



THE CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT

• Looking Forward •

FOR INCORPORATION INTO THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

On Monday, August 7th, 2023, the Lake Forest City Council granted final approval of the ordinance approving this Central Business District Chapter of the Comprehensive Plan, in substantially the form presented.



DRAFT

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THE CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT

• Looking Forward •

**The City of Lake Forest's Central Business District (CBD) is
one of the community's many treasures.**

INTRODUCTION

The Central Business District serves the Lake Forest community by providing retail, restaurants, service businesses, office space, public parking, and outdoor gathering spaces for day to day activity as well as community events. Historically, the CBD has also included residential units above first floor retail and service businesses. Over time, most of the original residential units in the CBD have been adapted to office space creating less of a 24/7 environment.

This Chapter of the Comprehensive Plan is being updated at a unique time, as the community and nation are coming out of the Covid pandemic. During the 2020-2022 pandemic, Lake Forest experienced a peak in home sales with many families and individuals accelerating moves from the City of Chicago to the suburbs.

Lake Forest's tree lined streets, welcoming neighborhoods, preserved open spaces, excellent and varied school options, safe environment and distinctive and welcoming Central Business District are just a few of the reasons people chose to make Lake Forest their home during this unprecedented time.

Established restaurants followed their customers to Lake Forest attracting other new businesses and bringing in patrons from surrounding communities. This chapter update occurs at an opportune time to pause, appreciate what the community has in the CBD, assess its strengths and weaknesses, and look forward. Strategies for preserving, protecting, enhancing and supporting the CBD in the future are detailed in this chapter.

CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT LOCATION MAP

Lake Forest's Central Business District (CBD) is identified within the context of the City's boundaries on the map below. The CBD is linear, extending along the west side of Western Avenue, parallel to the Metra Union Pacific North (UP_N) commuter rail line. This chapter does not recommend any change in the current geographic limits of the Central Business District.



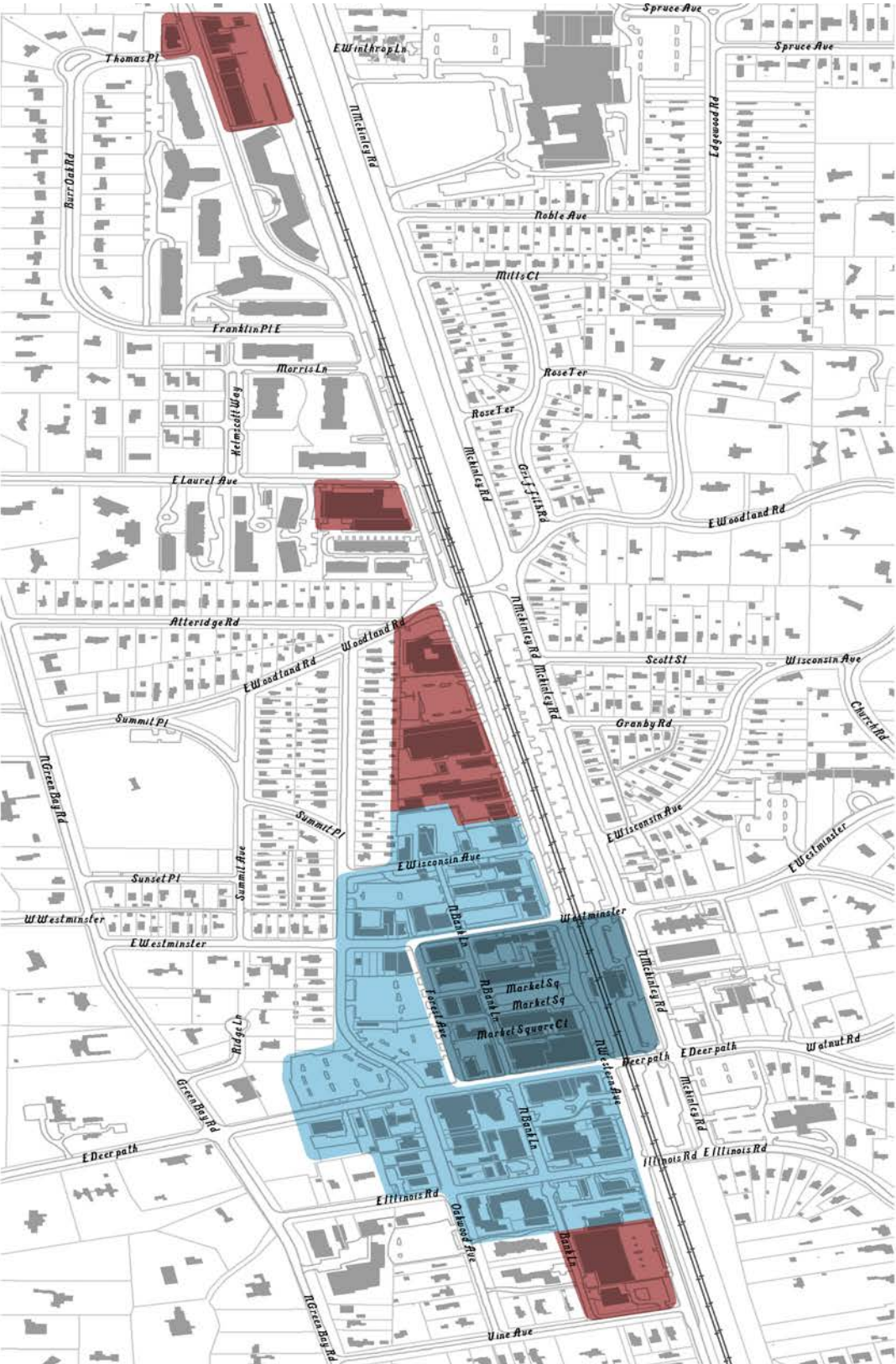
Insert CBD Map · Label Key Points of Interest & Pair with Photos

(Market Square, Metra Station, Deerpath Inn, Gorton, Greensward, North and South Alley, etc.)

CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT

SUBAREAS

THE CORE INNER RING NEIGHBORHOOD BUSINESS



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CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT SUBAREAS

