

1 Acknowledgements

Introduction

Many individuals and volunteers contributed to the *Village of Glen Ellyn Downtown Strategic Plan*, including scores of public participants. The individuals identified below were involved in an on-going basis.

Downtown Advisory Committee

- Rinda Allison, Chairperson
- Pat Melady, Vice Chairperson, Downtown Property Owner
- Dan Anderson, Historical Society
- Iain Dickie, Architectural Review Commission and Licensed Architect
- Linda Dykstra, Plan Commission
- Scott Hamer, Chamber of Commerce
- Beth Howley, Go Downtown!
- Jean Kaczmarek, Resident at Large
- Rob Kelley, Downtown Business Owner
- Tim Loftus, Historic Preservation Commission, Historical Society, Citizens for Glen Ellyn Preservation
- Jim Meyers, Economic Development Corporation (EDC)
- Sandy Moore, Retail Business Owner
- E. Jessica Pekny, Downtown Glen Ellyn Alliance, Downtown Business Owner
- Ann Riebock, School District 41
- Jennifer Shannon, Downtown Restaurant and Property Owner

Village of Glen Ellyn

Current Village Board

- Mark Pfefferman, Village President
- James Comerford, Trustee
- Peter Cooper, Trustee
- Phil Hartweg, Trustee
- Carl Henninger, Trustee
- Pete Ladesic, Trustee
- Michelle Thorsell, Trustee

Past Village Board

- Vicky Hase, Village President
- Timothy Armstrong, Trustee
- Mary Jane Chapman, Trustee
- James Comerford, Trustee
- Pete Ladesic, Trustee
- Peter Norton, Trustee
- Michelle Thorsell, Trustee

Student Assistant

- Julia Kaczmarek

Project Team

- Village of Glen Ellyn
- Town Builder Studios
- Gruen Gruen + Associates
- Walker Parking Consultants
- BauerLatoza Studio

2 Executive Summary

Introduction

In the past few years, Glen Ellyn has experienced an increase in retail vacancies in its Downtown. Although this historic commercial district enjoyed extremely low retail vacancy rates as recently as 2005, the signs of an official economic downturn may have begun as early as the mid-1960s, when regional shopping malls began to appear in DuPage County. The recent increase in Downtown vacancies prompted the Village of Glen Ellyn to partner with the consulting team of Town Builder Studios, Gruen Gruen + Associates, Walker Parking Consultants, and BauerLatoza Studio, to create a Downtown Strategic Plan that not only looks 20 years into the future, but identifies steps for immediate action.

The *Village of Glen Ellyn Downtown Strategic Plan* is the result of a partnership between the community and the consulting team working together towards a common goal of making Downtown Glen Ellyn more economically viable.

The Downtown Strategic Plan

The *Village of Glen Ellyn Downtown Strategic Plan* is the culmination of a planning process that involved residents, business owners, property owners, Village staff, and the consulting team. The public was very active in the planning process, from the 15-member Downtown Advisory Committee (DAC) meetings, to interviews, merchant surveys, a design studio, charrettes, open houses, presentations, and paper and online public feedback surveys, it was evident that the community was passionate about the vitality of its Downtown.

In addition to the public input, the consulting team utilized its professional expertise in summarizing and analyzing the gathered data, putting ideas on paper, and creating the *Village of Glen Ellyn Downtown Strategic Plan*.

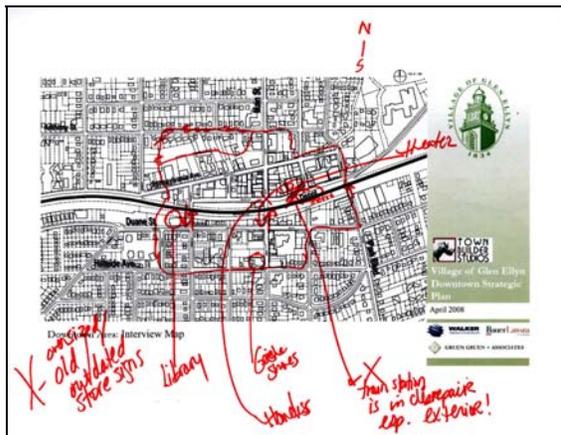
The goal of the *Downtown Strategic Plan* is to create an economically-viable Downtown that is attractive to citizens and businesses, and the pages within the final report illustrate and describe the means in which to achieve this goal.

