

DESIGNWORKSHOP

WHEATON DOWNTOWN STRATEGIC
AND STREETSCAPE PLAN

Wheaton, Illinois

October 2013



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Design Workshop:
Urban Design, Planning, and Economic and Market
Analysis

VOA:
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V3:
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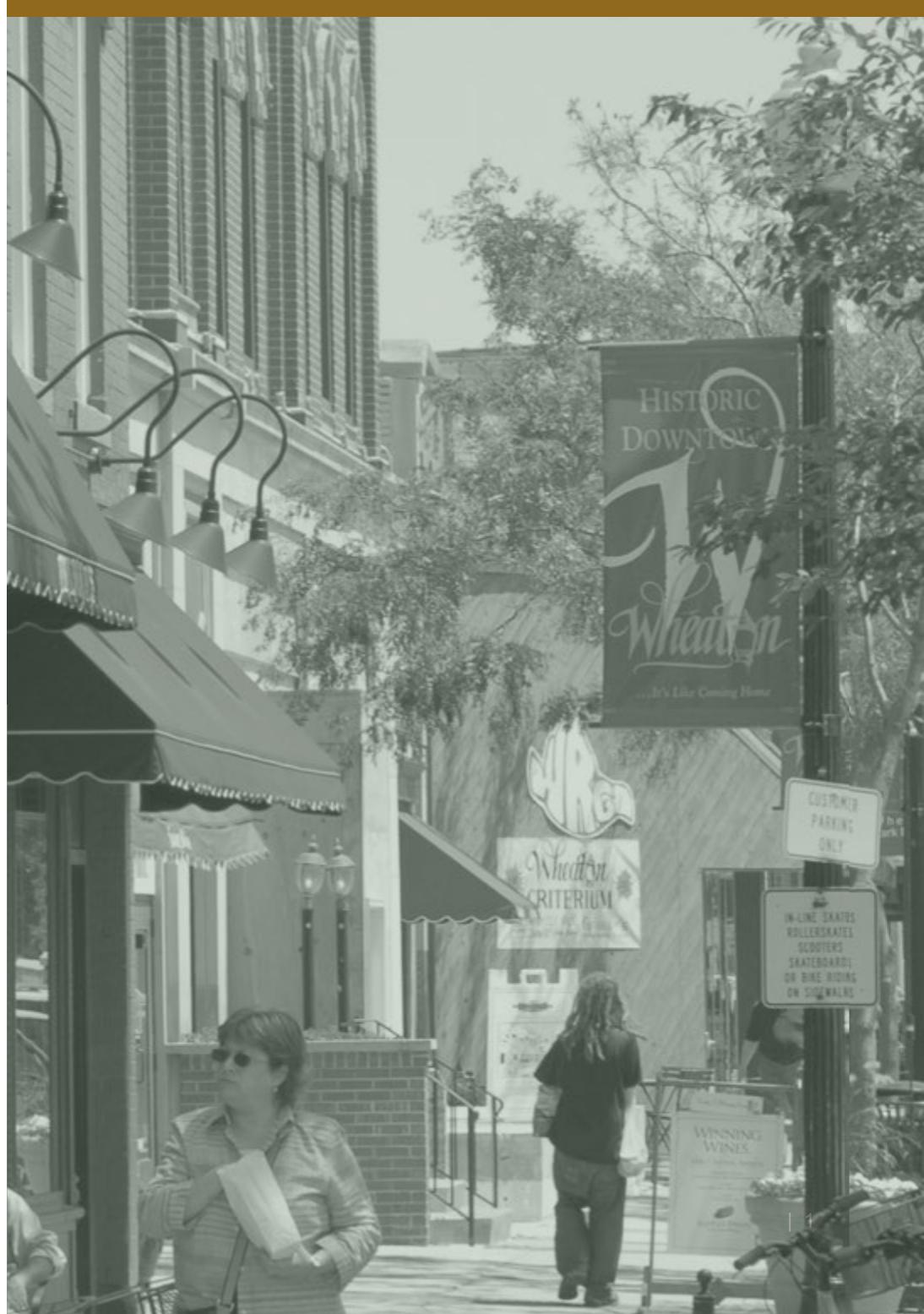
DESIGNWORKSHOP



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



The City of Wheaton completed efforts leading to a new Downtown Plan in 2012 and 2013, drawing from a range of technical and professional analyses as well as a comprehensive public outreach effort in which the citizens and stakeholders in the Wheaton community contributed input throughout the process, concerning the future of downtown.

The primary goals of the effort were as follows:

- To articulate an agreed upon Vision for Downtown Wheaton for the next twenty years
- To outline a streetscape plan for Downtown Wheaton that will tie with the agreed upon vision and elevate the success of the district
- To outline associated strategies and policies that the City and the private sector may pursue to implement the ideas outlined in the overall Downtown Plan.

Creating the Vision

The Wheaton City Council, along with City staff and the project team, developed a recommended Vision for Downtown Wheaton over the next twenty years by drawing from the following sources of input::

- Community input provided at a public open house in September 2012, as well as through a follow-up online survey completed by members of the community.
- A market study completed for Downtown Wheaton examining the development potential for residential, retail, and office land uses over the next twenty years.
- A transportation and utility analysis of Downtown Wheaton examining existing conditions and potential necessary improvements to streets and the infrastructure serving the overall downtown district.

The following summarizes the conclusions of each of these elements that contributed to the creation of the new Vision for Downtown Wheaton.

Community Input

The majority of respondents at the community open house in September 2012 and through an associated online version of the survey presented at the open house session perceive Downtown Wheaton as a restaurant-oriented center that competes with other downtowns in the local area. However, they also view Downtown as a retail-oriented center and expressed interest in the district evolving into more of an entertainment and culture-oriented downtown as well. The vision articulated by the public at this stage in the effort supported the creation of a plan to attract a wider variety of businesses and shops to Downtown Wheaton.

In terms of specific ideas to achieve the Vision for Downtown Wheaton, the public supported creating more space for outdoor dining and community events in the district. It also supported efforts designed to bring a wider variety of retailers and restaurants to the district and to provide more convenient parking as key strategies to achieve their vision for the downtown area.

Market Study

An economic analysis of Downtown Wheaton and competing downtowns in the Chicago region revealed the following takeaways that informed the creation of the final vision statement for Downtown.

- Because the vast majority of DuPage County has built-out in terms of traditional suburban growth, Downtown Wheaton cannot rely upon normal population growth in the surrounding areas to drive increased business over time, as is often the case in towns located on the expanding periphery of metropolitan areas. The only way to provide an increased residential base to support retail and dining in Downtown Wheaton would involve promoting the development of a sizeable program of residential development in or near the district. Introducing new residents into the heart of Wheaton would help to drive a portion of retail and office growth in the downtown district over the next 20 years.
- Since the overall suburban market for retail and office uses will likely not grow materially over the next 20 years, the only other way for Downtown Wheaton to grow would involve providing more compelling reasons and amenities to attract visitors and patrons to the district from surrounding suburban areas. Offering a variety of events and improved public and gathering spaces would help enhance the attractiveness of the downtown area in the larger suburban market.
- Overall, the market study projects that Downtown Wheaton has the potential to add a net increase of 80,000 square feet of retail uses, from 50,000 to 75,000 square feet of office uses, and around 1,000 residential units (comprised of apartments, townhomes, and / or condominium units) over the next twenty years. It also suggests that the vast majority of this additional development would occur on the south side of the Union Pacific tracks, where a number of vacant or underutilized parcels are present. New construction of retail and mixed-use space in this part of Downtown would allow local landlords to offer new spaces more geared to larger and perhaps national tenants, as opposed to the often space-constrained spaces found in many of the older buildings on the north side of the tracks. The market study suggests that by offering targeted enhancements in amenities, Downtown Wheaton can attract a critical mass of additional residential, retail, and office space that would help the district capture a larger share of the regional “pie” of demand over the next two decades and therefore support the overall vision for Downtown Wheaton.

Transportation Analysis

The project team completed an analysis of existing and potential transportation conditions in Downtown Wheaton and provided the following conclusions:

- The downtown streets currently accommodate existing traffic adequately. Going forward, the street system should accommodate the projected growth in the downtown district overall.
- The city may wish to explore roadway improvements and traffic signal improvements at the Main and Illinois intersection in order to reduce the potential for traffic delays as redevelopment proceeds in the portion of the downtown area between the Union Pacific tracks and Roosevelt Road.

Utility and Infrastructure Analysis

The project team completed an analysis of the existing infrastructure and utilities in the downtown area and arrived at the following key conclusions.

- In general, utility capacity should not place a major constraint on new development in the downtown area. While the perception of many in the public at the outset of the planning process was that the city would need to spend considerable sums to upgrade infrastructure serving downtown, the analysis revealed that overall, this is not the case. The analysis concluded that the city may wish to upgrade sanitary sewer lines and water mains as development proceeds, however.
- The Downtown area does not suffer from any segments of undersized storm sewer pipes, with the exception of the area of flooding that often occurs along south Main Street. Solving the flooding issue in this area would require a broader, watershed-wide solution. The costs of directly fixing the flooding issue along South Main appear impractical at this time.

Vision Statement

Following the initial analyses outlined above and input from the public and a variety of stakeholders, the City Council arrived at the following Vision Statement for Downtown Wheaton in February 2013:

Elevate the position of Downtown Wheaton as a destination district in the western portion of the Chicago region by pursuing a number of civic improvements and regulatory changes designed to increase the capture rate of retail, office, and residential land uses in the Downtown.

Key Recommendations to Achieve the Vision for Downtown Wheaton

The remainder of the Downtown Plan outlines key catalytic improvements in the downtown district that will help the community achieve its vision over the next two decades, as well as a variety of strategies and improvements that will help the overall Downtown area improve in the coming years. The key recommendations outlined and endorsed by the public as part of this planning effort include the following:

- Catalyst Improvement: Creation of Festival Streets on Liberty, Hale, and Karlskoga Streets: The plan recommends that the city invest in upgrades to streetscape necessary to make these streets operate as “festival” streets that would accommodate improved outdoor dining, host a variety of community festivals and events, provide greatly enhanced community gathering spaces, and attract visitation from surrounding communities. The plan recommends that the city, in completing final design for these festival streets, draw from the best examples of these kinds of streets around the country to create festival streets that will stand out in the Chicago region and the Midwest and help bring increased business and traffic to Downtown Wheaton.
- Catalyst Improvement: Creation of a Central Park, and French Market Upgrades: The plan recommends that the city work to create a central park between Liberty Drive and the Illinois Prairie Path, and between Hale and Cross streets. This central park would help serve as a central gathering place for the community and could include a small amphitheater, an ice skating rink, open park spaces, fountains, and related amenities designed to attract visitors from beyond Wheaton. The eastern portion of this central park, in the block between Main and Cross and north of Liberty, could include the construction of a permanent structure for the French Market. This permanent structure could accommodate market operations on a year round basis and could also provide space for a variety of community events and programs during all four seasons. The French Market is already a substantial draw to Downtown Wheaton on summer Saturday mornings, and this improvement would only enhance the market’s ability to attract patrons from throughout the surrounding suburban region.

- Catalyst Improvement: Enhancements to South Main Street to Facilitate Redevelopment: As an initial catalyst effort, the plan recommends that the City prioritize upgrades to the streetscape amenities along Main Street, from Front Street south to Roosevelt Road, in order to help stimulate and encourage redevelopment on the south side of the tracks, and to take advantage of the area's proximity to the new Mariano's development. Main Street represents the main "front door" into Downtown from the Roosevelt Road corridor, and prioritizing this upgrade could serve as a catalyst for redevelopment in this emerging part of Downtown Wheaton.
- Ongoing Improvement - Upgrades to Streetscapes Throughout Downtown: The plan recommends that the city continue to upgrade streetscapes (including furniture, lighting, street trees, and related improvements) for other streets within downtown. These improvements would likely tie with redevelopment efforts on particular blocks within the downtown district and could proceed over many years on an incremental basis.
- Other Improvements: The downtown plan also calls for a variety of improvements across the entire district designed to increase the marketability and attractiveness of the district. These initiatives range from planning for additional parking facilities across Downtown as redevelopment proceeds, to enhancing access and facilities for bicyclists, to enhancing the alleyways Downtown to facilitate pedestrian movement and outdoor dining. Other potential improvements in the Downtown area include enhancing the Prairie Path as it passes through the district, improving and expanding the roster of events in Downtown Wheaton and improving the program of signage and wayfinding serving the district.

Implementation Strategies

The Downtown Plan also outlines a menu of implementation strategies that the City, along with other players, may use to complete ongoing improvements and facilitate the improved performance of the Downtown district. These strategies include:

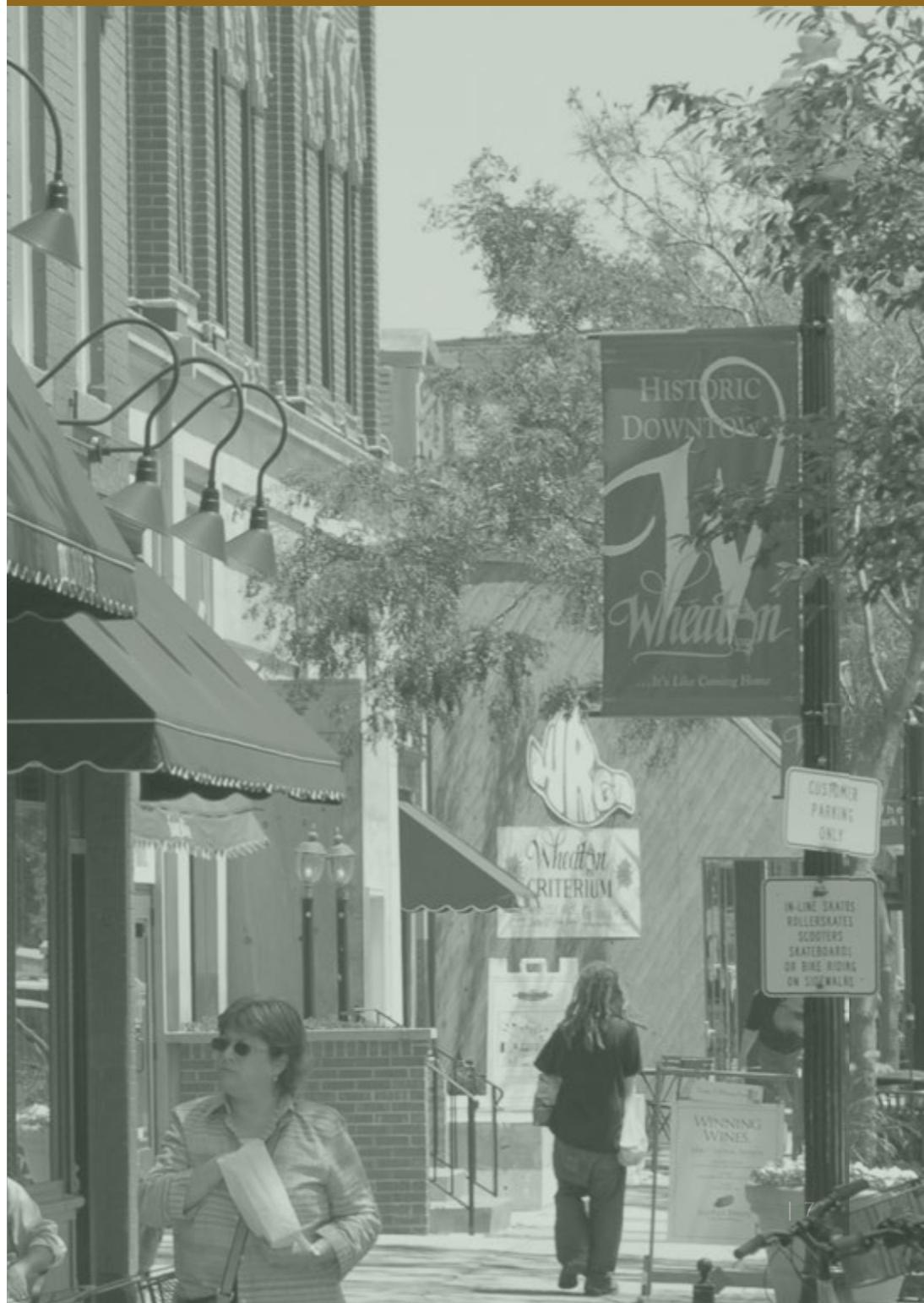
- Exploring various options for financing downtown development, including an expansion of Tax Increment Financing (TIF) districts
- Inviting development proposals for specific and strategic sites
- Strategically acquiring potential development parcels
- Implementing a targeted retail recruitment program
- Creating a coordinated marketing plan
- Creating a management entity for operations and maintenance
- Implementing necessary zoning changes to promote increased mixed-use redevelopment in Downtown Wheaton, particularly south of the tracks
- Implement changes to parking regulations for areas outside of the core downtown area to promote redevelopment. This may include instituting joint parking strategies in which property owners pay into a common fund to finance future parking facilities, including parking garages.

The total cost of all outlined improvements for Downtown Wheaton identified in this plan is approximately \$64 million in 2012 dollars. However, this cost would be spread over 20 years, and the City may elect to forego completing some of the improvements outlined in the Downtown Plan over time.

Together, the Downtown Plan provides a menu of options for improvement throughout the district that should help the community achieve its vision of a more vibrant downtown that draws from a larger portion of suburban Chicago and represents a stronger heart for the Wheaton community going forward.

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PROJECT BACKGROUND AND PUBLIC PROCESS





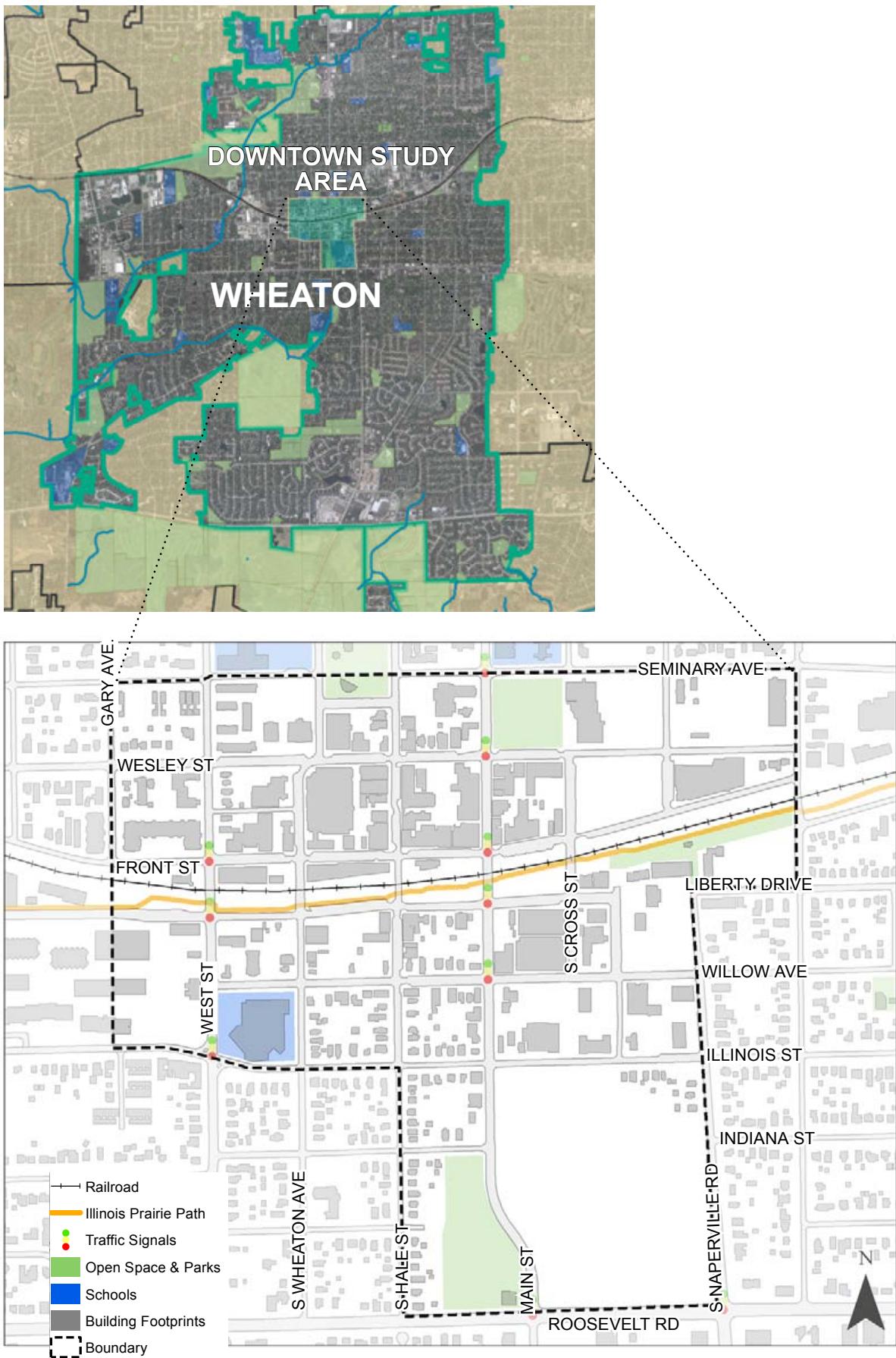
Goals for the Project

The City of Wheaton embarked on an effort to create an updated Streetscape and Strategic Plan for Downtown Wheaton in Summer 2012. This new document represents the next generation of the most recent plan for the downtown district that guided the community over the last twenty years. In turn, this document outlines the community's plans for Downtown Wheaton over the next twenty years, through 2030 and beyond. The objectives of this document and the planning project are as follows:

- To articulate an agreed upon Vision for Downtown Wheaton over the next twenty years
- To outline a streetscape plan for Downtown Wheaton that will tie with the agreed upon vision and elevate the success of the district
- To outline associated strategies and policies that the City and the private sector may pursue to implement the ideas outlined in this Downtown Plan.

The Wheaton City Council served as the Steering Committee to guide this planning process, with leadership from the City staff. This group, along with the consultant team, identified study area boundaries at the beginning of the downtown planning process. The study area covered by this downtown plan is generally bounded by Seminary Avenue on the north, Washington Street and Naperville Road on the east, Roosevelt Road on the south, and Gary Avenue on the west. However, the study area does not include the existing residential neighborhoods between Illinois Street and Roosevelt Road, and to the east of West Street. The downtown study area encompasses the Retail Core Business District and the General Business District zones in the Downtown area, and includes various major institutional users (such as City Hall, the library, and various churches). The study area also includes some of the higher density residential areas of the city, including townhomes and residential towers on the outside edges of the existing downtown area.

Figure 1: Downtown Wheaton Study Area



Description of Previous Planning Efforts

1999 Comprehensive Plan - Key Takeaways

The Downtown Strategic and Streetscape Plan builds on a number of planning and design efforts completed by the City of Wheaton over the last few decades. This section outlines some of the main points of several previous planning efforts as they relate to and impact the current Downtown Plan process. The City of Wheaton completed its most recent Comprehensive Plan, addressing key planning issues throughout the community, in 1999. The plan drafted key community development policies, a comprehensive land use plan, a framework for community character, an identification of key focus areas, and an implementation plan for issues addressing the city as a whole. The following outlines the key takeaways from the document pertaining to the downtown and a key focus area identified in the plan as the “Central Business District”.

Downtown market condition: (1999)

- While retaining its symbolic importance in the community, Downtown is no longer the predominant economic engine of the City. The downtown is in a transition period from a major retail center to a more self-supporting, diverse urban center with a variety of uses – focused on speciality retail, civic, entertainment and services, and not a dominant retailing position.
- Relocation of major employers, the development of Danada East and West, Rice Lake Square and Wheaton Town Square shopping centers, and the opening of the Kohls/Target commercial complex on west Roosevelt Road, combined with the growth of regional centers in Oak Brook, Lombard, Bloomingdale and elsewhere, have altered the economic strength and viability of the central business district.
- Office space in Downtown Wheaton is attractive due to generally lower lease rates. Second and third floor office space rented for \$6 to \$8 per square foot on average. The office market in Downtown is limited more by the availability and quality of space, than the potential demand. Office activity in Downtown Wheaton is hampered by relatively high asking prices for buildings currently on the market. Recent sales activity of buildings in Downtown indicated that the typical purchase price for office space ranged from \$25 - \$50/ sq. ft.

Success within downtown (1999)

- Successes with downtown entertainment activities (restaurants).
- Maintained retail uses through zoning regulations that restrict the conversion of prime ground floor retail space to office uses.
- Successes with the façade improvement loan program.
- Success within the established TIF district (particularly redevelopment projects within the “emerging urban village sub-area” focus area defined in the 1999 Comprehensive Plan Update).

Planning issues affecting downtown (1999)

- Downtown parking is not convenient, which constrains the success of downtown businesses. There is also a lack of convenient and adequate commuter parking.
- One-way streets (in place since the 1950s) can create challenges in finding stores and parking, however it was recommended that the one-way system be maintained for its increased capacity, lower occurrences of traffic conflicts and ability to accommodate angled parking.
- At-grade railroad crossings cause traffic blockage (27 east-bound and 27 west-bound commuter trains per weekday), in addition to access problems for emergency vehicles.
- Potential plans for a new storage depot could reduce the number of trains traveling through the city. Grade-separated crossings are likely unfeasible/cost-prohibitive.

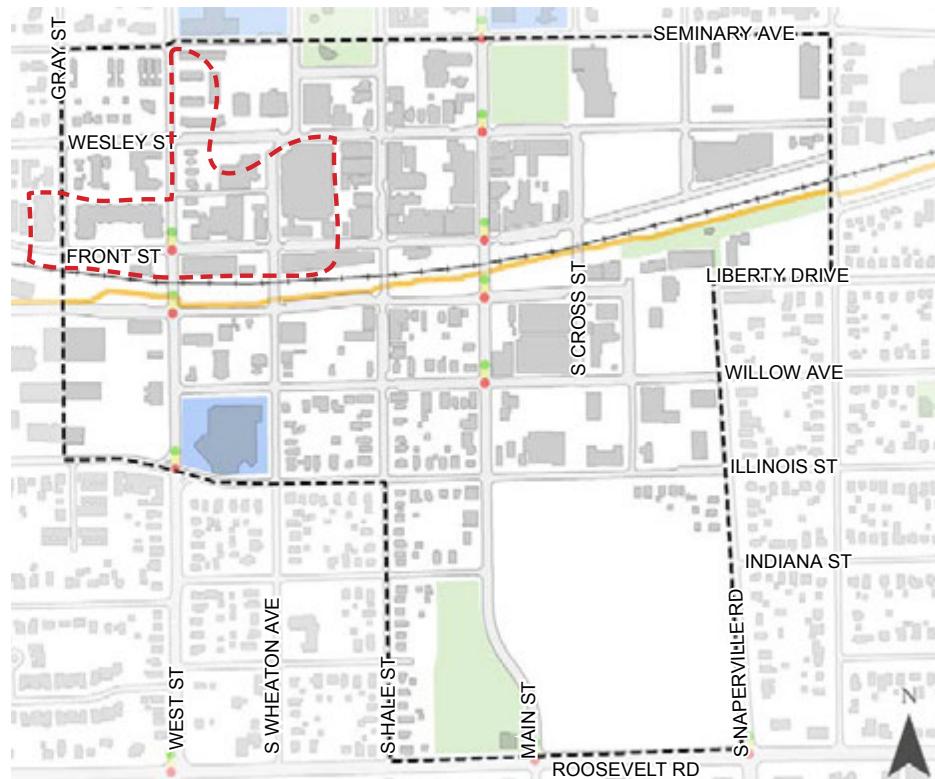
- Infrastructure - The Wheaton Sanitary District, which serves approximately 90 percent of Wheaton's planning area, has sufficient capacity to serve remaining development potential within the City. Operational problems include an old sewer system in poor condition that experiences infiltration of storm water during peak storm periods.
- Parks/Recreation – The goal in 1999 was to promote open space and a pedestrian atmosphere in the downtown business district through the addition of a playground/tot-lot, providing safe pedestrian and bike access, and the addition of a teen facility.
- The pedestrian core environment of downtown faces challenges , as the advanced age of many buildings requires additional maintenance; and vacancies are therefore high, which in turn reduces pedestrian traffic in the area.

Identified improvements / action items related to the downtown

Many of the action items identified in the 1999 Comprehensive Plan pertaining to downtown have been accomplished or are underway (as indicated with a check mark):

- Improve interrelationships between existing uses within the downtown.
- Expand the inventory of available sites for office development - Expand second floor office development opportunities in the central business district through the continued use of mixed use planned development and incentive zoning.
- Strengthen and preserve the central business district as an important focal point for a wide variety of compatible uses uniquely suited to a "central place" location, and which benefit from an interchange of people, ideas, and business.
 - ✓ Additional multiple family development should be encouraged within the Wheaton Central Planning Area.
 - ✓ Retail, restaurant and entertainment activities should be strengthened throughout the downtown/ central business district, especially north of the railroad.
 - ✓ Provide more accessible and usable open spaces, such as "pocket parks" and public plazas that serve as activity places and focal points in the central business district.
 - ✓ Prepare a detailed streetscape plan for the Central Business District. The plan should encompass Main Street from Roosevelt to Seminary and include appropriate "gateway" treatments and signage.
 - ✓ Prepare an overall urban design and pedestrian way plan for the Central Business District.
 - ✓ Continue and expand programs to retain and improve existing businesses.
 - ✓ Extend and enhance downtown character improvements, and identify appropriate forums for public art.
 - ✓ Incorporate business retention programs into the planning and economic development activities of the City, Downtown Wheaton Association (DWA) and the Chamber of Commerce.
 - ✓ Encourage development through financial incentive programs, when appropriate.
 - ✓ Identify niche markets with help from qualified marketing professionals. These niche markets should be the focus of recruitment and a basis for evaluating new uses if the City acquires and redevelops property.
- Develop a program to improve existing properties and businesses in the central business district area. Identify program elements, funding options and explore joint efforts with the DWA.
- Establish a development review process to ensure high quality without ignoring economic realities.
 - ✓ Prepare a report on the historic architectural resources of the Central Area.
 - ✓ Evaluate the creation of an appearance / architectural review commission/committee to provide advisory recommendations for all projects in the central business district area.
- Periodically evaluate the demand and availability of parking spaces in the downtown area for long term commuters and short term shoppers.
 - ✓ Coordinate study efforts with the METRA commuter rail agency to examine forecasted needs and financial assistance.

- ✓ Evaluate the need for additional commuter parking and explore alternative modes of transportation to the train station to increase train use while limiting parking demand.
- ✓ Explore the expansion of the PACE fixed route bus service, and other on-demand public transit services, to reduce the use of private vehicles.
- ✓ Develop a parking management plan to address alternative pricing, time restrictions and other solutions.
- Maintain areas and improve the system of arterial, collector, and minor streets to serve existing businesses and neighborhoods.
 - ✓ Evaluate the potential of directional improvements to enhance wayfinding in the central business district area.
- Development Opportunities
 - ✓ No new large scale multiple family housing is recommended, except for areas within the downtown area.
 - ✓ The need for additional multiple family housing to provide living alternatives for singles, "empty nester" and elderly persons is addressed through the designation of additional multiple family sites for condominium living within the downtown.
 - ✓ The pedestrian core – Landscaping, pedestrian lighting, public art, street furniture and mid-block walkways would strengthen the retail and entertainment environment.
 - ✓ A shared parking facility downtown could serve the demand for additional parking.
- Gateway design improvements for key entrances into downtown.



The Emerging Urban Village sub-area defined in the 1999 Comprehensive Plan Update (noted in red)

Outline of Current Planning Process

The Wheaton Downtown Strategic and Streetscape Plan process involved a multidisciplinary team of experts, as well as participation from community members and stakeholders who shared their ideas and opinions throughout the duration of the project. Four initial analyses, completed during the initial stages of the project, have contributed to and informed the recommendations of the strategic and streetscape plan. These analyses included a market study, a utility evaluation, a traffic evaluation, and a parking evaluation.

Market Study: The Market Study evaluated the economic position of Downtown Wheaton and the types and scale of land uses that will be viable in the future. Key elements of the market study involved analyses of overall demographic and economic conditions and the competitive position of Downtown Wheaton versus those of other nearby downtowns in the Chicago region. The study identified specific areas for growth in terms of residential, office, and retail land uses in the Downtown district and key redevelopment strategies or opportunities in the district over the short term and long term. In tandem with the market study, public meetings focused on creating and confirming a vision for the future goals and overall direction for the Downtown area.

Utility Evaluation: The project team completed an infrastructure analysis involving an inventory and evaluation of existing utilities and infrastructure in the downtown area. The study outlined key recommendations for the City to complete to upgrade critical elements of the Downtown area's infrastructure assets.

Traffic Evaluation: The project team evaluated existing traffic counts and traffic patterns in the downtown area, through field observations and data collections, and identified any potential improvements (including traffic signal improvements or roadway improvements) for the downtown district.

Parking Evaluation: A parking evaluation identified strategies for parking management, largely building on the parking study completed in 2007.

Approach to the Strategic and Streetscape Plan: One of the key elements of the overall Downtown Wheaton Plan involved outlining conceptual recommendations for upgrades to existing streetscape amenities in the district, as well as new improvements geared to elevate the competitive position of Downtown. The project team developed its recommendations based upon input from the public at a series of open houses as well as experience in other downtowns in creating public spaces that maximize the competitive positioning of local businesses and properties. The streetscape recommendations serve to bring the identified vision for Downtown Wheaton to life over the next two decades.



The screenshot shows a web-based platform for community engagement. At the top, there's a logo with the text "What do you want Downtown Wheaton to be?" and a subtext: "The City of Wheaton and Design Workshop are using this online town hall to gather citizen input on the economic development of Downtown. On this website, you can submit new ideas, second ideas you agree with, and leave feedback on different topics." Below this, there are three sign-up buttons: "Sign up with Facebook", "Sign up with LinkedIn", and "Sign up with Google", followed by a link to "Or sign up with your email address". On the left, there's a sidebar with "PROJECT DETAILS" (About the Project, How It Works, Select Language, Powered by Google Translate), "CONTRIBUTORS" (Weekly Active Users: Megan G6, 50), and a "Sign in" button. The main content area is titled "TOPICS" and shows three topics: "Vision for Downtown Wheaton" (Topic Closed, 151 responses, 301 comments), "I am thankful for..." (Topic Closed, 21 responses, 2 comments), and "Downtown Wheaton Streets" (Topic Closed, 83 responses, 93 comments). Each topic has a "Visit this Topic" link.

The MindMixer site allowed Wheaton residents to contribute ideas for the future of downtown and provide input concerning the ideas of others.

Community Engagement

The City of Wheaton coordinated public outreach along with the project team to raise awareness about the project and gain input from the broader community concerning elements of the Downtown Wheaton Plan. The City maintained a link from their website entitled "What do you want Downtown Wheaton to be" which included background documents, project updates and materials, and links to online engagement tools including Survey Monkey and Mindmixer. The project team gained valuable input from the broader community through a series of public meetings, one-on-one and small group stakeholder meetings, and online dialogues and surveys including Mindmixer and Survey Monkey.

Stakeholder Meetings

Throughout the planning process, the team held one-on-one work sessions with key stakeholders within Downtown including property owners, business owners, civic leaders, local government officials, developers, the Chamber of Commerce, and special interest groups. Stakeholders provided detailed feedback on design concepts and various policy ideas and recommendations throughout the process. In particular, they provided input concerning the key challenges faced by members of the downtown community in terms of parking requirements and policies, issues with regard to existing zoning, opportunities for soft programming and events, ideas for how to enhance public spaces, and overall strategies to strengthen downtown businesses.

Online Engagement - Mindmixer

The City of Wheaton's website hosted a link to the MindMixer application titled "What do you want Downtown Wheaton to be?". The online engagement tool allowed members of the public to submit and share ideas concerning how to improve Downtown in an "interactive online town hall" conversation. Participants submitted ideas in response to different topics which were posted to the site and had the opportunity to "second" or support other people's suggestions and comments or add their own ideas. A total of 184 active participants on Mindmixer weighed in on questions and responded to three instant online polls. The project team posted 17 questions or topics to Mindmixer that generated conversation and dialogue involving 212 distinct ideas for Downtown Wheaton and 301 associated comments regarding these various ideas. The Appendix to this document contains a complete listing of the ideas generated from the Mindmixer website.

