

# St. Charles Road Redevelopment Plan





# Acknowledgements

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# Organization of the Plan

## Section 1: Introduction & Community Outreach

The St. Charles Road Corridor Redevelopment Plan consists of five sections presented in a concise, illustrative format to facilitate the clarity of recommended policies, actions and goals.

### **Section 1: Introduction and Community Outreach**

This section provides a brief overview of the St. Charles Road Corridor, the purpose of the Corridor Redevelopment Plan, and an outline of the planning process. A description of the community input gathered throughout the planning process, including workshops, interviews, and various public meetings, is included. Additionally, existing conditions of the study area are included.

### **Section 2: Corridor Vision, Goals, & Objectives**

The Corridor Vision, Goals and Objectives were prepared as part of the planning process. Building upon the Community's Vision, the goals and objectives provide the framework for Bellwood's long-range aspirations and focus for the planning recommendations. This section contains goals and objectives for several different substantive topics.

### **Section 3: Corridor Plans**

This section provides policy direction for the future improvement, growth, development and preservation within the St. Charles Road Corridor. Plans include:

- Land Use & Development Plan
- Transportation & Circulation Plan
- Recreation, Open Space & Urban Design Plan

### **Section 4: Design & Development Guidelines**

This section provides design objectives, guidelines, and recommendations for the aesthetic improvement of the St. Charles Road Corridor study area. The guidelines are intended to inform necessary amendments to the Village's regulations and guide the elected officials and developers regarding the appearance and form of investments and improvements in the Corridor.

### **Section 5: Implementation Strategies Plan**

The Implementation Strategies Plan sets forth specific actions required to carry out the recommendations of the Plan. This agenda is intended as a work plan and tool for attracting and guiding reinvestment within the St. Charles Road Corridor. The Strategies Plan identifies key improvement projects and actions, recommends sequencing and suggests possible funding sources to accomplish capital projects.





## **Section 1: Introduction & Community Outreach**



# Section 1: Introduction & Community Outreach

This document presents the *St. Charles Road Redevelopment Plan* for the Village of Bellwood, Illinois. The Plan outlines the Village’s long-range plan for improvement, development and growth over the next 10 to 15 year period along St. Charles Road. The Plan establishes a foundation for future decision-making regarding land-use and development in the Study Area. The Plan includes community goals, objectives, and policies for the future of the Corridor, including long-range recommendations for land-use, transportation, and community facilities. In addition, the Plan includes an Implementation Plan that assigns priorities and outlines actions to be taken to complete the Plan’s recommendations.

The Corridor Redevelopment Plan is a policy guide intended to be flexible and adaptive over time. While the Plan contains detailed recommendations and policies for a number of improvements and actions, it also sets the basic framework to guide activities and change, allowing room for adjustment as conditions and potentials change. The Plan has been developed with substantial community input and participation.

## Community & Corridor Setting

The Village of Bellwood is located in Cook County, Illinois. The Village sits 13 miles west of Chicago’s Loop, bounded by the Dwight D. Eisenhower Expressway (I-290) to the south, Union Pacific Railroad Proviso Yard and Metra/UP-W Line to the north, and the Villages of Maywood to the east and Hillside and Berkeley to the west. The Study Area includes all of St.

Charles Road between the western Village limits near 52nd Avenue and the eastern Village limits at 22nd Avenue, as well as 25th Avenue south to Washington Street. St. Charles Road provides direct access to and from the Village of Maywood to the east and the villages westward; Berkley, Elmhurst, Villa Park and Lombard and intersects Mannheim Road near the corridor’s midpoint.



*The Study Area, indicated with a red dashed line, encompasses St. Charles Road and the neighborhoods surrounding it as well as 25th Avenue south to Washington Boulevard.*

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### **Purpose & Intent of the Plan**

In an effort to address the issues, challenges, and opportunities of the Corridor, the Village of Bellwood commissioned the development of this Redevelopment Plan for St. Charles Road. Recommendations of the Corridor Redevelopment Plan seek to improve and revitalize all areas of the Corridor, including the commercial, office and service districts, the residential neighborhoods, community facilities, and industrial areas, while also addressing image and identity and revitalization of the east end of the Corridor.

The *St. Charles Road Redevelopment Plan* is Bellwood's official policy guide for physical improvement and development within the Corridor. It considers not only the immediate needs and concerns of the community, but projects improvement and development 10 to 15 years in the future. The Plan establishes an overall vision that guides development, redevelopment, improvement and overall revitalization of the St. Charles Road Corridor.

The *St. Charles Road Redevelopment Plan* is intended to be used as a tool for coordinating new growth and development and establishing a strong and positive community image and identity. The Plan provides the "ground rules" for private improvements and developments along the Corridor. It presents guidelines that Village officials can use for reviewing and evaluating private development proposals, as well as public improvements. Finally, the Plan provides a guide for implementation of the recommendations, including a plan for public actions and

projects that will realize the Vision for the Corridor.

The *St. Charles Road Redevelopment Plan* provides a basis for zoning and development regulation amendments and also direction and rationale for budgeting capital improvement plans. Village actions such as those, combined with private actions will ultimately implement the planning policies and recommendations of the Plan. Finally, the *St. Charles Road Redevelopment Plan* serves as an important marketing tool to promote Bellwood and the Corridor's unique assets and advantages. The Plan should be used to achieve the desired vision for the Corridor, while helping to attract desirable new development to the Village.

### **The Planning Process**

The Village of Bellwood understands the importance of the issues facing the St. Charles Road Corridor and the relationship of those issues and opportunities to future redevelopment and improvement. The Village's proposed relocation and consolidation of the existing Bellwood and Melrose Park Metra Stations to 25th Avenue and the overall importance of St. Charles Road as a gateway to and through the community are some of the factors to be addressed in the study. The planning process seeks ways to improve and revitalize all components of the Corridor; addressing land use, transportation, zoning, and economic development with community involvement.

The planning process included a multi-step work program that began with documenting the existing conditions to provide a concise and accurate assessment of strengths, weaknesses, issues and opportunities. Community outreach and citizen participation were also an emphasis in the first steps. The process included establishment of a "vision" for the Corridor as a foundation for future planning efforts; formulation of goals and objectives; development and evaluation of alternative plans and policies; and preparation of the final *St. Charles Road Redevelopment Plan* with recommendations and implementation strategies.

## Section 1: Introduction & Community Outreach

### Community Outreach

Local residents have had several ways to participate in the planning process for the St. Charles Road Redevelopment Plan. Planning activities were undertaken throughout the process to promote community involvement and encourage citizen participation. These included:

- a **Public Corridor Workshop** which engaged participants in a dialogue together about their issues and desires for the Corridor;
- several **Stakeholder Interviews** that were conducted with individuals having knowledge and interest in the Corridor to gain perspective on how the existing conditions impact business operation, transportation, redevelopment and living;
- **Resident and Business Surveys** which were made available online; and
- a **Community Meeting** to review preliminary Vision Statement, Goals, Objectives and Corridor Plans.

Following is a summary of the various community outreach efforts of this planning effort. Common themes that connected the feedback from the various outreach methods include a desire for beautification of the St. Charles Road Corridor, expansion of retail, the need for focus on safe, friendly and entertaining environments for children and families, as well as for seniors.

### Corridor Workshop

On January 16th, 2007 a Corridor Workshop was held at Bellwood's Village Hall. Over thirty-five (35) people attended and participated in the Workshop, which encouraged participation by local residents, and business and property owners. The purpose of the Workshop was to review the purpose of the St. Charles Road Redevelopment Plan, the planning process to be undertaken, and the schedule for the study. The Workshop was designed to secure local views on problems, issues and potentials within the Corridor and the community.

The following is a summary of the results of the questions asked during the Corridor Workshop. The summary reflects the opinions and comments stated during the meeting and includes a summary of participants' responses to the Corridor Workshop questionnaire.

#### **Question One: Identify five issues or concerns confronting the St. Charles Road in Bellwood.**

##### **The top cited issues or concerns are:**

- Beautification and streetscape (business/commercial areas, planters, landscape, 22nd Avenue to the Post Office, increase commercial and residential curb appeal, business façade improvements) (12)
- Parking (off-street parking; need more; parking garage; add lanes; on-street parking hinders traffic flow, allow night parking; improved for patrons) (6)

- Expand retail (at 25th Avenue intersection; useful to residents; appropriate types; intensify) (4)
- Lighting (improve street lights/lighting, brighter) (4)
- Road condition (repair, repave, especially near Post Office) (4)
- Vacant buildings and lots (too many, appearance) (3)
- Uniform development guidelines (signage, storefronts, no "loud" colors) (3)

Issues and concerns mentioned more than once include:

- Redevelopment between Eastern Avenue and 22nd Avenue (2)
- Zoning issues (rezoning for condominiums, improper zoning residential/industrial) (2)
- Traffic safety (key intersections) (2)
- Public safety (increase foot patrols, improve curfew) (2)

Issues and concerns mentioned only once include: improve Eastern Avenue pedestrian crossing; mixed development (condominiums and retail); storefronts with reputable commercial activity; diverse languages or language barriers; poor appearance of apartment buildings from 25th Avenue to Eastern Avenue; new/updated residential; encourage African-American business ownership; create downtown feel between 25th Avenue to Eastern Avenue (small café, shops); convert apartments to condominiums;

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pedestrian safety (stop signs for school children near 27th Avenue; alley traffic circulation (one-way streets with two-way traffic near St. Charles); need more day care facilities; vehicular blind spot at 25th Avenue intersection east-bound turning south; coordinate and designate turning movements at the Mannheim Road intersections; improve sidewalks; lack of awareness of historic significance of buildings, area; linkage or flow with neighboring communities; opportunity at post office square; speeding; improve lot near 49th Avenue (in progress); youth activities and recreation (skating rink); gateway signage; parkway landscaping uniformity; promotional signs; 46th Avenue signal; new logo and colors; improve Indiana Harbor Belt (IHB) Railroad; and viaduct.

**Question Two: List in order of importance, the top three issues or concerns discussed so far. The three top issues or concerns are:**

- Beautification and streetscape (street lights, landscape, 25th Avenue to Eastern Avenue) (11)
- Youth activities (youth center, skating rink, boys and girls club) (9)
- Lighting (throughout corridor, at intersections, brighter) (4)

Other issues or concerns mentioned more than once include:

- Parking (off-street, parking garage, improved for business patrons, additional parking) (4)

- Public safety (curfew, night-time hanging out) (4)
- Downtown business district (pedestrian-oriented) (3)
- Road condition (3)
- Utilization of vacant Buildings/parcels (3)
- 46th Street signal (2)

Other issues or concerns mentioned only once include: Mixed-use redevelopment; expand retail district and uses; update old business; architecture standards; theme for Bellwood; new schools; improve sidewalks; stop sign at 27th Avenue; turning lanes at Mannheim Road intersection; historic preservation; speeding; day care facility; land use; and pedestrian safety (signal timing).

**Question Three: Identify three specific projects or actions that you would like to see undertaken in the St. Charles Road Planning Area in Bellwood. The top three cited projects or actions are:**

- Beautify streetscape (lighting, planters and landscape, use salt that will not kill grass, more trees) and property maintenance (5)
- Remove/fill/redevelop vacant buildings and properties (offices, storefronts) (5)
- Recreation/community center (skating rink, swimming pool, family activity center) anchor store (large store, Wal-Mart, Target) (4)
- Police patrol (at 46th Avenue for child safety,

of loud music and crowds, speeding) (4)

- Street repairs (4)
- Lighting improvements (4)

Projects or actions mentioned more than once include:

- Reconstruct/redevelop large apartment building north of the new townhomes (east of Eastern Avenue, Post Office) (2)
- Install cameras to reduce crime (2)
- New construction (retail) (2)
- Create a restaurant district (near Mannheim, for families) (2)
- Install a stop sign between 27th and 30th (2)

Projects and actions mentioned only once include: basketball at Jefferson School; cameras in MacArthur; expand retail (at 25th Avenue Intersection); redevelop the Corridor; allow all-night parking on St. Charles Road; add day care facilities near schools; interconnect all traffic signals (relieve congestion); update/create sign and building appearance ordinance; increase code enforcement/property maintenance (health issues with food service); improve entrance to commercial property at the SW corner of Mannheim and St. Charles Roads; improve/beautify the IHB rail viaduct east of Montalbano Furniture Co.; enforce curfew; initiate and promote small business ownership, especially for Bellwood residents; convert apartments into condominiums; add seasonal décor; interact/coordinate with Maywood and Berkeley; restrict

## Section 1: Introduction & Community Outreach

truck traffic east of Wolf Road; block alleyways to prevent speeding; and build a parking garage in a new downtown area.

**Question Four: What uses or development do you want to see in the St. Charles Road in Bellwood? The top cited desired uses or developments are:**

- Restaurants (Jimmy John's, Quizno's, Starbucks, Taco Bell, Pot Belly's, Indian Cuisine) (6)
- Retail/business (useful, convenience) (6)
- Recreational uses/center (miniature golf, skating rink, indoor pool, tennis, skateboard) (4)
- Supermarket (major) (4)

Desired uses or development mentioned more than once include:

- Book/music store (3)
- Youth activities (2)
- New residential (condominiums, townhomes, single family) (2)
- Movie theater or playhouse (2)

Desired uses or development mentioned only once include: arcade/restaurant (Chuck E. Cheese's); mixed use development; municipal/public; vacant lots developed/improved; video store (Blockbuster); locally owned businesses; school; park; downtown area; apartments (higher end); and medical facility electronics store.

**Question Five: What uses or development do you NOT want to see in the St. Charles Road in Bellwood? The top cited undesired uses or developments are:**

- Adult stores (book stores, adult use) (5)
- Check cashing stores (payday loans, currency exchanges) (4)
- Bars/clubs/taverns (4)
- Liquor stores (3)
- High density residential /apartments (3)
- Vacancies (2)
- Auto uses (parts, repair) (2)

Undesired uses or development mentioned only once include: massage parlors; chain stores (unless a visible contribution to community through financial, outreach programs); service businesses; Mexican restaurants; and video stores.

**Question Six: What are the primary strengths and assets of the St. Charles Road? The top cited strengths and assets of the St. Charles Road are:**

- Regional location (Metra, near expressway) (7)
- Effective east-west Road/thoroughfare (4)
- Senior assistance program (3)
- Historic buildings (Montalbano Furniture) (3)

Strengths and assets mentioned twice include:

- Single family homes (2)
- Schools (private, religious) (2)
- High traffic volume and frequently used (2)

Strengths and assets mentioned only once include: Village responsive to residents; Post Office; Bus Service; Variety of Business Owners; Westward extension to other communities; and easy to find.

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### **Key Person Interviews**

As part of the Community Outreach phase of the St. Charles Road Redevelopment Planning program, confidential interviews were conducted with individuals to discuss conditions and potentials within the St. Charles Road Corridor. Eight (8) individuals possessing various interests and insights into the Corridor were selected. Telephone interviews were conducted between December 11 and 21, 2006. Each interviewee was asked a series of questions designed to facilitate unfiltered dialogue regarding the Corridor. Overall responses are summarized below:

#### ***Question 1: How would you define/describe the character of St. Charles Road in Bellwood?***

Interviewees described St. Charles Road through Bellwood as a corridor in need of beautification and a face lift, but in fair condition given the amount of older housing in the area. They noted that many existing buildings and businesses were in need of updating or redevelopment, and that the corridor was in need of additional retail business and jobs. Some interviewees noted congestion issues and questioned whether the corridor was exposed enough for retail or other businesses. They also described the corridor as an area with property maintenance issues such as deteriorating fences. Interviewees agreed that the corridor could benefit from redevelopment and beautification, which in turn would improve the Village's image throughout this gateway Corridor.

#### ***Question 2: What do you believe are the primary assets and advantages of the St. Charles Road?***

Most interviewees cited accessibility and circulation within and to and from the corridor as a major asset. They noted that connections to I-290 and I-294 were advantages, as well as the fact that the corridor is a well-traveled east-west thoroughfare. Some respondents noted the room for improvement and parcel size as primary assets also.

#### ***Question 3: What do you believe are the primary weaknesses and disadvantages of the St. Charles Road?***

Most interviewees agreed that the appearance of commercial areas is very unattractive, rundown and in need of physical improvements. Additionally, interviewees expressed concern about the image being portrayed at key intersections in the corridor, namely at Mannheim Road and at 25th Avenue. Weaknesses at these intersections included too much parking, not enough visible retail commercial, attractive buildings and general upkeep. Interviewees also cited traffic issues, as a weakness of the corridor, including poor road condition, congestion and truck traffic. Other responses included: the lack of destination retail, such as coffee shops and book stores; and the lack of lighting which poorly impacts the perception of safety in the corridor.

#### ***Question 4: What do you consider to be the single most important issues confronting the St. Charles Road?***

The commonly stated most important issue is the unattractive appearance of the St. Charles Road Corridor. These comments included the lack of unified streetscaping – trees, sidewalk, and lighting, as well as the poor condition and disrepair of many of the commercial properties and some residential properties. Several noted that the eastern end of the corridor is in need of much improvement in this regard. Many others mentioned the need for a positive image and retail business at the intersection of Mannheim Road. Other responses included: the need for sit down restaurants, the lack of bus shelters, traffic congestion upon school dismissal; and the need for a redevelopment strategy.

#### ***Question 5: If you had the power to undertake one project or improvement within the St. Charles Road what would it be?***

Interviewees noted the following priority projects and improvements: designating appropriate land uses for the Corridor; façade improvements; revitalization of commercial areas; removal of unattractive apartment buildings within the Corridor and redeveloping those sites; converting industrial uses in the Corridor to much-needed neighborhood commercial business uses; increase the number of businesses within the corridor; improve lighting throughout the corridor in order to increase public safety; and focus redevelopment attention on the key intersections of the Corridor at Mannheim Road and

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at 25th Avenue, including attractive, gateway buildings with parking screened behind them.

### **Question 6: Do you have any other comments or suggestions regarding our work on the St. Charles Road?**

Additional comments covered a range of topics, including: improving the image of the Corridor which reflects upon the entire community; treating the Corridor as a gateway to Bellwood; improving and increasing the number of businesses; and improving the corridor streetscape.

### **Community Survey**

Business managers and residents of Bellwood responded to an online survey regarding their opinions about the St. Charles Road Corridor. Although the number of respondents was not statistically significant, responses to this community outreach tool were generally consistent with the opinions in other public meetings. According to the responses, benefits of the Corridor include traffic volume, access to interstates, and the general location. Weaknesses cited included the poor condition of commercial areas, lack of convenience shopping and sit-down restaurants, and lack of parks. Generally respondents reported being pleased with the overall character of the Corridor, but did see room for some improvements to appearance and addition of commercial and professional office uses.

### **Community Meetings**

On July 31, 2007 the Village hosted a Community Meeting to allow for presentation and review of the preliminary concept plans for the Corridor. The Consultant presented the Vision, Goals and Objectives for the Study Area and sought feedback on the drafts of plans for the Corridor. The meeting was well-attended by over thirty-five residents of Bellwood. Much of the input from the public at this meeting reinforced and supplemented draft recommendations, including concerns about the condition of pavement, lack of parking for areas near Mannheim Road and the lack of restaurants and retail in the Corridor. Recommendations to extend retail uses to the eastern Village boundary and to further explore teen recreational uses such as skate board facilities were discussed as considerations.

On March 12, 2008 a public open house was held to present the final plan to the community. This open house allowed Village residents and business owners to ask questions and provide feedback prior to the plan being reviewed and adopted. It was well attended by elected officials, business and property owners, and residents.

