


**PARK RIDGE, IL**

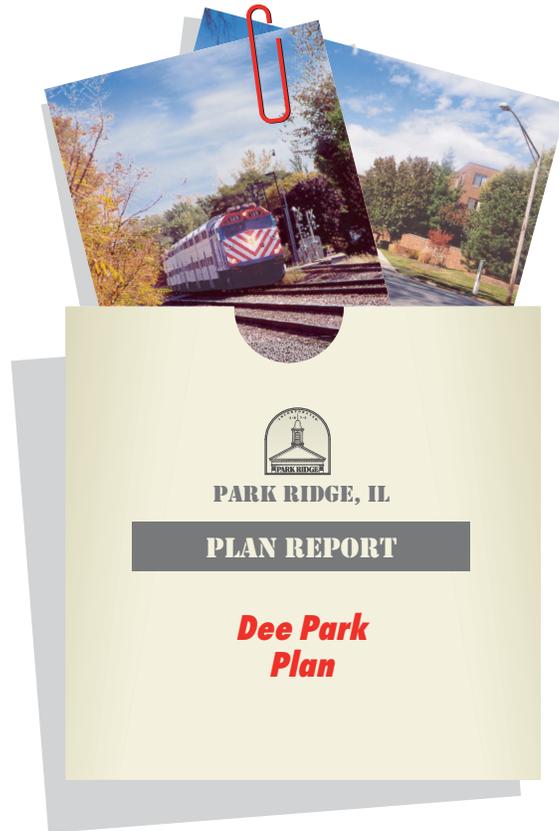
**PLAN REPORT**

***Dee Park Plan***



# ***Dee Park Plan***

***City of Park Ridge, Illinois***



# ***Participants in the Planning Process***

## ***CITY COUNCIL:***

Mayor Michael MaRous  
Treasurer Carl Brauweiler  
City Clerk Betty Henneman

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Donald Crampton

## ***Second Ward:***

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Bridget Lane,  
Business Districts, Inc.

**2004-53**  
**ORDINANCE**  
**OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PARK RIDGE**  
**AMENDING THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN FOR THE CITY OF PARK RIDGE**

WHEREAS, there was heretofore, to wit, on July 15, 1996, adopted by the City Council of the City of Park Ridge, Illinois, a Comprehensive Plan for the City of Park Ridge, Illinois, which Comprehensive Plan is now in full force and effect; and

WHEREAS, the Planning and Zoning Commission of the City of Park Ridge has determined that the Dee Park District section of the Comprehensive Plan no longer serves the purposes of the City of Park Ridge as said City now exists and is constituted; and

WHEREAS, the Planning and Zoning Commission on May 24, 2004, held a public hearing in conformity with 65 ILCS/11-12-7; and

WHEREAS, said Planning and Zoning Commission has recommended that an Amendment to the Comprehensive Plan be adopted and that the said Amendment to the Comprehensive Plan titled Dee Park Neighborhood Revitalization Plan be adopted and has, in accordance with such determination, submitted an Amendment to the Comprehensive Plan for the City of Park Ridge and has recommended its adoption; and

WHEREAS, the City Council, after due consideration and study, has determined that the Amendment to the Comprehensive Plan so submitted is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan of public improvements and the development of the municipality looking to the present and future developments of said City of Park Ridge;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED by the City Council of the City of Park Ridge that the Comprehensive Plan for the City of Park Ridge, Illinois, bearing the date 1996, be and the same is hereby amended as the Comprehensive Plan for the City of Park Ridge, Illinois, to include the Dee Park Neighborhood Revitalization Plan, a copy of

which is hereto attached and by reference made a part hereof.

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED that said Amendment to the Comprehensive Plan be approved on its face and that the Mayor and City Clerk be and they are hereby authorized and directed to execute said written approval, acceptance and adoption thereof.

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED that a true and correct copy of said Amendment to the Comprehensive Plan be forthwith recorded by the City Clerk in the Office of the Recorder of Deeds of Cook County, Illinois.

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED that this Ordinance shall be in full force and effect from and after its passage, approval and publication according to law.

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED that the City Clerk is hereby authorized and directed to publish said Ordinance in pamphlet form according to law.

Adopted by the City Council of the City of Park Ridge, Illinois, this 19<sup>th</sup> day of July, A.D. 2004.

***VOTE:***

***Ayes:*** Ald. Frimark, Beaumont, Bateman, Bell, Benka, DiPietro, Crampton, Tinaglia, Friel, Cox, Parker, Disher, Anderson

***Nays:*** None

***Absent:*** None

Approved to me this 19<sup>th</sup> day of July, A.D. 2004.

***Michael MaRous***  
*Mayor*

***Attest:***  
*Betty W. Henneman*  
*City Clerk*

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## ***Introduction***

The City of Park Ridge is an “inner ring” suburb with excellent transportation links to Chicago and nearby suburbs. The predominant land-use in the City is single-family residential, and most neighborhoods are characterized by tree-lined streets and a consistent quality and appearance. Commercial districts are located along major arterial corridors and most of them have a pleasant pedestrian scale and character. The City’s population is stable and has a median income somewhat higher than the average for the area.

The Dee Park area is located in the northwest portion of Park Ridge (see Figure 1). It consists of small retail, office and service uses along Oakton Street, Northwest Highway and Busse Highway, as well as a mix of single-family, two-family and multi-family housing. It also includes the Dee Road Metra station.

### ***Background to the Project:***

In contrast to other parts of the City, the Dee Park area has seen few improvements or developments during the past three decades. It is characterized by a limited commercial sector composed of small sites and single-story buildings; an older, modest housing stock; a tired and dated appearance; an auto-oriented development pattern; and very few pedestrian amenities. While it does serve commuters and many of the day-to-day needs of nearby residents, the area does not have a strong or positive image or identity, and its overall role and function are not well defined.

The City’s most recent *Comprehensive Plan*, which was adopted in 1996, recommends that the Dee Park area be improved as a neighborhood shopping district and higher-density residential area. The Plan establishes generalized policies regarding land-use, transportation, community facilities, and other aspects of the area.

### ***Purpose of the Dee Park Plan:***

There is now the need for a new, more detailed plan for the Dee Park area that can guide and promote public and private improvements and developments, respond to changing conditions and potentials, and address the needs of a mature neighborhood.

The new Plan should build upon previous planning efforts, explore new ideas and concepts, and identify opportunities for desirable neighborhood improvements and developments.

The City’s long-term goal is to create a more vibrant mixed-use neighborhood area that is friendly and convenient for pedestrians and bicyclists as well as vehicular traffic. The purpose of the Plan is to provide a long-term guide for private development, and to establish guidelines for the changes that will eventually occur within the Dee Park area.

The primary objectives of the Plan are to:

1. Improve pedestrian and bicycle circulation and safety;
2. Improve traffic flow within the area;
3. Upgrade the overall image and appearance of the Dee Park area;
4. Provide an area-wide Plan that will complement and support the revitalized Metra commuter station;
5. Improve parking conditions;
6. Promote new retail and service development on selected properties that can help support nearby neighborhoods and the northern part of the City of Park Ridge; and
7. Promote new townhome and condominium development in key locations.

## ***The Planning Process:***

The Dee Park planning process has entailed a five-phase work program that included analyzing existing conditions, identifying issues and concerns, developing plans and policies, formulating an implementation strategy, and preparing final plan and implementation recommendations.

Each phase in the planning process is briefly described below.

- ***Phase 1: Project Initiation*** entailed: a) working with City Staff and the Economic Development Corporation to establish a Dee Park Work Group to work with the Consultant Team throughout the project; b) conducting an initial meeting with the Work Group to discuss the planning process and review ideas and perceptions of the area; and c) conducting confidential interviews to obtain additional information regarding conditions, issues, and potentials within the Dee Park area.
- ***Phase 2: Inventory and Analysis*** entailed the collection and analysis of a range of information about existing conditions and future potentials within the Dee Park area, including land-use, zoning, the physical condition of sites and buildings, transportation, parking, and the overall image and appearance of the area.
- ***Phase 3: Preliminary Recommendations*** entailed the preparation of: a) an overall, long-range “vision” for the Dee Park area; b) the formulation of policies and guidelines for land-use, sites and buildings, redevelopment, traffic, transit, pedestrian circulation, parking, and urban design; and c) the identification of opportunity sites for future improvement and new development.
- ***Phase 4: Implementation Strategy*** included outlining the next steps and actions to be undertaken by the City, other public agencies and the private sector to implement the Plan.
- ***Phase 5: Plan Report*** entailed preparation of the draft and final versions of the ***Dee Park Plan*** document. The report includes long- and short-range recommendations related to land-use, development and redevelopment, traffic, parking, transit, and urban design.

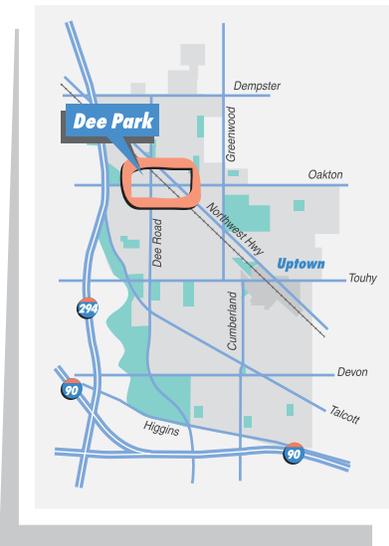
## ***Organization of the Plan Report:***

The ***Dee Park Plan*** includes six sections, as follows:

1. ***The Dee Park Area*** presents an overview of existing conditions and potentials within the area, including land use, zoning, plans and projects, physical conditions, and transportation and parking;
2. ***Market Overview*** summarizes the Dee Park Market Study undertaken by the City of Park Ridge and Business Districts, Inc. in preparation for the current planning assignment;
3. ***Revitalization Concept*** presents: a) a long-range “vision” of the area 10 to 20 years in the future; and b) a list of principles and objectives that should be used by the City to guide decisions regarding improvements and new development.
4. ***Opportunity Sites*** highlights: a) specific properties that may have potential for improvement and/or redevelopment in the future; and b) preliminary recommendations for the improvement of each site.
5. ***Illustrative Plans*** present a series of sketches that suggest the scale, character and intensity of new development to be promoted within selected parts of the area; and

**6. Implementation** outlines the actions and next steps to be undertaken in order to implement the *Dee Park Plan*.

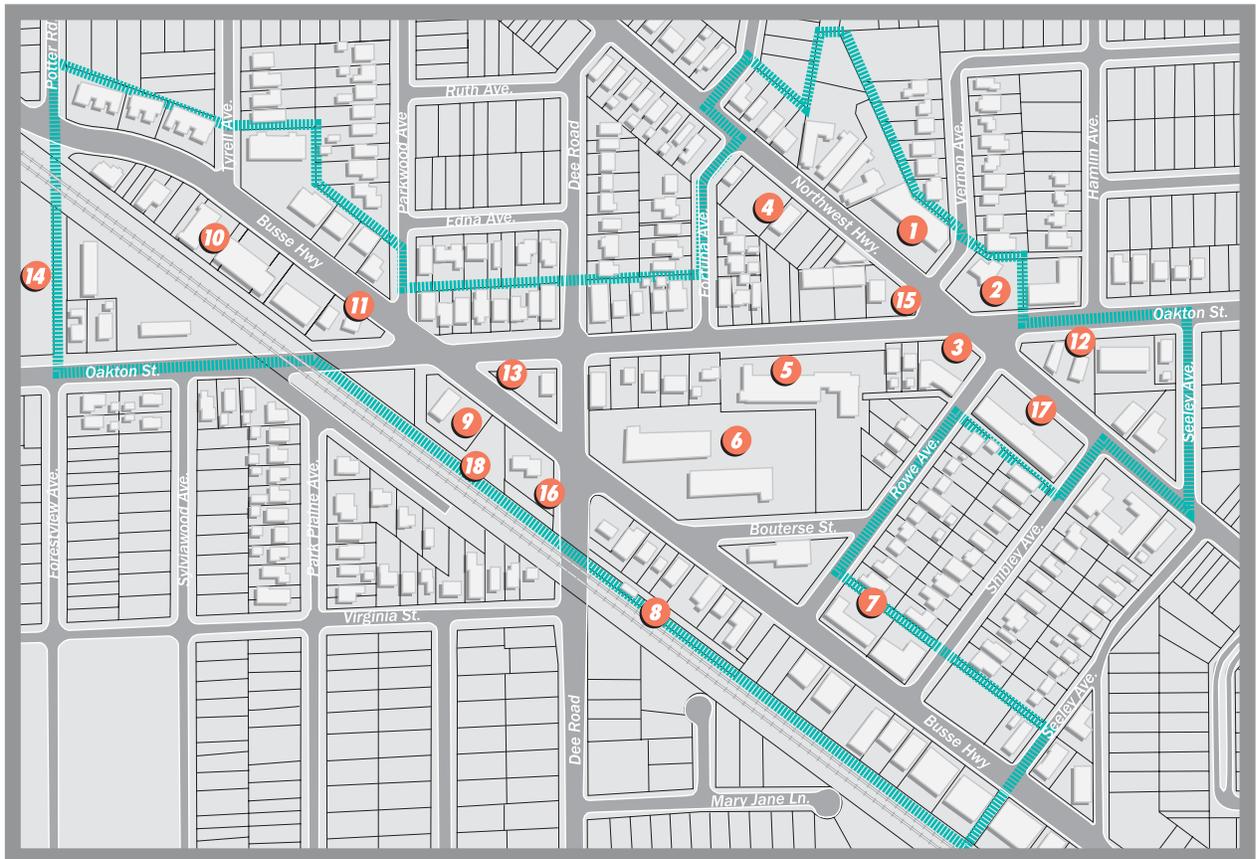
The **Appendix** summarizes a number of the issues and concerns regarding the area, as obtained from the Dee Park Work Group and from key person interviews. The Appendix also includes other materials prepared as a part of the Dee Park assignment.



**Examples of Existing Uses:**

- 1 - Crossroads Shopping Center
- 2 - Parkway Bank and Trust
- 3 - White Hen Pantry
- 4 - McDonald's
- 5 - Jeanine Schultz School
- 6 - Gallery Condominiums
- 7 - Standard Car Truck Company
- 8 - Existing Metra Station Building
- 9 - Brown's Chicken
- 10 - Enterprise Car Rental
- 11 - Citgo Service Station
- 12 - Marathon Service Station
- 13 - Denny's Auto Repair
- 14 - Oakton Sports Complex
- 15 - Wally's Gyros
- 16 - Boardwalk Car Wash
- 17 - Multi-Tenant Office Building
- 18 - New Metra Station Building

Figure 1: **Dee Park Area**



----- Dee Park Area Boundary

## ***Section 1: Existing Conditions***

This section provides an overview of existing conditions within the Dee Park area, including: a) land-use, b) zoning, c) plans and projects, d) physical conditions, e) access and circulation, f) parking, and g) properties potentially subject to improvement or development.

This section also highlights the City's previous recommendations for the Dee Park area, which provide a basis for the current assignment.

### ***1996 Comprehensive Plan:***

The City's most recent *Comprehensive Plan* was adopted in 1996. The Dee Park area was designated as one of several "special districts" that received in-depth attention in the 1996 plan.

A summary of the *Comprehensive Plan's* recommendations for the area are highlighted below. These recommendations provide an important "starting point" for the current planning effort.

#### ***Land Use***

- a) Predominant land uses in the area should be multi-family residences and retail and service businesses which serve the needs of adjacent neighborhoods.
- b) The compatibility between uses within the district and the compatibility of the district with adjacent neighborhoods should be improved.

#### ***Housing***

- a) The development of additional multi-family residences should be encouraged in proximity to the Metra commuter station along Oakton Street and Busse Highway.
- b) If the Jeanine Schultz School use terminates, the property should be redeveloped for a mixed-use development, including additional multi-family residences, convenience businesses, and a small children's park.

#### ***Transportation***

- a) Traffic management should be improved without widening arterial streets, by enhancing channelization and signalization, and by controlling curb cuts.
- b) The Dee Road commuter rail station should be relocated to the northwest, between Oakton Street and Dee Road. If the properties become available, the two businesses located on the block should be acquired to enhance the area and provide additional commuter parking.
- c) Public off-street parking facilities should be constructed in selected locations to support local businesses.
- d) Pedestrian facilities and crosswalks should be improved throughout the area to improve access from adjacent neighborhoods, and to encourage walking between destinations rather than driving.

#### ***Community Facilities***

- a) Encourage Jeanine Schultz School to remain at its present location.
- b) Provide a new public park as a focal point for the area within the triangle formed by Oakton Street, Busse Highway, and Dee Road.

### ***Community Character***

- a) Return grass to parkways and plant trees along Oakton.
- b) Provide places for people to sit.
- c) Consider installation of traditional Park Ridge gas light fixtures at selected locations, such as the new park and the Metra station.
- d) Implement a program of attractive banners along arterial streets.
- e) Encourage landscaping of parking lots and screen them from public view.
- f) Encourage the coordinated remodeling of business properties and signage.
- g) Establish design guidelines for the Appearance Commission to apply to new construction.

### ***Management***

- a) Establish a Dee Park property owners and tenants association to address common goals and objectives.
- b) Consider establishing a special service area to finance physical improvements and special services, e.g. marketing or maintenance.

### ***Existing Land-Use:***

The Dee Park area is a "mixed-use" area containing a variety of small retail, office, service, public and semi-public and residential land-uses.

Figure 2 presents generalized existing land-use, based on surveys undertaken by the Consultant in June 2002. The existing land-use pattern is an important consideration in determining improvement and development potentials within the area.

### ***Commercial Uses***

Most existing commercial uses within the area are relatively small and include business and personal services, office uses, fast-food restaurants, and auto-oriented commercial establishments. Commercial uses are most prominent along Oakton Street, Busse Highway, and Northwest Highway.

Except for a few strip centers with multiple tenants, most commercial uses are located on small sites and occupy small, free-standing buildings with separate access drives and parking lots.

Crossroads Shopping Center is a small strip center located on Northwest Highway just north of Oakton. Tenants include a dance studio, several office and service businesses, a small sit-down restaurant, and a carry-out restaurant. White Hen Pantry is located in a small strip center at the southwest corner of Oakton and Northwest Highway.

Restaurant uses include McDonald's and Wally's Gyros, located at the northwest corner of Oakton and Northwest Highway; Brown's Chicken, at Oakton and Busse Highway; and an ice cream shop located on Busse Highway at the northwest corner of the area.

Office and business service uses, including many medical and dental offices, are quite prominent within the area, particularly along the west side of Busse Highway and along Northwest Highway. Prominent office uses include Standard Car Truck Company on Busse at Rowe Avenue, and a multi-tenant office center on the west side of Northwest Highway between Rowe and Shibley Avenues.

Auto-oriented commercial uses, including gas stations, car-wash establishments, and repair shops, are located along Oakton Street and Busse Highway. Most of these properties are characterized by unsightly outdoor storage and a poor overall appearance.

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

Several newer multi-family residential developments are located within the area, including the attractive four-story Gallery condominium development located on Busse Highway just south of Oakton Street. Other prominent multi-family developments are located on the south side of Oakton, just west of Shibley; on Northwest Highway at Shibley; on Busse Highway at Tyrell Avenue; and on Oakton just west of the railroad tracks.

In addition, a new 12-unit condominium development is located on the triangular block bounded by Busse, Rowe and Bouterse, as discussed in a following section of this report.

These newer multi-family developments have added significantly to the vitality of the area, and should help enhance opportunities for continued improvement and development within the Dee Park area.

Several older multi-family developments are also scattered throughout the area, many of which are somewhat dated and may be subject to reuse or redevelopment in the future. However, these developments do offer affordable housing options within the Dee Park neighborhood.

### ***Single- and Two-Family Residential***

The area is bordered by attractive and well-maintained residential neighborhoods that add significantly to the overall character of the area and also provide a potential base of support for many commercial uses and businesses within the area. These neighborhoods are comprised primarily of single-family homes, with some two-family dwellings and small multi-family developments intermixed along the major street corridors.

In addition, several single-family and two-family homes are located along the Oakton Street frontage, between and intermixed with existing commercial development. While most of these residential properties are adequately maintained, they are located in a high traffic, commercially-oriented area that is not an ideal environment for lower-density housing. Some of these properties may be subject to change in the future.

### ***Public and Semi-Public Uses***

The Dee Road Metra commuter rail station is currently located east of Dee Road, south of Busse Highway. The commuter station generates significant activity in the area on a daily basis. Metra is constructing a new station building and expanding the parking lot, as discussed in a following section of this report.

The Jeanine Schultz School, a private special education facility, is located on the south side of Oakton Street between Northwest Highway and Dee Road. The school remains an important focal point for the Dee Park area.

Other public and semi-public uses include several utility substations located between Busse Highway and the railroad. These include facilities operated by Nicor, Commonwealth Edison, and others.

The Oakton Sports Complex, a large public park with a range of recreational facilities, is located on Oakton Street, just west of the area.

### ***Vacant Land and Buildings***

A few vacant buildings and land parcels are scattered throughout the area. At the time of the land-use survey, the most prominent vacant properties were the former Amoco service station, located at Oakton and Northwest Highway (which has since been redeveloped for a new Parkway Bank); and the vacant land parcel along the east side of Busse Highway at Shibley Avenue.

Several commercial buildings, particularly along Northwest Highway, appear to have vacant floor space.

### ***Surface Parking***

Much of the land within the area is used for surface parking. Most commercial uses are served by small off-street parking lots, many of which are located in front of buildings. Parking is discussed in more detail in a following section of this report.

### ***Current Zoning:***

Zoning is an important tool in implementing planning policy. It establishes the types of uses to be allowed on specific properties, and prescribes the overall character and intensity of development to be permitted.

The Park Ridge Zoning Ordinance was originally adopted in 1975. Current zoning within the Dee Park area is illustrated in Figure 3. In general, current zoning reflects the existing land-use pattern within the area.

It should be noted that the City is in the process of rewriting the Zoning Ordinance.

### ***Zoning Districts***

The individual zoning districts within the area are briefly identified below. An overview of the development requirements for these districts is presented in Table 1.

The ***R-1 Single Family Residential District*** is intended to create a low-density environment of single-family homes located on sites comparable in dimensions to the typical lot size for such housing within the community.

In addition to single-family homes, permitted uses include parks, forest preserves, and home occupations. Churches, public utility facilities, and planned residential developments are among the list of special uses.