Public Open Houses

The project team held four public meetings as part of the Downtown Wheaton planning process. Meetings were held at City Hall and the DuPage County Historical Museum as informal open houses in which attendees had the opportunity to review materials the project team had completed to date addressing existing conditions, comparative studies, and phases of the plan as it evolved from the existing conditions review to preliminary and final recommendations. Each meeting presented the progress the team had made to date, gathered critical feedback to inform the next stage, and addressed the next steps in the planning process. A formal presentation at each meeting was followed by an instant feedback keypad polling session in which participants were presented with questions, with their answers instantly displayed to the audience. Following each meeting the City of Wheaton posted the same questions posed at the public meeting in an online version on the city's website in order to obtain additional input from citizens unable to attend in person. The Appendix contains a summary of the keypad polling, and online polling results from each of the four rounds of public engagement during the project.

Open House 1: September 18, 2012

The first public meeting introduced the project, initial objectives and goals and presented a summary of existing conditions analyses completed to date. The keypad polling session included questions aimed at understanding the public's overall goals and vision for Downtown.

Open House #2 - February 28, 2013

The second public meeting reviewed the findings from the market study and the infrastructure analysis as well as the results from the first public visioning session. Meeting attendees participated in a second round of keypad polling focused on initial impressions regarding potential design ideas and strategies for the downtown, including festival streets and different options for outdoor dining.

Open House #3 – April 4, 2013

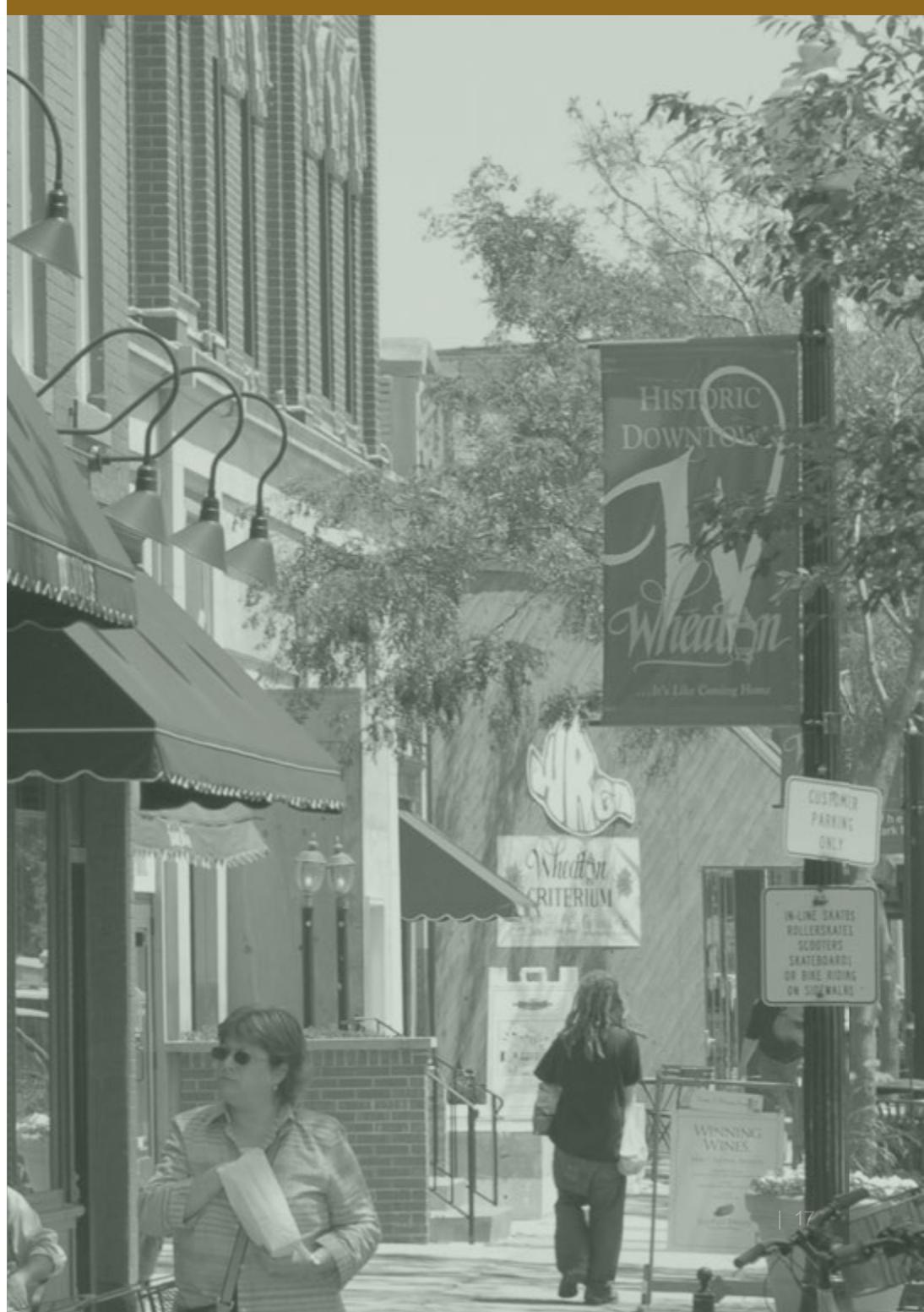
The third public meeting presented a summary of the feedback from the previous two public meetings and online engagement, reviewed draft recommendations, and reviewed streetscape concepts. Meeting attendees participated in a third round of keypad polling focused on understanding the public's priority locations for implementing festival streets, their materials palette preferences for each festival street, priorities for streetscape elements on other non-festival streets, and preferred strategies for moving forward.

Open House #4 – May 29, 2013

The fourth and final public meeting reviewed the recommendations and streetscape plans covered in the Downtown Plan. Keypad polling questions at this final meeting focused in more detail on the prioritization of various improvements around Downtown as well as various implementation tools and strategies for redevelopment in the area over the next several years. Around 90 percent of attendees at the meeting indicated that they were in favor of the City Council adopting the Downtown Plan, as it had been presented in the open house session.

3

VISION FOR DOWNTOWN



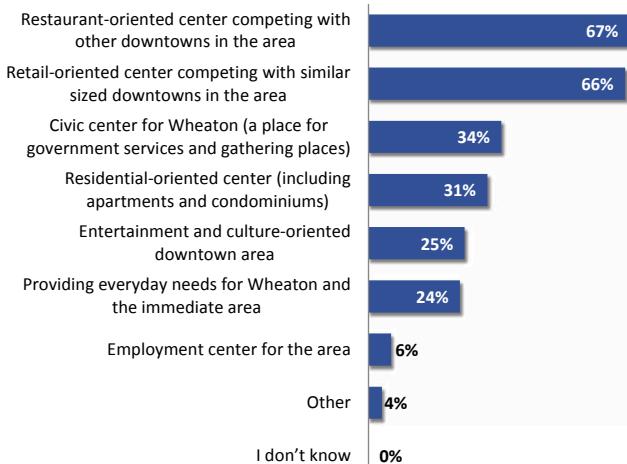
Based upon analysis and conclusions of the project team and input from the broader community at an initial “visioning session” and open house in Fall 2012, the City Council arrived at the following Vision Statement for Downtown Wheaton in February 2013. This Vision Statement helped to guide the creation of preliminary and final recommendations and implementation strategies during the overall planning process.

Elevate the position of Downtown Wheaton as a destination district in the western portion of the Chicago region by pursuing a number of civic improvements and regulatory changes designed to increase the capture rate of retail, office, and residential land uses in the Downtown.

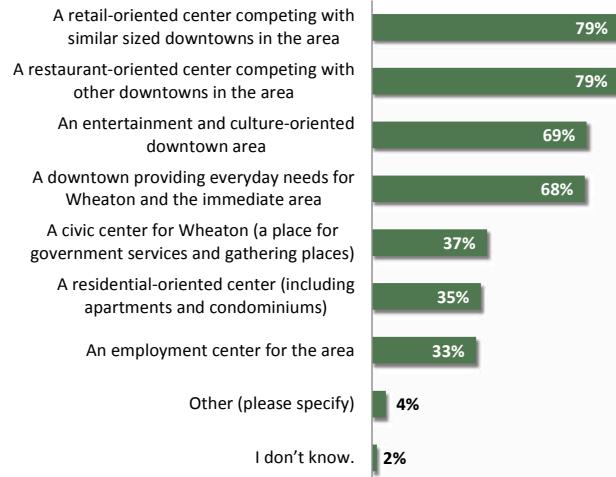
Input from the public at an initial community open house in September 2012, as well as in a follow-up online survey.

I envision Downtown Wheaton as representing the following in the future: (Choose all that apply)

Public Meeting Results



Online Survey Results



Overall Strategic Recommendation for Downtown

The overall strategic recommendation for achieving the Vision for Downtown Wheaton involves the following key concepts.

- 1) Actively promoting the redevelopment and expansion of a variety of office, retail, and residential projects in the area between the Union Pacific tracks and Roosevelt Road. This strategy would expand the overall scale of space in Downtown Wheaton, help to leverage the increased business anticipated from the opening of the Mariano's development, and help to create a greater presence for the district on the Roosevelt Road corridor. This strategy should help the Downtown district in offering the types and sizes of spaces that would appeal to new retailers, office tenants, and residents.
- 2) Strategically installing key catalytic streetscape and amenity improvements in the Downtown area, as outlined in the following pages. These key improvements, including "Festival" streets, a central park in the heart of Downtown Wheaton to the south of the Union Pacific tracks, alley enhancements, and overall streetscape improvements throughout the district, should enhance the attractiveness of Downtown Wheaton in the larger suburban marketplace and result in a greater capture rate of economic activity for Downtown businesses.
- 3) Implementation of various policy and regulatory changes, as outlined in subsequent sections, in order to help stimulate greater development and redevelopment in the Downtown Wheaton area. These changes, tied to zoning, parking, and related matters, should make it easier for the private sector to work with the community to create projects that produce strong returns while helping to support the overall Vision for the Downtown district and achieve the stated Vision for Downtown Wheaton.

Catalyst Projects and Initiatives

Festival Streets

Members of the Wheaton community, in the open house sessions and in online survey responses, expressed a desire to create enhanced community gathering places in Downtown Wheaton. At the same time, the project team canvassed examples of downtown revitalizations from around the country to gain ideas concerning how to enhance overall viability for the variety of land uses in the district, including retail, restaurants, office, and residential.

Based upon this research and feedback from the public during the planning process, the Downtown Plan recommends that the community move forward with one or more Festival Streets as a key initiative to spur the ongoing revitalization and growth of the district.

As illustrated on the following pages, communities around the country of various sizes have installed Festival Streets successfully in order to create enhanced public spaces for community interaction and to drive increased commercial activity in downtown areas and related districts. Festival street designs create a “hybrid” street that provides for vehicular movement and for on-street parking and may on occasion be easily closed off and converted into a small piazza or plaza for festivals and functions. Festival streets often do not include formal curbs, and therefore the entire area between buildings on either side of the street may easily convert to a flat open area that may accommodate outdoor dining, free-flowing pedestrian movement, on-street entertainment, and a variety of community events.

Festival Streets, in particular, enhance and promote outdoor dining and often represent the key “restaurant row” in a given downtown district. The convertible design of the street easily allows restaurants to expand their square footage of dining space, increase the number of patrons served, and to enhance and promote their business at the street level. Outdoor dining strongly contributes to a vibrant street atmosphere, and many of the most notable Festival Street examples from around the country feature a very strong outdoor dining culture.

The “Parklet” Idea

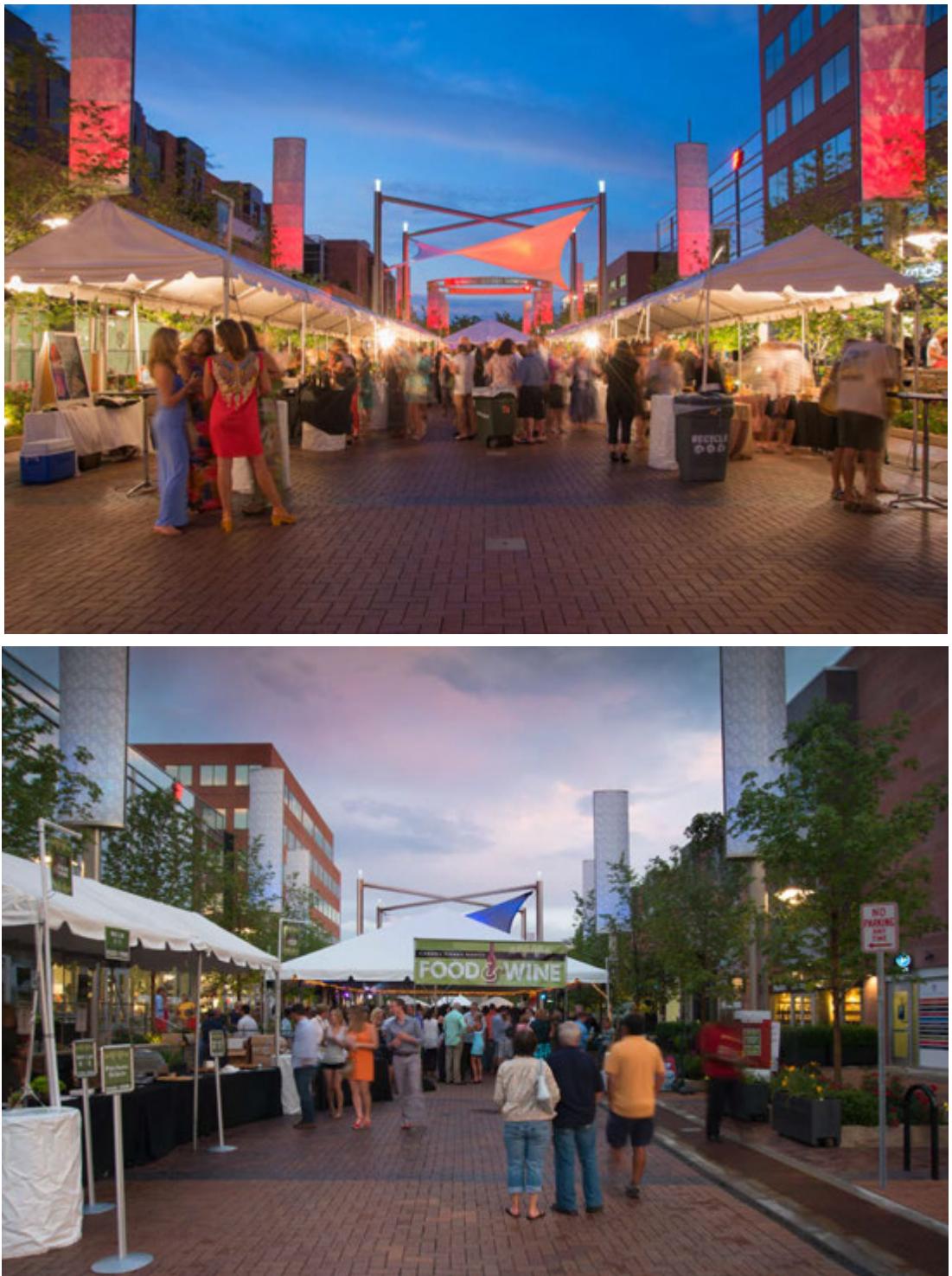
Festival street designs in particular enhance outdoor dining through the implementation of a “flex zone” or “parklet” system. The flex zone, which received strong support from the public during the planning process for Downtown Wheaton, includes a small space that extends from the normal sidewalk into the street in order to provide additional gathering spaces and amenities for outdoor dining. Flex zones are designed to be temporary and cover from two to four parking spaces along the street at a time. They are designed to be easily removed, without causing any damage or permanent changes to the street or sidewalk surfaces. The flex zones would ensure that the areas covering both the street and the sidewalk would remain at the same level, thereby creating a sense that the spaces between buildings is flat and seamless. The pavement surfaces within the flex zones, however, would include different patterns and appearances from those of the automobile travel lanes in order to provide visual cues and delineate the “flex zone” as part of the overall sidewalk zone.

Whereas sidewalks in a downtown district ideally are up to 19 feet in width, from the building to the sidewalk, in order to facilitate outdoor dining, the constrained right of ways of many of the streets in Downtown Wheaton limit the ability to expand sidewalks to facilitate festivals and more outdoor dining. Therefore, the “flex zone” or “parklet” idea fits Downtown Wheaton well, in that it offers another strategy to provide more space for festivals and outdoor dining.

Flex zones are often called “parklets”, and have gained acceptance and success in a number of American cities. In San Francisco, where the parklet idea originated, business owners usually pay the City for a permit and are responsible for the construction of each parklet. Many cities have created step-by-step guidelines to help business owners acquire the proper permits and build parklets on their blocks. Often the permit application requests documentation of support from surrounding business or property owners and the completion of a maintenance plan. As an investment, business owners have found that parklets help to beautify their block and attract more foot traffic to their shops. The Downtown Plan recommends that the City of Wheaton create a similar permit process and guidelines for parklets in the locations identified in this plan.



A “flex zone” or “parklet” system allows restaurants to expand their square footage of dining space.



Festival streets in the Cherry Creek North district in Denver were designed for community gathering spaces and events.

Liberty Drive

Creating a festival street along Liberty Drive, from Hale to Cross, would help to create a central gathering place to serve the south side of Downtown and would help to further redevelopment in the overall area from the Union Pacific tracks down to Roosevelt Road. The festival street design, in concert with the creation of a “central park” and improvements to the French Market between Liberty Drive and the Union Pacific tracks, would help to enhance the “front door” to Downtown Wheaton and therefore help to fulfill the overall vision for Downtown Wheaton gaining business and visitation from surrounding areas. The festival street improvements will create a more prominent and attractive address for properties fronting onto Liberty Drive. Specific festival street improvements will include the addition of seating areas, plantings, street trees, crosswalk improvements and similar improvements including a flattened street curb, the creation of parklet “flex spaces” for outdoor dining, and installation of bollards in order to provide for a seamless surface between the fronts of buildings and the middle of the street.

The public indicated support for a more contemporary style and application of streetscape materials along the Liberty Drive festival street, in contrast to the more historical style that is generally present throughout Downtown Wheaton.



Marion Street in Oak Park and Larimer Street in Denver are successful examples of festival streets.

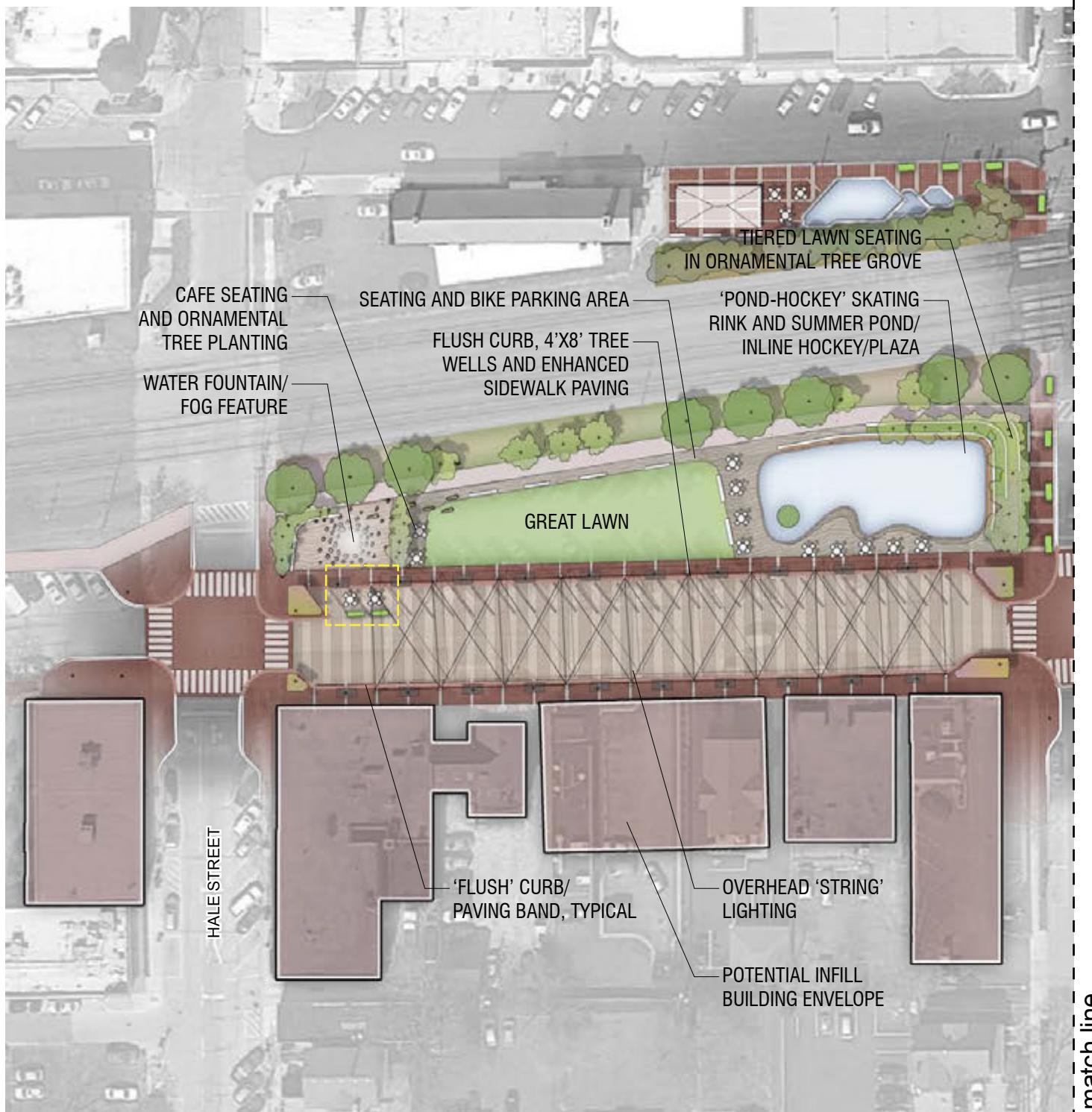
In addition to festival street enhancements along Liberty Drive itself, the overall recommendations for this corridor include the utilization of blank walls along the rear of buildings facing the Union Pacific tracks to project various light and images and thereby add vitality at night. Portable carts, equipped with projectors, would shine lights of various colors and patterns on the backs of buildings. They may “wash” the façade of an adjacent building with colored light, or with a projected graphic. The portable cart may be housed within a “kiosk” like structure at the street level, and the kiosk surface may be used as a downtown “town crier” of sorts, in order to advertise upcoming events and retailers in the downtown area. The projector port can be moved periodically to highlight different facades or parts of buildings along the railroad right of way, or to highlight or project on to blank walls on various downtown streets. The projections may serve as part of a downtown artistic program or may simply provide civic content and messaging or local advertising space, if desired.

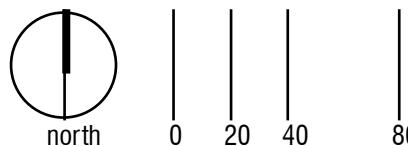
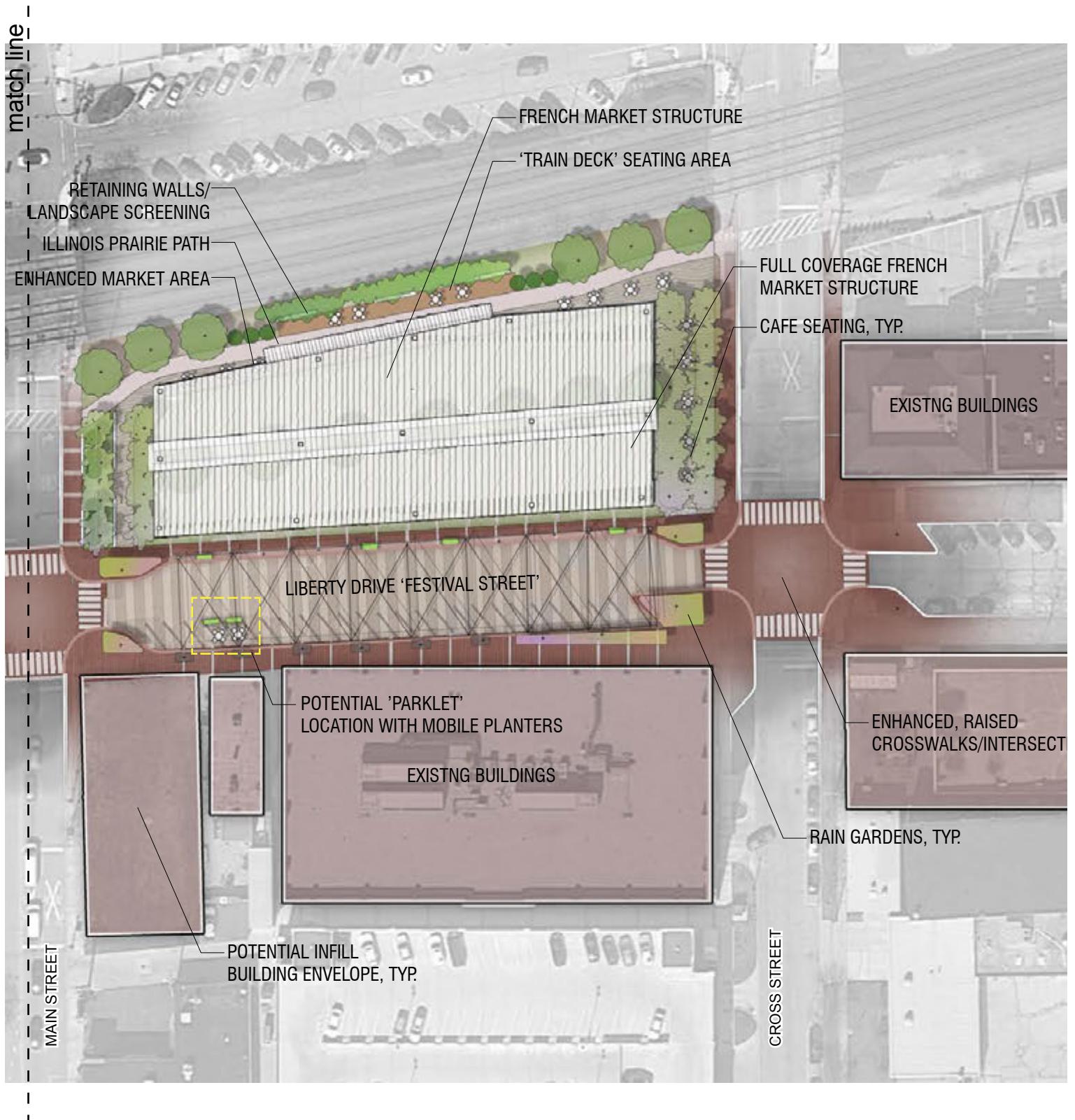
The appropriate image size for projections would be determined by the distance from the projector to the wall in question, often referred to as the “throw ratio”. Throw ratios vary for particular projector models. In the example that follows, the distance from the buildings adjacent to the railroad, to the railroad right of way, is around 15 feet. Given this distance, the image may be projected up to 14 feet high by 18 feet wide. Projected images may be enlarged as this distance increases. In most applications of this strategy, prepped surfaces (on the actual buildings) are not required but may be applied if desired. Property owners would need to be consulted, of course, for permissions in order to execute this lighting strategy.



Example of how images of local events or artwork can be projected to help activate the downtown and attract more visitors.

Festival Street | Liberty Drive





Street Furniture

The public indicated a preference for a more contemporary palette for street furniture on Liberty Drive. The Liberty Drive festival street will serve as the “front door” of Downtown Wheaton. This treatment will create a newer, sleeker look for this portion of Downtown Wheaton, setting the stage for the creation of an enhanced destination dining and shopping district.

Recommended Materials and Furniture Concept Palette - Liberty Drive Festival Street



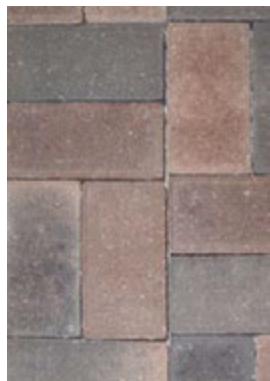
Outdoor Dining



Crosswalk



Trash Receptacles



Porous Pavement (in parking areas)



Bike Parking



Bench



Movable Planter Pots and/or Removable Bollards and Curb Treatment with Truncated Dome



Sidewalk Alternatives



Recommended Materials and Furniture Concept Palette - Liberty Drive Festival Street



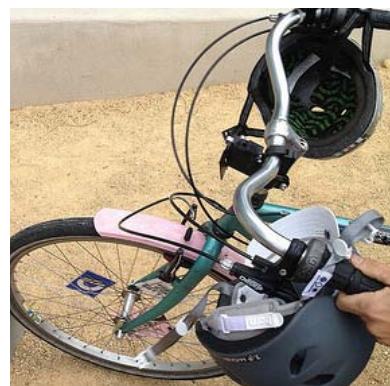
Cantenary Lighting System



French Market/Event Structure



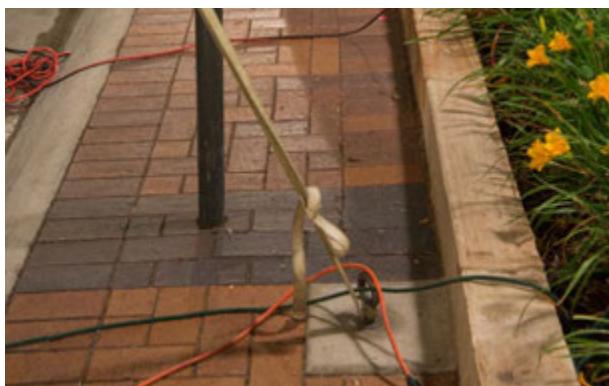
Additional Retail and Services Directory



Decomposed Granite Bike Parking



Tiered Lawn Seating with "Tree Grove"



Tent or Shade Structure Anchor



Water Feature/Pop Jet Fountain



Skating "Pond"



Rain Garden at Bulbouts



Parklet





Concept sketches of Liberty Drive festival street and proposed park. This view is looking to the southwest, with redevelopment on blocks to the south.



View looking east on Liberty Drive at the proposed Central Park during a community event



View looking east on Liberty Drive at the proposed Central Park

Hale Street

Hale Street already boasts a number of prominent restaurants and the Wheaton Grand Theater and serves as one of the key locations for the Taste of Wheaton festival. It also includes a wider right of way, from building front to building front, compared to the other streets in the older part of the downtown district, to the north of the Union Pacific tracks. Therefore, Hale Street represents a very logical location to introduce a festival street concept over time, to build upon the existing demand for outdoor dining and create a key gathering space in the heart of the historic downtown core area.

The design for Hale Street will include bollards that could easily be removed, allowing the entire street area to convert to outdoor dining or festival space. When the street is not closed to traffic for events, these bollards would separate automobile space from pedestrian space.

In line with input from the public throughout the planning process, the design of the Hale Street festival street would include historic styles that would draw from the historic patterns currently present in streetscape and building features throughout Downtown Wheaton. The lighting design for Hale would include the installation of a "catenary lighting" system, in which lights are strung across the street throughout the year, in order to add a distinctive element to the street's appearance. As illustrated in the diagrams, the festival street design for Hale will engage the Wheaton Grand Theater by providing additional space in front of the theater entrance and providing enhanced planting areas right around the theater and the adjoining pedestrian passageways.



Taste of Wheaton Festival, Hale Street, 2013. The new Festival Street design should help to enhance this and other festivals in the future.



View looking north on Hale Street at the Wheaton Grand Theater

Festival Street | Hale Street

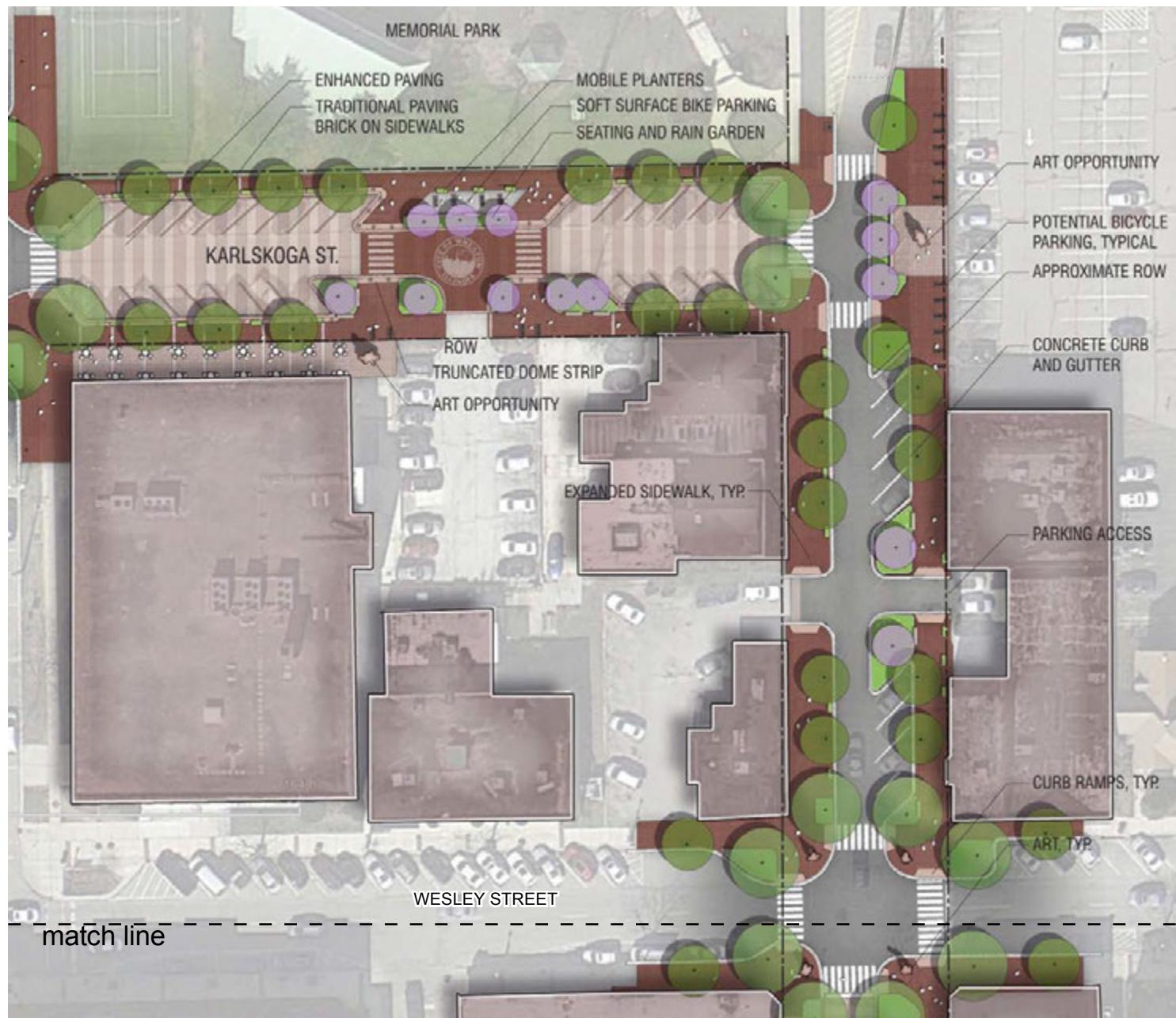


Karlskoga Avenue

The Downtown Plan recommends that the City eventually upgrade this small section of Karlskoga Street, from Wheaton Avenue to Hale, as a festival street in order to provide an enhanced “spill over” space for events held in Memorial Park, such as the Taste of Wheaton. The proposed design would provide a seamless space between the park and the street, through the installation of a flat curb and movable bollards and planters. The design calls for the removal of the existing parking meters and the installation of more street trees. The festival street design would include dimensions geared to accommodate temporary tents for events, and the City should ensure that future enhancements to Karlskoga include the provision of sufficient power supplies to support temporary outdoor entertainment and dining facilities and vendors, as well as overhead lighting.

In addition to supporting the ongoing success of festivals based in the Memorial Park area, a festival street upgrade to Karlskoga could also support the outdoor dining facilities of any restaurants located along the south side of Karlskoga, toward Wesley Street. Because Karlskoga carries very little vehicular traffic normally, the street could easily serve as a beer garden for a nearby establishment in the downtown area, for example.

Festival Street | Karlskoga Avenue + Hale Street



Street Furniture

The public indicated a preference to maintain the historic or Victorian-style street furniture palette for the festival streets in the historic core of downtown (including Hale St. and Karlsga Ave.)