Community Input

The *Village of Glen Ellyn Downtown Strategic Plan* process followed a planning schedule that included tasks such as Downtown data collection and analysis, a market analysis, concept plans, a refined preferred plan, a list of strategies to implement the final master plan, and a final report adopted by the Village Board of Trustees. A 15-person Downtown Advisory Committee (DAC) was assembled to serve as a sounding board for the TBS Team's preliminary conclusions and recommendations before the ideas were shared with the rest of the community. A unique step in the planning process was the June 2008 Charette and Main Street Design Studio event, when the TBS Team held a Monday evening charette (design brainstorming session), and then set up a temporary two-day studio at 476 Main Street where anyone from the general public could stop by and share their concerns, hopes, and dreams for Downtown Glen Ellyn. The two day studio was followed by a final public presentation in the studio space on Main Street, with more than 50 citizens, business owners, property owners, and Village officials in attendance.

There were numerous opportunities for community input. Citizens, business owners, property owners, and community leaders were interviewed over the course of the planning process. The DAC met more times than originally planned, and many members volunteered additional time to attend and make presentations at public events and meet with other communities to learn from their experiences. In addition to email communications via the project website, opportunities for public input included two public "town hall" meetings, two public open houses with presentations, and two online surveys. The purpose of the first online survey was to understand the preferences of the community for Concept #1 ("The Glen") and Concept #2 ("Main Street") to create a "preliminary preferred plan". The purpose of the second online survey was to understand the preferences of the community regarding the details contained within the preliminary preferred plan ("The Downtown Glen").

Project boards were on display at the Glen Ellyn Public Library and in the Civic Center during several critical times in the planning process to educate the public and gather their feedback on the preliminary ideas.

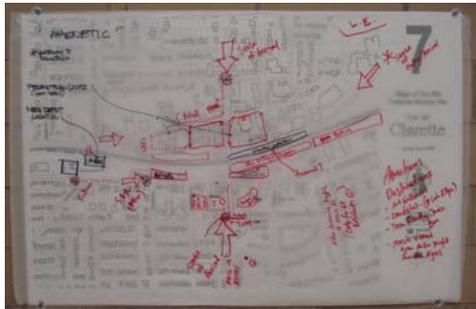


Interview Maps

Over the course of several days in April 2008, the TBS Team conducted interviews with more than 100 citizens, business owners, property owners and community leaders. Each interviewee was given a blank map and asked to illustrate the following:

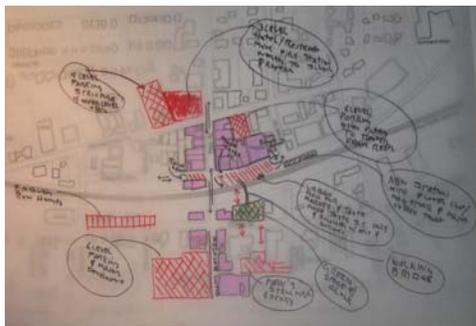
- *A boundary around the area perceived to be the outer limits of the Downtown.*
- *A circle around the three most important destinations in the Downtown.*
- *An "X" over the worst feature of the Downtown.*
- *Arrows at the primary entrance to and exit from the Downtown.*

The highlight of the planning process, however, was an evening charette followed by a two-day “Main Street Design Studio”, where the consulting team set up a temporary studio in Downtown Glen Ellyn, and the community was able to drop-in and describe and/or draw their version of an ideal future for Downtown Glen Ellyn. Some drew their own maps, while others participated in “annotated conversations”, where each participant described their visions to a design staff member, and their ideas were transformed into a hand-drawn map as they spoke. The following illustrations reflect an example of the different types of maps developed during the public participation component of the planning process:



Charette Maps

During the June 2008 “Town Hall Charette”, participants broke out into small groups, discussed ideas, wrote notes, and drew out desirable features of a future Downtown.



