

# 9

## Downtown Strategic Plan: Physical Characteristics

### Introduction

The *Downtown Strategic Plan* is the result of ideas generated from many individuals, including the general public, the Downtown Advisory Committee, elected and appointed officials, and the consulting team. This chapter describes and illustrates the *Downtown Strategic Plan* for Downtown Glen Ellyn – the physical characteristics envisioned for the Downtown. Fundamentally, the plan is based on the market analysis and the need to accomplish the goal of achieving an economically-viable Downtown. The measurement of the plan's success can be tied to its ability to achieve the various objectives previously described. The analysis related to transportation, historic resources, and urban design were important references in the preparation of the plan also.

Every planning process begins with understanding the area that is being planned for. Site visits, existing conditions photographs and annotated inventories, previous report and planning literature reviews, and general observations from a collaborative team of multi-disciplined planning professionals were conducted. In addition, this plan is based on the desires and concerns expressed by Glen Ellyn residents and business owners through a variety of forums including interviews, public open houses, a charette (a design-based brainstorming session), a two-day Main Street Design Studio, public feedback forms, community emails, and phone calls. The information received from the public, data collection and analysis by the consulting team, and the input by the DAC, contributed to the understanding of Downtown Glen Ellyn and the creation of the *Downtown Strategic Plan*.

### Elements

The following elements describe the general characteristics included in the overall *Downtown Strategic Plan*.

#### Retail and Entertainment Destination

The retail, restaurant, and special event activities, are orchestrated into a unified whole, making the Downtown a destination for residents, neighboring communities, and the region alike. Merchants sell affordable and high-end goods, restaurateurs prepare a wide array of meals for any budget, and the favorite community events are enhanced with new activities that draw new consumers into the Downtown shops and restaurants.

## Neighborhood Character

The Downtown is adorned with historic buildings and new buildings sensitive to the rich architectural heritage. The scale of the Downtown is a mixed-use neighborhood center that includes residential uses; it is not a regional shopping center. The general architectural styles found in the Downtown are Old English Tudor, Half-Timber, and new historically-sensitive versions of these styles. Buildings are generally two to three stories; however, taller buildings are allowed as long as the front façade is stepped back from the street. The building material palette includes brick, cut stone, and wood, with an earth-tone color palette, and windows with minimally- or non-tinted glass.

## Transit-Oriented

The activity hub of Downtown Glen Ellyn is located at the Glen Ellyn Train Station, resulting in a transit-oriented development that is not auto-dominated.

## Attractions and Events

Favorite events have been retained and enhanced to improve the vibrancy in the Downtown.

### *Taste of Glen Ellyn*

Glen Ellyn restaurants and the College of DuPage are involved in this event. The Downtown restaurateurs set up their vendor booth outside of their locations so participants can stroll through the Downtown, remember the restaurant location, and stop by the stores with "Taste" specials that coincide with the weekend event. In addition, culinary arts and hospitality students from the College of DuPage are involved in this event. The students serve as interns at the various restaurants, sell their culinary creations from their own booths, and help organize the event. The carnival continues; however, its activities and location will change over time as the *Downtown Strategic Plan* is implemented.

### *Fourth of July*

The local businesses and restaurants are more involved in the Fourth of July festivities with sponsorships, holiday specials, and a scavenger hunt for the kids.

### *Jazz Fest*

The Jazz Fest is now a multi-day event. One hundred percent (100%) Downtown merchant participation is encouraged with in-store jazz fest displays and specials.

### *Halloween Trick-or-Treating*

The trick-or-treating fun has been extended to kids of all ages, including adult treats that include coupons to be used within seven days of Halloween, flyers with day-after-Thanksgiving specials, and/or bite-sized samples of the cuisine of the Downtown food establishments.

### *Holiday Season*

The Holiday Walk and Christmas Tree Lighting activities continue, and new events are added, such as sugar cookie decorating contest at local bakeries, ethnic holiday food taste testing parties at local restaurants, and culminating in a polar bear swim in Lake Ellyn on New Years Day.

## Environmental Standards and State-of-the-Art Technologies

Business plans for Downtown businesses, and Downtown redevelopment and reinvestment strategies, utilize eco-friendly concepts. Leadership in Environmental and Energy Design (LEED) standards, reuse and recycling programs and community events, environmentally-friendly-themed movie nights and book club meetings, organic food, non-toxic building finishes and decorations, Energy Star appliances and electronics, daylight, energy-efficient light fixtures, upgraded heating/ventilation/air conditioning (HVAC) systems, insulation, Low-E glass, bike-to-work and bike-to-the-Glen Ellyn Train Station programs, use of salvaged building materials, reusing all or portions of a building in lieu of completely razing a building, pervious pavement, solar- and wind-powered electricity, on-demand hot water heaters, building materials from renewable resources, restaurants utilizing reusable and/or biodegradable place

settings and silverware, and xeriscaping<sup>1</sup> in the Downtown Greenway, are examples of how the Downtown business and residential community can achieve a more earth-friendly environment.

Design and construction standards for the public realm have been adopted that include state-of-the-art green and LEED-related design guidelines to promote community connections, technology, and communications, along with environmental best management practices. In addition, “dark skies” lighting technology continues reduces the amount of artificial light reflected into the sky at night in the Downtown.