Recommended Materials and Furniture Concept Palette - Hale and Karlsga Festival Streets



Bike Parking



Bench



Crosswalk



Outdoor Dining



Trash Receptacles



Movable Planter Pots and/or Removable Bollards and Curb Treatment with Truncated Dome



Sidewalk Alternatives



Porous Pavement (in parking)



Rain Garden at Bulbouts



Parklet



Cantenary Lighting System



Overhead Plaza Structure



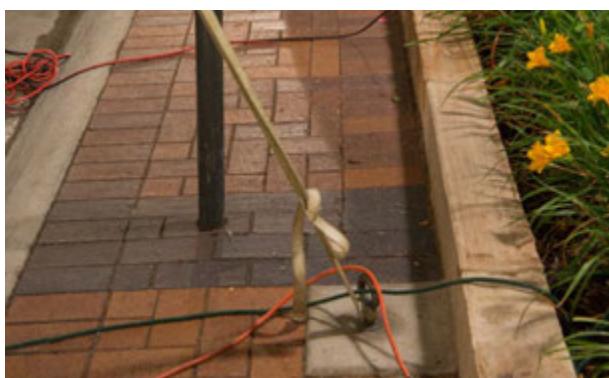
Additional Retail and Services Directory



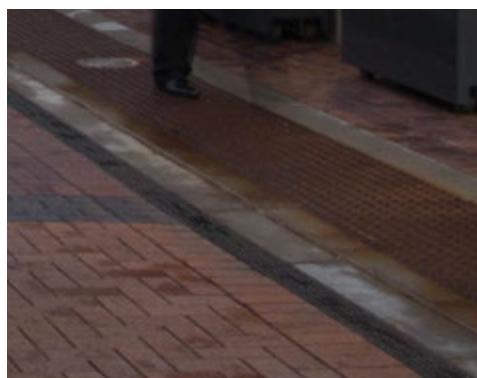
Decomposed Granite Bike Parking



City Logo in Pavement



Tent or Shade Structure Anchor

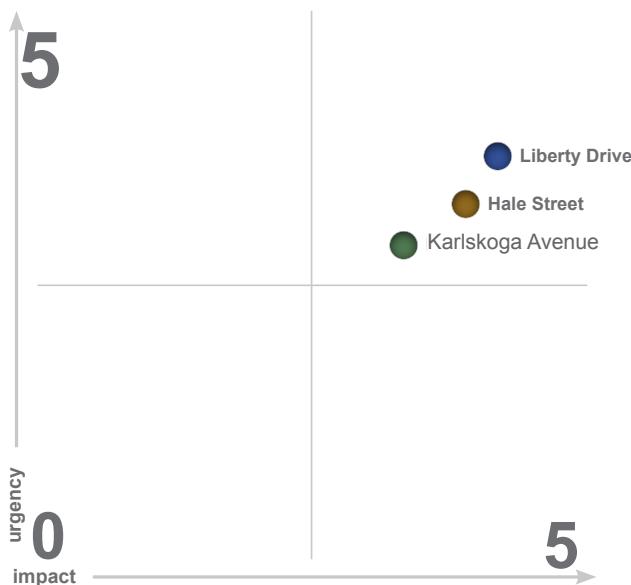


Curb Treatment with Truncated Dome

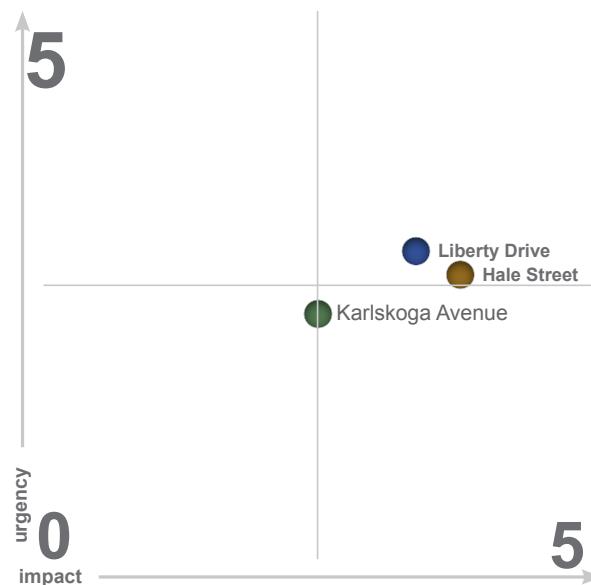
Prioritization of Festival Streets

In order to help prioritize the implementation of the three festival streets, participants in the planning process were asked to rate the perceived IMPACT and URGENCY of implementing the three different festival streets in Downtown Wheaton, using a scale from 1 (equaling the “lowest”) to 5 (equaling the “highest” impact or urgency). As illustrated below, the public generally indicated that improvements to Hale and Liberty would create greater impacts in Downtown Wheaton and perhaps are more urgently needed, compared to the proposed improvements to Karlskoga Avenue.

Public Meeting Results



Online Survey Results



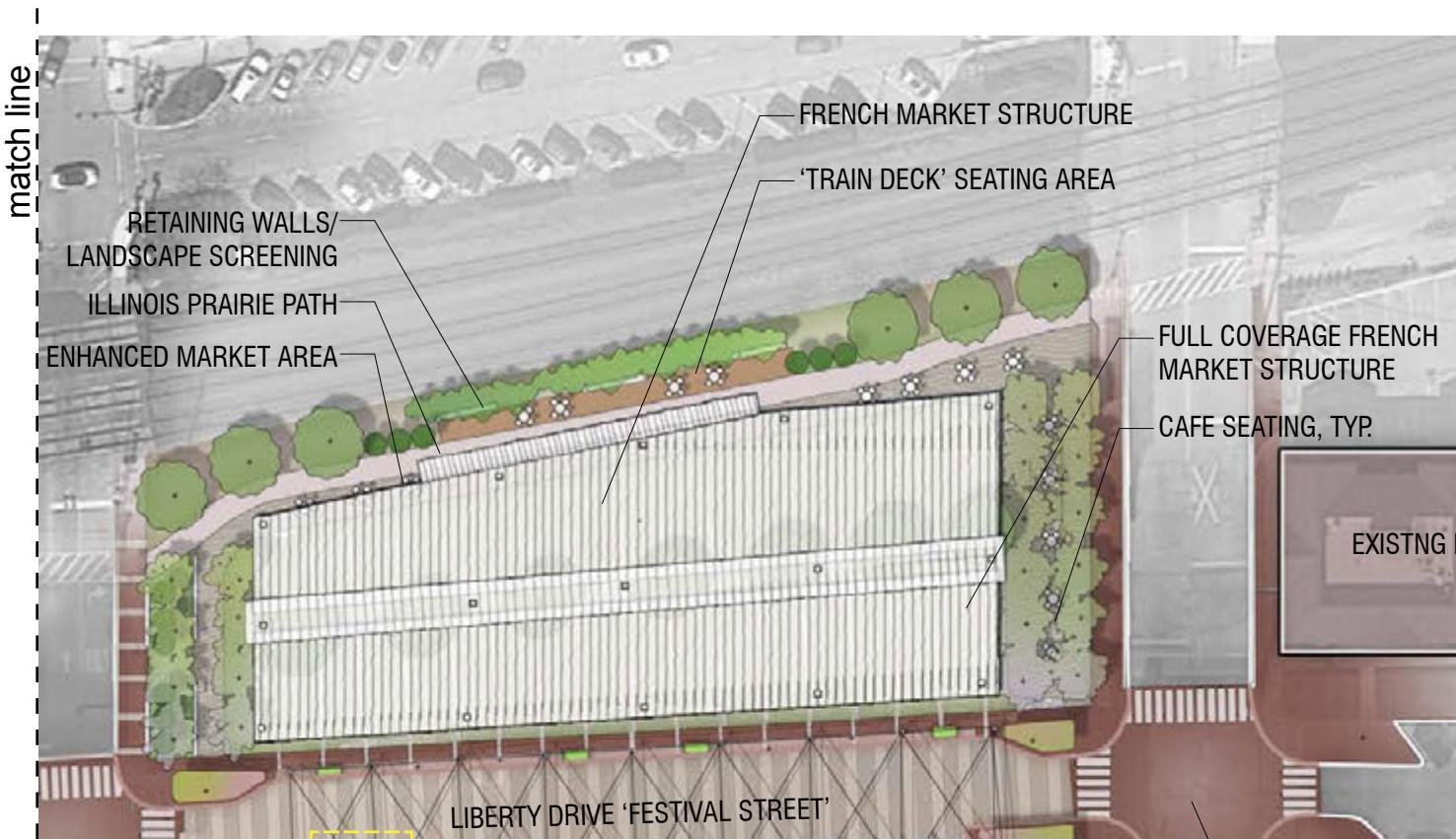
Central Park | Liberty Street



Central Park and French Market Upgrades

In addition to the festival street upgrades along Liberty Drive, the Downtown Plan recommends the installation of a 'Central Park' between Liberty and the Illinois Prairie Path, on the site of an existing employee parking lot. The concept of the Central Park, supported by 71 percent of respondents in the public outreach process, will provide a central gathering place for residents and visitors, provide the foundation for upgrades to the French Market facilities, and will help to bridge the north and south sides of downtown.

The open space-oriented portion of the park, between Main Street and Hale, would include a small ice rink, lawn space, water features, amphitheater space, and various seating areas. Downtowns and shopping districts around the country have successfully leveraged small public skating rinks in order to attract increased business during colder months. The community could leverage the amphitheater space to provide space for performing artists from Wheaton and beyond, particularly during the warmer months, and thereby enhance the vitality of the downtown district. Water features have proven to be popular with families and children and should further enhance the attractiveness of the central park and downtown for these audiences during the warmer months. All of these improvements would tie in with the adjoining Illinois Prairie Path. The presence of this path next to the central park should entice visitors from throughout DuPage County to visit Wheaton by bike and should help enhance Downtown Wheaton's stature as a key gathering place in the western suburban region.





Top: Buffalo, New York market structure
Bottom: Covington, Virginia market structure

Top: Little Rock, Arkansas market structure
Bottom: Overland Park, Kansas market structure

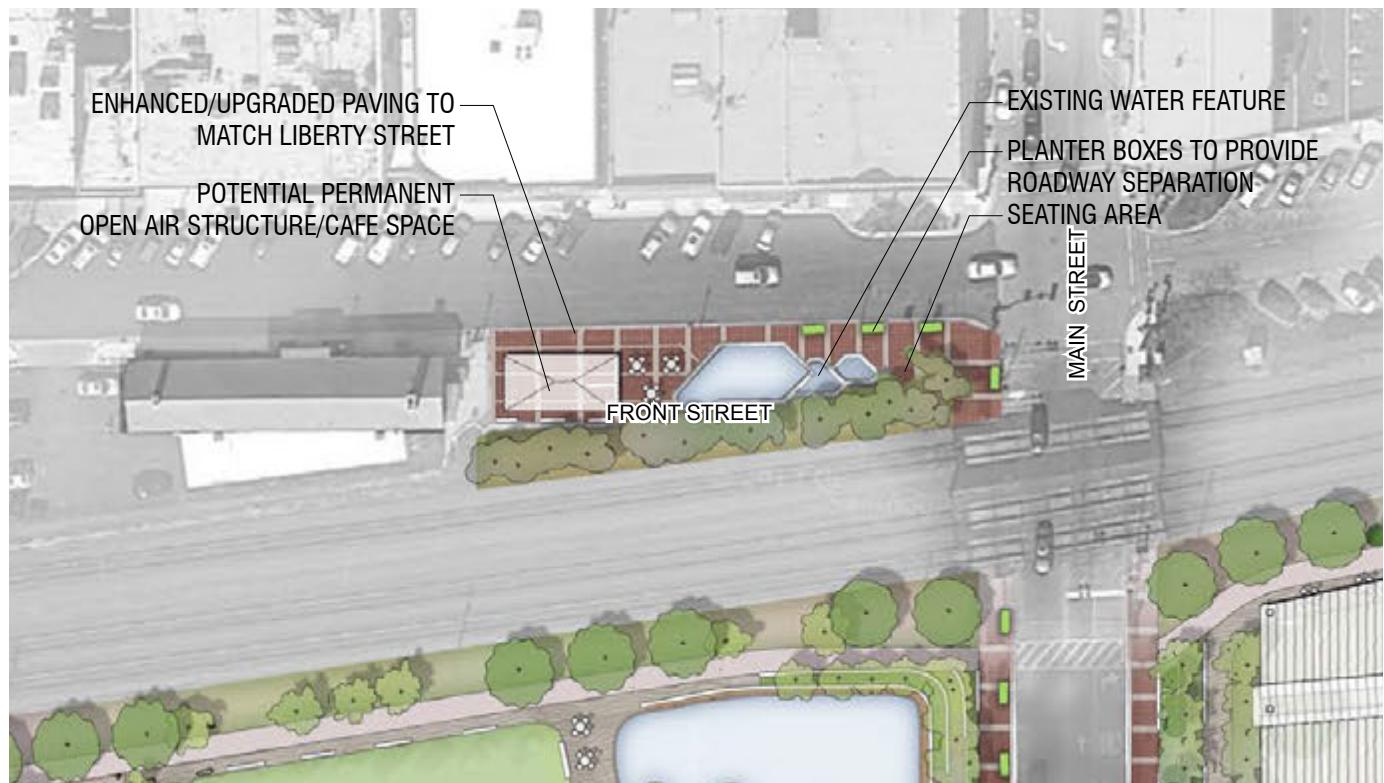


Artistic Rendering of the Potential French Market Permanent Structure in Downtown Wheaton

The eastern portion of the Central Park, between Main Street and Cross Street, would accommodate an expansion of the French Market into a permanent structure that would span the entire area currently covered by a city parking lot. A number of farmers markets throughout the Midwest have grown to eventually include permanent structures that shield vendors and shoppers from the elements and provide a sense of identity for the particular market. Most markets that have completed permanent structures have witnessed increased business and visitor numbers over time.

The permanent structure could include an option to enclose the area, with garage doors or other means, in order to provide indoor space for market activities during the colder months. This strategy would allow the city or the French Market to sponsor holiday markets (Halloween, Christmas, Easter, Valentines Day, etc.) during the colder months. The permanent structure space could also be used for a variety of community gatherings and events unrelated to market activities, throughout the year. The permanent structure for the French Market could create an identifiable icon along the Union Pacific tracks and therefore help to enhance the overall sense of identity for Downtown Wheaton in the minds of residents from nearby communities.

Tied to the strategy for the Central Park and the French Market, the Downtown Plan recommends that the community upgrade the materials and design of the existing Martin Plaza, along the north side of the tracks, and just to the west of Main Street. The city could upgrade the existing water feature at Martin Plaza, and could also consider installing a permanent restroom for the public in the area around Martin Plaza.



Potential improvements to Martin Plaza

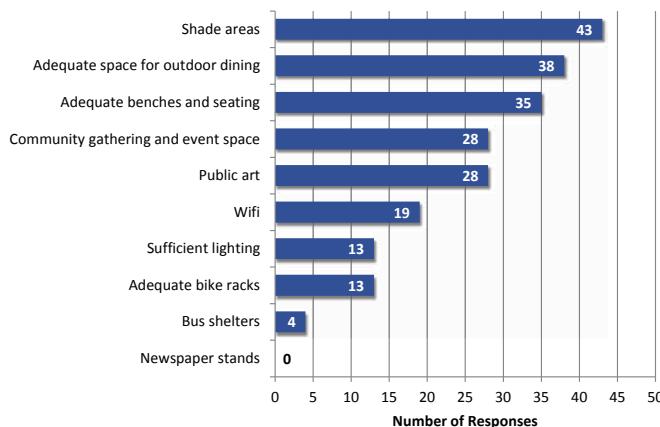
Main Street Upgrades

As redevelopment occurs south of the Union Pacific tracks, and the Liberty Street festival street and park area is constructed, the City should prioritize upgrading the streetscape along Main Street from Roosevelt Road to Front Street. Main Street is the main connection between the existing downtown retail core, the proposed downtown park and festival street improvements, and the parks adjacent to Mariano's.

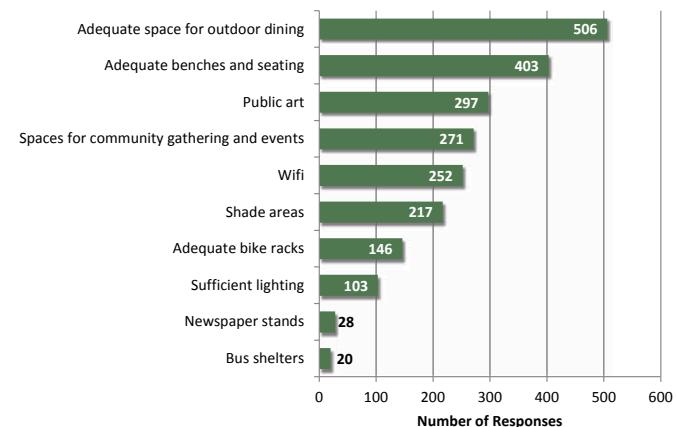
These upgrades would help to create an improved front door for Downtown Wheaton from the Roosevelt Road corridor and thus would help to fulfill the vision of attracting a larger pool of patrons to the downtown from surrounding communities. The enhancements to Main Street should also spur some redevelopment interest for areas to the east and west of Main, and to the south of the tracks.

What is missing from the current design of the streetscape in Downtown Wheaton? (Choose your top three)

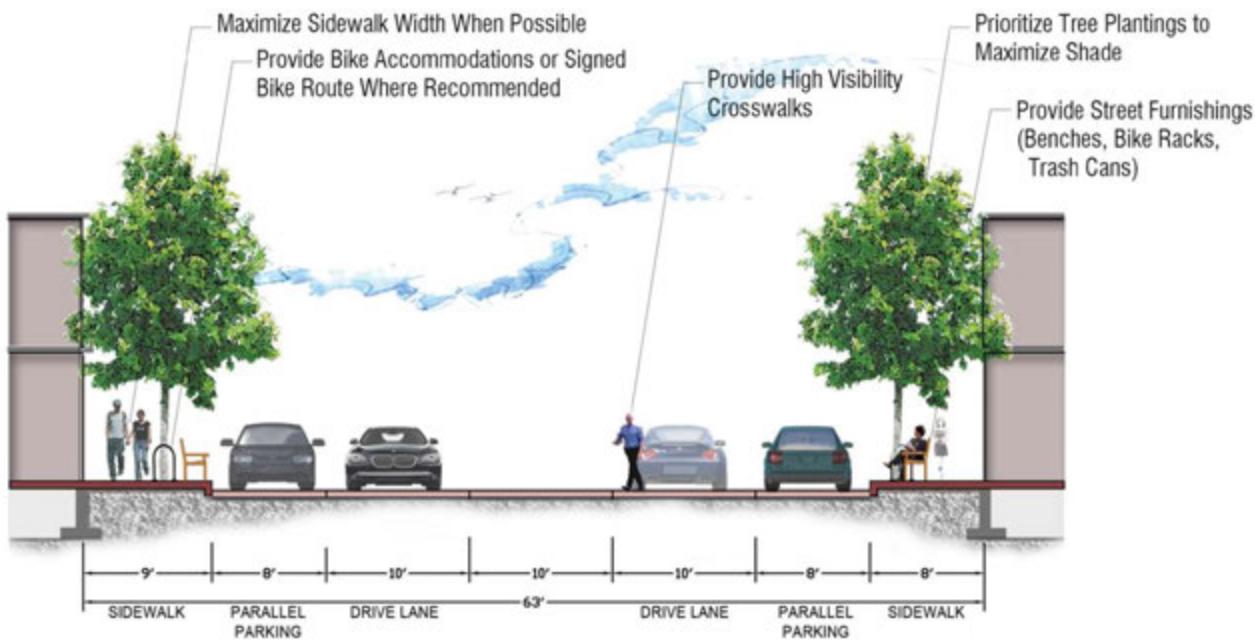
Public Meeting Results



Online Survey Results



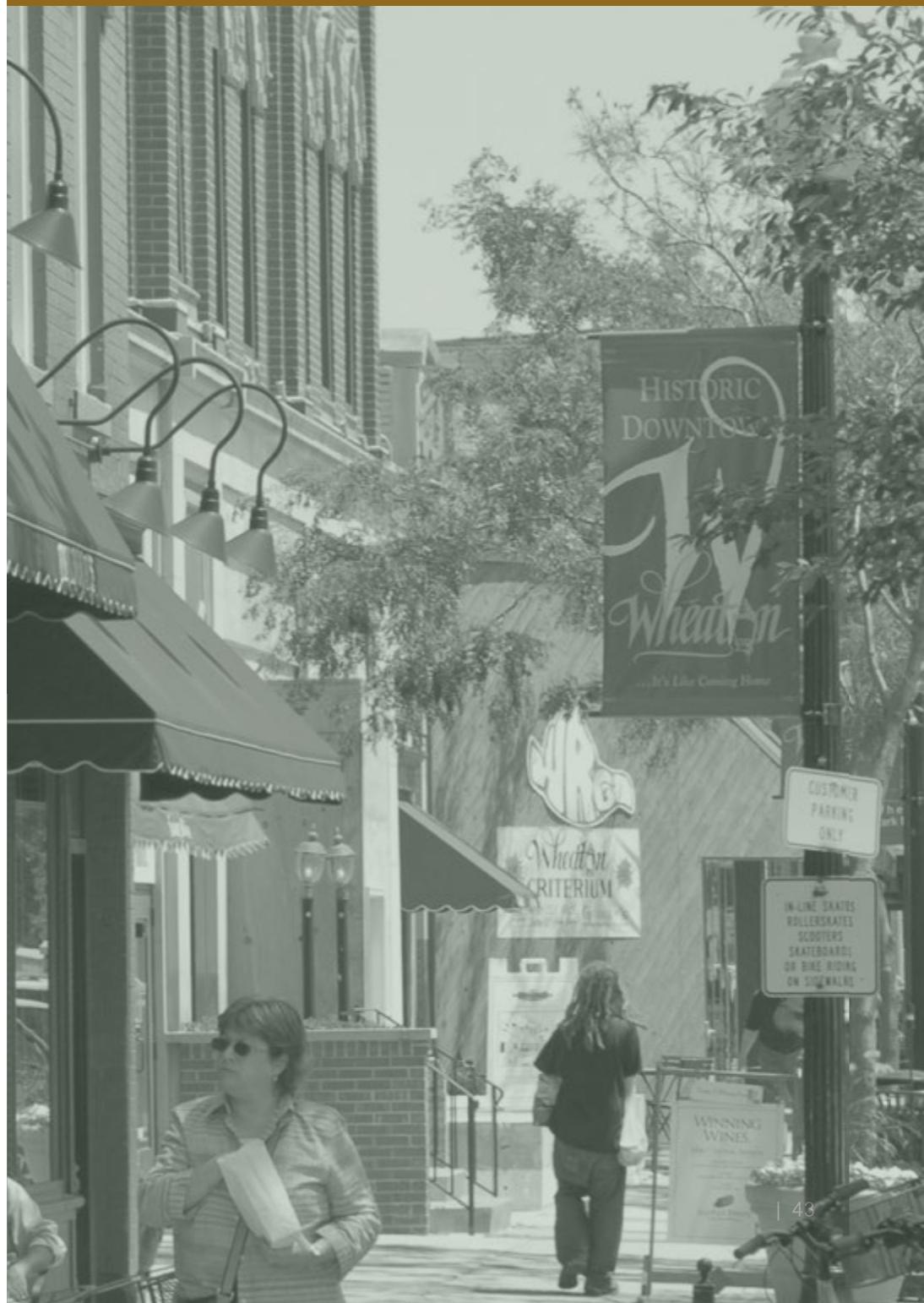
Potential Street Section for Main Street



Main Street



RECOMMENDATIONS/ STRATEGIES BY CATEGORY



While the previous section identified specific major improvements to particular areas within Downtown that would serve as catalytic changes for the area, this section outlines overall recommendations that will benefit the overall Downtown over the next two decades. These recommendations apply to all parts of the district and should help the City and stakeholders in executing the plan recommendations over the short term and long term.

Economic Analysis and Economic Development

In order to understand the current economic and demographic conditions in Downtown Wheaton and to determine the potential viability for a variety of land uses over the short term and long term in the downtown district, the project team conducted a market study addressing residential, retail, entertainment, and office uses. The study involved analysis of demographic and market information from publicly and privately available sources, discussions with brokers, developers, and others involved in the local real estate market, site visits to competing downtown districts in Chicagoland, and research into comparable downtown districts in the Midwest and nationwide. This section provides a summary of the key findings and recommendations of the market study. The complete market study document is provided as an appendix to the Downtown Plan.

Demographics

A key element of the market study involved examining demographic trends and projections concerning population, income, age, and other factors pertaining to Downtown Wheaton and the surrounding areas in DuPage County. This analysis reveals trends impacting the viability of retail, office, residential, and other land uses in the downtown district.

The market study examined demographic trends for trade areas tied to five, 15 and 25 minute drive times from Downtown Wheaton. In general, these drive times represent typical drive time metrics used in completing economic analyses for comparable districts. In general, local retail or entertainment trips would entice someone to normally drive up

Key Demographic Information: 5, 15, and 25 Minute Drive Time Trade Areas, Downtown Wheaton

5 Minute Drive Time			
	2000	2010	2015 (Est)
Population	12,904	13,241	13,327
Households	4,343	4,456	4,508
Median Age	30.5	30.3	30.4
Median Household Income	\$67,117	\$81,688	\$96,217

15 Minute Drive Time			
	2000	2010	2015 (Est)
Population	281,752	291,110	291,445
Households	98,071	101,695	101,975
Median Age	33.9	35.7	36.0
Median Household Income	\$67,334	\$82,247	\$93,979

25 Minute Drive Time			
	2000	2010	2015 (Est)
Population	1,087,145	1,140,602	1,149,905
Households	390,770	412,162	416,023
Median Age	35.2	37.0	37.2
Median Household Income	\$66,288	\$80,994	\$92,964

Source: ESRI

to five minutes by car, and that most people will not drive more than 25 minutes to visit a local downtown district on a regular or semi-regular basis. The area within a five minute drive of Downtown Wheaton has essentially remained unchanged in terms of population over the last ten years and will gain fewer than 200 new residents between 2010 and 2015. The area within a 15 minute drive of Downtown gained nearly 10,000 new residents from 2000 to 2010 but will gain fewer than 400 residents from 2010 to 2015. The area within a 25 minute drive of Downtown Wheaton, including a very large portion of the western suburban region, gained over 50,000 new residents from 2000 to 2010 but will gain fewer than 10,000 residents from 2010 to 2015.

In general, while all of the trade areas surrounding Downtown Wheaton report median household incomes that far outpace averages for the Chicago region and Illinois as a whole, the area is largely “built out” and will not gain a material number of new residents for the foreseeable future. Therefore, since the overall trade areas surrounding Downtown Wheaton will likely remain relatively static over the next few decades, the clearest way for Downtown to gain increased business is to increase its capture rate of potential business versus competing downtowns in the area (such as Naperville, Geneva, etc.) as well as a variety of other shopping options (including malls, and other shopping centers in Wheaton and beyond). The other way to stimulate or produce additional demand for goods and services in Downtown Wheaton would be to introduce additional residents in the downtown district through the construction of additional residential units (townhomes, apartments, etc.).

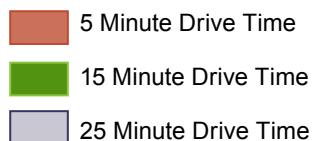
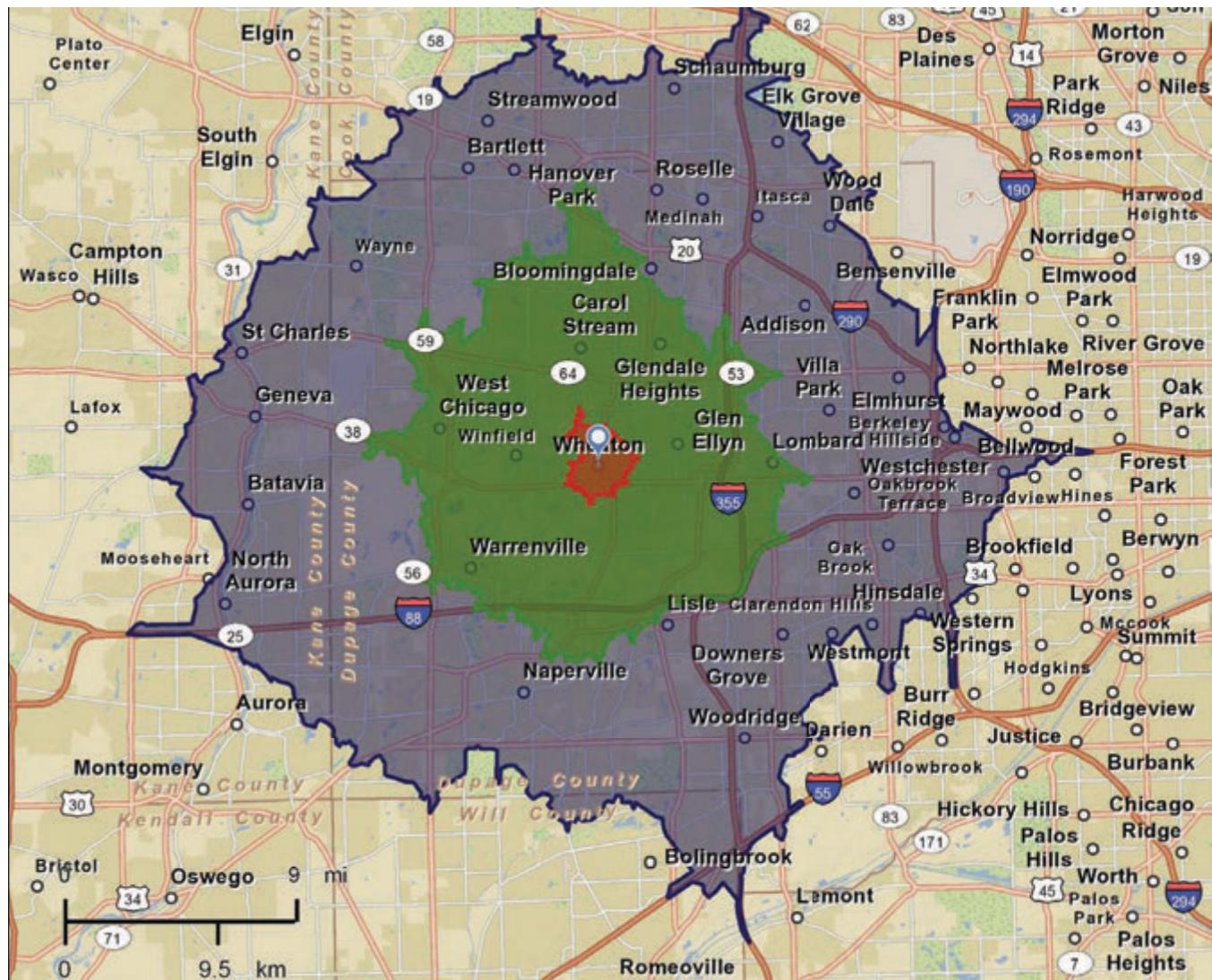


Figure 1: 5, 15, and 25 Minute Drive Time Trade Areas Surrounding Downtown Wheaton. Source: ESRI



In addition, while some of the other downtowns in the area enjoy somewhat better access to local and regional transportation routes (including major boulevards, as well as area freeways and tollways), Downtown Wheaton contends with a somewhat more isolated location in the broader DuPage County and western suburban market. These factors have tended to limit the ability of the downtown district to draw from a larger regional market. Therefore, in order to capture a larger share of the market, Downtown Wheaton must make a concerted effort to create a unique and higher quality experience for visitors and residents alike. Improvements identified as part of the Downtown Plan may in part help the district entice a larger pool of residents in the local market to live in or patronize the downtown district.

Tenant Mix: The market study examined the mix of tenants in Downtown Wheaton versus various other downtowns in the suburban region and arrived at the following takeaways:

- Downtown Wheaton benefits from the presence of a significant pool of professional services offices. These offices help drive traffic, to varying degrees, to the downtown district from local residents.
- Relative to its size as a downtown (compared to larger downtowns such as Naperville and Geneva), Downtown Wheaton has a significant number of eateries, including restaurants, bar / grills, coffee houses, and snack shops. The presence of a number of well-known restaurants already attracts visitors from the surrounding local area.
- Downtown Wheaton contains relatively fewer clothing and apparel stores, and much fewer shoe stores, compared to other downtowns such as Arlington Heights, Geneva, and Naperville.
- While some of the peer downtowns contain entertainment offerings such as theaters, comedy clubs, or piano bars, Downtown Wheaton at present offers few entertainment-specific tenants to attract visitors to the district.
- One of the key differences between Wheaton and the larger downtowns in the area lies in the presence of national versus local tenants. In contrast to local malls, that largely contain national chains, all of the area downtowns mainly host locally or regionally based tenants. However, the downtowns in Naperville, Oak Park, Elmhurst, and Arlington Heights contain a greater share of national versus local tenants, particularly with respect to restaurants and other eateries. National chains account for up to one fifth of the total number of restaurants and eateries in these four downtowns, whereas nationals account for only 12 percent of the total number of establishments in Downtown Wheaton.

Competing Downtowns Near Wheaton

	Downtown Wheaton	Downtown Arlington Heights	Downtown Downers Grove	Downtown Elmhurst	Downtown Geneva	Downtown Naperville	Downtown Oak Park
Shopping / Retail Total Tenants	34	60	65	73	65	120	49
National	1	8	1	3	1	20	10
% National	3%	13%	2%	4%	2%	17%	20%
Local	33	52	64	70	64	100	39
% Local	97%	87%	98%	96%	98%	83%	80%
Food / Beverage Total Tenants	33	38	37	49	37	41	35
National	4	6	2	10	2	15	11
% National	12%	16%	5%	20%	5%	37%	31%
Local	29	32	35	39	35	26	24
% Local	88%	84%	95%	80%	95%	63%	69%

Market Recommendations

Based upon the existing conditions analysis and analysis of competing and comparable downtowns locally and nationwide, the market study arrived at the following key findings and recommendations, to inform the larger downtown planning effort.

Note that the demand projections for various land uses are approximate, and relate to the combination of near term and long term estimates of growth. Projections for longer time frames (more than 5 or 10 years out) of course are less definitive and depend on a host of variables that will play out in the coming years. These recommendations are based upon the information gathered from the local market as well as the long term trends in terms of consumer and residential behavior that will continue to impact Wheaton and surrounding communities over the next twenty years.

Summary of recommendations

- Downtown Wheaton should continue to evolve as a sub-regional downtown that draws from its strengths as a small town, family-oriented district. Over the next 20 years, the potential exists, based upon the existing and potential market in the local area, to attract up to an additional 80,000 square feet of retail and entertainment uses, 1,000 residential units, and from 50,000 to 75,000 square feet of office uses.
- Downtown Wheaton should avoid trying to copy its neighbors, trying too much to be like its neighbors, or simply copying a formula from another city or state. Wheaton has a distinct and authentic feel and image, and it should leverage and polish these strengths rather than trying to pursue a model that may not make sense.
- The potential exists to position additional land uses and their demand in the area to the south of the tracks in order to connect and leverage the new Mariano's development on Roosevelt Road. The development of this area should focus on creating a good placemaking strategy and ensuring that the development of this area ties with the overall brand, image, and level of quality associated with the rest of Downtown Wheaton.
- Wheaton should explore additional entertainment offerings, particularly those that would appeal to families and seniors, as other downtowns tend to lack sizeable entertainment tenants and this appears to represent a possible opportunity in the local suburban market.
- Drawing from examples around the country, Wheaton should use the streetscape and strategic plan as a tool to help create better community gathering places for festivals, dining, and overall interaction. Other downtowns have actively and carefully designed for these types of spaces and enjoyed commercial success.
- Wheaton should pursue a strategy of encouraging further residential development in the downtown area in order to support retail land uses and to help encourage the support of a dynamic environment in the downtown district at all hours of the day and at various times during the year.

As a general comment, the recommendations and observations within this report pertain to the projected market and economic conditions in Downtown Wheaton over the next 20 years. The community may take a number of years and several phases to fully evolve over this 20 year window, given the need to find funding for improvements and to plan for development in an orderly manner.

Retail and Entertainment

The downtown area in Wheaton contains approximately 300,000 square feet of space in aggregate, depending on the classification method used. In essence, the downtown area contains significantly less space (for all land uses) compared to downtowns in Naperville and Elmhurst.

All of the trade areas surrounding Wheaton are not expected to materially grow in terms of population over the next few decades. While ESRI projects healthy growth of the already affluent income levels in the local area, one can reasonably assert that incomes may continue to grow relatively slowly over at least the next five to ten years given the slow growth pattern the United States has entered (growth of a few percentage points at most in a given year).

Retail demand is largely impacted and determined by two factors – population, and income. The populations around Wheaton are not expected to grow over the next few decades, and incomes may only modestly grow at a rate above inflation in the future as well. Therefore, based upon the current demographic situation in Wheaton, retail demand would not normally grow in the downtown area.