Community Maps

During the June 2008 “Main Street Design Studio”, the public was invited to drop in at any time and discuss their likes and dislikes of the existing Downtown, and their hopes and dreams for the future of the Downtown. Some participants chose to draw their own ideas, known as “Community Maps”.



Annotated Conversation Maps

During the June 2008 “Main Street Design Studio”, the public was invited to drop in at any time and discuss their likes and dislikes of the existing Downtown, and their hopes and dreams for the future of the Downtown. Some participants sat down with a design staff member who illustrated and annotated the ideas of the individual or small group, known as “Annotated Conversation Maps”.

Expert Analysis

The Village of Glen Ellyn contracted with the Town Builder Studios (TBS) Team to work with the community and facilitate the planning process for the Downtown Strategic Plan. Along with Town Builder Studios, the team was comprised of Gruen Gruen + Associates, Walker Parking Consultants, and BauerLatoza Studio.

Land Use and Public Policy Analysis

Downtown Glen Ellyn has several mixed-use buildings along Main Street and Crescent Boulevard, with first floor retail and residential or office uses above. The number of these types of buildings should be increased – via remodeling or new development – to create a more vibrant Downtown.

In recent years, Village staff has established a more efficient review and approval processes for business, event, and development proposals; however, adjustments should be made to the Zoning Code, Sign Code, Glen Ellyn Appearance Review Guidelines, and Glen Ellyn Appearance Review Guidelines Photo Resource Directory, to create an even better business-friendly partnership between the Village and the Downtown business community.

Market Analysis

Downtown's primary market area is generally bound by North Avenue to the north, Butterfield Road to the south, Naperville Road/Main Street – Wheaton to the west, and I-355 to the east. The market analysis concludes that the retail supply is double what the spending power is within the primary market area; there is a lack of incubator office space in the Downtown; there is a lack of residential units in the Downtown for smaller-sized to provide Glen Ellyn residents the opportunity to live near their workplaces; the restaurants are an asset to draw visitors to the Downtown; and there needs to be a collection of businesses, activities, and a community gathering place that work together better as a whole than the sum of their parts.

Circulation and Access Analysis

Downtown Glen Ellyn was first settled in the mid-1800s when the railroad came through the area and a train station was constructed. The street grid is conducive to a pedestrian-friendly environment; however, over the years, increased rail traffic has made the Downtown less circulation-friendly with approximately 180 trains passing through the Downtown every day.

In general, there is a perceived shortage of public parking and an actual lack of convenient public and commuter parking in the Downtown. Downtown employee parking needs and future Metra commuter parking needs result in the need for a parking structure in the short-term. The Illinois Prairie Path and Glen Ellyn Train Station are some of the Downtown amenities that should be enhanced and future reinvestment efforts in these amenities should occur.

Historic Inventory

The historically-significant buildings were built primarily in the 1890s and the 1920s, with many of the current “outstanding” and “notable” structures in the Downtown comprised of Old-English Tudor and Half-Timber architectural styles. Since the character of these buildings cannot be replicated today, it is recommended that a historic district be established for much of the Downtown core. A building with a National Register designation can provide the building owner the opportunity to utilize tax credits for renovating and restoring it to its original splendor.

The Goal for Glen Ellyn's Downtown

The purpose of the *Downtown Strategic Plan* process is to identify strategies to slow down and reverse the trend of increasing Downtown business vacancies, resulting in the following goal for the *Downtown Strategic Plan*.