**Existing Transportation**

St. Charles Road is an arterial street providing access to and from the Dwight D. Eisenhower Expressway (I-290) and the villages westward; Berkeley, Elmhurst, Villa Park and Lombard. According to the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), St. Charles Road averages 14,900 to 19,800 daily vehicular trips near its intersection with Mannheim Road. It includes several signalized intersections, the most significant of which is with Mannheim Road. Additionally, St. Charles Road crosses Addison Creek and passes under the north-south Indiana Harbor Belt rail lines, which are barriers to east-west traffic movements on most other streets in the community and the primary reason St. Charles Road is such an important Corridor in Bellwood.

The Corridor varies in number of through, turning and parking lanes as it moves through the community. At the west end it includes a total of six lanes: two through lanes in each direction and parking lanes on each side, tapering down to west-bound parking only and then to two lanes with no parking from 47th Avenue to the east. Two through lanes of traffic are maintained to just east of Eastern Avenue, where traffic is one lane in each direction with some on-street parking available in the far eastern end of the Corridor.

**Vehicular Transportation**

The grid of the intersecting street system is typical for the development patterns in the neighboring communities, occurring at 300- to 400-foot intervals along the entire length of the corridor. While this allows for easy access to and from St. Charles Road, it also presents issues for traffic flow and limits commercial development parcel size along the Corridor. In an effort to address the first of these two issues, traffic flow is restricted to one-way on most of the intersecting north-south streets, with few exceptions other than Mannheim Road, Eastern Avenue and 25th Avenue.

Traffic controls in the Corridor include several traffic signals. Signals are located (from west to east) at 46th Avenue, Mannheim Road, Bellwood Avenue, Eastern Avenue and 25th Avenue. Most intersecting streets are local streets; however a few are more important arterial and collector streets. These street classifications are described below.

**Arterials**

The primary purpose of arterial roads is to move traffic through the community. These streets are generally wider, allowing for faster traffic. Other than St. Charles Road itself, Mannheim Road is the only other arterial street in the Study Area. As a major arterial in the region, Mannheim Road provides direct access to and from the Dwight D. Eisenhower Expressway (I-290) and O'Hare International Airport. The section of Mannheim Road within the Study Area is four lanes wide, two through lanes north

and two south. No on-street parking is allowed along Mannheim Road. According to IDOT, Mannheim Road averages 39,000 to 41,700 daily vehicular trips. Mannheim Road averages 5,600 to 6,400 daily truck trips.

### **Collector Streets**

Collectors are intended to collect traffic from local streets and move the traffic toward arterial streets for efficient flow. Collector streets are intended to serve the local population. Collector streets can be classified as major and minor depending on the volume that they are intended to carry. Bellwood Avenue and Eastern Avenue, both minor collectors, are the only collector streets located within the Study Area that intersect with St. Charles Road. Both of these collectors, extend south of the Study Area, intersecting with another of Bellwood's major east-west collector, Washington Boulevard, and Bellwood Avenue even continues south of the interstate where it becomes Westchester Boulevard.

### **Local Streets**

All other streets within the Corridor are classified as local streets. Local streets serve primarily those vehicle trips generated by land uses abutting the street. A number of the local streets in the Corridor are one-way streets, alternating directions through the Corridor. The majority of local streets in the Study Area are for access to residential neighborhoods.

### **Public Transportation**

The St. Charles Road Corridor is well served by public transit including Pace Bus and the Bellwood Metra Station. Pace is the suburban bus division of the Regional Transportation Authority that services the Village of Bellwood. There are four Pace bus routes that serve the St. Charles Road Corridor; Routes 313, 325, 330 and 393.

Pace Bus Route 313 provides service along St. Charles Road. This route connects passengers to various stations of the CTA Green Line Rapid Transit, Melrose Park and Oak Park Metra Stations. Pace Bus Route 325 provides service along 25th Avenue between the Rosemont CTA Blue Line Station in Rosemont and 17th Avenue and Cermak Road in Broadview. Pace bus Route 330 serves the LaGrange Metra Station and operates in the vicinity of the Bellwood and Mannheim Metra Stations and connects with the O'Hare people mover for service to O'Hare Airport and the CTA Blue Line. Pace Route 393 serves the UPS night shift with one trip operating from the near West suburbs to the UPS Addison facility and one trip back to the near West suburbs via the Forest Park Transit Center.

The Bellwood Metra Station is located in the northern portion of the Corridor at 105 Frederick Avenue. The Station provides Metra service along the Union Pacific West Line to Chicago's Ogilvie Transportation Center. The Station is located in Fare Zone C. Two commuter parking lots are located near the Station (one east and one west of Mannheim Road) containing 213 spaces, including four handicapped acces-

sible spaces, which are 49% occupied. Available daily fee parking is \$1 per day. According to the Metra's Fall 2006 Boarding/Alighting Counts, there are 215 weekday boardings at the Bellwood Station. Based on the 1999 Boarding/Alighting Counts, there are 25 Saturday and 26 Sunday boardings at the Bellwood Station based on Metra's Fall 2002 Origin-Destination Survey.

The following are the modes of access of riders using the Bellwood Station based on Metra's Fall 2002 Origin-Destination Survey: 13% walk, 68% drive, 16% are dropped off, 1% use Pace, 1% use taxi, and 2% other. According to Metra's Fall 2002 Origin-Destination Survey, the following are the origins of riders by community using the Bellwood Station: 61% of the riders reside in Bellwood, 12% reside in Westchester, 5% reside in Hillside, 3% reside in Berkeley, and 19% reside in other communities.

While the existing Metra station serves its intended function, its location immediately adjacent to and only accessible through single family neighborhoods causes parking and traffic concerns, but also does not allow for mixed-use (re)development and visibility of the station within the community. Commuters frequently meet challenges of boarding when freight trains are stopped directly in front of the station.

The proposed Village's relocated and consolidated station of the existing Bellwood and Melrose Park Station will need to be discussed further with and studied by the Village of Melrose Park, the Union Pacific Railroad (UP),

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Indiana Harbor Belt Railroad (IHB), and Metra. This proposed location will need to be more deeply analyzed. The proposed location's proximity to the freight railroad interchange at the east entrance to Proviso Yard will need to be considered. Should both Bellwood and Melrose Park support the new station facility, Metra would look to the communities with funding by the Villages and their developer partnerships to maintain and operate the new station building and parking facilities.

In September 2007, Metra completed an Alternatives Analysis study under the Federal Transit Administration's New Starts program to allow significant physical and operating improvements to be made to the Metra/UP-West Line. The project goals are to create growth in frequency and efficiencies in the UP-West Line commuter service and manage freight congestion. Key improvements include triple-tracking a five-mile segment between Elmhurst and River Forest, adding new crossovers, and upgrading the current signal system. All these improvements will significantly increase Metra's capacity to expand the current peak, off-peak, and reverse commuter service and attract more riders, which will increase economic development opportunities to the communities along the line, including Bellwood.

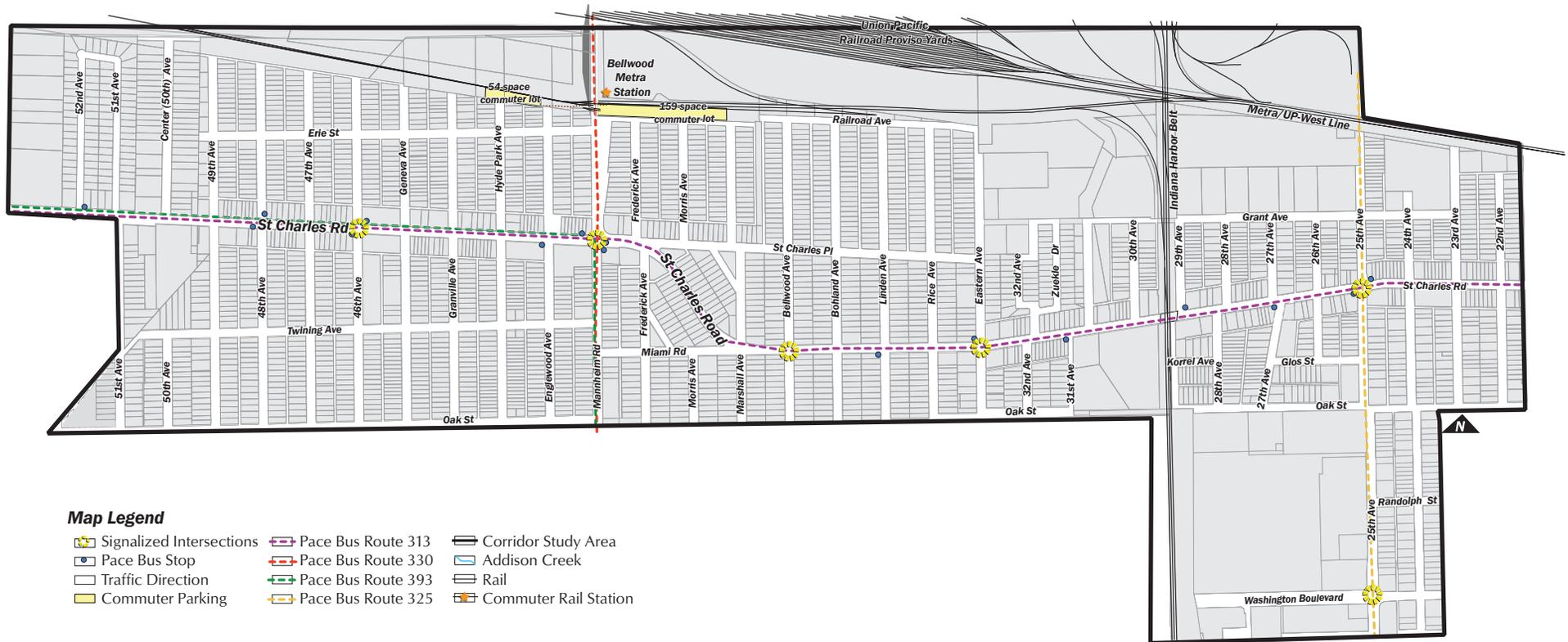
### ***Parking***

On-street parking is allowed on St. Charles Road at some locations on the west and east ends of the Corridor, but generally is not permitted in the mid-section of the Study Area. The majority

of the local streets allow on-street, parallel parking; and angled on-street parking exists in a few locations. Some surface parking lots are located along St. Charles Road specifically near commercial buildings at Mannheim Road, Eastern Avenue and some parcels at the west end of the Corridor. Some off-street parking spaces are located at the rear of commercial buildings, often along the alleys. These smaller parking areas (1-4 spaces) at the rear of building do little to accommodate shoppers and visitors to the area.

St. Charles Road Redevelopment Plan

# Existing Transportation & Circulation



**Map Legend**

- Signalized Intersections
- Pace Bus Stop
- Traffic Direction
- Commuter Parking
- Pace Bus Route 313
- Pace Bus Route 330
- Pace Bus Route 393
- Pace Bus Route 325
- Corridor Study Area
- Addison Creek
- Rail
- Commuter Rail Station





## **Section 2: Corridor Vision, Goals & Objectives**



## Section 2: Corridor Vision, Goals & Objectives

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A Vision Statement, goals and objectives for the St. Charles Road Corridor were prepared based on the community outreach and review of existing conditions. The Vision Statement is a description of the St. Charles Road Corridor as the community would like to see it in the future, as redevelopment and community investment takes place. It describes how the study area appears, functions and contributes to the positive image and necessary services to support the family-oriented character of the area. The vision provides a basis for the more specific goals and objectives, policy and action items, that together will achieve Bellwood's vision for the St. Charles Road Corridor.

### **Vision Statement**

***Whether traveling through town or around town, St. Charles Road projects a positive image of the Village of Bellwood from its east to west end. An extensive streetscape program was designed and implemented to add landscaping, signage and lighting that unify the appearance of the entire length of the community.***

***A spirit of collaboration and partnership with neighboring communities, other governmental agencies and service districts, and private sector land owners and developers has enabled the improvements and redevelopments that have bolstered the residential neighborhoods and transformed the St. Charles Road Corridor into a pedestrian-friendly, mixed use and transit oriented corridor.***

### **Commercial & Mixed Use Development**

New commercial and retail developments improve the variety and types of commercial tenants and shopping options in the community, with a focus on gathering places such as bookstores, sit-down restaurants and even some commercial family entertainment uses. A grocery store is located at the corner of St. Charles Road and Mannheim Road. It creates a positive visual impact corner at that prominent intersection, but also filling a community desire for a supermarket and smaller related conveniences, rather than transient retailers and parking lots that defined this corner in years past. Parking at that and other new commercial redevelopment provides a pedestrian scale, attractive front door along St. Charles Road, while screening adequate parking in the rear and adjacent to buildings.

Although improvements and development in the overall Corridor are pedestrian-oriented, the area from Eastern Avenue to 25th Avenue has developed into a true mixed-use, walkable neighborhood. The transformation is striking, but largely due to the Village's success in relocating and consolidating the Bellwood and Melrose Park Metra Stations to a new location west of 25th Avenue. Development regulations and public/private partnership encouraged reuse and redevelopment of a deteriorating commercial area and converted it into a neighborhood shopping and dining area along the street level, with office and residential uses on upper floors. Some architecturally/historically

## ***Village of Bellwood: St. Charles Road Redevelopment Plan***

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significant buildings were preserved, although most of the buildings are newly developed on consolidated parcels. New development makes the most of modern construction standards and greatly enhancing the function and appearance of the eastern gateway on St. Charles Road.

### ***Transportation & Circulation***

St. Charles Road continues to be an arterial serving as a thoroughfare through the community and beyond its borders, while serving the nearby neighborhoods and commercial districts within Bellwood. Various projects have improved rush hour congestion, including on-street parking studies, a comprehensive road repair program, traffic signal interconnection and timing studies, as well as reduction and/or consolidation of access directly onto St. Charles Road through redevelopment, parcel consolidation and voluntary cross access agreements.

The Village has also worked with adjacent parties including Melrose Park, Union Pacific Railroad, IHB Railroad, and other governmental agencies such as Metra, RTA, and Pace to consolidate and relocate the Bellwood and Melrose Park Stations closer to a common site west of 25th Avenue, south of Lake Street and north of Grant Avenue. The new commuter station is larger and more modern. Increased police enforcement of residential alleyways has reduced the number of speeders that caused problems for residents in the past.

Pedestrian and transit improvements such as sidewalks, bus shelters, and lighting have created a more pedestrian friendly environment throughout the Corridor. More residents walk or ride their bicycles from their homes to shop along the Corridor. Safety issues at crossing points near schools have been improved with signage and other physical improvements.

The combination of the Village's Metra station relocation/consolidation and a Village study of local street and alley traffic issues addressed local traffic issues. The study led the Village to permit two-way traffic on most residential streets within the Corridor, which reduced speeding and cut through traffic in neighborhoods.

## **Section 2: Corridor Vision, Goals & Objectives**

### **Residential Neighborhoods & Development**

The mid-1900s housing stock of neighborhoods within the St. Charles Road Redevelopment Plan study area is well maintained and preserved, although carefully crafted development and zoning regulations have allowed for compatible infill and additions. This investment in the neighborhoods has kept the housing updated and desirable for families and other residents.

Land use and transportation planning, along with buffering and screening requirements have mitigated impacts of the St. Charles Road traffic volume and associated non-residential uses. Single-family homes that were once fronting St. Charles Road have been encouraged to relocate and have been converted to more appropriate land uses such as retail, commercial and office space. New residential within the Corridor includes infill single family housing, but also updated townhomes on previously obsolete apartment building sites, as well as higher end condominiums and apartments on upper floors within a half mile of the relocated and consolidated Bellwood/Melrose Park train station.

### **Industrial, Wholesale & Office Development**

Though the St. Charles Road Corridor was never an industrial corridor, the heavier industrial or wholesale uses that were out of character in this residential, pedestrian-oriented area have relocated to other sites in the Village that allow them more buffering and outdoor storage. Some of the light industrial and office uses remain and have been joined by other like businesses – light industrial employers, small offices and even medical uses – mostly at the west end of the Corridor.

### **Youth & Community Activities**

Along with the positive streetscape, transportation and commercial development progress, Bellwood has also increased the youth, family and community activities available within the Corridor and beyond. On the public side, a plan was developed for an appropriate mix of indoor recreational uses, including an indoor pool and youth center, and implemented in coordination with the park district and local health care affiliate. Through zoning amendments and business attraction efforts, family-oriented indoor/outdoor entertainment uses of a compatible scale and type with the other uses in the area provide new activity choices, such as a movie theater and a child-oriented indoor playground/arcade.

## **Village of Bellwood: St. Charles Road Redevelopment Plan**

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### **Corridor Image & Identity**

The Corridor projects a fresh, updated and attractive image and identity throughout the year with a uniform landscape palette with year-round interest and beauty, along with pedestrian scale lighting and seasonal banners. The appearance of existing and new developments have been improved by adhering to the Village's Design and Development Guidelines that encourage quality materials, pedestrian-scale developments and new amenities, and classic and timeless architectural details. A Façade Improvement Program has assisted existing businesses in funding improvements to update their appearance.

Updated and comprehensive sign ordinance amendments limit and unify signage appearance, improve wayfinding and reduce visual clutter. Finally, gateway signage is enhanced with enlarged gateway parcels and an appropriate landscape setting for entry monuments at the western and eastern ends of the Corridor, as well as similarly designed features that are incorporated into new development at Mannheim Road and 25th Avenue.

### **Goals & Objectives**

The specific goals and objectives for the St. Charles Road Corridor described here are based on the description of what the community wants the Corridor to become (the Vision Statement). The goals provide direction for the Plan, serving as a guide for evaluation of specific projects, land use alternatives and implementation recommendations.

Goals describe desired physical and economic results which planning efforts should be directed. They are broad and long-range. They represent an end to be sought, although they may never actually be fully attained. Objectives describe more specific actions that should be undertaken in order to advance toward the overall goals. They provide more precise and measurable guidelines for planning action.

The goals and objectives presented below are based on: a) input from Village staff and the Planning Advisory Committee; b) the community workshops; c) the key person interviews; and, d) feedback from various public meetings and discussions.

First, general goals have been developed to provide an overall framework for change in the St. Charles Road Corridor. Then, specific goals and objectives are provided for each of the following categories:

- Corridor Image, Design & Identity
- Commercial & Business Development
- Neighborhoods & Residential Land Use
- Transportation, Access & Circulation
- Community Facilities, Open Space & Recreation
- Intergovernmental & Organizational Cooperation
- Program Administration

**Section 2: Corridor Vision, Goals & Objectives**

**General Corridor Goal 1**

Create and maintain an attractive and high-quality community environment through efforts that enhance the quality of life and the image and identity of Bellwood, as well as improve the function and appearance of the Corridor.

*Rationale* – Consensus is high among residents for the need to develop and redevelop sites in a manner which portrays a positive image of the Village and has long-term economic stability which also meets the social, cultural, educational, recreational, and lifestyle needs of the residents. The community supports maintaining a high standard for all uses, development and property within the Corridor.

**General Corridor Goal 2**

Develop a pedestrian and business friendly environment throughout the Corridor, focusing on family- and youth-oriented activities and businesses that provide high quality, but essential services, as well as promoting destination commercial uses that provide safe, friendly environments for informal gatherings and more formal community events.

*Rationale* – Since much of the Corridor consists of quality residential neighborhoods and the Village desires to create a new train station, there is great potential for updating businesses to meet the needs of existing residents and enhance the pedestrian amenities throughout the Corridor. Residents express a desire to shop in and contribute to Bellwood, but also to have a place to meet friends for coffee, read a book or have a family dinner within the Corridor.

**General Corridor Goal 3**

Forge and maintain strong public and private partnerships to capitalize upon and coordinate all resources and assets the community has to offer in carrying out plans, policies and programs.

*Rationale* – The Village seeks to continue meaningful and productive relationships with neighboring municipalities, local organizations, civic groups, institutions, railroads, government agencies, and the private sector to achieve the vision for the St. Charles Road Redevelopment Plan.