This situation leaves Wheaton with only two ways to increase the demand for retail in the downtown district. First, it could increase the population immediately surrounding the downtown district by actively pursuing residential growth and development. Traditionally, for example, real estate experts plan for the creation of a new shopping center and a grocery store once a town or a development reaches a critical mass of 10,000 to 12,000 residents. The section that follows will address the potential for residential growth. If one were to assume that the Downtown could attract a few thousand additional residential units in aggregate over the next 20 years, this (combined with planned development at Wheaton 121 and the Courthouse project) would translate into a potential increase in the population in the heart of Wheaton of 5,000 to 7,000 residents (assuming a metric of 2 to 2.5 people per household). While this number alone may not support another neighborhood retail center alone, this would represent a sizeable increase in the base of spendable income in the immediate downtown area. At the very least it would help support the existing base of shops and restaurants and would likely support an increase in the overall retail footprint of the downtown area.

The second route to increased demand for retail simply lies in delivering a better experience, better product, and a better mix of shops, restaurants and services compared to competing downtowns. This strategy would involve enhancing the “capture rate” of overall retail spending in Wheaton compared to other downtowns and districts within the local market. This would represent having a “better mousetrap” compared to the neighboring downtowns. Assuming Wheaton completes and executes a carefully crafted strategy to increase visitors and business, the overall retail demand for the district can increase over the next few decades.

Pinpointing an exact square footage of additional supportable retail in the downtown area between now and 2030 is difficult given the timeline and forecast horizon. However, given the market context, the nature of the competing downtowns, and the location and attributes of Downtown Wheaton, it is reasonable to anticipate that the downtown could absorb an additional 80,000 square feet of retail over the next 20 years (note, this would include space beyond the currently planned Mariano's development).

This growth in retail square footage would result from 1) demand for local retail resulting from an increased population / household base in the downtown area over the next few decades as a result of increased residential development, and 2) an improved capture rate for Downtown Wheaton of the larger retail market in the DuPage County area for various types of retail spending. Based upon normal metrics for retail development, this study estimates that around one-half or 40,000 square feet of the additional retail space in Downtown Wheaton could be substantiated by the potential residential growth in the downtown area. The 40,000 square feet total may include dry cleaners, restaurants, convenience retail, and other day-to-day retail that would support residents living within or in close proximity to Downtown Wheaton.

The overall retail market in the "East West" sub-market (including most of DuPage County) includes a total of over 3.5 million square feet of space. Downtown Wheaton currently captures less than 10 percent of the retail market, in this sub-market. An addition of 40,000 square feet of retail would translate into an enhancement of a point or two in terms of the capture rate for Downtown Wheaton of the overall retail market in DuPage County (the East West sub-market). A concerted effort to enhance the marketability of the downtown area, through amenities and marketing strategies, should allow Downtown Wheaton to enhance its capture rate by a few percentage points and therefore help the district add a small amount of additional retail space (regardless of any increases in population in the downtown area).



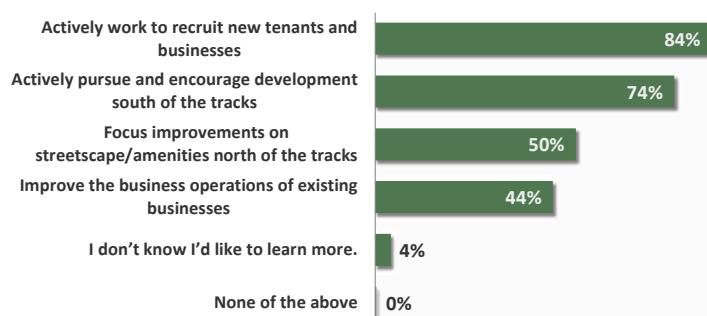
Potential Built-out South of the Union Pacific Railroad Tracks (view looking north)

Importantly, any additional development would likely evolve in phases in the downtown area. In addition, the ability to develop a certain amount of retail may depend on other non-market factors, including the available infrastructure, the available footprints for development, and other factors.

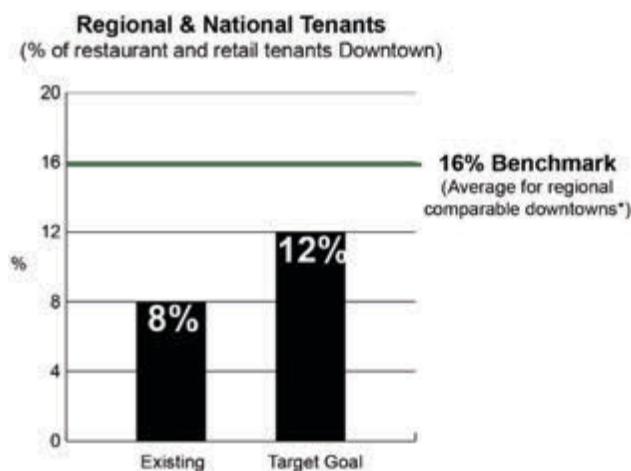
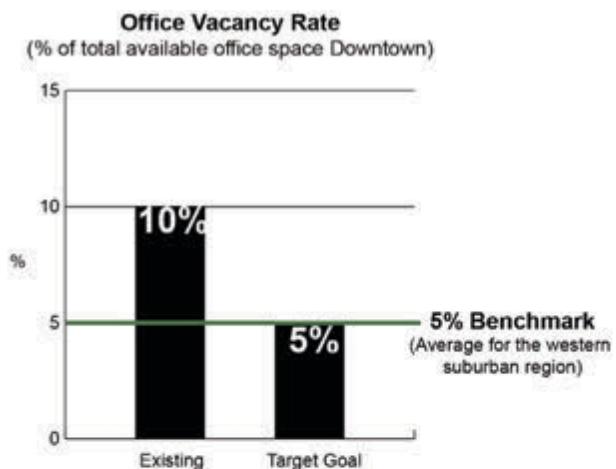
Beyond this macroeconomic projection, this study contains the following recommendations for retail in the Downtown Wheaton area. The market study provides profiles of comparable downtowns and draws lessons learned from these districts to inform recommendations. These comparable downtowns demonstrate similar demographics and market contexts or are competitor downtowns to Wheaton.

- The experience and research of the project team reveals that downtowns should work to include a mixture of some national tenants along with local tenants, in order to increase the diversity of the district and appeal to a wider market. However, given its location and the nature of the district, the study does not anticipate that Wheaton would evolve to include a significant pool of national retailers over the next few decades. While Downtown Naperville has attracted many of the “usual suspects” of national retailers in a lifestyle or destination district (including Gap, Banana Republic, etc.), Downtown Wheaton should pursue a strategy that instead draws from its inherent, small town strengths rather than copying from Naperville. Many examples nationally exist of downtowns that have resisted simply filling their stores with national tenants and instead have cultivated a distinct brand and identity built upon the strength of local tenants. National tenants can and often do pay higher rents and are more credit worthy than local tenants and therefore Wheaton should look to add some degree of national tenants, but civic leaders should be careful to not overemphasize the inclusion of national tenants in the downtown area.
- Downtown Naperville and Town Square Wheaton have the market cornered locally for national name brand clothing and apparel retail outlets. Downtown Wheaton as noted already has a strong pool of local restaurants, but has a relatively weak set of clothing and general retail tenants. Efforts by the City, Downtown Wheaton Association, and other parties going forward should focus on recruiting distinctive tenants that would attract shoppers from throughout the area and help to create a distinct reputation for Downtown Wheaton. For example, the downtown may wish to pursue and focus on photo or art galleries or higher end home furnishings in order to establish a district as a key destination in the suburbs for this type of product. While Wheaton can add more boutiques and clothiers, it may make sense to not concentrate on this segment, as a host of other downtowns as well as various malls (as well as malls that are repositioning into destination or lifestyle centers) will focus on this segment.

I would support the following ideas to improve the competitive position of Downtown Wheaton? (Choose all that apply)



ECONOMIC METRICS:



*Comparable downtowns included: Arlington Heights, Downers Grove, Elmhurst, Geneva, and Oak Park

- While Wheaton has a good roster of existing restaurants, the downtown should focus on making the roster ever better and “polishing the apple” with regard to the mix of restaurants and eateries. Wheaton should explore attracting restaurants or destination eateries that may be unusual or hard to find in the suburbs. Everyone knows Chicago for its neighborhoods of ethnic restaurants. Wheaton could explore, for example, establishing itself as a downtown known for a certain kind or kinds of cuisine.
- As mentioned in the previous sections, Downtown Wheaton should work to help polish and strengthen the brand recognition and image of the district in the minds of people in the area. Using the streetscape plan as a vehicle to identify those improvements that would help to identify this brand or identity would serve as the springboard for an effort over the next several years to bring the identity and brand / image of Downtown into focus in the local marketplace.
- Downtown Wheaton should work with officials at Wheaton College to ensure that the district is fully leveraging the spending power and economic strength of the nearby college. The Chamber of Commerce and Downtown Wheaton Association should work with merchants to ensure that they are offering goods and services that would appeal to the college population. The Downtown should also explore additional programming events in the district throughout the year in order to better integrate the college into the area. For example, allowing or facilitating musical groups from Wheaton College to perform on downtown streets at various times would increase connections between the college and downtown and would also enhance the appeal of the district to shoppers and passersby.
- Downtown Wheaton should work with officials from the French Market to ensure that any upgrades or expansions of the market facilities leverage the appeal of the market as much as possible. Many downtowns around the country have successfully used established farmers markets as a way to drive increased restaurant and retail sales. The city and downtown leaders should make sure that the French Market has visibility in marketing materials and in gateway signage. They should also work with the French Market to integrate programming events (such as live music) with normal market operations. The city should work with the French Market to explore options for year round market sessions or for special markets to be held at key times during the off season (such as during the Holidays).
- Downtown Wheaton should work to strengthen and diversify its line-up of festivals and create great places in the downtown district that naturally attract visitors and residents to spend time in the area. The overall region is growing slowly at best. The route to success entails simply creating a better place that will attract visitors and business. Creating community gathering places, plazas, and festivals and events that appeal to the widest segments of people in the suburbs is key. Wheaton should explore hosting additional festivals in the non-summer months, and it should explore strategies to leverage the power of the French Market and perhaps other public markets to drive business to Wheaton from throughout the county.
- In terms of entertainment uses, very few of the competing downtowns offer distinct entertainment land uses. Wheaton will again boast an entertainment venue upon the completion of renovations to the Wheaton Grand Theater on Hale Street in a few years. The downtown may want to consider attracting other types of entertainment uses not found in competing downtowns, such as comedy clubs, piano bars, family entertainment centers or arcades, or other game oriented venues that attract young adults, families, and in some cases Empty Nesters as well.

Office

Projections of future residential growth and projections of future employment levels in a given community or region inform projections for future office demand in a given market. As mentioned, the population of the trade areas surrounding Downtown Wheaton is unlikely to materially increase over the next twenty years given the built-out nature of the DuPage County and western Cook County markets. With the exception of any additional office demand spurred by the addition of residents (through infill development), population growth will not stimulate additional demand for local serving office uses (doctors offices, insurance, real estate, etc.).

On a broader level, while Chicago will continue to serve as the business capital of the Midwest, the concentrations of employment are beginning to strengthen in the Downtown Chicago market and close-in districts of the City and, if anything, will continue to weaken or remain fairly slow growth-oriented in the dominant suburban markets over the next few decades. Corporate users are often choosing downtown locations if available, and some corporations are commencing a reverse migration back to the core. Whereas Sears fled Downtown Chicago in the 1990s for Hoffman Estates, today corporations are just as likely to move back downtown where they can more readily attract younger workers and enjoy the benefits of transit adjacency, access to leading hotels and restaurants, and other urban amenities. Outer suburbs will continue to likely offer incentive packages to try to lure companies, and this strategy can and often does work in attracting distribution centers, warehouses, back-office operations, and more “commodity” office spaces, but in terms of the types of office that Downtown Wheaton would likely pursue (professional offices or corporate offices), location and the provision of amenities will remain key to decision makers.

As mentioned, Downtown Wheaton is not positioned to secure a significant nucleus of corporate office space to compete with the scale of corporate campuses present in the Oak Brook area or the larger campus complexes along the Tri-State and East-West Tollways. However, Downtown Wheaton, given its access via Metra to Chicago and the potential to create and maintain a distinct place in the suburbs, does have the potential to gain a larger share (or capture rate) of the office market over the next few decades. The existing office market in Downtown Wheaton includes from 150,000 to 200,000 square feet of space at the current time. It is possible for Downtown Wheaton to increase this total by perhaps as much as 50,000 to 75,000 square feet over twenty years. However, doing so would require a careful creation of a brand and image for Downtown Wheaton, active recruitment of new businesses, and patience. Because companies today are using less space per employee, the growth of the office market anywhere will lag the rates seen from the 1950s through the 1990s in most markets. Over time, and through careful and patient execution, Wheaton may be able to increase the overall demand for office space in the district.

Perhaps more important to Wheaton is to play the “flight to quality” game and to ensure that its pool of existing office space presents the best options for prospective tenants. The city should work with other partners to encourage the renovation and positioning of existing space in order to maximize occupancy and maximize the potential lease rates in the existing footprints downtown. By creating a better downtown district overall complemented by great retail, good entertainment, good places to eat and drink, and good gathering places, the overall effort will help the district in providing a “quality” environment for potential office users. By polishing the apple in this way, Downtown Wheaton can compete against other Metra adjacent downtowns and also out-compete local office building offerings in the immediate Wheaton area and in surrounding towns such as Glen Ellyn, Carol Stream, and Winfield.

Residential

The overall residential market in the Chicago region will continue to recover slowly over the next several years, but as mentioned several fundamentals in the American housing market have likely shifted and will change the long term prospects of the housing market over the next two decades. Because the allure of homeownership has waned and younger generations do not view homeownership as necessarily the best investment, the market for rental properties of various forms will remain strong for at least the mid-term if not the long-term. Given the rising cost of fuel and congestion in the region, locations near Metra and other mass transit will continue to attract interest for residential product. The recent trend toward apartment and condominium development in the Metra-served downtowns in the Chicago region will continue. The rate of interest in residential will ebb and flow with the cycles of the broader economy over the course of two decades, but in general downtowns like Wheaton will continue to generate interest, particularly if these downtowns actively cultivate a strong image and brand and create a place that naturally attracts residential interest. Just as Downtown Chicago and nearby districts such as the West Loop, Lincoln Park, etc., with their numerous amenities, stand out as areas of residential and retail growth in the broader region, so too can downtowns such as Wheaton's in the suburbs.

Two key target markets represent likely buyer types for residential product in the Downtown Wheaton area. Empty Nesters, including retiring Baby Boomers, represent the largest target market for apartments, condominiums, and townhomes in the local market. Many of these potential residents already live in single family neighborhoods in the suburbs, and for many the idea of living in the City of Chicago presents too many complications in terms of traffic, crowded conditions, and elevated price points. For those Boomers who want to stay in the Chicago region, enjoy a higher quality of life, and also enjoy all that the city has to offer, a downtown like Wheaton's represents a natural place to live. Empty Nesters renting or buying smaller units can dispense with the headaches of homeownership and maintenance, enjoy access via Metra to all that Chicago has to offer, and closer to home can enjoy the benefits of a thriving downtown in a suburban setting.

A smaller subset of potential residential renters or buyers includes younger professionals, either married or single, in their 20s and early 30s. Families with children are less likely to live in smaller units in the downtown area, but young professionals just starting out or wanting to live in a good district with amenities and access to the City would consider living in Downtown Wheaton. While many companies are moving to the city and many young workers live in places such as Lincoln Park and complete reverse commutes to suburban jobs, for a portion of the younger pool of workers, the prospect of sitting on the Eisenhower or Kennedy expressway to go to a job in Oak Brook, Schaumburg or beyond may prove too daunting. For some of these younger workers, they can "have their cake and eat it too" by living relatively close to suburban jobs in DuPage or western Cook counties and also enjoying the benefits of a nice downtown and access via train directly to Downtown Chicago.

Based upon regional numbers concerning residential units, Downtown Wheaton could attract another 1,000 residential units over the next 20 years, phased over time. The exact mixture of for-rent apartments versus the introduction of for-sale condos or apartments may depend on market and investment conditions in a given year during this time span. Given the framework of the existing downtown, these residential units may more likely fill in south of the tracks. Clustering residential near the Mariano's may represent a good place to create and support a neighborhood-oriented retail cluster along the southern flank of downtown, toward and along Roosevelt Road.

In addition, the market study recommends the following:

- Wheaton, in allowing further residential growth, should be very careful and guiding in ensuring that the residential product, whether for sale or for lease, is of the level of quality in keeping with the image and brand of downtown. A "problem" apartment complex that declines in condition, for example, can bring down the image and viability of an entire downtown. Wheaton should explore residential opportunities but ensure that these developments emphasize Quality over Quantity.
- In keeping with the overall design of the downtown, future residential development should look to provide parking either under or behind the main streets in the downtown district, in order to provide for a better streetscape and urban design framework.
- The city should entertain senior living options, but may wish to more actively pursue projects that market to active adults, rather than assisted living units. Residents living in assisted living quarters are obviously less likely to venture out and spend as much money on eating, drinking, or shopping. The ideal market segment for residential in the area includes couples without kids from 50 to 70 years old with significant disposable income or higher net worth who enjoy active living, getting outside, and enjoying the downtown environment.

Hotel or Lodging

While not discussed in detail in this study, the project team believes the City should explore integrating a hotel in the downtown area. Many comparable downtowns in other parts of the country feature a smaller hotel of higher quality that appeals to visitors seeking out a nice district in which to shop or dine while on vacation or on a business trip. The competing downtowns in the area do not have any hotels and therefore this may represent an untapped market in the western part of the Chicagoland area. Although local road access is not perfectly ideal, Downtown Wheaton is located within a 15 minute drive from many of the key office parks along the East-West Tollway. The access to Metra may also appeal to hotel visitors. A hotel market study completed for the City of Wheaton in 2009 concerning the Hubble School site concluded that traditional, larger format hotels (common along freeways in the Chicagoland market) would not attract sufficient demand in the downtown market (including along Roosevelt Road) given the distance from Downtown Wheaton to major employment centers and expressways / tollways in the region. However, the study did identify some potential for a hotel around Downtown Wheaton that would attract business from extended-stay travelers and social functions in the local area (such as weddings). The study also noted that the presence of Wheaton College would contribute to the viability of a hotel project in the Downtown area. The study concluded that a nationally branded extended stay hotel property (such as a Staybridge Suites or similar) would have the best chance of success in the downtown market. It furthermore noted that non-nationally branded boutique hotels faced the greatest difficulties in terms of staying in business during the Great Recession given the lack of access of these properties to national reservations systems. While this study does not identify the precise recommended size of a prospective hotel in Downtown Wheaton, the project team recommends the city pursue and investigate this real estate opportunity in the downtown area.

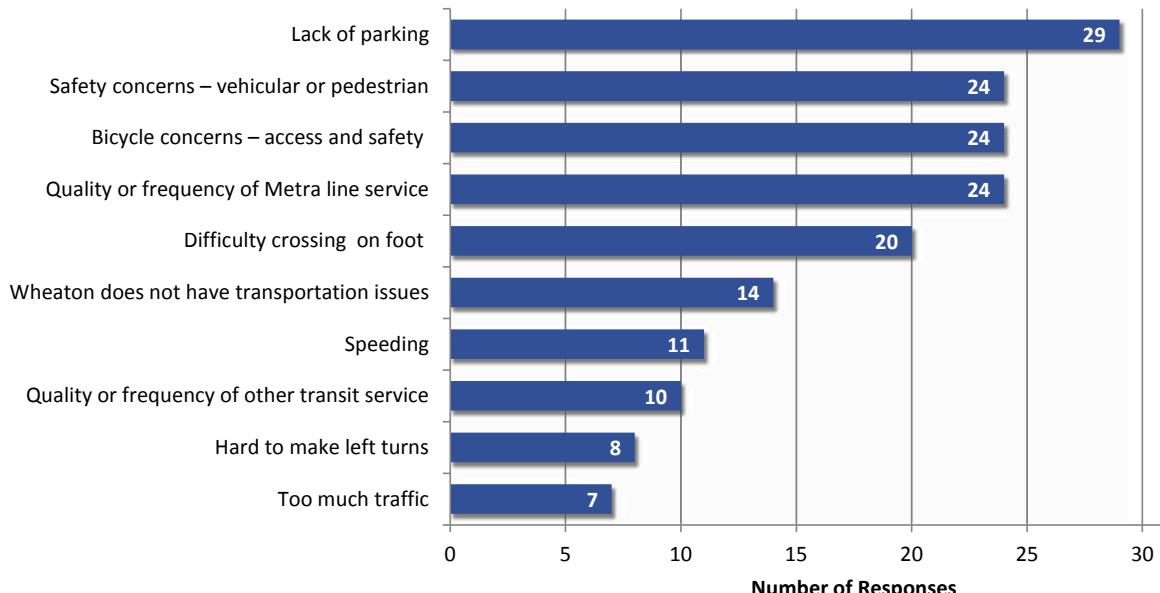
Transportation Network Analysis and Recommendations

Traffic Evaluation

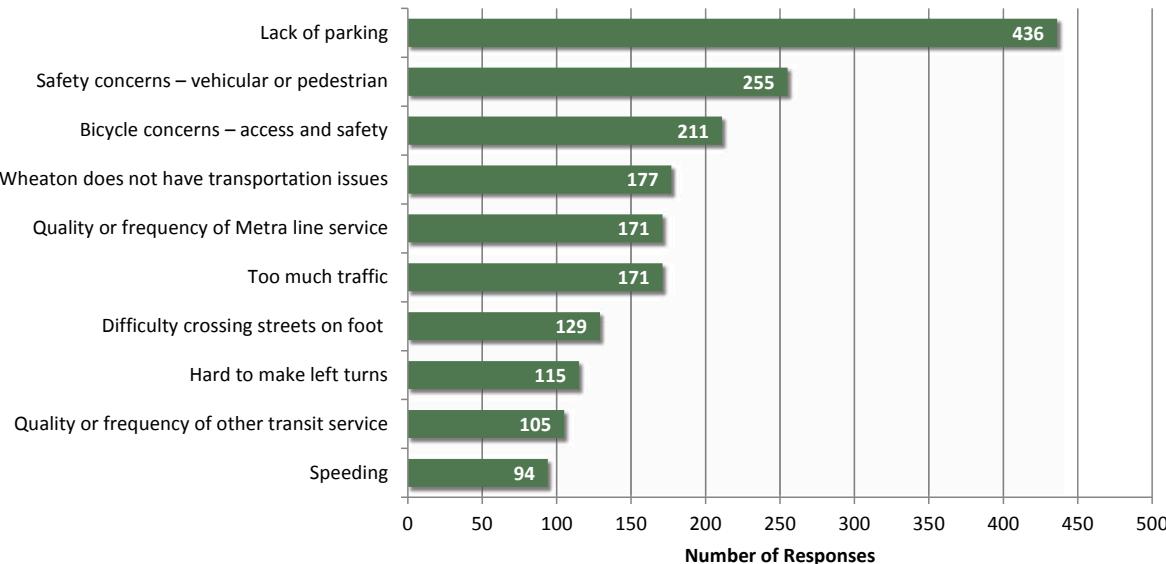
The project team evaluated existing traffic and transportation conditions in the Downtown area through the collection of field count data, field observations, and follow-up analyses. Working with City staff, engineers on the project conducted traffic counts at a sample of intersection locations in Downtown Wheaton. Using the collected data the team determined the degree of delays and the level of service (LOS) for each of the subject intersections. The intersections in the downtown area, based upon the available information, operate at acceptable levels of service. The greatest delay occurs at the intersection of Main Street and Illinois Street, which is a four-way stop sign controlled intersection. One of the more significant traffic issues within the downtown is the disruption to traffic flow that is caused by the existing Union Pacific railroad tracks.

Which transportation issues concern you most in the downtown area? (Choose your top three)

Public Meeting Results



Online Survey Results



Level of Service

To obtain a more objective and precise picture of traffic conditions, the project team performed traffic counts at various locations on August 28th, 29th, and 30th, 2012. Specifically, engineers conducted counts for two hours in the morning and two hours in the evening at each of the following locations:

- Main Street & Illinois Street
- Illinois Street & West Street
- Liberty Drive & Hale Street
- Wesley Street & Hale Street
- Wesley Street & West Street
- Willow Avenue & Cross Street

The project team selected the traffic count locations in order to provide for a representative sample of traffic patterns and volumes in the downtown area. Using the data collected, the engineers identified traffic counts for the AM and PM peak hours and used this information to determine the level of delay at each location and the level of service (LOS) for the particular intersections.

The project team considered the possibility of converting the existing one-way streets to a two-way orientation. Although some degree of circulation enhancement would result from this modification, there would also be a corresponding increase in overall traffic delay at the traffic signals and stop sign controlled intersections. In addition, two-way streets require a larger footprint. A conversion of the one-way streets would have a negative impact on sidewalk widths and the number of on-street parking spaces. The initial round of public engagement (the public meeting in September 2012 and online survey responses) did not reveal a strong desire to explore conversion of the one-way streets to two-way within the Downtown district.

Figure 2: One-way Streets



As part of the analysis, the project team conducted analyses to determine how various intersections would perform as traffic levels increase. The engineers estimated the percentage of traffic volume increases at the various intersections that would begin to cause excessive delays. The intersection of Main and Illinois would display the most significant changes in delays with increases in traffic volume. During the PM peak, a 10 percent increase in traffic at the intersection would begin to cause excessive traffic delays. Depending on the scale of future redevelopment in the downtown area and in particular to the south of the tracks, the intersection of Main and Illinois may warrant roadway improvements or signalization in order to mitigate traffic delays.

The operation of a facility is based on level of service (LOS) calculations using analytical methods defined in the Transportation Research Board's Highway Capacity Manual (HCM), 2000 Edition. The concept of LOS is defined as a quality measure describing operational conditions within a traffic stream, generally in terms of such service measures as speed and travel time, freedom to maneuver, traffic interruptions, and comfort and convenience.

There are six LOS letter designations, from A to F, with LOS A representing the best operating conditions and LOS F the worst. In general, the various LOS are defined as follows:

- LOS A represents free flow. Individual users are virtually unaffected by the presence of others in the traffic stream. Freedom to select desired speeds and to maneuver within the traffic stream is extremely high. The general level of comfort and convenience provided to the motorist, passenger, or pedestrian is excellent.
- LOS B is in the range of stable flow, but the presence of other users in the traffic stream begins to be noticeable. The freedom to select the desired speed is relatively unaffected, but there is a slight decline in the freedom to maneuver within the traffic stream from LOS A. The level of comfort and convenience provided is somewhat less than at LOS A, because the presence of others in the traffic stream begins to affect individual behavior.

Table 1: Existing Traffic Conditions

Intersection	Approach	AM Peak Hour		PM Peak Hour		Overall LOS (AM/PM)	Overall Delay (s) (AM/PM)
		LOS	Delay	LOS	Delay		
Main & Illinois ²	NB	B	13.3	C	16.8	B / C	14.9 / 21.4
	SB	B	14.3	D	29.3		
	EB	C	17.7	C	18.1		
	WB	B	11.2	B	14.4		
Illinois & West ¹	NB	B	14.3	B	14.3	B / B	17.9 / 18.9
	SB	B	14.3	B	13.8		
	EB	C	24.7	C	25.9		
	WB	C	23.3	C	23.5		
Liberty & Hale ²	NB	A	8.3	A	8.7	A / A	8.1 / 8.4
	SB	-	-	-	-		
	EB	A	8.1	A	7.3		
	WB	A	7.5	A	8		
Wesley & Hale ²	NB	A	9.2	A	9.2	A / B	8.6 / 10.0
	SB	-	-	-	-		
	EB	-	-	-	-		
	WB	A	8.2	B	11.1		
Wesley & West ²	NB	A	9.7	B	11.2	A / B	9.9 / 11.1
	SB	B	11.1	B	12.2		
	EB	-	-	-	-		
	WB	A	9.1	B	10.5		
Willow & Cross ²	NB	-	-	-	-	A / A	8.1 / 9.9
	SB	A	7.2	B	10.6		
	EB	A	8.4	A	9.6		
	WB	A	7.9	A	9.6		

¹ Signalized

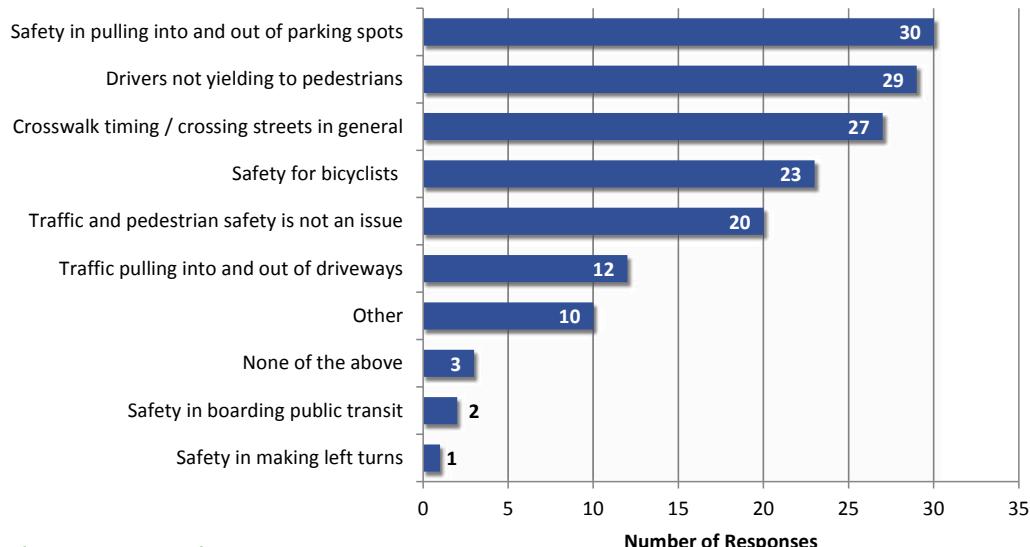
² All-Way Stop

- LOS C is in the range of stable flow, but marks the beginning of the range of flow in which the operation of individual users becomes significantly affected by interactions with others in the traffic stream. The selection of speed is now affected by the presence of others, and maneuvering within the traffic stream requires vigilance on the part of the user. The general level of comfort and convenience declines at this level.
- LOS D represents high-density, but stable flow. Speed and freedom to maneuver are restricted and the driver or pedestrian experiences a generally poor level of comfort and convenience. Small increases in traffic flow will generally cause operational problems at this level.

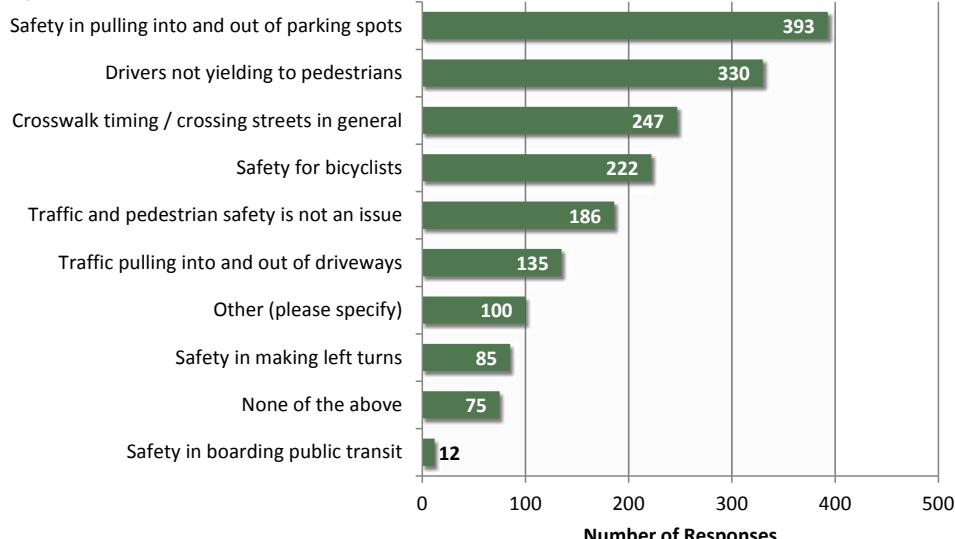
In general, most transportation and municipal agencies in the local area have accepted a LOS D as a minimum operating standard. For purposes of this analysis, a LOS D was assumed to be the threshold of acceptable intersection performance. Based on the analysis of the intersections that were reviewed as part of this study, the intersections within the downtown operate at acceptable levels of service. The highest delay occurs at the intersection of Main Street and Illinois Street, which is a four-way stop controlled intersection. Even at this intersection, the delay is in a range that is considered to be acceptable.

Which traffic and safety issues concern you most in Downtown Wheaton? (Choose your top three)

Public Meeting Results



Online Survey Results



Transportation Recommendations

- The LOS analyses determined how the various intersections within the downtown area will perform as traffic increases. This analysis estimated the percentage of traffic volume increase that would begin to cause excessive intersection delays. Based upon this analysis, the Downtown Plan recommends that the City explore roadway improvements and traffic signal improvements at the Main and Illinois intersection in order to reduce the potential for delays at this intersection as development proceeds along the south side of the tracks and the overall level of traffic in the downtown area increases over time. The project team determined that significant upgrades to traffic control and roadway widening would not be required elsewhere in the downtown area as development moves forward, based upon the projected increase in development. The planning process did not involve modeling of future traffic conditions, however, and the city should continue to monitor conditions and may need to complete additional traffic analyses as development proceeds over the next one to two decades.
- The project team considered the possibility of converting various existing one-way streets in the downtown area to a two-way orientation. Although proceeding with a two-way orientation on streets such as Wesley and Front would result in some enhancements to circulation throughout the district, it would also produce corresponding increases in traffic delays at traffic signals and at stop sign controlled intersections.
- However, the project team does recommend that the city consider a few select street conversions in the vicinity of the downtown area. In order to better route traffic approaching the downtown area from the northwest, the city should consider converting Gary Avenue to a two-way orientation between Harrison Street and Front Street. This change would allow drivers approaching the heart of Wheaton from the north, on Gary Avenue, to continue directly to the south on Gary toward downtown, rather than having to divert to other streets in order to access the downtown area from the northwest.

Parking Analysis and Recommendations

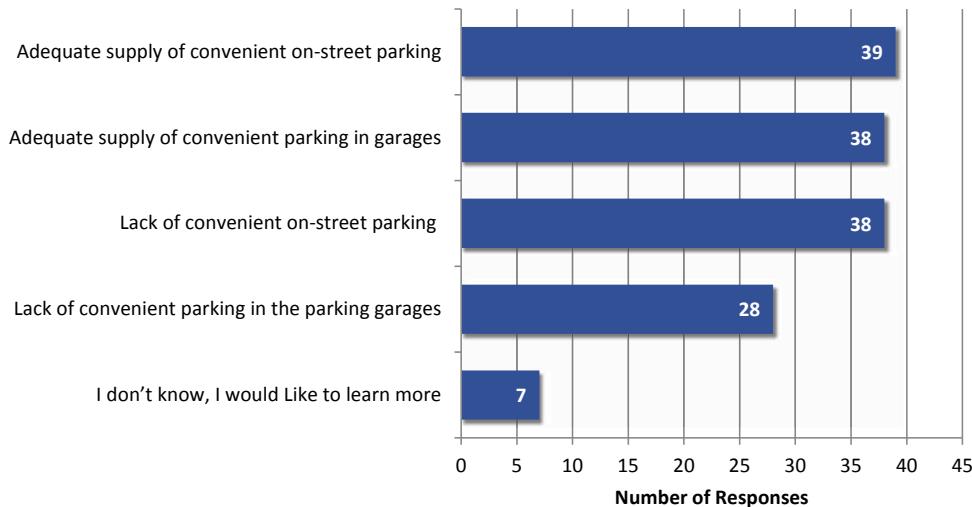
The project team utilized information from previous parking studies and gained input from the community as it developed recommendations for parking for Downtown Wheaton.

According to the Downtown Parking Study completed in 2007, the downtown area included a total of 3,278 parking spaces, and the district reported a peak occupancy rate (representing the highest occupancy rate for downtown parking spots on average, on a daily basis) of 53 percent at that time. In general, the downtown area currently contains sufficient parking inventory to serve existing uses. However, as illustrated by input from the public at the open houses in 2012 and 2013, the issue is that visitors and businesses perceive that the district lacks a sufficient pool of “convenient” parking. In the September public meeting, a sizeable portion of participants indicated that Downtown Wheaton lacked convenient parking in terms of both on-street parking spaces and in terms of parking garage spaces. Several hundred participants in the online version of the survey from September 2012 cited a “lack of convenient on-street parking” as a key issue.