Create an economically-viable Downtown that is attractive to citizens and businesses.

Some of the means in which to achieve this goal are:

1. Provide an appropriate mix and supply of **retail** establishments to draw consumers to the Downtown.
2. Increase the Village's **population within walking distance** of the Downtown, by increasing the number of dwelling units (and thereby, consumers) in and around the Downtown.
3. Improve the condition of many Downtown **buildings**, by upgrading and modernizing building interiors and maintaining and restoring building exteriors.
4. Increase the amount of Downtown **office** space that attracts small and growing businesses.
5. Create new Downtown **amenities** by increasing recreation and parkland opportunities.
6. Increase the number of **cultural events and activities** that could make Downtown Glen Ellyn a destination for residents and non-residents alike.
7. Eliminate the perception of **government-imposed obstacles** to operating a business and reinvesting in private property in the Downtown.
8. Establish safe and efficient pedestrian, bicycle, and automobile **traffic and access** patterns to, through, and from the Downtown.
9. Improve the sufficiency and convenience of the Downtown **parking** supply north and south of the tracks.
10. Establish a **distinguishing feature** in the Downtown that differentiates Glen Ellyn's Downtown from other communities' downtowns.
11. Establish a Downtown implementation **funding** plan to ensure that reinvestment occurs and initiatives are achieved.

Downtown Strategic Plan:

Physical Characteristics

The Downtown Master Plan illustrates the vision for Downtown Glen Ellyn. The master plan includes a framework plan upon which the land use plan and the circulation and access plan are organized. The following overview summarizes the concepts behind the illustrations on the following pages.

Framework Plan



A wide greenway will pass through the Downtown along its narrow valley (or "glen"), incorporating natural features into an urban area and providing a connection to Lake Ellyn, thereby creating a feature in the Village of Glen Ellyn that sets it apart from other western suburbs. A Main Street with two- and three-story building facades adjacent to the sidewalks will provide the "small town" ambiance of the Downtown. A new Glen Ellyn Train Station with landmark-quality details, materials, colors, and proportions will be the center of Downtown activity. Options for parking structures north and south of the tracks along Forest Avenue will provide additional parking for commuters, and Downtown visitors, merchants, and employees.

Land Use Plan



A blend of "The Glen" and "Main Street" concepts presented to the public during the planning process, the plan includes a greenway as a landscaped feature through the valley of the Downtown. Mixed-use buildings with first floor retail (and floors above office or residential) will be located within the Downtown core, which is oriented along the greenway and Main Street. Medical office and service uses will be primarily located northwest of the Downtown core. Residential buildings will surround the Downtown core and the overall Downtown area. Institutional uses – including a new Civic, Leadership, and Learning Center on Duane Street – will be located throughout the Downtown.

