental harms associated with haphazard sprawl. Reduce development pressure beyond the limits of existing development. Conserve natural and financial resources required for construction and maintenance of infrastructure.

1F. Contribution to Jobs-Housing Balance:

Encourage balanced communities with a diversity of uses and employment opportunities. Reduce energy consumption and pollution from motor vehicles by providing opportunities for shorter vehicle trips and/or use of alternative modes of transportation.

1G. School Proximity: Promote children's health through physical activity by facilitating walking to

school and promote a sense of community.

1H. Access to Public Space: Provide access to public gathering space in order to promote sense of community.

Environmental Preservation

The goal is to reduce energy consumption and derogation of the environment by promoting the following location environmental preservation initiatives.

2A. Preserve Imperiled Species and Ecological Communities: Protect imperiled species and ecological communities. Conserve existing natural areas and protect trees to provide habitat and promote biodiversity.

2B. Parkland Preservation: Protect natural habitat. Preserve existing tree canopy, native vegetation and pervious surfaces while encouraging high density, smart growth communities.

2C. Wetland & Water Body Protection: Conserve water quality, natural hydrology and habitat through conservation of water bodies and wetlands.

2D. Farmland Preservation: Protect land that is important for natural or cultural resources from development. Preserve irreplaceable agricultural resources by protecting prime and unique farmland from development.

2E. Design the Site for Habitat or Wetlands Conservation, through Restoration and

Implement Conservation Management: Conserve water quality, natural hydrology and habitat through conservation of water bodies and wetlands.

2F. Provide Erosion & Sedimentation Control through Steep Slope Preservation and Site Disturbance during Construction: Minimize erosion to protect habitat, and reduce stress on natural water systems, by preserving steep slopes in a natural, vegetated state. Reduce water pollution from erosion during construction.

2H. Reduce or Maintain Storm Water Runoff Rates and Provide Storm Water Treatment: Protect land that is important for natural or cultural resources from development. Conserve native wildlife habitat, wetlands and water bodies. Reduce stormwater pollution, prevent flooding, and promote aquifer recharge.

2M. Prevent Outdoor Hazardous Waste Pollution: Reduce surface water pollution from stormwater. Reduce stormwater pollution from the use of pesticides and fertilizers

Encourage Compact, Complete, & Connected Neighborhoods

The goal is to reduce energy consumption and derogation of the environment by promoting the following location compact and complete neighborhood initiatives.

3A. Encourage Compact Development especially with Transit-Oriented Development: Conserve

land. Promote livability, transportation efficiency, and walkability. Maximize walking trips to and from transit stops in the area immediately surrounding the transit stop.

3B. Provide for Transit Amenities and Inter-Modal Connections: Promote community livability, transportation efficiency, and walkability.

3C. Provide for a Diversity of Uses: Promote community livability, transportation efficiency, and walkability.

3D. Provide for Housing Diversity: To enable citizens from a wide range of economic levels and age groups to live within a community.

3E. Incorporate Affordable Rental Housing in New Development: To enable citizens from a wide range of economic levels and age groups to live within a community.

3F. Encourage the Development of Affordable For-Sale Housing: To enable citizens from a wide range of economic levels and age groups to live within a community.

3G. Reduce the Parking Footprints: Reduce stormwater runoff per capita. Encourage neighborhood walkability and promote public health through physical activity.

3H. Provide for Community Outreach and Involvement: To encourage community participation in the project design and planning and involve the people who live in a community

in deciding how it should be improved or how it should change over time.

3I. Orient and Design Buildings to Shape Walkable Streets and Comprehensively Design Walkable Streets:

To promote pedestrian connectivity and encourage pedestrian-oriented streets.

3J. Create and Maintain Street Network for Vehicles and Pedestrians:

Provide direct and safe connections, for pedestrians and bicyclists as well as drivers, to local destinations and neighborhood centers. Promote public health through increased physical activity.

3K. Maximize Pedestrian Safety and Comfort and Maximize Pedestrian Experience:

Provide direct, safe, and comfortable connections, for pedestrians and bicyclists, to local destinations and neighborhood centers. Promote public health through increased physical activity. Provide appealing and comfortable pedestrian street environments in order to promote pedestrian activity.

3M. Regional Precedents in Urbanism and Architecture:

Promote energy savings, respond to regional climate, increase the life of buildings and materials, provide cultural continuity, and reinforce local distinctiveness.

3N. Provide Adaptive Reuse of Historic Buildings:

Encourage use of historic buildings in a manner that preserves their historic materials and character.

Resource Efficiency

The goal is to reduce energy consumption and derogation of the environment by promoting the following resource efficiency initiatives.