## Urgency

Plan implementation is a top priority for the Downtown and the Village. Short-term projects set the standard for the mid- and long-term projects and initiatives, as well as signaling to the community that the Village is serious about making its Downtown economically-viable once again.

# Framework Plan

A greenway passes through the Downtown along its glen (a narrow valley), 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 continues the “small town” feel of the Downtown. A new Glen Ellyn Train Station is the center of Downtown activity, 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 provide additional parking for commuters, and Downtown visitors, merchants, and employees.

The Downtown Greenway creates an environment that is unique in the region. Its main purpose is to beautify the Downtown and establish a focal point in the Downtown that enhances the existing Illinois Prairie Path amenity. Programming for the greenway could include sculptures, flower gardens, and other passive recreation activities.<sup>2</sup> Downtown businesses take advantage of the splendor, recreational activities, and special event programs. A branch off the Illinois Prairie Path, leads Downtown visitors to an inviting and safe pedestrian underpass next to the new Glen Ellyn Train Station. In addition to pedestrian access, the underpass is wheelchair-accessible and bicycle-friendly.

The Lake Ellyn Trail amenity within the Downtown Greenway is a 1.5-mile looped path connecting the Glen Ellyn Train Station to Lake Ellyn utilized by people of all ages for activities such as walking, running, biking, and rollerblading.

“Attractive”, “green”, “natural”, and “active” are words that describe the backbone of the Downtown.

“Handsome”, “elegant”, “spacious”, “vibrant”, and “bustling” are words that describe the improvements to Main Street.

The edges of the greenway are just as important as the greenway itself. Buildings facing the greenway must have a “front door” appearance. The railroad right-of-way should be thought of as a grand boulevard, and the buildings along its route should have high-quality building design details and materials.

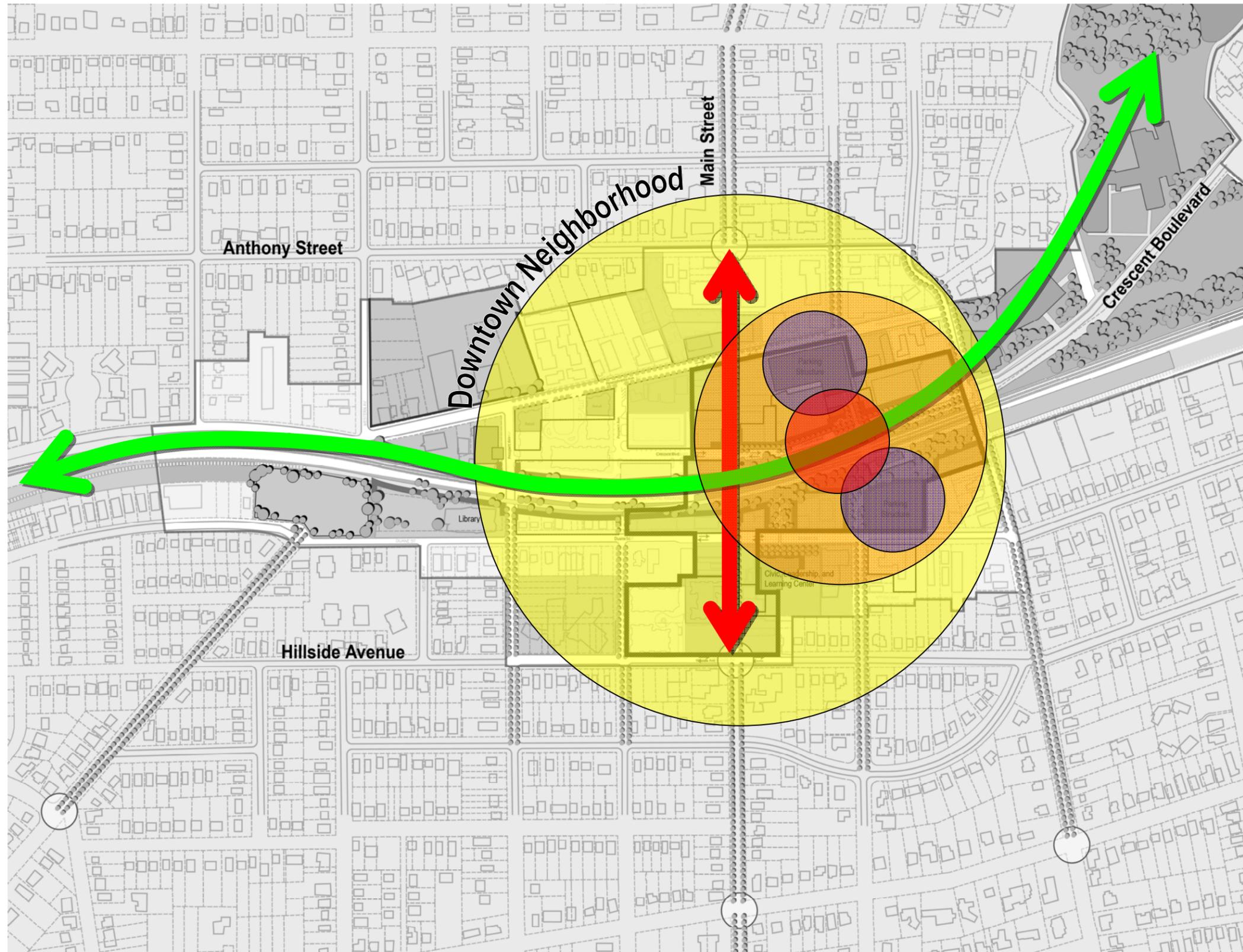
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<sup>1</sup> Xeriscaping is the practice of designing landscaping in a way that reduces or eliminates the need for supplemental irrigation.