## **Village of Bellwood: St. Charles Road Redevelopment Plan**

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### **Corridor Image, Design, and Identity**

#### **Goal**

Improve the community's image through public and private improvements which enhance various physical features of the Corridor and which brings the community together as a whole.

#### **Objectives**

- Improve the image and maintenance of all existing areas of the Corridor, with particular emphasis on the appearance of buildings, signage, site landscaping, and streetscape amenities.
- Enhance gateway/entry features to provide the desired image of to arrival to the Village of Bellwood and distinguish the Village from neighboring communities.
- Improve the Village's image for motorists entering into and passing through the St. Charles Road Corridor.
- Improve the appearance of the Corridor.
- Encourage compatible and high-quality design and construction for all developments, with an emphasis on quality site design, building orientation, architecture, building materials, and site improvements.
- Develop and implement landscaping and tree planting and maintenance programs that beautify the Corridor.
- Develop a program to bury utility lines along the Corridor.

### **Commercial & Business Development**

#### **Goal 1**

Achieve a compatible mix of commercial, service and business development that is well organized to provide common and quality goods and services for residents and neighboring communities, but is compatible with residential uses in the area.

## Section 2: Corridor Vision, Goals & Objectives

### Objectives

- Promote and maintain a contemporary and mutually reinforcing mix of commercial, retail, and service uses along St. Charles Road.
- Ensure that all retail, office, and service commercial activities are organized by uses and concentrated within or near areas of similar or compatible uses.
- Promote new commercial development and redevelopment within the Corridor, including uses such as a higher end grocery stores and casual sit-down restaurants and cafés.
- Initiate programs to encourage the improvement and rehabilitation of older commercial buildings and areas which are, or are becoming, functionally obsolete including improvements to facades, signage, and parking areas as well as encouraging the provision of additional site amenities.
- Promote and require landscaping within commercial areas and require the upkeep of parking lots, opaque screening of service areas, drives, buildings, and incompatible uses.
- Provide for potential mixed-use development (retail with residential or office above) at appropriate locations within the Corridor.

### Goal 2

Develop aesthetically pleasing and functionally well-designed retail and commercial shopping areas.

### Objectives

- Encourage high-quality development and redevelopment of sites, buildings, and amenities in commercial areas.
- Encourage the design of new commercial development to facilitate a system of pedestrian access and amenities.
- Establish a program that reasonably and uniformly regulates signage while providing for the identification of Corridor businesses.
- Ensure that new development and redevelopment of private property is designed in scale with, and complementary to, existing development and also at a pedestrian scale.
- Establish special design and improvement standards for commercial areas, guiding the scale, appearance, orientation, and overall character of new development.
- Ensure that all new, improved and existing commercial development is effectively screened and buffered from adjacent residential uses.
- Encourage coordinated and shared vehicle access wherever possible.
- Promote shared parking facilities.

### Goal 3

Encourage the relocation of existing wholesale, automotive or outdoor storage uses in the Study Area and instead promote office and research in limited areas of the Corridor where it is compatible with the adjacent residential neighborhoods.

### Objectives

- Limit expansion of new industrial, automotive and wholesale uses in the Corridor through zoning amendments.
- Ensure that all new, improved and existing industrial or wholesale business development is effectively screened and buffered from adjacent residential uses.
- Establish special design and development standards to ensure that new industrial, automotive and wholesale uses are only permitted under certain conditions and that development complements the overall character of the Corridor and the Village.
- Encourage the rehabilitation and reuse or redevelopment of functionally obsolete buildings to accommodate more appropriate and market viable uses.
- Where appropriate, assist existing businesses within the Corridor relocate to development or redevelopment sites that are better suited to heavier business uses that have outdoor or automotive components.

## ***Village of Bellwood: St. Charles Road Redevelopment Plan***

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### ***Neighborhoods & Residential Land-Use Area***

#### ***Goal***

Provide a living environment in residential neighborhoods and housing which supports the local population and maintains the overall quality and character of the Corridor and the Village.

#### ***Objectives***

- Protect residential areas from encroachment by incompatible land uses and the adverse impacts of adjacent activities.
- Strictly enforce all building, safety, zoning and fire codes to prevent overcrowding, unsafe conditions, and misuse of residential dwellings including garage conversions and basement apartments.
- Provide for possible mixed-use development (retail with residential or office above) at appropriate locations within the Corridor. Mixed-use developments will depend on many factors such as the size of the site, and its ability to provide adequate parking and setbacks.
- Promote the economic importance of the quality and diversity of the Village's housing stock and work to ensure neighborhood stability in all areas of the Corridor.
- Encourage new development and infill development/redevelopment which is complementary to the scale and character of surrounding residential uses.
- Preserve the sound, existing housing stock through regular and active code enforcement and preventative maintenance programming.
- Promote the improvement and rehabilitation of deteriorating housing properties.
- Increase the frequency of inspections for residential rental properties and work to require local managers in lieu of absentee landlords.
- Continue the use of Neighborhood Watch Programs encouraging efforts to reduce crime and increase community awareness of public safety.
- Seek funding sources which assist in the maintenance and improvement of housing conditions in the Corridor and meet the diversity of housing needs in the Village.

**Transportation, Access & Circulation**

**Goal**

Provide a balanced transportation system, which ensures the safe and efficient movement of vehicles, pedestrians, and cyclists within the Corridor.

**Objectives**

- Protect and improve the function of the overall street hierarchy within the Corridor through effective access, land-use controls, and street/intersection design improvements.
- Coordinate with Metra and the UP and consider Village funding (as Metra does not have this funding) of interim station improvements for the current station, such as building upgrades, landscaping, and commuter access improvements.
- Ensure adequate resources are made available for the maintenance of Corridor streets and public rights-of-way.
- Create and implement an “Infrastructure Improvement Program” that budgets infrastructure maintenance and construction projects throughout the Corridor.
- Minimize curb cuts on St. Charles Road to the extent possible and use intersecting side streets for access into properties.

- Implement traffic management strategies to minimize the impact of peak traffic flows along the Corridor.
- Correct traffic operational problems, including placement of traffic signals, painted lane indicators, and readability and placement of traffic related signage.
- Ensure safe design of street intersections, street lighting, and surface condition.
- Minimize non-local traffic within residential neighborhoods.
- Work with Pace to improve key bus stop locations with signage and passenger amenities (shelters).
- Work with Pace to further improve bus/shuttle service throughout the Corridor, either through expanded Pace bus service or the addition of new shuttle/van service.
- Work with Pace to implement Transit Signal Priority and other strategies to attract more ridership and improve the speed of bus service through the corridor while also reducing traffic congestion.
- Continue to study and work with Metra, RTA, UP Railroad, IHB Railroad, other agencies, and adjacent municipalities such as Melrose Park to relocate the existing Bellwood and Melrose Park Metra Stations to a new consolidated location near 25th Avenue, with funding by the Village and its developer partnerships.
- Work with the necessary agencies to implement the proposed grade separation of the Metra/UP-W Line and 25th Avenue in order to improve vehicular, pedestrian and train travel in the area.
- Improve the enforcement of speed restrictions within alleys to decrease speeding.

## **Village of Bellwood: St. Charles Road Redevelopment Plan**

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### **Community Facilities, Open Space & Recreation**

#### **Goal**

Ensure the provision of high-quality community facilities, open space and recreation opportunities for all residents of the Village in appropriate locations along the Corridor.

#### **Objectives**

- Provide the proper mix of public and private community facilities and activities in appropriate locations.
- Improve and expand specialized facilities and services for senior citizens and youths.
- Identify locations for additional tot lots and smaller parks in some of the under-served residential areas of the Corridor.
- Identify location and connections for a bicycle/pedestrian trail system across the Corridor with the ability to connect south to Stevenson Park.
- Research and plan an indoor recreation facility to meet the needs of the community.
- Encourage and facilitate cooperation between the school districts and the park district to provide more recreation space, facilities and equipment on or near school sites.

### **Intergovernmental & Organizational Cooperation**

#### **Goal**

Encourage the coordination and cooperation among government agencies and organizations potentially having interest in the Corridor to ensure the greatest level of efficiency and effectiveness in the provision of municipal services.

#### **Objectives**

- Coordinate with other municipal service providers, surrounding communities, and county and regional agencies, to ensure continuity and consistency of overall community planning and development activities.
- Establish meaningful lines of communication with those agencies and organizations that can assist the Village in meeting its Corridor planning objectives, and work to secure participation of these agencies and organizations in realizing mutual objectives.
- Continue to seek grants, loans, and other sources of intergovernmental funding transfers.
- Work cooperatively with adjoining communities and continue to encourage communication and collaboration among service providers to provide the most efficient and cost effective services possible.

### **Program Administration**

#### **Goal**

Implement, monitor progress, and update the Corridor Plan.

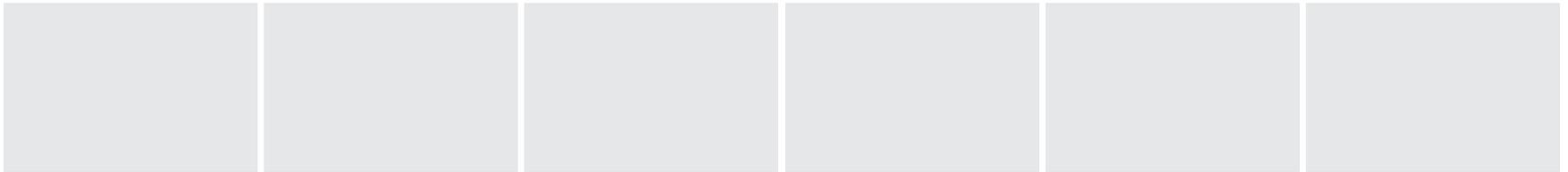
#### **Objectives**

- Annually, develop an action plan to prioritize objectives and list accomplishments of proceeding years.
- Make available existing and/or new financial resources to implement the Corridor Plan.
- Establish a process for the regular review and update of the Village's Zoning Ordinance to appropriately meet the changing needs of the Corridor and the community as a whole.
- In the Corridor Plan review and amendment process, the Village should consider any input and involvement of the Village Board, Plan Commission, various Village committees, local organizations, and individuals.
- Identify and engage agencies and organizations willing to share in the responsibility for active implementation of the Plan.



## **Section 3: Corridor Plans**

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## Section 3: Corridor Plans

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### Land Use & Development

This section provides the core of the Redevelopment Plan, that lays out plans for the St. Charles Road Corridor and 25th Avenue. The Corridor Plans included are:

- Land Use & Development Plan
- Priority Redevelopment Sites
- Transportation & Circulation Plan
- Recreation, Open Space & Urban Design Plan

Together, the Corridor Plans provide a comprehensive plan for improvement and development in the St. Charles Road Corridor for the long-term, a 15 year period. The Corridor Plans establish long-range policies for key areas within the Corridor based upon the planning process. These grew from the creation of a Corridor Vision and Goals and Objectives (see Section 2) based upon community input. The Corridor Plans are intended to be used as tools by the elected officials, residents, other land owners, business owners, and investors and developers to improve and enhance the St. Charles Road Corridor. Adherence to the plans will promote and encourage the type and intensity of new development and redevelopment desired along this important Corridor.

The Land Use Plan recommends continuation of many of the existing land uses, consolidation of non-residential uses, especially along the west end of St. Charles Road and expansion of commercial uses on the east end, radiating out from the intersection of St. Charles Road and 25th Avenue. The Plan includes recommendations for the location and form of all of the land uses planned for the area as continued or new uses (as illustrated on page 27). Redevelopment and enhancement of existing properties is the overall goal of the specific plans for properties in the Corridor. Priority locations for redevelopment are indicated on the *Priority Redevelopment Sites* figure on page 29, followed by illustrations of how each site may be redeveloped to fulfill Bellwood's vision for the Corridor.

Included in the *Land Use and Development Plan* are policies and plans for improving and stabilizing the residential neighborhoods, providing image-enhancing retail uses at the key intersections of Mannheim Road and 25th Avenue. Also included is a mixed use development surrounding the Village's proposed relocated and consolidated Bellwood/Melrose Park Metra Station west of 25th Avenue.

The Plan provides recommendations about type, intensity and character for each future land use designations, including:

- Single-Family & Two-Family Residential
- Multi-Family Residential
- Retail Commercial
- Neighborhood Commercial
- Mixed Use Commercial/Office/Residential
- Public/Semi-Public
- Light Industrial/Manufacturing
- Parks/Open Space

Within each land use category, aside from the overall description of the desired land use and development form, a few specific sites are discussed to further illustrate the intent and specifics of planning recommendations. For instance, these include, creating commercial and office consolidations along the Corridor and improvements at Eastern Avenue.

## ***Village of Bellwood: St. Charles Road Redevelopment Plan***

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### ***Single-Family & Two-Family Residential***

Bellwood, particularly surrounding the St. Charles Road Corridor, has a well-maintained and sound housing stock. Plan recommendations intend to bolster this community asset through enhancements to nearby and complimentary land uses. Enhancements to parks and schools are also a focus of the Plan since they contribute to sustainable residential areas.

The residential neighborhoods in the Study Area have sound housing stock, attractive tree-lined streets and convenient community facilities, such as schools and places of worship, that contribute positively to the quality of life. Future redevelopment decisions should aim to preserve and stabilize these neighborhoods. Enhancements for pedestrians, cyclists and shoppers will continue to enhance the value of housing stock in this well-established area.

### ***Multi-Family Residential***

Create new and convert deteriorating and obsolescent multi-family housing to provide a variety of housing within the Study Area and Village. All housing should positively contribute to the family- and senior-oriented character of the community.

### ***Retail Commercial***

Intensify retail commercial uses at the intersection of Mannheim Road and create a distinctive gateway at this major intersection by requiring high quality development that meets the Design and Development Guidelines of the Plan. Retail

businesses here can accommodate uses that have a higher parking requirement than other areas in the Study Area. Sit-down restaurants and destination uses such as bookstores with cafes are desired. *Washington Commons* shopping area at the northwest corner of Washington Boulevard and 25th Avenue should be maintained for retail and restaurant uses, and enhanced with additional landscaping and pedestrian amenities.

### ***Neighborhood Commercial***

Commercial uses are found along the length of St. Charles Road, with concentrations at Mannheim Road, Eastern Avenue and 25th Avenue. The Village's policies and regulations should encourage intensification and concentration of retail commercial uses at these key locations in the corridor. Zoning should be amended to permit only a mix of commercial retail, service and office businesses that provide conveniences to and are compatible with nearby residents. Service businesses and offices should be encouraged to continue operation or fill in vacancies at the west end of the Corridor. Additional areas of neighborhood commercial should be encouraged along the east side of 25th Avenue to transition from retail uses on the west side, especially where Randolph Street terminates at 25th Avenue.

### ***Mixed Use Commercial/Office/Residential***

Properties indicated as Mixed Use should be redeveloped and/or rehabilitated into pedestrian-oriented, mixed use developments near

the intersection with 25th Avenue and south along 25th Avenue. These building types should generally have retail or service uses on the first floor, with office and residential uses on upper floors.

### ***Public/Semi-Public***

The Village's proposed relocation and consolidation of the Bellwood and Melrose Park Metra Stations in coordination with Melrose Park, UP, IHB and Metra would allow for redevelopment of a large industrial area along 25th Avenue. Mixed use development opportunities surrounding the new location may allow for increased ridership and revitalization.

### ***Light Industrial/Manufacturing***

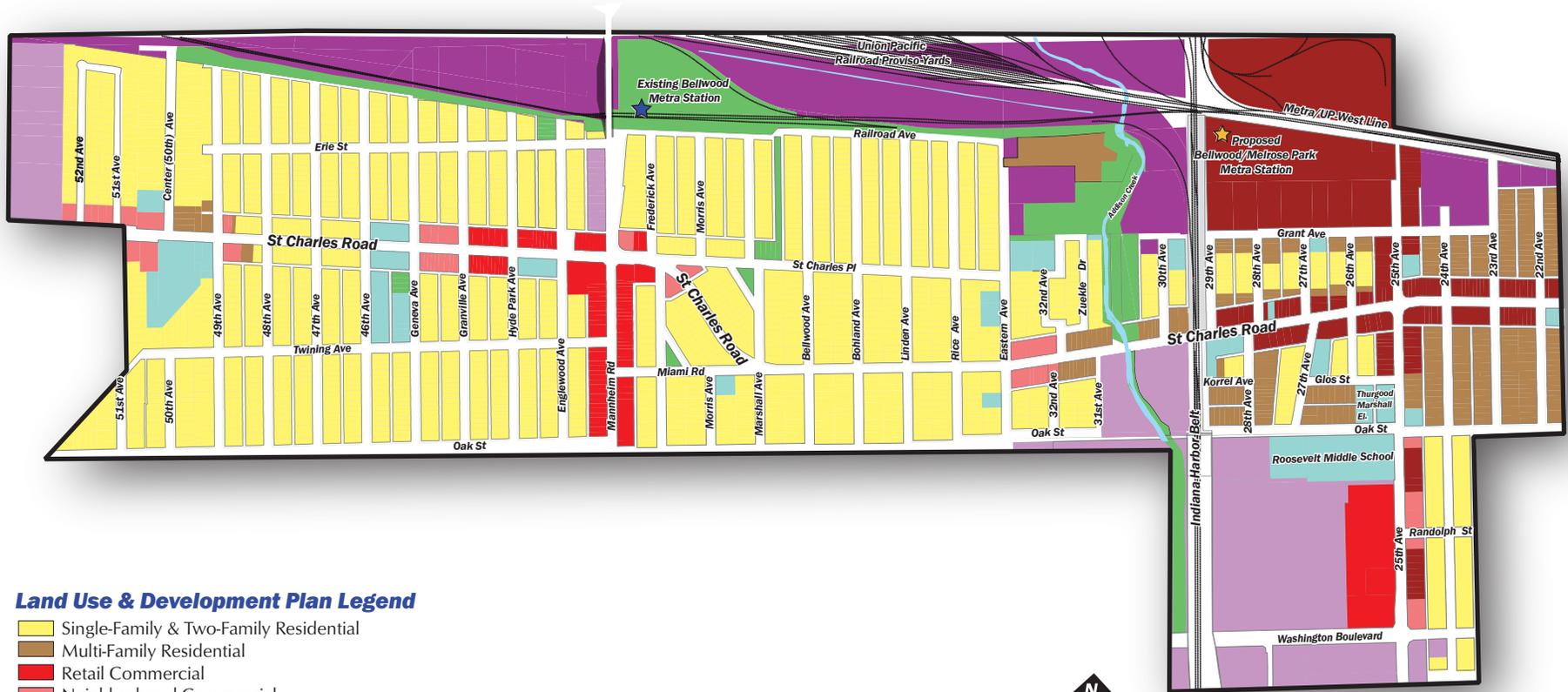
These higher impact uses should be limited to the west end of the Corridor which is an office to light manufacturing transitional area. If these uses remain near the intersection of Mannheim Road, they must be screened with fencing and landscaping. Manufacturing uses also exist and should continue south along 25th Avenue.

### ***Parks/Open Space***

Public open space in the form of conservation areas around the creek, a greenway buffer between neighborhoods and rail lines, and formal parks can form a network providing recreation and transit linkages to existing and planned facilities.

St. Charles Road Redevelopment Plan

# Land Use & Development Plan



**Land Use & Development Plan Legend**

- Single-Family & Two-Family Residential
- Multi-Family Residential
- Retail Commercial
- Neighborhood Commercial
- Mixed Use Commercial/Office/Residential
- Public/Semi-Public
- Light Industrial
- Industrial/Manufacturing
- Parks/Open Space
- Rail Lines
- Existing/Proposed Metra Station

## **Village of Bellwood: St. Charles Road Redevelopment Plan**

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In addition to recommendations for the full range of land uses, the following seven *Priority (Re)development Sites* are instrumental in reaching the area's potential and the Village's vision for the Corridor. These are illustrated on the facing page.