CBD Subarea #1

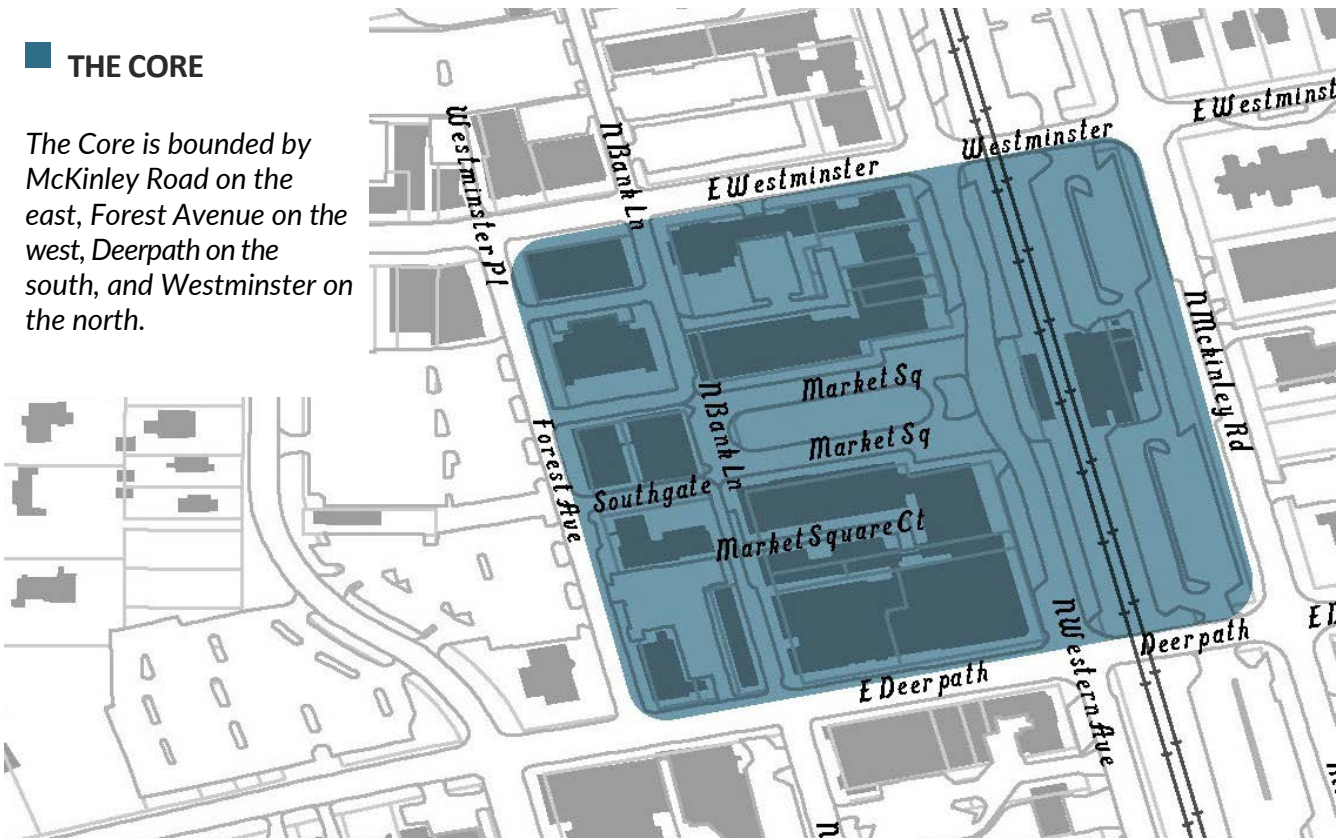
The Core: A Unique Experience

Lake Forest's iconic Market Square, the historically significant buildings, the Greensward, courtyards, and the predominance of ground floor retail businesses make up the heart of Lake Forest's Central Business District. Market Square is known as the first planned shopping center in the United States. The buildings that comprise Market Square are historically and architecturally significant, designed by Howard Van Doren Shaw. Market Square was created as a result of a community vision, community initiative, and community investment.



THE CORE

The Core is bounded by McKinley Road on the east, Forest Avenue on the west, Deerpath on the south, and Westminster on the north.



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CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT SUBAREAS

In 1913 Lake Forest Improvement Trustees, comprised of prominent local residents, acquired 400 feet of frontage along Western Avenue and charged architect and local historian Howard Van Doren Shaw with developing a plan to transform Lake Forest's core. The result of the visionary plan and the public/ private partnership, was a business district that serves as a model, even today, for communities across the Country. Most other buildings in the Core are also important and contribute to the distinctive character of the Central Business District.

The "Core" subarea has historically been dominated by first floor retail and storefront windows that invite shoppers in and activate the streetscape. Today, more service businesses are interspersed among the retail stores: banks, real estate offices, shipping services, and personal care salons of various types. The second-floor spaces in the subarea support small to medium size office uses. Several distinctive outdoor spaces for passive and active enjoyment are located in the Core. The Greensward in Market Square, the north and south Market Square Courtyards, the dining patio on Southgate, and the Lake Forest Bank and Trust Garden offer outdoor areas to eat, gather, sit, stroll, and enjoy community events.

Preservation, restoration, and maintenance are of the utmost importance in the Core. Opportunities for adaptive reuse of buildings exist, for example the U.S. Post Office building and site if it becomes available in the future.

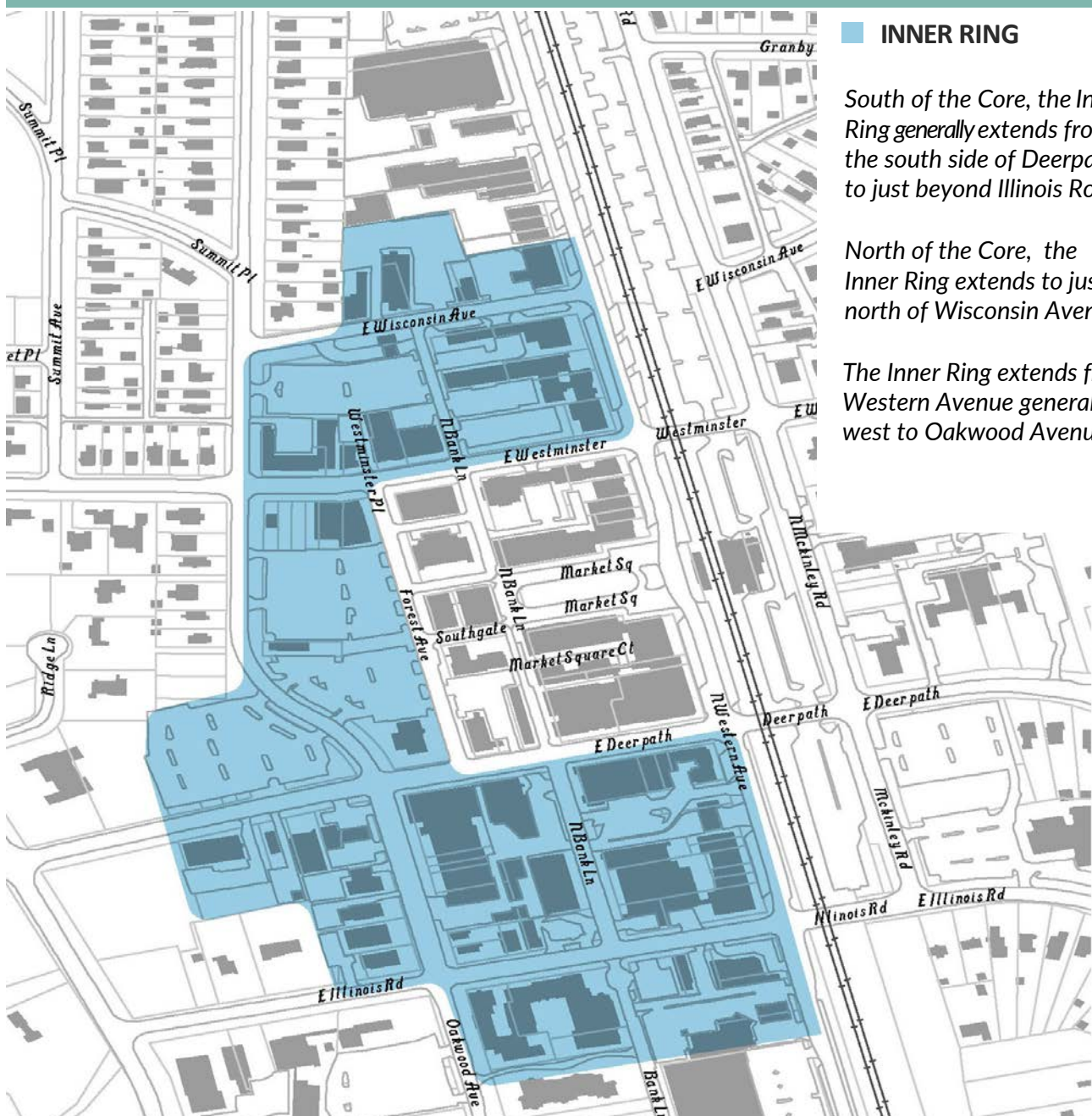


CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT SUBAREAS

CBD Subarea #2

Inner Ring: Meeting Daily Needs

The Inner Ring is comprised of those properties and buildings located just beyond and adjacent to the Core, a mix of commercial uses in buildings of various sizes, ages, and architectural integrity “ring” the Core adding to the vitality and density of the CBD.



INNER RING

South of the Core, the Inner Ring generally extends from the south side of Deerpath to just beyond Illinois Road

North of the Core, the Inner Ring extends to just north of Wisconsin Avenue.

The Inner Ring extends from Western Avenue generally west to Oakwood Avenue.

CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT SUBAREAS

The Inner Ring Subarea supports a mix of businesses including retail, restaurants, service businesses, medical and dental offices and other professional offices. This area also includes large expanses of City owned surface parking lots which provide customer and employee parking to support businesses and community activities.



The Inner Ring subarea offers the greatest opportunity for development and redevelopment in the CBD including the adaptive reuse of existing important buildings and the potential for redevelopment of sites that are underutilized and do not contribute significantly to the character of the CBD, as well the opportunity to re-think how the City owned surface lots can best serve and support the CBD in a manner consistent with the desired overall character. Parking is critical to support a vibrant CBD and can be provided in a more attractive manner than occurs today, in combination with providing opportunities for other desired uses.