<sup>2</sup> Active recreation activities such as organized team sporting events, playing catch, and throwing Frisbees, should not be allowed due to the proximity of the train tracks and the area of the useable greenway space.

Figure 28:

# Framework Plan



### Legend

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

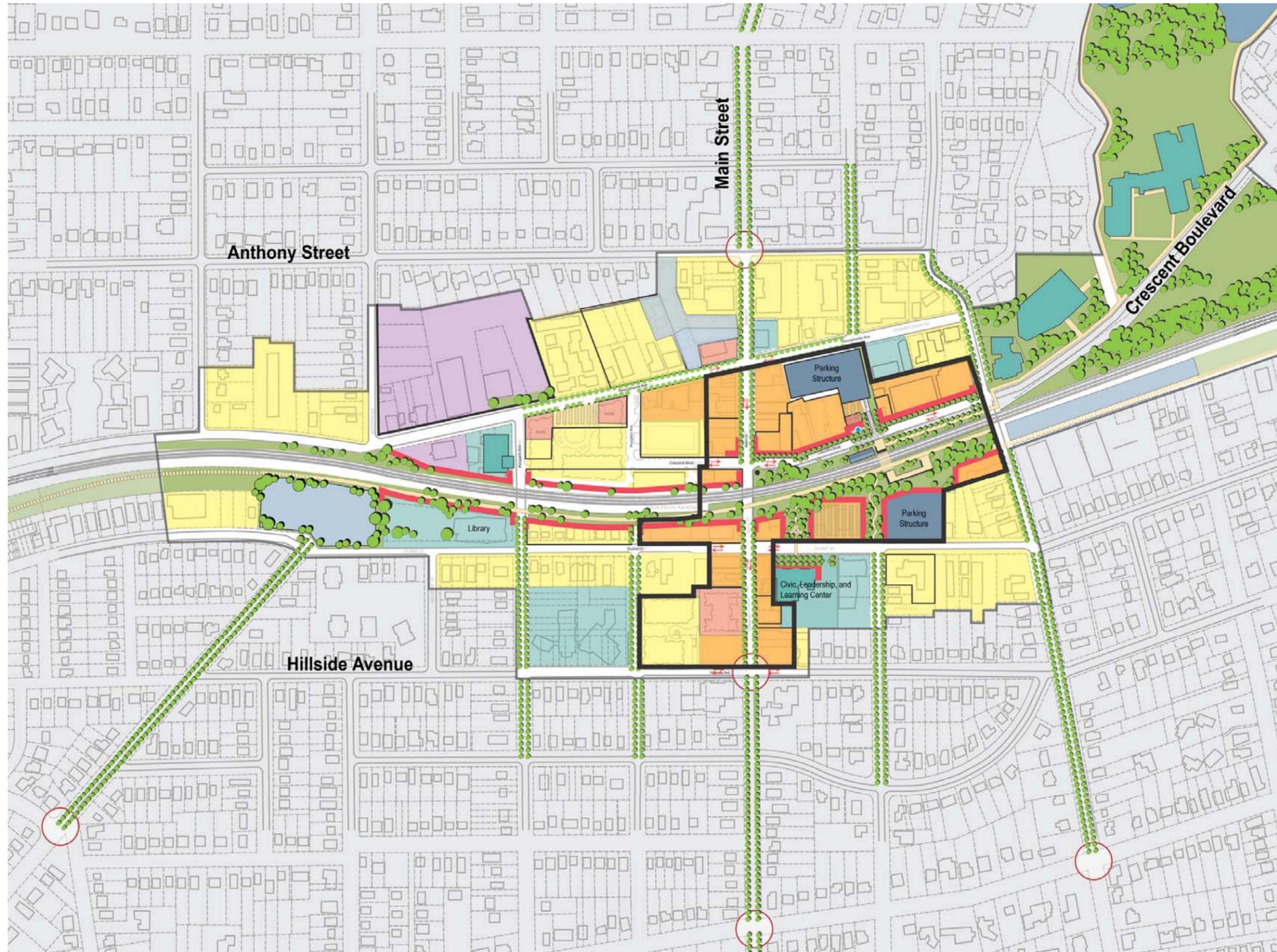
Source: Town Builder Studios

# Land Use Plan

A blend of “The Glen” and the “Main Street” alternatives, the land use plan includes a greenway as a landscaped feature through the valley of the Downtown. Mixed-use buildings with first floor retail and restaurants (with floors above containing residential or office uses) are located within the Downtown core, which is oriented along the greenway and Main Street. Residential uses in mixed-use and multiple family buildings are located throughout the Downtown. Medical office and service uses are primarily located to the northwest of the Downtown core. Residential buildings surround the Downtown core and the overall Downtown area. Institutional uses – including a new Civic, Leadership, and Learning Center on Duane Street – are located throughout the Downtown.