1. Mannheim Intersection Retail Commercial
2. East Gateway Mixed Use Development
3. Eastern Avenue Neighborhood Commercial
4. West Gateway Neighborhood Commercial
5. Addison Creek Park & Multi-Use Trail
6. Retail Redevelopment/Consolidation
7. Proposed Bellwood/Melrose Park Metra Station & Transit Oriented Development (TOD)

For detailed implementation strategies for each of the priority redevelopment areas, refer to **Section 5: Implementation Strategies**.

### ***Mannheim Intersection Retail Commercial***

The Mannheim Road intersection should be redeveloped and enhanced to create not only new retail and family dining & shopping destinations, but a gateway intersection that projects a positive image of the Village. Uniform landscaping and streetscaping can beautify the area and screen parking.

### ***East Gateway Mixed Use Development***

Mixed use redevelopment of the area near and west of 25th Avenue and along the Corridor will provide an attractive, walkable shopping & living district. Ground floor retail & dining should be complemented by upper floor offices and upgraded housing. The streetscape will be invit-

ing and the entire area will act as a gateway to Bellwood. Great potential at the east end of the Study Area along 25th Avenue includes business district revitalization, the Village's proposed relocated and consolidated Bellwood/Melrose Park Metra station and associated Transit Oriented Development (TOD). This east gateway to Bellwood is an opportunity to reestablish a pedestrian-oriented, destination commercial district. Improvements for school properties in the area should be a focus, providing more recreation space associated with them.

### ***Eastern Avenue Neighborhood Commercial***

Neighborhood commercial uses should be strengthened with rehabilitation or redevelopment of parcels near Eastern Avenue. Uses should provide conveniences to and be compatible with nearby neighborhoods.

### ***West Gateway Neighborhood Commercial***

Coordinated redevelopment of this Neighborhood Commercial area may result in updated office & convenience commercial buildings, with more of a residential character to complement nearby neighborhoods.

### ***Addison Creek Park & Multi-Use Trail***

Public & private unused or under-utilized open space near Addison Creek should be assembled for use as a public park, with access from Eastern & Grant Avenues, as well as along the creek from St. Charles Road on a multi-use trail. Active & passive amenities should be incorporated.

### ***Retail Redevelopment/Consolidation***

Master planned redevelopment of the blocks facing St. Charles Road just west of Mannheim

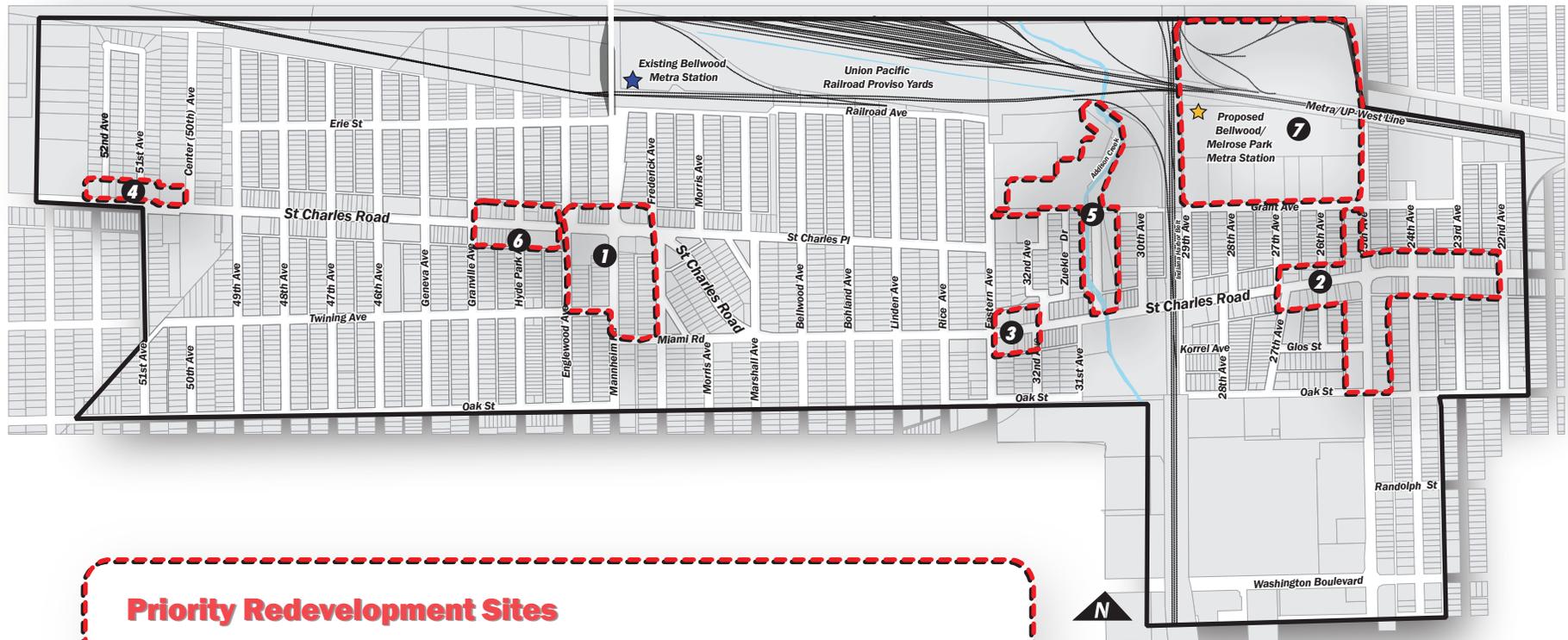
Road could offer a more pedestrian friendly retail & public service area. Access, circulation & parking could be improved & retail square footage increased.

### ***Proposed Bellwood/Melrose Park Metra Station & Transit Oriented Development***

The Village's proposed relocation and consolidation of the existing Bellwood and Melrose Park Stations will allow for redevelopment of a large industrial area along 25th Avenue as a mixed use, transit oriented development (TOD). These development opportunities surrounding the new location may allow Metra and Pace ridership and revitalization. The Village of Bellwood has been working with Melrose Park on a possible relocation and consolidation of the Bellwood and Melrose Park Metra Stations. The two communities should continue to work with each other and to explore issues and opportunities for redevelopment of the area immediately west of 25th Avenue, between Grant Avenue and Lake Street (in Melrose Park). TOD opportunities surrounding the proposed location for a new station would encourage increased ridership through stabilization of nearby neighborhoods, development of new commercial/mixed use projects on-site and revitalization of the commercial district at St. Charles Road and 25th Avenue. The Village should continue efforts to plan for the proposed relocated/consolidated station through further study by and discussions with the proposed site with Metra, UP, and IHB. Although, resolution of operational issues with the proposed site and funding by the Villages and their developer partnerships for the proposed station will be necessary for the station to be built.

## St. Charles Road Redevelopment Plan

# Priority Redevelopment Sites



### Priority Redevelopment Sites

- 1 Mannheim Intersection Retail Commercial
- 2 Eastern Gateway Mixed Use Development
- 3 Eastern Avenue Neighborhood Commercial
- 4 West Gateway Neighborhood Commercial
- 5 Addison Creek Park & Multi-Use Trail
- 6 Retail Redevelopment/Consolidation
- 7 Proposed Bellwood/Melrose Park Metra Station & Transit Oriented Development (TOD)

## **Transportation & Circulation**

This section of the St. Charles Road Redevelopment Plan presents the recommendations related to transportation, circulation, access, and parking. Transportation and parking issues were consistently cited during the community outreach activities as some of the most important issues facing the Village and the St. Charles Road Corridor Study Area. The Plan seeks to improve traffic flow on St. Charles Road, provide additional parking where it is needed, improve efficiency and ease of use of transit services, improve pedestrian and bicycle circulation throughout the Corridor, and enhance the east end of the Study Area. The illustration on the next page highlights the transportation recommendations and concepts that are presented below.

trian crossings and pavement. Enhancements to transportation infrastructure, public transit facilities, and pedestrian and commuter amenities can all improve the flow and ease of travel through and from the St. Charles Road Corridor, enhancing the marketability and livability of Bellwood.

Key elements of the plan include interim enhancements for the existing Bellwood Metra Station, but longer term consolidation of the station with the Melrose Park Station, near 25th Avenue. Following are detailed descriptions of key transportation and circulation recommendations of the Plan.

The Plan includes detailed recommendations and policies for all areas within the Corridor. Improving transit service and access, for the short- and long-term, along with creating a “walkable” pedestrian retail environment, and increasing retail uses in the Corridor are all priorities of the Plan. The Transportation & Circulation Plan also includes specific recommendations and policies for improvements to street circulation, pedes-



*Benches and shelters improve the comfort of commuters awaiting buses, encouraging ridership year-round. These improvements can be made at popular stops.*

**Primary Through Streets**

Two (2) intersections along St. Charles Road are considered primary through streets:

- 25th Avenue; and
- Mannheim Road.

These intersections all have traffic signals which should be coordinated (interconnected) to maximize traffic flow through the Corridor. Each intersection should be clearly striped as to delineate left turn lanes, right turn lanes, and through lanes on St. Charles Road. Intersecting cross streets should have designated right turn lanes to minimize the stacking of cars waiting to get through the intersection. On-street parking should be restricted for several hundred feet leading up to the intersections, to maximize the efficiency and safety of lane stacking and turning movements.

**Secondary Through Streets**

Three (3) intersections along St. Charles Road are considered secondary through streets 46th Avenue; Bellwood Avenue and Eastern Avenue. These three intersections are also signalized and should be incorporated into any plans for inter-connection. These secondary streets provide access to key community facilities, such as area schools and churches. Some provide north-south alternate routes to Mannheim between St. Charles Road and Washington Boulevard, another of Bellwood’s main east-east routes.

To the extent possible, even if some on-street parking is lost, each intersection should be clearly striped as to delineate a left turn lane and a through lane(s) on St. Charles Road. On-street parking should be restricted for a considerable distance leading up to the intersections, to maximize efficiency and safety of turning movements and through traffic. These improvements will improve traffic operations on St. Charles Road.

**Restricted Access and Cross-Access**

Overall, street maintenance and safety were the top rated transportation related issues. Re-striping and repairing streets and lane lines should be added to a program for regular maintenance of streets in the Study Area. Reducing the number of curb-cuts along St. Charles Road is a technique that will resolve these issues. As new development and redevelopment occurs throughout the Corridor, the number of curb-cuts should be minimized along St. Charles Road and 25th Avenue. Where possible, access should be from side streets or shared curb-cuts. The Village should also encourage shared cross-access between properties. Shared cross-access will allow vehicular movements between properties without the need to travel on St. Charles Road.

## ***Village of Bellwood: St. Charles Road Redevelopment Plan***

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### ***Traffic Flow and Circulation Pattern***

The one-way circulation pattern of the intersecting side streets should be re-examined. If cul-de-sacs are utilized on certain streets, the one-way traffic pattern will not work. The existing circulation pattern also forces vehicles onto St. Charles Road that might otherwise not need to be on the street. This exacerbates the traffic congestion on St. Charles Road.

### ***Pedestrian & Commuter Amenities***

The Village should plan, budget for and implement pedestrian & commuter amenities in the Study Area to incrementally & regularly improve the environment. In addition to landscaping & beautification, seating & shelter near bus stops and other gathering spaces increases the comfort level of commuters year-round. The Village can assist in enhancing Pace & Metra ridership by enhancing the overall pedestrian environment in the Corridor. Benches, shelters, leaning rails, & seat walls can all be used to improve the comfort of bus stops, even where a shelter is not warranted by ridership statistics.

Several intersections, including the intersections of the primary through-streets such as Mannheim Road and 25th Avenue should be improved with better pedestrian amenities and crosswalks. These intersections are key locations for pedestrians to cross the public right-of-way. These intersections should have crosswalks delineated with brick pavers or other pavement treatment, bollard lighting, larger pedestrian "holding areas", and more. Additionally, crosswalks near schools, such as at Oak Street and 25th Avenue, should be improved to allow for safer crossing of students and faculty.

### ***Access Restrictions***

Curb-cuts (driveways) along St. Charles Road should be restricted as much as feasible while still providing adequate access to adjacent properties. For many residential properties whose side yards abut St. Charles Road, this does not present an issue, rather it provides for good traffic flow. If single family residential teardowns occur, however, garages and driveways should be required to access the side street, and not directly to St. Charles Road. Many non-residential and even multi-family properties have access from or rely on access from St. Charles Road. As properties improve or redevelop, opportunities to consolidate access points should be sought, encouraging cross access between properties as well. Wherever possible, access to properties should be from the north-south cross streets and shared/consolidated driveways should be encouraged. These same principles can be applied along 25th Avenue. Where applicable, access into the sites should be aligned with the streets and alleys on the opposing side of the street.

**Relocate/Consolidate Bellwood & Melrose Park Stations**

Bellwood should continue to partner with Melrose Park, UP, IHB, Metra and other necessary parties to consolidate and relocate the two communities' existing stations to a common site west of 25th Avenue, south of Lake Street and north of Grant Avenue. The sites proximity to the freight railroad interchange at the east entrance to Proviso Yard will need to be further considered. The Villages and their developer partnerships would need to fund the proposed station. The proposed station location would encourage more Transit Oriented Development (TOD), than could ever be achieved in the station's current location. Plans could include on-site restaurant and retail uses, residential uses, as well as possible institutional uses to attract a student population to the area.

The TOD in the St. Charles Road and 25th Avenue vicinity should focus on pedestrian and commuter amenities such as crosswalks and benches. These improvements will benefit students walking to school as well as Metra commuters and Pace bus riders.

If located on a sufficiently sized parcel, a larger "consolidated" Metra facility could provide significantly more parking and be more easily accessible to Bellwood residents, including new on-site residents, those from neighboring communities, and people from an even wider area. Such a station could serve as a more "regional" transit facility, rather than a local facility, accommodating more commuters from a greater

area, thereby increasing the number of people for whom Metra would be a viable commuting option.

**25th Avenue Grade Separation**

The Village should continue to work toward and support the grade separation of 25th Avenue and the Metra/Union Pacific West Line. The grade separation will likely result in the loss of development opportunity for some sites on 25th Avenue just north of St. Charles Road. The grade separation should also include a wide enough overpass to accommodate a pedestrian connection over 25th Avenue to allow residents in the Study Area to more conveniently walk to the proposed consolidated train station that may be located on the west side of 25th Avenue. Additionally, this improvement will increase traffic on 25th Avenue enhancing the retail at the TOD. The proposed grade separation of 25th Avenue and the Metra/UP-W Line was identified in the priority list of Chicago area road crossings proposed for grade separation in the Chicago Region Environmental and Transportation Efficiency (CREATE) Program's final feasibility study (March 2005). CREATE is a partnership between the State of Illinois, City of Chicago, Metra and the nation's freight railroads.

CREATE proposes to invest \$1.5 billion in critically needed improvements to increase the efficiency of the region's rail infrastructure and the quality of life of Chicago-area residents.



*Possibilities to explore further for the Bellwood/Melrose Park Consolidated Metra Station include a multi-level parking structure, a pedestrian overpass, and a retail component.*

*NOTE: This is a conceptual sketch of TOD improvements. Exact configuration of the station and its elements would be determined in conjunction with Metra, UP, IHB, and other property owners and agencies.*

## ***Village of Bellwood: St. Charles Road Redevelopment Plan***

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### **Public Parking**

Additional public parking should be provided throughout the corridor. Larger public parking lots should be located near areas where the Village is promoting retail opportunities, including near Mannheim Road and at the East Gateway. All public parking areas should be attractively landscaped and screened, well lit, and signed as to identify their location.

On-street parking should be maximized in the east gateway, 25th Avenue Business District and it should continue to be restricted to one side of the street on the side streets in residential areas. On St. Charles Road, on-street parking should be provided where possible, but improving the intersections with designated through lanes and turning lanes should take precedent over on-street parking. On-street parking should be set back a considerable distance from all intersections to preserve driver sight lines and provide a desirable buffer.

### **Pace Bus Service**

Currently, the Study Area is served by multiple Pace bus routes. Several key recommendations should be considered to enhance bus service in the area and improve traffic flow:

- Work with Pace to plan for and implement Transit Signal Priority, to lengthen green lights and shorten red lights, to keep buses moving through the area on schedule and with less disruption to the overall flow of traffic, and similar strategies that improve the speed of bus service while reducing traffic congestion;
- Provide “next bus” information at bus stops as technology progresses;
- Turnouts should be established where possible to create a better environment for passengers boarding or leaving the bus;
- Work with Pace to relocate stops as necessary and establish far-side bus stops along the Corridor to improve safety and minimize congestion, particularly for traffic making turning movements at intersections; and
- Provide passenger amenities such as shelters, leaning rails or benches and improved signage. Designated Pace bus stops (including, shelters, information kiosks, etc.) should be part of any streetscape improvements program designed and implemented within the St. Charles Road Corridor.

### **Pace Bus Shelters**

Passenger shelters are recommended for bus stop areas that are high volume boarding sites. The size and design of passenger shelters will vary depending on space availability and the number of passenger boarding at the stop. However, the standard shelter that is accessible to individuals with mobility limitations is 13.5 feet by 6.5 feet. The location of the shelter will vary depending on space availability, utility placement, passenger counts and driver visibility needs. Shelters should have a minimum 5-foot setback from the street. When possible, bus stop information is provided on the shelter rather than on a freestanding sign. Currently, Pace identifies the route number on many of its shelters.

Pace shelters are available to communities at no cost. They are comprised of anodized aluminum frames and either safety glass or polycarbonate glazing. These structures are designed to be constructed on concrete pads that have a minimum four inch (4”) thickness. If requested, Pace will install the shelters. However, Pace encourages municipalities to maintain these enclosures.

If desirable, developers and municipalities can provide shelters that are architecturally consistent with particular development designs. Shelter placement should be reviewed by Pace and the local jurisdiction (i.e. IDOT, county or municipality) to avoid visual obstructions to vehicle drivers as well as interference with utilities. The maintenance of these shelters is usually the responsibility of the developer, municipality or other appropriate party. To increase passenger

comfort and convenience, shelters should be designed with the following considerations:

- Wheelchair access and maneuverability;
- Visibility of approaching traffic for 1000 feet;
- Adequate lighting;
- Seating capabilities;
- Quick access to the bus;
- Route and schedule display; and
- Protection from weather.

**Multi-Use Trail/ Linear Park**

A new multi-use trail should be created along the southern boundary of the Metra/Union Pacific West Line. The Village’s proposed relocation and consolidation of the existing Bellwood and Melrose Park Stations to a site west of 25th Avenue will create the opportunity for a new linear park and trail system with the potential to connect to the proposed relocated/consolidated station. The trail should take advantage of the existing Mannheim Road pedestrian underpass. The path/trail should be a paved surface at least 10’ wide, so as to accommodate pedestrians and cyclists traveling in opposite directions, and to accommodate the patrolling of the linear park by patrol car. The proposed trail should not be considered within the Metra/UP-W Line or Indiana Harbor Belt Railroad’s right-of-way. Proposed improvements (e.g. trail and landscaping) near the railroad right-of-way would need to be discussed with the UP and the IHB due to needed safety measures by the railroads (e.g. fencing). The Village would need to seek their own funding for these improvements since Metra has no funding for these types of improvements.

**Pedestrian Safety**

The community expressed concern for safety of students walking & riding to and from school, as well as a desire to improve the positive pedestrian environment of mixed use and shopping areas near neighborhoods. Improvements should be made in the Study Area to improve pedestrian safety with updated crosswalks, signal timing and sidewalk improvements. Lighting, landscaping and streetscape can accomplish some of these goals. In addition, improved vehicular and pedestrian signage and indicators may be required. These may include specialty paver crosswalks and other traffic calming devices that require reduced driving speeds and enhance the pedestrian experience. Specifically, consider a realignment of 27th Avenue & traffic calming at that intersection for school children walking to & from school. Other pedestrian improvements may be necessary near 46th Avenue and Oak Street, to highlight crosswalks and assist children walking to the nearby schools on the south side of St. Charles Road. Similar improvements should be made along 25th Avenue to make the walk between schools on the west side and neighborhoods on the east side more safe. *Washington Commons* shopping area attracts much pedestrian traffic due to its location near neighborhoods, workplaces and schools. More should be done to enhance the area along 25th Avenue to provide pedestrian connections to businesses from the public sidewalk.