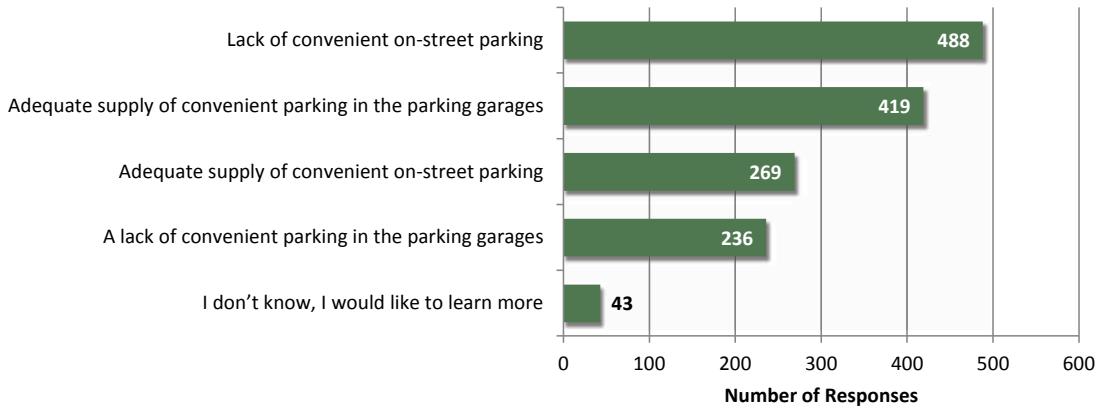
The 2007 parking study compared the existing supply of parking in Downtown Wheaton to estimates of future demand calculated at that time, based upon assumptions that new retail and restaurant uses would open in the district, along with a re-opening of the Wheaton Grand Theater. The study concluded that even with future development, the district would have a 206 parking space surplus on a typical Thursday and a 635 parking space surplus on a typical Saturday.

The following reflects my views concerning the current supply of parking in Downtown Wheaton. There is... (Choose two)

Public Meeting Results



Online Survey Results



Parking Recommendations

Given that Downtown Wheaton generally has sufficient parking at the current time, the recommendations for parking in the Downtown Plan primarily pertain to managing the existing parking supply in order to maximize the efficiency of use of existing parking, and providing the most convenient inventory of parking for the uses in Downtown that have the greatest need for highly convenient parking.

The community expressed a desire for free parking in Downtown Wheaton, and the project team recommends that all parking in Downtown remain free going forward. Residents in suburban Chicago simply expect free parking as the norm, and maintaining parking meters in the area would only serve to harm the viability of the district.

- Metered parking currently is present on a few streets south of the tracks. The Downtown Plan recommends that these meters be removed, and that the south side of the tracks explore the potential creation of a Special Service Area (SSA) for parking (similar to the one present on the north side of the tracks) to offset the lost revenues from these meters. The SSA could help fund parking enforcement (of time limits and related requirements for parking spaces) as well. The south side could join the SSA present on the north side or form its own SSA.
- In general, the downtown plan recommends that the city work toward ensuring a reasonable level of parking inventory availability (of 5 to 15 percent) at every location so that persons seeking a parking space can reasonably find one. This goal should help to maximize the overall efficiency of the parking system. At the same time, the city and downtown interests should aim to maximize the overall utilization of parking spaces throughout the parking system. Maintaining large numbers of parking spaces that remain unoccupied for significant periods of time represents a wasteful and costly use of land and financial resources.
- While the City should work to provide the most convenient parking possible for the widest net of downtown users, from a planning perspective the community should remember that every parking trip begins and ends with a “pedestrian trip”. To some extent, virtually every driver must walk from their cars to their destination. Downtown Wheaton will not be able to achieve a perfect parking scenario for every user, and in most cases suburban shoppers actually face longer walking times to particular stores when visiting large shopping malls such as Yorktown and Stratford Square than they do when visiting downtowns such as Downtown Wheaton.

A key strategy to provide convenient parking for patrons in the downtown district is to provide the most convenient spots for customers, and to direct employee parking to less convenient spots in the downtown area. Enforcing time limits for on-street parking spaces would help ensure that employees do not take prime parking spaces in front of restaurants or retail businesses, for example. Designating particular floors within parking garages or remote lots for employee parking would ensure that employees have sufficient parking in the downtown area but also help to prevent employees from parking in the more convenient on-street parking spaces during prime business hours.

While Downtown Wheaton currently has an ample supply of parking, visitors to the district are often unaware of the available pool of parking spaces at any given time. The Downtown Plan recommends that the city install digital signage and improved wayfinding signs to guide patrons to the pool of available spots present in the existing parking garages on the north and south sides of the tracks. Downtown Naperville and a number of similar districts around the country have utilized digital signage to alert drivers to the supply of parking in particular locations, and instituting this technology in Wheaton would help to guide patrons to available spaces. This strategy would help to overcome the misperception that Downtown Wheaton “doesn’t have enough parking”.

On-street parking represents the most convenient pool of parking in the downtown area, and the plan recommends the following parking management strategies in order to maximize the efficiency of use of these prime spaces and to maximize the benefits of this convenient parking for the widest audience possible in Downtown Wheaton. On-street parking spaces represent the most important spaces in the parking system due to their close proximity to businesses, high visibility, and ease of entry and exit.

Downtown Wheaton should establish various time limits for the on-street parking spaces, with the time limits depending on the time of day and the location of particular parking stalls. For example, parking spaces located in front of businesses that require or experience greater turnover (such as coffee shops, dry cleaners, or banks) should have shorter parking time limits. Businesses located on the periphery of Downtown Wheaton or that experience less frequent turnover (such as restaurants) may have longer time limits on particular parking spaces. The following rules of thumb should guide the implementation of a timing strategy for the on-street spaces in Downtown Wheaton:

- Shortening the allowable parking duration would result in faster parking turnover. For example, a 30 minute or one hour time limit would result in greater turnover compared to a two-hour or four-hour parking time limit.
- Where time restrictions are in place, the city should implement a graduated system of parking citation fees that would penalize habitual offenders with higher fees. For example, the parking fines could increase by 50 percent for offenders receiving more than three citations in a given month. After five parking tickets, fines could double. At the same time, the parking fine system should not apply unduly onerous or unfairly high parking fines to the occasionally forgetful offender or a first-time offender. Instituting particularly steep parking fines would only dissuade a patron from returning to Downtown Wheaton in the future and could contribute to a reputation for the district in the region as being particularly “tough” on parking. The Downtown Plan recommends that parking citation fees from the district could be placed into a fund to pay for future parking equipment or street improvements.



Electronic parking sign in Naperville, IL

- Parking enforcement should be in place no later than 10AM in order to ensure that employees do not park in timed on-street parking spots. Parking enforcement should also be in place from 5 to 7 PM and beyond in order to ensure that convenient spaces remain open or turnover for patrons conducting errands after work or visiting the district for dinner or evening shopping. The number of necessary parking enforcement personnel will depend on the enforcement method and timing chosen by the city going forward. During peak parking times, the plan recommends that the City monitor parking spaces with shorter time limits (two hours or less) at least once every 30 to 60 minutes. The City may consider using vehicle-mounted cameras or other new technologies in order to read license plates in order to track compliance with time limits for parking spaces. Cameras and related technology would reduce the number of personnel required to monitor parking spaces but would require greater upfront investment in equipment and technology.
- Overall, the Downtown Plan recommends that the city establish a target of 85 percent occupancy (equivalent to the presence of roughly one or two available parking spaces per block at any time) for on-street spaces during peak hours.
- The plan recommends that the City, along with downtown organizations, create a Parking Advisory Committee, consisting of stakeholders including business and property owners, employees, and residents. This committee would review public parking occupancy data, conditions, and trends with city officials and provide input regarding any changes or policies tied to parking rates, time limits for particular blocks, and related parking policies in the downtown district.

Unlike on-street parking, off-street parking is usually targeted for drivers willing to accept lower convenience in parking in exchange for longer time limits. Long term parkers including employees and residents often use off-street parking as opposed to on-street parking. In order to encourage greater use of off-street parking and therefore free up more on-street parking spaces for visitors seeking greater convenience, the Downtown Plan recommends the following steps:

- The City should ensure that off-street parking always has longer time limits than those for on-street parking. This would encourage greater use of off-street parking facilities and reduce the prevalence for residents or employees to “cruise” the district looking for on-street parking spaces.
- For areas where off-street parking spaces are in particular under-utilized, the City should increase posted time limits, or do away with daily time limits, in order to fill these under-utilized spaces and thereby increase overall parking occupancy to 90 percent or greater during peak parking periods. This strategy would help to maximize parking utilization while maintaining parking availability for those seeking a space during peak periods.
- The City should create a parking advisory committee consisting of stakeholders including business and property owners, employees, and residents. The role of this advisory committee would be to review public parking occupancy data and conditions with the City and provide input regarding any adjustments to time limits and other parking policies in Downtown Wheaton.
- In line with overall signage and wayfinding recommendations for Downtown, the City should ensure that signage and directions for parking guide drivers to public structures and other off-street parking. This strategy would reduce the tendency of drivers to “cruise” in search of on-street parking as their primary parking option.

Planning for Future Parking Inventory and Facilities

As outlined in the 2007 parking study, Downtown Wheaton currently has sufficient parking on average to serve the various parts of the district, even at peak parking times. However, as downtown development continues, in particular on the south side of the Union Pacific tracks, eventually the district will face the need for additional parking spaces and facilities. The following table outlines the overall additional parking spaces required to accommodate the additional anticipated net increase in development in Downtown Wheaton. The quantities of retail, residential, and office space listed in the table tie directly to the conclusions of the market study for the downtown district over the next twenty years.

Land Use	Amount	Parking Demand	Projected Demand	Opportunity for Shared Parking?
Retail	80,000 s.f.	2.5/1,000 s.f.	200	Yes
Office	75,000 s.f.	2.5/1,000 s.f.	263	Yes
Apartments/Condos/Townhomes	1,000 units	1.5/unit	1,500	Yes
Total			1,963	

This table utilizes typical parking demand rate assumptions in calculating the projected parking demand tied to the particular land uses. These demand rates require fewer parking spaces than typical parking requirements for suburban developments because they assume that, to a certain degree, parking may be “shared” between uses within the downtown area. For example, residents living in the downtown area may visit nearby retailers by foot, eliminating the need for a certain number of retail-specific parking spaces. The analysis assumes that a portion of parking spaces used by office employees during the day may be used by retail or restaurant patrons in the downtown area after 5PM.

As illustrated, the anticipated additional square footage and units of retail, office, and residential space projected for Downtown Wheaton over the next twenty years would necessitate an additional 1,963 parking spaces. The following provides additional guidance and suggestions concerning how Downtown Wheaton may proceed to satisfy this additional parking demand over the next two decades.

The City and downtown leaders may reasonably assume, based upon prior practice in Wheaton and other suburban downtowns, that any new apartment or condominium projects would satisfy their internal parking demand through their own facilities, on-site. Providing parking on-site, through surface or garage parking, is essential for apartment or condominium projects to attract new residents, particularly in the suburbs. Failure to provide adequate parking spaces would likely doom most suburban residential developments. The Wheaton 121 apartment project provided sufficient parking spaces within the boundaries of the development, through sub-surface parking located in the middle of the project. The City should reasonably expect that future apartment, townhome, or condominium projects would provide their own parking going forward.

Assuming that residential projects would provide their own parking on-site, the analysis indicates that new development (representing a net increase in retail or office space) would result in demand for an additional 463 parking spaces over the next twenty years. While the project team did not formally complete a site planning exercise for specific blocks or parcels on the south side of the tracks in Downtown Wheaton, it did use some general assumptions to determine the size of parking facilities that could accommodate this future growth in Downtown Wheaton. The project team assumed that typical retail or mixed-use buildings would extend 60 to 70 feet back from the right of way along the various streets on the south side of the tracks (in line with typical development practice in similar downtowns), and that the center portion of the various blocks on the south side could accommodate shared parking facilities for retail and office uses. Using these assumptions, the project team calculated that a parking structure located in the interior of a typical downtown block could accommodate around 70 parking spaces per floor. Furthermore, assuming that a typical parking garage on the south side of Downtown Wheaton would not extend beyond three or four stories in height, it appears that around two new parking garages (each with 200 to 250 parking spaces per garage) would accommodate the anticipated net increase in development (of retail and office) over the next twenty years. This calculation assumes that virtually all of the new, net development square footage would occur on the south side of Downtown Wheaton (where considerable space for new buildings remains).

Timing and Triggers for Parking Garage Construction

A precise “trigger” or calculation that would signal to city leaders or the private sector the necessity of constructing a new parking structure, or a new parking lot, is impossible to pinpoint. However, a few rules of thumb should guide city leaders and the private sector in deciding to move forward with plans for parking expansion as Downtown Wheaton, and in particular the south side of the tracks, continues to redevelop.

The best rule of thumb from other downtown districts around the country is that the community should begin planning for additional parking facilities when the overall utilization of existing parking facilities is either at or above 85 percent. Furthermore, if a new development or series of developments is forecast to produce utilization rates at or above 85 percent going forward, the City and property owners should proactively plan for additional parking facilities before construction of new development properties commences in the downtown area. Parking studies from around the country indicate that an average parking utilization rate of 85 percent will often translate into a parking shortage or a significant reduction in parking convenience during peak parking times. Therefore, the City should actively plan for new parking facilities when the quantity of new development approved would produce parking utilization rates of at least 85 percent. The community may also wish to err on the side of caution and plan for additional parking facilities when the anticipated utilization rate reaches a lower threshold (such as 70 percent).

The average American typically is willing to walk no further than two blocks in an average journey, including within a downtown district. This rule of thumb means that the City should consider parking utilization with regard to future redevelopment for an area within a two block radius of the existing parking facility located at Cross Street and Willow, on the south side of the tracks. This parking facility has accommodated much lower rates of parking utilization since its completion, in contrast to the higher rates of usage for the parking garage on the north side of the tracks. Conversely, the City should analyze parking needs separately for areas located more than two blocks away from the Cross Street parking

garage. The City should analyze the need for an additional parking lot or parking structure serving new developments to the west of Hale Street separately going forward.

In general, given that the existing parking garage located at Cross and Willow has significant capacity, one may reasonably expect that one new parking garage will likely move forward on the south side, serving the area to the west of Hale Street. An additional, second parking garage may locate either in this western portion, to the west of Hale Street, or may serve areas to the east, toward Naperville Road, on the south side of Downtown. Again, the exact location and timing of additional parking facilities will depend on the nature of particular site plans, negotiations with various property owners, and the City going forward.

Implementing New Parking Structures

In an ideal scenario, an entire block on the south side of Downtown would move forward with redevelopment at the same time, allowing for planning for an additional parking structure to move forward in tandem. Retail, office, and other mixed use buildings would flank the street frontages, and the interior portion of the particular block would accommodate a parking structure or additional surface parking spaces. This scenario is more likely in the event a single entity controls an entire block of Downtown. However, in reality a developer may only be able to construct a project on one half or less of a given downtown block. The following outlines some general strategies the City and the private sector could explore to ensure that blocks, particularly on the south side of Downtown Wheaton, would develop with well-integrated and sufficiently sizable parking spaces.

1. In the event a developer controls only a portion of a block that may contain additional parking spaces going forward, the City may attempt to purchase or assemble the remainder of the particular block in order to ensure that space is reserved for the construction of a parking garage or parking space within the block.
2. If the City is unable to control, through options or purchase, the surrounding parcels within a given block, it may simply require that future development of the remainder of the particular block include space for construction of a formal parking garage.
3. As development moves forward within Downtown, and in particular on the south side of the tracks, the City could require that all new developments pay into a SSA to fund future parking structures or parking areas. The City would need to monitor the projected parking utilization as development proceeds, as well as the available funds for future parking facilities, in order to determine the optimum timing to proceed with any future parking construction projects. If in doubt, the City may wish to err on the side of caution and proceed with additional parking facilities for Downtown before the need becomes critical, in order to ensure that the public perceives that parking in Downtown Wheaton is sufficient and convenient.

Modifications to Zoning Regulations

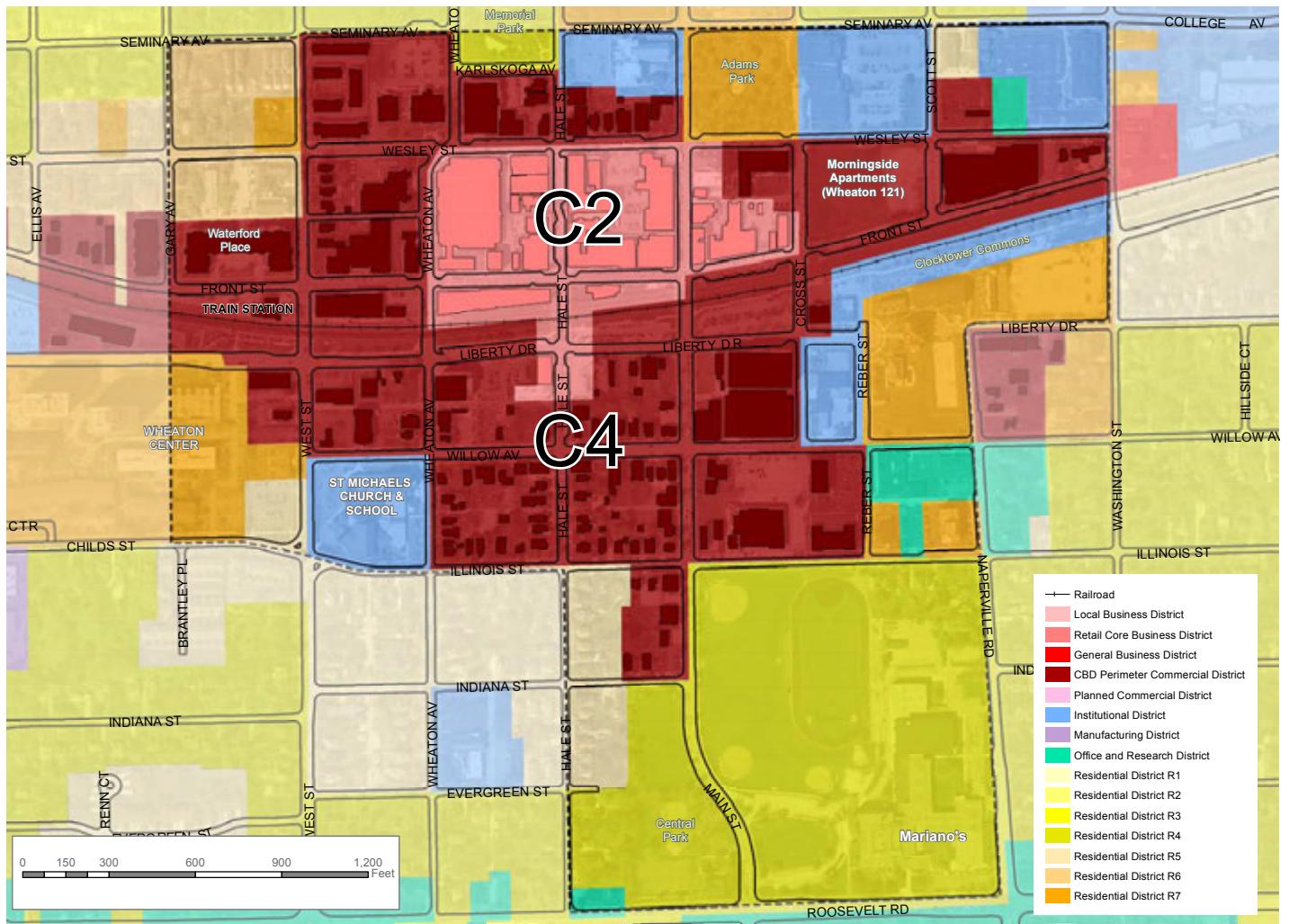
The current zoning in the Downtown Wheaton area include the C-2 zoning classification, covering primarily the older retail core of downtown, on the north side of the tracks, and the C-4 zoning designation, which covers much of the adjacent transitional zones between the retail core and surrounding residential areas. The C-2 zoning classification includes a number of provisions that match with the existing conditions in the older part of downtown. For example, the guidelines for C-2 do not require any setbacks from the street, as most of the buildings in this area front onto sidewalks anyway.

The C-4 designation includes a mixture of zoning requirements, but generally calls for a less urban design condition for the areas to the south of the tracks compared to the design concepts envisioned by the downtown plan. Furthermore, some areas of downtown along Naperville Road and to the west of West Street actually include residential zoning and would not allow mixed-use development to move forward.

To streamline the zoning process in the downtown area, this plan recommends that the downtown study area, outside of the existing C-2 zoning area, be rezoned into a new, comprehensive Downtown Mixed-Use zoning classification that would include the following key provisions. These guidelines will help to support and encourage downtown redevelopment as much as possible, in that they simplify and streamline zoning requirements for various downtown areas and allow developers by right to construct more mixed-use projects, in keeping with the vision for Downtown Wheaton.

Key provisions

- Zero setbacks on buildings in the zoning district, in order to encourage developers to use acreage as efficiently as possible and to create projects that create a more urban environment.
- Permitted uses include residential, office, and residential development by right, including apartments, townhomes, and condominiums
- Height limits of at least five stories
- No requirements to provide parking on site. Instead, property owners would be required to pay in lieu to a common downtown parking fund that would help to locate and secure common parking for various parts of Downtown Wheaton.



Utility Analysis and Recommendations

The project team evaluated the existing conditions and capacities of the utilities in Downtown Wheaton in order to inform the overall planning effort and made general recommendations that will help the downtown move forward with orderly growth in the next two decades in order to achieve the overall Vision for Downtown. The analysis included the gathering of information from available sources including the City of Wheaton, Nicor, Commonwealth Edison, Comcast, Sprint, Verizon and AT&T. The team focused on the feasibility of the various infrastructure systems to serve additional development in the downtown area. The following summarizes the takeaways from the analysis:

Sanitary Sewers:

- The sanitary sewers within the study area generally have sufficient capacity to support additional development. However, the following sewer lines are currently operating beyond their design capacity and may require upgrades as development proceeds:
 - The mainline trunk sewer lines (of 21 to 30 inches in diameter) that run from Liberty Street and Naperville Road to the Roosevelt Road corridor, east of Main Street
 - The sewers along Willow Street (from West Street to Hale Street), and
 - The sewers along Hale and Wheaton (from Liberty Drive to Willow Street)

Water Mains:

- The water mains within Downtown that are less than 10 inches in diameter should be evaluated for replacement if any street reconstruction efforts or significant redevelopment projects in the vicinity move forward.
- The water mains of 4 and 6 inches in diameter should be planned for replacement in conjunction with any street resurfacing or reconstruction efforts in the Downtown area, regardless of whether redevelopment occurs or not.

Storm Sewers:

- Solving the flooding issue near Mariano's would require a broader, watershed-wide solution to stormwater management. The costs of fixing the flooding issue along South Main appear impractical at this time.
- The City should consider the use of green stormwater solutions as a general rule in Downtown Wheaton in order to address stormwater more sustainably and to reduce stormwater runoff into the system. These solutions would include the use of permeable pavements, rain gardens and green roofs in order to reduce the total volume of stormwater runoff and to slow the movement of stormwater to storm sewers and nearby streams.

Natural Gas:

- As the area redevelops and as streets are reconstructed, the utility provider should replace the gas mains with polyethylene lines to reduce the chances of future gas leaks.
- The City should work with the utility to evaluate the status of mainline gas lines as applications for redevelopment come forward. The construction of larger buildings and multi-family structures in the Downtown area could require the upsizing of gas lines in some cases in order to provide sufficient service going forward.

Electric:

- The City and potential developers should explore the potential undergrounding of overhead lines along Illinois Street, Cross Street, and Naperville Road as redevelopment projects move forward along these streets, in particular. While relocating power lines underground carries considerable costs, the strategy can improve the overall aesthetics of Downtown streets and improve the overall image of redevelopment projects.

Lighting:

- Some of the alleyways on the north side of Downtown currently have little or no pedestrian lighting. The City may wish to install upgrades to pedestrian lighting in these locations in order to improve safety and to help facilitate outdoor dining and increased retail activity in the vicinity.
- Throughout Downtown, the City should consider installing LED lighting technologies as redevelopment and streetscape improvements move forward, in order to reduce overall energy costs.

Streetscape Analysis and Recommendations

While the Downtown Plan identifies the installation of Festival Streets on Liberty, Hale, and Karlsgoga, as well as improvements to Main Street from Front Street south to Roosevelt Road, as key catalytic improvements designed to help stimulate redevelopment and achieve the Vision for the district, the plan outlines overall recommendations for streetscapes for the other streets in the area.

Because different streets in the district serve different purposes, the plan classifies the existing network of streets in Downtown Wheaton based upon field observations and input from City staff and the community. The main classifications include:

Festival Streets:

As described earlier, these streets are designed to serve as dynamic public gathering spaces and help facilitate outdoor dining, major events, and overall downtown vitality.

Pedestrian Streets:

These streets within the Downtown area are intended to promote pedestrian travel and overall retail activity. The main Downtown retail streets on the north side of the tracks that will not serve as Festival streets fall under this designation.

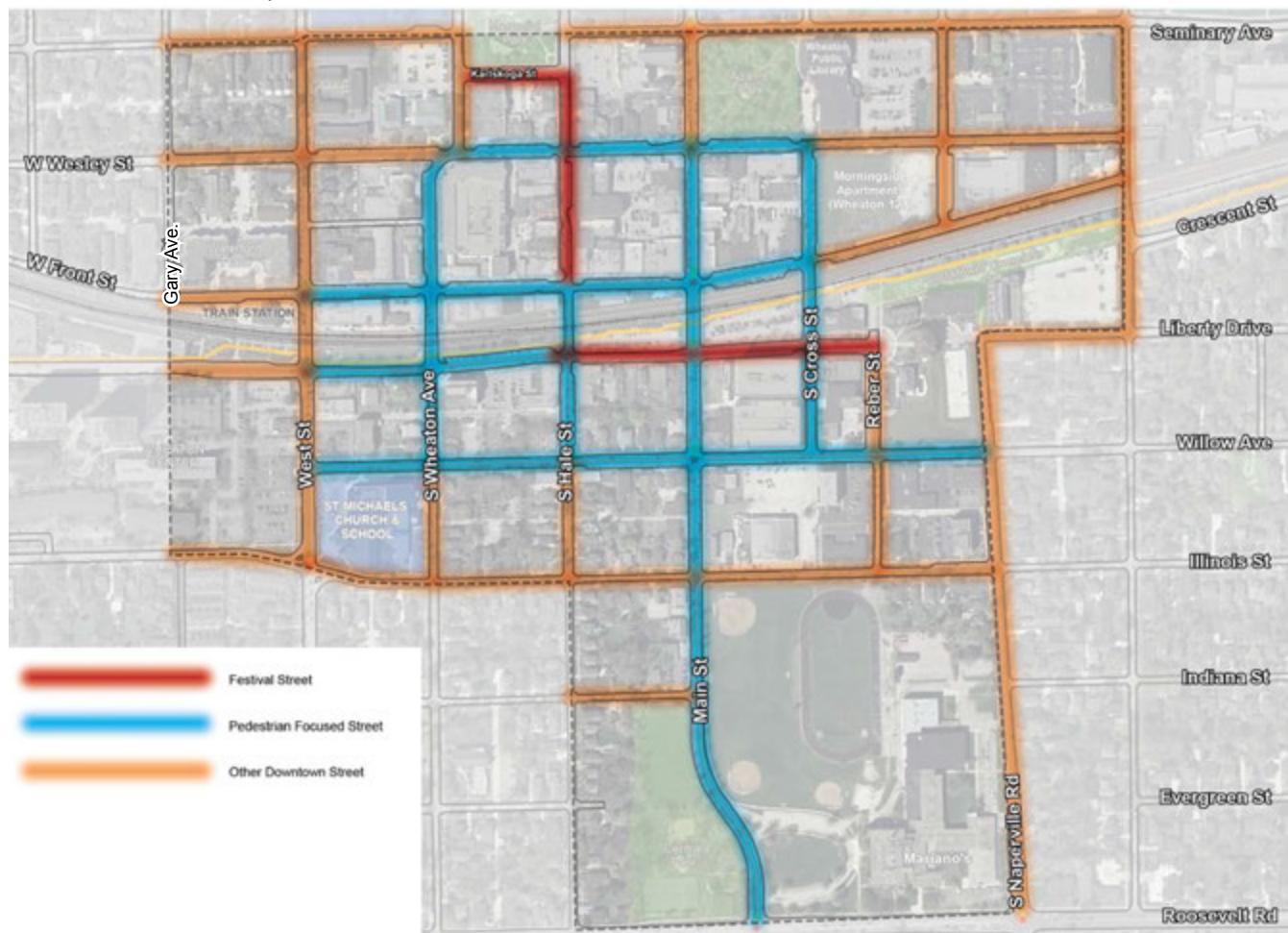
Other Downtown Streets:

These streets serve as transitions from residential areas to the core retail areas of Downtown Wheaton. These streets must safely accommodate pedestrian movement, but their design does not serve the needs of more pedestrian-intensive sidewalk activity associated with retail businesses.

The map provided on the following page designates each street within the Downtown study area according to this classification system.

The Downtown Plan focuses in particular on streetscape design because streets serve as the backbone for a downtown district and serve many functions beyond simply serving as conduits for vehicular traffic. Streets have always represented places within communities where ideas are exchanged and where interactions and enterprise take place. Streets form the structure of local communities, and the landscape areas along city streets typically account for 25 percent of a community's open space inventory, far exceeding the total acreage formally dedicated to parks and public plazas. Given these historical roles of streets, they should serve all modes of travel including pedestrian and bicycle movement, and should accommodate people with disabilities. Over time, streets normally change and adapt to the needs of a community, as downtowns and other districts evolve.

Recommended Streetscape Classifications



Pedestrian Streets:

The streets identified as Pedestrian Streets in Downtown Wheaton serve a variety of retail and office uses in the heart of the district, or are likely to serve this function as redevelopment proceeds and the area south of the tracks continues to grow. These streets will form a core area within Downtown where patrons can move with ease from block to block and can spend time shopping, recreating, or dining during their visit to the area.

The City has installed primarily historical-oriented streetscape fixtures within the main part of Downtown Wheaton in recent years. The public expressed through the planning process a desire to maintain this traditional or historic style going forward for the various pedestrian streets in the district. The following pages outline the recommended styles and palettes for pedestrian streets, in terms of street furniture and related streetscape features.

As the City performs upgrades to pedestrian streets over time, the Downtown Plan recommends a variety of key strategies to improve the functionality of the streetscape.

Upgrades to Street Furnishings (including benches, bike racks, and trash cans):

- As the City conducts upgrades to the pedestrian streets, it should install upgrades to these features in order to ensure that the streetscape does not appear dated over time.

Tree Plantings:

- In cases where existing street trees are failing or street trees are missing, the City should install new tree plantings in order to maximize the overall shaded areas along streets.

Crosswalks

- The City should install more visible crosswalks (through paving patterns) in order to increase safety for pedestrians.

Maximize Sidewalk Width

- The dimensions of most pedestrian streets in the downtown area dictate that it will not be possible to widen sidewalks over time. However, where possible the City may explore opportunities to widen sidewalk widths through curb extensions and related strategies. Wider sidewalks generally support increased retail activity and enhanced outdoor dining.

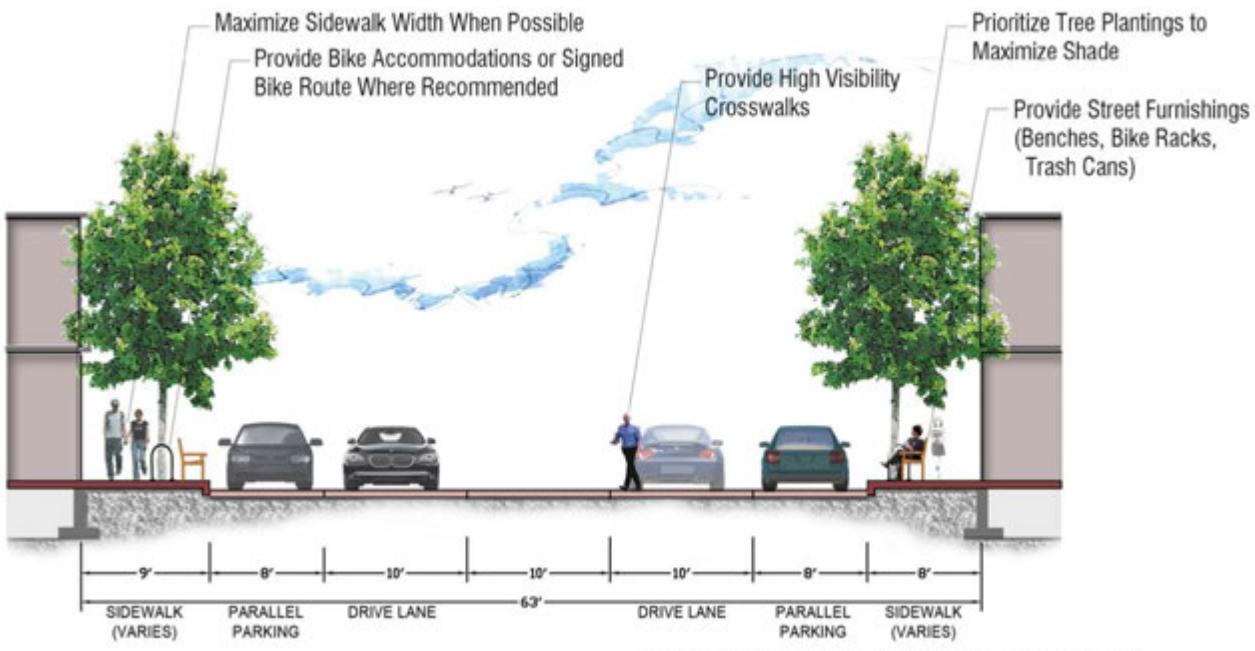
Bike Accommodations

- The City should install additional bike racks where feasible on pedestrian streets over time in order to support and encourage additional bike usage in the community.

Willow Street | Pedestrian Focused Street (prototype)



Example Pedestrian Focused Street



Recommended Materials and Furniture Concept Palette - Pedestrian Focused Streets in Downtown



Bike Parking



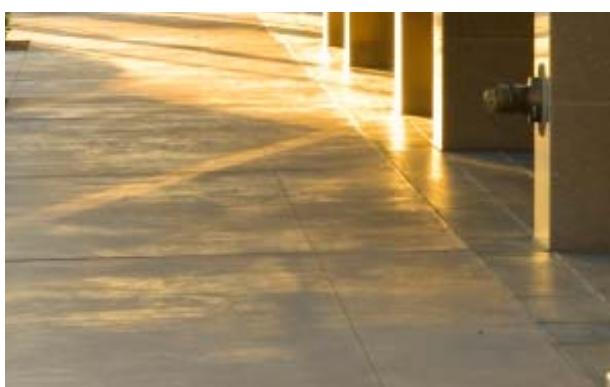
Bench



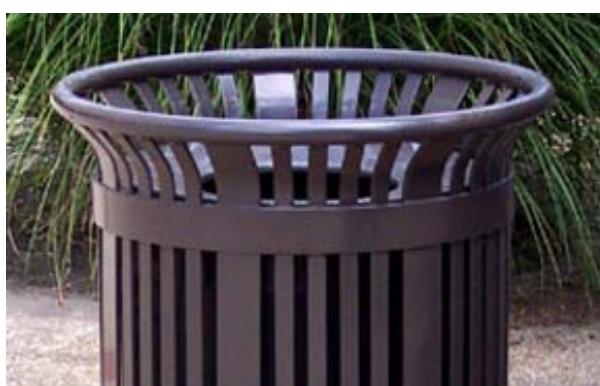
Crosswalk



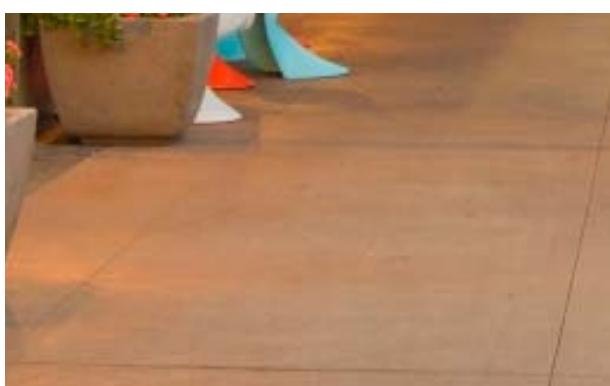
Outdoor Dining



Sidewalk Alternative - Scored Concrete



Trash Receptacles



Sidewalk Alternative - Scored Colored Concrete



Hanging Planters



Sidewalk Alternative - Scored Concrete with Colored Bands

Recommended Materials and Furniture Concept Palette - Pedestrian Focused Streets in Downtown



Large Tree Growth Areas



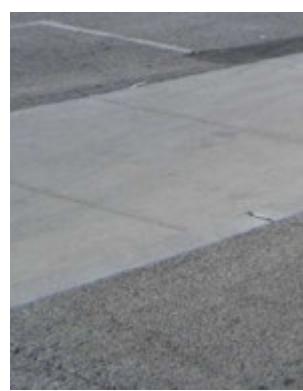
Typical Concrete 6" Curb Treatment



Bulb-Out at Pedestrian Crossing



Porous Pavement or Porous Concrete (in parking areas)



Recommendations for All Downtown Streets

The following streetscape recommendations apply to all types of streets within Downtown Wheaton and draw from best practices for street and downtown design from throughout the United States.