The ***R-2 Two Family Residential District*** is intended to create a moderate-density environment of single- and two-family homes located along major streets on sites comparable in dimensions to the typical lot size for such housing within the community.

Except for the addition of two-family homes, the list of permitted and special uses is very similar to the R-1 District.

The ***R-4 Multiple Family Residential District*** is intended to create a higher-density environment of single-family, two-family and multi-family dwellings including townhomes and apartments. R-4 areas should be well served by public transportation and major streets, and should be located in or adjacent to higher-intensity development.

Figure 2: Existing Land-Use

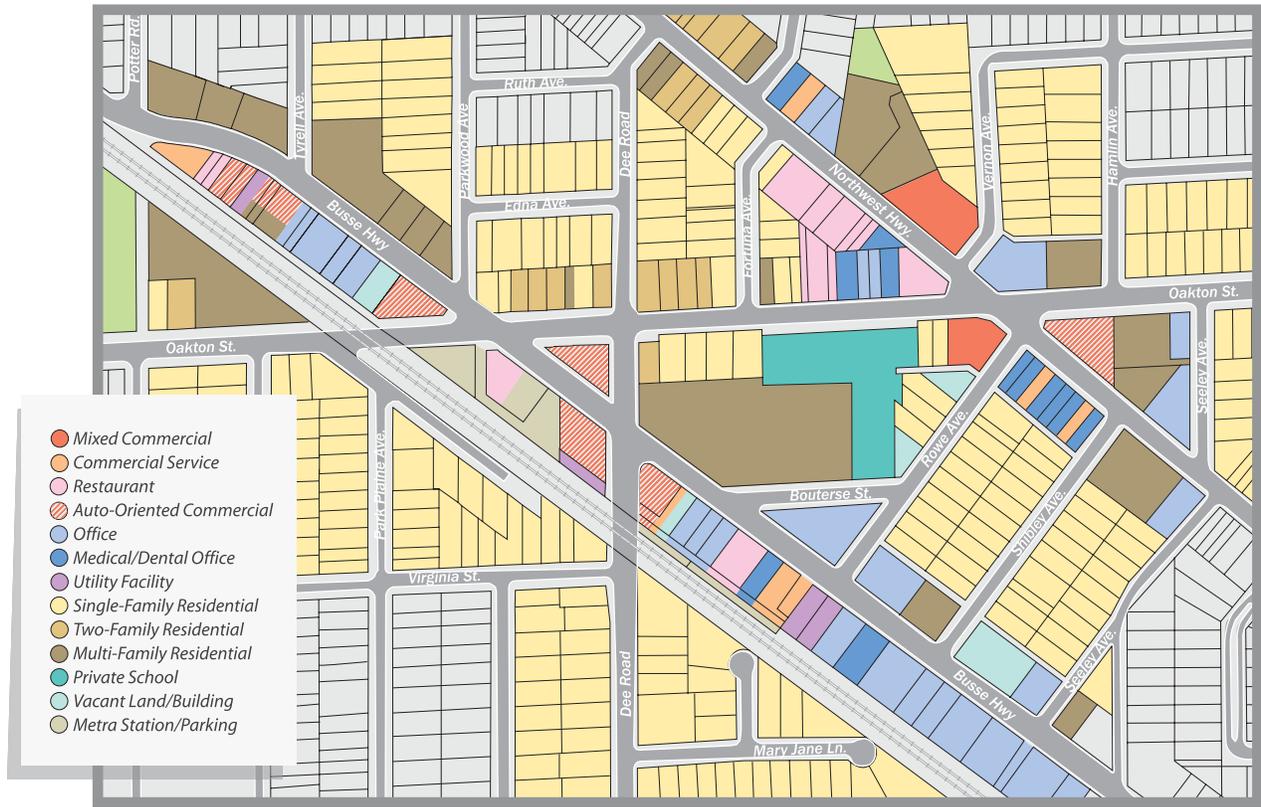


Figure 3: Current Zoning



The **B-1 Retail and Office District** is intended to create a business environment for a variety of commercial uses, including retail shopping, convenience stores, offices, and personal and business services. This district is designed to provide for the needs of local residents and to enhance the economic vitality of the community. B-1 areas should have access to major streets or public transportation, and provide a safe environment for pedestrians.

The **B-2 General Commercial District** is intended to create a business environment for a variety of commercial uses, including retail shopping, offices, and personal and business services. This district is designed to be oriented to the traveling public and depends to a large extent on customers arriving by automobile. B-2 areas should have direct access to major streets and should be situated in locations that are removed or buffered from lower-density residential areas.

The **B-3 General Commercial, Wholesale and Service District** is intended to provide locations for specialized commercial uses, including wholesaling, equipment storage, and a variety of business services which primarily support other retail and service businesses, and are not necessarily focused on the shopping public. B-3 areas should have direct access to major streets and generally be situated in locations removed or buffered from residential areas.

**Table 1: Overview of Zoning Districts in the Dee Park Area  
Dee Park Plan, Park Ridge, Illinois**

<b>Zoning District</b>	<b>Minimum Lot Area</b>	<b>Minimum Lot Width</b>	<b>Front Yard</b>	<b>Interior Side</b>	<b>Corner Side</b>	<b>Rear Yard</b>	<b>Building Height</b>	<b>Lot Coverage</b>	<b>F.A.R. (density)</b>
B-1	None	None	7 feet*	None*	7 feet*	None*	40 feet	None	None
B-2	None	None	7 feet*	None*	7 feet*	None*	40 feet	None	None
B-3	None	None	7 feet <sup>1</sup>	None*	7 feet*	None*	40 feet	None	None
R-1	6,500 SF per unit	50 feet	35 ft. max. <sup>2</sup>	8 ft. max. <sup>2</sup>	15 ft. max. <sup>2</sup>	30 ft. max. <sup>2</sup>	35 feet	35 %	6.7 du/acre
R-2	6,500 SF per unit	50 feet	30 ft. max. <sup>2</sup>	8 ft. max. <sup>2</sup>	15 ft. max. <sup>2</sup>	30 ft. max. <sup>2</sup>	35 feet	35 %	13.4 du/acre
R-4	2,000 SF per MF unit <sup>3</sup>	50 feet	25 ft. max. <sup>2</sup>	8 ft. max. <sup>2</sup>	15 ft. max. <sup>2</sup>	30 ft. max. <sup>2</sup>	40 feet	40 %	21.78 du/acre

<sup>1</sup> Except along the southwest side of Busse Highway, where a 17 foot setback is required where the width of the public right-of-way is sixty-six feet or less; and where a 10 foot setback is required where the width of the right-of-way is between 67 and 80 feet.

<sup>2</sup> Yard requirements in residential districts are also based on the percentage of lot depth. The number shown is the "maximum" yard requirement in each case.

<sup>3</sup> Minimum lot area for attached dwellings in the R-4 District is 3,500 square feet per unit.

\* Where a B-1, B-2 and B-3 district adjoins a residential district, "transitional yards" are required which are generally similar to the yard requirements for the adjoining residential district.

### ***Parking Requirements***

The Zoning Ordinance also establishes requirements for the amount of parking that is to be provided by new commercial and residential land-uses. An overview of parking requirements for uses common within the area is presented below.

- ***Multi-family dwellings*** – 1½ to 2 spaces per unit, depending on the number of bedrooms.
- ***Retail stores and banks*** – One space per 300 square feet of floor area.
- ***Restaurants*** – One space for each 200 square feet of floor area.
- ***Offices*** – One space for each 300 square feet of floor area.
- ***Medical offices*** - One space for each 300 square feet of floor area for the first 3,000 square feet, plus one space for each additional 150 square feet of floor area.

In general, off-street parking is not permitted within a required front yard or side yard. Required off-street parking facilities must also be screened and landscaped according to the specifications set forth in the ordinance.

### ***Recent Projects and Proposals:***

Several recent and ongoing projects and proposals will provide important new focal points for the Dee Park area and should also enhance opportunities for attracting additional improvements and developments in the future. These are highlighted below.

- ***Parkway Bank and Trust.*** Parkway Bank and Trust was recently developed on a former Amoco service station site at the northeast corner of Oakton Street and Northwest Highway. The existing building was extensively renovated and drive-through facilities were constructed. A small addition was also placed on the rear of the building.
- ***Condominium Development.*** A new 3½ - story condominium building is located within the triangular block bounded by Busse Highway, Rowe Avenue and Bouterse Avenue replacing a small office building. The structure contains 12 two-bedroom units. Most parking spaces are located underground, with primary vehicular access from Rowe Avenue. Landscaping is provided around the periphery of the site.
- ***Metra Commuter Station.*** Metra, in cooperation with the City of Park Ridge, is in the process of redeveloping the Dee Road commuter rail station. A new station building will be built. The parking area will be expanded and extensively landscaped. The existing building, located east of Dee Road, will be demolished and the area improved for additional parking.

### ***Existing Physical Conditions:***

While the City of Park Ridge is generally a well-maintained community with an attractive small-town image and character, this is not entirely the case within the Dee Park area.

Although the area is not characterized by severe deterioration, a number of marginal features and conditions combine to give the area an overall appearance of decline and neglect. If not corrected, these conditions could inhibit opportunities to attract new investment and development in the future.

Physical conditions within the area are illustrated in Figure 4 and described on the following pages.

### ***Structural Conditions***

While there are no severely deteriorated buildings within the area, several older commercial and residential properties are characterized by deferred maintenance. While these conditions may not be significant at the present time, they do detract from the overall image and perception of the area.

### ***Vacant Properties***

While vacant properties are not prominent within the area, several are located on highly visible sites along the major roadways that pass through the area.

### ***Sites and Buildings***

Most commercial and business uses are located in small, non-descript, one-story buildings. Except for a few small strip centers, most commercial buildings are freestanding structures. There is little coordination between adjacent commercial properties in terms of building placement and orientation, setbacks, access drives and parking areas, signage, and site landscaping.

A number of existing commercial buildings have a dated appearance with signs of deferred maintenance, including many along Oakton Street and Northwest Highway, which are the most highly visible parts of the area.

The image and appearance of parking lots are also a concern. In addition to surfaces in poor condition, few lots are landscaped and there are no clearly defined pedestrian ways that traverse parking lots or connect the lots to nearby stores and businesses.

Several of the auto-oriented businesses and “heavy” commercial uses have unattractive storage areas, many of which are visible from public streets and/or passing commuter trains. Few storage yards are screened or buffered.

It should be noted that several of the multi-family developments have attractively landscaped sites and setbacks, particularly the Gallery, and these green spaces add significantly to the appearance of the area.

### ***Streets and Roadways***

Except for the pleasant tree-lined residential streets that border the area, the public streets that pass through the Dee Park area do not have an attractive image or appearance. Several streets have surfaces in poor condition, deteriorated and/or intermittent curbs and gutters, poorly maintained and unattractive medians, and inconsistent parkway treatments.

In addition, there is no consistent streetscape treatment along the major streets, very little landscaping within the public rights-of-way, inconsistent street lighting, and a lack of directional and informational signage. Several streets have overhead utility lines, which also detract from the image and appearance of the area.

### ***Pedestrian Amenities***

Because of the diverse mix of residential and commercial uses and the presence of the commuter station, the area should have a “pedestrian friendly” atmosphere that encourages people to walk between the various destinations.



**Figure 4: Physical Conditions**

**1** - The Metra commuter station will be relocated one block northwest. The new station should become a more prominent visual focal point and landmark for the Dee Park area.

**2** - Attractive single-family neighborhoods closely border the Dee Park commercial area; nearby residents represent potential support for local stores and businesses.

**3** - Several newer multi-family developments, including the Gallery of Park Ridge, are located within and around the Dee Park area. The market for additional multi-family development appears to be strong.

**4** - A mix of single-family and two-family homes occupies several frontage blocks along Oakton Street and Northwest Highway. Some of these may be susceptible to redevelopment.

**5** - A few older multi-family developments within the area may have potential for redevelopment as new townhome or condominium uses.

**6** - The Jeanine Schultz School is an important use within the area. Mixed-Use commercial and residential uses should be considered if the site becomes available in the future.

**7** - Small strip centers and freestanding commercial buildings are scattered along Oakton Street, Northwest Highway, and Busse Highway. Most sites are quite small and there is little visual coordination between buildings.

**8** - Many existing commercial properties are characterized by deferred maintenance, poorly screened parking lots, and a "dated" appearance.

**9** - Repair shops and similar uses occupy some of the most prominent and highly visible properties in Dee Park. These tend to detract from the overall image and character of the area.

**10** - Most streets are characterized by non-existent or unattractive landscaping, parkway and sidewalk treatments, light fixtures, crosswalks, and signage. The area has very few pedestrian amenities.

**11** - A number of small office and service uses are located along the Busse Highway, Oakton Street, and Northwest Highway frontages.

**12** - A few vacant buildings and storefronts are scattered throughout the Dee Park area. This former gas station was recently redeveloped for a new Parkway Bank and Trust.

However, it is currently difficult for residents and visitors to walk to nearby stores, shops, services, and public transportation. Sidewalks, particularly along the major streets, are quite narrow and some segments are in poor condition. Along most other streets, sidewalks are inconsistent in terms of width, placement and condition. It is also difficult for pedestrians to cross the major streets. Pedestrian crossings are further complicated by the presence of several diagonal streets and multi-legged intersections.

Access to the commuter station from several areas is difficult and unsafe. In particular, the newer multi-family developments are not well connected via pedestrian walkways to the commuter station or to other surrounding uses.

Except for the Oakton Sports Complex, which is located just west of the area, there are no public open spaces or pedestrian gathering places within or adjacent to the area.

### ***Railroad Corridor***

Many people get their first impression of the Dee Park neighborhood as they pass through the area on the commuter train. Unfortunately, the railroad corridor is not attractively landscaped for most of its length within the area. Equipment is stored along the tracks, and the back sides of many commercial uses are unsightly and poorly screened.

### ***Historic Features***

While most buildings within the area are older, there are no commercial or public buildings with true historic significance. The residential neighborhoods north of the area have an attractive small-town image and character, and some of these structures may have local historic interest.

### ***Properties Susceptible to Improvement and Development:***

While improvements and new developments could conceivably occur anywhere within the Dee Park area, several properties appear to be more susceptible to change than others. These include vacant land and buildings; marginal and underutilized properties; properties where reuse or redevelopment is already being discussed; and properties subject to change because of their location.

It should be emphasized that the inclusion of sites in this section does not imply that redevelopment will occur or that redevelopment is necessarily recommended as a part of the final *Dee Park Plan*. Rather, it suggests that these properties may represent opportunities for improvement or redevelopment. Because of this, they have warranted investigation as a part of the revitalization planning process.

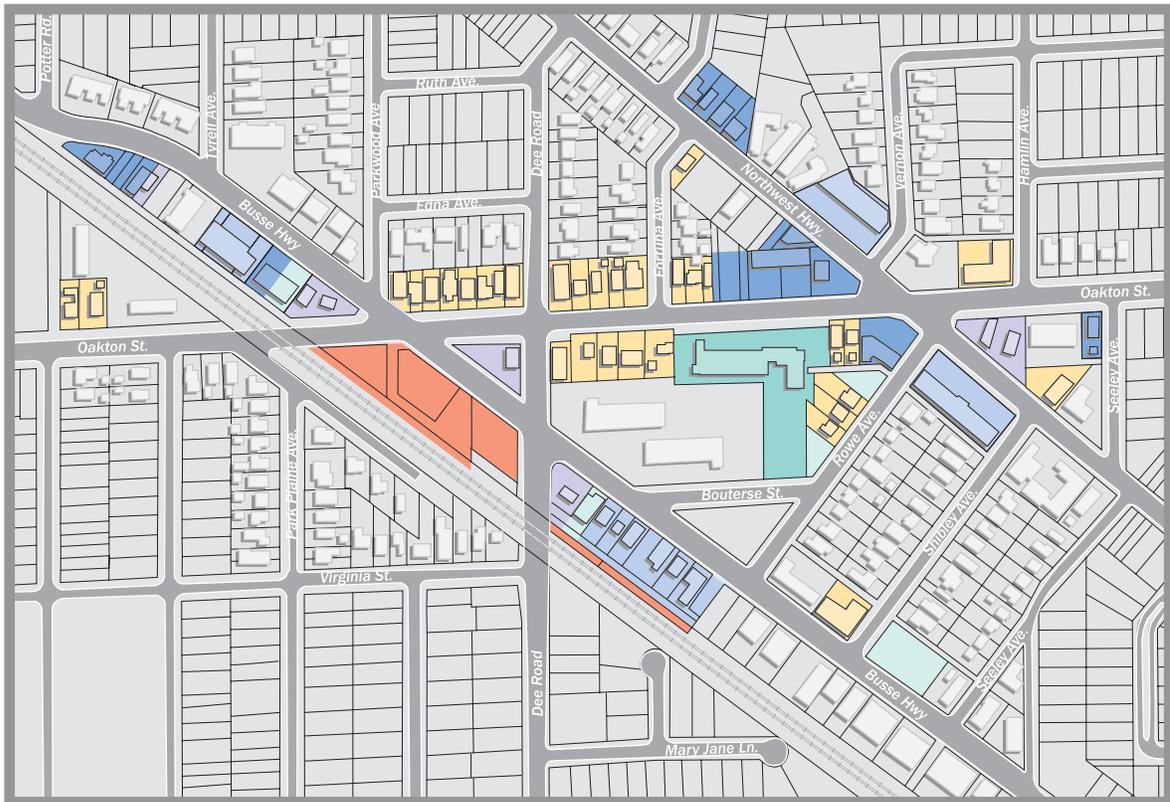
Properties potentially subject to change, illustrated in Figure 5, include the following:

### ***Projects and Proposals***

As described in a previous section of this report, two development projects are underway or proposed within the area:

- a) A new 3 ½ - story condominium development is located at Busse Highway and Rowe Avenue; and
- b) A redeveloped commuter rail station and parking facility is under construction south of Oakton Street and west of Busse Highway.

Figure 5: **Properties Susceptible to Change**



- Pending project
- Vacant properties
- Auto-oriented commercial uses
- Commercial properties susceptible to change
- Commercial properties in need of improvement
- Residential properties susceptible to change
- Institutional property susceptible to change

### ***Vacant properties***

Several vacant buildings and land parcels are scattered throughout the area. Other buildings appear to have vacant floor space. In general, vacant properties should be reused or redeveloped for commercial or residential purposes, parking, or public open space.

### ***Auto-Oriented Commercial Uses***

While the area has no truly “incompatible” uses, a few gas stations and repair shops do occupy prominent and highly visible sites. Even though these may be viable businesses, they may also represent an underutilization of prime frontage properties at signalized intersections and may eventually be subject to redevelopment.

### ***Other Commercial Properties***

This category includes other properties currently occupied by sound and viable businesses that may be subject to intensification or redevelopment due to their location, age, current use, and/or physical condition. These properties might be improved and upgraded, or combined with nearby properties for redevelopment.

### ***Other Residential Properties***

This category highlights several older residential properties located along or near the major streets that pass through the area. Some of these properties could be replaced with new multi-family housing, or be redeveloped for new businesses, parking, or public open space.

### ***Opportunity Sites***

Based on the presence of the properties described above, several “clusters” of properties have been identified within the Dee Park area that may represent opportunities for new commercial, residential, or mixed-use development. Each Opportunity Site is explored in more detail in Section 4 of this Plan report.

## ***Existing Transportation and Parking:***

This section provides an overview of existing transportation conditions within the Dee Park area, based on investigations by the Consultant and interviews with City staff, Metra, and others.

### ***Traffic Access and Circulation***

Access and circulation conditions in the area vary with the time of day and the day of week. The area experiences significant congestion during weekday peak commuter periods when conflicts between the Metra commuter trains, through traffic, and pedestrians are the highest (see Figure 6).

Peak-period delay is especially high near the at-grade railroad crossing on Oakton Street. This is compounded by the lack of left-turn lanes along Oakton. While the traffic signals have arrows to allow protected left-turns from the higher volume approach, vehicles must make those turns from the inner through lanes. After the left-turn arrow has terminated, turning vehicles block one through lane and significantly reduce intersection capacity.

Partially because of the congestion near the railroad crossing, vehicle speeds are somewhat higher through the area, as motorists strive to “make up for lost time” before and after the congestion spots. The lack of driveways, on-street parking, and wider pavements along most of the major streets also contribute to the higher speeds.

Signals and controls for the train system were recently upgraded. The current system allows for the railroad signals and gates (“preemption”) to be released when the departing train is about 65 feet past the centerline of Oakton Street. However, field observations indicated that the observed trains were well over 100 feet past the centerline of Oakton before the gates across Oakton were released.

While this extra stoppage time does not significantly affect overall delay during peak hours, any future improvement in this performance could reduce delay. The preemption time for approaching trains is dictated by higher speed express trains passing through the area.

### ***Parking***

There are four types of parking in the Dee Park area—resident parking, employee parking, patron parking, and commuter parking.

The small size of most private parking lots limits the number of available off-street parking spaces for businesses in the area. Most commercial uses are under-parked, and parking for these uses often “spills over” into the adjacent neighborhoods.

Employee parking is generally limited to on-site lots and some on-street spaces. Patron parking is limited and business patrons must rely on a few on-street parking spaces and limited off-street parking. The convenience retail and service uses that are located in the area tend to generate more parking demand due to quick turnover parking among customers. These uses include fast food establishments, car washes, detailing shops, gas stations and convenience stores.

Resident parking is permitted along most local streets, although some streets have on-street restrictions during certain hours.

Commuter parking is limited to the two commuter lots located along the railroad tracks to the east and west of Dee Road. There is concern on the part of many residents regarding commuters parking on nearby residential streets within the area. Commuter parking issues are discussed further in the following section.

### ***Public Transportation***

The Dee Park area is well served by public transportation, including Metra commuter rail service and three Pace bus routes (see Figure 7).

The Pace routes (209, 226, and 240) provide service along Busse Highway, Oakton Street, Dee Road, and Potter Road. Service on Route 209 (along Busse) is provided from approximately 5:00 AM to 10:00 PM Monday through Saturday and 8:00 AM to 7:00 PM on Sundays. The other routes operate between approximately 6:00 AM and 6:00 PM Monday through Friday.