## ***Village of Bellwood: St. Charles Road Redevelopment Plan***

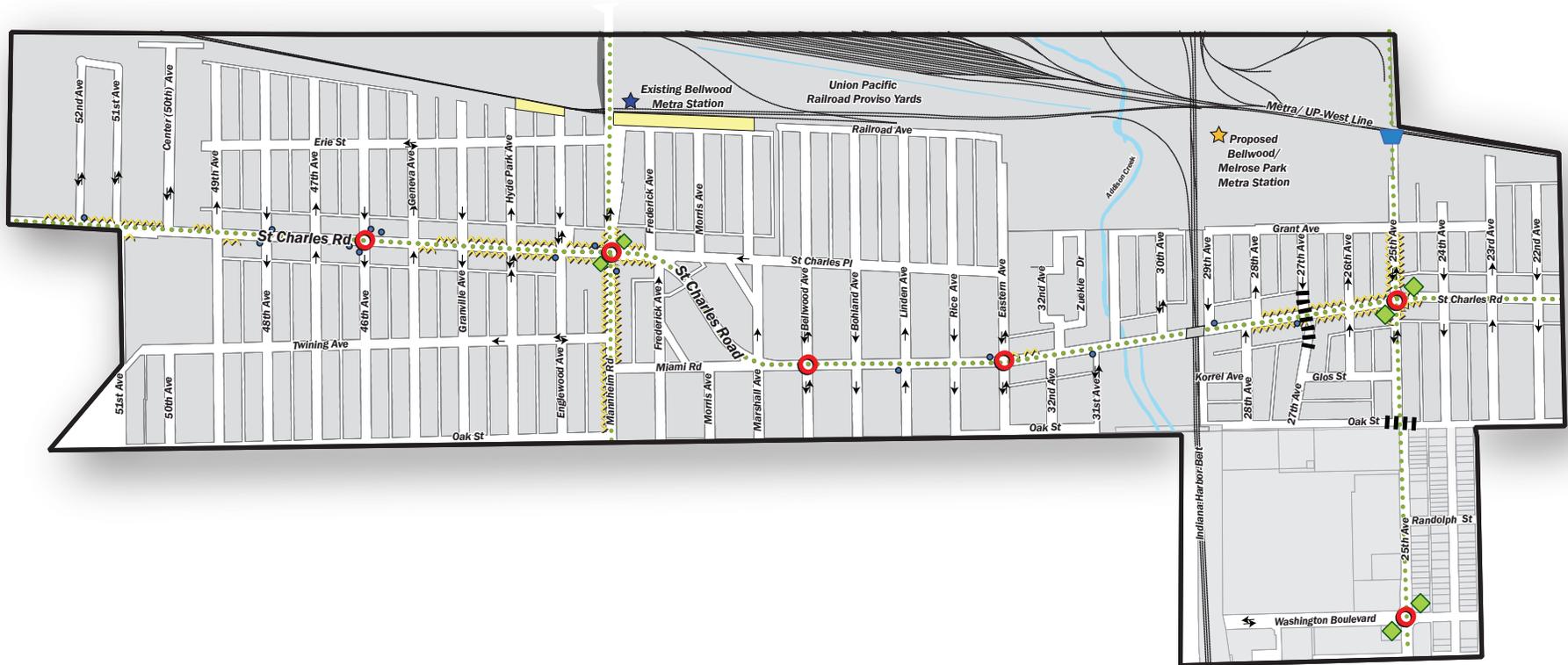
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### **Street Closures**

Consider the closure of local streets that intersect with St. Charles Road & Mannheim Road where the existing right-of-way can be incorporated into redevelopment parcels. Other traffic issues, such as alley speed and cut through traffic may be addressed by this solution. Additionally, with redevelopment near Mannheim Road, new and consolidated access points can improve access to retail and traffic flow at the intersection. Road maintenance, re-striping and patching could improve functionality and comfort of use as well. Possible street closures between the service alley and St. Charles Road could reduce traffic congestion and create more parking and retail area for redevelopment, for instance at Hyde Park Avenue (see p29 *Priority Redevelopment*).

Related to possible streets closures, an area to consider strategic vacation of existing, but unimproved right-of-way is along Grant Avenue in the area of Addison Creek. This land could be used to add to proposed park and open space there, as well as provide access to those areas.

# Transportation & Circulation Plan



## Transportation & Circulation Plan Legend

- Rail Lines
- Existing Commuter Parking
- Existing/Proposed Metra Station
- Existing Traffic Signal
- Traffic Direction
- Existing Pace Stop
- Potential Bus Shelter
- 25th Avenue Grade Separation/Vehicular Underpass
- Pace Bus Routes 313, 323, 330 & 393
- Restrict & Consolidate Access/Curb Cuts
- Improve Crosswalks



## **Recreation, Open Space & Urban Design Plan**

Although several parks and other open spaces are located within the Study Area, enhancements and additions should be made to the open spaces and parks in the area. In addition, streetscaping, landscaping and updated site development practices will enhance the appearance of St. Charles Road, making it the east-west gateway corridor of Bellwood.

Recommendations and policies for recreational and open space components are a key component of the proposed mixed-use, transit-friendly environment, sustaining the neighborhoods, and revitalizing the commercial areas. Civic gathering places, active recreation areas, passive open space and other amenities are included in the Plan. Improvements to recreation spaces near the schools within the Study Area are important to sustaining these educational facilities and the neighborhoods surrounding them. Multi-use trails and creek-side enhancements will inject more recreational and natural open space access into the existing neighborhoods.



*A multi-use trail would provide desired recreation facilities along the north side of neighborhoods near the rail lines as well as providing access along Addison Creek.*

### **Plan Recommendations**

#### **Neighborhood Parks**

Additional and larger neighborhood parks are recommended in the Corridor. As properties come on the market, the Village should consider purchase of key properties to enhance the existing park system. As larger redevelopment occurs, opportunities to add park land, even small tot-lot facilities, should be considered.

Several opportunities exist to enhance and insert green and open space in the Study Area. Addison Creek runs north-south across St. Charles Road a few blocks east of Eastern Avenue, but is not used as an asset currently. Recommendations for Recreation, Open Space and Urban Design include improvements and incorporation of the creek into future plans. Public & private unused or under-utilized open space near Addison Creek should be assembled for use as a public park, with access from Eastern & Grant Avenues, as well as along the creek from St. Charles Road on a multi-use trail. Active & passive amenities should be incorporated.

Existing parks should be enlarged and improved to maintain their contribution to the surrounding neighborhoods' quality of life. Acquisition through voluntary sale of key properties near Thomas Jefferson Elementary School and Thurgood Marshall Elementary could increase playground area for students & insert a tot-lot into the neighborhood. Schools & parks enhance residential areas & encourage reinvestment.

Finally, formalization of existing open spaces into usable recreational spaces will also assist in enhancing the community. The double fronted alley open space between Marshall and Bellwood Avenues should be improved to encourage outdoor recreation by neighborhood youth and ultimately a linkage could be made to nearby Fenhouse Park.

St. Charles Road Redevelopment Plan

# Recreation, Open Space & Urban Design Plan



**Recreation, Open Space & Urban Design Plan Legend**

-  Parks/Open Space
-  Addison Creek
-  Rail
-  Existing School Site
-  Existing/Proposed Metra Station
-  Proposed Trail
-  Uniform Streetscape Treatment
-  Landscape Enhancement
-  Gateway Improvements
-  Key Intersections
-  1 Flanagan Park
-  2 Fenhouse Park
-  3 Orlandino Park
-  4 Addison Creek Greenway/Park

## Village of Bellwood: St. Charles Road Redevelopment Plan

### Landscape Enhancements

Along with the uniform streetscaping, landscape enhancements to specific areas will improve the identity of the community and encourage economic development. Selected sites that are highly visible, at key intersections and that screen otherwise unsightly views, should be enhanced with additional landscaping that complements the uniform streetscaping. Public and private partnership will make the most impact. Landscape enhancements even on small parcels add up to big improvements when implemented Corridor-wide. By adding landscaping to an empty parkway, both the vehicular & pedestrian experience is improved. As with other site landscaping, driver sight lines must always be considered in selecting plant location and height. Landscaping, both private and public, should be incorporated along 25th Avenue as street trees, possible median plantings, and parking lot buffering and screening to the logistics center west of *Washington Commons*.

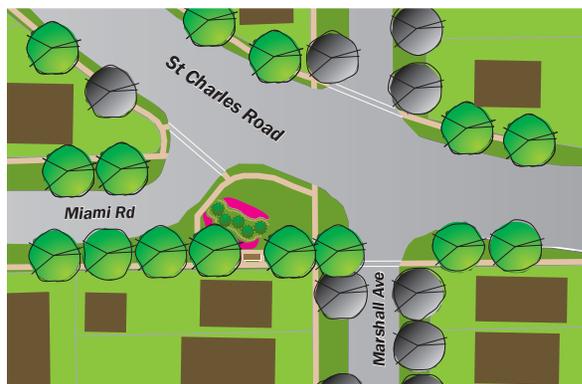
### Interim Enhancements to Existing Station

The existing Bellwood Metra Station is in need of some interim updates, even as the Village plans to relocate its function. In the short-term, additional landscaping and screening should be added near the existing Bellwood Metra Station and surrounding parking lots there to improve the commuter experience. This will also improve the character of the station for nearby neighborhoods. The Village would need to seek their own funding for these improvements since Metra has no funding for these types of improvements. These types of improvements (e.g. trail and landscaping) would need to be discussed with the UP and the IHB due to needed safety measures by the railroads (e.g. fencing). Any proposed plantings in the vicinity of Metra stations, platforms, and in commuter parking lots are subject to *Metra's Station and Parking Design Guidelines* as well as the host railroads' standards regarding sight lines, clearances of tracks and crossings, and plantings. Other enhancements should be coordinated with the Union Pacific Railroad to ensure freight trains do not complicate commuter access to the existing station.

### Urban Form & Character

New development and redevelopment within the Corridor should have the appropriate urban form and character depending where it is located along St. Charles Road (see *Section 4: Development & Design Guidelines*). For instance, redevelopment of the west end should have more residential character, while the East Gateway near 25th Avenue should create a downtown-like environment with pedestrian amenities such as landscaping and seating.

Mixed use redevelopment of the area near and west of 25th Avenue & along the Corridor will provide an attractive, walkable shopping & living district. Ground floor retail & dining should be complemented by upper floor offices & upgraded housing. The streetscape will be inviting & the entire area will act as a gateway to Bellwood.



*Landscaping, including additional parkway trees, berming, ornamental trees, grasses and flowering perennials could enhance the large blank areas of public right-of-way along the Corridor. Here, a small landscape installation at St. Charles Road at Miami Road and Marshall Avenue could provide beautification to both passersby and nearby residents.*

**Greenways & Multi-Use Trails**

An opportunity for a continuous pedestrian and bicycle trail just south of the rail line right-of-way could provide commuter and recreation routes for residents. The Village should consider funding and implementing a path to improve access to the existing Bellwood Metra Station, as well as to provide linkages to recreation and other destinations in the community. Between neighborhoods and just south of the Metra/UP-West Line right-of-way, greenways and trails can form a network providing recreation and transit linkages to existing and planned facilities. These should be planned carefully to screen neighborhoods from views of the rail yards, while providing an amenity for residents to enjoy.

As a link to that east-west multi-use trail, a north-south trail is recommended along Addison Creek, connecting south to Stevenson Park on Washington Boulevard. This connection will make use of unused property along the creek, provide a view of the creek from St. Charles Road and a linkage between the Corridor and community facilities on Washington Boulevard.

The proposed trail should not be considered within the Metra/UP-W Line or Indiana Harbor Belt Railroad's right-of-way. Proposed Improve-

ments (e.g. trail and landscaping) near the railroad right-of-way would need to be discussed with the UP and the IHB due to needed safety measures by the railroads (e.g. fencing).

**Village Gateways**

Village Gateways should be enhanced with additional landscaping and more permanent signage than the existing signs. Primary gateways should welcome passersby & set the tone for the streetscape enhancements & community character. The design of these monuments should relate to the other streetscape improvements. Gateway properties can also be improved by limiting St. Charles Road access, especially near sites where monuments are situated. Additional landscaping should be used to screen parking areas and provide a backdrop for the Village welcome signage.

The Village should plan and implement gateway sign and site enhancements, urban design elements along the Corridor, and coordinated landscaping. Key Intersection improvements & landscape enhancements should beautify the Mannheim Road intersection & the approach to this prominent crossing.

**Uniform Streetscaping**

Bellwood can increase its image and appearance by beautifying St. Charles Road and 25th Avenue within the public right-of-way. Lighting, parkway landscaping, specialty paving, planters and other hardscape elements can be added along the length of St. Charles Road, 25th Avenue and Washington Boulevard to unify the entire community. Additional, attractive bus shelters should accompany other streetscaping to make the area attractive & functional for Pace & Metra commuters.

This kind of effort also encourages private property owners to improve and enhance the appearance of residences and businesses. These enhancements will improve Bellwood's identity and encourage positive pedestrian activity.



*Decorative paving and street furniture such as benches and trash receptacles, not only can provide inviting pedestrian amenities, but positively contribute to the character and image of the community.*



*Village gateways and key intersections should be improved with landscape and hardscape features. The elements of the design should be used throughout the Study Area to unify the image of Bellwood.*



*Planters set in the public right-of-way, particularly in mixed use areas, can be replanted seasonally. This brings life, color and decoration to the Corridor.*





## **Section 4: Design & Development Guidelines**



## Section 4: Design & Development Guidelines

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The Design and Development Guidelines address both the public and private improvements within the St. Charles Road Corridor. The Guidelines are based upon community input and the Corridor's Vision, Goals and Objectives.

In general, the design guidelines strive to:

- Promote public and private improvements and developments that will help create and reinforce the desired character of the St. Charles Road Corridor.
- Foster new development and redevelopment within the Study Area.
- Improve Bellwood's image and appearance by improving the quality of existing and future structures and developments.
- Ensure high-quality and compatible building and site designs throughout the Corridor.
- Establish development patterns appropriate to the specific goals and conditions of subareas within the Corridor.

The guidelines do not attempt to dictate specific architectural styles or require buildings to have the same appearance. Rather, they strive to promote a level of quality, compatibility, and consistency that will help transform the Study Area into a distinctive area for residents, businesses, employees, shoppers, commuters and visitors alike.

The guidelines for all sites and buildings are focused on promoting high-quality and compatible developments that will help create a

traditional and unified image and identity for the St. Charles Road Corridor. While the guidelines are specific enough to ensure design compatibility, they are also flexible enough to allow for individual creativity on the part of property owners, architects, and builders.

The guidelines presented below should be used by Village staff, Planning Commission and Village Board in reviewing plans and proposals for all new developments within the Corridor. They should be considered "supplements" to the Village's Zoning Ordinance and other applicable codes and ordinances. Architects, property owners and developers should also use the guidelines as a reference as they prepare plans for new development projects within the Study Area.

The Guidelines are presented below in the following categories:

- Residential
- Retail & Neighborhood Commercial
- Mixed Use Development
- Light Industrial
- General Building
- Public Improvements

## **Village of Bellwood: St. Charles Road Redevelopment Plan**

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### **Residential Guidelines**

- New housing construction should be respectful of the scale and character of surrounding properties, particularly in terms of building materials, colors, and building mass and proportion.
- While new residential buildings may be set back from the property line, setbacks should be consistent along a block front. Residential buildings should be aligned with and face the street.
- Landscaping and decorative fencing should be used to maintain the “streetwall” along streets that serve multi-family residential buildings.
- Residential sites should be attractively landscaped, particularly front setbacks and the perimeter of parking and service areas.
- Where possible, parking to serve multi-family uses should be located inside the primary buildings at or below grade; if garages or surface lots are provided, they should be heavily landscaped, constructed of the same materials as the primary structure and located behind the residential buildings.
- Apartment and condominium units could also be promoted on the upper floors of mixed-use buildings.

### **Retail & Neighborhood Commercial Guidelines**

- The first floor on new commercial buildings should have a strong pedestrian orientation with display windows, attractive detailing, and convenient and “hospitable” entrances.
- The façades of large new multi-tenant commercial buildings should be visually divided into 20 to 30 feet “bays” to reflect a traditional commercial development pattern. Rooflines, cornice treatments, and the design and placement of columns, pilasters, and windows, could be used to achieve this objective.
- Covered walkways, such as arcades, should be encouraged along the fronts of commercial buildings to create a “pedestrian-friendly” orientation. However, the columns of the arcade should be aligned with the façade of the building.
- New buildings should have attractive rear façades that are comparable to front façades. Rear entrances to stores and shops should be encouraged in blocks where public parking or pedestrian walkways are located behind the buildings.

- All service entrances, dumpsters, loading facilities, and outdoor storage should be located at the rear of buildings; they should be screened from view along sidewalks and roadways through the use of decorative screening, masonry walls, and/or evergreen plantings.
- Any business that is allowed to have a “drive-thru” facility should be sited so that drive-through lanes and pickup windows are not prominently featured.
- Doors on commercial buildings should be attractive and inviting to pedestrians. Recessed entrances and the use of awnings and canopies should be encouraged to define and protect entryways. Multiple entrances should be encouraged along a block front to enhance pedestrian activity and add visual interest to the street.
- Main entrances should be located at the front of the building and should face the sidewalk; corner buildings might take advantage of their prominent locations with angled corner entrances. Secondary entrances should also be encouraged from public parking areas or secondary pedestrian walkways.

## **Section 4: Design & Development Guidelines**

- Large ground-floor display windows should be encouraged in new commercial and mixed-use construction. Metal or wood frame windows over solid bulkheads are recommended; glazing should not extend to the ground.
- Upper floor windows should be recessed, not flush with the surface of the building, and should be smaller than first floor windows. Bay windows are also acceptable, provided they are in character with the architectural style of a building.
- Upper floor windows should appear to be individual openings in a solid wall, rather than as continuous rows of windows separated only by their frames; curtain-wall window treatments are not appropriate within commercial areas of the Corridor.
- Window glazing should be clear or slightly tinted; dark, mirrored, or reflective glass should not be permitted.
- Any existing or proposed outdoor seating areas, should be well landscaped and incorporated into the overall site design. Outdoor seating areas should be set back and screened from parking areas and driving aisles.
- Awnings and canopies should be encouraged to provide weather protection and to add visual interest at the street level. Design of these should be integrated into the façade and should be in character with the architectural style of the building.
- Simple pitched awning profiles, either fixed or retractable, are preferred. Arched or rounded awnings should be discouraged, unless they are compatible with and appropriate to the architectural style of a building.
- Internally illuminated or back lit awnings and canopies, shingle and mansard canopies, and plastic awnings should not be permitted.
- Exterior building signs should be limited to business identification and description; exterior advertising signs should not be permitted. The size, material, color, and shape of building signs should complement the architectural style and scale of the building.
- Wall-mounted signs should be encouraged, although signage should not project above the cornice line or be mounted on the roof of a building. Raised, individual letters mounted directly on the building, as well as signs that use light colors for lettering and darker colors for backgrounds, should be encouraged.
- When a building contains multiple ground-floor tenants, signage for all businesses should be compatible in design and consistent in placement.
- Street numbers should be prominently displayed at the main entrance to every business and be clearly visible from the street.
- Free-standing signage is not recommended within the Corridor, except for shared, low-profile monument signs for multi-tenant commercial properties. Monument signs should be attractively landscaped and constructed of traditional building materials similar to the primary building on the site.
- The letters of a monument sign should be internally illuminated with a white light source. External illumination may be appropriate for a natural metal or “engraved” stone monument sign.
- Pole signs, pylon signs, and billboards should not be permitted in the Corridor.