Decrease Stormwater Runoff Through Green Technologies:

Most of the surface area in the Downtown area is impervious, meaning that stormwater flows along roadways toward storm inlets and streams, picking up pollutants and sediment along the way. The use of green stormwater techniques would reduce the quantity of stormwater runoff flowing into area streams and collections sites and would also improve overall water quality. The use of permeable paving and installing additional rain gardens and vegetated areas along streets would reduce the overall area of impervious surfaces, thus reducing stormwater runoff. Rain gardens and increased vegetation would help to cleanse stormwater of pollutants in the Downtown area, in particular.

As the City installs rain gardens going forward, the outflow into the storm sewer should be located one inch below the inflow at street grade, and at least two inches above the finished grade of the rain garden itself. This strategy should encourage infiltration of stormwater runoff within the rain garden area. The City should institute proper soil testing in the rain garden area to ensure the system is working properly. In addition, the rain garden should include a subsurface drainage system or a gravel chimney in order to allow for water to percolate into the ground.

Increase Use of Native Planting

Over 75 percent of participants in the planning process supported adopting sustainable landscape standards for Downtown Wheaton going forward, in order to create a more 'green' district. The use of native plants that are non-invasive and appropriate for site conditions will improve the overall landscape performance in the district and reduce costs to the city associated with watering and replanting. Native plants simply require less water, less fertilizer, and less maintenance on average. The suggested planting palette for Downtown Wheaton consists of 100 percent native plant material that is drought tolerant and requires little seasonal maintenance. Native grasses and wildflowers, mixed with a few selected shrubs, will provide the foundation for the planting palette.

Understory and ornamental plantings should consist of three types: Rain gardens; ground plane planting beds and pots; and ornamental hanging pots.

Rain Gardens

The rain garden plants should include water tolerant grasses and wildflowers that have a contemporary color vocabulary. The use of native perennial plants that can tolerate rainfall fluctuations is critical to the success of rain garden systems over time. Examples of plants that have proven successful in rain gardens in the Midwest include rushes, sedges and perennials such as Big Bluestem, Grey Sedge, Palm Sedge, Bottlebrush Grass, Cardinal Flower, Virginia Bluebells, Great Blue Lobelia, Blackeyed Susan, New England Aster and other native Illinois plants. Specific plants should be selected depending on the specific rain garden application and context, including sun/shade conditions and corner sight triangle requirements. Applying one or two of these native plants along a single street corridor can create a very beautiful urban rain garden treatment.

Ground Plane Planting Beds / Pots

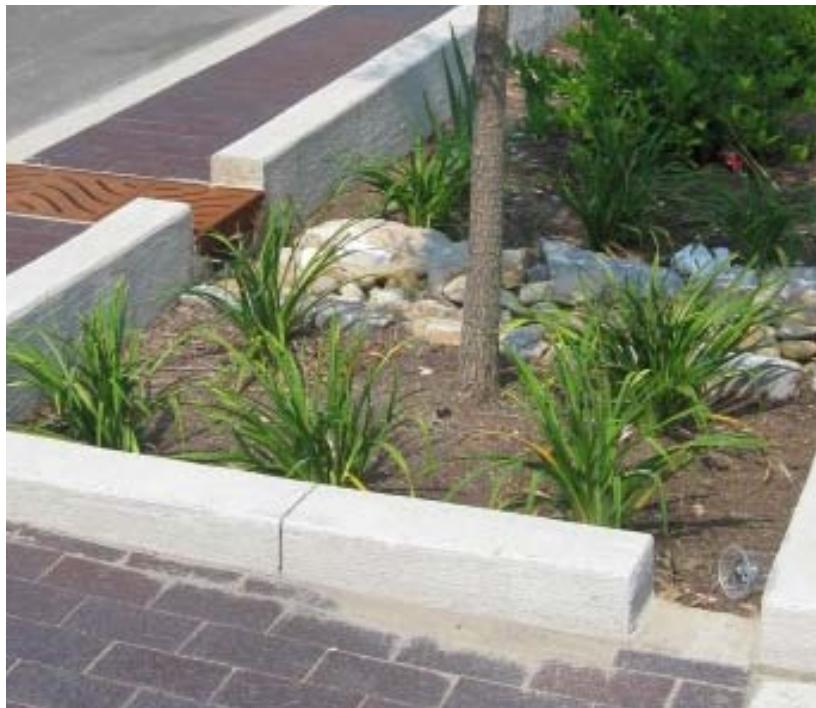
Ground plane planting areas that are not rain gardens should consist of native grasses and perennials that have a primary color vocabulary. Each planting area should include a mixture of grasses, perennials, and select placement of shrubs.

Ornamental Hanging Pots

Hanging pots, attached to the existing pedestrian lighting poles, should include plants with a complementary color vocabulary. These hanging pots should be planted with seasonally appropriate annual flowers and vines and should represent the only exceptions to the general rule of using native plant materials within Downtown.

The goal of tree and understory planting within downtown is to provide year-round aesthetic improvements through form, color, and texture while providing a very low maintenance and low-irrigation solution for the City. Because these recommended plant selections are drought tolerant, the City should benefit from reduced irrigation costs. Native grasses should be pruned only once a year in the spring after the last freeze. When grasses go into dormancy the biomass attached to the root stock keeps the healthy root tips from freezing during the winter.

The plan suggests that the City leave 40 percent of the removed grass biomass in the planting bed to degrade and self-mulch the plant material. A similar maintenance strategy should be used for wildflowers and perennials as well. Flowering forbs can be deadheaded throughout the year to provide a boost in the flower production of each plant. A healthy layer of organic mulch should be maintained on top of the plant material. To achieve zero net waste, this can be completed using plant trimmings left in place. To supplement this process, shredded bark mulch can be used and applied at a depth of two inches. A horticulturalist with training in native Illinois plant materials should be consulted on a regular basis to ensure that the city follows proper maintenance strategies.



Example rain garden treatments

Improve the health of street trees

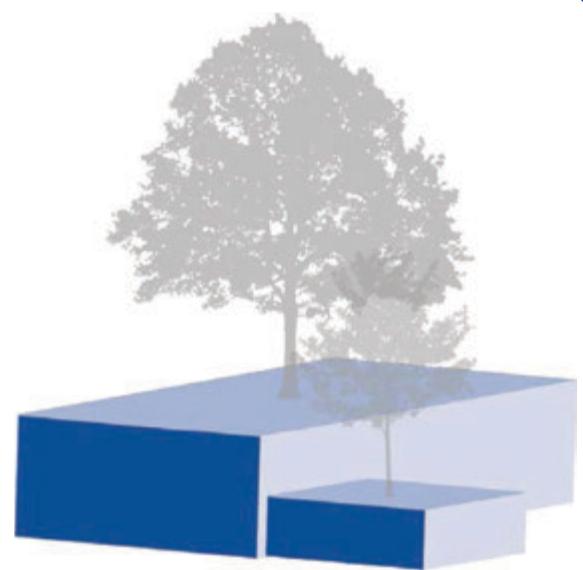
Most successful downtown retail and dining places have a healthy presence of tree canopy. Current trends in design focus on the technical benefits of understory plant material, like reductions in ambient air temperature and the reduction and treatment of urban water runoff. The streetscape planting strategy focuses on both healthy trees and an appropriate understory presence to provide continuity within Downtown. Tree patterning consists of a rhythm (changing elements) and a datum (that which stays the same) as one moves from block to block.

Including practices and materials that enhance the environmental integrity of the downtown will not only contribute to improvements in local and regional ecosystems, but these considerations can also enhance user experiences and have significant energy and monetary implications. A healthy tree can:

- Provide quality oxygen and improve air quality: A typical person consumes about 386 pounds of oxygen per year. A healthy tree produces 260 pounds of oxygen annually. Two healthy downtown trees could provide oxygen for one downtown resident per year!
- Reduce storm water levels and associated treatment costs. The canopy of a healthy street tree absorbs rain, reducing the amount of water that will fall on pavement and which then must be removed by the storm water drainage system.
- Reduce the effects of the urban heat island effect and lower ambient temperatures. Healthy mature tree canopies can reduce air temperatures by about 5° to 10° Fahrenheit.

The streetscape plan recommends improving the overall health of street trees by eliminating the use of tree grates and providing larger tree pits for additional growth area and soil volume to encourage larger, healthier trees. In urban environments, tree soil volume is most commonly the deciding factor of street tree health. Trees within downtown are currently planted in 4 foot by 4 foot tree pits with tree grates creating 123 cubic feet of soil volume. Ideal soil volumes are 1,000 cubic feet.

One way to accomplish this in conjunction with larger tree pits is the use of silva cells and suspended paving. Suspended pavement utilizes a structural sound steel frame that is anchored to slabs and supports the above pavers while leaving the soil below untouched. This system is used for newly planted trees and can come in various sizes to fit necessary requirements. These systems can be coupled together to provide a continuous un-compacted soil trench between street trees, allowing trees to share soil. A company that provides these systems is Ironsmith, Inc. Another system that can be used is Silva Cells which is provided by Deep Root, Inc. This system is a modular cage system that can support both concrete and pavers and the full load of cars and trucks. This system can be used in tight areas where the surface material is irregular. For best results these systems should be used in conjunction with proper subsurface drainage and permeable pavers to allow for air and water flow between the soil and the atmosphere. The increased tree canopy and the addition of rain gardens can lower energy costs for heating, cooling and water treatment and has the potential to increase annual property values.



Soil Volume:

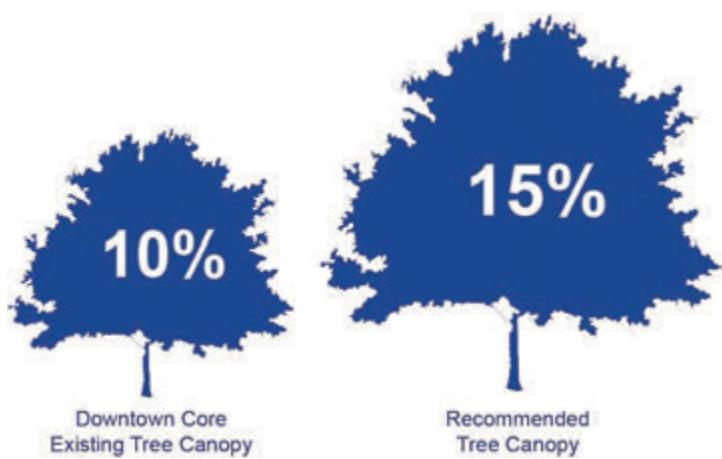
Ideally trees within the downtown should have **1,000** cubic feet of soil volume which provides over **800** times more volume for root growth to support healthy trees than typical 4x4 foot tree pits in many urban environments.

Figure 3: Existing Tree Canopy



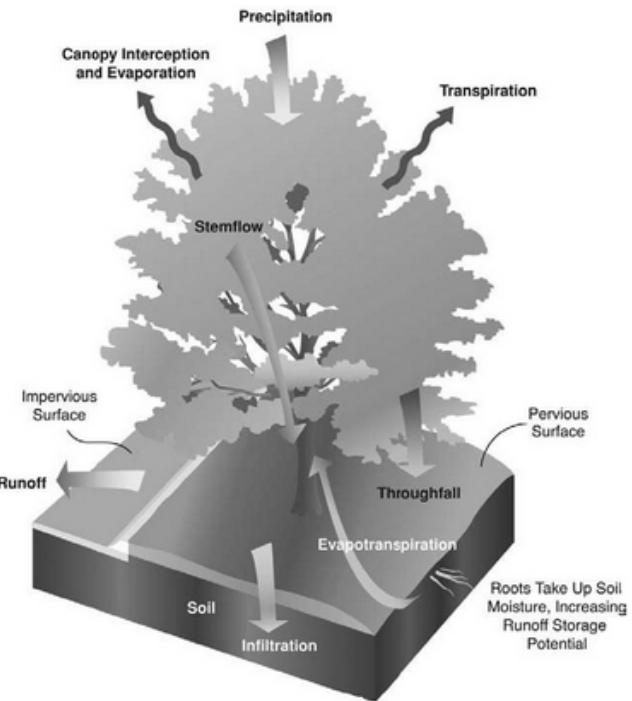
Tree Canopy

The area within the red outline in Figure 3 currently has a tree canopy of 10%. National research suggests that successful downtowns plan for a tree canopy of at least **15%**. An increase in street trees and shaded areas can increase property values, provide for energy savings and improve air quality, as well as help absorb rainfall and reduce stormwater runoff. Healthier and more abundant street trees can improve the overall appearance of downtown.



Annual Benefits of Downtown Street Trees

The online Tree Benefits Calculator provides an estimation of the environmental and economic benefits individual street trees provide based on their location, species, and tree size. The benefits include: stormwater quality and quantity improvements, increases to property values, benefiting both the private and public sectors; energy savings; air quality improvements; and green house gas reduction.



This diagram shows the variety of ways trees help reduce stormwater runoff and improve the quality of runoff through infiltration and absorption. Source: Treebenefits.com

Table 2: Annual tree benefits of existing tree canopy and additional canopy coverage for the Downtown Core study area with an additional 8 percent canopy to reflect the recommended 15 percent tree canopy.

	Overall Benefits	Stormwater: Annual interception of stormwater runoff (gallons)	Property Value: for a small commercial business, the property value will be raised by this amount per year:	Energy: Kilowatt hours of electricity for cooling and reduced energy use	Reduced consumption of oil or natural gas conserved by each tree. (therms)	Air Quality	CO2: Pounds of reduction in atmospheric carbon.
Existing Tree Canopy Benefits	\$48,019	64,6381	\$10,002	72,044 kwh	9,862 therms	\$3228	262,608
Benefits of Additional Coverage	\$3,841	51,710	\$800	5,764 kwh	789 therms	\$258	21,009
TOTAL:	\$51,861	698,092	\$10,802	77,808 kwh	10,650 therms	\$3,486	28,3617

Source: Treebenefits.com

The species selection builds on the location of existing healthy 'approved' street trees. Small areas of consistency in tree species exist within downtown, and mature, healthy trees should be preserved when possible. The proposed tree planting strategy is intended to scale the downtown core by creating visual consistency by street segment. All recommended tree species are native to the Illinois landscape, or are cultivars of native species – all on the City's approved street tree list. The species selected are high branching trees that will not visually block ground floor signage from the sight of potential customers. Trees in this area are to be pruned by a trained arborist to ensure that the central leader does not branch out until achieving a full size of fifteen to eighteen feet. This means that the leafy portion of the tree will be always rest above ground floor signage.

Figure 4: Existing Approved Street Trees

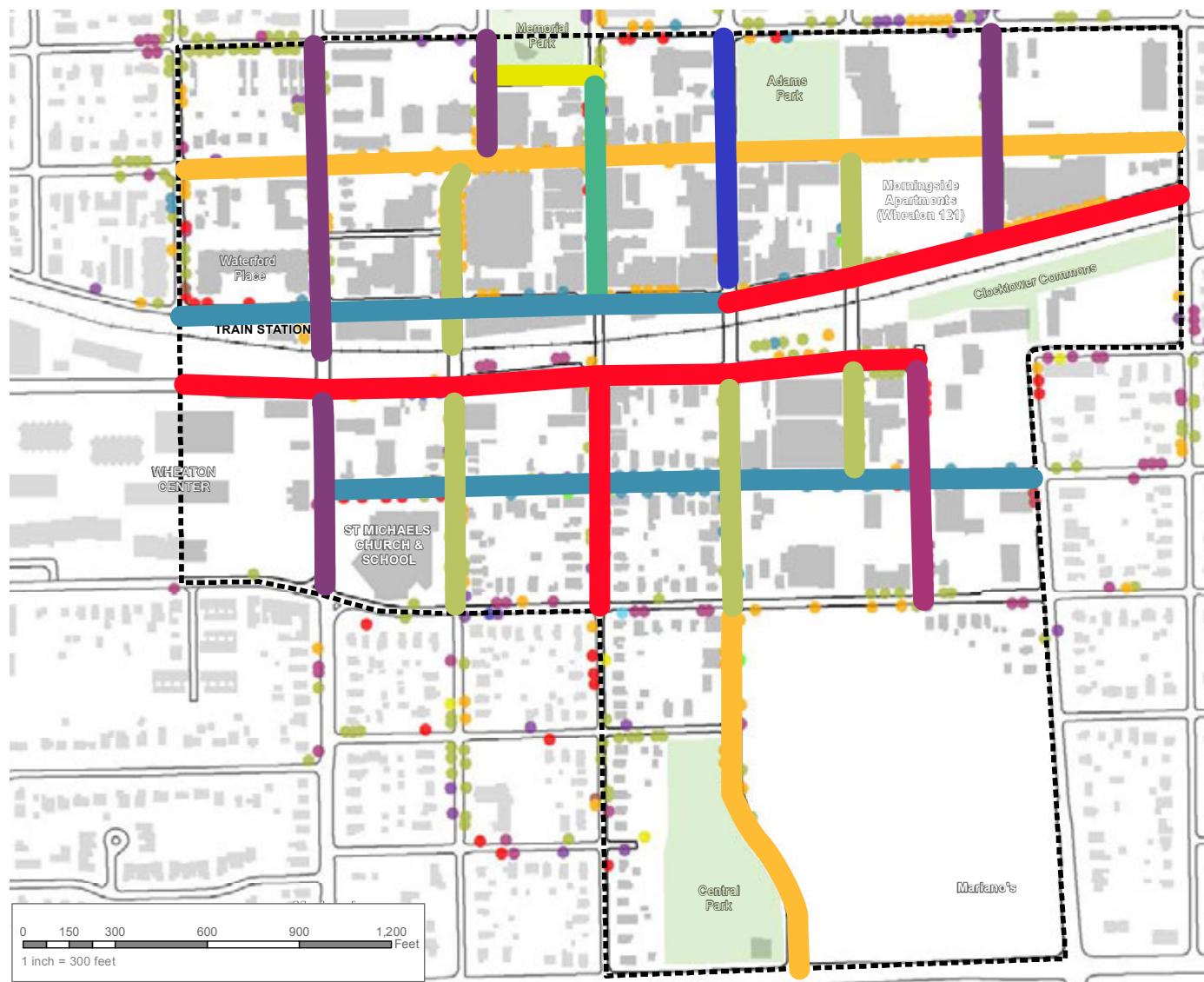


Specifying large species allows for limbing the branches up to avoid vehicular conflict, pedestrian conflict and conflict with viewing signage and businesses. Trees commonly do not reach their largest height in urban environments. The recommended list includes trees that are approved by the City and have proven successful in urban/street tree conditions. In addition, the following pages document alternative perennials that have proven to do well in an urban streetscape locally. Raingarden and bio-swale plant selection should be site and hydrologic specific, however the following pages should serve as a starting point.

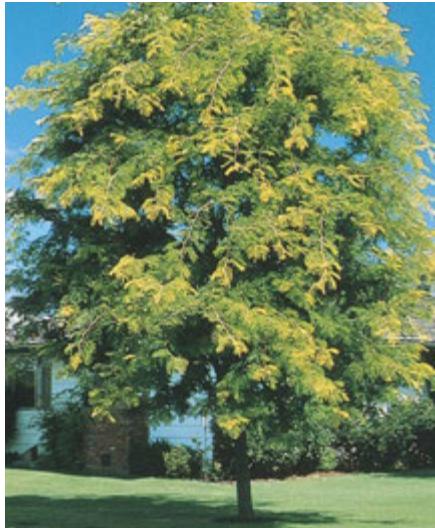
Figure 5: Proposed Street Trees

The species selection builds on the location of existing healthy 'City approved' street trees building on areas of consistency in tree species that currently exist.

- Honeylocust
- Ginkgo
- Norway Maple
- Red Maple
- Pin Oak
- Northern Catalpa
- Sugar Maple
- Horsechestnut



Recommended Trees (approved City of Wheaton Street Trees)



Honey Locust



Pin Oak



Red Maple



Northern Catalpa



Ginkgo



Redbud



Sugar Maple



Norway Maple

Recommended Trees



Horsechestnut



Northern Catalpa



Common Hackberry

Recommended Plant Palette



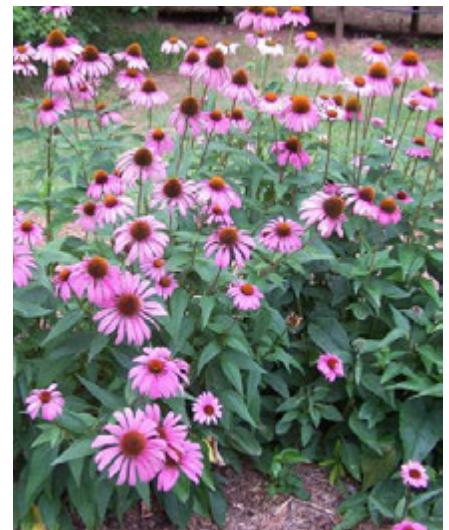
Feather Reed Grass



Lesser Calamintha



Burgundy Fireworks



Magnus Purple Coneflower



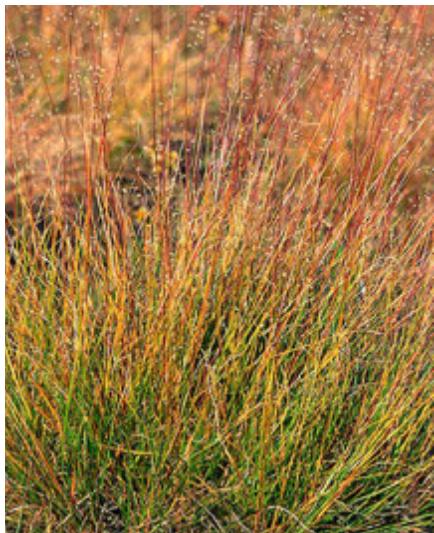
Johnson's Blue Geranium



Blazing Star



Kit Cat Catmint



Prairie Dropseed



Blue Wonder Catmint



Showy Black-Eyed Susan

Recommended Plant Palette - Rain Gardens



Variegated Sweet Flag



Smooth Penstemon



Prairie Cord Grass



Nodding Pink Onion



Blue Flag Iris



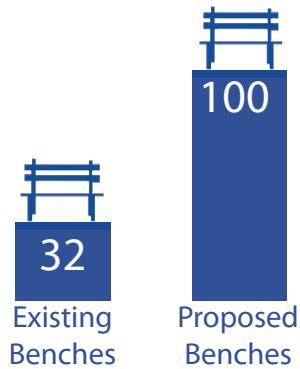
Fox Sedge



Japanese Blood Grass

Seating

Seating is an important part of vibrant public spaces. It allows pedestrians to rest, socialize, read and people-watch. Currently Wheaton has 32 benches with half of these (17) concentrated along Front Street, allowing for about 192 linear feet of seating. As streetscape recommendations are implemented efforts should be made to add an average of 5 benches per block face (100 benches total) on pedestrian focused streets to encourage moments for pause and interaction.

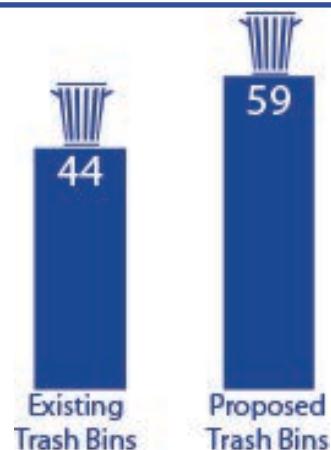


Planter Pots

The planter pots are beneficial in both aesthetics and functionality of the street. They encourage pedestrians to cross at safe locations, and if they are moveable, they allow the streets to be configured as needed. Planters should be focused around seating areas. When applied to the festival streets, the planter pots prevent vehicles from crossing into the pedestrian zones, while providing flexibility for festivals and events. On the festival streets, planters should be placed between street trees and light poles.

Trash Receptacles

Trash bins should be placed on each street corner and mid block at high traffic pedestrian areas as well as within open spaces and plazas. As more people visit downtown it is important that bins are convenient and accessible for people as they walk through downtown or from the Metra station to the restaurants. The trash bins can be durable and reflect the character of the streetscape. In addition, recycling bins can be provided with trash bins. Recycle units can be provided within the same trash bin, allowing the flexibility to provide recycling where needed, with the same aesthetic.



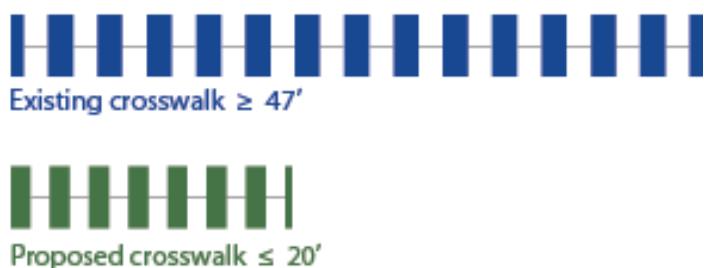
Crosswalk Distance

On the Pedestrian Focused Streets corner bulb-outs reduce the crosswalk distances in the recommended design, creating a safer and more pedestrian-friendly downtown. Bulb-outs are already being utilized to the north of the tracks where there is the most pedestrian traffic, however there are many opportunities to extend this treatment to other parts of the downtown study area. In this example at the intersection of Liberty Drive the existing crossing distance is reduced by **43%** from 47 to 20 feet.

Crosswalk Timing

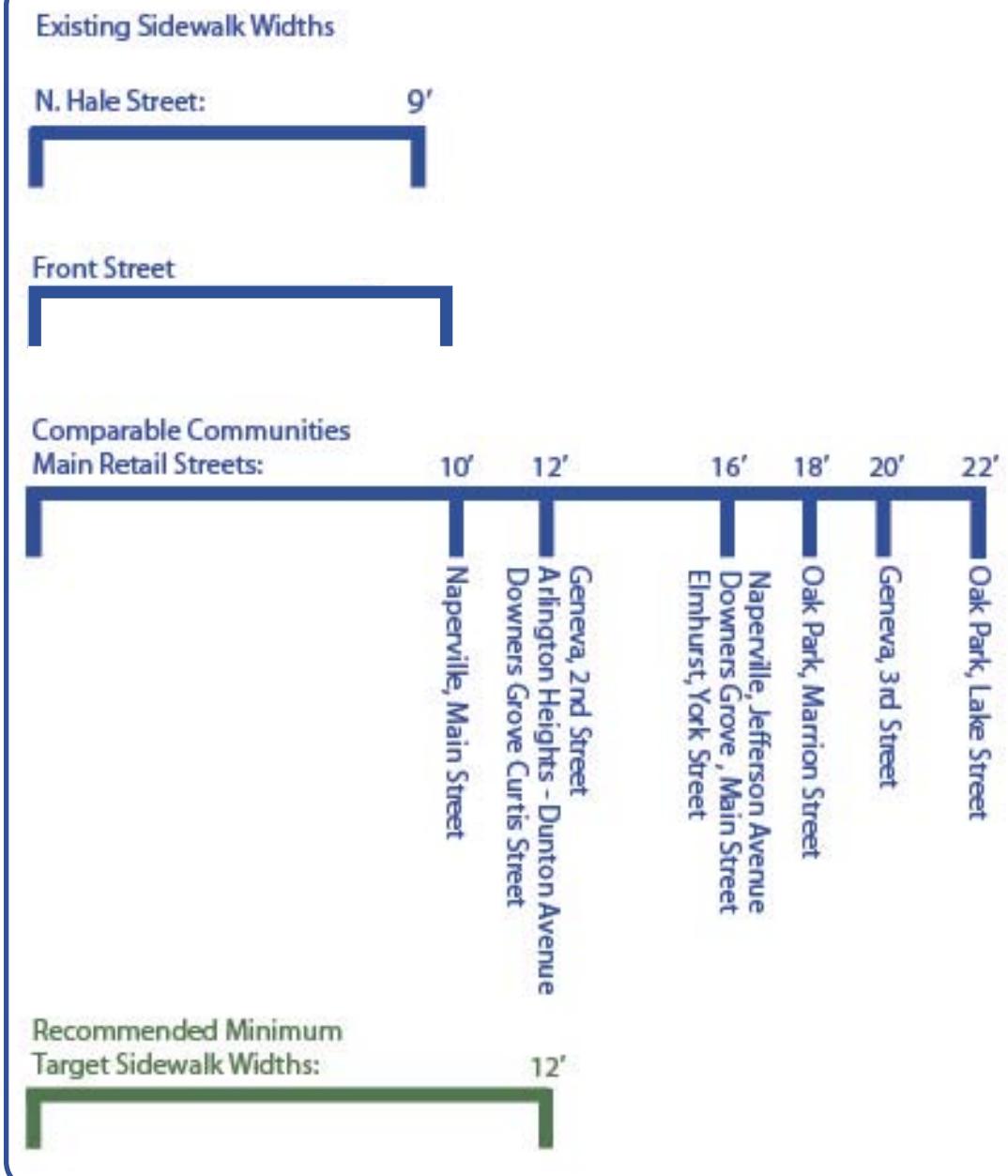
The standard signal timing for downtown areas is 3.5 feet per second. This plan recommends that downtown signals be set to accommodate crossing speeds of 2.5 feet per second to accommodate the visually impaired and elderly and promote a pedestrian friendly environment

Liberty Drive - Sample Crossing Distance



Maximize sidewalk width

The width of existing sidewalks along the main retail areas within the downtown district varies from 9-10 feet on Front Street to 16 feet along North Hale Street. The right of way within this area has largely been determined due to the historic nature of this area. However, as redevelopment occurs, the design team recommends a minimum of 12 feet for the pedestrian focused streets measured from the front of curb to building face. Ideally, where possible, sidewalks should be 18 feet in width to accommodate outdoor dining space, a clear zone for pedestrians and space for planting and seating amenities. Wider sidewalks also increase the distance between pedestrians and moving vehicles, enhancing real and perceived safety.



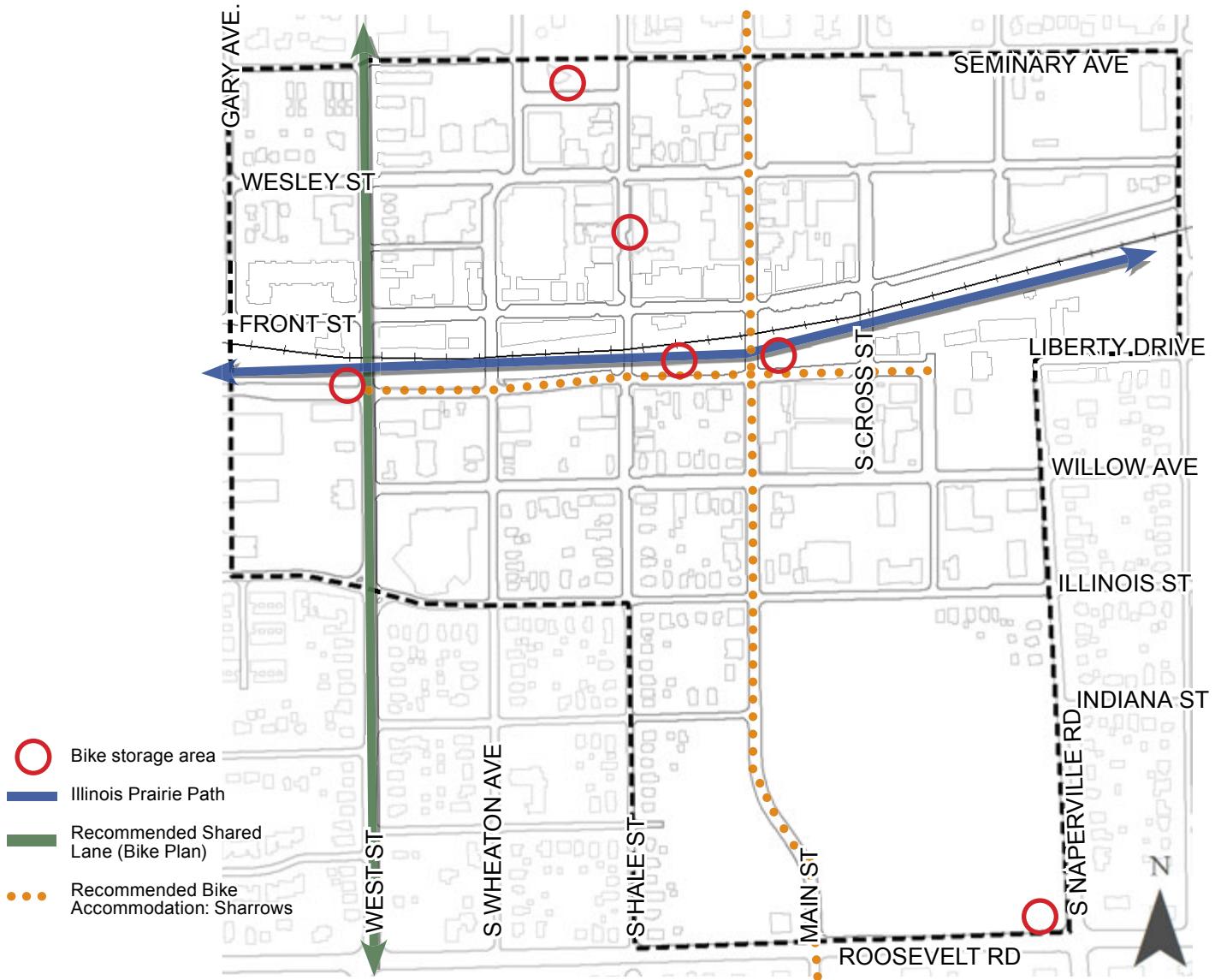
Bike Access and Facilities

The Downtown Plan recommends that the City implement the recommendations of the Wheaton Bicycle Plan as it pertains to the district. Enhancing bicycle access into and around Downtown will only help in bringing more people to the area, thereby helping to achieve the overall vision of a more vibrant and active Downtown.

The Active Transportation Alliance and the City of Wheaton completed the Wheaton Bicycle Plan in September 2011. The plan recommended various routes for Shared Bicycle Lanes and for sharrows (in which markings on the pavement indicate that bicyclists and motorists should share the road). Specifically, the plan recommended Shared Bicycle Lanes along West Street through the entire downtown area, and along Liberty Drive going west from West Street. The Wheaton Bicycle Plan also recommends designating Illinois Street and Main Street in the downtown area as designated bike routes.

The downtown plan recommends supplementing these recommendations with additional bike accommodations on select streets. Specifically, the plan recommends that the City

Figure 6: Existing and Recommended Bike Facilities



extend the sharrow designation along Liberty Drive from West Street east to Main Street, to encourage bicyclists approaching downtown from the west to proceed into the heart of the downtown district. The plan also recommends designating Naperville Road and Washington Street along the eastern edge of the study area as sharrow streets in which motorists would be encouraged to share the road with bicyclists. On these street segments, Marked Shared Lanes (or "Sharrows") would include designations on the pavement that bicyclists and motorists should share the road.

Naperville Road is designated in the bike plan as a prime bicycle route to the south of Roosevelt Road, including the construction of a separated bike path on the side of the road, and the sharrow designation to the north of Roosevelt Road would only encourage bicyclists entering the downtown area from the south to continue to Naperville Road into the heart of the downtown district.

The Bicycle Plan recommends the placement of bike racks within 50 feet of building entrances. If multiple racks are clustered in a visible and signed location they can be sited up to 100 feet from entrances to the destinations being served. Bicycle parking should be located convenient to final destinations and in highly visible areas. There are many styles of bicycle parking racks available, but best practices state that a rack should be securely anchored to the ground and allow both the frame and at least one wheel to be locked to the rack.



Marked Shared Lanes - Signal to drivers to yield to bicyclists and "share the road" on public streets. These markings also indicate to cyclists the appropriate locations and directions to ride on particular streets.



Photo: Eric Schkrut

Signed Routes - Signed bike routes encourage bicycle riding on particular streets and raise awareness to all users of the street that bicycle traffic is accepted and encouraged. A system of bike routes helps cyclists navigate to particular destinations in a community, including downtown districts.

Bike Racks:

The US Green Building Council sets standards for neighborhood development which recommend a minimum of one bicycle parking space per business. For the downtown study area this would equal a minimum of 67 spaces or 34 racks just to accommodate retail and restaurant uses, with additional racks recommended for other commercial and residential units. In the downtown core there are currently only 14 bike racks. The standard U Racks or variations thereof are recommended for the ease of use and bike security, allowing for two contact points between the bike and the rack for ease of locking and stability.