Figure 29:

# Land Use Plan



Source: Town Builder Studios

## Parks and Open Space

### Downtown Greenway Plaza

Forest Avenue will be transformed into a public plaza across the street from the new Glen Ellyn Train Station. Informal gatherings and street performances will keep this alcove along Crescent Boulevard active and an interesting place to visit, it will be a location for seasonal decorations, and could be constructed to accommodate events such as the farmer's market.

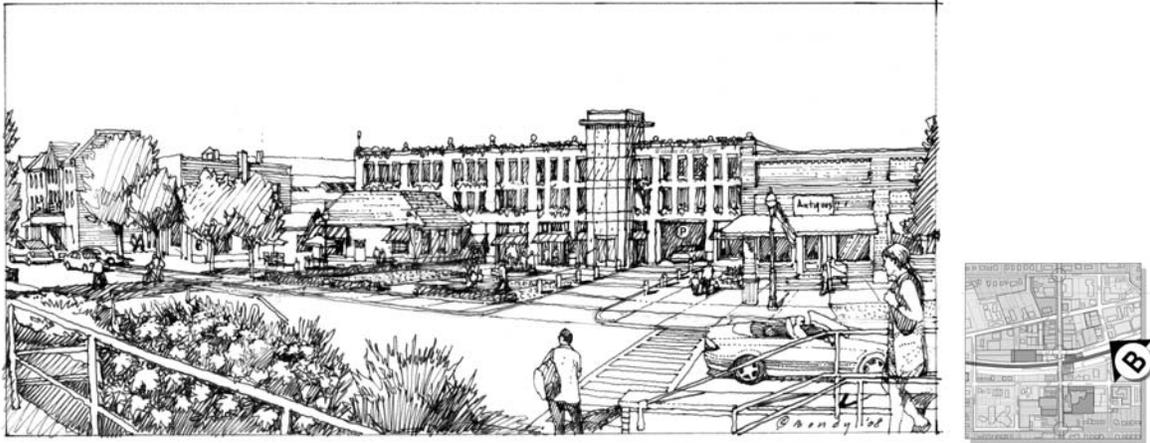


Figure 30: Perspective Sketch – Downtown Greenway Plaza. Source: Town Builder Studios.

## Mixed-Use

### Mixed-Use Reinvestment

First floor retail with residential and/or office uses on the floors above. Upgrades to building interiors and maintaining building exteriors, while retaining as many of the historic features as possible, are expected and highly-encouraged. In addition, sustainable practices using Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) standards are a must.

Renovated and newly constructed retail spaces meet the needs of both modern retailers and long-time community “legends”. Improvements include additional outdoor connections, including sidewalk cafes and views to the Downtown Greenway. The transit-oriented retailers are conveniently-located next to the Glen Ellyn Train Station and commuter parking areas, including concessions within the station.

Businesses offering affordable and upper-end goods and services coexist in the Downtown core. Consumers can purchase items that include groceries, clothing, gifts, and items that meet the daily needs of Downtown residents, Village residents, and commuters.

Additional restaurants have been brought into the Downtown, building upon the success of established restaurants. In addition, many restaurateurs have incorporated College of DuPage interns and graduates into their staff.

Prominent Downtown locations are occupied by anchor retailers, assuring the success of the businesses for future generations and the Downtown as a whole. For example, if the Fire Company determines they need new facilities, the Fire Station property could be transformed into a mixed-use development with a grocery store and market occupying the first floor, with office and/or residential uses above.

### New Mixed-Use

First floor retail with residential and/or office uses on the floors above. Complete redevelopment of these properties is expected. If a property owner chooses new construction, the building heights should be a minimum of two and a maximum of three stories along Main Street, and a minimum of three and a maximum of five stories elsewhere in the Downtown – especially along the railroad corridor. In addition, sustainable practices using Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) standards are a must. New mixed-use buildings should be located in the existing South Main parking lot, along Pennsylvania Avenue at both Prospect Avenue and Glenwood Avenue, and at the existing Fire Station property at the northwest corner of Main Street and Pennsylvania Avenue.



Figure 31: Perspective Sketch – New Mixed-Use Building at the Northwest Corner of Pennsylvania Avenue and Main Street. Source: Town Builder Studios.

### Historic Sensitivity and Preservation

A historic district has been established for the Downtown, including properties along Main Street, Crescent Boulevard, Pennsylvania Avenue, Duane Street, and Hillside Avenue. The benefits of this district include preserving the historic architecture, and making available tax credits to the property owners. The predominant building styles within this district in the Downtown are Old-English Tudor and Half-Timber, and new construction elsewhere in the Downtown are sensitive to these styles.

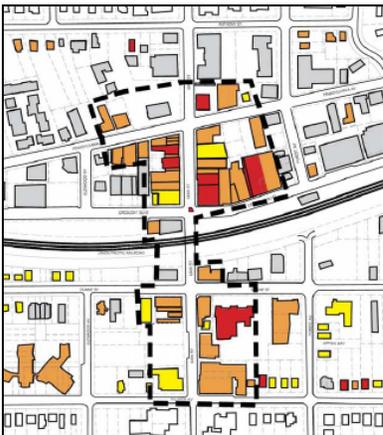


Figure 32: Historic Downtown District. Source: Town Builder Studios and BauerLatoza Studio

## Multiple Family Residential

The Downtown has been converted to a dense, mixed-use neighborhood with a variety of residential housing types and unit prices. The number of residential units in the Downtown has been maximized to ensure an active evening and weekend population. A total of 450 dwelling units have been added to the Downtown. They are smaller in size to cater to the needs of the smaller-sized households that are attracted to the downtown living concept. In addition, the young professional and empty-nester residents have the convenience of commuting into Downtown Chicago via Metra without the need for Downtown commuter parking.