The Metra Northwest Line provides daily service to the Dee Road station. Access to the existing station platform is currently off Dee Road. Commuter parking is located in two dedicated parking areas northeast of the tracks—one east of Dee Road (“east-end” lot) and another west of Dee Road (“main” lot).

Access to the east end lot is via Busse Highway with an exit onto Dee Road. The main lot is accessible only via Busse. During the afternoon peak period, exiting from the main lot is difficult because of surges of exiting commuters. Plans for the improved Metra commuter station call for relocation of the handicapped spaces from the east end lot to the main lot and increasing the combined total number of spaces.

### *Pedestrian Access and Circulation*

Pedestrian traffic in the area is primarily between the residential areas and the “pedestrian-oriented” retail and service uses and the commuter station. All of the traffic signals have pedestrian signal heads and push buttons. However, the locations of some signals are not readily visible to pedestrians—especially at approaches where pedestrian “pork chop” islands are used.

One impediment to pedestrian movement is the angled intersections and the lack of good access between intersections along the Metra tracks. As a result, people must travel circuitous routes to get from one area to another and appear to sidestep “official” paths and signals.

Numerous pedestrians were observed walking between stopped cars on Northwest Highway rather than using the dedicated crosswalks at the intersection. In addition, morning commuters walking along Dee Road were observed going around the railroad crossing gates and crossing the tracks while the gates were down. Based on discussions with City staff, this pedestrian pattern occurs on a regular basis, although no data was available to confirm this.

Overall, the railroad tracks tend to bisect the neighborhood by limiting access between residential areas. Specifically, pedestrians from the homes south of the tracks have limited options for crossing the tracks. The relocation of the platforms to the west side of Dee Road should improve this condition by providing an accessible mid-block access to cross the tracks. Unfortunately, there are no suitable locations for a grade-separated crossing.

The City does not have specified bicycle routes in the area, although some roads could be considered “bicycle suitable.” Younger riders, however, would likely feel comfortable only using local streets or sidewalks.

While the existing commuter station has limited bicycle access and facilities, the improved Metra station should be designed to provide for additional accommodations for bicyclists.

Figure 6: Access and Circulation

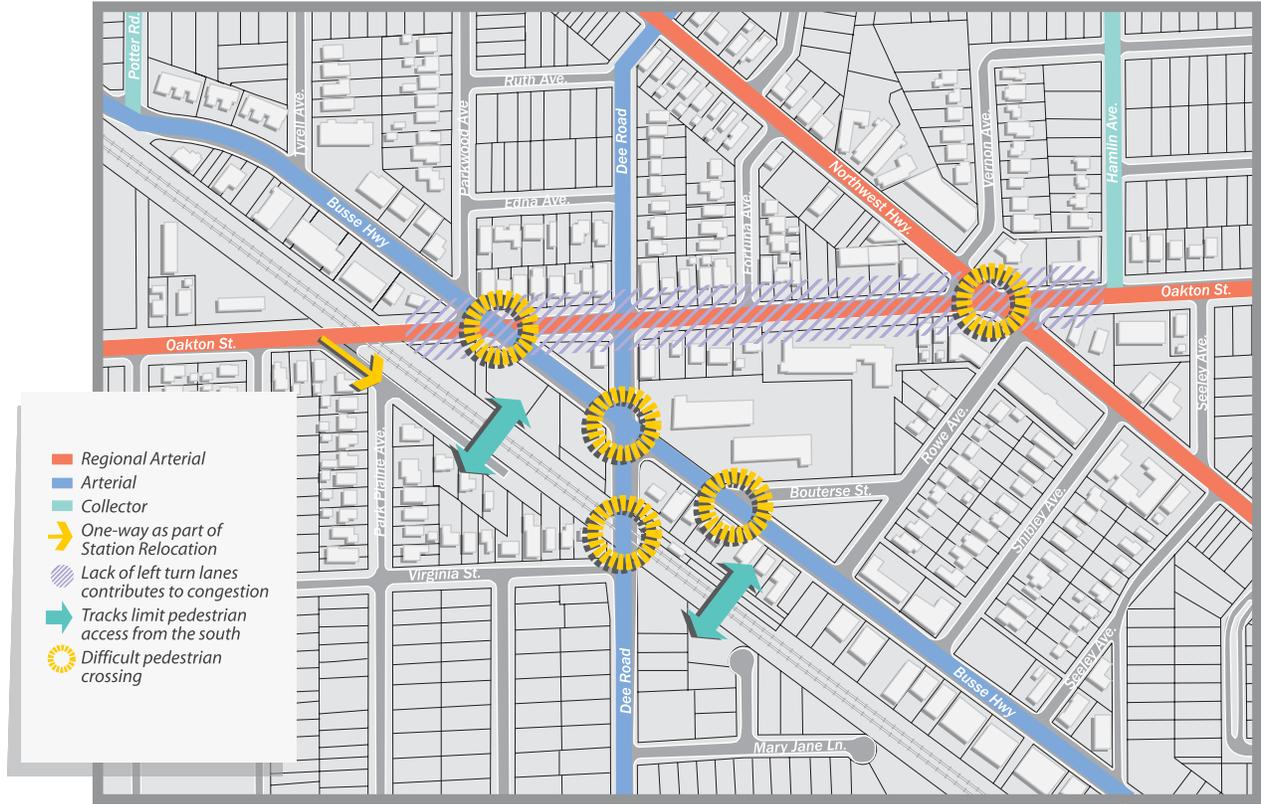


Figure 7: Public Transportation



## ***Section 2: Market Overview***

The market and demographic conditions within the greater Dee Park neighborhood will have a strong influence on development potentials within the Dee Park area.

The City retained the services of Business Districts, Inc. to undertake a study of the demographics and potential for retail, residential and office development in the Dee Park area. Key conclusions and recommendations of the *Market Study: Dee Park Area*, completed in March 2002, are summarized below.

### ***Demographics:***

Based on 2001 data, there are approximately 5,376 households, 14,275 residents, and 631 businesses and offices (with a total of 5,714 employees) within a one-mile radius of the intersections of Dee Road, Oakton Street and Busse Highway. The 2001 median household income for this area was \$63,214 and the total annual consumer expenditures for retail goods and services was approximately \$152.3 million (79 percent of which was spent on food and beverages).

### ***Existing Issues and Characteristics:***

- The demographics of the area present a very desirable market with higher than average income and a strong daytime population.
- The most desirable development site is a right-angle corner location. Unfortunately only one of five signalized intersections in the area (Dee Road and Oakton Street) provides such a location.
- Businesses in the Dee Park area are not well-clustered to provide good critical mass and appeal to the customer for multi-stop shopping.
- The district is generally unappealing for pedestrian-oriented shopping due in part to one-side-of-street, auto-oriented retail.
- Parcels are generally small and irregularly configured, which makes consolidation of lots necessary (and costly) to accommodate new development.
- Utility substations along Busse Highway limit the possibilities near or adjacent to these sites.
- The area faces strong competition from Uptown Park Ridge and other nearby established shopping centers and office developments.

### ***New Development Issues and Potentials:***

- The area could support additional residential development.
- Consistent with Metra guidelines for station area development, some multi-family projects, including townhomes and condominiums, should be encouraged.
- Unfortunately, high land costs and relatively small lot sizes will hamper residential redevelopment opportunities.
- The area has a strong demand for flexible office space. The two primary office types in the area are small multi-tenant buildings (under 15,000 square feet) and owner-occupied single office of 3,000 to 6,000 square feet.

- An opportunity for a multi-story office development may be appropriate—if on-site parking can also be achieved.
- Based on the demographics, market rent and high land costs, the Dee Park area is likely able to support new retail development by strong credit tenants (such as a national retailer).
- Based on the existing business mix and demographics, types of new retail that should be encouraged include restaurants, a national chain drugstore, home improvement businesses, and destination businesses.

The market study reviews four potential redevelopment areas, including: 1) the west side of Busse Highway from Potter Road to Oakton Street; 2) the southwest corner of Oakton Street and Dee Road; 3) the area bounded by Busse Highway, Dee Road, Oakton Street, and Rowe Avenue; and 4) the triangular area bounded by Oakton Street, Fortuna Avenue, and Northwest Highway.

These four areas—along with other potential redevelopment sites—are explored in more detail in Section 4 of this Plan report.

## ***Section 3: Revitalization Concept***

This section describes the recommended long-range revitalization concept for the Dee Park area. It includes a “vision” of the area as it should be 10 to 20 years in the future, and a list of principles and objectives that should be used by the City to guide future decisions regarding improvements and new development.

The material in this section is based on the analysis of existing conditions and potentials described in previous sections of this report, and on discussions with a number of persons from the Dee Park neighborhood and the Park Ridge community.

### ***Vision of the Dee Park Area:***

The City's vision for the Dee Park area is to create a more vibrant neighborhood shopping district centered on an improved Metra station that strengthens urban design, increases multi-family residential density, is more conducive to pedestrian and bicycle traffic, and improves open space. The City also wishes to create a more urban character for commercial and business development within the area, with buildings located closer to the street and parking being placed at the rear of commercial properties.

During the next 10 to 20 year period, the Dee Park area should be substantially improved and revitalized as a compact, traditional neighborhood containing a mix of land uses, all located within convenient walking distance of one another. It should function as a neighborhood commercial district, an employment and business area, and a quality living environment. It should be equally attractive and convenient to shoppers, business patrons, employees, commuters, and residents alike.

Future improvement and development should be based on the recognition that Dee Park is both an individual neighborhood unit, and also an integral and essential part of the larger Park Ridge community. While Dee Park's distinguishing features and characteristics should be enhanced and its special opportunities and potentials should be captured, its linkages and contributions to the Park Ridge community should also be strengthened and reinforced.

Existing sites and buildings should be substantially improved and upgraded, and high-quality and compatible new development and redevelopment should be promoted in selected locations. New development should be urban—as opposed to suburban—in character. New buildings should be located near the front property line and should be characterized by high-quality architectural design and traditional masonry building materials, particularly on the street level.

The area should be characterized by a mix of convenience commercial uses that serve nearby neighborhoods and transit patrons; office and service uses that support the surrounding community and motorists passing through the area; and a range of housing that offers close proximity to shopping and public transportation.

The improved Metra commuter rail station should become a major landmark and focal point for the Dee Park neighborhood. In addition, a pattern of improvement and redevelopment that builds upon the advantages offered by public transit should be promoted throughout the area.

Convenience retail, office, and service uses should be encouraged along the major streets that pass through the area and in the vicinity of the commuter station. These developments should be designed, located, and configured to serve the daily needs of nearby residents, commuters, and passing motorists.

While existing single-family neighborhoods should be maintained and protected, high-quality new multi-family residential development should also be promoted. Residential densities should be high enough to help support new retail and service development, as well as promote additional

transit usage. Densities should be generally highest in the blocks immediately around the station. Residential units might also be located on the upper floors of selected commercial buildings.

Dee Park should be served by a safe and convenient transportation system that accommodates vehicles, public transit, bicyclists, and pedestrians alike.

Left-turn lanes should be added along Oakton Street at the Busse Highway and Dee Road intersections. Traffic signal improvements should be undertaken to reduce congestion and improve pedestrian safety. Access drives for new development should be consolidated, particularly along Busse Highway near the Metra station. The City should work with the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), the Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR), and Metra to coordinate signals and minimize delays at the railroad crossings within the area.

Parking should be improved through the enhancement of existing lots and the construction of new attractively designed, shared-use parking areas. Most parking should be positioned behind buildings or at mid-block locations. Where possible, streets within the area should accommodate curb parking. The adjacent neighborhoods should be protected from spillover parking by business patrons, employees and commuters.

The area should become an attractive and convenient area for pedestrians and bicyclists. Sidewalks, crosswalks, and other pedestrian and bike amenities should be upgraded throughout the area. The placement and orientation of buildings, parking lots, and open spaces should also help to encourage pedestrian and bicycle movement, particularly in the vicinity of the commuter station.

In addition, a range of actions should be undertaken to enhance the image and character of the Dee Park area. This new image should help distinguish the shopping district and the surrounding neighborhood, and also contribute to the image and identity of the City as a whole. Existing sites and buildings should be substantially improved and upgraded, and new construction should be characterized by high-quality design and construction. Streetscape improvements should be undertaken throughout the area, particularly in the highly visible areas near the primary intersections.

### ***Principles and Objectives:***

In order to help achieve the vision described above, it is recommended that the City of Park Ridge utilize the following principles and objectives to guide future improvement and redevelopment decisions within the Dee Park area. Several of these principles and objectives are illustrated in Figure 12, which appears at the end of this section.

#### ***Commercial Development***

The area currently includes a mix of small commercial uses, including retail establishments, business and personal services, office uses, restaurants, and auto-oriented commercial establishments. Commercial uses are most prominent along Oakton Street, Busse Highway, and Northwest Highway. In general, existing commercial uses should be improved and upgraded and new commercial development should be promoted.

Favorable demographics, coupled with a significant employee and residential population, create a very desirable market for new commercial development within the Dee Park area. In addition, the area has good vehicular accessibility, good visibility, and convenient public transportation.

However, redevelopment for commercial uses in the Dee Park area will be a challenge. Sites are small and most commercial lots have limited depths. Commercial uses are also closely bordered by residential uses. The City should strive to achieve a balance between retaining existing residential uses, while recognizing the needs and requirements of commercial and business uses. In order to accommodate a desirable new commercial development that will serve nearby neighborhoods and the northern part of Park Ridge, the City should consider selected redevelopment.

Commercial development within the area should be designed to serve commuters going to and from the Metra commuter station, and capture the markets created by nearby residential areas, employment uses, and passing motorists. The close proximity of stores and businesses to the station and the neighborhoods can create convenient shopping opportunities that benefit both customers and merchants.

To be successful, commercial development within the area must include a healthy mix of stores and businesses, and it must have good accessibility and visibility to both pedestrian and automobile traffic. New “transit-oriented” commercial development should be designed and located to accommodate the needs of commuters, recognize their time constraints, and provide an attractive environment for consumers who might stop on the way to or from work.

The following principles and objectives should be used to guide commercial improvements and developments within the area:

- Properties near the commuter station should be promoted for transit-oriented commercial development. The close proximity of stores and businesses to the station will create convenient shopping opportunities that can benefit both commuters and merchants.
- Transit-oriented commercial development should consist of small retail and service uses that provide the opportunity for commuters to combine their commuting and shopping trips. For example, commercial uses to be promoted near the station include:
  - Dry-cleaning
  - Sit-down restaurants, with liquor service
  - Banks and ATM facilities
  - Convenience stores
  - Coffee shops
  - Bakery/donut shops
  - Carry-out restaurants
  - Candy stores
  - Ice cream shops
  - Newsstands
  - Pharmacies
  - Video rentals
  - Card/gift shops
  - Hardware stores
  - Barber/beauty shops
  - Day-care centers
  - Florists
  - Book stores
  - Photo-finishing shops
  - Auto-related services
- Transit-oriented commercial development should be highly visible and easily accessible to both pedestrian and automobile traffic. Businesses should be visible and accessible to commuters as they approach and leave the station. If some commuter parking is located outside the station site, stores and shops might be positioned between these off-site commuter parking areas and the station facility.
- Since much commuter shopping is done after work, stores and businesses in the vicinity of the station should be encouraged to stay open in the evening to take advantage of commuter business.
- In addition to transit-oriented development, other properties along Oakton Street, Northwest Highway, and Busse Highway should be promoted for commercial uses that serve the nearby neighborhoods and motorists passing through the area. These three corridors are suitable locations for a wide range of retail and service businesses. While convenience stores and services should be emphasized in most locations, offices and employment uses also will be appropriate, particularly along Busse Highway.
- New commercial development should reflect an “urban” rather than “suburban” development pattern. Where possible, new commercial buildings should be positioned near the front property line, with parking located to the rear. Commercial buildings should be aligned with and face the street. The use of traditional masonry building materials such as brick and stone should be encouraged.

- Mixed-use buildings should be promoted, particularly in the blocks near the commuter station and the major street intersections. Mixed-use buildings in these locations should consist of retail and service businesses located on the ground floor, with residential units located on the upper floors.
- While redevelopment may take place in several locations, many existing commercial properties and buildings will remain, at least in the immediate future. In general, existing commercial properties should be substantially upgraded, including storefronts, signage, landscaping, parking lots, and other features. In addition to physical improvements, existing property owners and businesses should be encouraged to take advantage of new technology and telecommunications improvements to enhance business operations.
- Marketing and promotional efforts will also be required to ensure successful commercial development within the area. For example, information about nearby stores and businesses should be made available in the commuter station to help encourage commuters to patronize nearby businesses. Informational kiosks, maps, and brochures highlighting nearby stores and businesses can be useful in this regard.

Several “opportunity sites” with potential for new commercial development are highlighted in Section 4 of this Plan report. However, since most sites are small and most properties are already occupied viable land-uses, the attraction of new commercial development will require a strong partnership between the City and prospective builders and developers.

### ***Residential Development***

The area is bordered by attractive and well-maintained residential neighborhoods that add significantly to the overall character of the area and also provide a base of support for many commercial uses and businesses within the area. These neighborhoods are comprised primarily of single-family homes, with some two-family dwellings and small multi-family developments intermixed along the major street corridors.

In addition, several newer multi-family residential developments are located within the area, including the four-story Gallery condominium development located on Busse Highway just south of Oakton Street. These newer multi-family developments have added significantly to the vitality of the area, and should help enhance opportunities for continued improvement and development within the Dee Park area.

The area is an ideal location for additional multi-family residential development. The area has good vehicular accessibility, convenient public transportation, proximity to shopping and services, and is located adjacent to existing single-family neighborhoods.

Most recent new construction projects within this portion of Park Ridge have been townhouse and condominium developments, and the demand for additional new multi-family residential development will most likely continue in the immediate future.

Over time, additional multi-family residential development within the area would serve to: a) expand the customer base for retail and service businesses within the area; b) increase the potential for commuter ridership; and c) continue to enhance the image and perception of this part of the City.

New residential development will also be a challenge within the area. The City should strive to increase residential densities in appropriate locations, particularly near the new commuter station. While most single-family homes should be retained, several homes along the major streets that pass through the Dee Park area may eventually be subject to redevelopment for townhomes or condominiums. The City should consider redevelopment if attractive new multi-family projects are proposed.

The following principles and objectives should be used to guide residential improvements and developments within the area:

- A mix of housing types should be promoted, including single-family and two-family homes, townhouses, apartments, and condominiums. A mix of housing can help attract a diverse range of residents to the area, including young families, single people, and “empty nesters.”
- Single- and two-family homes will be most appropriate within the residential neighborhoods immediately north and south of the commercial district. Multi-family development, including townhouses, apartments, and condominiums, will be most appropriate along and near the major streets that pass through the area.
- New multi-family residential development within the area should reflect an “urban” rather than “suburban” development pattern. New residential buildings should be aligned with and oriented to the street. Front entrances should face the street. While residential buildings should be set back from the sidewalk, setbacks should be held to a minimum and setbacks should be consistent within the same block. Garages should not be permitted on the street face of residential buildings.
- New residential development should be designed and located to create a pleasant environment for walking and facilitate pedestrian connections to the surrounding neighborhood. All new multi-family developments should include direct, safe and attractive connections to the commuter station.
- Residential areas should be characterized by a “residential” streetscape, whereby sidewalks, street lights, street trees, and parkway treatments reflect similar features within other traditional Park Ridge neighborhoods.
- Mixed-use buildings should be promoted, particularly in the blocks near the commuter station and the major street intersections. Mixed-use buildings in these locations should consist of retail and service businesses located on the ground floor, with residential units located on the upper floors.
- The relationship between the commercial areas and the adjacent neighborhoods should be strengthened and enhanced. Pedestrian linkages should be improved between the neighborhoods and shopping and transportation facilities. Screening and buffering should also be provided between the different land-use areas. Traffic and parking should be adequately accommodated within the commercial and business areas so that these conditions do not adversely impact the adjacent neighborhoods.
- Incompatible and unattractive uses and structures should either be substantially improved or removed in order to improve the residential quality and character of the area and to enhance opportunities for quality new residential development.

Several “opportunity sites” with potential for new multi-family residential development are highlighted in Section 4 of this Plan report. However, most sites are small and are occupied viable land-uses. As with commercial development, the attraction of new residential development will require a strong partnership between the City and prospective builders and developers.

### ***Commuter Station***

The existing Dee Road Metra commuter station is an important asset for the area. However, the existing station building is small, in poor condition, and not highly visible or accessible to motorists or pedestrians.

Metra, in cooperation with the City, has redesigned the facility to meet the needs of the community and satisfy the recommendations in the 1996 *Park Ridge Comprehensive Plan*. The existing station building will be demolished. A new building is currently under construction on the west side of Dee Road. The parking lot is being redeveloped and expanded. These changes will help make the station more visible; more accessible to pedestrians, bicyclists, and automobile and bus traffic; and create an important focal point for the Dee Park area.

The station should also have a positive impact on the surrounding neighborhood and enhance opportunities for attracting new investment and development. It should also help improve the image and perception of the area for residents, visitors, commuters, and passing motorists.

The primary challenges of the station relocation will continue to be the gate closures at both Oakton Street and Dee Road when a train is in the station. The City should work closely with Metra to determine if modifications can be made regarding gate closures in the future.

It should be emphasized that the redevelopment of the station was determined prior to the initiation of the *Dee Park Plan*. While the station is being redeveloped, the *Dee Park Plan* recommends several principles and objectives that should be considered as plans for the facility are finalized.

- The station should be characterized by high-quality design and construction and should provide a new civic landmark within this portion of Park Ridge. Even people that do not take the train should view the station as an important focal point and “signature” project for the Dee Park area.
- The station will be the first public building constructed in Dee Park in many years, and the station should “set the standard” for other new development within the area. To the extent possible, the station should be “urban” in character and it should complement other new buildings in terms of materials and color.
- The station should be inviting and easy to use, particularly for pedestrians and bicyclists. Safe and convenient walkways should be provided to the station from nearby stores and businesses, residential areas, and parking facilities. Pedestrian and bike amenities, such as seating areas, drinking fountains, bicycle storage facilities, etc., should be provided within the station area.
- Vehicular access to the station, as well as pick-up and drop-off facilities, should be safe and convenient for both motorists, pedestrians and bicyclists, and should be provided in a manner that does not add to congestion or result in traffic operational problems on streets in the surrounding area.
- The City should work with Metra to consider the feasibility of constructing a pedestrian tunnel under the tracks at some point between Oakton Street and Dee Road to improve pedestrian access to the station and enhance pedestrian safety.
- The City should work with Metra and Pace to determine the best locations for bus stops in the area. Bus stops may need to be relocated to provide safer access and street crossings for bus riders, and to help reduce traffic congestion. If possible, bus stops should be relocated near the new commuter station, possibly in conjunction with the development of a new public plaza on Opportunity Site J, as described in Section 4 of this report.