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CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT SUBAREAS

CBD Subarea #3

Neighborhood Business: Smaller Scale/Personal & Professional Services

Beyond the Core and Inner Ring, the Central Business District extends in a linear fashion, primarily along Western Avenue. These Neighborhood Business nodes, include a mix of commercial uses, service businesses, and professional offices that are smaller in scale and lower in density than those found in the Core and Inner Ring subareas.

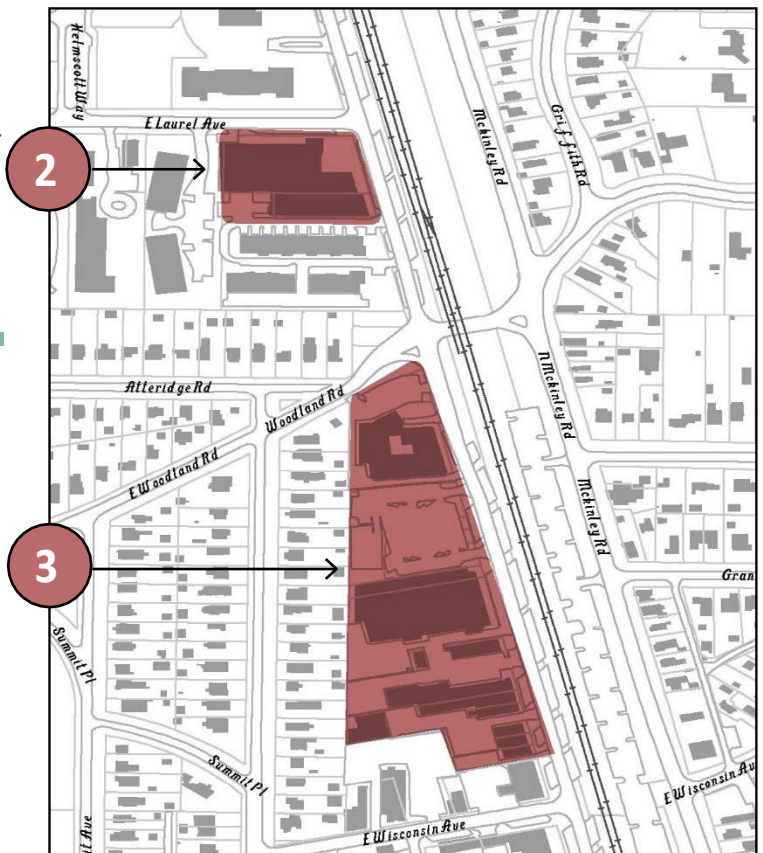
NEIGHBORHOOD BUSINESS

SUBAREA 1: Western Avenue between Franklin Place and Thomas Place

SUBAREA 2: Corner of Western Avenue and Laurel Avenue

SUBAREA 3: Western Avenue north of Wisconsin Avenue to Woodland Road

SUBAREA 4: Western Avenue south of Illinois Road to Vine Avenue, and west to Bank Lane



CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT SUBAREAS

The Neighborhood Business subarea, more so than the Inner Ring, offers businesses that meet every day needs including: grocery and drug stores, dry cleaners, restaurants, salons, and professional services. This subarea is adjacent to a variety of residential housing types, single family homes as well as multi-family buildings. Development in the Neighborhood Business area is less intense with many of the buildings being single use.

At the far north and south ends of the subarea, buildings support a mix of uses with office and residential located above ground-floor commercial. A limited number of businesses have on-site parking lots, with the majority relying on street parking. Public parking lots located on the east side of the railroad tracks are available to support off-site parking for employees and valet services. Access to the remote parking lots is available by way of underpasses at Woodland and Illinois Roads and at-grade crossings at Westminster and Deerpath.

Photos: The Neighborhood Business Subarea includes a range of businesses and service types to meet every day needs. Some buildings single-story / single-use structures, whereas others include upper story residential units.



CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT

VISION

“Looking forward, the vision for Lake Forest’s Central Business District is not to change it into something different, something more akin to business districts in other communities, but instead, to enhance and preserve the historic character and architecturally significant buildings and spaces, and to maintain an environment in which businesses thrive and a place residents and visitors are drawn to again and again, for day to day needs, a special night out, to find that one of a kind gift, and to celebrate the community.”

In other words, the vision is to build upon strengths, address weaknesses and create long term community benefit from opportunities.

The configuration and size of the overall CBD is well suited to meet the needs of the community. Neither expansion, nor a reduction in the CBD is recommended in this chapter.

The neighborhoods surrounding and adjacent to the District should be preserved and their unique character protected. Located within easy walking distance to the shops, eateries, gathering spaces, and services offered by the CBD, these neighborhoods are an important part of the community fabric.

The proximity of residential neighborhoods to the CBD provides mutual benefits to both residents and businesses; residents enjoy quick access to local shops and restaurants while businesses benefit from a nearby customer base. It is also recognized that these residential neighborhoods experience impacts by virtue of their proximity to the CBD.

This chapter acknowledges these impacts, the importance of synergy and balance between adjacent uses, and offers recommendations on how to create appropriate transitions between the business district and surrounding residential areas.

CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT

GOALS & STRATEGIES

Goal 1: Foster an active, resilient and vibrant mix of uses by protecting and leveraging the Central Business District's strengths

The CBD exemplifies Lake Forest, the quality, the character, the history, the vitality, the distinctiveness, the community. Buildings, streetscapes, and public spaces contribute to the special experience and fond memory of being in Lake Forest. The CBD has something for everyone and is active day, evening, winter and summer. A balance of uses in a pleasing environment is maintained with a focus on attracting not only Lake Forest residents, but also residents of surrounding communities, and visitors from near and far. The mix of uses is not static and reflects changes in markets, technologies, and consumer behaviors. The character, available parking, well maintained infrastructure, development parameters that set clear expectations, and an active customer base all serve to attract continued private investment, encourage adaptive reuse of important buildings, and incent redevelopment of appropriate sites in a manner that aligns with and enhances the character of the CBD.

Goal 2 · Reinforce a distinct, cohesive and charming sense of place by preserving and strengthening community character

The ever-evolving CBD maintains and builds upon the features that make it resilient, timeless, and distinctive; a diversity of building styles, quality building materials, landscaped streetscapes and gathering areas, surprises around every corner, spaces that evoke a sense of place, pedestrian amenities, ease of access, a strong mix of commercial uses, and community events that align with and support businesses. The historic and more contemporary buildings and spaces share common themes and create a unified whole that is welcoming, invites exploration, and contributes to the unique character of the district.

Goal 3 · Enhance Bank Lane as unique and charming pedestrian corridor to create catalyst for future enhancements in the CBD

Bank Lane is a narrow, north-south inviting pedestrian connecting areas north and south with the Core, a comfortable and memorable experience. Located one block west of Western Avenue, the limited length street extends from Vine Avenue north to Wisconsin Avenue, intersecting with Market Square, spanning six blocks. It's location and orientation provides connectivity and creates synergy between different uses, the various east-west street corridors and public spaces. The pedestrian-scaled streetscape, lighting and amenities provide an inviting setting for strolling, shopping, indoor and outdoor dining and seasonal programming. Temporary street closures along Bank Lane provide one of a kind spaces for dining and festivities.

CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT GOALS

Goal 4 · Meet the needs of existing and future development by maintaining and enhancing **infrastructure** - parking, streets, sidewalks, stormwater management, lighting, signage, and integrated technologies

The CBD is safe, accessible, convenient, and inviting in a way that draws users to businesses and public events throughout the day and year. The CBD is neighbor-friendly, reliably serving the needs of Lake Forest residents while attracting visitors from a larger market area and afar. The continued investment in infrastructure maintenance, innovation, upgrades and enhancement by the City contributes to the resilient, sustainable and vibrant nature of the CBD while encouraging ongoing investment by private property and business owners.

Goal 5 · Provide high-quality living, working and business climates by supporting and fostering strong **public/private partnerships**

The City's participation in maintaining and enhancing infrastructure and public places under its control demonstrates the need for and importance of an ongoing partnership with private property and business owners. The community has a long tradition of public/private partnerships, there is a shared and vested interest in maintaining and enhancing property values, creating a profitable business climate, and providing high-quality living and working opportunities. Consideration is given on an ongoing basis to opportunities for public/private partnerships, building on the community's long and successful tradition.



CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

Achieving Our Vision & Goals

The Comprehensive Plan is not a regulatory document. Instead, it articulates a vision and sets out goals and recommends actions to proactively shape the future and arrive at that vision. It looks forward while being informed by the past.

- *This plan is intended to be used by Boards, Commissions, and the City Council as a tool and guide in making decisions about development, adaptive reuse, preservation, investment in infrastructure, polices, and regulations.*
- *This plan is intended to set realistic expectations for property owners, investors, developers, and residents and to avoid surprises.*
- *The plan is intended to encourage creative ideas and new concepts and to position the City well to adapt in the future always with an eye toward preserving the distinctive character of the CBD.*
- *The tradition of careful planning has served Lake Forest well, and that tradition should continue.*

1 • Protect & Leverage Strengths

This first set of recommendations is focused on recognizing and re-enforcing past successes, ideas, initiatives and actions that have served the CBD and community well over time. Further, “Building on Strengths” means identifying, preserving, protecting, and as necessary, finding new uses for historically and architecturally significant buildings.

1.1: Support a Mix of Local & National Businesses

Support, encourage and welcome a mix of retail, restaurant entertainment, and service uses, both locally based businesses and national brands, in the Core.

1.2: Focus Specialty Retail in the Core

Recognize changes in the retail market make it unrealistic to expect that retail alone will sustain the CBD. To the extent possible, focus specialty retail in the Core to draw shoppers and create synergy that is mutually beneficial to businesses.

1.3: Promote Year-Round Activity

Support and encourage businesses that promote daytime, evening, and year-round foot-traffic.

1.4: Prioritize Infrastructure Investments

Continually plan for and prioritize public investments in infrastructure including, but not limited to, accessible parking, stormwater management, landscaping, broadband and smart infrastructure, wayfinding signage, electric vehicle charging stations, lighting, and ongoing maintenance and upgrades of City rights-of-way.

1.5: Facilitate Business Attraction & Retention

Review and update the Zoning Code on an ongoing basis to facilitate attraction and retention of desired uses, restaurants, entertainment, retail and service businesses. Consider ways the City can assist in overcoming obstacles by thinking creatively about support services such as shared loading zones, nearby and remote parking facilities, use of rights-of-way for outdoor dining, and recycling/trash areas.

PHOTO PLACEHOLDER

PHOTO PLACEHOLDER

PHOTO PLACEHOLDER

CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

1.6: Address Public Parking & Wayfinding

Re-think public parking locations and management with the goal of making parking more convenient, comfortable, safe, easy to find and intuitive to navigate by car and foot. Minimize enforcement costs and user confusion via available technology.

1.7: Enhance Pedestrian Experience

Enhance the pedestrian experience via wider walkways, walkable alleys, enhanced landscaping, varied/safe hardscapes, improved sightlines at crosswalks, benches, lighting, spaces to gather, and public art recognizing that buildings have historically served as distinctive public art in the Core.

1.8: Support Inner Ring Residential

Encourage residential uses of various types and price points especially in the Inner Ring to support the Core, and beyond, and to increase pedestrian activity and vitality throughout the day and evening hours, seven days a week, all year round.

1.9: Encourage Adaptive Reuse

Encourage business/property owners to restore and maintain historically significant buildings and adaptively reuse/upgrade buildings to accommodate a variety of uses including, but not limited to residential, retail, restaurants, entertainment venues, and offices.

1.10: Support Upper Story Multi-Family Residential

Support multi-family residential as an appropriate adaptive reuse of upper floors in buildings in the CBD, particularly in the Inner Ring.

1.11: Recognize Financial Feasibility

Recognize that adaptive reuse projects must be financially feasible in the eyes of developers and lenders; be flexible, collaborative, and open minded.

1.12: Market Trends & Sustainability

Support adaptive reuse of existing buildings as a sustainable approach to responding to changing market trends and demands.



CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT
RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

1.13: Identify Development Parameters

Preserve and enhance the unique character of the CBD by identifying elements that define the character of specific areas of the CBD and specific blocks.

1.14: Ensure Design Adaptability

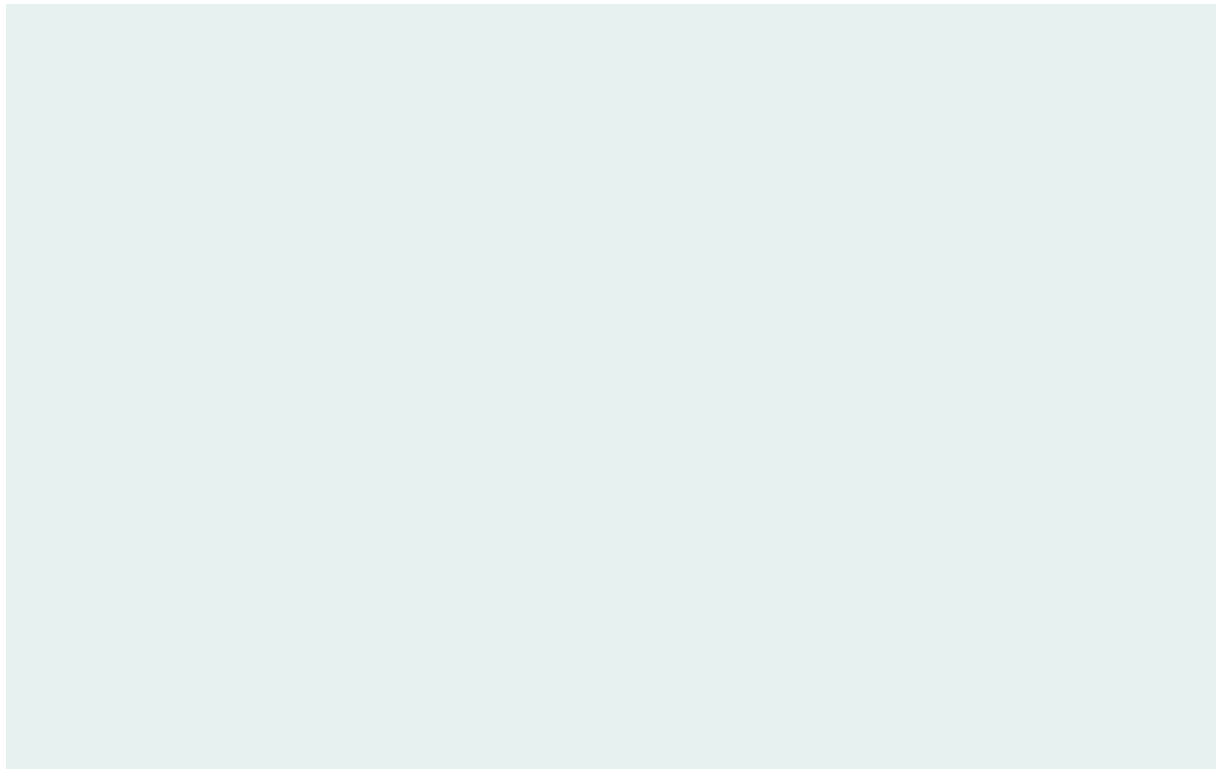
Assure that new buildings are designed consistent with applicable standards and development parameters and built with future adaptability and reuse in mind. Avoid construction of new, single purpose buildings that cannot reasonably accommodate different uses over time.

1.15 Recognize Building Significance

Acknowledge that not every building in the CBD is significant enough to demand adaptive reuse and support appropriate redevelopment, consistent with established parameters, in those cases. Support appropriate redevelopment of properties in cases where existing buildings do not contribute positively to the character of the CBD. The 17 standards should be adhered to for properties within the historic district and any applicable design guidelines should be followed for other sites

1.16: Enhance Predictability

Provide an efficient and predictable review process for development projects that closely adhere to the 17 Standards applicable to properties within the Historic District, achieve the vision and goals established in this document, and align with regulations and parameters established by the City.



2 • Preserve & Strengthen Community Character

Identifying character defining elements and establishing Development Parameters to provide guidance to property owners, developers and stakeholders is important. The following recommendations are intended to provide a starting point for more in-depth study and discussion.

2.1 Undertake Collaborative Process

The process to develop Development Parameters and to articulate defining character elements should involve a variety of stakeholders, invite many perspectives, and utilize creative means, including, but not limited to design charettes, to provide guidance *prior* to the development of proposals for specific sites. The goal is to set realistic expectations, balance various interests, and preserve and enhance the unique character and long term vitality of the CBD.