Unit types include rental apartments above first floor retail in the Downtown core; mid-rise condominiums, garden condominiums, and townhouses surrounding the Downtown core; and existing single family homes with new accessory dwelling units<sup>3</sup> on the periphery (within a quarter-mile) of the Downtown core. Pennsylvania Avenue and Glenwood Avenue have been converted into neighborhood streets.

A new urban residential neighborhood is located west of Main Street, north of the railroad tracks, south of Pennsylvania Avenue, and east of Prospect Avenue. Occupants include young professionals, empty-nesters, senior citizens, and young families. Existing businesses have been relocated to other Downtown locations, including the first floors of the buildings fronting Pennsylvania Avenue. This redevelopment was made possible with the Village's effort to assemble the property in partnership with the existing property owners and the private investment community.



Figure 33: Perspective Sketch – Pennsylvania Avenue Mixed-Use and Residential Buildings.  
Source: Town Builder Studios.

## Medical Office / Service

The DuPage Medical Group's Glen Ellyn Clinic has drawn newer office users into the Downtown, especially in its northwestern periphery. This has resulted in the incubation of start-up professional office businesses, increased Downtown employment opportunities, and an increased Downtown daytime population.

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<sup>3</sup> Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU). A small efficiency apartment that typically includes a kitchenette, a bathroom, a combination living/dining/sleeping space, and is approximately 650 square feet in size. It is usually located above a two-car detached garage; however, it could be a part of the single family home – such as in an attic or a basement – as long as the proper building codes are adhered to. The ADU option can be accomplished by creating an overlay district for the "R-2" (Single Family) Residential District, and single family homes permitted by special use in the "R-4" (Multiple Family) Residential District.

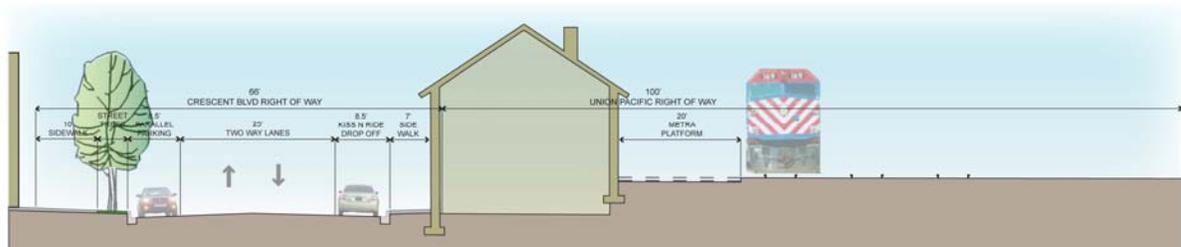
## Institutional

### Civic, Leadership, and Learning Center

The Civic Center has been converted to a Civic, Leadership, and Learning Center. In addition to the Village of Glen Ellyn administrative offices, the College of DuPage has its own satellite campus within the center, and the center is within a convenient walking distance of the Glen Ellyn Train Station, Illinois Prairie Path, Downtown businesses, and the Forest Avenue South parking structure. This project is contingent upon a determination that the Police Department needs new facilities.

### Train Station

A new Glen Ellyn Train Station has been constructed in the same general location as the existing station at Forest Avenue and Crescent Boulevard. The award-winning station design has landmark-quality features, and complements the Old-English Tudor and Half-Timber architectural styles found throughout the Downtown.



*Figure 34: Cross-Section – New Glen Ellyn Train Station with a “Kiss-N-Ride” Drop-Off Lane*

Source: Town Builder Studios

### Civic Buildings

The Glen Ellyn Public Library, Post Office, and Glenbard West High School, all remain in their current locations, and general maintenance and upgrades to each structure have been made to better serve the community.

# Circulation and Access Plan

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

The circulation network within the Downtown is improved to incorporate two-way automobile traffic throughout. In addition, an efficient and effective parking system provides new greenspace in the Downtown and structured parking in locations convenient to shopping and the Glen Ellyn Train Station.

Streetscape features include well-maintained – and in some cases, wider – sidewalks, street trees, lighting, seating, bike racks, directional signage, artwork, and sidewalk cafes.