## **Village of Bellwood: St. Charles Road Redevelopment Plan**

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### **Mixed Use Development**

#### ***Building Design, Proportion & Orientation***

- Require building types near 25th Avenue and also in the redevelopment area west of Mannheim to be mixed use, multi-level buildings that promote first floor retail and office and residential above the street level.
- Identify key historic buildings of good condition for adaptive reuse in the blocks between the post office and 25th Avenue. The architecture of these early Bellwood buildings provides a historic foundation for details, massing and materials for new development.
- Require street level commercial uses to establish a comfortable pedestrian environment.
- Mixed Use buildings should create a “street wall”, creating a sense of enclosure. The ratio of width and height (as measured horizontally between opposing store fronts and vertically from sidewalk to roofline) should be between 2:1 and 3:1.

- New development within the Mixed Use areas should avoid extreme differences in building height. Consideration should be given to the height of adjacent buildings.
- Four story design elements could be acceptable in select locations, provided they are in character with the surrounding area. Vertical architectural elements could include clock towers, spires or bell towers. These elements should be considered as design “highlights” at key locations.
- The third and fourth stories of buildings within the Mixed Use areas should be setback to soften the bulk and visual scale of the building.
- Townhomes and other multi-unit buildings within the Mixed Use areas should be 2 ½-3 stories in height and also utilize upper floor setbacks. Where townhomes or multi-unit buildings directly border or face single-family uses, the height of these buildings should be restricted to two-stories in height.
- Buildings within the Mixed Use areas shall be positioned at the front property line. Buildings located on corner lots shall be built out to both fronting property lines.
- New construction in the Mixed Use areas shall occupy the entire width of the lot to avoid gaps between buildings and discontinuities in the streetwall, except where pedestrian access to rear parking is designed and planned for.
- Where maintaining a continuous streetwall is not possible or desirable, the streetwall shall be maintained through the use of landscaping, pedestrian amenities, and decorative walls or fencing.
- Buildings throughout the Mixed Use areas shall face the street, with strong pedestrian orientation.
- Development within the Mixed Use areas shall consist of traditional or transitional architectural styles. Modern architectural styles are discouraged.
- New buildings should be constructed of traditional masonry building materials such as brick or stone; these materials should be used on all sides of the building. Stucco, siding of all types, and any other exterior wall covering are not permitted within the Mixed Use areas.



*New buildings should include a complementary palette of materials that encourage retail and pedestrian activity on the street level and allow for upper end office and residential ownership above.*

## Section 4: Design & Development Guidelines

- Since parking will be promoted in the rear of the buildings, new construction within Bellwood's Mixed Use areas should have "360 degree" appearance, with design and detail consideration for all visible sides.
- The front doors of new buildings should reflect the scale, placement, and proportions of traditional downtown and civic center buildings; recessed entrances are encouraged.
- Main entrances shall be at the front of the building and face the sidewalk. Buildings situated on corner lots may take advantage of their prominent locations with angled, or rounded corner entrances.
- Large ground-floor display windows and bays are strongly encouraged for retail and entertainment uses within the Mixed Use areas and should be in consistent proportion with historic downtowns.
- Windows shall complement the architectural style of the building. Window glazing shall be clear or slightly tinted; dark, mirrored, or reflective glass are not permitted. Where existing windows are important architectural features in a building's façade, window size and configuration should be maintained; window openings should never be covered over or boarded up.
- Ground floor windows can be used for displays, however business owners are encouraged to allow full and unobstructed views into their businesses. Obstructing windows from the interior of a building with shelving, display cases, signage or other objects is not permitted.
- The roofs of commercial buildings should be flat, shallow-sloped or gabled. Roof parapets should be utilized to create an interesting building profile and to hide vents and other rooftop equipment. Cornices, and other decorative detail are encouraged along the rooflines of buildings.
- The predominant colors for Mixed Use area buildings should consist of earth tones. The natural brick and stone colors should predominate. Darker or lighter hues could be used as accent trim. Ceramic tile, terracotta, brick, stone, and glass surfaces are not painted, unless it is appropriate to the architectural style.
- Awnings and canopies shall be integrated into the façade of all commercial buildings within the Mixed Use areas and shall be in character with the architectural style of the building. Awnings shall be properly placed above entrances and may extend over storefront windows. The color of awnings and canopies shall complement and enhance the overall color scheme of the building façade. Awnings and canopies shall be positioned at least eight feet above the sidewalk.
- Awnings should be made of a canvas or durable fabric material that can be easily cleaned. Hard plastic, or other materials that could be cracked or broken are not permitted. Awnings and canopies that become windblown or torn shall be repaired immediately.
- Back lit awnings and canopies, shingle and mansard canopies, and metal and plastic awnings are not permitted within the Mixed Use areas.
- Awnings and canopies shall be used only when they are compatible with, or complement the architectural style of the building. Awnings should not appear out of place, "forced", or as an afterthought.

## ***Village of Bellwood: St. Charles Road Redevelopment Plan***

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### ***Lighting & Signage***

- Lighting shall be used to illuminate entries into the Mixed Use areas, signage, displays, and pedestrian and parking areas, the Village's proposed relocated and consolidated Bellwood/Melrose Park Station as well as to highlight significant architectural elements.
- Most exterior lighting sources shall be concealed to provide direct illumination; where concealment is not practical, light fixtures shall be compatible with overall storefront design. Spotlighting is not permitted for commercial buildings within the Mixed Use areas.
- Street lighting within the Mixed Use areas shall be at a pedestrian scale. Light standards shall be between 12'-15'. Parking areas within the Mixed Use areas should contain both pedestrian and vehicular scale lighting.
- A common style of pedestrian-scale light fixtures should be selected and used throughout the Mixed Use areas. The style of light fixture should enhance the desired atmosphere of the Mixed Use areas and complement the architecture of buildings.
- Raised, individual letters mounted directly on the building, as well as signs that use light colors for lettering and darker colors for backgrounds, are encouraged in Mixed Use areas. Wall-mounted signs shall be designed as an integrated component of the building façade, and should not cover important architectural details. The size, material, color, and shape of signs should complement the architectural style and scale of the building.
- When a building contains multiple storefronts, signage for all businesses shall be compatible in design and consistent in placement.
- Exterior signs should be limited to business identification and description. Signs for special promotions, sales, products, and advertising signs are discouraged.
- The backs of existing commercial buildings shall be well kept, with rear façades being "comparable" to front façades.

### ***Parking***

- Parking lots shall be located behind buildings. Parking lots in front of buildings should not be permitted within the Mixed Use areas.
- Vehicular access to parking lots shall be provided from alleys or side streets. Curb cuts and access drives are not permitted along pedestrian shopping streets.
- Pedestrian access to parking lots shall be provided through planned walkways located in gaps between buildings.
- Secondary rear entrances to stores and shops are encouraged in blocks where public parking or pedestrian walkways are located behind the buildings.
- Parking lots shall be screened from view along sidewalks and roadways through the use of low masonry walls or evergreen plantings and decorative fencing.
- Parking lot lighting should consist of vehicular scale lighting and pedestrian scale lighting. Excessive lighting and light pollution shall be avoided.
- Commuter parking areas should consist of daily fee parking spaces. During off-peak times, such as evenings and weekends, designated areas of commuter lots shall be designed to accommodate shoppers and special events within the Mixed Use areas.

## **Section 4: Design & Development Guidelines**

### **Light Industrial**

- Building materials should be of high quality and durability, and should complement other new buildings within the Corridor.
- New buildings should be constructed primarily of traditional masonry building materials such as brick or stone. These materials should be used on all sides of the building that face a street, walkway or parking area, or that experience substantial “wear and tear.” Recommended accent materials include stone, simulated stone, terra cotta, and metal trim.
- New all metal buildings should not be permitted.
- Loading docks and overhead doors should be designed such that they do not directly face the public right-of-way.

### **General Guidelines**

The guidelines in this section are generally applicable to all building types and sites within the Study Area. They should be considered in combination with specific requirements for the use, such as Residential or Retail & Neighborhood Commercial.

### **Building Placement and Orientation**

- Buildings should have a strong visual and physical relationship to the street to enhance the Village’s identity and pedestrian orientation. However, buildings should be attractive at both a pedestrian and vehicular scale.
- Buildings throughout the Corridor should face the street; the placement of buildings at odd or irregular angles to the street should be avoided. However, corner buildings might take advantage of their prominent locations with angled or recessed corner entrances or other small setbacks.
- In locations characterized by building setbacks, side yards and surface parking lots, the street frontage should be maintained through the use of low-profile landscaping and decorative walls or fencing.

### **Building Scale and Proportion**

- Buildings may have either a pitched roof profile or a flat roof with a parapet wall. Parapets should be encouraged to create an interesting building profile and to hide vents, HVAC, and other rooftop equipment. Mansard roofs should not be permitted within the Study Area.
- Exterior building design features that distinguish Bellwood’s buildings and create an image and identity should be encouraged, Decorative cornices, pilasters, columns, reliefs, medallions, dormers, are among the elements that can be incorporated.
- Buildings consisting of entirely retail uses should be primarily one-story in height. Buildings where upper floors are to be used as condominiums or office space shall be no greater than three-stories in height.
- Architectural details should be visible from the street. Buildings shall not be setback so far as to diminish the aesthetic impact of the building on passing pedestrians and motorists. Buildings shall be attractive at both a pedestrian and vehicular scale.

## ***Village of Bellwood: St. Charles Road Redevelopment Plan***

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### ***Building Materials and Colors***

- Building materials should be of high quality and durability, and should complement other new buildings within the Corridor and the Village.
- New buildings should be constructed primarily of traditional masonry building materials such as brick or stone. These materials should be used on all sides of the building that face a street, walkway or parking area, or that experience substantial “wear and tear.” Recommended accent materials include stone, simulated stone, terra cotta, and wood and metal trim.
- While “exterior insulation finish systems” (EIFS) might be used in limited quantities as an accent material, they should not be employed as a primary building material or be used on the street level of a building. Rough sawed wood, aluminum siding, rustic shingles and shakes, and plastic or metal panels should be discouraged within the Corridor.
- Color should be used to unite the elements of a façade and to highlight architectural features. However, the colors on individual buildings should complement and be compatible with the colors of nearby buildings.
- The predominant colors for new buildings should be relatively muted and subtle. While the natural brick and stone colors of red, buff, cream, and gray should predominate, contrasting and complementary colors should also be used to accent building components, highlight architectural elements, and add richness and variety to the Corridor.

### ***Building Lighting***

- Lighting should be used to illuminate entries, signage, displays, and pedestrian and parking areas, as well as to highlight significant architectural elements.
- Building lighting should be subtle and understated; light fixtures should be designed and oriented to produce minimal glare and spillover onto nearby properties.
- Most exterior lighting sources should be concealed; where concealment is not practical, light fixtures should be compatible with overall building design.
- Down-lighting should be encouraged on all commercial buildings; spot-lighting should be limited to major features and key landmarks within the Corridor such as “gateway” signage.
- Incandescent lighting creates a warm atmosphere and should be encouraged; if neon lighting is used, colors should be compatible with and complement the façade of the building.

## **Section 4: Design & Development Guidelines**

### ***Parking Lots & Structures***

- Whenever possible, parking lots should be located behind buildings; parking in front of buildings or at corner locations should be discouraged.
- Curb cuts and access drives should be minimized and they should not be located near intersections or primary building entrances.
- Parking lots should be screened from view along sidewalks and roadways through the use of low masonry walls, hedge plantings, or shrubs.
- Parking lots should have curbed perimeters; curbed landscaped islands and clearly marked pedestrian pathways should be provided within the interior of parking areas to avoid large expanses of asphalt and to enhance pedestrian safety.
- All parking lots should be paved, well marked, and designed for proper drainage. Parking lots that are used during evening hours should be adequately illuminated.
- Whenever possible, parking lots should be shared between multiple stores and businesses to allow for a more efficient lot layout and to minimize curb cuts, provided there is no violation to the Village's zoning ordinance. Cross access between adjacent parking lots should also be encouraged.
- Parking structures should have an architectural style and design character that is similar to the primary building it serves. In general, the design treatment of parking structures, particularly the ground floors and front façades, should conform to the full range of design guidelines presented above.
- Commuter parking should be within line of sight of the station and should not be concealed if screening with landscaping and ornamental fencing is proposed.
- Parking garage rooflines and floor level articulations that are visible from the street should be parallel to the street; ramping and inclines should occur within the structure or on the interior of the block.
- The appearance of parking structures might also be "softened" through the use of planter boxes on the upper floors.
- Uncovered parking on the top level of a structure should employ roof-top planters around the full perimeter of the building.

### ***Private Landscaping and Site Improvements***

- Planters and landscaped areas should be encouraged adjacent to buildings and to buffer parking and service areas. Plantings should consist of low evergreen and/or deciduous shrubs planted in conjunction with low-growing annual or perennial plants and groundcover.
- A landscaped buffer at least eight feet in width should be provided around the perimeter of surface parking lots.
- In conjunction with landscaping, decorative fencing should be encouraged to delineate and screen parking and service facilities, outdoor storage areas, etc. Low-profile wrought iron fencing or masonry walls are recommended; chain link fencing should not be permitted.
- Maintenance programs should be established to ensure that private landscaping is adequately cared for and that its value is retained over time. Regular maintenance should include turf mowing, periodic fertilization, pruning, and the clean-up of litter and debris. Irrigation systems should also be required where possible.
- Covered walkways, such as arcades, are encouraged along the fronts of multi-tenant commercial buildings to create a "pedestrian-friendly" orientation. The columns of the arcade shall be aligned with the façade of the building.

## Village of Bellwood: St. Charles Road Redevelopment Plan

### Public Improvements

In addition to site and building improvements on private property, a range of projects should be undertaken within the public rights-of-way and on publicly owned property to enhance the image and appearance of St. Charles Road and 25th Avenue streetscape to create a safe, attractive, and “hospitable” shopping, living, and leisure-time environment.

These public sector improvements can also help promote new private investment and development, and attract additional visitors and business patrons to the Village and the redevelopment areas recommended within the Study Areas (see p 29 Priority Redevelopment Sites).

In general, it is recommended that the Village establish a Village-wide design system for public improvements to be applied in various parts of the Village and specifically along St. Charles Road and 25th Avenue. While the streetscape elements should be based on the architecture, history, and traditional character of Bellwood, it should also establish a unique new image and identity for the Village and the Corridor

The following guidelines provide a preliminary framework for the design treatment of streets, sidewalks, streetscape facilities, and other pedestrian and open space amenities.

### Streets

- Even though safe and convenient vehicular access and circulation is essential, the Corridor should be improved and redeveloped in a manner that encourages alternative modes of transportation, including walking, bicycling and transit usage, in order to reduce the reliance on automobile travel.
- Opportunities for the construction of landscaped medians at select locations in along St. Charles Road should be considered. For instance, medians would enhance the areas proposed for pedestrian-oriented, mixed use development, since they enhance the appearance of the roadway and calm traffic.
- Measures should be taken to prohibit on-street parking for commercial and office uses within nearby residential neighborhoods.
- Circulation through the streets and alleys within the Study Area should be studied and considered. Two-way traffic on most streets will reduce frustration and speeding on streets and alleys, although restrictions on turning movements at St. Charles, Mannheim Road and 25th Avenue should be used.
- Contrasting paving materials, landscaping, on-street parking, medians, and curb “bump-outs” can all be used to help calm and reduce the speed of traffic, and ease pedestrian circulation.
- Pedestrian crossings should be improved along St. Charles Road at the intersections of 46th Avenue, Mannheim Road, Bellwood Avenue, Eastern Avenue, 27th Avenue and 25th Avenue making it safer and more comfortable for pedestrians and bicyclists. This may entail widening sidewalks, constructing

*Both private and public investment in landscaping and streetscaping will enhance and unify the St. Charles Road Corridor. Street lighting for vehicular and pedestrian travel will beautify the area and bring a sense of safety that residents desire.*



## **Section 4: Design & Development Guidelines**

curb extensions, improved pavement markings, pedestrian-compatible traffic signals, and other measures. Clearly marked (decorative) crosswalks should also be provided at these key locations.

- To improve visibility and safety, crosswalks should be made prominent and noticeable by employing a change in paving materials, texture and color. Small pylons and bollard lighting fixtures might also be used to highlight crosswalks.

### ***Sidewalks & Multi-Use Trails***

- Sidewalks should be designed to support bicyclists and pedestrians on a relatively equal basis. All public sidewalks should be a minimum of five feet in width. In locations of heavy pedestrian use, such as the proposed mixed use areas, sidewalks should be a minimum of eight feet, but preferably wider, up to fifteen feet.
- A “buffer” zone or parkway between the sidewalk and the street should be constructed wherever possible. This zone should consist of a grass parkway with street trees and light fixtures, or a paved area with trees in grates, lights, raised landscape planters and street furniture.
- Sidewalks at key Corridor intersections should consist of specialty paving with sidewalk bump-outs at key intersections to assist in street crossings, slow traffic, provide additional space for street furniture, and eliminate parking near intersections.
- All public and private sidewalks within the Study Area should comply with appropriate ADA standards (Americans With Disabilities Act).

### ***Landscaping***

- Street trees should be planted in along both sides of St. Charles Road and 25th Avenue where there are gaps between street trees. Species and spacing should conform to the landscape requirements in the Bellwood Zoning Code.
- Parkway landscaping should consist of salt-tolerant street trees, shrubs, groundcover and perennials. Plantings in raised beds, planters, urns, or other containers should be considered along the curb line in selected locations and to highlight building entries and special activity areas.
- Street trees and other landscaping along the public rights-of-way should be protected from motorized and pedestrian traffic by curbs, tree grates, and other devices. Evergreen shrubs are encouraged in light of their ability to provide year-round color and interest, but carefully specified in locations due to higher salt intolerances.

## ***Village of Bellwood: St. Charles Road Redevelopment Plan***

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### ***Lighting***

- Lighting along St. Charles Road and 25th Avenue should consist of both roadway lighting and decorative pedestrian lighting.
- While roadway lighting should be consistent with Village codes and regulations, light standards within the Corridor should be no more than 20 to 30 feet in height in order to be in scale with new developments.
- Pedestrian light fixtures should be included in mixed use, pedestrian areas and approximately 12 to 15 feet, and be of a style and character that would complement existing and proposed development.
- Pylons and bollard lighting should be considered as accents and for ornamental purposes. These fixtures could be used to highlight crosswalks, open spaces, seating areas, and major pedestrian ways.

### ***Public Signage***

- The Village should establish a signage system that can guide and direct both motorists and pedestrians to key destinations within the Study Area and the Village.
- “Gateway” sign sites should be enhanced further with landscaping and site improvements. In addition to signage, gateway features should include special landscaping, lighting and paving materials.
- Informational and wayfinding signs should be provided at key locations to direct pedestrians to businesses and stores, and to announce special activities and events within the area.
- Banners attached to street light standards should also be used to commemorate special events within the Village.

### ***Park, Open Space, Recreation and Pedestrian Amenities***

- Open spaces, courtyards, outdoor seating areas and plazas should be promoted as a part of private development projects within the Study Area.
- Improvement and development of the commercial areas should include a unified system of “street furnishings,” such as seating areas, trash receptacles, drinking fountains, bike racks, and other pedestrian amenities. Street furnishings should reflect a traditional design theme, and be consistent with the materials, colors and architectural styles to be promoted within the Corridor.
- Trash receptacles should be placed along each block front, preferably at or near corners or other high activity areas. Benches and drinking fountains should be located within park sites, open spaces or high activity areas. Bike parking should be provided in visible areas and near main entrances to buildings. Bollards should be used at curb side, along streets where sidewalks directly abut parking or traffic lanes.
- Bike parking should be provided in visible areas and near main entrances to buildings. Bollards should be used at curb side, along streets where sidewalks directly abut parking or traffic lanes.