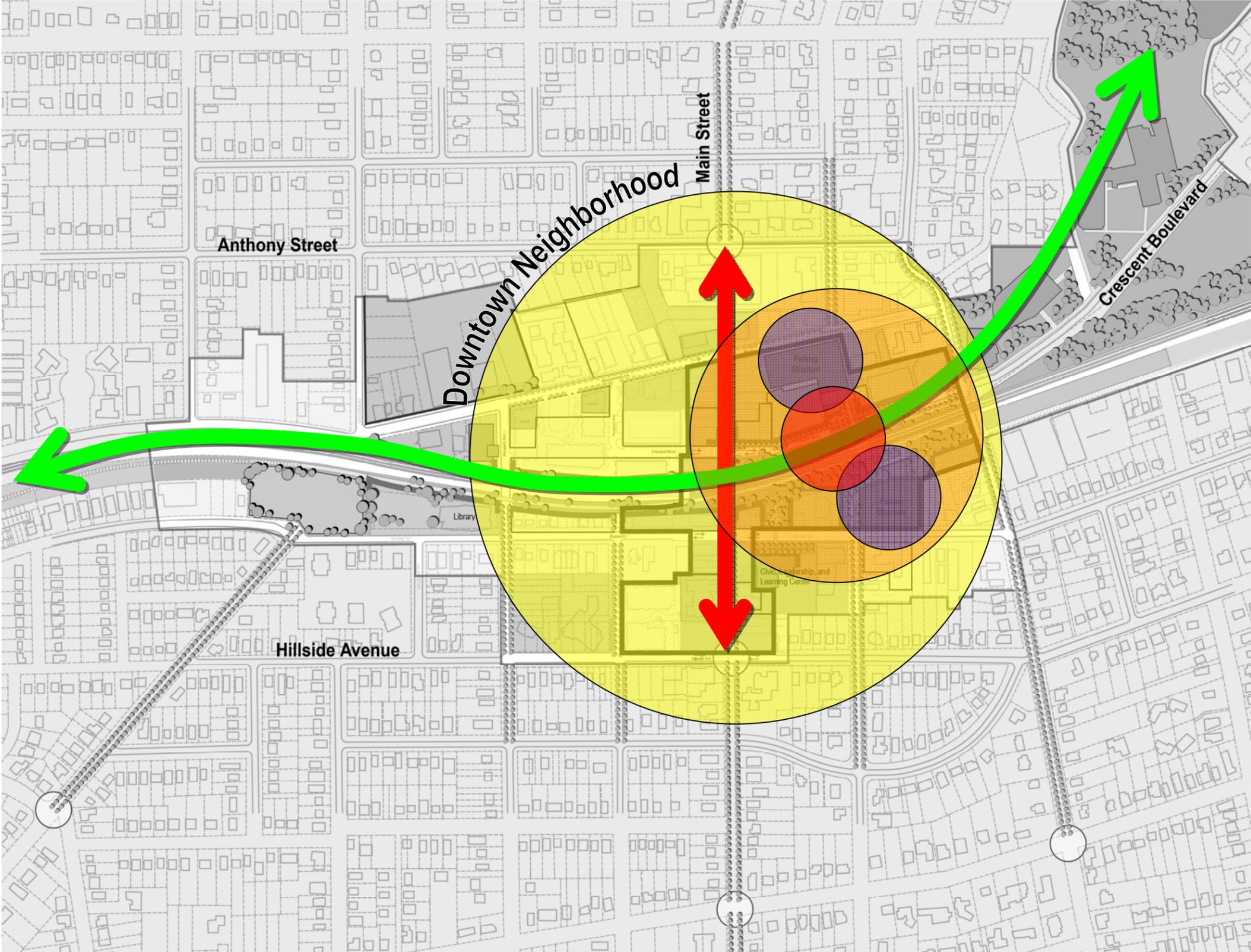
Circulation and Access Plan



The Downtown is a major attraction, and will draw people in by foot, bicycle, bus, train, and car. Sidewalks will be wide and well-maintained, and intersections will be well-marked and safe for pedestrians to cross. Several on-street bicycle routes will draw residents in from the north and south sides of the Downtown, while the Illinois Prairie Path will continue to bring visitors in from neighboring communities via an off-road path. Pace Bus and Metra will continue to bring visitors into the Downtown from surrounding communities and from across the region. Main Street will continue to be the primary access into the Downtown, and its 2.0-mile corridor connects Roosevelt Road and Geneva/St. Charles Roads to the Downtown. Two-way traffic patterns and an efficient and effective parking system will highlight the improvements within the Downtown.