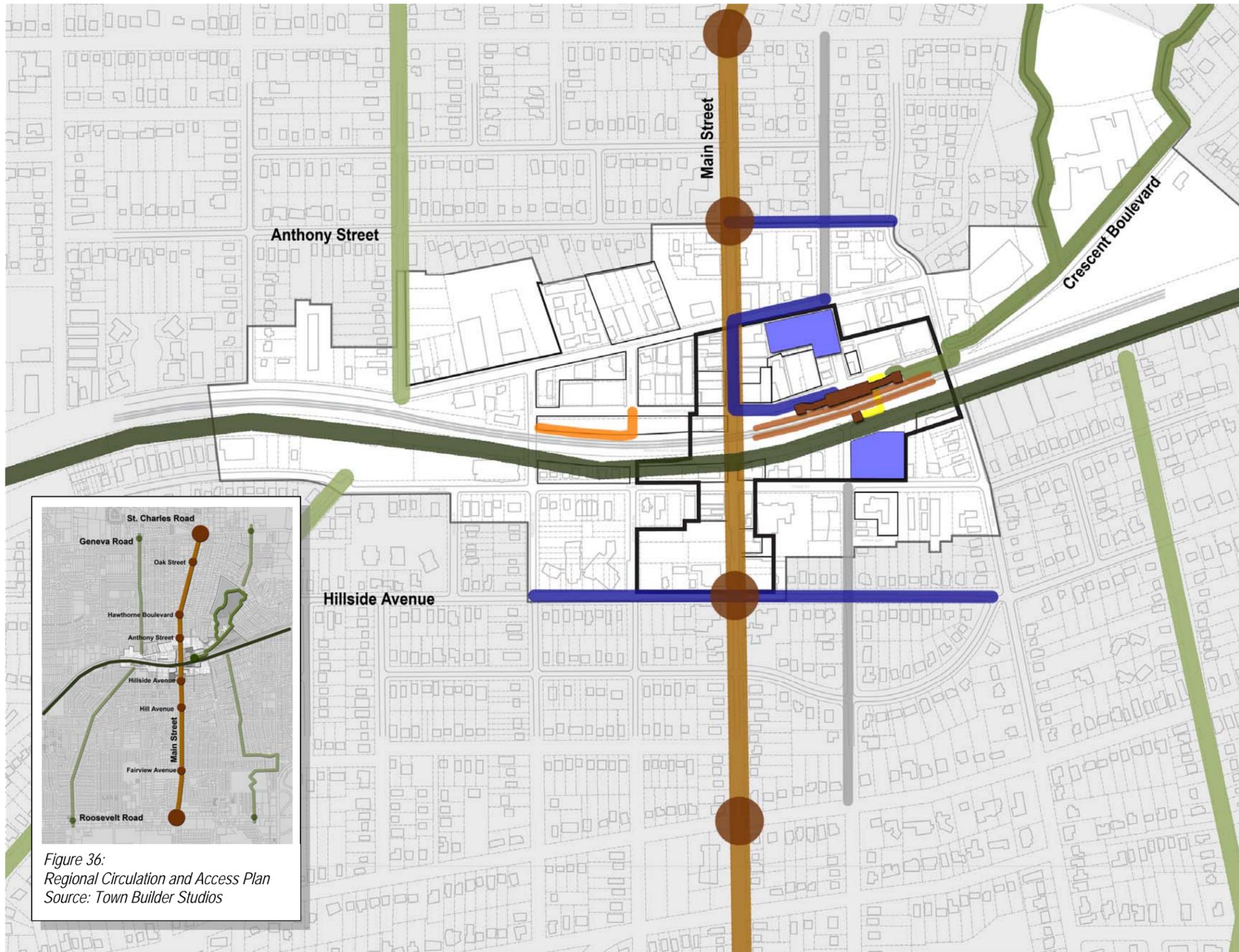


Figure 35:  
Circulation and  
Access Plan



Figure 36:  
Regional Circulation and Access Plan  
Source: Town Builder Studios

Source: Town Builder Studios

## Transportation

### Public Transit

#### *Glen Ellyn Train Station*

The architectural details on the new station are spectacular. The landmark-quality structure can be seen from many vantage points around the Downtown, guiding people to the Downtown activity center. Inside, the new train station includes features such as a concessionaire, technology center, artwork, space for seasonal displays, and an informational kiosk. In addition, the new station provides improved ADA accessibility, and family-friendly features for those who utilize the Illinois Prairie Path and the Lake Ellyn looped path.



*The Tinley Park Train Station is an example of a landmark-quality and award-winning structure. It has a tower that can be seen from a distance, (and can serve as a lookout tower for visitors on special occasions). In addition, it has the capacity to hold special indoor events. Source: Town Builder Studios*

#### *Pace Bus*

Pace Bus services Downtown Glen Ellyn and connects the Downtown to other locations in the region, including College of DuPage, Yorktown Center, Argonne National Laboratory, and Glendale Heights Community Hospital. Bus service is a key component in the transportation network, keeping the Downtown parking demand and traffic levels lower than what they could be without the service. The bus service needs are evaluated every five years or earlier if necessary.

### Bicycles

Illinois Prairie Path improvements include several state-of-the-art bike stations, where sheltered bicycle parking, and bicycle path maps and information are available. A family-friendly 1.5-mile looped path starts and finishes at the Glen Ellyn Train Station, and passes along the shore of Lake Ellyn.

### Pedestrians

Glenbard West High School is within a convenient distance from the Downtown core, giving students the option of walking to an after school job or studying under the canopy of trees in the Downtown Greenway on a nice day.

### Automobiles

Main Street, Crescent Boulevard, and Pennsylvania Avenue have been converted to two-way traffic patterns. The one-way neighborhood street system on Forest Avenue (north of Pennsylvania Avenue and south of Duane Street) could remain until traffic analyses are conducted as part of the preparation for the public parking structure designs and construction.