### ***Traffic Access and Circulation***

Traffic access and circulation has historically been a problem within the area, particularly during the peak travel periods.

It is recommended that the City undertake a multi-tiered approach to reduce delays and provide adequate access to businesses and residences by adding physical capacity where practical, and improving traffic operations to reduce unnecessary delays.

A strategy for minimizing delays and inconveniences at the Oakton Street and Dee Road railroad crossings should be developed. In addition, new development that promotes the use of transit and walking should be encouraged in order to reduce the reliance on auto traffic and parking.

The following principles and objectives should be used to guide traffic access and circulation improvements within the area:

- It is strongly recommended that Oakton Street be changed from four to five lanes, which would allow for dedicated left turn lanes at key intersections between the Metra tracks and Northwest Highway. While left-turn arrows are currently used on Oakton Street, turning traffic must wait in the through lanes, which blocks one lane and reduces capacity.
- Approximately 100 feet of right-of-way should be maintained along Oakton Street from the railroad east to Hamlin Avenue to accommodate the recommended five lanes. Additional land should be acquired where the right-of-way is less than 100 feet. The City will need to work with IDOT to achieve this key improvement.
- In addition to accommodating new turn lanes at key intersections, the widening of Oakton Street will also help to achieve several other objectives of the *Dee Park Plan*. It will allow for more safe and convenient pedestrian movement along Oakton Street; it will improve bicycle safety and flow; and it will allow for significant new streetscape beatification opportunities along the area's primary roadway.
- The City should also work with IDOT to explore the possibility of an attractive boulevard treatment along Oakton Street, perhaps with median planters and other landscaping as has been done in the city of Chicago. A boulevard treatment would still allow for left turn lanes.
- A traffic signal system that is "demand-responsive" should be installed within the area. A demand-responsive system uses vehicle sensors and computer-controlled signals to adjust the signal timings to better accommodate changing traffic demand. These systems can reduce delay by shifting green time to different streets as demand warrants.
- The City should consider providing a dedicated right turn lane along northbound Dee Road at Busse Highway as a part of the redevelopment of this property. A separate right turn lane could help reduce some of the congestion that currently occurs at this intersection.
- The City should undertake further study to explore the possibility of a three-lane cross section along Busse Highway north of Oakton Street and south of Dee Road. The provision of bike lanes along Busse Highway should also be considered.
- The City should continue to consider alternatives for Bouterse Street between Busse Highway and Rowe Avenue in order to reduce the delays along Busse and eliminate cut-through traffic. In general, several options should be explored:
  - a) Provide striping and signage for no parking within 20 feet of the driveway to the Gallery Condominium development. While parking near the driveway is already prohibited by ordinance, signage would help clarify parking restrictions in this area.
  - b) Work with Jeanine Schultz School to have pick-up and drop-off for all non-bus traffic on Oakton Street, rather than Bouterse. Bus traffic would continue to be provided on Bouterse.

- c) The possible closure of Bouterse between Rowe and Busse Highway. However, before making this decision, a number of issues must be studied in more detail, including local access requirements, police and fire vehicle requirements, and refuse collection.
  - d) Converting Bouterse to one-way traffic.
  - e) Restricting turning movements from Bouterse to Busse Highway during peak hours.
- Access to the Metra station should be provided from Busse Highway only. Access either from Dee Road or Oakton Street would conflict with the railroad crossings and would result in the loss of parking spaces in the lot. A left-turn lane should be provided on northwestbound Busse Highway for traffic entering the station.
  - Access to commercial properties should be consolidated where possible. By minimizing the number of locations where turning movements take place, traffic congestion can be reduced along the major streets. Consolidating the number of driveways can also help reduce conflicts with pedestrian circulation, and may also create additional opportunities for on-street parking.
  - As new development takes place within the area, the City should conduct periodic surveys of neighborhood streets to identify any changes in traffic patterns. If traffic increases on residential streets, the City should consider traffic calming treatments, such as speed control devices or turn restrictions. Some neighborhood streets might be converted to one-way traffic to prevent cut-through travel. However, the decision to change any residential street should take into account the views of neighborhood residents.
  - The City should consider opportunities for traffic calming and slowing the speed of traffic, particularly along Oakton Street. For example, improved traffic signal sequencing or progression could help reduce traffic speeds through better signal timing. Limited on-street parking might also be considered along Busse Highway during off-peak hours to help slow through traffic. Contrasting paving materials, landscaping, medians, and curb “bump-outs” can all be used to help calm and reduce the speed of traffic.

In addition to the recommended transportation improvements highlighted above, several other traffic circulation alternatives were considered in the planning process, but for various reasons are *not* recommended at this time. However, these alternatives may be studied by the City in more detail as a follow-up to the current assignment. These transportation alternatives are described in *Appendix B* of this report.

### ***Pedestrian and Bicycle Circulation***

Because of the diverse mix of residential and commercial uses and the presence of the commuter station, the area should have a pedestrian-friendly atmosphere that encourages people to walk and bike between the various destinations.

However, it is currently difficult for pedestrians and bicyclists to circulate between stores, shops, services, and public transportation. Sidewalks, particularly along the major streets, are quite narrow and some segments are in poor condition. Along most other streets, sidewalks are inconsistent in terms of width, placement and condition. It is also difficult for pedestrians to cross the major streets. Pedestrian crossings are further complicated by the presence of several diagonal streets that require multiple crossings at intersections.

In general, the area should become a more safe, attractive, and convenient environment for pedestrians and bicyclists, particularly in the vicinity of the commuter station. A more attractive pedestrian orientation should be a major “theme” of the *Dee Park Plan*.

As mentioned above, the widening of Oakton Street will significantly improve pedestrian and bicycle safety and circulation within the area. Widening of Oakton Street will permit additional space to be devoted to sidewalks, pedestrian amenities, and bicycle facilities.

The following principles and objectives should be used to guide pedestrian and bicycle access and circulation improvements within the area:

- Sidewalks should continue to be located along all streets in the area. Sidewalks should be well-maintained and set back from the street where possible to provide a buffer between traffic and pedestrians. Where on-street parking is permitted, sidewalks can be located adjacent to the curb. However, these sidewalks should be wide enough to accommodate street trees and other streetscape features. Sidewalks in commercial blocks should have an unobstructed walking path of at least six to eight feet.
- Curb heights should be no higher than six inches and curb cuts and ramping should be provided at all locations where pedestrian access is encouraged or expected. All sidewalk grades should meet minimum ADA requirements for slopes and widths.
- As mentioned above, sidewalk “bump-outs” might be considered at key intersections to assist in street crossings, slow traffic, provide additional space for street furniture, and eliminate parking near intersections.
- Crosswalks with pedestrian signals and push buttons should be provided at all major intersections where pedestrian and bicycle crossings are to be encouraged. Crosswalks should be well marked with reflectorized striping and advance warning signs to alert motorists to the presence of pedestrians. Alternative pavement colors and/or construction materials also should be considered to make crosswalks more visible. Small pylons and special lighting fixtures might also be used to highlight crosswalks.
- Pedestrian signal indicators should be located so that they are easily visible to pedestrians. Pedestrian push buttons might be linked with flashing amber lights to alert motorists that a pedestrian is waiting to cross the street. Pedestrian “countdown timers” might also be considered for intersections with longer wait times. Timers actually display the amount of time until the next walk signal will be displayed.
- Front entrances to stores and businesses should face the sidewalk, and pedestrian pathways should be highly visible. Pedestrian pathways between buildings and parking areas should be clearly defined, well-illuminated, and attractively maintained. Signage may also be considered in parking areas or at informational kiosks to direct pedestrians to stores, businesses, the commuter station, and other activity areas.
- Pedestrian routes between off-site commuter parking areas and the Metra station should be clearly defined and well-maintained with crosswalks and pedestrian lighting. Pedestrians should be directed to use the primary routes with controlled crosswalks, rather than crossing directly adjacent to the tracks.
- Pedestrian crossings at the railroad along both Oakton Street and Dee Road should have wide, well-maintained sidewalks for pedestrians, and should be equipped with signal gates to stop pedestrians and bicyclists from crossing the tracks when trains are approaching. The City should also work with Metra to consider the feasibility of constructing a pedestrian tunnel under the tracks at some point between Oakton Street and Dee Road to improve pedestrian access to the station and enhance pedestrian safety.
- Informational kiosks and/or location maps should also be considered at key locations to orient visitors to the area and promote local stores and businesses.

- A master bicycle plan should be developed for the Park Ridge community to identify preferred on- and off-street bike routes. Bicycle parking should be provided in well-lit and safe locations, and enclosed bicycle parking should be provided at the Metra station.

### ***Parking***

Even though the area should be developed in a manner that promotes and encourages access and circulation by pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users, the provision of adequate parking will still be essential.

Commuters and business patrons will continue to be attracted to the area from outside the immediate neighborhood. The employees of local businesses will also require adequate parking spaces, as will the residents of the area.

The following principles and objectives should be used to guide parking improvements within the area:

- As part of the Metra station redevelopment, additional commuter parking will be provided on the station site. These spaces should be maintained for commuter parking during weekday hours. However, the use of commuter parking for nearby stores and businesses during weekends and evening hours should be considered. In particular, this parking may be a viable option for employee parking during certain time periods.
- The existing “east end” commuter parking lot should be maintained for commuter use. If this block is redeveloped, some parking spaces should be retained for commuter use. During certain time periods, these spaces might also be made available to local stores and businesses.
- If required, additional commuter parking might be considered along the tracks in the block north of Oakton Street and west of Busse Highway. If this block is redeveloped, parking could be provided that would be available for shared-use during non-commuter periods.
- If off-street parking is not sufficient to serve commuters, some limited on-street commuter permit parking might be considered along selected streets within a reasonable walking distance of the station. However, on-street commuter permits should not conflict with local business or residential parking needs.
- Adequate parking should be provided as part of all new commercial developments. Shared-use parking facilities should be encouraged. Consolidated parking located behind commercial buildings should be promoted. Shared-use parking allows for larger parking fields, improved access, fewer driveways, more efficient lot layout, and often results in more parking spaces.
- Consolidated, shared-use parking lots should also be encouraged in blocks with existing commercial and business uses. If consolidated parking cannot be provided, parking agreements should be promoted between nearby businesses that allow parking on adjacent parcels for patrons and/or employees during certain time periods.
- If commercial area parking continues to be a problem, the City might consider the provision of one or more public parking lots within the area. These might be constructed as part of larger mixed-use developments or through the acquisition of a few selected parcels. Blocks in which shared-use public parking lots might be considered include:
  - a) The triangular block bounded by Oakton Street, Northwest Highway, and Fortuna Avenue;
  - b) The triangular block bounded by Oakton Street, Rowe Avenue and Busse Highway;
  - c) The block between the railroad and Busse Highway, north of Oakton Street; and

d) The block between the railroad and Busse Highway, east of Dee Road.

- Parking lots should be attractively designed, landscaped, and maintained to complement the character of the area. Lots should be pedestrian compatible, with walkways and access points that promote walking to nearby businesses. Lots might also provide some informational signing to orient parkers to nearby shops, businesses, and the commuter station.
- Most on-street parking spaces in the commercial portions of the area should be reserved for short-term shoppers and business patrons. However, on-street parking might be restricted during peak commuting hours to improve traffic flow. The City might also consider issuing permits to commercial area employees to allow for a limited amount of on-street, daytime parking in adjacent neighborhoods when resident parking needs are minimal.
- Some additional off-peak, on-street parking might be considered along Busse Highway. However, additional study of traffic volumes and street dimensions should be undertaken before this decision is made. Off-peak, on-street parking might also be considered along Northwest Highway, although traffic volumes and street dimensions may make this a less attractive alternative.

While adequate parking is essential, the area should be improved and redeveloped in a manner that encourages safe and convenient pedestrian and bicycle access and circulation in order to reduce the reliance on automobile travel and reduce the need for “more and more” parking.

### ***Image and Appearance Enhancements***

In addition to site and building improvements and new developments, a range of projects should be undertaken within the public rights-of-way to enhance the image and appearance of the Dee Park area and 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 area.

In general, it is recommended that the City establish a comprehensive, area-wide design scheme for public improvements to be applied in various parts of the area. While the design scheme should be based on the architecture, history, and traditional character of the Park Ridge community, it should also help establish a unique new image and identity for the Dee Park area.

- Coordinated streetscape improvements should be considered along all public streets within the area, particularly Oakton Street, Northwest Highway, Busse Highway and Dee Road. Improvements should include street trees, parkway landscaping, street light fixtures, pedestrian lighting in selected locations, and directional signage. Streetscape improvements will not only improve the image of the area, but will also help encourage people to walk and spend more time in the area.
- Regularly spaced street trees should be planted in rows along both sides of all major streets within the area. 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.
- 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. All landscaping within and adjacent to the public right-of-way should be compatible with existing plant materials in Park Ridge.
- Lighting along public streets within Dee Park should consist of both roadway lighting and decorative pedestrian lighting. While roadway lighting should be consistent with IDOT and

City codes and standards, light standards should be no more than 20 to 25 feet in height in order to be in scale with new buildings within the area.

- Pedestrian-scale light fixtures should be considered along designated pedestrian and bicycle paths. Additional lighting also may be required at key intersections to illuminate crosswalks and pedestrian waiting areas. Pedestrian light standards should be approximately 12 to 15 feet in height.
- 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.
- The appearance of the railroad right-of-way should be enhanced within the area, particularly near the Oakton Street and Dee Road crossings. Decorative fencing and low-profile landscaping, such as hedges and shrubs, should be considered to supplement the existing trees along the edges of the right-of-way.
- At least one new public open space should be provided within the area to serve as a focal point and gathering place for residents, employees, and visitors. Additional plazas and open spaces might be provided as a part of new residential and commercial developments.
- The intersection of the grid street pattern with two diagonal streets has resulted in several triangular blocks and irregular intersections within the area. While these intersections can complicate land development and can be difficult for motorists and pedestrians to negotiate, they also create interesting views and opportunities for special design treatment. In general, urban design enhancements should focus on these highly visible intersections.
- Attractive and distinctive wayfinding signage should be installed at selected locations so that people who are not familiar with the area can find the commuter station, public parking areas, and local stores, businesses and attractions more easily.
- New “gateway” design features should be developed at selected locations, particularly at the intersections of Oakton/Northwest Highway and Oakton/Busse Highway, to announce entry into the Dee Park area. Gateway features might incorporate an attractive new Dee Park logo or other visual symbol to denote this mixed-use neighborhood.
- Maps and other resources should be made available to assist commuters, customers, and visitors in locating parking facilities and understanding the regulations that control those facilities. Pedestrian-oriented signs and kiosks should also be provided to direct and encourage pedestrians to walk to the commuter station and nearby uses and activity areas.
- The City should work with the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) to undertake regular patching and, if needed, resurfacing of the major streets that pass through the area. The City should continue to provide a regular program of maintenance on all local streets within the area.
- Regular street and sidewalk sweeping and snow removal should be conducted, especially as the area becomes more oriented to pedestrian travel. In particular, snow, dirt and other debris should be regularly removed from areas near crosswalks.

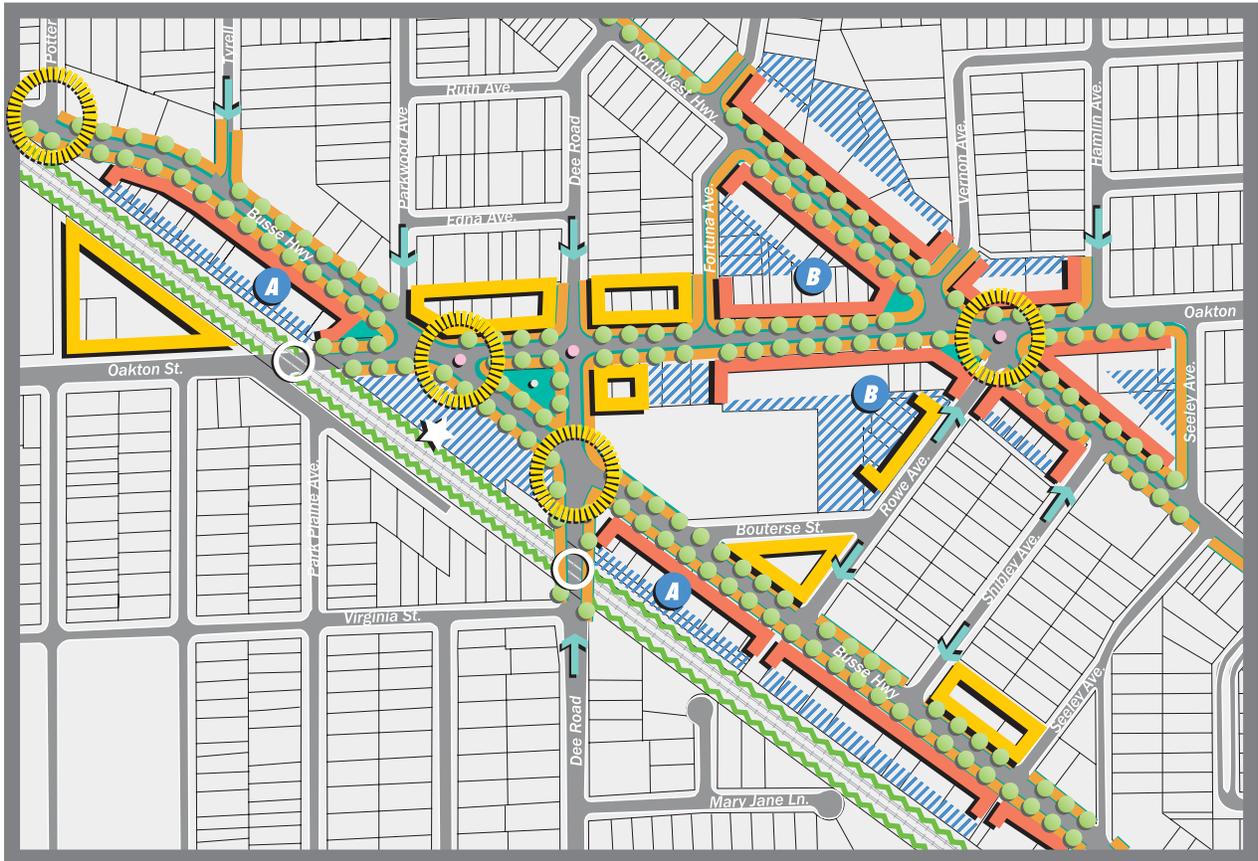
### ***Zoning and Development Controls:***

Zoning should be reviewed to ensure that it is compatible with and supports the *Dee Park Plan*. The City is undertaking a comprehensive rewrite of the Zoning Ordinance.

While current zoning appears to be reasonable, refinements that might be considered include:

- The possibility of creating a new neighborhood commercial zoning district that allows for mixed-use development;
- The rezoning of certain properties to reflect the land-use recommendations established in the Plan;
- A review of the permitted and special uses in certain districts, particularly the “heavy” commercial uses that are currently permitted in the B-3 District;
- Requiring site plan review for small commercial development projects in the area—such as projects in the 5,000 to 10,000 square foot range;
- The creation of a neighborhood shopping environment that is more conducive to pedestrian movement and pedestrian activity;
- The improvement of traffic flow and traffic operations, particularly with regard to the number and location of curb cuts and cross-access between adjacent properties;
- Pedestrian access to commercial buildings from parking areas and public sidewalks;
- Parking requirements, as well as the location and design of parking facilities;
- The promotion of high-quality and compatible new infill developments and redevelopment projects;
- The possibility of additional new mixed-use developments within neighborhood centers; and
- The possibility of using zoning to better implement some of the site and building design guidelines established in the Plan, particularly with regard to signs, site landscaping, building facades, and building location and orientation.

Figure 8: Revitalization Concept



**Commercial Development:**

**A** Properties near the commuter station should be promoted for new transit-oriented commercial development.

**B** Properties near the intersection of Northwest Highway and Oakton Street should be promoted for new retail, service and mixed-use development.

**Commercial Building Icon** New commercial development should reflect an “urban” scale and character. New buildings should be positioned near the front property line and should be aligned with and face the street.

**Residential Development:**

**Residential Building Icon** Potential opportunities for residential development near the Metra commuter station. New residential buildings should be aligned with and oriented to the street. Setbacks should be consistent within the same block. Garages should not be permitted on the street face of buildings.

**Arrow Icon** The relationship between the commercial areas and adjacent neighborhoods should be

enhanced through pedestrian linkages and screening and buffering. Single-family areas should also be protected from encroachment.

- A mix of housing types should be promoted, including townhouses, apartments, and condominiums. A mix of housing can help attract a diverse range of residents to the Dee Park area.

**Public Transportation:**

**Star Icon** The commuter station should be characterized by high-quality design and construction and should provide a civic landmark within Dee Park.

**Circle Icon** The City should work with Metra to improve the safety, appearance and convenience of the at-grade rail crossings.

- The City should work with Metra and Pace to determine the best locations for bus stops in the Study Area. Bus stops should be located near the commuter station.

**Access and Circulation:**

- Left turn lanes should be provided along Oakton Street between the Metra tracks and

Northwest Highway. A 100-foot right-of-way should be maintained along Oakton Street in this area.

- A “demand-responsive” traffic signal system should be installed within the Study Area. Such a system can adjust signal timings to better accommodate changing traffic demand.

**Pedestrian Orientation:**

**Sidewalk Icon** Sidewalks along all streets should be well-maintained and set back from the street where possible to provide a buffer between traffic and pedestrians. Parkways should be wide enough to accommodate street trees and streetscape features.

- Crosswalks with pedestrian signals should be provided at all major intersections.

**Parking:**

**Shared-use Parking Icon** Shared-use parking facilities should be encouraged, and consolidated parking located behind commercial buildings should be promoted.

- Parking lots should be attractively designed, landscaped, and maintained to complement the character of the area.