4A. Encourage Certified Green Buildings through use of LEED rating systems:

Encourage the design and construction of buildings to utilize energy conserving practices.

4B. Regulate Energy Efficiency in Buildings:

Encourage the design and construction of energy efficient buildings to reduce air, water, and land pollution and environmental impacts from energy production and consumption.

4C. Regulate Water Efficiency in Buildings:

Encourage the design and construction of water efficient buildings to reduce the environmental impacts from water consumption.

4D. Encourage Heat Island Reduction:

Reduce heat island effect to minimize impact on microclimate, human and wildlife habitat, and required energy for cooling.

4E. Develop Infrastructure Energy Efficiency:

Reduce air, water, and land pollution from energy consumption on a municipal level.

4F. Encourage On-Site Power Generation and Renewable Energy Sources:

Reduce air, water, and land pollution from energy consumption and production by increasing the efficiency of the power delivery system. Increase the reliability of power. Reduce environmental impacts associated

with fossil fuel energy generation by increasing the use of on-site renewable energy sources.

4G. Encourage Efficient Irrigation through the use of Greywater & Stormwater Reuse:

Conserve potable water.

4F. Encourage efficient Wastewater Management:

Reduce pollution from wastewater and reuse nutrients from the wastewater stream.

4G. Encourage Reuse of Materials and Recycled Content:

Promote reuse of materials, resource and recycled content, .

4H. Use Regionally Provided Materials to Reduce Transportation:

Promote selection of regionally available materials and resources to build local economy and reduce embodied energy.

4I. Develop Construction Waste Management:

Promote efficient use of solid waste by diverting construction, demolition and land clearing debris from landfill disposal, and by redirecting resources for recycling and reuse. Promote safe and efficient disposal or reuse of waste streams generated by occupants.

4J. Light Pollution Reduction:

Reduce light pollution.

4K. Contaminant Reduction in Brownfields Remediation:

Encourage brownfields cleanup methods that reduce contaminant thereby minimize long-term remediation or monitoring burdens.

Part 10

Implementation Plan

Organization and Implementation

Marketing

Business Recruitment and Development

Physical Design Implementation

Action Plan



Organization and Implementation

Objective: Provide an organization to facilitate public/private implementation of this plan.

1. Appoint a Steering Committee to oversee the plan; each member should make a minimum of a 2 year commitment. The composition of the steering committee should be balanced and is recommended to include the following individuals:
 - 3 property owners
 - 3 business owners (great if also property owners)
 - 2 neighborhood residents
 - Representative of Village planning staff
 - Representative of Village business development staff
 - Representative of Village Police Department
 - Representative of CTA (ad hoc, non-voting member)
 - Representative of Chicago Austin Business District (Aldermanic Staff) (ad hoc, non-voting member)
2. Steering committee should meet approximately every 6 weeks.
3. A method of communication needs to be established between the Steering Committee and all project area stakeholders and can include the following elements:
 - Create preferred contact master list that focuses on using e-mail but identifies “snail mailers”
 - Send meeting minutes to the stakeholder list
 - Alert stakeholders to advocacy opportunities
4. Representatives of the Steering Committee should advocate for implementation of plan elements by:
 - Attending Village Board, Plan Commission and other commission meetings
 - Communicating with press
 - Other commissions as necessary

5. The Steering Committee should make a semi-annual progress report to the Village Board.
6. The Steering Committee and Village together need to design a permanent organization to undertake the long-term programming of the district especially for the following issues:
 - Construction Mitigation
 - Joint Marketing
 - Events
 - Business Development

Marketing

Objective: Publicize plan to the development community

Publicizing the plan is critical to getting the word out to the community; the following is a list of steps to market the plan:

1. Publish 4-page executive summary of plan.
2. Identify point of contact.
3. Issue a press release to mass and trade press.
4. Mail executive summary to locally active developers.
5. Follow-up with phone calls to press and developers.
6. Report to Steering Committee on feedback from press & developers.

Objective: Develop the “product”

1. Identify a name for the district that is memorable and differentiates it from other competitive areas.
2. Create a logo for the district.
3. Create collateral marketing materials for Lake Street.
 - Directory
 - Parking Map
 - Web site

7. Contact all the prospective businesses and create database of potentially interested tenants
8. Inform property owners about the list of interested tenants by quarterly mailing of the entire list and phone calling property owners with ideal tenants and opportunities.
9. Assist with new business incentive development as appropriate
10. Request co-tenant recommendations from existing businesses.