## Infrastructure

### Parking

#### *Structures*

Consider the construction one or more public parking structures after exhausting all surface parking improvement options. Optional structure locations include Forest and Pennsylvania (north of the tracks near the Glen Ellyn Train Station), and Forest and Duane (south of the tracks near the Glen Ellyn Train Station). Shared parking arrangements between different entities are found throughout the Downtown.

#### *Lots*

Surface lots will be maintained on a regular basis and upgraded as needed. The visual impact of such lots will be minimized with landscaping and special pavement designs.

### Streets and Rights-of-Way

#### *Sidewalks*

Wider sidewalks are located along the east side of Main Street between Crescent Boulevard and Pennsylvania Avenue, and the north side of Crescent Boulevard between Main Street and Forest Avenue.<sup>4</sup> Wider sidewalks provide opportunities for better pedestrian circulation and more outdoor dining space. Special lighting adds illumination, vibrancy, and safety along the streets and sidewalks.

#### *Hierarchy*

*The primary public corridor is the Downtown Greenway, including Crescent Boulevard east of Main Street. The secondary public corridor is Main Street. The remaining Downtown Streets are subordinate to the Downtown Greenway and Main Street.*

#### *Design*

Every bicycle and pedestrian right-of-way has international quality, scale, and splendor.

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<sup>4</sup> This was achieved by converting angled parking to parallel parking adjacent to the sidewalks. The displaced angled parking along the east side of Main Street and the north side of Crescent Boulevard will be relocated to the south side of Crescent Boulevard. These adjustments will result in no net loss of parking.

## Intersections

### *Main Street and Crescent Boulevard*

The horse trough has been relocated to its original historic location at the southeast corner of Main Street and Crescent Boulevard. A detailed analysis has resulted in the following traffic recommendations:

- |                      |               |                      |                             |
|----------------------|---------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|
| ▪ Northbound Main    | No stop sign. | One thru lane.       | One right turn lane.        |
| ▪ Southbound Main    | Stop sign.    | One right turn lane. | One through/left turn lane. |
| ▪ Eastbound Crescent | Stop sign.    | One right turn lane. | One through/left turn lane. |
| ▪ Westbound Crescent | Stop sign.    | One through lane.    | One right turn lane.        |

## Gateway Corridors

### *Main Street – Roosevelt Road to Geneva/St. Charles Roads*

North and south of the Downtown, Main Street is a tree-lined corridor lined with historic and beautiful estates. Brick-paved intersections at the crossroads between Roosevelt Road and Geneva/St. Charles Roads guide the visitors into the Downtown. Although it would be desirable to have special pavement treatments at every intersection along the corridor, intersection improvements were made at the intersections of Main Street and Roosevelt Road, Fairview Avenue, Hill Avenue, Hillside Avenue, Anthony Street, Hawthorne Boulevard, Oak Street, and St. Charles/Geneva Roads. A landscape has been designed that is respectful of the existing neighborhood yet denotes the road segment as the route to Downtown. Signage, street tree plantings, annual and perennial plants and flowers in the parkways, and special lighting features, are several elements that have been installed along the two-mile corridor, adding to the anticipation of arriving into Downtown Glen Ellyn.

### *Main Street – Downtown Core*

The buildings and streetscape along Main Street are enhanced, technologically upgraded, and remain largely intact from the last century. Occupants include retailers, restaurateurs, artists, technology start-ups, designers, and other incubator and growing businesses. Main Street is a hometown street with two-way traffic, parallel parking, wide sidewalks, street trees, and special pavement details. The horse trough is now located to the southeast corner of Main Street and Crescent Boulevard as shown in the lower right corner of the illustration.

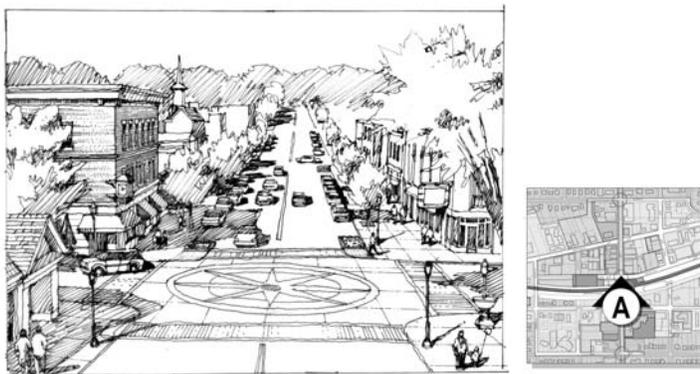


Figure 37: Perspective Sketch – Main Street Looking North. Source: Town Builder Studios.

A major reinvestment atop the South Main parking lot closes the gap along the Main Street corridor and reinvigorates the southern end of the Downtown with shopping, living, working, and structured parking.



Figure 38: Perspective Sketch – South Main Mixed-Use. Source: Town Builder Studios.

Main Street is the spine that connects Roosevelt Road and Geneva/St. Charles Roads to the heart of the community via a commercial neighborhood streetscape.

*Building Facades, Streetscapes, and Wayfinding*

The buildings along Main Street have been enhanced, restored, and remain largely intact. Building owners along the Downtown Greenway have upgraded their building facades to provide a welcoming presence to Metra, Illinois Prairie Path users, and residents alike.