**Urban Design:**

**Streetscape Icon** Coordinated streetscape improvements should be undertaken along all major streets within the Study Area, including Oakton Street, Northwest Highway, Busse Highway and Dee Road. Improvements should include street trees, parkway landscaping, street light fixtures, pedestrian lighting, and directional signage.

**Green Arrow Icon** The appearance of the railroad right-of-way should be enhanced within the Study Area, particularly near the Oakton Street and Dee Road crossings.

**Plaza Icon** Create a new public plaza at Dee Road and Oakton Street.

**Gateway Icon** New “gateway” design features should be developed at selected locations. These might incorporate an attractive new Dee Park logo or other visual symbol to denote this mixed-use neighborhood.

## Section 4: Opportunity Sites

Even though the Dee Park area is fully developed and most existing uses are sound and viable, there will continue to be a market for and interest in new development and redevelopment.

While development and redevelopment could conceivably occur anywhere within the area, several properties appear to be more “susceptible” to change than others. These include: a) vacant properties; b) marginal and underutilized properties; c) properties where reuse or redevelopment is already being discussed; and d) properties subject to change because of their location.

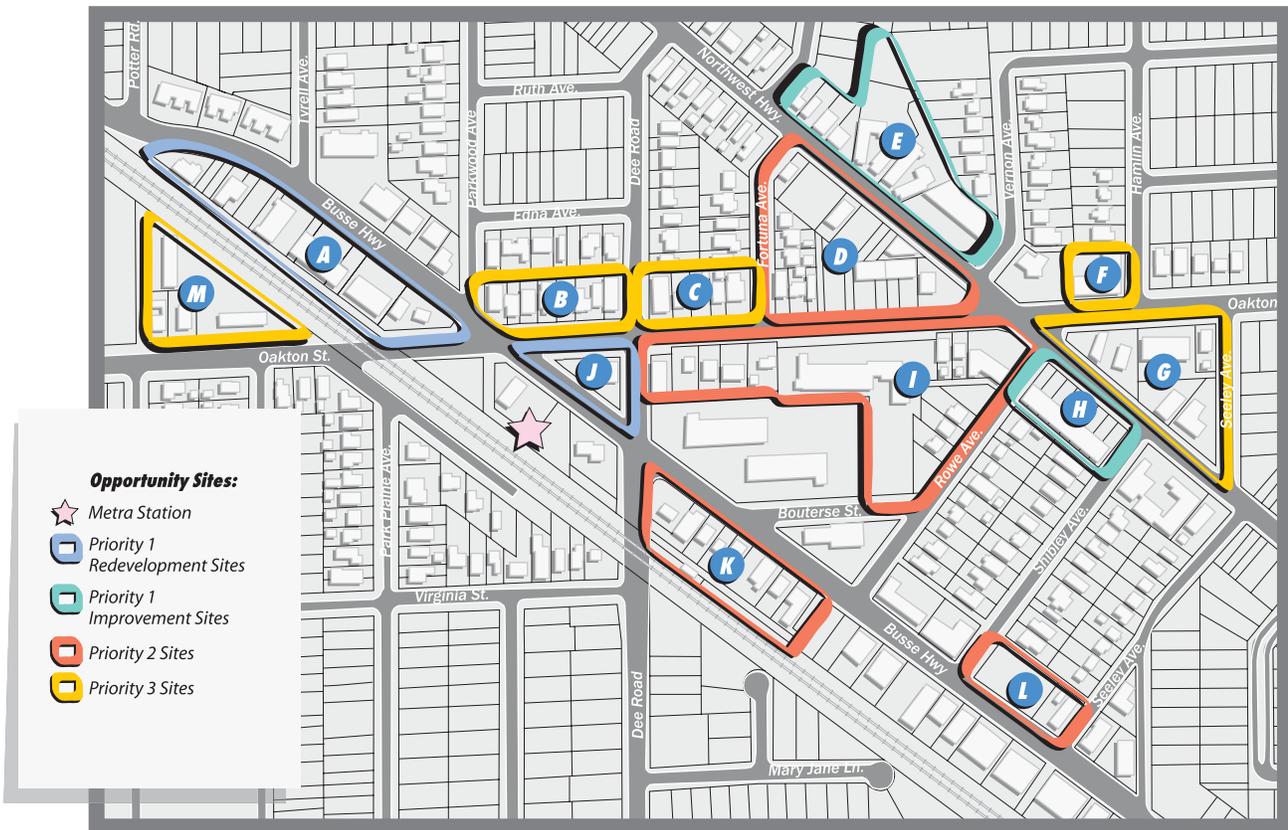
Based on the presence of these properties, which were previously discussed in Section 1 of this report, several “Opportunity Sites” have been identified that may have potential for either site and building improvements or new commercial, residential, or mixed-use development in the future.

### **Overview of Opportunity Sites:**

Potential Opportunity Sites within the area are illustrated in Figure 9. They include the following:

- **Site A** encompasses the commercial and office properties located between the railroad and Busse Highway, north of Oakton Street.
- **Site B** encompasses the mixed residential properties located along the north side of Oakton Street, between Busse Highway and Dee Road.
- **Site C** encompasses the mixed residential properties located along the north side of Oakton Street, between Dee Road and Fortuna Avenue.
- **Site D** encompasses the triangular block bounded by Oakton Street, Northwest Highway and Fortuna Avenue, which contains a mix of commercial, office and residential uses.
- **Site E** encompasses the frontage properties along the northeast side Northwest Highway from Vernon Avenue to Fortuna Avenue, including commercial, office and residential uses.
- **Site F** encompasses the residential property located on the northwest corner of Oakton Street and Hamlin Avenue.
- **Site G** encompasses the triangular block bounded by Oakton Street, Northwest Highway and Seeley Avenue, which contains a mix of commercial, office and residential uses.
- **Site H** encompasses the office building located on the west side of Northwest Highway, between Rowe and Shibley Avenues.
- **Site I** encompasses the northern portion of the block bounded by Oakton Street, Rowe Avenue, Bouterse Street, Dee Road and Busse Highway, which contains a mix of commercial and residential uses, as well as the Jeanine Schultz School.
- **Site J** encompasses the triangular block bounded by Oakton Street, Busse Highway and Dee Road, which contains Denny’s Auto Repair.
- **Site K** encompasses the commercial and office properties located between the railroad and Busse Highway, east of Dee Road.
- **Site L** encompasses the office and vacant properties located along the north side of Busse Highway, between Shibley and Seeley Avenues.

Figure 9: Opportunity Sites



**Priority 1 Sites:**

**Site A** encompasses approximately 2.25 acres just north of the new commuter station. New commercial development should be encouraged along both Busse Highway and Oakton Street, perhaps including a new pharmacy or convenience store. Office, service and transit-oriented uses should be promoted along Busse Highway.

**Site J** encompasses approximately 0.35 acres just east of the new commuter station. This Site should be redeveloped as an attractive pedestrian plaza that would become an important new visual focal point for Dee Park.

**Site E** includes the 0.65 acre Crossroads Shopping Center site. The City should work with the existing property owner to improve and enhance this property as an anchor within the Study Area. The office and service uses near Fortuna Avenue may be subject to improvement or redevelopment. The multi-family residential units at mid-block could be retained.

**Site H** includes the 0.8 acre office building site located along Northwest Highway. The City should work with the existing property owner to enhance this property as an anchor within the area.

**Priority 2 Sites:**

**Site D** occupies the 3.0 acre block at the northwest corner of Oakton Street and Northwest Highway. Site D has excellent potential for a new neighborhood commercial center containing a mix of retail and service uses.

**Site I** encompasses approximately 4.6 acres at the southwest corner of Oakton and Northwest Highway. Site I has excellent potential for a new mixed-use center containing retail, service and residential uses.

**Site L** encompasses approximately 0.75 acres southeast of the new commuter station. Three alternatives should be considered for this Site:

- a) A small new townhome or multi-family development, located within convenient walking distance of the new station.
- b) New office or service development, similar to other uses currently in this area.
- c) Permanent public open space, which would enhance the image and appearance of this portion of the Study Area.

**Site K** encompasses approximately 1.6 acres along Busse Highway southeast of the new commuter station. Site K may have potential new office, service and other transit-oriented commercial uses.

**Priority 3 Sites:**

**Site B** and **Site C** are located along the north side of Oakton Street, just east of the new commuter station. These sites may have long-term potential for new townhome or multi-family developments, within convenient walking distance of the commuter station.

**Site F** encompasses approximately 0.45 acres at the northwest corner of Oakton Street and Hamlin Avenue. This Site would be appropriate for either new residential development, or for new office or service development. If possible, this Site should be coordinated with the Parkway Bank property.

**Site G** encompasses approximately 1.9 acres at the southeast corner of Oakton Street and Northwest Highway. This Site may have long-term potential for a new neighborhood commercial center or mixed-use development.

**Site M** encompasses approximately 1.75 acres along the north side of Oakton Street just west of the railroad. This Site may have long-term potential for new mixed residential developments that overlook the Oakton Sports Complex.

**Note:** See the accompanying text for a more complete description of each Opportunity Site.

- **Site M** encompasses the mix of residential properties located along the north side of Oakton Street, just west of the railroad.

The existing characteristics and future potentials of each Opportunity Site are presented in Table 2, which highlights the following:

- a) Site size in acres,
- b) Owner(s) of record (based on 2001 data),
- c) Total 2001 assessed valuation (both land and buildings),
- d) Existing uses,
- e) Current zoning,
- f) Past planning recommendations,
- g) Market potential (based on the recent *Market Study* prepared by BDI, Inc.),
- h) Development considerations, and
- i) Improvement and development recommendations.

### ***Approach to Improvement and Redevelopment:***

While the City of Park Ridge might promote the redevelopment of several Opportunity Sites as part of a single project, this will not likely be possible because of the size and location of the sites, the multiple owners, and the need to relocate existing businesses and residences.

Therefore, the *Dee Park Plan* allows for improvement and redevelopment to occur in the area over a period of years, in a series of phases, as opportunities arise and resources become available.

However, while redevelopment might take place over a period of years, redevelopment should not occur as a series of isolated and unrelated projects. While each project should be capable of standing on its own merits, each should also be consistent with and conform to the objectives and guidelines for the area as a whole.

Furthermore, since redevelopment will most likely be phased over a period of years, the Plan addresses both the short- and long-term needs of the various Opportunity Sites. For example, short-term improvements for certain sites might include the enhancement of existing sites, buildings and parking lots. Long-term improvements might include large-scale redevelopment and more significant structural changes within the area.

### ***The Phasing of Redevelopment:***

Improvement and redevelopment of the Dee Park Opportunity Sites might proceed in three phases, as described below:

#### ***PRIORITY 1 SITES***

***Sites for Redevelopment.*** It is recommended that the City of Park Ridge work with existing property owners and potential developers to promote redevelopment of the following sites in the short-term future.

- **Site A**, which occupies a highly visible and accessible intersection location directly north of the new commuter station.  
New commercial development should be encouraged along both Busse Highway and Oakton Street. The corner of Oakton and Busse should be considered as the site of a new pharmacy or convenience store, which would become a major new anchor within the area. Office, service and other transit-oriented uses should be promoted along the Busse Highway frontage. Several of the existing office uses could become tenants in the new development.

Parking should be located along the rail tracks, behind the stores and businesses. Shared-use parking should be promoted, and this area might provide parking support for the commuter station. Vehicular access to Site A should be from Busse Highway.

Redevelopment of Site A should include attractive new “gateway” design features along Oakton Street near the railroad, and near the intersection of Potter Road and Busse Highway. Improved sidewalks, crosswalks and streetscape amenities should also be provided along both Oakton Street and Busse Highway to promote more pedestrian movement between stores and businesses and to provide linkages to the commuter station and nearby residential developments.

While redevelopment of Site A would require the assembly of several parcels under separate ownership, it would entail the displacement of only one residential structure.

- **Site J**, which occupies a highly visible intersection location just east of the new commuter station.

This site should be redeveloped as an attractive pedestrian plaza and public open space that would become an important new visual focal point for the entire Dee Park area. The new plaza should include a combination of landscaping, seating areas, identity signage, and a signature design feature such as a fountain, sculpture, gazebo, or other piece of public art. In terms of materials and design, the plaza should complement and enhance the commuter station.

Pedestrian crosswalks should connect the new plaza to all surrounding blocks, which should greatly enhance pedestrian access to the commuter station.

While Site J might be considered for new commercial development, such as a restaurant, the small size and triangular configuration of the block will limit and constrain new development. In addition, providing vehicular access to this site would further complicate an already difficult traffic situation.

**Sites for Improvement and Enhancement.** In addition to promoting redevelopment, the City should also assist and encourage existing property owners to improve and enhance two other Opportunity Sites in the short-term future, as highlighted below:

- **Site E**, which includes the frontage properties along the northeast side of Northwest Highway from Vernon Avenue to Fortuna Avenue.

While the existing Crossroads Shopping Center is generally sound and adequately maintained, it is characterized by a somewhat dated appearance, an overcrowded and poorly screened parking lot, uncoordinated signage, and a lack of quality landscaping.

It is recommended that the City work with the property owner of the shopping center to improve and enhance this property as an important anchor within the area. Improvements might include screening and landscaping of the parking lot in front of the center; updating the design and appearance of the building's storefront; and more attractive and coordinated signage. Convenience commercial uses that provide for the day-to-day needs of nearby residents should be promoted in this development.

While the office and service uses near the corner of Northwest Highway and Fortuna Avenue are in adequate condition, these properties may eventually be subject to redevelopment for new retail, office and service uses.

If portions of Site E are redeveloped, it is recommended that buildings be located at the front of the property, near the sidewalk, and that parking be located to the rear of the buildings. If redevelopment takes place, retail, office and service uses that accommodate the needs of nearby neighborhoods and the northern portion of Park Ridge should be encouraged. New buildings should be characterized by coordinated signage, façade treatments, and quality landscaping.

Improved sidewalks, crosswalks and streetscape amenities should also be provided along Northwest Highway adjacent to Site E to promote more pedestrian movement between the shopping center and nearby stores, businesses and residential developments.

- **Site H**, which includes a two-story, multi-tenant office building located along Northwest Highway.

While the existing office building is generally sound and adequately maintained, it is characterized by a dated appearance, a poorly screened parking lot, uncoordinated signage, and a lack of quality landscaping.

It is recommended that the City work with the property owner of this building to improve and enhance this property as an anchor within the area. Enhancements should include façade improvements, more extensive screening and landscaping of the parking lot in front of the building, and improved signage. The interior of the building might also be upgraded to provide more desirable and attractive space for new office tenants.

As an alternative to improvement and enhancement, this Site may have potential for redevelopment for new office and service development. The site occupies a highly accessible location and would be a very desirable site for a new, updated office, service or mixed-use development.

If Site H is redeveloped, it is recommended that buildings be located at the front of the property, near the sidewalk, and that parking be located to the rear of the building. If redevelopment takes place, the facility should be characterized by coordinated signage, façade treatments, and quality landscaping.

It should be emphasized that short-term improvement, enhancement and redevelopment of the four Priority 1 Opportunity Sites highlighted above would:

- a) Support and complement the Metra commuter station;
- b) Provide new stores and businesses to serve commuters and nearby residents;
- c) Increase the residential base;
- d) Upgrade the image and appearance of the area; and
- e) Enhance opportunities for attracting additional commercial and mixed-use development in the intermediate and long-term future.

### ***PRIORITY 2 SITES***

The Priority 2 sites also appear to have potential for new commercial, residential or mixed-use development, although site acquisition and assembly may be more difficult due to the large number of property owners, the presence of residential properties, and/or the fact that these sites are already occupied by sound existing uses.

It should be emphasized that some of these “intermediate” sites could become higher priority sites if attractive and desirable redevelopment projects are proposed.

- **Site D**, which occupies the triangular block at the northwest corner of Oakton Street and Northwest Highway.

Because of its relatively large size, good accessibility, and high visibility, Site D has potential for redevelopment as a new neighborhood commercial center containing a mix of retail and service uses. This new development would create an important new anchor for the area.

The City should strive to create a balance between preserving single-family homes in this block, while recognizing the needs and requirements of commercial and business development. The Plan does not recommend that any existing homes in this block be removed. However, if an at-

tractive and desirable redevelopment project is eventually proposed for this block, the City should consider the possibility of redevelopment.

If redevelopment takes place, new commercial development should be encouraged along both the Oakton Street and Northwest Highway frontages. Buildings should be located near the sidewalk, with shared-use parking lots located behind the buildings. If sufficient parking can be provided, two-story buildings with offices or housing units on the upper floors might be considered. Several of the existing commercial uses in this block might become tenants in the new development.

Redevelopment of Site D should include a new “gateway” design feature at the corner of Oakton and Northwest Highway. Improved sidewalks, crosswalks and streetscape amenities should also be provided along Oakton Street and Northwest Highway to promote more pedestrian movement between stores and businesses and to provide linkages to nearby residential developments. Landscaped screening and buffering should also be provided between the new development and the adjoining residential areas.

If redevelopment does not take place in the immediate future, the City should work with existing property owners to improve and enhance the existing commercial uses in this block, particularly those near the corner of Oakton and Northwest Highway. Improvements might include screening and landscaping of the parking lots; updating the design and appearance of storefronts; a more consistent sidewalk treatment along Oakton Street; more attractive and coordinated signage; and new street trees and parkway landscaping.

- **Site I**, which encompasses the block bounded by Oakton Street, Rowe Avenue, Bouterse Street, Dee Road and Busse Highway (excluding the Gallery Condominium site).

Because of its relatively large size, good accessibility, and high visibility, Site I has potential for redevelopment as a new mixed-use center containing retail, service and residential uses. This new development would create an important new anchor and focal point for the area.

The Jeanine Schultz School, a private special education facility, is an important asset within the Dee Park area. The Plan does not recommend that this structure be removed. However, if the existing school is eventually closed or is subject to redevelopment, commercial and mixed-use development should be considered for this key property.

If redevelopment takes place, new commercial development should be encouraged along the Oakton Street and Northwest Highway frontages. Buildings should be located near the sidewalk, with shared-use parking lots located behind the buildings. If sufficient parking can be provided, two-story buildings with either offices or housing units on the upper floors might be considered.

New commercial and mixed-use development within Site I and Site D would create a “two-sided” shopping area that does not exist in Dee Park at present. The provision of commercial services along both sides of Oakton Street would greatly enhance the attraction of this commercial node and would also help promote additional pedestrian shopping. To the extent possible, the commercial developments along both sides of Oakton should be coordinated in terms of scale, character and architectural design, and safe and convenient crosswalks should be provided to link the two shopping areas.

While the focus of Site I should be commercial development, new townhome or multi-family residential development might be considered at the southeast corner of Oakton Street and Dee Road. If sufficient land is available, new townhomes might also be considered along Rowe Avenue, across from the existing single-family homes in this area.

In addition, plans for any new development should be compatible with the existing Gallery condominiums, which are located within the same block just south of Site I.

Redevelopment of Site I should include a new “gateway” design feature at the corner of Oakton and Northwest Highway. Improved sidewalks, crosswalks and streetscape amenities should also be provided to promote more pedestrian movement between stores and businesses and to provide linkages to nearby residential developments and to the commuter station. Landscaped screening and buffering should be provided between the new development and the adjoining residential areas.

If redevelopment does not take place in the immediate future, the City should promote improvement and enhancement of the existing commercial uses in this block, particularly those near the corner of Oakton and Northwest Highway. Improvements might include the screening and landscaping of parking lots; updating the design and appearance of storefronts; more attractive and coordinated signage; and new street trees and parkway landscaping.

- **Site L**, which is located a few blocks southeast of the commuter station. The City should consider three alternatives for this particular Site:
  - a) This Site, much of which is currently vacant, would be an ideal location for a small new townhome or multi-family development, located within convenient walking distance of the commuter station. New development should front Busse Highway, with parking located either within the primary structure or to the rear of the property. The small existing office building at the corner of Busse and Seeley Avenue might be retained, or might be combined with the vacant parcel to create a larger site for new residential development.
  - b) This Site would also be an appropriate location for new office or service development, similar to other uses that currently exist along the west side of Busse Highway in this area. New development should front Busse Highway, with parking located to the rear of the property. The small existing office building at the corner of Busse and Seeley Avenue might be retained, or combined with the vacant parcel to create a larger site for new office and service development.
  - c) Because this Site is wooded and has been characterized by drainage concerns in the past, this property might be preserved as permanent public open space, which would enhance the image and appearance of this portion of the area.

If Site L is redeveloped for either residential or commercial use, the mature trees which exist on the parcel should be retained and incorporated into the new development.

- **Site K**, which is located along Busse Highway directly southeast of the commuter station. Because of its good accessibility and visibility, Site K may have potential for redevelopment in the future. A wide range of office, service and other transit-oriented commercial uses would be appropriate in this block. New development should be encouraged along the Busse Highway frontage, with parking located along the rail tracks, behind the stores and businesses. Shared-use parking should be promoted, and this area might provide parking support for the commuter station. Vehicular access to Site K should be from Busse Highway.

Redevelopment of Site K should include a design feature or landscaped treatment at the corner of Busse Highway and Dee Road. Improved sidewalks, crosswalks and streetscape amenities should also be provided along Busse Highway and Dee Road to promote more pedestrian movement between stores and businesses and to provide linkages to the commuter station.

If redevelopment does not take place in the immediate future, the City should promote improvement and enhancement of the existing auto repair property at Dee Road and Busse Highway, perhaps including perimeter landscaping, the screening of outdoor storage areas, and signage improvements. A small new entry design feature should also be considered at this intersection.

### ***PRIORITY 3 SITES***

Priority 3 sites are characterized by existing residential uses, small site sizes, and/or other conditions or characteristics that suggest redevelopment in the near future will be less likely than the Opportunity Sites highlighted above. However, some of these “long-term” sites could become higher priority if developer interest emerges.

- ***Site B*** and ***Site C***, which are located along the north side of Oakton Street, just east of the commuter station.

These sites may have potential for redevelopment as small townhome or multi-family developments, located within convenient walking distance of the commuter station. However, redevelopment would require the removal of existing homes. If new development takes place, housing units should front Oakton Street, with parking located either within the primary structure or to the rear of the property.

As an alternative, the existing single- and two-family homes might be retained. Since the existing homes are sound and well-maintained, short-term site and building improvements are not necessary in these blocks at the present time.

- ***Site F***, which includes the northwest corner of Oakton Street and Hamlin Avenue.