Figure 1:

Framework Plan



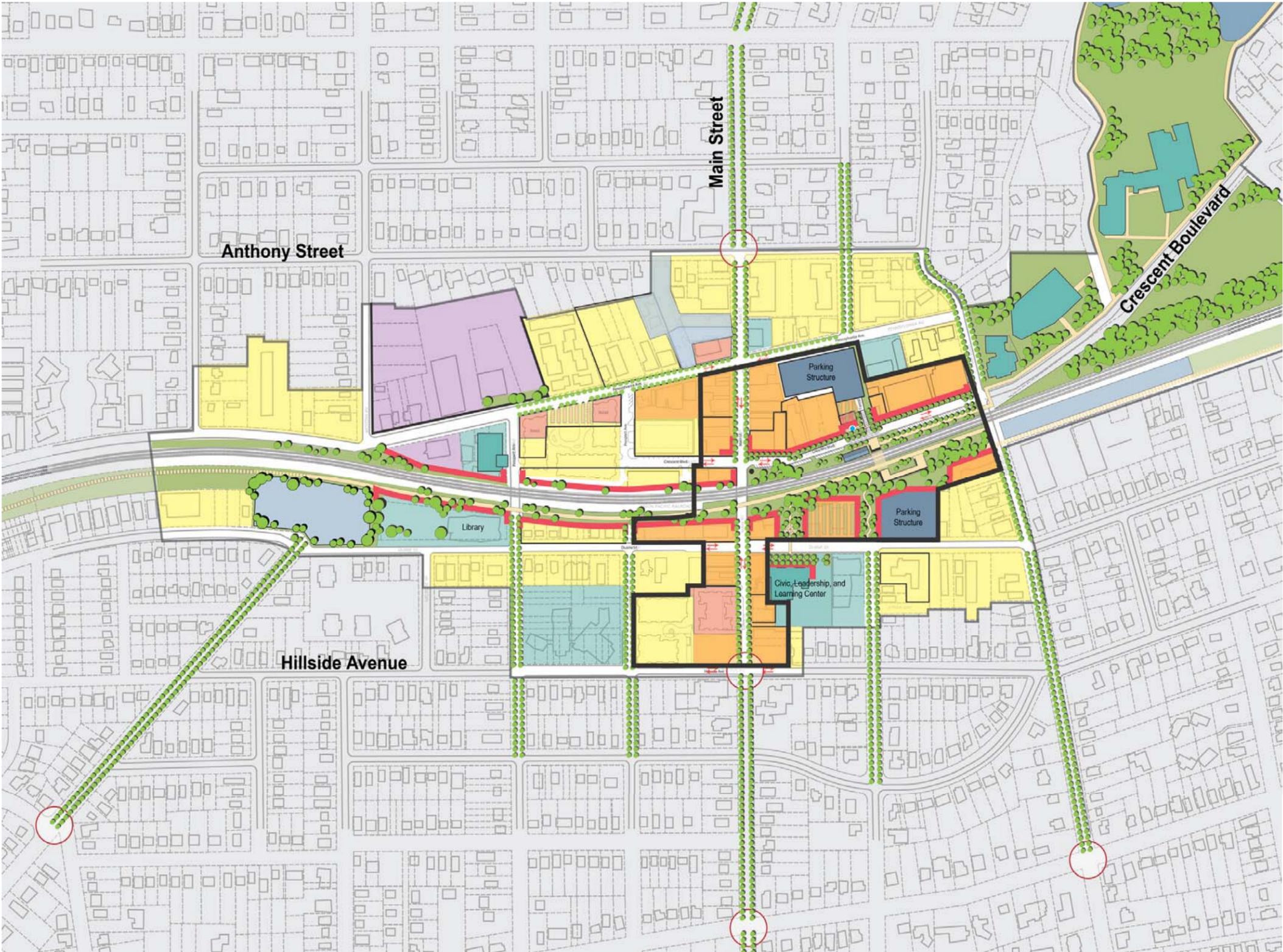
Legend

- Downtown Neighborhood
- Activity Center
- Train Station
- Optional Public Parking Structure
- The Downtown Greenway
- Downtown Main Street

Source: Town Builder Studios

Figure 2:

Land Use Plan



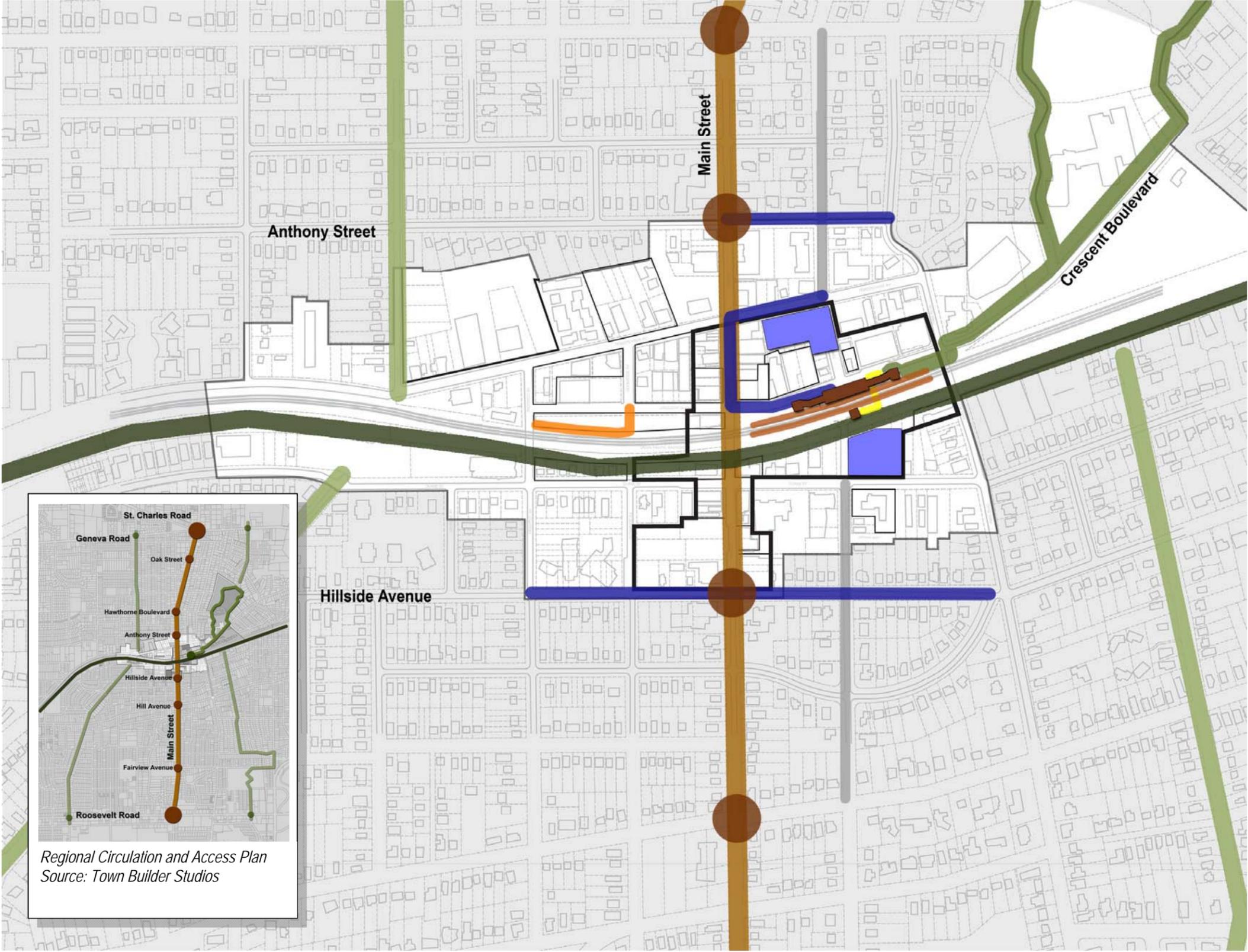
Legend

- Open Space
- Institutional
- New Mixed-Use
- Mixed-Use Reinvestment
- Medical Office / Service
- Multiple Family Residential
- Optional Parking Garage
- Parking Lot
- Important Corridor Edge
- Trail / Path
- Street Trees
- Open Space and Buffer Trees
- Gateway
- Downtown Core
- Surrounding Neighborhoods
- Horse Trough