Development Parameters should, at a minimum, address the following:

2.1A: Streetscape Activation

Design buildings and outdoor spaces that attract uses that activate and enhance the streetscape and sidewalk.

2.1B: Design Elements

Use setbacks, human-scale design elements, architectural styles and details that relate to significant surrounding buildings and the established streetscape character.

2.1C: Comfortable Spaces

Incorporate natural exterior materials, nooks and crannies for gathering and pausing, high quality landscaping and lighting at appropriate levels to balance safety with low levels of illumination found in the community.

2.1D: Distinguished Buildings

Recognize that buildings themselves, i.e. their architectural styles, materials, massing, height, orientation, etc., have served the community well as distinguishing artful elements and design and carry on that tradition.

2.1E: Development Parameters

Once developed, adopt Development Parameters through a public process to proactively set realistic expectations and assist property owners, developers, architects, contractors, and designers in the renovation or construction of buildings in a manner compatible with the architectural heritage and character of Lake Forest's CBD.

3 • Enhance & Connect Bank Lane

Bank Lane is a narrow, limited-length street that offers unique experiences, interest and opportunity for connectivity between key elements of the CBD. The recommendations that follow offer a path toward strengthening Bank Lane as a Pedestrian Corridor. Further study should be conducted as concepts are explored to assess the impacts of proposed changes including, but not limited to impacts, positive or negative, on adjacent businesses and properties, traffic circulation, and pedestrian comfort and safety.



insert aerial map of Bank Lane

CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

■ 3.1 Bank Lane Far South · Vine Avenue to Illinois Road

As Bank Lane extends from Vine Avenue to Illinois Road, the west side is developed with multi-family residential buildings and the east side is developed with the service side (rear) of commercial buildings that front on Western Avenue. This service oriented portion of Bank Lane is visually connected with the historic Deer Path Inn at Illinois Road.

Existing Photos: Looking South on Bank Lane to Vine Avenue



3.1-A: Consider benefits and challenges to making this block of Bank Lane one-way.

3.1-B: Consider ways to beautify the service corridor.

3.1-C: Require uses to maintain enclosed trash areas, fences, landscaping and buildings at a consistent level recognizing the adjacent residential development.

3.1-D: Ensure commercial lighting is sensitive to adjacent residential, properly shielded, directed downward, and the minimum needed for safety and security.

3.1-E: Recognize this block serves important functions for businesses and the Deer Path Inn.

3.1-F: Encourage property owners and utility companies, as opportunities present, to underground utilities.

3.1-G: Require new development on east side to provide appropriate transitions from commercial uses fronting on Western Avenue to multi-family residential uses on west side.

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■ 3.2 Bank Lane South · Illinois Road to Deerpath

Bank Lane provides an important link between Illinois Road and Deerpath and offers opportunities to provide a unique, inviting and memorable pedestrian connection between the Deer Path Inn and Market Square and the larger CBD creating synergy between hospitality, restaurant, retail, and residential uses.

Existing Photo: Looking South to Illinois Road



3.2-A: Encourage and support redevelopment of underutilized properties with a mix of uses including multi-family residential and restaurants.

3.2-B: Require new developments to include pedestrian amenities such as wide sidewalks, gathering spaces, benches, outdoor dining areas, green streetscapes, human scaled first floor building facades, well placed and marked cross walks, and pedestrian friendly, subtle but safe, lighting.

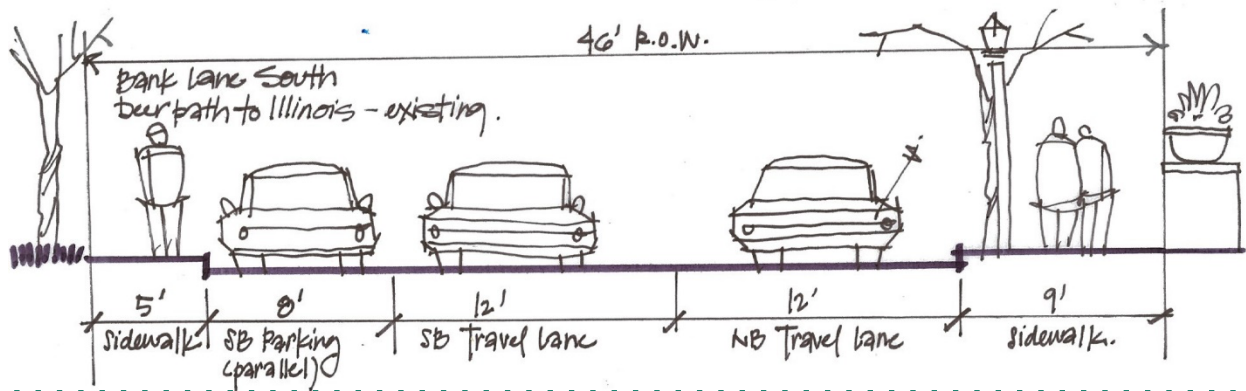
3.2-C: Consider making Bank Lane one way south from Deerpath to minimize congestion on Deerpath by avoiding left turn movements and to allow the travel lane on Bank Lane to be narrowed reducing vehicle speeds and providing additional opportunities for on street parking. Undertake the necessary traffic and circulation studies to evaluate feasibility and pros and cons of this concept.

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Bank Lane South · Illinois to Deerpath

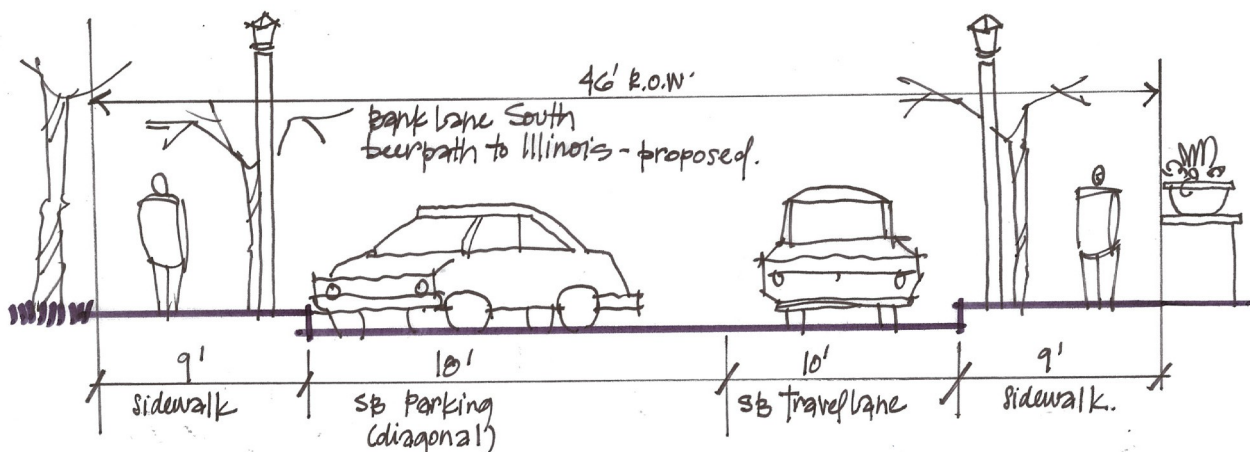
Existing Conditions - OVERVIEW OF CONSTRAINTS

- Two-way traffic / travel lanes limit pedestrian walkway
- Very narrow 5 foot sidewalk on west-side
- No pedestrian scaled lighting on west side
- No tree grate / tree on west side
- West side parallel parking does not provide many stalls



Proposed Concept - OVERVIEW OF IMPROVEMENTS

- Support redevelopment of underutilized properties
- Encourage mix of uses and multi-family residential
- Provide the ability to close the entire block for community events
- Convert to one-way southbound from Deerpath to minimize congestion
- Convert west side parallel parking to diagonal parking to increase on street parking
- Require pedestrian amenities as redevelopment occurs
- Widen sidewalks from 5 feet to 9 feet
- Add interest and character defining elements
- Install pedestrian scaled lighting on both sides of street
- Install landscape enhancements on both sides of street



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CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

■ 3.3 Bank Lane Core · Deerpath to Market Square

Bank Lane from Deerpath to Market Square is one-way north with a single travel lane. It is a unique and interesting space, alley-like with adjacent outdoor courtyards and dining spaces as one approaches Market Square. What had once been a service road behind the buildings facing Western Avenue has evolved into a very special sub-area. Unique businesses fill nooks and crannies, inviting exploration, and respite from the active business district experience and nearby more heavily travelled streets.