While the existing multi-family structure is generally sound and well-maintained, it is older and somewhat dated. Because of the property’s excellent visibility and accessibility, this site may have potential for redevelopment.

Site F would be appropriate for either a new townhome or multi-family development, or for office or service development. If the property is redeveloped for commercial use, it should be coordinated or combined with the new Parkway Bank site at the northeast corner of Oakton and Northwest Highway.

- ***Site G***, which includes the triangular block at the southeast corner of Oakton Street and Northwest Highway.

While the existing uses are generally sound and viable, this highly visible and accessible site may eventually have potential for redevelopment as a new neighborhood commercial center or mixed-use development. Commercial uses should be located near the corner of Oakton and Northwest Highway, and along the Northwest Highway frontage. Multi-family uses might be considered in the eastern portion of this block, which already contains a relatively new condominium development.

Improved sidewalks, crosswalks and streetscape amenities should also be provided along Northwest Highway to promote more pedestrian movement between the shopping center and nearby stores, businesses and residential developments.

In the immediate future, the image and appearance of the existing gas station property at the corner of Oakton and Northwest Highway should be improved and enhanced with additional perimeter landscaping, the screening of outdoor storage areas, and signage improvements. A small new entry design feature should also be considered near the corner of Oakton and Northwest Highway.

- ***Site M***, which is located along the north side of Oakton Street, just west of the railroad.

This site may have long-term potential for redevelopment for a mix of housing types, including townhomes and condominiums that overlook the Oakton Sports Complex. New residential development in this location would have excellent proximity to the commuter station.

**Table 2: Assessment of Opportunity Sites  
Dee Park Study Area, City of Park Ridge, Illinois**

Site	Site Size	Owner of Record	2001 Assessed Valuation	Existing Uses	Current Zoning	Past Planning Recommendations	Market Potential	Development Considerations	Improvement and Development Recommendations
<b>A</b>	2.25 acres	McClennon Company, B. Beaureau, B. Reno, ComEd, E. Laris Trust, J. Binder, E. Spinuzza, Trust 998391, TU Trust, Mobile Main- tenance	\$ 769,531	Commercial Service Building (Merry Maids, Clothes Café Dry Cleaners) Fil & Andy's Ice Cream, Like New Car Detail, ComEd substation, Enterprise Car (w/residential); three multi-tenant office buildings; Schweizer Emblem and Beaureau Studios; VRA Architects and Freirich's Design Group), Citgo Gas	B-3	Comp. Plan: Business	Good potential for a combination of commercial and office. Market Study suggested 10,000 square foot drug store with parking and 18,000 square feet of office with parking.	Busse and Oakton frontages provide good access and visibility. Redevelopment would require assembling several parcels with various owners and the displacement of existing businesses. The Busse/Potter intersection marks a neighborhood gateway and should be- come a strong visual asset. Busse/Oakton is an important anchor corner for the neighborhood district. Proximity to the Metra station is a key asset. Limited lot depths constrain redevelop- ment, especially with regard to on-site parking requirements. Small ComEd sub- station at mid block may also limit rede- velopment. Environmental investigations may be required due to existing and former land uses.	Short-Term. Location coupled with excellent accessibility, visibility, and proximity to the train station make this Site a good candidate for new commer- cial or mixed-use transit-oriented devel- opment. However, lot depths are limiting and substantial land assembly and displacement will be required. This Site might also provide parking support for the commuter station, per- haps in the form of a shared-use parking facility. A new pharmacy or convenience store might be promoted at the corner of Oakton and Busse Highway.
<b>B</b>	1.0 acres	9 different owners	\$ 229,307	Mixed residential (four single- family and four two-family)	R-2	Comp. Plan: Multi-Family Residen- tial	Site not specifically addressed but may have market poten- tial for new multi- family residential development.	Redevelopment would entail assembling several parcels with various owners and the displacement of existing residences. Relatively small site size will also constrain new development. Proximity to the Metra station is a key asset.	Long-Term. Proximity to the train sta- tion and Oakton Street frontage could make this block attractive for new town- home or multi-family development in the long-term future.
<b>C</b>	0.7 acres	Five different owners	\$ 140,714	Mixed residential (four two- family and one single- family)	R-2	Comp. Plan: Multi-Family Residen- tial	Site not specifically addressed but may have market poten- tial for new multi- family residential development.	Redevelopment would entail assembling several parcels with various owners and the displacement of existing residences. Relatively small site size will also constrain new development. Proximity to the Metra station is a key feature	Long-Term. Proximity to the train sta- tion and Oakton Street frontage could make this block attractive for new town- home or multi-family development in the long-term future.

**Table 2: Opportunity Sites (continued)**

Site	Site Size	Owner of Record	2001 Assessed Valuation	Existing Uses	Current Zoning	Past Planning Recommendations	Market Potential	Development Considerations	Improvement and Development Recommendations
<b>D</b>	3.0 acres	V. Poulikakos, K. Park, Karis Management, TU Trust, Trust, M. Pelfresne, P. Buhelos and six single-family home owners	\$ 714,017	Wally's Gyros, Pediatrics Medical Office Building, McDonald's, Oakton Chiropractic & Physical Therapy, Spotlight Photography, Dr. Clinton Dentistry, and mixed residential (six single-family and one two-family)	R-1 (fronting Fortuna) B-1 (NW Hwy & eastern half of Oakton frontage) R-2 (western half of Oakton frontage)	Comp. Plan: Business (NW Hwy) Retail (Oakton) Multi-Family Residential (Oakton & Fortuna) Single-Family (along Fortuna)	Good potential for neighborhood commercial center of approximately 25,000 square feet. Market Study suggested a restaurant, coffee shops and specialty stores.	Excellent accessibility and visibility due to frontage on both Oakton and Northwest Hwy and a key corner location. Oakton/Northwest Hwy is an important anchor corner for the neighborhood district and should be a strong visual focal point. Redevelopment would require assembling several parcels with various owners and may entail the displacement of existing businesses and residences. Design for vehicular access is important due to the high traffic volumes on Northwest Hwy and Oakton Street. Coordination of ingress/egress and effective design of parking are essential. Oakton Street is a primary pedestrian linkage to the Metra station and a connecting route between Busse and Northwest Hwy. Oakton and Northwest Hwy frontage should be pedestrian friendly.	Intermediate. Good location, excellent visibility and accessibility, and relatively large site size combine to make this a prime candidate for a new anchor neighborhood commercial center that includes coordinated parking, building and site design. However, substantial land assembly and displacement will be required. The City should strive to create a balance between preserving existing homes in this block, while recognizing the needs and requirements of new commercial and business development.
<b>E</b>	3.2 acres	Wilbur Whamond, Anthony Castellano, Ericksen Armstrong Cord, 40 condominium owners	\$ 731,055	Crossroads Shopping Center, four condominium buildings, medical office building, Beauty Salon, two additional office uses	B-1	Comp. Plan: Retail, Single-Family Residential	Site not specifically addressed but this area appears to have good potential for neighborhood commercial, especially if new commercial is also developed across Northwest Highway.	Excellent access and visibility with frontage on Northwest Highway. Existing structure is sound and generally well-maintained, although landscaping, parking lot and building façade could be upgraded and enhanced.	Short-Term Improvement and Enhancement. The existing shopping center should be upgraded and enhanced, including perimeter landscaping, parking lot improvements, coordinated signage, and façade improvements. The commercial properties near the corner of Fortuna may have potential for redevelopment. The existing condominium buildings could remain.

**Table 2: Opportunity Sites (continued)**

Site	Site Size	Owner of Record	2001 Assessed Valuation	Existing Uses	Current Zoning	Past Planning Recommendations	Market Potential	Development Considerations	Improvement and Development Recommendations
<b>F</b>	0.45 acres	Edwin Golemba	\$ 124,003	1 multi-family rental residential building	B-2	Comp. Plan: Multi-Family Residential	Site not specifically addressed but appears to have good potential for neighborhood commercial (especially if strengthened by additional commercial in the area to achieve "critical mass"). Site could also be suitable for small new multi-family development.	Excellent access and visibility with frontage on Oakton. Relatively small site would require displacement of an apartment building with several inhabited residential units. Located close to important intersection location for the business district. Oakton and Northwest Highway are high traffic volume locations that commercial developers typically seek.	Long-Term. While the existing multi-family structure is sound and generally well maintained, it is older and somewhat dated. This Site would be suitable for a new, updated townhome or multi-family development, or for new commercial development. If possible, this Site should be coordinated with the new Parkway Bank site at the northwest corner of Oakton and Northwest Highway.
<b>G</b>	1.9 acres	Success A11 Educate, TU Trust, Hobo Enterprises, 18 condo owners and 9 condo owners	\$ 599,539	Marathon Gas Station, Dentist Office Building, State Farm Insurance, 1815 Oakton Condos (18 units), 941 NW Hwy Condos (9 units)	B-1 R-4 (1815 Oakton Condos)	Comp. Plan: Multi-Family Residential and Retail (Gas Station)	Site not specifically addressed but appears to have potential for neighborhood commercial (especially if strengthened by additional commercial in the area to achieve "critical mass").	Excellent access and visibility with frontage on Northwest Highway and Oakton. Oakton and Northwest Highway are high traffic locations that commercial developers typically seek. Redevelopment would require assembling several parcels with various owners and potential displacement of existing residences and some businesses. Environmental investigations may be required due to existing and former land uses.	Long-Term. Location, excellent visibility and accessibility, and good site size combine to make this a candidate for a new neighborhood commercial center that includes coordinated parking, building and site design. However, substantial land assembly and displacement would be required. At a minimum, the existing gas station property should be upgraded and enhanced.
<b>H</b>	0.8 acres	A. Saccone and Sons	\$ 389,526	Multi-tenant office building with 10+ medical office and commercial service uses	B-1	Comp. Plan: Office	Site not specifically addressed but appears to be a stable and competitive location for office uses.	Excellent access and visibility with frontage on Northwest Highway. Existing structure is sound and generally well-maintained, although landscaping, parking lot and building façade could be upgraded and enhanced.	Short-Term Improvement and Enhancement. The existing office building is an important use within the Study Area. This property should be upgraded, including perimeter landscaping, parking lot improvements, coordinated signage, façade improvements, and interior remodeling.

**Table 2: Opportunity Sites (continued)**

Site	Site Size	Owner of Record	2007 Assessed Valuation	Existing Uses	Current Zoning	Past Planning Recommendations	Market Potential	Development Considerations	Improvement and Development Recommendations
1	4.6 acres	Jeanine Schulz School, School District 64, 10 owners of single-family or two-family	\$ 416,244	Jeanine Schulz School, White Hen Pantry, Jackson Hewitt Tax Service, Dry Cleaners, two small vacant parcels, and mixed residential (nine single-family, one two-family)	B-2 (Oakton from NW Hwy to J.S. School) R-1 (J.S. School & Rowe parcels) R-2 (Oakton: west of J.S. School)	Comp. Plan: Retail: Oakton from NW Hwy to school Retain school or consider for mixed use Multi-Family Residential (Oakton St. west of school) Single-Family (along Rowe)	Market Study suggested that the school site has potential for redevelopment as ground floor retail (approximately 12,500 s.f.) with office above. Good potential for commercial uses along Oakton frontage and at corner locations (perhaps 10,000 s.f. drug store or 5,000 s.f. restaurant) Potential for condo development in the Bouterse/Rowe/Busse triangle	Excellent access and visibility with frontage on Oakton, Dee, and Busse. Oakton/Northwest Hwy and Oakton/Busse are important corner sites for the neighborhood business district. Redevelopment would require assembling several parcels with various owners and the displacement of existing residences and businesses. New development should relate to the existing Gallery Condominiums, located to the south. The proposed condominium development at Bouterse/Rowe/Busse will add to the customer base for neighborhood commercial.	Intermediate. Location, coupled with excellent accessibility, visibility, and proximity to the train station, make this Site a good candidate for new mixed-use transit-oriented development that includes both commercial and multi-family residential uses. Commercial development of Site I, coupled with similar development on Site D, will create a "two-sided" commercial area along Oakton Street that would significantly enhance the attraction of the area. If the Jeanine Schulz School property becomes available in the future, mixed-use commercial and residential uses should be considered. However, substantial land assembly and displacement will be required. The City should strive to create a balance between preserving uses in this block, while recognizing the needs and requirements of new commercial and business development.

**Table 2: Opportunity Sites (continued)**

Site	Site Size	Owner of Record	2007 Assessed Valuation	Existing Uses	Current Zoning	Past Planning Recommendations	Market Potential	Development Considerations	Improvement and Development Recommendations
J	0.35 acres	Dennis O'Deen, K & J Modrzejewski	\$ 58,999	Denny's Auto Repair	B-2	Comp. Plan: Open Space	If Busse Hwy is vacated between Dee Road and Oakton Street, the Market Study suggested that this Site could accommodate a 10,000 square foot drug store or 5,000 square foot restaurant use.	The Site is a key neighborhood focal point with excellent visibility and access due to frontage on Dee, Oakton, and Busse and proximity to the new train station. Environmental investigations may be required due to existing and former land uses. Small site size limits redevelopment potential.	Short-Term. Small size, proximity to the train station, and a central location make this Site an ideal location for a new public plaza with strong design and identity features. It might include seasonal landscaping, lighting, a fountain or sculpture, a gazebo, monument signage and banners, public art, etc. While this Site could be appropriate for new commercial uses, the small site size and difficult access patterns are critical limitations. The closure of Busse Hwy, which could increase the size of this Site, is not recommended because of adverse traffic impacts in the surrounding area.

**Table 2: Opportunity Sites (continued)**

Site	Site Size	Owner of Record	2001 Assessed Valuation	Existing Uses	Current Zoning	Past Planning Recommendations	Market Potential	Development Considerations	Improvement and Development Recommendations
<b>K</b>	1.6 acres	Theodore Baseleon, John Davis, Tom Mafoutsis, Swidereck Trust, Frank Johnson, Nicholas LLC, Midwest Baptist Conference	\$ 668,625	Skyjark Garage, Tiny's Cycle Works, Dental Office, Midwest Baptist Conference, Peter A. Johnson & Sons, Park Ridge Cabinet, John's Auto and Truck Repair, two small single user office buildings, and one vacant building	B-3	Comp. Plan: Business	Lower traffic volumes on Busse contribute to a stable market location for affordable, flexible office/general commercial space and auto-oriented stores/restaurants suitable for independent businesses.	Redevelopment would require assembling several parcels with various owners and potential displacement of existing residences. Proximity to the Metra station is a key asset. Environmental investigations may be required due to existing and former land uses.	Intermediate. Location coupled with good accessibility, visibility, and proximity to the train station make this Site a good candidate for new commercial or mixed-use transit-oriented development. However, lot depths are limiting and substantial land assembly and displacement will be required. This Site might also provide parking support for the commuter station, perhaps in the form of a shared-use parking facility.
<b>L</b>	0.75 acres	Robert B. James and Christos D. Sotos Trust	\$ 117,814	Main Center Office Building and vacant parcel	B-1	Comp. Plan: Office	Site not specifically addressed but lower traffic volumes on Busse contribute to a stable market location for affordable, flexible office/general commercial space and auto-oriented stores/restaurants suitable for independent businesses. This general area also has strong market potential for multi-family residential development.	Good visibility and accessibility with frontage on Busse. Site assembly is not inhibited by multiple parcels/owners. An existing vacant parcel contributes to this Site's "readiness." A mature stand of trees and a wetland area on the site should be considered for conservation.	Intermediate. Three options should be considered for this Site: a) Site L would be an ideal location for new townhome or multi-family development, located within convenient walking distance of the commuter station. b) Site L would also be an appropriate location for new office or service development, similar to other uses along Busse Highway in this area. c) This Site might be preserved as permanent public open space. If Site L is redeveloped, the mature trees should be retained and incorporated into the new development.

**Table 2: Opportunity Sites (continued)**

Site	Owner of Record	2001 Assessed Valuation	Existing Uses	Current Zoning	Past Planning Recommendations	Market Potential	Development Considerations	Improvement and Development Recommendations
M 1.75 acres	Gary/Emily Oswald; Hooshang Moshtaei; and 22 owners of 24 condo units	\$345,480	Single-Family Home; Apartment Building; 24 unit Condominium (2 buildings)	R-1 and R-2 (Oakton frontage)	Comp. Plan: Multi-Family Residential	Site not specifically addressed but area shows strong market potential for multi-family residential.	<p>Redevelopment would entail assembling several parcels with various owners and potential displacement of existing residences.</p> <p>Proximity to the Metra station and adjacency to Oakton Sports Complex are key features.</p>	<p>Long-Term: Location coupled with excellent accessibility, visibility, and proximity to the train station make this Site a good location for new commercial or mixed-use transit-oriented development that includes multi-family residential.</p> <p>This Site might also provide parking support for the commuter station, perhaps in the form of a shared-use parking facility.</p>

## Section 5: Illustrative Plans

The section presents a series of plans that illustrate how various parts of the Dee Park area might eventually be improved and redeveloped, consistent with the policies, guidelines, and recommendations presented in previous sections of the Plan report.

The illustrative plans include the following:

- **Figure 10** illustrates: a) the Metra commuter station and off-street parking at Oakton Street and Busse Highway; b) new transit-oriented development and off-street parking at Opportunity Site A, located north of Oakton Street and west of Busse Highway, perhaps including a new pharmacy or convenience store at the corner of Oakton and Busse; and c) a new public plaza and design feature at Opportunity Site J, which encompasses the triangular block at Oakton Street, Dee Road and Busse Highway.
- **Figure 11** illustrates: a) new commercial development and off-street parking near the northwest corner of Oakton Street and Northwest Highway (Opportunity Site D); and b) new commercial development and off-street parking at the southwest corner of Oakton Street and Northwest Highway (Opportunity Site I). Under this plan, the Jeanine Schultz School and all existing residential uses along Oakton Street, Fortuna Avenue, Northwest Highway and Rowe Avenue would remain.
- **Figure 12** illustrates more extensive redevelopment of Opportunity Sites C, D, and I. If attractive and desirable redevelopment projects are proposed for these blocks, this concept is intended to help the City balance the needs of both existing and new development. Figure 12 highlights : a) new commercial development and off-street parking at Opportunity Site D, which encompasses the triangular block bounded by Oakton Street, Northwest Highway and Fortuna Avenue; b) new commercial, residential and mixed-use development at Opportunity Site I, which is located along the south side of Oakton Street between Northwest Highway and Dee Road; and c) new townhouse development at Opportunity Site C, located on the north side of Oakton Street between Fortuna Avenue and Dee Road.
- **Figure 13** presents an illustrative cross-section of Oakton Street, showing the roadway width, parkways and sidewalks, street trees, street and pedestrian light fixtures, and other features.

The illustrative plans are intended to:

- a) Suggest alternatives for how the overall area might eventually be revitalized and enhanced, according to the “vision” described in Section 3;
- b) Illustrate a number of the policies and objectives for commercial and residential development, access and parking, and image and appearance enhancements, as presented in Section 3; and
- c) Depict options for how the key “Opportunity Sites” might be improved and redeveloped, according to the recommendations set forth in Section 4.

***Note on Graphic Presentation:***

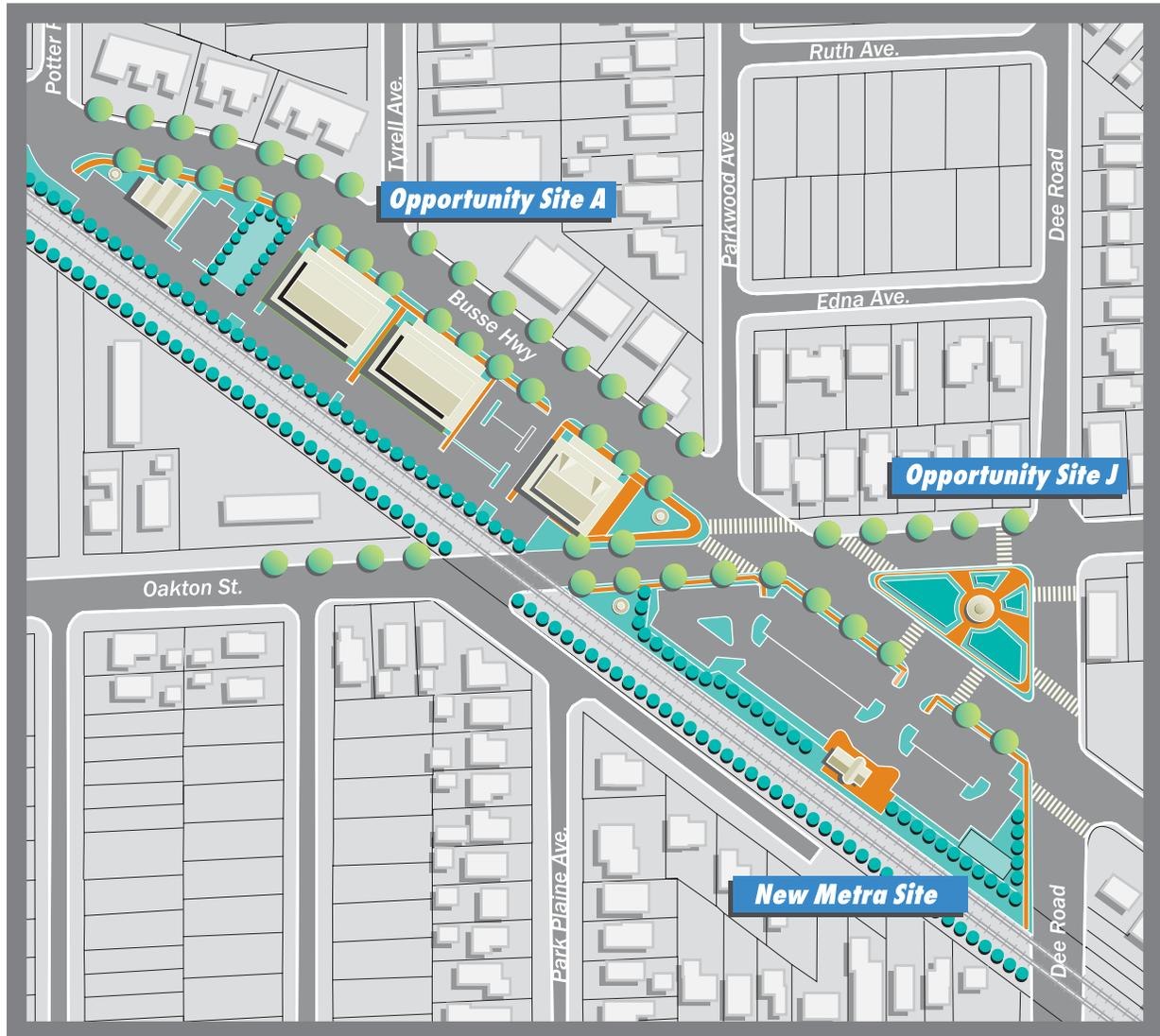
In order to describe and convey the various policies, guidelines, and recommendations, the graphics presented on the following pages show the location and arrangement of buildings, access drives, parking areas, and open spaces.