Source: Town Builder Studios

Figure 3:

Circulation and Access Plan



Legend

- Main Street Corridor
- Major Main Street Gateway
- Minor Main Street Gateway
- Illinois Prairie Path
- Looped Path
- Train Station
- Bicycle Access Route
- Bicycle Access Gateway
- Two-Way Street
- Optional Two-Way Street
- Parking Structure
- Platforms
- Crescent Boulevard Realignment

Regional Circulation and Access Plan
 Source: Town Builder Studios

Source: Town Builder Studios

Downtown Strategic Plan:

Implementation

A nationwide economic downturn was experienced in 2008 and is ongoing as of the writing of this report; however, there are ample opportunities to begin various partnerships, initiatives, and projects as soon as the *Downtown Strategic Plan* is adopted. Some changes will occur within the first year of plan adoption, others could occur 20 years into the future.

The following major short-term (0 to 5 years), mid-term (6-10 years), and long-term (11-20 years) initiatives and projects are listed in the order of anticipated implementation over the next 20 years. In general, short-term projects and initiatives are low-cost and easy to implement, while long-term projects and initiatives are higher-cost and more complicated to implement. These projects may be initiated privately, publicly, or via a public-private partnership. Regardless of the project or initiative, partnerships and relationships should be established as soon as possible, since many construction projects can take months or years to develop prior to entering the Village's review and approval process. Details about each project and initiative can be found in Chapter 10: Implementation.

Initiatives

Administration

1. Create a Permanent Downtown Organization – Short-Term and Ongoing
2. Establish a Historic Downtown District – Short-Term and Ongoing
3. Review and Make Improvements to the Zoning Code and the Development/Administrative Review Process – Short-Term and Ongoing

Public-Private Partnerships

4. Strengthen the Village of Glen Ellyn/College of DuPage Partnership – Short-Term

Projects

Infrastructure

5. Analyze the Downtown Traffic Circulation System – Short-Term
6. Design and Install New Public Signage, Wayfinding, and Streetscaping – Short-Term
7. Design and Consider Constructing the Main Street and Crescent Boulevard Streetscapes, and the North Downtown Greenway – Short-Term
8. Maintain and Enhance the Recreational and Multiple-Use Path System – Short-Term
9. Design and Construct the Mixed-Use Forest Avenue North Parking Structure – Short-Term
10. Design and Construct New Train Station Facilities and a Pedestrian Underpass – Mid-Term
11. Design and Consider Constructing the Mixed-Use Forest Avenue South Parking Structure – Long-Term
12. Design and Construct the South Downtown Greenway – Long-Term¹

Development

13. Encourage and Facilitate Private Downtown Building Maintenance and Modernization – Short-Term
14. Facilitate a Private South Main Street Mixed-Use Development – Mid-Term
15. Facilitate a Private Residential Development on Existing Church Parking Lot and Village-Owned Parking Lot – Mid-Term
16. Facilitate a Potential Fire Department Relocation and the Redevelopment of the Existing Fire Station Site – Long-Term
17. Facilitate a Potential Police Department Relocation and the Creation of the Civic, Leadership, and Learning Center – Long-Term
18. Facilitate a Private Residential and Mixed-Use Neighborhood Development in the Crescent Boulevard and Glenwood Avenue Area – Long-Term

By adopting the *Downtown Strategic Plan*, a commitment has been made by the community to begin immediately on the implementation process.

¹ A majority of the Village Board was not in favor of the South Downtown Greenway project at the time of plan adoption; therefore, further discussion of this concept is recommended prior to commencing any studies or engineering analysis for this project.