Improve lighting coverage and efficiency

Once visitors have arrived downtown, the mission of the lighting is to provide a nighttime ambience that coaxes motorists out of their cars – to shop, to dine, to stay. The landscape must have a high level of aesthetic appeal and proper lighting is essential to achieving this. Components include:

LED fixtures

- As redevelopment and streetscape improvements occur within downtown, LED lighting should be considered in order to reduce energy costs. The alleyways in Downtown Wheaton in particular lack sufficient lighting for pedestrians and would benefit from various ornamental lighting fixtures in order to enhance safety. The current pedestrian scale lights in the downtown district should be refitted with new LED fixture heads.

Architectural Lighting

- Another strategy to improve lighting as well as create a stronger sense of place within the downtown is to implement a downtown architectural lighting master plan to highlight architectural elements on individual buildings. Architectural lighting can spur interest in particular buildings, provide energy savings, reduce lighting pollution, enhance property values and increase activity in the downtown after dark. An architectural lighting master plan is not mandatory but rather could be advisory and completed through public-private investments. Such a document could provide a “toolbox of ideas” for property owners, developers and designers that includes design guidelines coupled with “best practice” photos and lighting techniques that demonstrate how to highlight the architectural composition of buildings. Architectural lighting plans typically identify incentives for property owners to implement the guidelines. Incentives vary but might proceed in the form of rebates tied to demonstrated energy savings or a reduction in property taxes or sales taxes on building materials tied to the completion of particular improvements.

Improved color rendering

- Color Rendering Index (CRI) is a measurement of a light source's ability to render all of the colors in the spectrum accurately (on a scale of 1-100 with 100 being the best). Using high color rendering light sources is essential to make people, art and landscape look attractive. This means lamps with a minimum Color Rendering Index (CRI) of 80 and a preferred CRI of 85 or above should be a standard of the downtown district.

Dark Sky Compliant Fixtures

- International Dark-Sky Association (IDA) is the recognized authority on light pollution. Protecting our environment and night skies from unnecessary light pollution is critical to the economic, cultural, and scientific enjoyment of our living and working environments. It is therefore recommended that Dark-sky compliant fixtures be phased in over time, to limit the light pollution expelled by pedestrian and street lighting. It is recommended that these new fixtures maintain the “historic” character of the existing context.

Dining Alleys

Another favorable concept that can contribute to the downtown identity is designed alley upgrades. Alley upgrades improve the aesthetics and lighting of alleyways to create special, intimate pedestrian spaces. Alleys present great opportunities to create a more vibrant public realm, improve pedestrian connections, and generate new business opportunities. There are many US cities that are recognizing the potential of alleys as inviting public spaces and pedestrian connections capable of attracting activity that is good for the local economy and neighborhood safety. Some cities are including “green” designs which include permeable pavements and landscaping to aid storm water management. Streetscape furnishings, lighting, art and plantings give additional character to alleyways that invite visitors to venture down new paths, creating an element of discovery and expanding the pedestrian network in downtown. The City should work with property owners to actively encourage the use of specific alleyways for commercial uses such as boutiques and restaurants.

The existing passage off of Hale Street between Front Street and Wesley Street could be further enhanced as a green dining alley, building off of the outdoor dining and pedestrian connection that currently exists. In addition, there is potential for upgrades to the existing alley passageways on the block east of Hale Street between Front Street and Wesley Street. These locations should remain closed to automobile access. Mid-block crosswalks are recommended at these locations to provide additional circulation options. Implementation of this concept will require property owners to consider their building and service relationship with these spaces, as well as consideration to accommodate deliveries and dumpsters. The city has already successfully begun to screen dumpsters and upgrade these alleys.

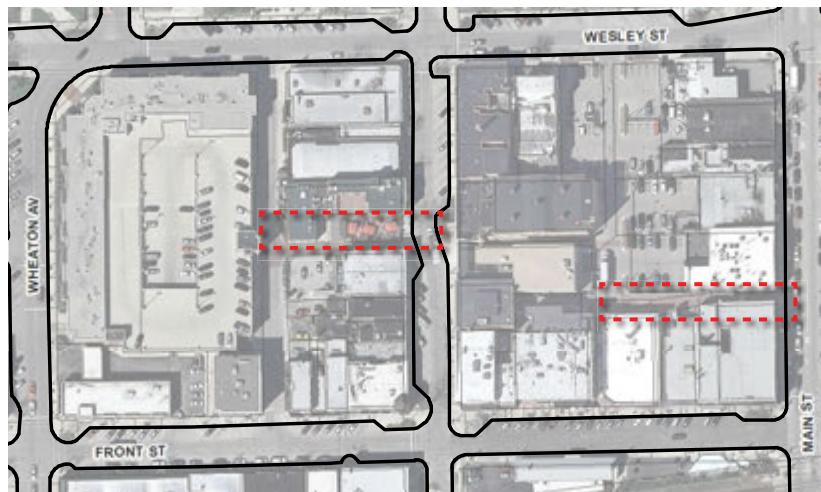
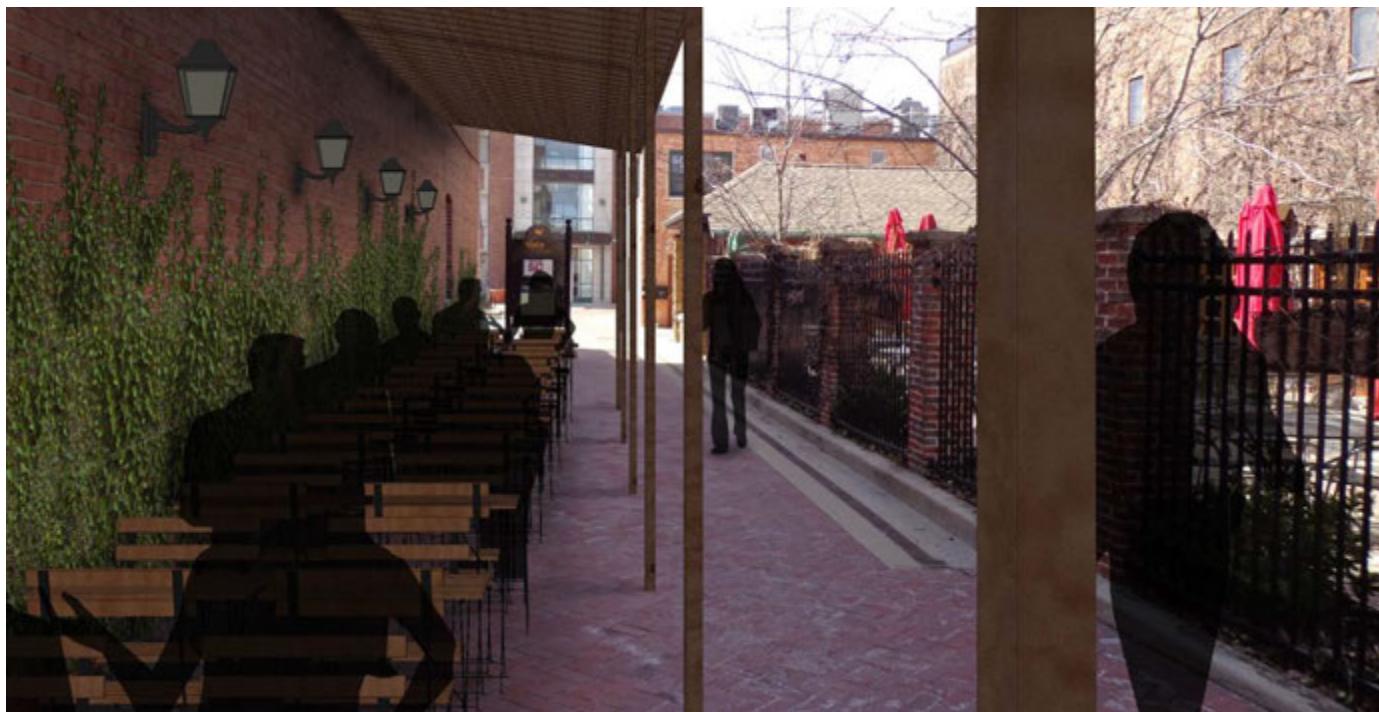


Figure 7: Green dining alley locations



Example of an active alley with access to shops and restaurants



Simulations illustrate the potential for green dining alleys in downtown.

Prairie Path

The Illinois Prairie Path system has eight hundred thousand annual visitors. Additional programmatic elements should be considered along the path, particularly within proximity to downtown shops and the proposed 'Central' park and Metra stop including seating, exercise structures and covered bicycle storage facilities.

Because the path is a key connector within downtown, there needs to be a separation between the bicycle traffic and pedestrian traffic within the downtown. Most traffic on the path is bicyclists, therefore treatment of the path within downtown should physically or visually separate the path for use as a sidewalk versus use as a cycle track.



The Cultural Trail in Indianapolis incorporates signage, wayfinding, seating, and bicycle parking. Source: Sustainable Cities Collective

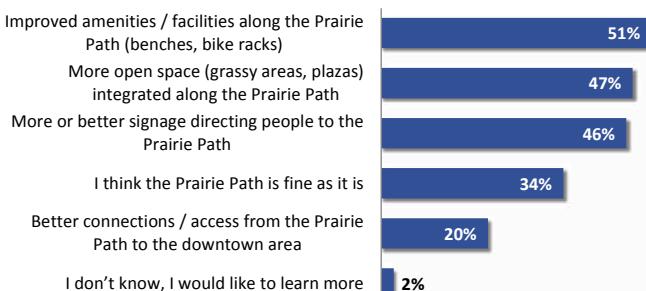


An example of covered bicycle parking at transit locations.

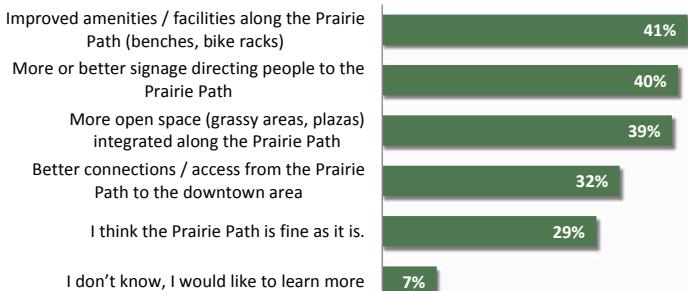
Source: Matt Hobo - Creative Commons

The following reflects my views concerning the Illinois Prairie Path that crosses the Downtown area. I would like to see... (Choose all that apply)

Public Meeting Results



Online Survey Results



The City should explore additional locations where the Prairie Path could more seamlessly connect with the rest of the downtown area, beyond the intersections with the north south streets. For example, the City may look to strengthen or highlight connections between the path and the central park along Liberty Drive in order to strengthen the appeal of both of these key amenities in the downtown area. Additional signage should be provided along the Prairie Path to indicate businesses in the downtown, such as opportunities for shopping, dining and entertainment. Similarly, signage to the Prairie Path should be integrated into the signage within downtown.

The Prairie Path and Wheaton can be marketed as an eco-tourism destination, where you can take the train, get on a bicycle and visit shopping, dining and entertainment venues. A “Prairie Path Station” could be created in a location adjacent to the facility to encourage large scale bicycle commuter usage with covered parking and the ability to lock bikes. This station could provide the opportunity to rent bicycles.

The Prairie Path can also be marketed to runners for training as a major hub for Chicago Marathon training. One particular group is C.A.R.A. (Chicago Area Runners Association) which already uses Caribou Coffee for weekly Saturday morning meeting location due to its proximity to Mile Marker Zero which is one-fourth mile to the west. The association has over 200 members and growing.

Integrating History into the Streetscape

Downtown Wheaton boasts one of the richest histories of any district in the Chicagoland region, and integrating the history of the community in the future design for the area will help in distinguishing Downtown as a unique and destination district. As one of the original communities in DuPage County, Wheaton's history traces to the 1830s. The community was one of the key hotbeds of abolitionist activity prior to and during the Civil War and supported the Underground Railroad. The city has operated as the county seat since the 1860s and as one of the principal commercial centers in DuPage County since the beginning of suburban expansion in the 1950s. Wheaton is the home to a varied set of famous natives and attendees at Wheaton College, including natives Jim and John Belushi, and Wheaton College alumni Wes Craven (famous Hollywood producer), former Speaker of the U.S. House Dennis Hastert of Illinois, and famous evangelist Billy Graham. A ‘History Walk’ currently exists along the Prairie Path. Building on Wheaton's rich history and this program can make downtown more marketable. This can be accomplished through interpretive signage and public art.

The future design of amenities and streetscape in Downtown Wheaton can effectively draw from this heritage to create a unique look and feel for the district. For example, future streetscape designs could incorporate and expand upon the existing History Walk along the Prairie Path, highlighting key buildings and famous people from Wheaton's past. Future Downtown projects should carefully respect and preserve the historical architecture of buildings in the district as well. Downtown Wheaton should take advantage of this rich heritage and use it as a distinguishing strength in its positioning going forward.

Soft Programming

Enhanced “soft programming” (including events, festivals, and the like) can significantly increase the number of people coming to Downtown Wheaton and thereby help to fulfill the vision of Downtown Wheaton as a key community gathering place for the region. Effective soft programming can provide cultural enhancements, drive increased retail activity, and help to brand the Downtown as a key destination for shopping, dining, entertainment, and culture.

Wheaton provides many well-attended events throughout the year in the downtown area, with most events occurring during the summer months from June through August as outlined in the chart. Fifty percent of respondents during the planning process rated the number of events in Downtown Wheaton as “about right”, but around 40 percent indicated a preference for increasing the number of events in the district. Wheaton provides a wider range of events throughout the calendar year, compared to other downtowns in the area. However, compared to its peer downtowns, Wheaton lacks a significant number of arts and cultural events. To diversify the programming in Downtown Wheaton the community may consider introducing an arts or cultural themed event. In addition, the community may wish to explore opportunities to create more events tied to Wheaton College. Discussions with the college during the planning process indicated that the college would be interested in opportunities to collaborate on events in the downtown area involving the college.

Wheaton Soft Programming

January	February	March	April	May	June	July	PROGRAM TYPE:
		Celebrate Spring/ Celebrate Easter		Memorial Day Parade	Taste of Wheaton, Wheaton Park District & Wheaton	Snapshots of America Independence Day Festival, Wheaton Park District	Music
					Municipal Band Concerts	DuPage County Fair, DuPage County	Food
						Rockin' for the Troops, Operation Support Our Troops	Culture
							Holiday
							Art
							Other
August	September	October	November	December	Farmer's Market		
Wheaton Ale Fest		Downtown Trick-or-Treat	Chili Cook-Off	Dickens of Christmas Celebration & Lighted Holiday Parade	Yes; Saturdays April - November		
Municipal Band Concerts		Pretty in Pink: A Ladies Night out in Downtown Wheaton					

Signage and Wayfinding

A future comprehensive gateway and wayfinding project for Downtown Wheaton would provide valuable tools to help identify and build a specific and consistent brand. Building on the existing downtown branding strategy will help create a cohesive and consistent system that visitors and residents will recognize. Elements of this brand include district gateways and district wayfinding.

The city should develop a signage and wayfinding plan to:

- Improve directional signage to key destinations within downtown;
- Enhance signage directing people from the Prairie Path to downtown, including signage along the path that points out the businesses downtown including the bike shop, coffee shops, and restaurants;
- Enhance signage directing people from downtown to the Prairie Path (Key destinations along or adjacent to the Prairie Path route should be indicated including retail and dining opportunities, the Central Park, Adams Park and Memorial Park);
- Create more visible signage directing drivers to parking locations within downtown – this signage should indicate that the parking is free;
- Provide signage indicating the number of spaces available in the parking garages. This can be accomplished by installing or retro fitting vehicle loop detectors into new and existing parking garages, similar to the City of Naperville parking garage.
- Provide directional signage to the existing overpass at Wesley Street.

District Wayfinding:

Wayfinding signs in a given area of town, or applied to an entire city, provide a system that helps guide visitors and residents to key destinations, including parks, government centers and other attractions.

Wayfinding encompasses all of the ways in which people orient themselves in unfamiliar or new surroundings and “find their way” from place to place. Programs generally consist of signs, symbols, colors, messages and images. People find their way around a complex or unknown environment by a process known as cognitive mapping — creating a mental image of a place which improves over time. The wayfinding program should be intuitive, easy to grasp quickly and able to cross cultural and language barriers. The outcome of a successful wayfinding sign program enables visitors to easily determine their own experiences by empowering them to make their way through the area with comfort and clarity and without confusion. The best wayfinding programs provide a combination of manufactured, electronic and human elements to create a guided



A street in St. Louis indicates bike right-of-way



A parking sign in Ann Arbor clearly indicates free public parking



A district identity sign in Washington D.C. clearly defines the district

experience for visitors as well as residents. Statistics show that people make their opinions of places in as little as 15 seconds, so a negative first impression can be difficult to overcome.

Wayfinding can be part of the backbone of a community's identity. The visual representation of that identity is the thread of continuity from gateways to corridors to commercial centers to neighborhoods. A successfully designed sign program is not only functional and memorable; it also extends a welcoming gesture to visitors and residents. It reflects the community's values that they care for everyone's comfort and experience.

Wayfinding signs do not advertise specific businesses unless a part of the program includes a business focused directory or smart phone application. They don't add clutter to the streets—they reduce clutter and consolidate information. The signs are not just for the visitor; instead, they identify areas of interest to locals and visitors alike.

Objectives for Identity, Gateway and Wayfinding:

- Create a consistent and controlled design vision communicated through unified and distinctive graphic identity, gateway and wayfinding elements.
- Provide a stronger sense of arrival into the downtown district.
- Facilitate circulation and educate visitors about the destinations, amenities and commercial offerings within downtown.
- Create a system that can be extendible to other areas of the city with a different color and materials palette.
- The design can reflect a balance of local character and civic refinement.
- The signs should be distinctive, and at the same time harmonious with the context and existing signs.
- Signs should be made of high quality, durable and practical materials.



Examples of wayfinding signs that help identify key locations within a community



Existing gateway signage identifying Downtown Wheaton

District Gateways

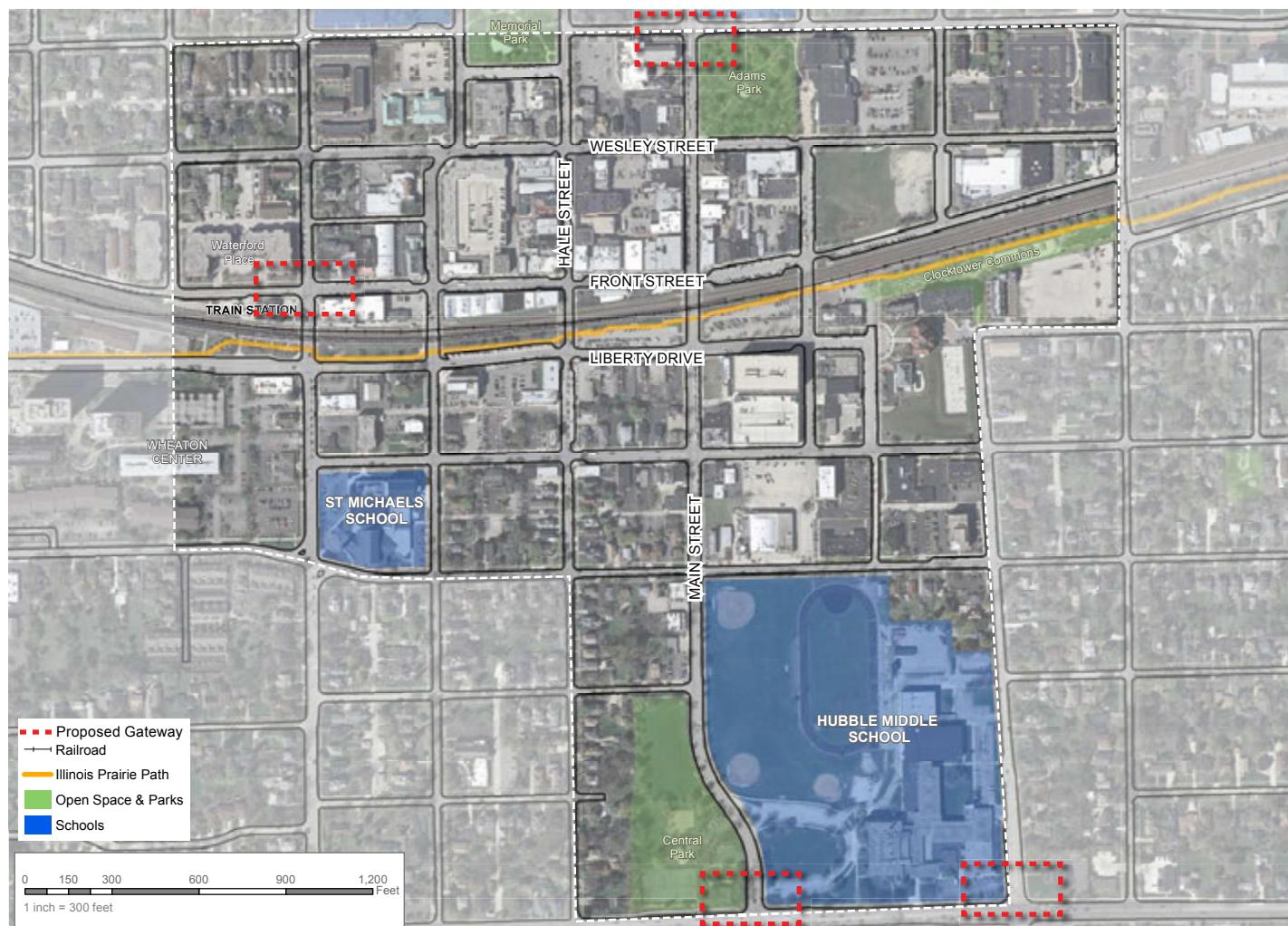
Community Gateways come in many varied forms such as vehicular bridges, overpasses, portals, public art sculptures, traditional monument signs and pedestrian-scaled district markers. They provide a strong sense of arrival and should reflect the inherent character of the place. Gateways can extend the community branding and messaging to be an integral part of a wayfinding system. They are most successful when integrated into the environment and landscape. Correct scale, placement and lighting are important for optimal impact, visibility and legibility.

The district gateways should alert travelers that they are approaching a unique area within the larger city. This can be achieved through gateway markings, district signage, and aesthetic enhancements.

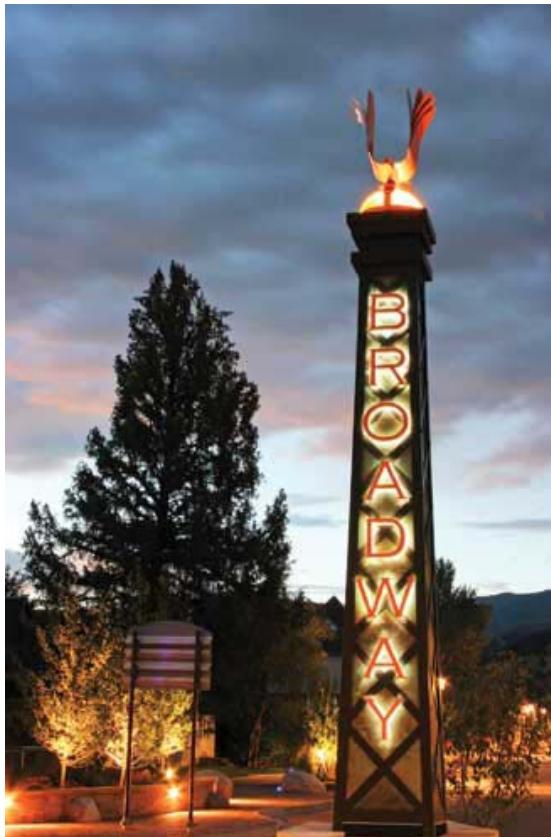
The downtown plan recommends establishing gateways leading into Downtown at the following key locations:

- At the intersection of North Main Street and Seminary Street (adjacent to Adams Park)
- At the intersection of West Street and Front Street (near the train station)
- Roosevelt Road and S. Naperville Road (Mariano's location)
- A gateway monument exists at Roosevelt Road and Main Street
- A gateway sign needs to be located at Gary Ave. and Harrison Ave to point to Downtown Wheaton.

Figure 8: Gateway Locations



District Gateway - Examples



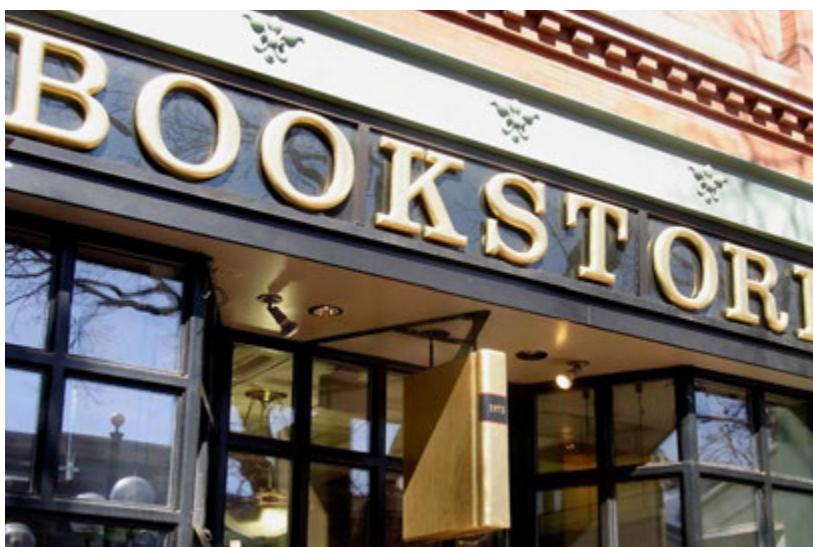
Gateway signage identifying downtown Eagle, Colorado



Gateway signage identifying downtown Willits, California



Gateway signage identifying the historic core of San Diego, California



Modifications to Design Guidelines

The Wheaton Downtown Design Guidelines, completed in 2001, articulated preferred urban design strategies for buildings and streetscapes throughout the district. Importantly, the document earmarked different standards for three sub-areas within downtown:

- Traditional Core Area
- Perimeter Commercial Area
- Residential Conversion Area

The standards for the “traditional core area”, located mainly north of the tracks, create an urban design framework for the “main” part of downtown and articulate fairly urban standards. These standards would work well in any district in which projects include a mixture of retail, residential, and office space, often mixed vertically in a Main Street orientation.

The Downtown Plan does not propose a complete reworking of the design guidelines for Downtown Wheaton. Instead, this document recommends that the entire downtown area be reclassified to use the urban design standards outlined for the Traditional Core Area. Because one of the main goals of the current downtown effort is to extend the downtown development to the south side of the tracks, and extending east and west to West Street and Naperville Road, this part of downtown should have the same urban design standards as the “main” part of downtown. These guidelines would help to articulate how buildings relate to the street, the design of pedestrian areas, and other considerations that will help to create a more urban feel for Downtown Wheaton between the tracks and Roosevelt Road. Simply reclassifying the areas to the south of the tracks from an urban design perspective will help set the foundation for the kinds of buildings and projects that the community expects in this part of Downtown going forward.

District Signage Guidelines

As stated above, the purpose of these recommendations is to encourage innovative, creative, functional and expressive signs that contribute to the visual and experiential vitality of the District. Signage and street graphics within the downtown district are expected to meet or exceed the criteria below:

General Design Notes

- All signage and street graphics are expected to be compatible with and represent an enhancement of the character of the downtown, the architecture of the building to which it is affixed as well as adjacent architecture when considered in terms of placement, design, scale, color, materials and lighting both related to brightness and type of illumination.
- All signage and street graphics are expected to be appropriate to and expressive of the business or activity for which they have been designed.
- All signage and street graphics are expected to be creative and innovative in the use of form, graphic design, dimensionality, scale and iconographic representation. Signage that exhibits high levels of these qualities, executed with high levels of craft and materials are encouraged.
- All signage and street graphics must be installed according to Code requirements and the expectation is that signage in the Downtown will be designed with ease of service and maintenance to ensure longevity and a quality presentation over time.
- Tenants and landlords are encouraged to retain professional assistance in the planning and design of their signage.

Visibility and Legibility Day and Night

A sign can certainly be expressive and artistic, but if it cannot be seen or read by passersby, it will have little positive or material impact on the business it is intended to promote. Poor or illegible typography, the use of dimensional letters where the return is the same color as the face, and the presence of highly reflective materials all can degrade a sign's function.

Placement

Placement so that viewing angles are favorable for pedestrians, vehicles or both should be considered carefully. Placement and design should result in an enhancement of the appearance of the host building.

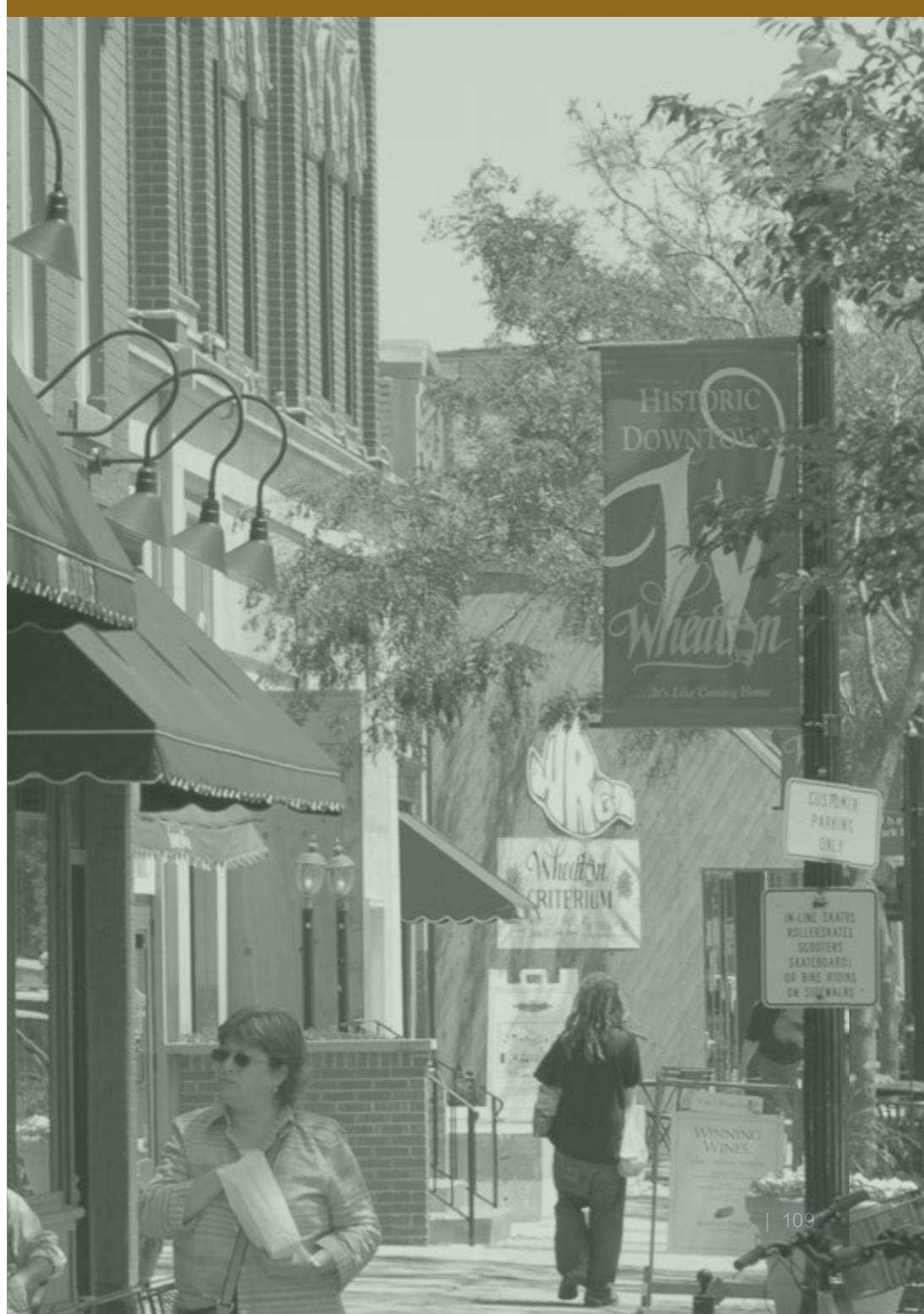
Signage/Building Relationships

Signage should relate in some way to the host building. Businesses should seek placements or locations for signage that appear to have been designed to receive signage. In creating alignments with architectural features or surfaces, the sign is more likely to "nest" in an appropriate fashion within its architectural context. The line between communicating a sense of Vitality vs. Chaos is often the result of how well or badly this principle is understood.

General Design Notes

- Quality signage is in general characterized by simplicity rather than complexity. When trying to visually communicate quickly as a sign must do, less is more.
- Large letters on a small field do not communicate as well visually as letters sized properly to allow for enough "white space" facilitating legibility.
- Good signage conveys purpose and personality. Great signage strikes a balance in how well it communicates both character and personality of the business or use it is intended to promote.
- Temporary signage, including window banners, sidewalk sandwich boards and other temporary interventions, although occasionally required, can have a down market impact on a downtown district. It is essential that temporary signage (not associated with leasing or the sale of the premises) be managed from a time, scale and placement standpoint, in that order.

IMPLEMENTATION



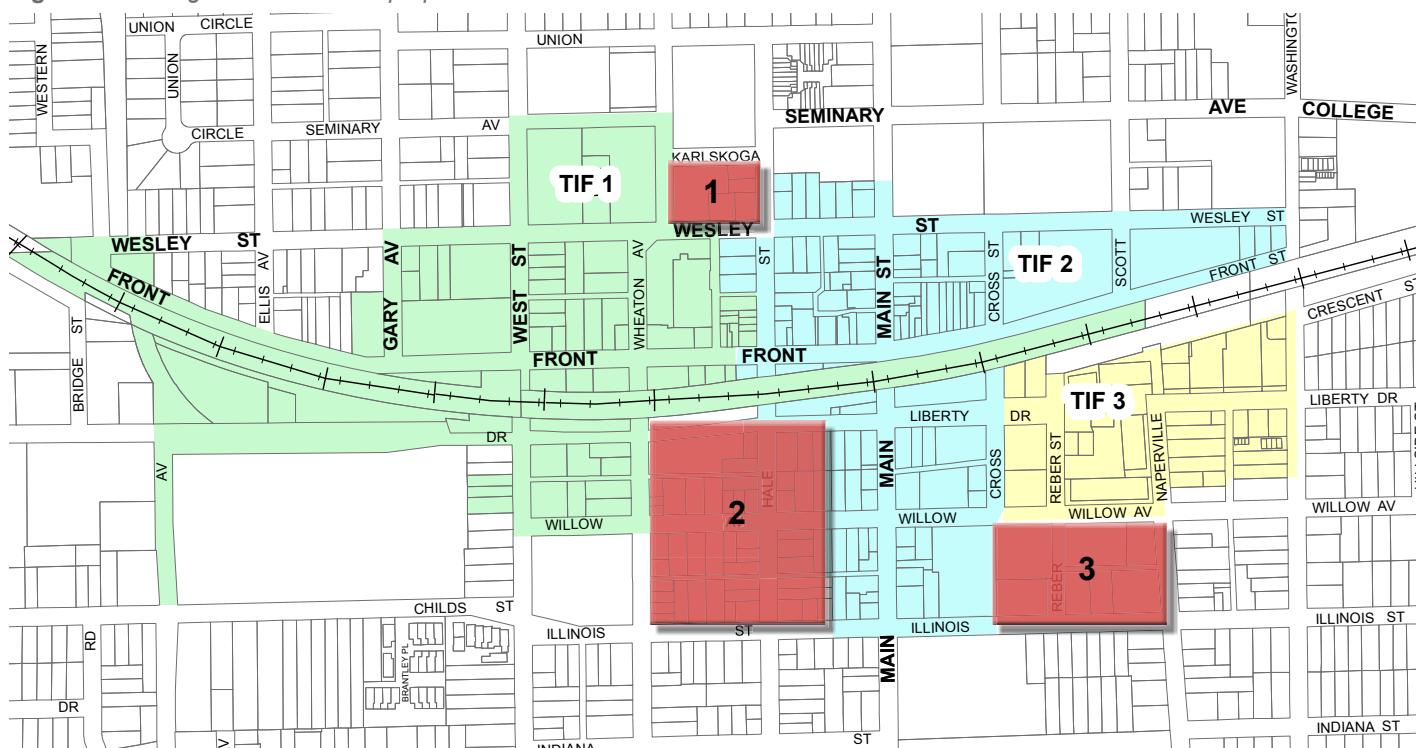
IMPLEMENTATION

The Downtown Strategic and Streetscape Plan document outlines the various overarching recommendations the community may pursue in maintaining and improving the downtown district over the next twenty years, building from the overall vision for Downtown Wheaton. This section discusses how the City and the community-at-large may pursue the various improvements and recommendations for the downtown district, in terms of the prioritization of projects and various financial, procedural, and regulatory tools the City and the private sector may utilize in order to promote improvements in Downtown Wheaton. This document does not suggest that the implementation recommendations will remain fixed. This section outlines a roadmap for the community from which the City Council, City staff, and other community leaders will bring forth formal proposals for action over many years.