However, it should be emphasized that these are shown for *illustrative purposes only*. They are not intended to be architectural plans or final design solutions. They are not intended to limit creativity or to restrict the final design for any specific property.

Rather, the graphics illustrate the mix of uses and the scale, pattern, and character of new development called for in the *Dee Park Plan*.

If a specific property is redeveloped in the future, the City should work closely with prospective architects and developers to formulate high-quality site and building design solutions, consistent with the principles and guidelines established in the final Plan.

Figure 10: **Illustrative Plans**



**Metra Station Site:**

- Metra commuter rail station south of Oakton Street and west of Busse Highway. The station should provide a new civic landmark within the Dee Park area.
- New masonry station building consisting of approximately 1,000 square feet and a covered outdoor "loggia" area.
- New off-street parking lot with 187 parking spaces.
- The station should be inviting and easy to use, particularly for pedestrians and bicyclists.
- Access should be safe and convenient and should not add to congestion on streets in the surrounding area.
- More extensive landscaping should be provided along the Metra commuter line as it passes through the area.

**Opportunity Site A:**

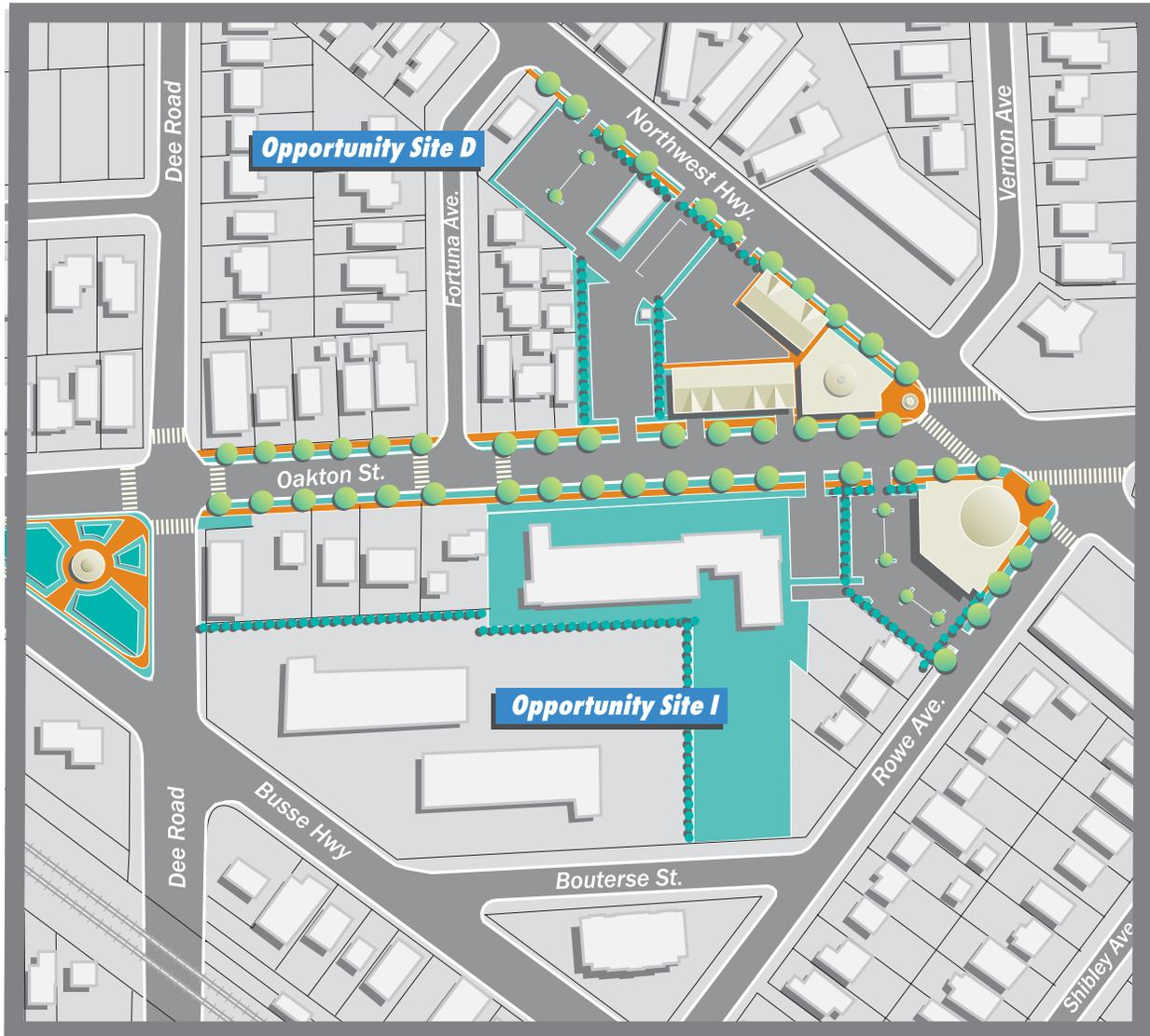
- Approximately 40,000 square feet of new ground floor commercial space.
- The corner of Oakton and Busse should be considered as the site of a new pharmacy, convenience store or other transit-oriented commercial development.
- Retail, office, service and other transit-oriented uses should be promoted along Busse Highway. Two-story buildings in this block may have housing units or offices on the second floor.
- Adequate parking should be provided, located primarily along the rail tracks, behind stores and businesses. Shared-use parking should be required.
- Gateway design features and small plazas at the Oakton/Busse and Busse/Potter intersections.

- Twenty feet should be provided between the curb line and buildings along Oakton Street and Busse Highway, which should be sufficient for parkways, street trees, and other streetscape features.
- All new development should be characterized by consistent setbacks along the major streets within the area.

**Opportunity Site J:**

- Site J should be redeveloped as an attractive pedestrian plaza that would become an important new visual focal point for the Dee Park neighborhood.
- The new plaza should include a combination of landscaping, seating areas, identity signage, and a signature design feature.
- Pedestrian crosswalks should connect the new plaza to surrounding blocks.

Figure 11: **Illustrative Plans**



**Opportunity Site D:**

- New commercial buildings near the corner of Oakton Street and Northwest Highway. New buildings should be located near the sidewalk line, with parking behind the buildings. The corner building should be two-stories in height.
- Adequate parking should be provided, with parking lots landscaped and buffered from adjacent residential uses.
- A gateway design feature and small plaza should be provided at the corner of Oakton Street and Northwest Highway.
- Twenty feet should be provided between the curb line and buildings along Oakton Street and Northwest Highway. This would provide sufficient space for parkways, street trees, sidewalks, and other streetscape features.

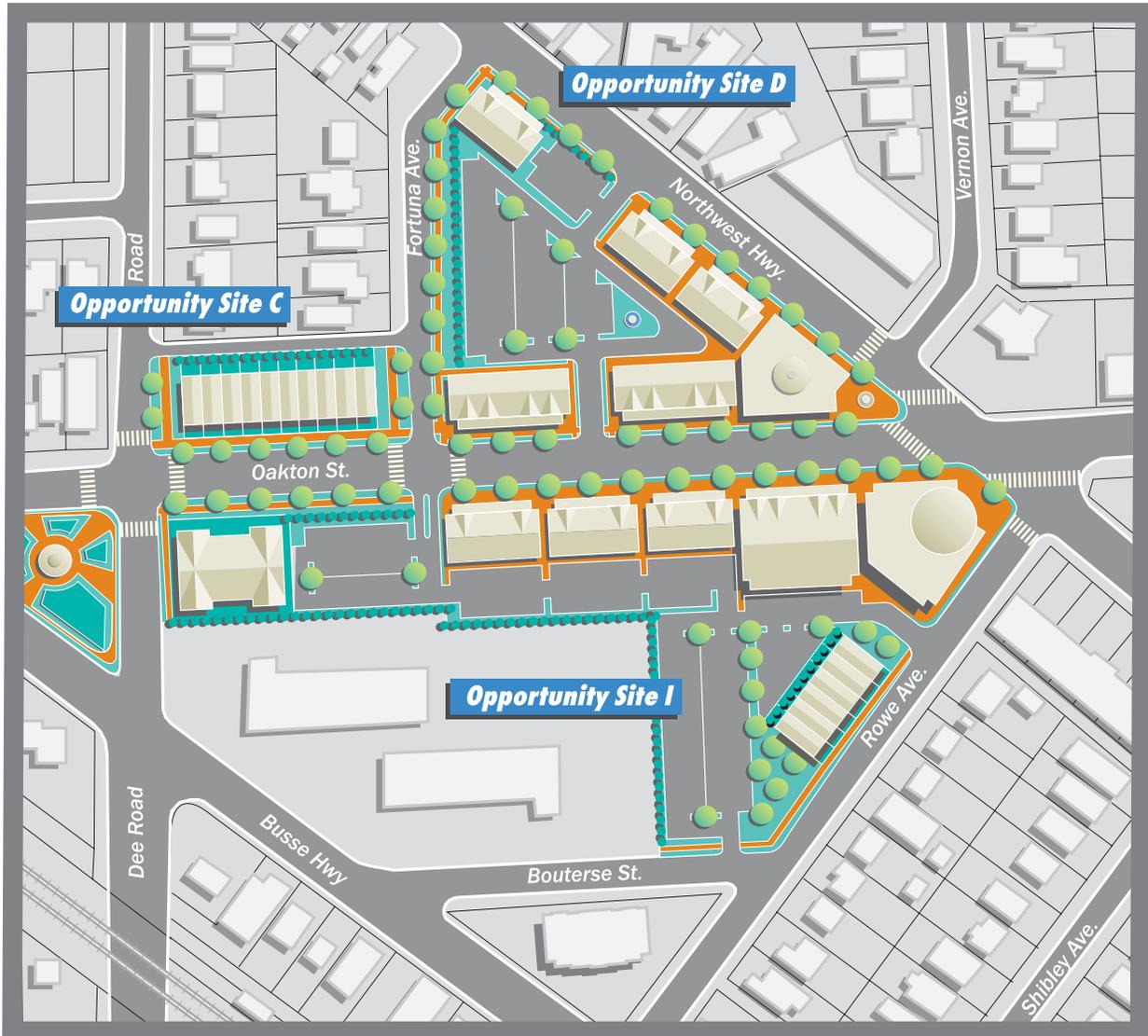
- The City should work with property owners to improve and enhance the commercial properties to remain in this highly visible block.
- Under this concept, all residential properties along Fortuna Avenue, Oakton Street and Northwest Highway would remain.

**Opportunity Site I:**

- New commercial building at the corner of Oakton Street and Northwest Highway; this building should be two-stories in height.
- Adequate parking should be provided, with parking lots landscaped and buffered from adjacent residential and public uses.
- A gateway design feature and small plaza should be provided at the corner of Oakton Street and Northwest Highway.

- Twenty feet should be provided between the curb line and buildings along Oakton Street and Northwest Highway. This would provide sufficient space for parkways, street trees, sidewalks, and other streetscape features.
- A generous setback and extensive landscaping should be provided along Rowe Avenue to buffer existing homes from new commercial development and related parking.
- Under this concept, the Jeanine Schultz School would remain, as would all existing residential properties along Oakton Street and Rowe Avenue.

Figure 12: **Illustrative Plans**



**Opportunity Site D:**

- Approximately 45,000 square feet of new ground floor commercial space.
- The new commercial building at the corner of Oakton and Northwest Highway should be at least two stories in height.
- Adequate parking should be provided, located behind buildings and at mid-block.
- Gateway design feature and small plaza at Oakton/Northwest Highway.
- Twenty feet should be provided between the curb line and buildings along Oakton Street and Northwest Highway, which should be sufficient for parkways, street trees, and other streetscape features.
- Arcades between buildings to connect sidewalks with parking lots.
- Small open space behind buildings.

- A generous setback and extensive landscaping should be provided along Fortuna Avenue to buffer existing homes along the west side of the street.

**Opportunity Site I:**

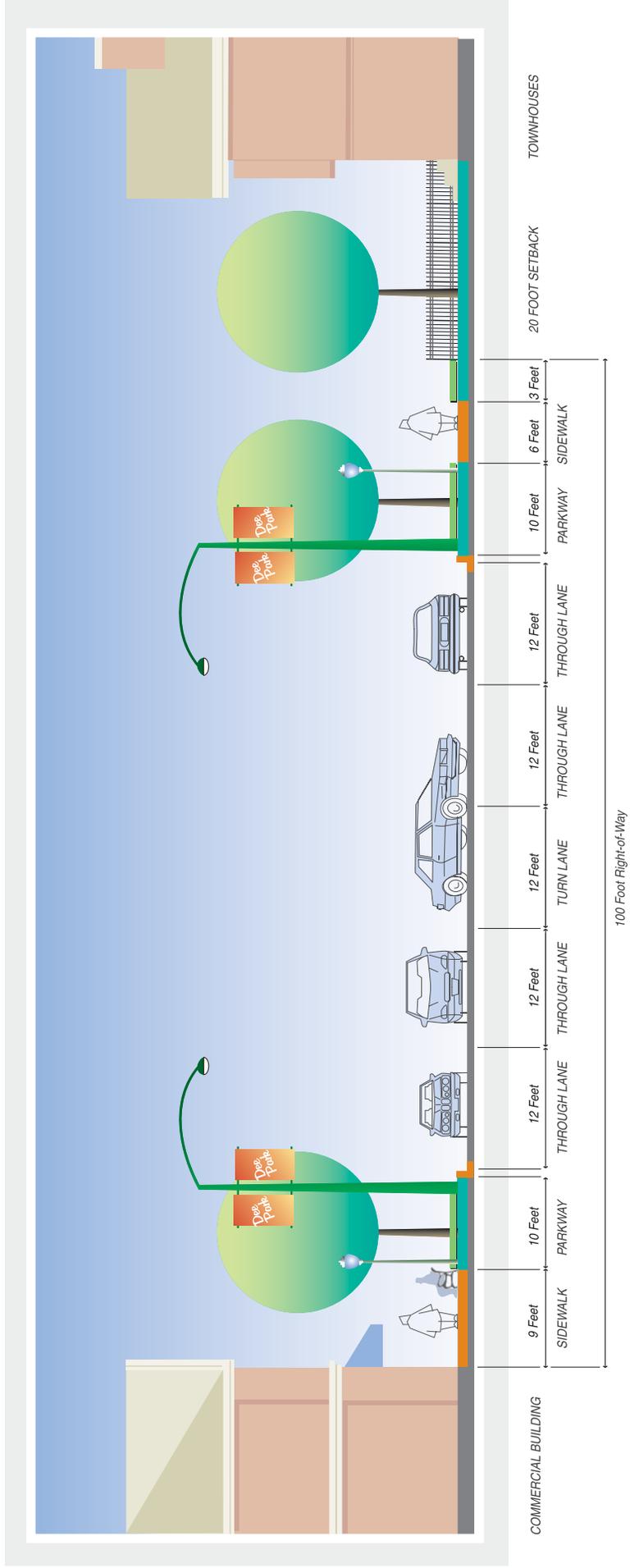
- Approximately 55,000 square feet of new ground floor commercial space.
- The new commercial buildings near the corner of Oakton and Northwest Highway should be at least two stories in height.
- Adequate parking should be provided, located behind buildings and at mid-block.
- Gateway design feature and small plaza at Oakton/Northwest Highway.
- Twenty feet should be provided between the curb line and buildings along Oakton Street and Northwest Highway, which should be sufficient for parkways, street trees, and other streetscape features.

- Arcades between buildings to connect sidewalk with parking lots.
- Three- to five-story condominium building at the southeast corner of Oakton Street and Dee Road.
- Six two-story townhouses of approximately 2,400 SF each, along the west side of Rowe Avenue.
- A generous setback and extensive landscaping across from the existing homes along the east side of Rowe Avenue.

**Opportunity Site C:**

- Ten new two-story townhouses, of approximately 2,400 SF each.
- Auto access to the townhomes should be provided from the rear.

Figure 13: Illustrative Cross Section of Oakton Street



**NOTE:** The City should work with IDOT to explore the possibility of an attractive boulevard treatment along Oakton Street, perhaps with median planters and other landscaping. A boulevard treatment would still allow for left turn lanes.

## **Section 6: Implementation**

The *Dee Park Plan* provides a comprehensive guide for improvement and redevelopment within the Dee Park area. It addresses land-use, opportunities for redevelopment, improvement of existing sites, public transportation, traffic and pedestrian circulation, and urban design.

The Plan should be part of an ongoing effort to improve and revitalize this important part of Park Ridge. Formal adoption of the Plan is only one step in the process, not the last. Continuing action to implement the Plan is necessary for the City's recent planning efforts to have lasting impact. This section is intended to help the City organize and initiate the Plan implementation process. The Plan cannot be accomplished all at once; projects and actions will have to be scheduled over a period of years.

Also, in order for the Plan to be successful, it must be based on a strong partnership between the City, other public agencies, the local business community, property owners, residents, and other public and private organizations. The City should assume the leadership role in implementing the Plan that will require administrative and regulatory actions as well as scheduling/implementation of public improvements and promotion/facilitation of high-priority private development and improvement projects.

The implementation of other projects and actions called for in the Plan should be flexible, and should be modified and updated to reflect changing needs, conditions and preferences. The implementation of some projects may change, depending on market conditions, the availability of funding, or local preferences and priorities. In general, the implementation of the Plan progress and priorities should be reviewed and updated once a year.

Recommendations for implementation approaches, projects, funding sources and techniques are presented below.

### **Projects and Approaches:**

***Opportunity Site Redevelopment.*** The Plan highlights several properties with short-term, intermediate and long-term redevelopment potential.

For short-term Site "A" (encompassing the block on the west side of Busse Highway between Oakton Street and Potter Road) and eventually for intermediate and long-term sites. Next steps should include: a) assemble sites for redevelopment, with the possible assistance of a planner or developer; b) implement any required infrastructure improvements; c) formulate design standards; and d) prepare and issue a developer Request for Proposals (RFP) to seek out developers with expertise in high-quality residential, commercial and mixed-use development.

Upon adoption of the Plan, the City should update the Zoning Ordinance and applicable codes to ensure that allowable land-use, density, height, parking, setbacks and other site considerations support and complement the recommendations for redevelopment in the Plan. In addition, the City should administer technical and other assistance programs to property owners and private sector developers of projects that meet the guidelines and foster the objectives of the Plan.

***Improvement of Existing Sites and Buildings.*** The Plan highlights two sites with "short-term" improvement and enhancement potential, Site "E" (Crossroads Shopping Center) and Site "H" (the office building on Northwest Highway between Rowe and Shibley Avenues).

For these two sites, the City should work with existing property owners to enhance buildings that are likely to remain. Next steps should include preparing more detailed design guidelines for building and site improvements that address such features as a coordinated signage, screening of parking areas, quality landscaping, and coordinated storefront/façade improvements. These types of improvements would also benefit other buildings and sites that may remain throughout the Dee

Park area before redevelopment potential is realized. Additional strategies for site enhancements for many other properties include consolidating parking areas and combining access drives in order to develop cross access between adjacent properties.

The City created a façade improvement program to provide financial assistance to commercial property owners in Dee Park and throughout the City. The program is intended to foster the improvement of existing exterior facades to make properties more attractive and increase long-term property values. Projects proposed in Dee Park should meet the program guidelines and foster the objectives of the Plan.

For all improvement and enhancement sites, the City should ensure that codes, ordinances, and enforcement procedures support and are consistent with the Plan.

***Urban Design Improvements.*** The Plan recommends a number of urban design improvements that will enhance the image and appearance of the Dee Park area and enhance opportunities for attracting new investment and development.

The City should contract with a landscape architect to develop detailed plans for the streetscaping and pedestrian improvements along Oakton Street, Northwest Highway, Busse Highway and Dee Road, including sidewalks, street and pedestrian-scale lighting, bus stop waiting area amenities, bicycle amenities, street trees, parkway landscaping, gateway features, and directional signage. Initial emphasis should be given to the area immediately around the commuter station.

The City should seek out grants and funding sources to construct and complete these pedestrian amenities and streetscape improvements. Sources might include funding programs administered by the Illinois Department of Transportation and the Transportation Equity Act for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (TEA-21), or Illinois Department of Natural Resources. Special Service Area and Tax Increment Financing are local financing mechanisms that could also be used for public streetscape improvements. These local, state and federal programs are briefly described at the end of this section under Funding Sources and Implementation Techniques.

***Traffic Improvements.*** The Plan includes several recommendations to improve traffic circulation and pedestrian/bicyclist safety in the Dee Park area.

Specifically, the City should pursue funding for the: a) planning, design, engineering, and construction of dedicated left turn lanes at key intersections of Oakton Street between Northwest Highway and Busse Highway and a dedicated right turn lane along northbound Dee Road at Busse Highway; b) installation of a demand-responsive traffic signal system; and c) improvements to pedestrian and bicycle crosswalks.

Other projects that the City should explore include a master bicycle plan for Park Ridge that includes specific recommendations for routes to and through the Dee Park neighborhood and commuter train station; the possibility of creating a three lane cross-section of Busse Highway between Oakton Street and Dee Road; alternatives for Bouterse Street between Busse Highway and Rowe Avenue (e.g. closure, one-way, restricted turning movements, etc.); and installing traffic calming features (e.g. limited on-street parking, medians, curb bump outs, etc.).

The City might secure funding for one or more of these projects through programs administered by the Illinois Department of Transportation and the Transportation Equity Act for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (TEA-21), or Illinois Department of Natural Resources. Special Service Area and Tax Increment Financing are local financing mechanisms that could also be used for public infrastructure improvements. These local, state and federal programs are briefly described at the end of this section under Funding Sources and Implementation Techniques.