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## **Section 4: Design & Development Guidelines**

- Linkages from area parks, school sites, and the multi-use trails should be enhanced through wayfinding signage, paving materials, plantings, and branding.
- Pieces of public art may also be considered at key locations along the public rights-of-way in high visibility areas. Businesses or institutions within the Village might be recruited to sponsor public art.

### ***Public Utilities***

- Where possible, utility lines within along the Corridor should be placed underground. Overhead wires should travel along rear property lines or alleyways for properties adjacent to St. Charles Road.





## **Section 5: Implementation Strategies**

The final section lays out specific actions to implement the recommendations of the Plan and highlights resources that may be available to support those actions. The implementation strategies are keyed directly to the Priority Redevelopment Sites identified in Section 3 in order to tightly link the action agenda to these opportunities, which are instrumental in reaching the area’s potential and the Village’s vision for the St. Charles Road Corridor. Many of the issues and opportunities identified in Priority Sites reflect conditions that are present more generally in the Corridor as a whole. Therefore, addressing them on a site-specific basis also will drive the effort to improve the entire area.

The Implementation Plan is intended as a “road map” for Village staff and officials in their efforts to realize the goals and vision set forth in Section 2 of this document. It also is a reference for other stakeholders and interested parties, such as residents, business owners, community organizations, and potential developers, for determining their opportunities to engage the process and participate in reinvestment in the area.

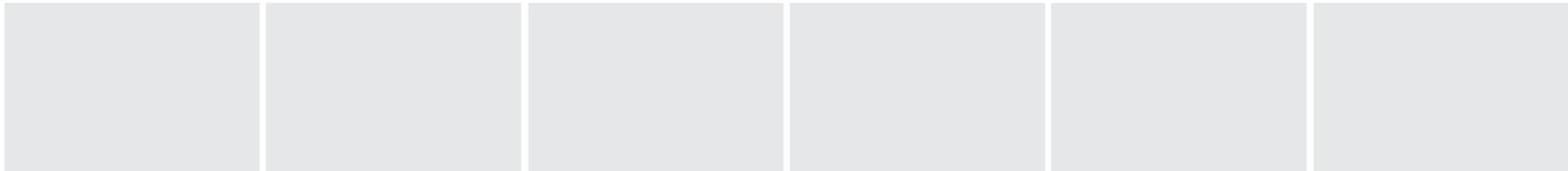
***Priority Redevelopment Sites***

The Development Plan identifies seven Priority Redevelopment Sites (see page 29). In order to guide the Village’s allocation of efforts and financial resources, these seven priority sites have been sorted into two tiers based on an assessment of the following characteristics:

- Size and scope of the opportunity;
- Catalytic potential for stimulating additional investment;
- Potential complexity and time frame for implementation; and
- Resources needed to accomplish redevelopment.

First tier priorities were judged to exhibit a significantly greater magnitude in most or all of these characteristics than second tier priorities.

An Implementation Matrix table on the following page summarizes the priority sites, their redevelopment needs, the implementation steps, and potential funding sources. An illustration of the site locations is included in Section 3 on page 29. Detailed discussion of the implementation strategy for each site follows.



## Section 5: Implementation Strategies

### Village of Bellwood: St. Charles Road Redevelopment Plan Implementation Matrix - Summary of Key Implementation Steps

Map Key	Priority Redevelopment Site	Redevelopment Needs	Priority	Potential Funding Sources	Key Steps
1	<b>Mannheim Intersection Retail Commercial</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Assemble redevelopment parcels of sufficient size for new retail</li> <li>- Reconfigure corner properties to accommodate current retail development requirements</li> <li>- Add local-serving neighborhood retail uses such as a grocery store, drug store, and other tenants drawing the customers from nearby neighborhoods</li> <li>- Streetscaping and circulation improvements</li> </ul>	First Tier <b>1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Village Capital Fund</li> <li>- Business District funds</li> <li>- Potential new TIF</li> <li>- CMAQ</li> <li>- ITEP</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Communicate with landowners regarding acquisition potential</li> <li>- Create new TIF district</li> <li>- Explore business relocation</li> <li>- Opportunistic acquisition of parcels</li> <li>- Market assembled site(s) to retailers/developers</li> <li>- Establish a Streetscape Improvements Plan and Commercial Design Guidelines</li> </ul>
2	<b>East Gateway Mixed Use Development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Façade improvements</li> <li>- Code enforcement as necessary</li> <li>- Designation of buildings to be preserved</li> <li>- Master plan for entire district</li> <li>- Streetscaping and circulation improvements</li> </ul>	First Tier <b>1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Business District funds</li> <li>- TIF funds (if district expanded)</li> <li>- SSA</li> <li>- CMAQ</li> <li>- ITEP</li> <li>- Safe Routes to School</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Active code enforcement to encourage improvement of existing buildings</li> <li>- Communicate with landowners regarding acquisition potential</li> <li>- Expand North TIF District to cover area</li> <li>- Opportunistic acquisition of parcels</li> <li>- Prepare Master Plan and Building Survey for area</li> <li>- Review zoning regulations for potential conflicts</li> <li>- Establish a Streetscape Improvements Plan and Commercial Design Guidelines</li> </ul>
3	<b>Eastern Avenue Neighborhood Commercial</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Façade improvements</li> <li>- Code enforcement as necessary</li> <li>- Marketing</li> <li>- Streetscaping and circulation improvements</li> </ul>	Second Tier <b>2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Business District funds</li> <li>- CMAQ</li> <li>- ITEP</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Active code enforcement to encourage improvement of existing buildings</li> <li>- Cooperative marketing as incentive to property owners</li> <li>- Establish a Streetscape Improvements Plan and Commercial Design Guidelines</li> </ul>
4	<b>West Gateway Neighborhood Commercial</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Façade improvements</li> <li>- Code enforcement as necessary</li> <li>- Marketing</li> <li>- Streetscaping and circulation improvements</li> </ul>	Second Tier <b>2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- CMAQ</li> <li>- ITEP</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Active code enforcement to encourage improvement of existing buildings</li> <li>- Cooperative marketing as incentive to property owners</li> <li>- Establish a Streetscape Improvements Plan and Commercial Design Guidelines</li> </ul>
5	<b>Addison Creek Park &amp; Multi-Use Trail</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Acquisition of parcels or access rights</li> <li>- Park and trail improvements</li> <li>- Active and passive amenities</li> <li>- Access linkages to surrounding neighborhoods</li> </ul>	First Tier <b>1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Village Capital Fund</li> <li>- TIF funds</li> <li>- Park/trails grants</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Communicate with landowners regarding acquisition potential</li> <li>- Assemble parcels and/or access rights</li> <li>- Prepare a park improvements plan</li> </ul>
6	<b>Retail Redevelopment/ Consolidation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Façade improvements</li> <li>- Code enforcement as necessary</li> <li>- Marketing</li> <li>- Streetscaping and circulation improvements</li> </ul>	Second Tier <b>2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- CMAQ</li> <li>- ITEP</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Active code enforcement to encourage improvement of existing buildings</li> <li>- Cooperative marketing as incentive to property owners</li> <li>- Establish a Streetscape Improvements Plan and Commercial Design Guidelines</li> </ul>
7	<b>Proposed Bellwood/Melrose Park Metra Station &amp; Transit Oriented Development (TOD)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Partnership between Village and developer</li> <li>- Relocation/consolidation of Bellwood &amp; Melrose Park Stations</li> <li>- Site control/assembly</li> <li>- Site preparation and TOD planning</li> <li>- Pedestrian linkages to 25th Ave. district</li> </ul>	First Tier <b>1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- TIF funds</li> <li>- CMAQ</li> <li>- ITEP</li> <li>- Safe Routes to School</li> <li>- Brownfields grants</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Establish public-private partnership</li> <li>- Continue station relocation studies and discussions with Metra, UP, and IHB due to operation issues</li> <li>- Explore 25th Ave. grade separation &amp; work with UP, IDOT &amp; Metra</li> <li>- Site due diligence</li> <li>- Create TOD plan and development program</li> <li>- Villages and their developer partnerships would need to fund station</li> </ul>

## Village of Bellwood: St. Charles Road Redevelopment Plan

### 1 Mannheim Intersection Retail Commercial

**Priority - 1.** This redevelopment site is a first tier priority.

**Existing Condition.** The primary issue facing this site is that the size and configuration of the existing commercial parcels at the St. Charles Road and Mannheim Road intersection are not sufficient for current standards of retail/commercial development. Parcel depth is a particular challenge, as new retail development will demand adequate off-street parking located primarily in front of the stores. The small size and diverse ownership of these parcels means that assembling a site of sufficient size will be challenging.

**Redevelopment Needs.** The intersection will not be competitive for large-scale big box retailing with better-positioned sites along North Avenue or near the Eisenhower Expressway. However, redevelopment can provide an opportunity to add local-serving neighborhood retail uses such as a grocery store, drug store, and other tenants that would primarily draw their customer base from the Study Area. If new, accessible retail space is developed at the intersection, these and other tenants such as restaurants, fast casual/fast food establishments, coffee shops, dry cleaners, hair and nail salons, video stores, and medical or financial offices could potentially be attracted. These examples are the most commonly occurring tenants in convenience and neighborhood shopping centers.

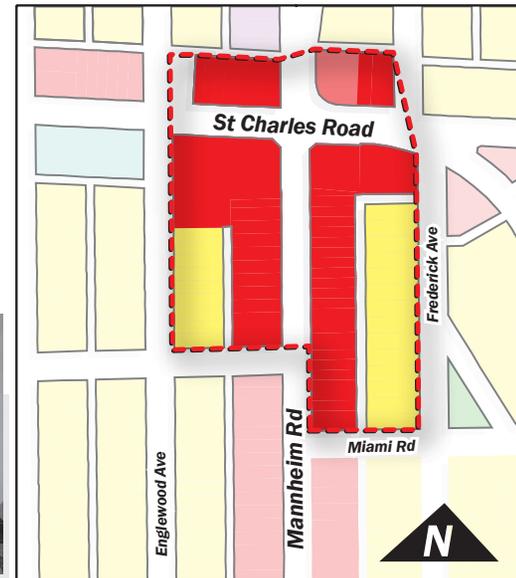
The accompanying figures illustrate possible concepts for reconfiguring parcels at the intersection to accommodate new retail development.

**Implementation Steps.** Since assembling a suitable development site will require acquisition of many individual parcels, land acquisition will be the primary challenge of implementing redevelopment. The Village should reach out to landowners to learn their near term and long term plans for their properties, and assess the likelihood of parcel availability. The potential for relocation of existing owners and/or tenants also should be explored. The Village may be in the position to make opportunistic purchases of properties if they become available. Future planning for the intersection should include establishing priorities as to which parcels could be acquired for strategic reasons in order to facilitate redevelopment.

The commercial frontages, but not the adjacent residential portions, of the Priority Site are located within the Mannheim Road Business District, which gives the Village acquisition and eminent domain authority (should it choose to use it), as well as a dedicated funding source. The Village should consider creating a new Tax Increment Financing (TIF) district encompassing the area to provide an additional funding source and reinforced acquisition authority.

It is not advisable for the Village to actively market any potential site for retail development until effective site control has been established, to ensure that it is perceived as a credible opportunity by the development community. Site control can be accomplished through outright acquisition, options to purchase, and/or agreements with landowners to work with potential developers. With a credible site in hand, the Village can market it to potential developers and retailers through broker tours, mass mailings, attendance at retail development conferences (such as ICSC), and engagement of a dedicated retail broker for the site.

*While various limitations due to parcel depth and multiple ownership, the location of these commercial parcels at the intersection of St. Charles and Mannheim Roads present other opportunities.*

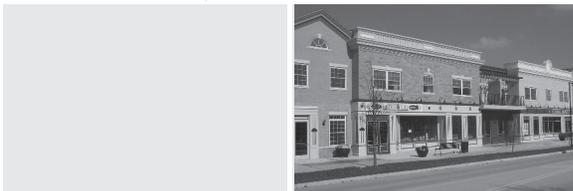


**2 East Gateway Mixed Use Development**

**Priority - 1.** This redevelopment site is a first tier priority.

**Existing Condition.** The East Gateway area, centered on the 25th Avenue intersection, is in poor condition but is rich in community facilities and historic character. The opportunity exists to create a walkable business district that potentially could link to the Village’s proposed relocated and consolidated Metra station at 25th Avenue. Additional retail/commercial development, in either new or rehabilitated buildings, is needed to stimulate pedestrian activity and serve residents of the surrounding neighborhood. As a key east gateway into Bellwood, the area’s appearance impacts the image and perception of the entire community.

**Redevelopment Needs.** The appearance and condition of buildings in the area need to be improved, potentially through a combination of facade improvement funding and active code enforcement by the Village. A survey of the existing building stock should be conducted to determine the functionality and marketability of individual structures, and to assess the level of contribution each is making to the area’s potential character. Structures deemed to be worth preserving should be designated as such and incorporated into a detailed plan for the area that also includes new buildings, parking facilities, and park spaces. Streetscape and circulation improvements are needed in the area, like the Corridor as a whole.



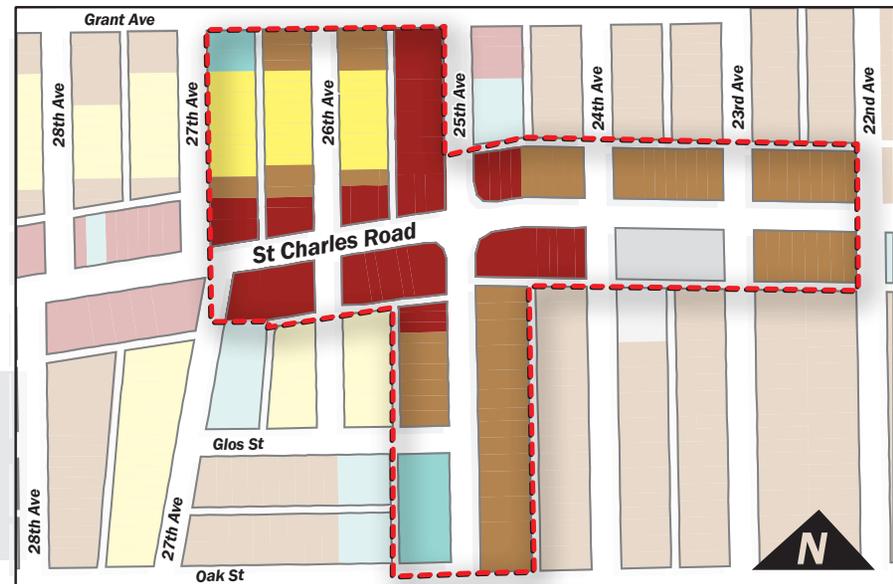
*No matter what style of architecture, buildings should be inviting, contribute to the appearance of the gateway area and provide pedestrian amenities like seating and trash receptacles.*

**Implementation Steps.** Redevelopment of the Eastern Gateway area will encompass a number of steps. Some of the primary elements are:

- The Village should reach out to and maintain contact with area landowners to track property availability and encourage the maintenance of appropriate building appearance and code standards.
- Opportunistic property acquisition by the Village could be implemented if strategic and/or historic sites come on the market and funds are available.
- Expansion of the North TIF District to include the area should be considered to provide funding for facade improvement and redevelopment activities. Expanding the North TIF, rather than creating a new district, would allow tax increment generated in either Priority Site (East Gateway or TOD) to be used in the other.
- A detailed plan for the area should be prepared,

addressing building preservation, potential new construction, land use mix, public facility needs, parking and open space needs, vehicular and pedestrian access, and other subjects.

- Zoning regulations for the area should be reviewed to ensure that existing codes do not hinder or prevent the development of pedestrian-oriented, mixed use buildings that can form a cohesive and functional business district. Zoning policy areas that often need adjustment in these situations include: allowable uses, building setback and orientation requirements, minimum parking requirements, and maximum height/density.
- Establish a Streetscape Improvements Plan and Commercial Design Guidelines.



## Village of Bellwood: St. Charles Road Redevelopment Plan

### 3 Eastern Avenue Neighborhood Commercial

**Priority - 2.** This redevelopment site is a second tier priority.

**Existing Condition.** This Priority Site is a small cluster of commercial properties at the Eastern Avenue intersection, several blocks west of what eventually becomes the East Gateway area discussed previously. The site is surrounded by single-family and multi-family residential properties. While it is not, and does not have the capacity to become, a major retail node itself, the area can provide convenience oriented goods and services to the surrounding neighborhood. The strengthening of existing commercial nodes is a goal of the Corridor Plan.

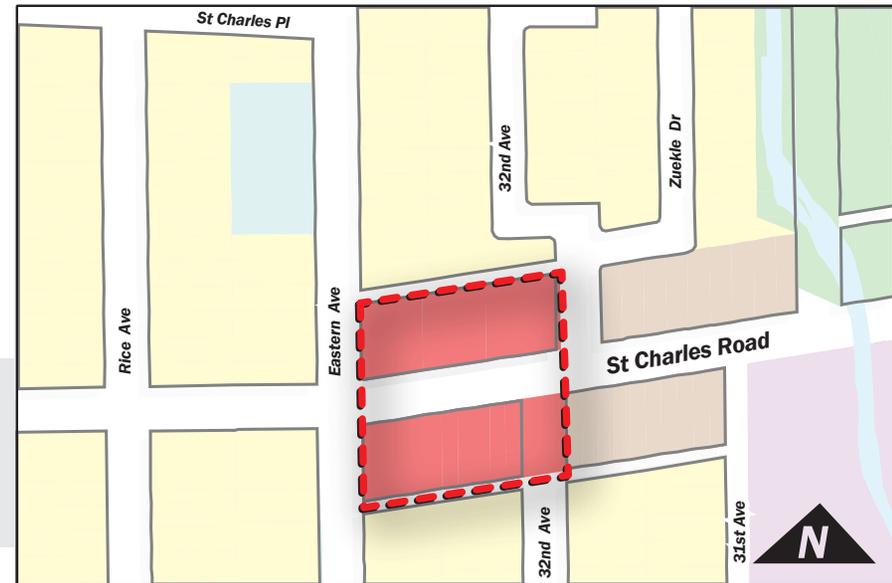
**Redevelopment Needs.** Facade improvements and other building investments could make the properties more marketable for commercial use. Alternately, complete redevelopment of the parcels could offer new opportunities if the property owner(s) is willing. Streetscape and circulation improvements are needed in the area, like the Corridor as a whole.

**Implementation Steps.** Building appearance can be maintained through active code enforcement by the Village and potential facade improvements. Funding for facade and other property improvements may be available through the St. Charles Road Business District, within which this area is located. The Village also could encourage the cooperation of property owners by making marketing opportunities available to which they otherwise would not have access. For example, the Village could create a marketing brochure for small properties and circulate it at an International Council of Shopping Centers (ICSC) conference, or include the properties in a community-level advertising campaign. If redevelopment of the area becomes an option, zoning regulations for the area should be reviewed to ensure that existing codes do not hinder or prevent the development of pedestrian-oriented,

retail or mixed use buildings. The Village also should establish a Streetscape Improvements Plan and Commercial Design Guidelines for the Corridor.