Existing Photos: Looking North to Market Square



3.3-A: Pedestrian Experience · Place a priority on pedestrian comfort and experience by considering improvements that support walkability over vehicle use recognizing there are first floor retail businesses that rely on visibility and the limited parking available on the street.

3.3-B: Parking · Recognize the need for parking to support retail businesses and restaurants and any future uses, new or expanded, that may locate in the CBD including multi-family residential.

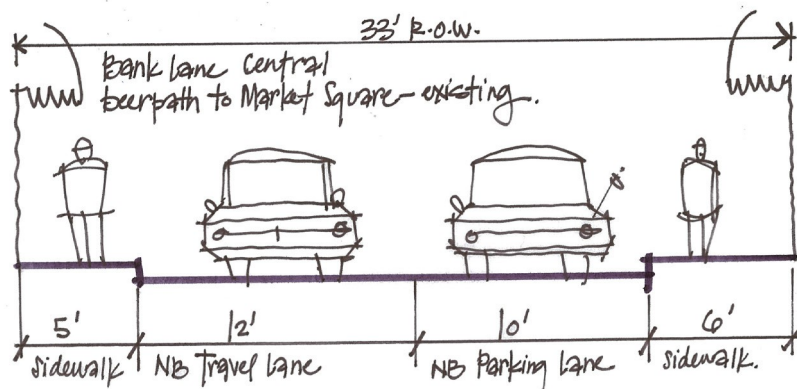
3.3-C: Events · Continue to use this block of Bank Lane for special events, allowing short term closure to vehicles while drawing increased pedestrian travel to the area for business exposure.

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Bank Lane Core · Deerpath to Market Square

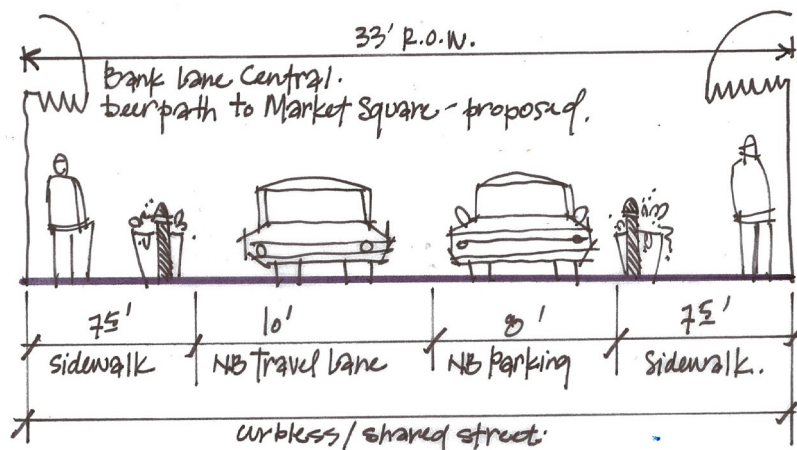
Existing Conditions - OVERVIEW OF CONSTRAINTS

- One-way north-bound travel lane
- North-bound parallel parking on east side of street
- Very narrow 5 ft sidewalk on west-side, 6 ft on east side
- Narrow sidewalk limits landscape planters and amenities



Proposed Concept - OVERVIEW OF IMPROVEMENTS

- Prioritize pedestrian comfort, experience and walkability
- Convert to curbless street; continue to use for special events/short term closures
- Widen sidewalks to 7.5 feet (reduce width of travel / parking lanes)
- Install bollards to define pedestrian zone
- Install planters, lighting, and pedestrian amenities



■ 3.4 Bank Lane North · Market Square to Wisconsin Avenue

Bank Lane from Market Square north to its terminus at Wisconsin Avenue continues as a narrow, single lane one-way north street with narrow sidewalks. Significant opportunities exist to enhance this portion of Bank Lane and encourage pedestrian activity between restaurants and businesses between Market Square and Wisconsin Avenue, including on Westminster.

Existing Photo: Looking North from Bank Lane to Westminster



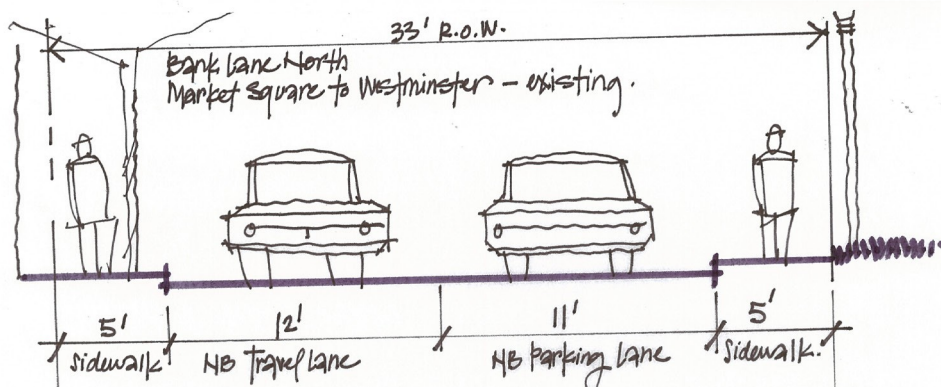
3.4-A: Adaptive Reuse Opportunities · Recognize that adaptive reuse and development opportunities exist along this stretch of Bank Lane including the Post Office, activating Market Square’s North Courtyard, upgrading or replacing some underutilized buildings, and the potential for future development of portions of existing parking lots.

3.4-B: Pedestrian Experience · Encourage new development / redevelopment to give priority to pedestrian amenities to create a distinctive and active Bank Lane pedestrian link from Illinois Road to Wisconsin Avenue, a corridor of restaurants, outdoor spaces, and a favorite place for an evening stroll.

Bank Lane Core · Market Square to Wisconsin Avenue

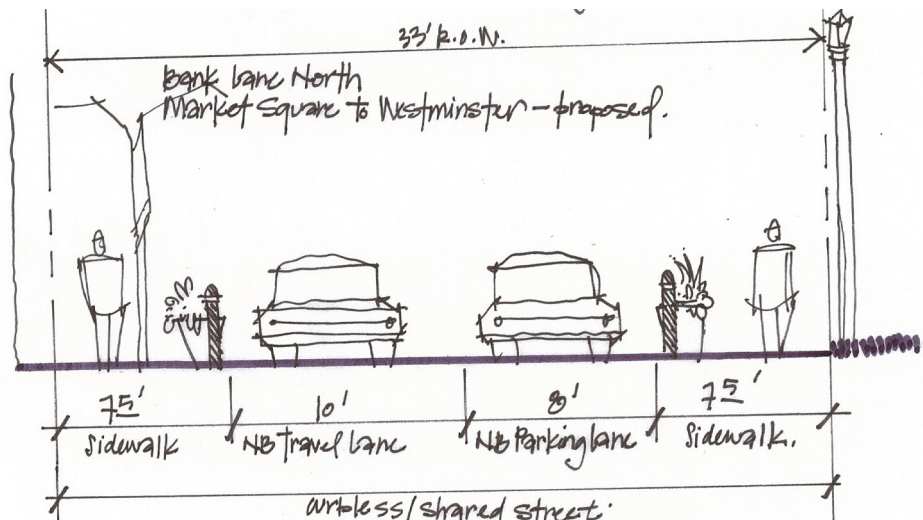
Existing Conditions - OVERVIEW OF CONSTRAINTS

- One-way north-bound travel lane
- North-bound parallel parking on east side of street
- Narrow 5 ft sidewalks
- No landscape planters or amenities in public r.o.w



Proposed Concept - OVERVIEW OF IMPROVEMENTS

- Recognize adaptive reuse and development opportunities
- Prioritize pedestrian experience
- Create a distinctive and active Bank Lane to draw people to the north
- Convert to curbless street (no curb, at grade)
- Widen sidewalks to 7.5 feet (reduce width of travel / parking lanes)
- Install bollards, planters and amenities to define pedestrian zone



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4 • Maintain & Enhance Infrastructure

The City-owned surface parking lots cover more than 4 acres of land in the CBD. They serve an important role in providing access to and supporting CBD vitality and represent a significant opportunity to serve as a potential catalyst for future redevelopment within the Inner Ring.