The Main Street and Crescent Boulevard streetscapes have become tree-lined, bustling promenades, and the preeminent address of Glen Ellyn’s rich architectural mix, including multi-story brick- and cut stone-covered commercial and mixed-use buildings. Sidewalk cafes enhance the social experience, nighttime lighting adds to the evening ambiance, two-way traffic and on-street parking provide convenience for the driver, and special intersection pavement details add to the aesthetics and safety for the Downtown shoppers.

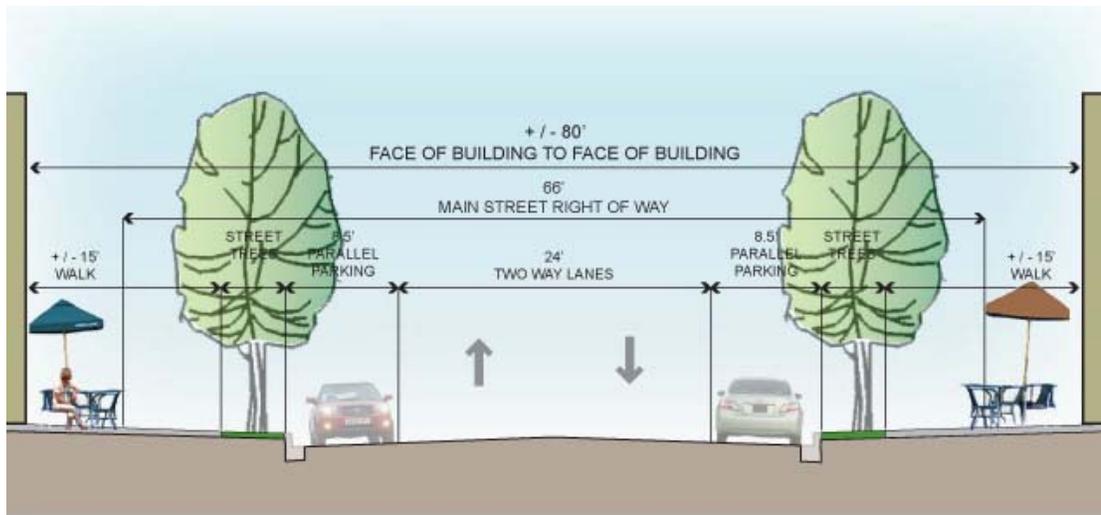


Figure 39: Cross-Section – Main Street Corridor  
Source: Town Builder Studios

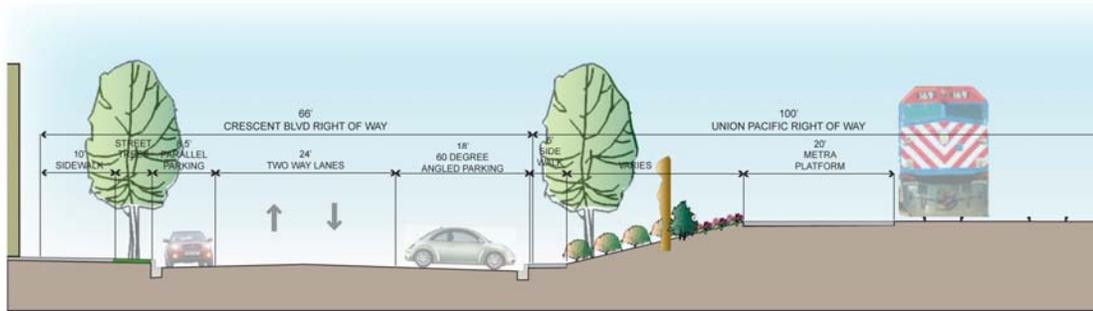


Figure 40: Cross-Section – Crescent Boulevard Adjacent to a Platform  
 Source: Town Builder Studios

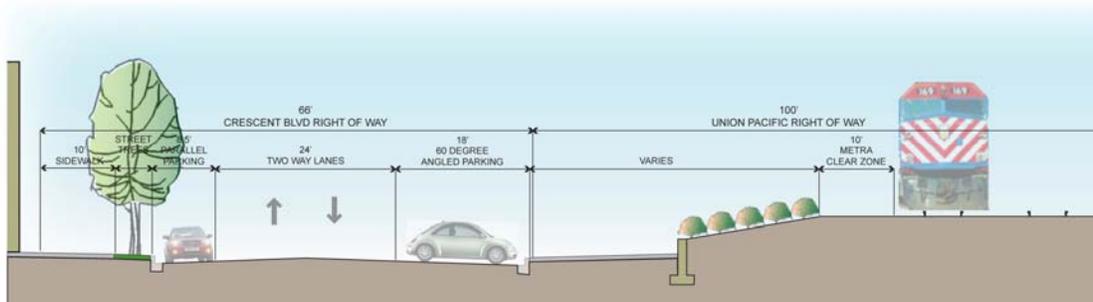


Figure 41: Cross-Section – Crescent Boulevard not Adjacent to a Platform  
 Source: Town Builder Studios

The Downtown Greenway

Crescent Boulevard between Main Street and Park Boulevard has been converted to a two-way traffic pattern. Angled parking has been provided on the south side of the street to accommodate the conversion of the parking lots to the north side of the Downtown Greenway, and parallel parking has been provided on the north side of the street to accommodate more sidewalk space adjacent to the businesses. A kiss-n-ride drop-off area has been provided for eastbound traffic adjacent to the Glen Ellyn Train Station.