District – Wide Implementation Strategies

The downtown plan identifies the following key implementation strategies that the City and the community as a whole should pursue going forward, regardless of the particular stage of improvements at hand. These strategies will help the community advance the goals identified in the downtown plan over both the short-term and long-term and largely will not involve significant expenditures of public funds. Instead, these policy or strategy ideas should guide City actions with regard to economic development and overall implementation of the plan almost immediately.

Figure 9: Existing TIF Districts and proposed additions.



Expand Tax Increment Financing Districts to Cover Additional Downtown Areas

As illustrated in the diagram that follows, the Downtown Wheaton area currently includes three separate Tax Increment Financing (TIF) districts. The TIF provisions allow for developers and the City to use part of the anticipated increases in property tax revenues resulting from their projects to fund public infrastructure related to their particular project. However, certain blocks located to the south of the Union Pacific tracks are not currently included in any TIF districts. The City should explore either the expansion of an existing TIF district to include areas within the downtown study area not covered by TIF, or create a new TIF district (or multiple TIF districts) to cover these additional blocks and development parcels. In addition, the City could explore extending the life of the existing TIF districts to additional years in order to fund additional future downtown improvements.

Having a TIF designation in place throughout the downtown district, and in particular for blocks south of the tracks, will help to set the stage for redevelopment. Potential developers would know in advance that TIF incentives could be available for particular properties and this may help provide incentive for them to move forward with redevelopment concepts.

Invite Development Proposals on Strategic Sites

The City should explore issuing formal development requests for proposals for targeted parcels, or groups of parcels, in order to attract interest from the development community and help push the overall redevelopment of Downtown Wheaton forward. The City would need to coordinate with the particular landowners included in a RFP issuance in order to agree on the language and requirements articulated in the RFP document. Importantly, the City should incorporate development and design standards tied to, or in alignment with, the downtown plan into the RFP criteria. The City should consider completing some level of market analysis around the time of RFP issuance in order to ensure that the anticipated development program articulated for the site aligns with current market conditions and therefore would attract greater levels of developer interest. The development RFPs must draw from the goals articulated in this downtown plan and further the redevelopment of Downtown Wheaton in line with the standards and concepts outlined in this document. This strategy will ensure that future redevelopment projects align with the community's long term vision for Downtown Wheaton.

Strategically Acquire Development Parcels

The City has historically not engaged in any land banking of parcels anywhere in the city. However, acquiring targeted properties could help to further redevelopment in the downtown area. The City could acquire parcels as they become available on the market as a first step toward crafting larger redevelopment projects, particularly south of the tracks. The assembling of parcels of sufficient size to launch a feasible project often creates a challenge in redevelopment efforts. While the City should be careful to not extend itself too far financially in acquiring properties, as a public entity the City of Wheaton could help considerably in the land assemblage process. The City should in particular focus on acquiring key parcels around the downtown area that represent corner locations or would likely represent the "missing piece" in a larger redevelopment project involving other land owners. This downtown plan does NOT suggest that the City explore the use of eminent domain to acquire properties. However, where feasible, acquiring key parcels on the open market could further the redevelopment of select parts of Downtown Wheaton considerably.

Implement a Targeted Retail Recruitment Program

Many stakeholders and members of the public expressed support during the planning process for initiatives to create a greater mix of retail businesses in Downtown Wheaton. The Chamber of Commerce, along with Downtown Wheaton Association and the City, should explore instituting a formal retail recruitment program for the district, with the aim of attracting tenants that would fill specific gaps in the current roster of businesses and elevate the competitive position of the area. Many other suburbs around the country have implemented formal recruitment efforts, usually through a seasoned retail broker or recruitment specialist, in order to attract certain types of tenants that had been missing in their local areas. A formal retail recruitment program could target national tenants in particular, or certain types of retailers that would fill specific niches in Downtown Wheaton. The City along with the Chamber and DWA should complete a more specific and detailed tenant analysis before embarking on a formal retail recruitment program for Downtown.

Complete a Coordinated Marketing Plan

The marketing of properties, events, and other elements pertaining to Downtown Wheaton is currently carried out by various parties – including the City of Wheaton, the Wheaton Parks District, the Chamber of Commerce, and the Downtown Wheaton Association. These entities should consider joining forces and coordinating marketing efforts for the downtown district. These entities should hold joint events when possible, market destinations and key retailers in Downtown Wheaton collectively, and work together to craft marketing messages geared to critical demographic groups in the local region (young people, seniors, families, etc.). Pursuing a coordinated marketing plan would allow these entities to increase the visibility of Downtown Wheaton in the Chicago region to a greater extent than having separate entities pursue separate strategies.

Create a Management Entity for Operations and Maintenance

The City of Wheaton currently carries out maintenance for various items in the downtown district, including trash and litter removal, landscaping upkeep, and maintenance of trash containers, benches, and other fixtures. Downtowns around the country have moved in recent years to having a separate entity coordinate management and maintenance in order to ensure that these districts retain their attractiveness and marketability. While the City has done a good job in maintaining fixtures and facilities around the downtown area, the City has to maintain Downtown as one of a myriad of other areas around the city. Creating a separate entity (perhaps coordinated along with the Chamber or the DWA) to lead the maintenance and upkeep around Downtown Wheaton would help ensure that the full attention of this entity would be on the district, and that resources would not be spread across the city. A Business Improvement District (BID) could be formed to carry out these management functions, for example. BIDs in various downtowns concentrate on maintenance and upkeep and also coordinate marketing and business development efforts.

Phasing and Prioritization of Improvements

Based upon input from the public during the project and an analysis on the part of the consultant team and city staff regarding the costs of various public improvement items versus their anticipated returns on investment, this plan recommends that the City of Wheaton proceed with the following major improvements in the following order, to advance Downtown's continued growth over the next two decades.

Phase One – Upgrades to South Main Street / Liberty Drive Festival Street / Central Park

- Timing: 3 – 5 Years
- Estimated Total Cost: \$15.9 Million

As an initial project tied to this Downtown Plan, the City of Wheaton should proceed with upgrades (in terms of streetscape and traffic signals) to Main Street, from Roosevelt Road to the Union Pacific tracks. The City should, at the same time, also complete the Festival Street design for Liberty Drive and the Central Park upgrades outlined in this document, between Hale and Cross Streets. Pursuing this combination of projects as an initial phase of implementation of the Downtown Wheaton Plan would achieve the following objectives:

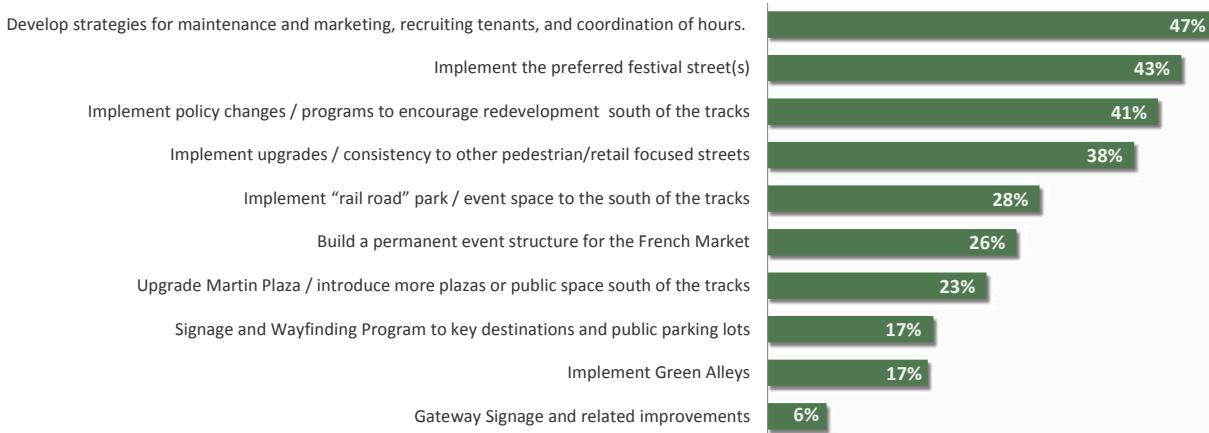
- Upgrading the streetscape along Main from Roosevelt to the Union Pacific tracks would help create a new and more attractive “front door” to Downtown Wheaton from the south, and along the main retail street that connects with Route 38 (Roosevelt Road). Improving this front door would help the downtown district in leveraging the increased traffic resulting from the new Mariano’s development to spur increased retail and restaurant spending in the heart of Downtown Wheaton.
- Similarly, completing the Festival Street improvements along Liberty Drive, tied with the Central Park improvements, would help create a new “front door” for Downtown Wheaton for people traveling through the area via the Metra line. Implementing these improvements along the south side of the tracks may attract additional visitors and business from people who live elsewhere in the area and pass through Wheaton regularly via the Metra line. The Liberty Drive and Central Park improvements would also complement the upgrades to South Main Street and further enhance the perceived “front door” of Downtown Wheaton for those traveling from the south.
- The Central Park and Liberty Drive improvements would include the anticipated upgrades to the French Market and therefore would help to strengthen this key amenity in the downtown area. Constructing a permanent structure for the French Market would allow the community to host additional market sessions during the cold weather months and to host additional events under the structure throughout the year. In this sense, the Central Park and the revamped French Market facilities would serve as a key gathering place in Downtown Wheaton and a potential catalyst for a variety of events that could spur additional revenue throughout the year.
- The combination of the improvements to South Main Street, coupled with the Central Park, Liberty Drive, and French Market improvements, would help to spur overall redevelopment of the area between the Union Pacific tracks and Roosevelt Road. These investments by the City are more likely to stimulate private sector redevelopment including retail, residential, and office projects in this area compared to other potential improvements outlined in this document. While the completion of these improvements will not guarantee that private sector redevelopment will proceed over the next several years, the upgrades to Main, Liberty, and the Central Park should enhance the marketability and property values of adjacent parcels and therefore stimulate developer interest.

Please choose your top 3 overall recommendations for Downtown Wheaton: (Choose your top 3)

Public Meeting Results

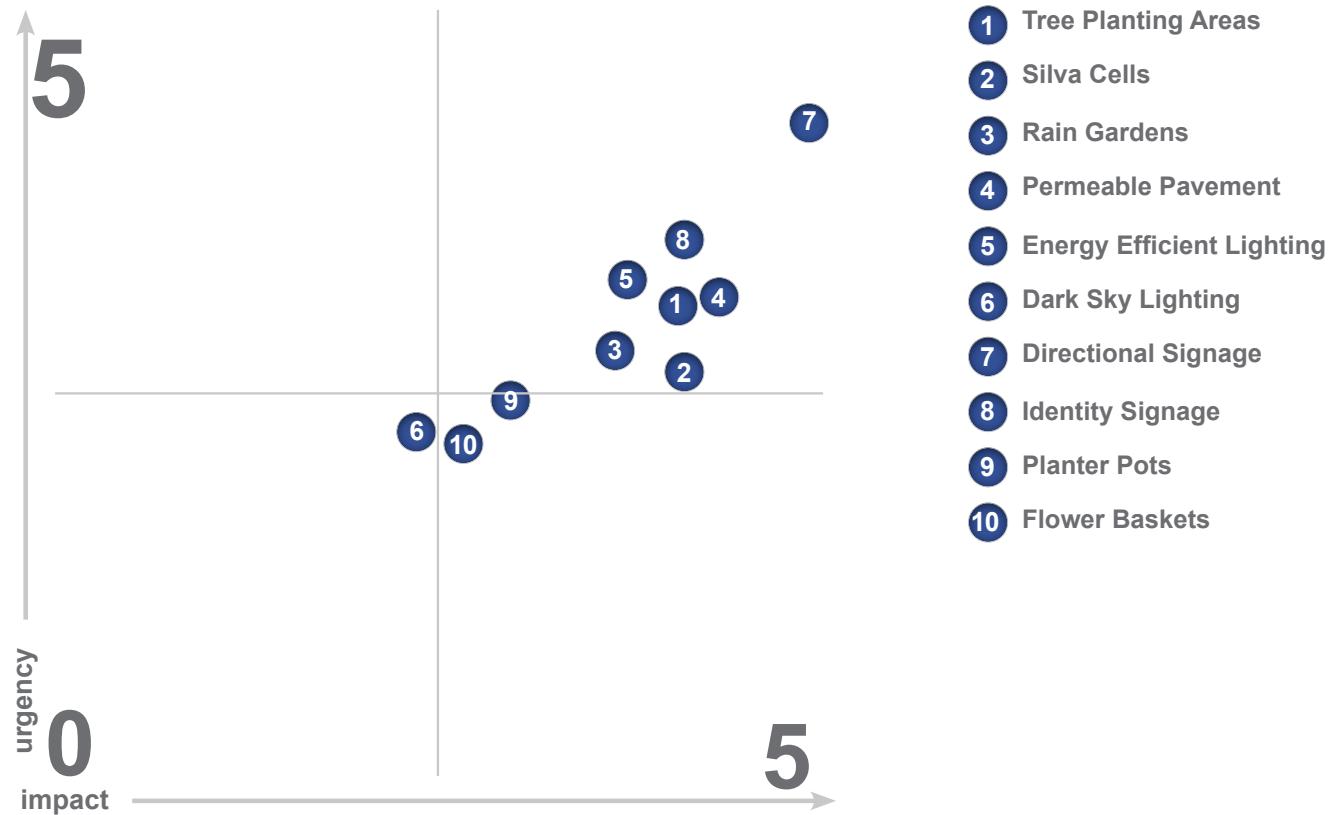


Online Survey Results

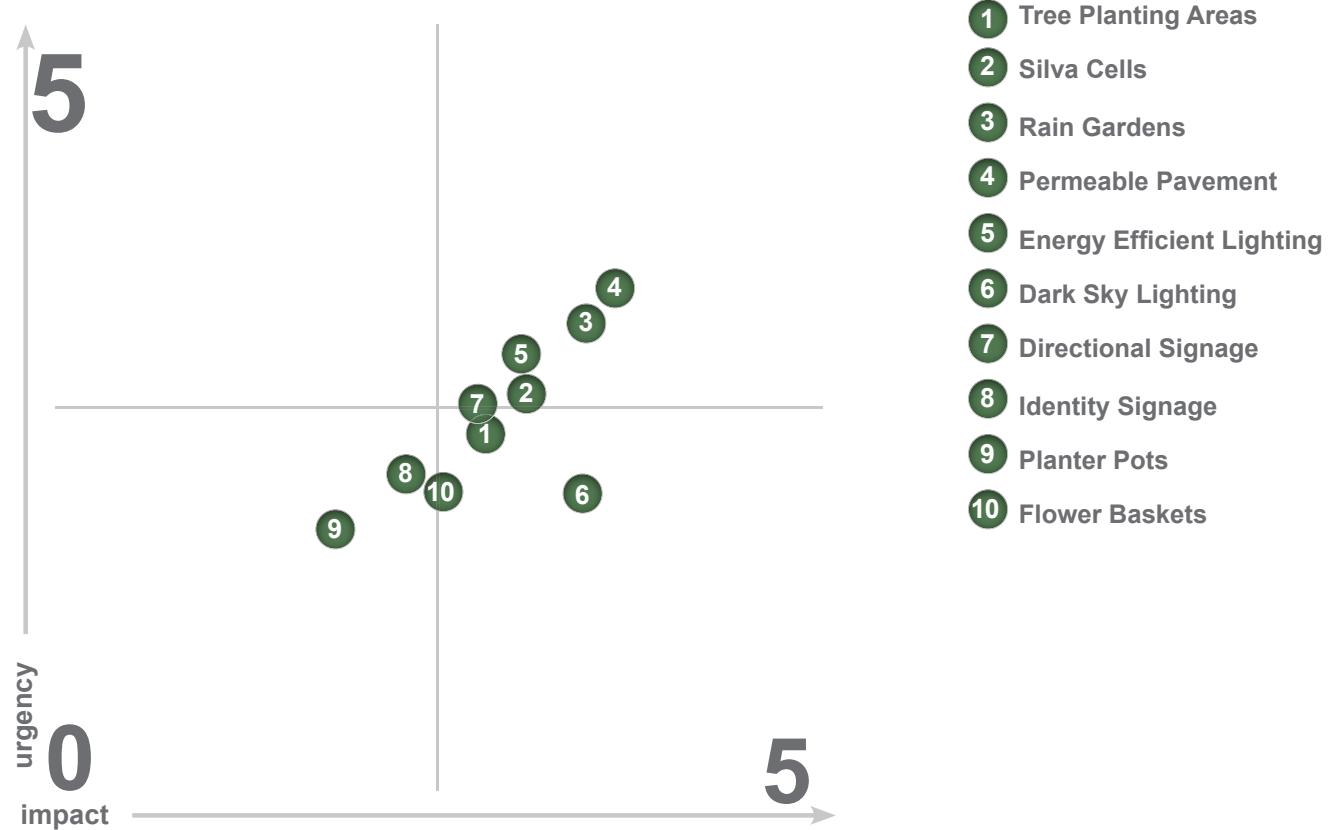


To prioritize streetscape improvements on the pedestrian priority streets identified for downtown, participants were asked to rate the “IMPACT” of each element and the “URGENCY” of implementing them on a scale from 1 to 5 where 1 = lowest and 5 = highest.

Public Meeting Results



Online Survey Results



Phase Two – Completion of Signage and Gateway Enhancements

- Timing: 3 – 5 Years
- Estimated Total Cost: \$800,000

At generally the same time as it completes improvements to South Main, Liberty Drive, and the Central Park, the City should move forward with district-wide enhancements to signage and gateway monumentation in order to enhance the overall marketability of the Downtown area. Upgrades to signage would include district identity signage (as outlined in this document) as well as signage that would guide visitors to available parking spaces and facilities in the downtown area. Upgrades to gateway signage or monumentation for Downtown Wheaton, at the locations identified in this plan, will enhance the visibility of the downtown district in this part of DuPage County. Specifically, pursuing these improvements as one of the initial stages of implementation would produce the following key benefits to the downtown community.

- Completing enhanced signage and gateway monumentation would help to drive some of the anticipated traffic visiting the new Mariano's development to explore and visit Downtown Wheaton. Completing these improvements in particular on the southern side of Downtown Wheaton would help the district in leveraging the arrival of the Mariano's development in the area.
- The public and elected leaders in Wheaton repeatedly cited parking as one of the key concerns in the downtown area during the planning effort. As mentioned in previous sections, enhancing signage guiding drivers to available parking spots and facilities would help a great deal in maximizing the use of existing parking that serves Downtown. The installation of user-friendly signage related to parking would help a great deal in enhancing the marketability of the downtown area in the broader DuPage County area.
- Enhancing district identity signage for Downtown Wheaton would help in the near term to enhance the visibility and image of the district in the broader DuPage County market. Enhancing the marketing position of the downtown district at this time has particular value, given the anticipated increased traffic at the Mariano's project and the City's ongoing efforts to help spur redevelopment south of the Union Pacific Railroad tracks.

Phase Three – Completion of Hale Street Festival Street Improvements

- Timing: 5 – 10 Years
- Estimated Total Cost: \$4.1 Million

Following the completion of the initial phase of improvements, the City should proceed with the Festival Street upgrades to Hale Street in order to further enhance the position of Hale Street and areas along the north side of the Union Pacific Railroad tracks as key dining and retail locations in the Downtown area, and to further enhance festivals and other programming opportunities in the district. The Hale Street improvements would align well with any planned upgrades to the Wheaton Grand Theater and would help to support the further growth of the Taste of Wheaton and other festivals held throughout the year.

Pursuing this improvement as a second phase of improvements in Downtown Wheaton would achieve the following objectives:

- Completing the Festival Street improvements along Hale Street would help to extend the momentum generated by the initial Festival Street improvements (along Liberty Drive, south of the tracks) farther to the north, into the historic heart of Downtown Wheaton.

- The Hale Street improvements would further support Taste of Wheaton and other festivals in the downtown area.
- The Hale Street festival street improvements would create additional and enhanced space for additional festivals, throughout the year.

Phase Four – Completion of Karlskoga Festival Street Improvements

- Timing: 10 – 15 Years
- Estimated Total Cost: \$2.2 million

The public supported the completion of festival street improvements along Karlskoga Avenue during the planning effort, but also signaled that upgrades on this street should represent a lower priority compared to Hale Street and Liberty Drive. Karlskoga Street has a relatively isolated location relative to the rest of Downtown Wheaton and thus completing improvements on this street should remain a somewhat lower priority over time. However, upgrading Karlskoga as a festival street would help to further enhance the marketability of the Taste of Wheaton and other festivals located at the north end of Downtown Wheaton and would likely help to stimulate further redevelopment in the block located between Karlskoga and Wesley Street.

Phase Five: General Upgrades to Existing Pedestrian Focused Streets to the North of Union Pacific Rail Line

- Timing: 10 – 20 Years
- Estimated Total Cost: \$11.9 million

Beyond the major improvements in Downtown Wheaton outlined in this plan (including festival streets, the Central Park, and South Main upgrades), the City should move forward over time to upgrade the existing streetscape amenities along the downtown or pedestrian-focused streets, to the north of the Union Pacific Railroad tracks. These improvements would not involve any substantial changes to the streets themselves, but instead would include upgrades to street furniture, signage, lighting, landscaping, and related amenities. Over time, the City should complete these improvements in order to complement the planned improvements along Hale and Karlskoga and to ensure that the historic core of Downtown Wheaton remains competitive.

Improvements Contingent Upon Redevelopment South of the Railroad Tracks

The public, along with city and elected leaders, identified the promotion of redevelopment south of the tracks as one of the key goals of the downtown planning effort. The improvements identified in Phase One, for South Main, Liberty Drive, and the Central Park, should help tremendously in stimulating further interest in the development community in projects on blocks between the Union Pacific line and Roosevelt Road. Beyond these catalyst projects, the downtown plan identifies the streets in the area for improvement to either pedestrian focused streets or to other downtown streets. These enhancements would include upgrades of streets identified in the plan to meet standards intended to support retail and outdoor dining, including street furniture, street trees, upgraded sidewalks, lighting, signage, and other streetscape elements. All of the streets south of the railroad tracks would, regardless of their classification, eventually receive some level of streetscape improvements, including signage, lighting, and landscape elements.

Given the magnitude of investment anticipated to complete the phases of improvements identified above, the downtown plan assumes the following regarding the various other streets located between the Union Pacific tracks and Roosevelt Road:

- Upgrades to these other streets would not commence until development projects arise on one or more blocks in the area to the south of the railroad tracks.
- The City would lead the completion of upgrades to particular streets in this area, and would complete entire blocks or series of blocks at a time (rather than completing upgrades located adjacent or attached to proposed development projects). This strategy would ensure that particular blocks have a consistent look and feel over time and would avoid a disjointed, piecemeal approach to streetscape implementation in the area.
- The City would coordinate with potential developers, as well as the various other property owners in an area or street section identified for improvements, to explore possible cost sharing arrangements, in order to fund streetscape enhancements. The downtown plan anticipates that private sector redevelopment ideally would help to fund at least part of the streetscape upgrades to the south of the railroad tracks.
- The precise design of particular streets to the south of the railroad tracks would draw from the conceptual design ideas identified and articulated in this document. However, the city, working with the private sector landowners, would need to complete more detailed design for the various streets to the south of the railroad tracks in order to arrive at final design documents.

ADDITIONAL ACTION ITEMS

The following represents specific actions that tie to various recommendations included in this plan document as well as the appropriate general timing for their implementation as well as the likely responsible party (beyond actions tied to the major phases of implementation articulated above). This action item list should help the community in confirming and tracking progress across the various recommendations identified for the downtown plan over the next twenty years.

Action: Implement Green Alleys north of the tracks (including porous paving and development of additional programming or entertainment along these green alleys)

- Responsible Party: City, along with DWA
- Timing: 5 – 10 years

Action: Remove Parking Meters from South of the Tracks (funded by district wide funding provision)

- Responsible Party: City
- Timing: 1 – 3 Years (as soon as possible)

Action: Establish a Fee-in-Lieu Fund for Future Parking Improvements

- Responsible Party: City
- Timing: 1 – 3 Years (as soon as possible)

Action: Designation of bike routes, shared lanes, and bike racks / storage around downtown

- Responsible Party: City
- Timing: 1 – 5 Years

Action: Prairie Path improvements (including signage, exercise facilities, additional connections to downtown locations)

- Responsible Party: City, Illinois Prairie Path Corporation (non-profit entity)
- Timing: 5 – 10 Years

Action: Enhance the History Walk around Downtown Wheaton

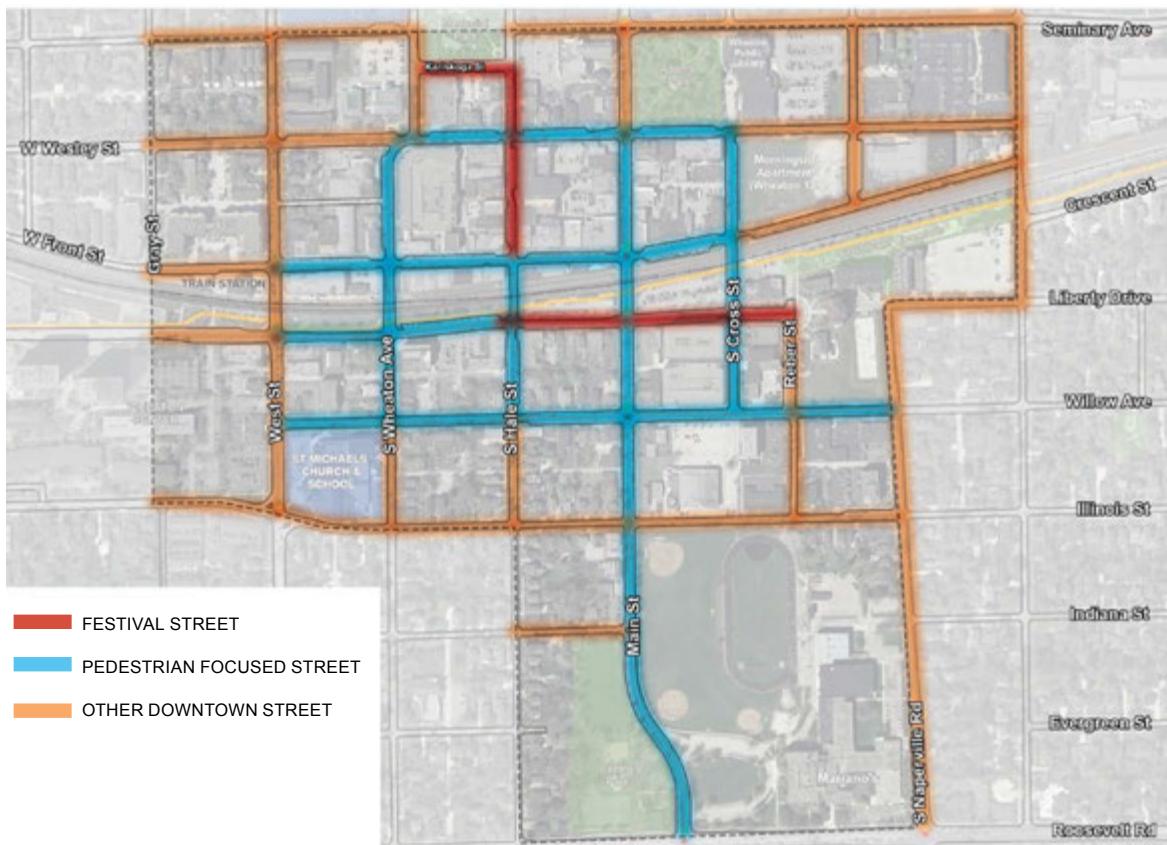
- Responsible Party: City
- Timing: 5 – 10 Years

Action: Explore Expansion of Programming / Festivals in Downtown Wheaton (to include more activities year-round)

- Responsible Parties: City, DWA, Chamber, Parks District
- Timing: 1 – 5 Years

Cost Estimate

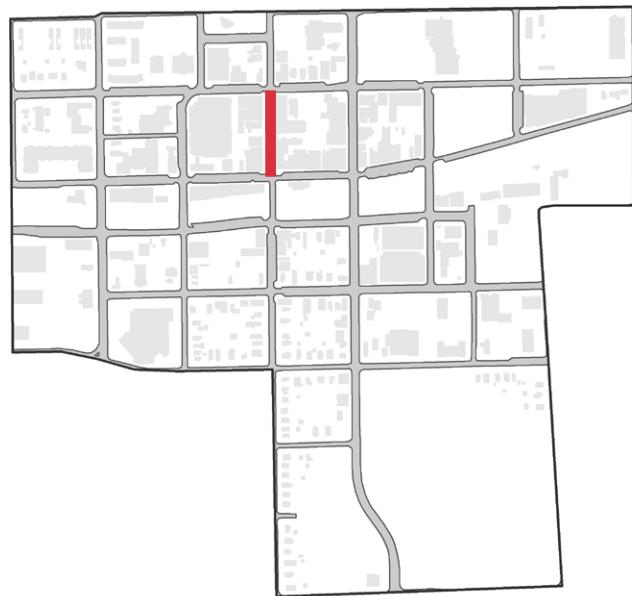
Recommended Street Classification



TOTAL ESTIMATED COST	
Improvement	Estimated Cost
Festival Streets	
Hale Street	\$4,065,045
Liberty Drive	\$5,213,355
Karlskoga	\$2,159,142
Pedestrian Focused Streets	\$25,389,329
Other Downtown Streets	\$11,859,238
Traffic Signal Improvements	\$450,000
Railroad Crossing Improvements (Main/Hale)	\$500,000
Gateway Signage	\$800,000
Central Park	\$2,818,418
French Market Structure	\$300,000
Overhead Lighting on Festival Streets	\$150,000
Contingency (20%)	\$10,740,905
Total Cost	\$64,445,432

Cost Estimate - Festival Streets by Segment

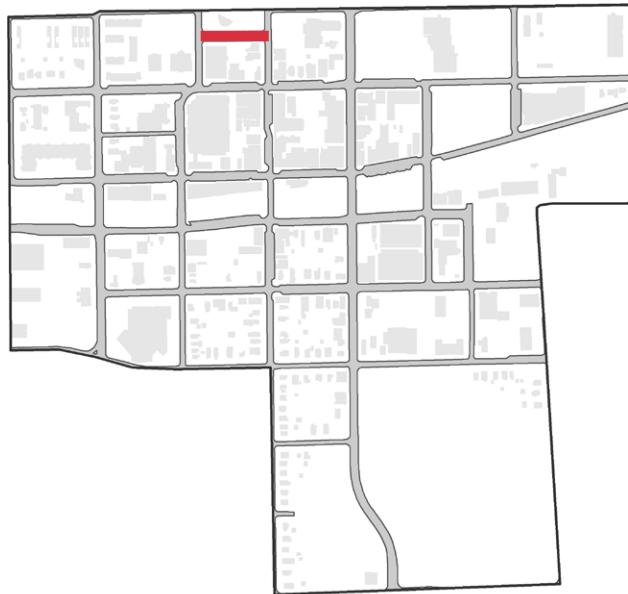
FESTIVAL STREET - N. HALE ST. (Front St. to Wesley St.)	
Improvement	Estimated Cost
Removal	\$117,899
Pavement	\$1,338,260
Drainage	\$163,095
Lighting	\$131,751
Landscape	\$367,583
Electrical	\$1,581
Utilities	\$74,318
Misc.	\$39,500
Subtotal	\$2,233,988
Contingency (20%)	\$446,797
Total Cost	\$2,680,786



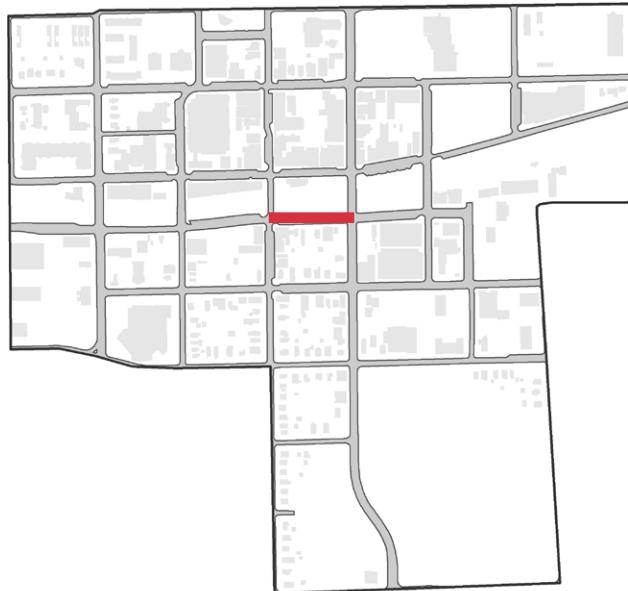
FESTIVAL STREET - N. HALE ST. (Wesley St. to Karliskoga Ave)	
Improvement	Estimated Cost
Removal	\$49,847
Pavement	\$628,488
Drainage	\$95,078
Lighting	\$80,664
Landscape	\$218,462
Electrical	\$948
Utilities	\$40,558
Misc.	\$39,500
Subtotal	
Contingency (20%)	\$230,709
Total Cost	\$1,384,258



FESTIVAL STREET - KARLSKOGA AVE. (Wheaton Ave. to Hale St.)	
Improvement	Estimated Cost
Removal	\$75,785
Pavement	\$1,143,397
Drainage	\$128,523
Lighting	\$106,129
Landscape	\$304,684
Electrical	\$1,265
Utilities	
Misc.	\$39,500
Subtotal	\$1,799,284
Contingency (20%)	\$359,856
Total Cost	\$2,159,141

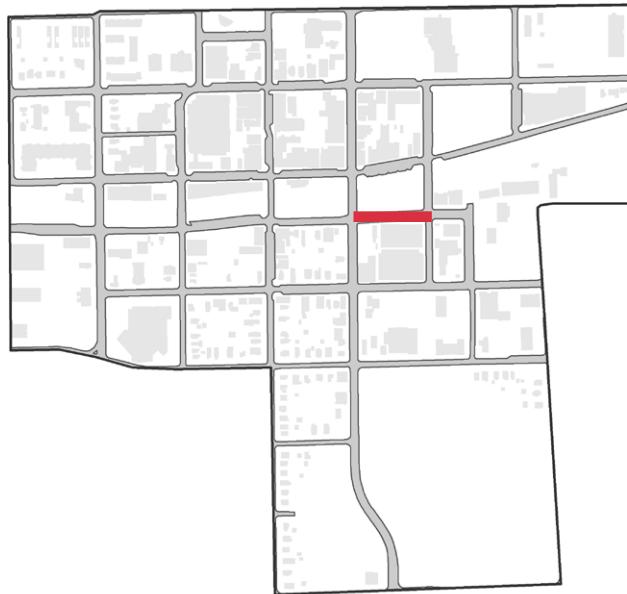


FESTIVAL STREET - LIBERTY DRIVE. (Hale St. to Main St.)	
Improvement	Estimated Cost
Removal	\$83,843
Pavement	\$1,136,925
Drainage	\$163,012
Lighting	\$131,740
Landscape	\$309,220
Electrical	\$1,581
Utilities	
Misc.	\$39,500
Subtotal	\$1,865,822
Contingency (20%)	\$373,164
Total Cost	\$2,238,987



Cost Estimate - Festival Streets by Segment

FESTIVAL STREET - LIBERTY DRIVE. (Main St. to Cross St.)	
Improvement	Estimated Cost
Removal	\$86,066
Pavement	\$1,384,000
Drainage	\$137,666
Lighting	\$63,400
Landscape	\$218,466
Electrical	\$1,265
Utilities	
Misc.	\$39,500
Subtotal	\$1,930,365
Contingency (20%)	\$386,073
Total Cost	\$2,316,438



FESTIVAL STREET - LIBERTY DRIVE. (Cross St. to Reber St.)	
Improvement	Estimated Cost
Removal	\$41,383
Pavement	\$187,050
Drainage	\$81,220
Lighting	\$45,740
Landscape	\$152,432
Electrical	\$948
Utilities	
Misc.	\$39,500
Subtotal	\$548,275
Contingency (20%)	\$109,655
Total Cost	\$657,930