Parking is essential to sustain businesses in the CBD. Surface lots and structures must be planned, designed and managed thoughtfully to meet the needs of varying users, and accommodate changes over time, while providing safe, intuitive access. Given that the historic and established CBD Core is entirely built-out, proactive planning and efficient utilization of parking areas and potential redevelopment sites within the Inner Ring is critical. The surface parking lots owned by the City could, if developed at the proper scale and in a manner consistent with the character of the CBD with a mix of uses such as a variety of housing types, limited retail space, quality restaurant opportunities, outdoor gathering areas, and parking with limited visibility from the streetscape, enhance and support long term, sustainable vibrancy in the CBD. The recommendations that follow take into account these cross-cutting benefits and opportunities.

4.1: Intuitive Parking & Business Success

Recognize that easy to use parking, in the right locations, offered in a welcoming manner with clear signage and wayfinding is critical to the success of existing businesses and essential in attracting new businesses.

4.2: Planned Improvements & Locations

Plan for parking improvements in various locations to support businesses in the Core and Inner Ring, which historically have minimal, if any, onsite parking.

4.3: Pedestrian Connections & Amenities

Enhance pedestrian connections to parking through landscaping, appropriate signage, and well maintained and lighted walkways including under viaducts.

CITY-OWNED SURFACE PARKING LOTS



4.4: Parking Availability

Ensure that adequate parking on site or off site is planned for and provided when considering new development, redevelopment, or adaptive reuse of existing buildings.

4.5: Parking Requirements

Meet parking requirements through newly created spaces planned as part of future developments, through shared on-site parking agreements, or allocations as part of a future parking structure, if one is constructed. Surface parking lost through new development or renovation must be replaced in some similarly convenient manner.

4.6: Parking Policies

Consider where, when and whether accepting payment in lieu of parking requirements benefits the community, and what other forms of creative compensation may be warranted and/or appropriate to incentivize added character and vibrancy in the CBD.

4.7: Develop Parking Lot/Structure Development Parameters

Assure that parking lots and parking structures are designed and landscaped to fit in with and not be disruptive to the established character of the CBD and streetscapes. Give consideration to the following

4.7-A: Conceal or screen parking lots to minimize visual, light, sound and activity impacts on streetscapes and adjacent residential neighborhoods

4.7-B: Design new parking structures in ways that are compatible with the scale, materials and character of surroundings, and avoid the appearance of a parking structure while still making it easy to find.

4.7-C: Assure massing, height, connections and features achieve an appropriate transition from more intense development to adjacent residential neighborhoods. Avoid over-building, monolithic structures, and monotony; pay deference to significant historic structures.

4.7-D: Direct traffic away from residential streets, avoiding ingress and egress points.

4.7-E: Integrate interesting pedestrian connections, green space, outdoor gathering areas, and landscaped streetscapes; make parking part of the “Lake Forest experience” through creative wayfinding, programming opportunities / spaces, public art and materials.

4.7-F: Take advantage of changes in topography to minimize appearance of massing.

4.7-G: Build in sustainability elements such as: permeable paving, energy saving measures, alternate energy technologies, bike racks, building orientation to minimize heating/cooling demands, natural building materials, EV charging stations, recycling opportunities, water saving measures and court yard, roof top gardens.

4.8: Identify Stormwater Opportunities

Evaluate existing infrastructure in the CBD and identify needed improvements: streets, sidewalks, stormwater management, lighting.

4.9: Prioritize Public Improvements

Prioritize infrastructure improvements in the CBD in the Capital Improvement Plan especially those improvements necessary to protect private investments and promote public safety.

4.10: Incentivize Private Improvements

Consider incentives to support private stormwater management initiatives brought forward by CBD property owners.

4.11: Development Requirements

Require stormwater management improvements in conjunction with redevelopment and new development and take advantage of opportunities to collaborate on improvements as development occurs.

4.12: Inviting, Directional Signage

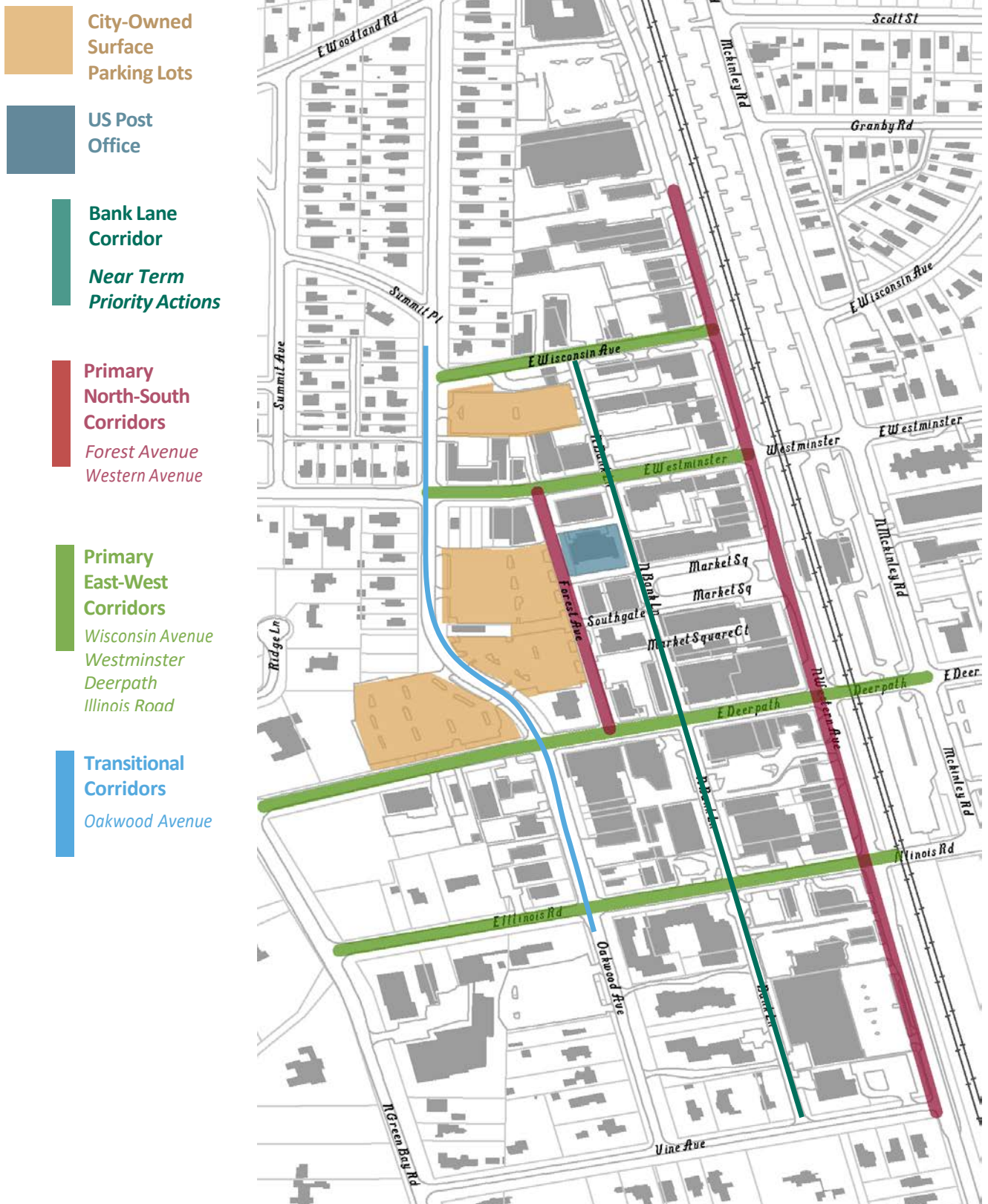
Invite people into the CBD with clear but understated signage that directs visitors to the Core, restaurants, shops, parking, and bicycle racks.

4.13: Develop Comprehensive Wayfinding & Signage

Develop a comprehensive Wayfinding & Signage Plan to guide pedestrians and vehicles easily to and through the CBD. Signage should respect and align with the overall character of the CBD.

Insert photos

5 · Support & Foster Public Private Partnerships



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- VISUALS AND IMAGERY INFILLS TO BE COMPLETED AS PART OF SUCH -

■ 5.1 U.S. Post Office

The Post Office is adjacent to and anchors the northwest corner of Market Square. Both the use and its Art Deco Post Office architecture are valued and contribute to the character of the Core.