*This neighborhood commercial node is situated within a well established residential area, at Eastern Avenue. New uses and improvements should address residents' desire for useful convenience uses and an easy access neighborhood shopping area.*



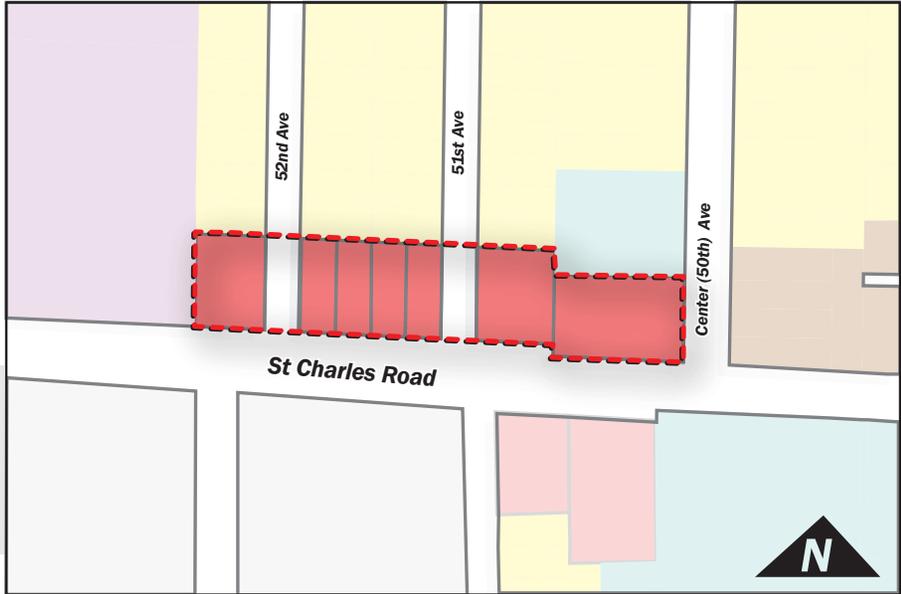
### 4 West Gateway Neighborhood Commercial

**Priority - 2.** This redevelopment site is a second tier priority.

**Existing Condition.** This Priority Site is a small cluster of commercial and office properties at the western end of the Corridor, close to the corporate boundary of the Village. The site is surrounded by a mix of residential, commercial, institutional, and industrial properties. Like the Eastern Avenue area discussed previously, it does not have the capacity to be a major retail node. However, the area can provide convenience oriented goods and services to the surrounding neighborhood and office opportunities to small businesses seeking to locate in or near Bellwood. The proximity of the Interstate 290 interchange a short drive to the west could make this site an attractive office location. As a key western gateway into Bellwood, the area’s appearance impacts the image and perception of the entire community.

**Redevelopment Needs.** Facade improvements and other building investments could make the properties more marketable for commercial and/or office use. Alternately, complete redevelopment of the parcels could offer new opportunities if the property owner(s) is willing. Streetscape and circulation improvements are needed in the area, like the Corridor as a whole.

**Implementation Steps.** Building appearance can be maintained through active code enforcement by the Village and potential facade improvements. While a dedicated funding source for improvements is not currently available, the Village could encourage the cooperation of property owners by making marketing opportunities available to which they otherwise would not have access. For example, in return for facade or other improvements by owners the Village could create a marketing brochure for small properties and circulate it at a retail industry conference, or include the properties in a community-level advertising campaign. If redevelopment of the area becomes an option, design guidelines should ensure that buildings are developed with more of a residential character that complements nearby neighborhoods. The Village also should establish a Streetscape Improvements Plan and Commercial Design Guidelines for the Corridor.



*With a mix of offices, commercial business, and community uses the western gateway is another opportunity for enhancements and investment.*

## Village of Bellwood: St. Charles Road Redevelopment Plan

### 5 Addison Creek Park & Multi-Use Trail

**Priority - 1.** This redevelopment site is a first tier priority.

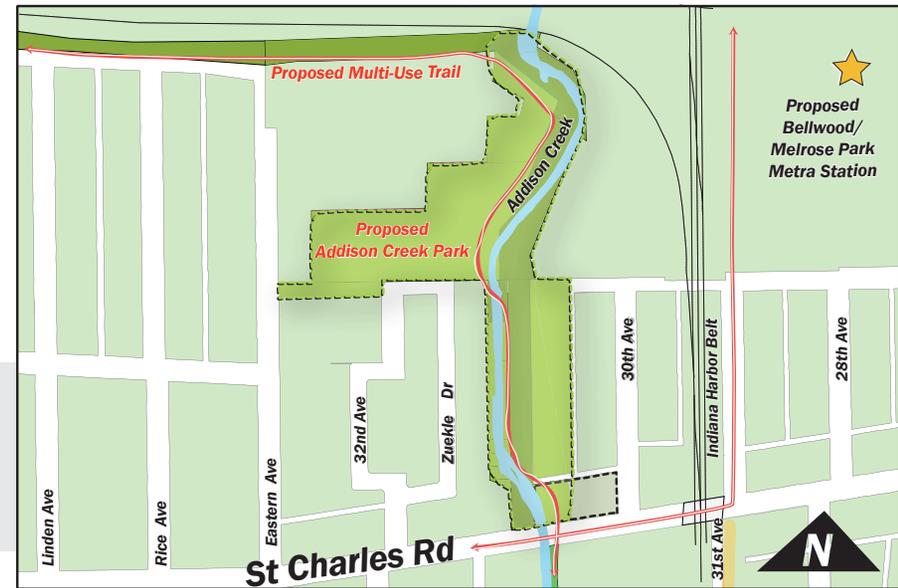
**Existing Condition.** Open space along Addison Creek north of St. Charles Road is unused or under-utilized. This land is in both public and private hands, and frequently experiences flooding during heavy rains. Public access is difficult or nonexistent. The creek area is included in the recently established North TIF District, which can potentially provide a funding source for improvements and/or land acquisition.

**Redevelopment Needs.** Land parcels or access easements (at minimum) should be assembled by the Village to create a continuous public park along the creek with connections to Eastern Avenue, Grant Avenue, and St. Charles Road. Both active and passive recreational amenities should be incorporated into the design. The proposed trail must be located outside of the Metra/UP-W Line or Indiana Harbor Belt Railroad's right-of-way. Proposed improvements (e.g. trail and landscaping) near the railroad right-of-way should be discussed with the UP and the IHB due to needed safety measures by the railroads (e.g. fencing). The Village would need to seek their own funding for the proposed trail.

**Implementation Steps.** The first step will be to prepare a strategy for assembling the necessary parcels or access rights to the properties along the creek. The privately held parcels should be identified, prioritized, and targeted. The Village should maintain communication with landowners in the targeted area even if acquisition is not immediately possible in case the owners change their plans sometime in the future. After a sufficient area has been assembled, the Village can initiate a planning process to design the park and develop a program of amenities. Both land acquisition and park planning can potentially be funded through the TIF district.



A park along Addison Creek will provide active and passive open space for the area residents and capitalize on an existing asset in the Corridor.



**6 Retail Redevelopment/Consolidation**

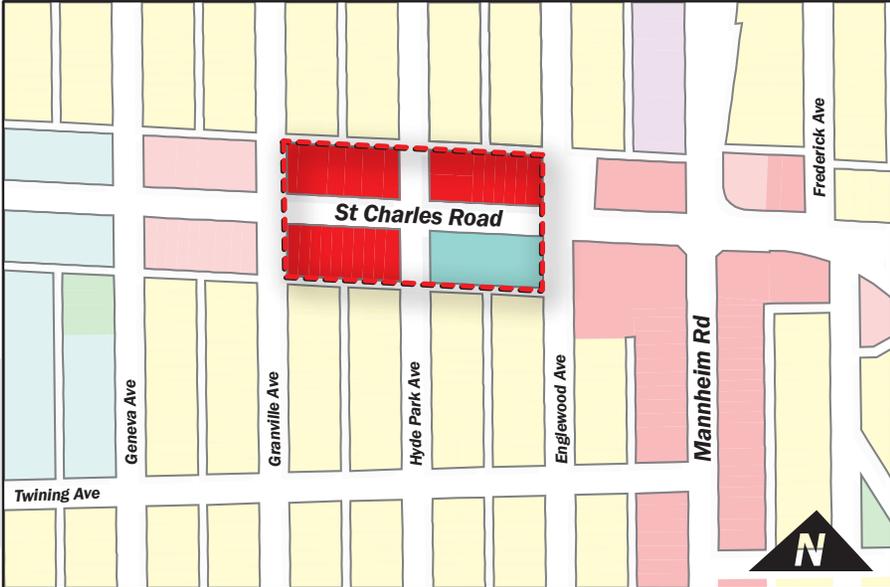
**Priority - 2.** This redevelopment site is a second tier priority.

**Existing Condition.** This Priority Site is a small cluster of commercial, residential, and institutional properties along St. Charles Road just west of the Mannheim Road intersection. The site is surrounded mostly by single-family and multi-family residential properties. While it is not, and does not have the capacity to become, a major retail node itself, the area can provide convenience oriented goods and services to the surrounding neighborhood. This area could experience rehabilitation or redevelopment if the Mannheim intersection is redeveloped. The strengthening of existing commercial nodes is a goal of the Corridor Plan.

**Redevelopment Needs.** Facade improvements and other building investments could make the properties more marketable for commercial use. Alternately, complete redevelopment of the parcels could offer new opportunities if the property owner(s) is willing. Streetscape and circulation improvements are needed in the area, like the Corridor as a whole.

**Implementation Steps.** Building appearance can be maintained through active code enforcement by the Village and potential facade improvements. While a dedicated funding source for improvements is not currently available, the Village could encourage the cooperation of property owners by making marketing opportunities available to which they otherwise would not have access. For example, in return for facade or other improvements by owners the Village could create a marketing brochure for small properties and circulate it at a retail industry conference, or include the properties in a community-level advertising campaign. If redevelopment of the area becomes an option, zoning regulations for the area should be reviewed to ensure that existing codes do not hinder

or prevent the development of pedestrian-oriented, retail or mixed use buildings. The Village also should establish a Streetscape Improvements Plan and Commercial Design Guidelines for the Corridor.



*A prime commercial area with frontage along two highly visible corridors adjacent to well established neighborhoods has potential to become a shopping destination.*

## Village of Bellwood: St. Charles Road Redevelopment Plan

### 7 Proposed Bellwood/Melrose Park Metra Station & Transit-Oriented Development (TOD)

**Priority - 1.** This redevelopment site is a first tier priority.

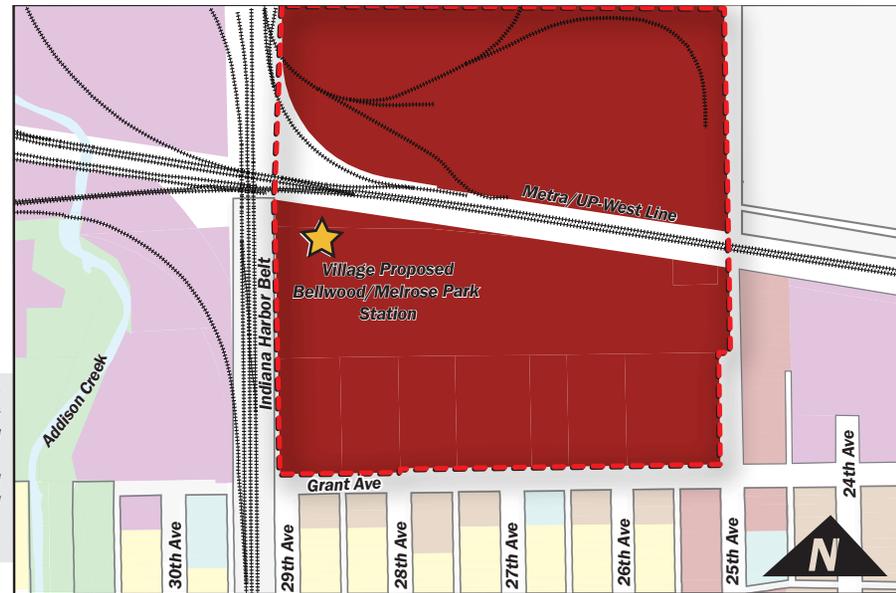
**Existing Condition.** Redevelopment of this industrial site, located at 25th Avenue and the Metra/UP-West Line, is the largest opportunity for new development in the entire Corridor, and holds the promise of dramatically changing the character and growth potential of the surrounding area. Relocation and consolidation of the existing Bellwood and Melrose Park Metra stations to one station on the site has been proposed by the Village as part of the redevelopment, and could improve access to and increase ridership of commuter rail service in both communities through the incorporation of transit-oriented development (TOD) principles. Grade separation of 25th Avenue at the railroad tracks also has been suggested. The Village is currently working with a developer and holding discussions with Metra, the UP, and IHB. A TIF district has been established that encompasses the site.

**Redevelopment Needs.** The Village should work closely with the developer, UP, IHB, and Metra to explore the feasibility of the preliminary plans that have been proposed. A public-private partnership should be established that lays out mutual goals and specifies individual responsibilities and priorities. Once site control is established, the site will need to be thoroughly investigated to identify any issues that

may impact its capacity for development. A TOD concept plan should be prepared that establishes strong pedestrian links throughout the site, and to the Village's proposed relocated and consolidated Bellwood/Melrose Park Metra station, the Addison Creek area, and the 25th Avenue gateway district (which is also a Priority Redevelopment Site).

**Implementation Steps.** Full implementation of the vision that has been laid out for this site will be a complex process requiring a number of steps, including:

- Establish a public-private partnership with the developer, detailing roles and responsibilities, need for and amount of TIF financing, time lines, proposed land uses and development program, and other items.
- Continue study and discussions with Metra and the IHB and UP railroads about operational issues related to the relocation of the existing Bellwood and Melrose Park Metra stations.
- Explore with IDOT, Metra, and the UP the potential for grade separation of 25th Avenue at the railroad tracks through the CREATE program.
- Conduct due diligence on the development site(s), including environmental and engineering issues.
- Create a TOD concept plan that establishes a mix of uses and housing types, and emphasizes pedestrian linkages both within the site(s) and to surrounding neighborhoods.
- Seek funding for the proposed relocated/consolidated station, parking, and other amenities. In addition to those funding needs, Metra will also require the Villages to maintain and operate the station building and parking facilities and notify the residents of the closure of the existing stations.



*Opportunity for this mixed use redevelopment includes commercial retail, housing, office, and other destination and community uses found within thriving TOD areas.*



**Potential Funding Sources**

An array of tools and resources, primarily focused on providing financial support, are available to the Village to facilitate the implementation of the Corridor Plan. These potential sources are referenced in the Implementation Matrix table earlier in this section.

- **Village Capital Projects Fund.** Funding for capital improvements and public facilities can be allocated as part of the Village’s annual budgeting process and funded out of existing reserves for capital projects.
- **Tax Increment Financing (TIF).** Per Illinois law, TIF districts are intended to address existing blight conditions and/or to prevent blight from occurring. Under TIF, the increases in property taxes from redevelopment and/or natural growth in equalized assessed valuation within a defined geographic area are all allocated to the City for up to a 23-year period (with certain reimbursement provisions to school and library districts) to be used for various public and private redevelopment project costs. The other taxing districts serving the subject area continue to receive the taxes on the equalized assessed value that existed prior to creation of the district. Properties in the district are assessed in the same manner as all other properties and are taxed at the same rate—in other words, TIF is not an increase in taxes, but rather a re-allocation of how they are used. TIF can only be used in areas exhibiting specific combinations of eligibility factors defined in Illinois law. TIF is particularly well suited to financing of infrastructure and assisting economically challenged redevelopment projects with “extraordinary costs” such as land assembly, site preparation, or environmental cleanup.
- **Business District Funds.** Per Illinois law, municipalities are authorized to designate an area as a Business District in order to assure opportunities for development and redevelopment, and to attract sound and stable commercial growth. Within the district, a variety of powers are available to the municipality, including exercise of eminent domain for purposes of redevelopment, acquisition of private property, creating and approving development plans, applying for government grants, borrowing funds, and issuing bonds for redevelopment activities. A municipality is authorized to impose a sales tax and/or a hotel tax on properties in the district, provided that the taxes do not last longer than 23 years, are imposed in quarter-point (0.25%) increments, and do not exceed a total rate of one percent each. The revenue collected from these taxes can be used for planning, execution, and implementation of business district plans, including applicable project and improvement costs.
- **Disposition of Village-Owned Property.** The Village may, now or in the future, own properties that may be included in larger redevelopment sites. Depending on the specific parameters of the projects proposed for each of these sites, the Village can sell or donate these properties to catalyze

## **Village of Bellwood: St. Charles Road Redevelopment Plan**

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revitalization projects. Land sales may be at market value or at a price that is discounted to the extent necessary to make a particular redevelopment project economically feasible. For development sites fully owned by the City, a formal two-stage Request for Qualifications/Request for Proposals (RFQ/P) process is recommended. For City-owned land that comprises part of a larger privately held site, a negotiated sale to a specific developer should be considered.

- **Special Service Area (SSA).** An SSA is a taxing mechanism that can be used to fund a wide range of special or additional services within a designated geographic boundary. Funding is obtained through an additional property tax levied on those properties within the designated boundary. An SSA can provide support services (e.g., maintenance of public improvements), infrastructure upgrades, and/or land and building improvements (interior or exterior). The process for establishing an SSA is defined by Illinois's Special Service Area Act. To establish an SSA, a majority of the property owners and registered voters within the proposed boundary must not object to the additional taxation required to fund programs and services.
- **State or Federal Grants.** Several potential grant sources are available to fund improvements of the type recommended in the Corridor Plan. The best prospective programs for the Village to consider include:
  - **Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ).** A federally funded program administered by the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) that targets projects reducing congestion and/or improving air quality. Eligible project types include transit facility improvements, commuter parking lots, traffic flow improvements, and bicycle/pedestrian projects are eligible for this funding.
  - **Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program (ITEP).** Administered by the Illinois Department of Transportation, eligible projects for this funding include bicycle/pedestrian facilities, streetscaping, and landscaping. Federal reimbursement is available for up to 50% of the cost of right-of-way and easement acquisition and 80% of the cost for preliminary engineering, utility relocations, construction engineering, and construction costs. Application cycles for this program have been irregular in recent years.
  - **Member Initiative Grants.** This funding is administered by the State of Illinois, and is fairly flexible in its scope. These grants are initiated by individual members of the Illinois legislature.
  - **Safe Routes to School.** This relatively new federal program is administered by IDOT. The program uses a multidisciplinary approach to improve conditions for students who walk or bike to school. Most projects that are funded are for infrastructure such as sidewalk improvements, traffic calming/speed reduction, traffic control devices, traffic diversion, pedestrian and bicycle crossing improvements, on- and off-street bicycle facilities, and secure bicycle parking facilities. Projects are funded at 100% with no local match required. Funding applications are only accepted through an online application process available on the IDOT website.
- **Illinois Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Open Space Land Acquisition and Development (OSLAD) Program and Trails Program Grant Funds.** The state DNR administers this matching grand funding in conjunction with the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund program. In addition, the DNR offers matching grants for trails development initiatives under its Trails Program.
- **Illinois Municipal Brownfields Redevelopment Grant Program.** The state Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) administers this matching grant program that helps communities investigate contaminated sites, develop cleanup plans, and fund eligible cleanup activities. The municipality need not own the site but it must document that it has obtained access from the owner.

**Development Assistance Programs and Policies**

As implementation of the St. Charles Road Corridor Plan unfolds, it is possible that early-stage redevelopment projects may require financial assistance (most likely through TIF) to offset certain “extraordinary” development costs that may include land acquisition, site cleanup and preparation, stormwater detention, and/or structured parking construction costs.

The Village should consider programs and policies designed to reduce private development costs for desirable projects and to systematize the process by which private development projects requesting TIF assistance would be considered. Specifically, the Village should create a defined application process for projects requesting TIF financial assistance from the Village to ensure that sufficient data is provided in a usable format that clearly justifies the need for assistance. The Village also should consider developing and adopting specific policies and guidelines regarding its proposed use of TIF funds to assist private development projects to create consistency and predictability while limiting land speculation that may take place due to the expectation of TIF funding.