Business Recruitment and Development**Objective: Fill vacancies with high quality tenants**

1. Use plan information to create a one-page marketing sheet about Lake Street business opportunities.
2. Confirm and update the data base of existing space in the district.
3. Request co-tenant recommendations from existing businesses
 - Distribute marketing information
 - Distribute prospect tracking form
4. Interview commercial property owners to identify upcoming vacancies and suitable tenant categories for each building
5. Invite local real estate agents with a focus on small retail spaces to a familiarization breakfast with the steering committee and/ or Village.
6. Establish a target (or prospect) business database of businesses by name and phone number per the suggestions of the realtors, Village Staff, and from other Lake Street businesses.
 - Notice at local Small Business Development Center
 - Other referral sources

Physical Design Implementation

The following are key physical design components that should be part of an implementation plan for the district.

- **Prepare District Design Guidelines for Future Development Sites**
Design guidelines are regulations that govern the appearance of a development. Guidelines are typically used to create distinctive attractive places, and ensure that present and future development is context sensitive. They add value to a community's built environment by ensuring well-designed buildings, attractive and useful signage, appealing façades, and street orientation that is distinctive to the community. Guidelines can apply to a variety of community elements, residences, commercial and retail uses, lighting, signage, transit shelters, benches, sidewalks, public spaces etc.
- **Façade Improvement Program**
Provide financial assistance for qualified property owners to undertake façade improvement projects that are consistent with the plan that will improve the pedestrian and shopping experience along Lake Street. The improvements can include new awnings, storefronts, lighting, signage or façade maintenance.
- **Establish District Parking Plan**
Collectively review all the parking demands for current businesses and residents. Establish a district wide plan for accommodating parking for new businesses. Some uses might be able to share parking between day and night time uses such as retail, office and residential parking spaces.
- **Provide Parking Incentives or Financing Options**
Where possible provide incentives for building additional parking spaces that will serve the district wide needs.
- **Review Development Proposals for Compliance**
New development proposals should be reviewed by the Village for compliance with the objectives of the Lake Street Plan.
- **Prepare Streetscape and Landscape Design**
Public Improvements such as streetscape elements, crosswalks, special pavers and landscaping can add to the quality of the district and encourage business development.
- **Prepare Pedestrian Lighting Plan**
The sidewalks along Lake Street are very dark and pedestrian light fixtures will improve the appearance of the shopping district and provide a greater sense of safety. Currently there are fixtures along Austin Boulevard that could be incorporated into the design for the district.
- **Prepare Physical Public Improvements Cost Estimates**
Prepare a cost estimate for streetscape landscape, crosswalks, pedestrian lighting and any other public improvements.
- **Establish Way-Finding Signage Program**
Having attractive and informational district signage is very important for directing people to parking areas and providing information about the district businesses.
- **Establish an Implementation Phasing and Action Plan**
Every construction project needs to be sequenced so the businesses are not inconvenienced and public improvements are phased in an appropriate manner.
- **Coordinate all Physical Improvements with Property and Business Owners**
Every property needs to understand how a public improvement will impact their property and/or business so they can plan appropriately.

Action Plan

The following is a preliminary action / implementation plan for the Lake Street District to support the plan recommendations in this document. This is by no means a conclusive list; however it is intended to help guide and kick off the implementation process after the plan is adopted by the Village Board.

1. Establish a collaborative public private partnership similar to the partnership established for Madison Street – (refer to page 102 for organization components). Utilize monthly electronic communication such as a “newsletter” to communicate with the district businesses and property owners about the implementation process, especially with those that do not live in the Village.
2. Identify short term things that can be accomplished to improve the district immediately.
3. Prepare a prioritization plan for the various the two blocks that front Lake Street between Austin Boulevard and Humphrey Street.
4. Develop a plan for retail recruitment and include diversity in retail options.
5. Work with businesses to improve the appearance of their properties - this change can improve the perception of security in the district.
6. Review compliance with code enforcement requirements within the district.
7. Develop a conceptual streetscape plan for creating a gateway at Austin / Humphrey on Lake Street - coordinate the streetscape with any new development. Establish streetscape guidelines for the district and work with any property owners or developers to ensure they implement the streetscape elements as part of their improvement projects. (this is important to communicate to Aldi and PCC Health Care who are currently planning improvements.
8. Contact the Austin Neighborhood, City of Chicago and CTA regarding the plan recommendations and present coordination issues.

9. Explore design alternatives for district signage elements, landscaping, and entrance pylons in combination with any new signature development..

11. Develop a conceptual streetscape plan for South Boulevard and redesign the entrance / drop off and pedestrian access into the two CTA stations.

12. Create detailed development guidelines for the site that combines the Dominick’s and Tennis Center.

13. Outline a land acquisition process for the north side of Block 5 which is deteriorated and obsolete.

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