5.1-A: Continue to monitor and remain in communication with the U.S. Postal Service with respect to the Lake Forest Post Office and any future intentions to downsize to a smaller location in or near Market Square.

5.1-B: Encourage the Post Office to retain a presence in the CBD going forward if the Post Office leaves the existing building.

5.1-C: Recognize that preservation, restoration of the building will be costly and may require incentives or assistance from the City or outside groups to make adaptive reuse of the building for desired uses possible.

5.1-D: Lead efforts to explore opportunities for public/private partnerships to support adaptive reuse of building for one or more uses to add vitality to Core: restaurants, retail, entertainment venue.



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■ 5.2 & 5.3 Streetscape Corridor Enhancements

Various street corridors “knit together” the CBD as a whole providing pedestrian and vehicle access through, to, and beyond the CBD in all directions. Parking is well interspersed throughout the CBD in various forms (on street parking, public lots, private lots) encouraging residents and visitors to park and meander from restaurants to local businesses, making stops along the way.

The various street corridors in the CBD have distinctly different building types, forms, and character. Two-sided streetscapes offer the opportunity for building facades and block faces to relate to each across the street creating a unified character. Depending on the width of the street and sidewalk, building heights, closed or transparent building facades, and the presence of or lack of landscaping and gathering spaces, the character of each street corridor offers a unique experience. Enhancing the public infrastructure in the corridors where and when needed on an ongoing basis should be a priority for the City. Private property owners should be encourage to do their part to maintain and enhance the corridors.



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■ 5.2 Primary & Transitional North/South Corridors

Western Avenue, Forest Avenue, Oakwood Avenue

Insert map / photos

Western Avenue is the primary North/South Corridor and borders the entire east edge of the CBD from north to south. Together, Western Avenue, the railroad tracks and McKinley Road provide an approximately 300 foot separation distance between the CBD and the residential neighborhoods to the east. Wide sidewalks extend along the west side of Western Avenue through the Core, Inner Ring, and beyond, creating a generally comfortable and active pedestrian experience although at times bicycles and scooters share the space causing congestion.

5.2-A: Invite businesses to actively use outdoor space along Western Avenue for limited seating and benches in good weather while maintaining an unobstructed sidewalk sufficient in width to support comfortable pedestrian use.

5.2-B: Continually maintain and enhance the landscaping along both sides of Western Avenue the full length of the CBD; maintain a similar density of plant material throughout.

5.2-C: Consider ways to better identify the most heavily used mid-block crosswalks. Shoppers and restaurant patrons frequently cross Western Avenue to reach the diagonal on-street parking on the east side of the street.

Forest Avenue extends from Deerpath north to Westminster, intersecting with Northgate and Southgate, which provide easy vehicle and pedestrian connections to Market Square. The expansive surface parking lots to the west make this narrow corridor appear wider.

5.2-D: Consider ways to enhance and bring awareness to Forest Avenue as a north/south pedestrian corridor.

5.2-E: Significant redevelopment and adaptive retrofit opportunities exist along Forest Avenue. The Character Guidelines and Development Parameters discussed earlier in this chapter must assure development connects with and supports Market Square, forms an appropriate edge to the business district, and respects and protects the neighborhood to the west.

Insert map / photo

***Oakwood Avenue North** extends from just north of Deerpath to Wisconsin Avenue. It is a “Transitional Corridor” given the interfacing of residential on the west side of the street with the business district on the east side. Any future development must pay special deference to this unique interface and preserving the residential character of the neighborhood.*

5.2-F: Avoid encroachment of the CBD beyond the current limits.

5.2-G: Protect, preserve, enhance the residential character of Oakwood Avenue.

5.2-H: Street frontage on east side of Oakwood Avenue must respect the established residential character on the west side in terms of use, massing, rooflines, setbacks, architectural styles, materials, and landscaping.

5.2-I: Create a pedestrian friendly streetscape.

5.2-J: Vehicular ingress/egress for any future development with frontage on Oakwood Avenue must be mindful of the residential neighborhood. Traffic studies should be conducted for any significant development or redevelopment in this transitional area to assess potential impacts on the residential character of the neighborhood as a result of traffic volumes, cut-through traffic, and ingress/egress points.

5.2-K: Consider ways to discourage “cut through” traffic on Oakwood Avenue by minimizing any new access points, street designs, and wayfinding/directional signage.

5.2-L: Provide pedestrian connections from residential neighborhood to/through CBD.

Insert map / photo

Oakwood Avenue South extends from Deerpath south to just past Illinois Road with both sides of the street developed with commercial buildings of various types. This portion of Oakwood Avenue essentially forms the west edge of the business district and is used by some as a “bypass” to avoid congestion on Deerpath at times.

5.2-M: Recognize that Oakwood Avenue has not successfully functioned as a location for retail businesses in part due to building configurations and distance from the Core.

5.2-N: Support personal service businesses, professional and medical offices, and multi-family residential along this corridor.

5.2-O: Explore opportunities to enhance the functionality of buildings, activate open spaces, add pedestrian pathways and improve connections to the greater CBD.

5.2-P: If sites redevelop, parking should be added away from the streetscape, behind, under, or internal to buildings, to support a mix of uses with adequate parking.

■ 5.3 Primary East/West Street Corridors

Deerpath, Illinois Road, Westminster, Wisconsin Avenue

Insert map / photo

Deerpath is the primary east-west entrance to the CBD and is heavily traveled and congested at times. The entry corridor should represent the best the City has to offer and evoke a sense that one has arrived somewhere special. The streetscape should present high quality architecture, well landscaped streets, consistent lighting, green spaces, and safe and well placed pedestrian crossings and amenities.

5.3-A: When implementing the Deerpath Streetscape Improvement Plan consider the improvements in the context of infrastructure improvements that may be needed on Bank Lane to avoid ongoing construction in the CBD. Plan for a subsequent phase of the Deerpath Streetscape Improvement Plan extending to Route 41, a high visibility entry into the CBD.

5.3-B: Enhance the walkability along Deerpath encouraging pedestrian activity between Veterans Park and the CBD.

5.3-C: Encourage replacement of buildings along Deerpath that do not contribute positively to creating a welcoming entry to the CBD. Plan for a streetscape that along which buildings on either side relate to each other in massing, height, style, detailing, and materials.

5.3-D: Character Guidelines should seek to enhance the streetscape environment and encourage pedestrian activity, safety and comfort via setbacks, seat walls, furnishings, landscaping and other elements.

5.3-E: Consider limiting turns on to Deerpath in the most congested blocks by making Bank Lane one way south.

Insert map / photo

Illinois Road anchors the south end of the Inner Ring with historic buildings and a unique blend of uses, a distinctive hotel, restaurants, and specialty businesses.

5.3-F: Encourage continued development of hospitality-oriented businesses as additive uses to the Deer Path Inn and other businesses in the area.

5.3-G: Plan for increased parking to support uses, build-in excess parking, in appropriate forms and locations, as new development and redevelopment occurs.

5.3-H: Consider opportunities for public/private partnerships to support parking in this corridor.

Insert map / photo

Westminster west of Western Avenue, is an active corridor, just beyond the Core of the CBD. A mix of uses and building types line this street although over time, some buildings fronting on the street have been lost and replaced with auto-oriented development diminishing the pedestrian attractiveness, connectivity, and sense of vitality along this corridor.

5.3-I: Encourage appropriate redevelopment and reuse of underutilized and outdated properties in a manner that welcomes pedestrian activity and steps down as Westminster approaches Oakwood Avenue.

5.3-J: Protect and respect the Oakwood Avenue residential neighborhood as redevelopment occurs along Westminster.

5.3-K: Pay attention to how buildings on street frontages relate to buildings across the street.

Insert map / photo

Wisconsin Avenue west of Western Avenue is anchored with substantial buildings at Western Avenue quickly stepping down to smaller scale buildings to the west. Wisconsin Avenue is the north end of Bank Lane.

5.3-L: Development on Wisconsin Avenue should provide an attractive visual terminus at the north end of Bank Lane.

5.3-M: Maintain a significant step down in scale at the shared edge of the business district and adjacent residential neighborhood.

5.3-N: Preserve and protect the Oakwood Avenue residential neighborhood as redevelopment occurs along Wisconsin Avenue.