***Public Transportation Improvements.*** The revitalization of the commuter train station is a major undertaking of the City and Metra that will contribute significantly to the success of the Plan. Com-

pletion of the project within projected timelines and budgets is a top priority as is on-going coordination with Metra and Union Pacific Railroad to complete the commuter station and parking areas according to policies and guidelines of the Plan.

The City should also work with Pace to identify preferred locations for bus stops so that they coordinate with the station relocation and planned or recommended traffic circulation improvements. As redevelopment sites throughout the Dee Park area are considered or become available, the City should continue to work with Metra to identify additional commuter parking areas.

The City might secure funding for one or more of these projects through programs administered by the Illinois Department of Transportation and the Transportation Equity Act for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (TEA-21), or Illinois Department of Natural Resources. Special Service Area and Tax Increment Financing are local financing mechanisms that could also be used for public infrastructure improvements. These local, state and federal programs are briefly described at the end of this section under Funding Sources and Implementation Techniques.

### ***Funding Sources and Implementation Techniques:***

While many of the recommended projects and actions called for in the *Dee Park Plan* can be implemented through administrative and policy decisions or can be funded through established municipal programs, other projects will require special technical and/or financial assistance.

In general, implementing the Plan will require a proactive and creative approach to securing various sources of funding and assistance. Tax increment financing and special service area financing are two types of district-based financing techniques that many communities use to accomplish long-term, comprehensive and coordinated improvements within a commercial or mixed-use neighborhood district.

Additional funding and assistance programs available from the state and federal governments might also be available for specific types of projects such as transportation, congestion mitigation, open space, bike path or bike amenities, environmental remediation, etc.

The City should also promote the organization of a Dee Park Neighborhood/Business Association and active participation and support from prospective developers, property owners, and other private-sector entities.

A sampling of the tools, programs, and techniques for implementing improvement and redevelopment within the Project Area are briefly described below.

***Tax Increment Financing.*** Tax Increment Financing (“TIF”) is a mechanism used to carry out revitalization and redevelopment activities on a local basis within a specified area or district of a community. A municipality may designate a contiguous area of tax parcels as a “TIF District” if the properties within the district exhibit a combination of factors that meet various eligibility criteria set forth in Illinois statute. The eligibility criteria are documented for the proposed district as a whole and considers such factors as the physical conditions of buildings and sites, the compatibility of land use relationships, the configuration of buildings/sites, and trends in equalized assessed valuation of tax parcels.

Tax increment financing does not generate tax revenues through increases in tax rates. This financing mechanism allows the municipality to capture, for a certain number of years, the new tax revenues produced by the enhanced valuation of properties resulting from public and private redevelopment activities.

TIF funds generally can be used only within the TIF District and can be used for:

- Acquisition, clearance, and other land assembly and site preparation activities;
- Rehabilitation of existing buildings in poor condition;

- Incentives to attract or retain private development; and
- Marketing of development sites.

Other redevelopment activities are also possible under TIF, including:

- Infrastructure and other public improvements such as roadway improvements, utility upgrades, and public facility improvements;
- Correction or mitigation of environmental problems;
- Job training, workforce readiness, and other related educational programs; and
- Staff time and professional fees related to the project, such as legal, planning, and architectural services.

TIF has proven to be an exceptional economic development tool. Many communities—including Park Ridge—have successfully used TIF funds to finance public improvements and other economic development incentives.

***Special Service Areas.*** Special Service Area (SSA) financing is an economic development tool that enables a municipality, property owners and community members to cooperatively plan, provide for, benefit from, and finance capital improvements or “special services” for an identified geographic area. The projects or services of an SSA district are paid for with revenue from taxes levied on the properties receiving the benefit. SSA services and programs are in addition to the normal programs and services provided by the City.

SSA districts most typically encompass commercial or business districts (which is why they are often referred to as “business improvement districts”), but can include residential areas as well. SSAs have been used by communities throughout Illinois to accomplish a range of improvement activities, including: parking lots, lighting, paving, landscaping installation and maintenance, streetscape improvements and seasonal decorations, litter control, security services, snow removal, storm sewers, tenant search and commercial attraction activities, and area-wide marketing and promotion activities.

SSA services and improvements are funded entirely through the tax revenues generated by the special service tax. The revenue is derived from a computation using the Equalized Assessed Valuation (EAV) of the taxable parcels within the special service area boundaries. The process for establishing an SSA involves first establishing proposed boundaries of a contiguous area and defining the benefits and services to be paid for within that area. The costs of these services or projects are then estimated to determine a corresponding tax levy, rate and duration of the SSA.

A public process for notifying property owners and other stakeholders within the SSA is required to provide information, gather feedback, and to allow for challenge. Upon successful adoption of an SSA ordinance, which includes a levy and budget, the sponsoring municipality typically serves as the administrator of the SSA. Depending on the types of projects and services proposed for the SSA, however, many communities choose to delegate administration of the SSA to either an existing or new organization with a mission consistent with the purposes of the SSA.

***Dee Park Neighborhood/Business Association.*** While the Plan focuses on physical improvements and redevelopment, it is also important for other cooperative and promotional efforts to be undertaken for the Dee Park area. In cooperation with the City, business owners, property owners and residents should consider organizing a business/neighborhood association to coordinate strategies that reinforce the Plan and strengthen the identity of the neighborhood as an attractive place to live, work and visit.

A neighborhood/business association should focus on marketing and promotion of Dee Park’s assets, including a) an affluent resident/customer base; b) available sites and properties; c) proximity

to public transportation; d) the development of the train station and other upcoming improvement and redevelopment projects; and e) the commitment of local government to the area.

A business/neighborhood association should also coordinate and promote special activities and events that will bring people to the area on a regular basis or help people to recognize Dee Park as a distinctive neighborhood commercial area. A neighborhood/business association should also serve as a strong network of information exchange among members, the surrounding neighborhood and the City. This network should help to recruit new businesses and strengthen existing businesses through peer support, organized advocacy, and cooperative promotional or advertising strategies. In general, a business/neighborhood association should contribute to the implementation of the Plan by providing ongoing stewardship for the Dee Park area and encouraging individual businesses and institutions within Dee Park to maintain and manage their own properties in a manner that supports and complements the overall guidelines and objectives of the Plan.

A business/neighborhood association could be organized informally through volunteer effort with or without membership dues or more formally through a special service area (as described in the section above).

**Zoning Refinements.** As mentioned in Section 3, the City's zoning regulations should be reviewed and revised where necessary to ensure that zoning supports the land-use, development and urban design recommendations included in the Plan. As noted previously, the City is in the process of re-writing the Zoning Ordinance.

**Transportation and Infrastructure Funding Sources.** A number of federal and state funding sources are potentially available to assist the City in implementing the transportation and infrastructure improvements called for in the Plan.

It should be noted that several of the funding sources listed below are committed until the next funding cycle. It is anticipated that the next cycle will replenish the amount of resources available for projects such as those required for redevelopment of the Dee Park Area.

- **TEA-21.** The Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century, which includes the ITEP, CMAQ and STP Programs, was appropriated in 1998 as a successor to the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA). Since 2003, Congress has authorized or considered extensions for this program, most recently known as the proposed "Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy For Users" which would provide funding for programs through 2009.

While the details of project eligibility vary from program to program, they all generally require that a project have a local sponsor (the City of Park Ridge), and some evidence of local support of the project. Brief descriptions of the typical component programs of TEA-21 are highlighted below.

It should be noted that these transportation and infrastructure programs might be applied in combination with one or more funding sources described under other funding categories.

- **Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program (ITEP).** This funding source is administered by the Illinois Department of Transportation and is a set-aside fund from TEA-21. The projects that are eligible for this funding include bicycle/pedestrian facilities, streetscaping, landscaping, and projects that control or remove outdoor advertising. Federal reimbursement is available for up to 50 percent of the cost of right-of-way and easement acquisition and 80 percent of the cost for preliminary engineering, utility relocations, construction engineering, and construction costs.
- **Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ).** The CMAQ program focuses on projects that provide solutions to regional congestion and air quality problems. Eligible project types include transit improvements, commuter parking lots, traf-

fic flow improvements, bicycle/pedestrian projects, and projects that result in emissions reductions. These projects are also federally funded at 80 percent of project costs.

- **Surface Transportation Program (STP).** These funds are allocated to coordinating regional councils to be used for all roadway and roadway related items. Projects in this funding category must have a local sponsor and are selected based upon, among other factors, a ranking scale that takes into account the regional benefits provided by the project. STP funds are allocated among the following programs: demonstration projects; enhancement; hazard elimination; and urban funds.
- **Other TEA-21 Programs and Resources.** Other programs that may have potential for the Dee Park area include:
  - a) **Section 1112: Recreational Trail Programs**, which provides funding for both recreational and non-motorized trail facilities (80% federal, 20% local);
  - b) **Section 1401: Hazard Elimination Program**, that provides funding for the elimination of bicycle and pedestrian hazards, roadway projects, and some traffic calming measures (80% federal, 20% local); and
  - c) **Transit Enhancement Activity**, which is focused on improving access to mass transit, including bicycle parking and storage facilities (95% federal, 5% local).
- **Bike Paths and Pedestrian Facilities.** The State has awarded approximately \$120 million to nearly 140 community bicycle path projects. The Illinois Department of Transportation and the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (DNR) generate the funding for bicycle path projects.

The DNR grants are available to any local government with statutory authority to acquire and develop land for public recreation. The grants are funded from a percentage of motor vehicle title transfer fees and provide up to 50% of an approved project's total cost. Grants through DNR to develop bike paths are limited to \$200,000 and there is no cap for acquisition projects.

- **Legislature Initiatives.**

General funds may be allocated for specific projects at the discretion of legislators at the State and Federal level. These legislative initiatives may be accessed by working with the elected officials representing the City of Park Ridge. These elected officials may also be able to assist in leveraging funding through targeted grant programs.

## ***Appendix A: Neighborhood Ideas and Concerns***

This Appendix section provides an overview of the ideas and concerns of neighborhood residents and business persons regarding existing conditions and future potentials within the Dee Park area. It includes a review of the initial meeting conducted with the Dee Park Work Group, and a summary of the key person interviews.

### ***Dee Park Work Group:***

An eleven-member Dee Park Work Group was established to offer input on the Plan throughout the planning process. The Work Group included residents and business persons from within the Dee Park area.

An initial meeting was conducted with the Dee Park Work Group on April 9, 2002, to review the upcoming Dee Park planning process and the schedule for the project.

At the initial meeting, Work Group members were asked to articulate some of their ideas and concerns regarding the area, and some of the issues and concerns that they would like to see addressed as part of the planning process.

A summary of the responses received from Work Group members is presented below.

- The Work Group identified a number of issues, concerns and suggestions related to traffic and parking, urban design and aesthetics, business climate, new development and the revitalized Metra station.
- Traffic issues included strong concern for the amount of congestion in the area due to train crossings and the timing of traffic signals, especially during peak commuter hours. The speed of traffic throughout the area is also a problem and contributes to what most describe as unsafe/dangerous paths, crossings, and linkages for pedestrians and bicyclists—especially children. Additional dedicated crosswalks or stoplights are necessary (for example at the intersection of Potter Road and Northwest Highway). Some neighborhood residents avoid the Dee Road Metra station altogether and use the Uptown station to avoid traffic snarls and parking problems.
- The Work Group also identified the need for an improved streetscape, including greenery, landscaping, new development, and an overall improved visual identity for the area.
- The train station is viewed as one of the area's strongest assets. The revitalized station should help to establish a fresh look to the area and stimulate interest in new transit-oriented commercial and residential development. Some existing business uses in the area seem to “no longer fit” with the neighborhood convenience retail business mix and new types of businesses are strongly desired—especially a coffee shop. However, some concern was raised about the ability to attract new and stable businesses to the area.

In addition to the comments offered by the Work Group at the initial workshop session, Work Group members offered a number of other suggestions during the course of the Dee Park planning study and many of these have been incorporated into this Plan.

## **Key Person Interviews:**

Interviews were conducted with select individuals to discuss conditions and potentials within the Dee Park area. Persons interviewed included residents, public officials, representatives from the business community and representatives of local and regional institutions.

Each interviewee was asked a series of questions regarding the area. Overall responses to key questions are summarized below.

### **1. *What kind of neighborhood is Dee Park, and why do you believe most people select Dee Park as a place to live or do business? What are the assets and advantages?***

According to most interviewees, one of the greatest assets of Dee Park is its central location. Many people cited accessibility to the commuter train, convenient access to the rest of Park Ridge and the Chicago region, as well as the accessibility to major thoroughfares, such as Northwest Highway.

The strong residential base was also frequently mentioned as an asset. The homes are mainly single-family residential, well-protected, stable, and generally affordable. Young families are moving into the area, reinforcing the character of Dee Park as a family-oriented neighborhood. In addition, interviewees mentioned the good parks and schools, hospital, churches, pool, and ice rink, all within close proximity.

Business owners in the area cited the high traffic volume, good traffic flow, high visibility, and a strong and loyal customer base as advantages to Dee Park.

### **2. *What do you believe are the primary weaknesses or disadvantages of Dee Park?***

The most frequently mentioned disadvantages or weaknesses in the Dee Park area are traffic issues and parking. Parking is difficult to access and limited to off-street parking for commercial businesses. The lack of street parking is especially problematic for commercial businesses located in buildings/sites that were developed when street parking used to exist. Traffic-issues identified include congestion, particularly during morning and afternoon rush hours and train stops, vehicular speed, and dangerous/difficult crossings and paths for pedestrians. Overall, the stoplights and traffic patterns are frustrating, and cars cannot orient quickly and get in/out of the area quickly.

Another frequently mentioned “weakness” related to the lack of a cohesive urban design, including the lack of neighborhood identity or uniqueness; no signature development; and an uninteresting and “hodge-podge” image and appearance. Orientation of parking lots to buildings makes cars the most prominent feature of the streetscape and, in some cases, sidewalks have been lost to parking lots. The railroad tracks and Northwest Highway are significant physical barriers between Dee Park and the surrounding community. Related comments were that the area “just plain looks neglected” and needs to be more inviting.

Other “weaknesses” include: the feeling of an interruption in continuity/compatibility of the school with surrounding/adjacent uses; disconnected relationships between uses; lack of organization of area businesses; strip malls; difficult, inconsistent snow removal and storage; and lack of nighttime activity.

3. ***A major focus of the study will be land-use and development. What issues or concerns related to land use and development within and around Dee Park do you think are important?***

***Related to residential areas.*** The issues and concerns related to residential development included concerns that new development be generally no more than four stories in height; multi-family housing should be attractive in design and offer good options for first-time homebuyers and seniors; and that housing should be the focus of the area.

A few interviewees mentioned transit-oriented development and linking housing development to the train; and concerns over protection of existing housing, due to the many tear-downs that are occurring in nearby areas.

Regarding future development, several suggestions were made that the Jeanine Schultz School could be converted into some sort of multi-family or senior housing building; the need to consider the impact of any new residential development on the schools; potential development of condominiums, with ground floor retail; the desire to see the range of housing types increased; and more multi-family is necessary.

***Related to retail areas.*** Two significant issues raised by interviewees included: a) the need to improve parking, perhaps with metered on-street parking during non-peak traffic hours; and b) the need/desire for a destination restaurant and coffee house. Another issue that was frequently mentioned was the desire for more neighborhood service/convenience-type and specialty retail, including perhaps a butcher, specialty grocery store, barber shop and fast food.

Other responses included: improve the walk-ability of the area; improve street crossing barriers; too difficult to orient to the business district (vehicular) unless you are very familiar; the lack of organization among local businesses; the benefit that mixed-use buildings have on tax rates to help offset costs for commercial business/property owners, and the comment that small businesses have trouble making numbers work related to rental rates.

***Related to office/employment areas.*** There were not many responses to this question, but in general most interviewees acknowledged that Busse Highway is more oriented to business uses than other streets in the area. Other responses were that Dee Park is a good location for small employment/office users and the community is generally supportive of office uses, because they generate less traffic and result in less litter, signage, and visual clutter.

4. ***In thinking about the four major corridors of the area, what would you identify as a strength for each? A weakness to be addressed? A specific opportunity?***

***Oakton Street.*** There were several mentions of the high speed and volume of traffic along Oakton and the number of accidents at the intersection of Dee and Oakton. Other interviewees said that Oakton is a route to the park facility west of the area and has become a "bottle-neck."

Respondents also cited the "visual clutter" i.e., the lack of consistency of structures, the lack of landscaping, and the cars that are parked at auto repair shops. Another common response was the timing of the traffic light at Dee Road.

White Hen, Wally's, and McDonald's are strong features of the business area; Oakton includes many residential uses, which makes some land use relationships feel disconnected; and the width of and access along Oakton Street should be improved.

***Busse Highway.*** There were several mentions of the need for stronger urban design features along Busse, including trees and landscaping. Other responses were that it is an underutilized thoroughfare or a "dead" street for retail-oriented business and has less traffic than other streets in the area; that Busse is used as a short-cut street for rush hour traffic; has too many potholes; and the traffic signal timing at Dee Road is a weakness.

A strength that was mentioned is that Busse is good for office, retail and small business uses because there is generally sufficient parking.

**Northwest Highway.** Most respondents pointed out that, because Northwest Highway is a major thoroughfare, it is often congested, has heavy traffic and fast cars, and is used as access to the Tollway. The lack of parking is also a problem.

Another comment was that Northwest Highway should be more actively commercial. Interviewees also said that the streetscape needs visual cohesiveness and can be difficult to orient to quickly.

**Dee Road.** Interviewees cited several concerns regarding Dee Road, including: a) it serves as a main thoroughfare and has a lot of traffic; b) the train interrupts traffic flow; c) it needs to be repaved; d) it is used as a short cut, and e) the timing of the traffic light at Dee and Oakton is a problem.

Positive responses were that the Dee Road has a nice residential character, and the opportunity may exist for a pedestrian/bike route.

**5. *What do you consider the single-most important issue facing Dee Park today?***

While many projects were mentioned, the most frequent responses included: a) the theme of development---including developing the area along with the train station, formulating a cohesive plan to tie all pieces together, and developing the area as a key corridor; b) the lack of unified urban design features, need for an identity, increasing the visual attractiveness, lack of focal point; and c) run-down conditions, neglected lots, need for building rehabilitation and an overall "facelift," and the effect of vacancies on the district.

Other issues that were mentioned include: the strength of residential property and maintenance of property values; the need to improve parking and access; and improving the commercial area for easier use by residents.

**6. *If you had the power to undertake one project or improvement, what would it be?***

Several interviewees cited solving traffic and parking problems in relation to safety, improving the parking, and slowing down traffic. Other frequent responses included a) the desire to redevelop the train station with landscaping, parking, and public art; b) the need for quality urban design and streetscaping for the area; c) focusing on a central project, such as "the Oakton/Busse/Dee triangle;" d) focusing on the key intersections of Oakton/Northwest Highway and Oakton/Busse, as well as the segment of Busse Highway between Potter and Oakton.

Interviewees also had common responses regarding the triangle property formed by Oakton/Busse/Dee stating that it was a key central property that needs to provide a positive image of the neighborhood and serve as a focal point for the area, ideally an open space/passive park.

Allowing parking on Northwest Highway (perhaps limited to the hours of 9 AM to 3 PM) and attracting a coffee shop were other "number 1" projects mentioned by interviewees.

**7. *What haven't we asked about that we should have asked? Or what can you tell us about Dee Park that you think no one else can tell us?***

In terms of development, several interviewees pointed out the potential opportunity represented by Jeanine Schultz School. Interviewees pointed out the "dead" space at the rear of the school property and the "tired" feel of the playground.

Increasing the housing options for new residents, such as young people who may be interested in new condominiums or townhouses, was also mentioned. One respondent mentioned the opportunity for more official open space for the grove of trees at Busse and Shibley. Busse between Oakton and Potter is considered by some as an opportunity area, due to its current underutilization.

From the business perspective, one interviewee attempted years ago to organize area businesses as a group, but didn't have much success.

It was stated that the businesses along Busse will improve with the train station relocation and will have better visibility from the station.

One interviewee said on-street parking could help slow down the traffic at Northwest Highway and Oakton.

Other responses included: a) tree trimming; b) speed control of vehicles; c) façade rehabilitation; and d) snow storage/removal from street is important for pedestrian paths to the train.

## Appendix B: Transportation Alternatives

In addition to the recommended transportation improvements highlighted in Section 3 of the *Dee Park Plan*, several other traffic circulation alternatives were considered, but for various reasons are *not* recommended at this time.

However, these alternatives may be studied by the City in more detail as a follow-up to the current planning assignment. The alternatives are briefly described below.

- ***Closure of Busse Highway between Dee Road and Oakton Street.*** While removal of this street segment would provide a larger site for the Metra station, the traffic implications on nearby streets would be considerable.

Traffic now using Busse Highway would be diverted to the intersection of Dee Road and Oakton Street. Additional turn-lane capacity would be required, and the section of Oakton Street between Dee and Busse would need to be cleared of cars during each traffic signal cycle to prevent backups. In addition, Oakton Street would need to be widened to accommodate the eastbound right-turn lane at Dee Road, and the entrance(s) to the Metra site would be located at traffic signals resulting in backups within the site.

Because of these concerns, the closing of Busse Highway is not recommended at this time. However, as mentioned above, further study of this alternative might be undertaken by the City in the months ahead.

- ***A grade-separated crossing (either a bridge or a tunnel) at Oakton Street and the railroad.*** While a grade-separated crossing would significantly improve traffic circulation and reduce delays near the railroad, it would also have a major detrimental impact on land-uses and site development within the area. The cost of a grade-separated crossing would also be quite substantial.

Based on preliminary investigations, the construction of a grade-separated crossing at the railroad would also require that Oakton Street be significantly raised or lowered for a considerable distance both east and west of the railroad. The intersections of Oakton Street with both Dee Road and Busse Highway would have to be grade-separated, as well as other streets in the area. East of the railroad, a grade-separated crossing would result in the loss of access to all of the commercial and residential properties along Oakton Street, perhaps as far east as Northwest Highway. The impact on properties west of the railroad would be equally dramatic. Therefore, a grade-separated crossing is not recommended at this time.

However, even though a grade-separated roadway is not recommended, the City should work with Metra to consider the feasibility of constructing a pedestrian tunnel under the tracks at some point between Oakton Street and Dee Road to improve pedestrian access to the station and enhance pedestrian safety.