



Northwest Highway Corridor Plan

PLAN ADOPTED JUNE 7, 2011

ORDINANCE 5859

PREPARED BY:

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

VILLAGE OF MOUNT PROSPECT

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The Northwest Highway Corridor Plan was developed with input from the public through interviews and public workshop meetings. Several organizations and governmental offices were contacted and contributed to the fact finding process for the plan. Our thanks to these organizations, partners, and the public for their time and opinions.

INTRODUCTION

The Northwest Highway corridor was the first commercial corridor in Mount Prospect and has played a vital role in the development of the community. Northwest Highway was the primary vehicular linkage to other communities in the Northwest Suburbs throughout the first half of the twentieth century. It continues to connect the central business districts of several communities along the Union Pacific Northwest train line.

As development of the northwest suburbs continued throughout the late 20th century, other corridors supplanted the Northwest Highway Corridor as primary commercial corridors. In Mount Prospect, the Rand, Elmhurst, and Golf Road corridors have been developed with regional shopping centers.

The importance of Northwest Highway prompted the Village of Mount Prospect to complete a study on the Northwest Highway Corridor to sustain it as an essential corridor and an asset to the community. Additionally, the Village of Mount Prospect Comprehensive Plan recommended a more detailed corridor study of Northwest Highway. The Northwest Highway Corridor Study (“Study”) identifies current issues within the corridor and recommends actions to address these issues. The Study provides existing and prospective businesses and residents with a future vision for the corridor and an action plan for achieving goals. The Study strives to highlight key forces impacting the corridor and to enhance the character and economic viability of the Northwest Highway Corridor. The Study was developed through an interactive planning process that involved input from the public on their views of the corridor and suggestions to continue the vitality of the corridor.

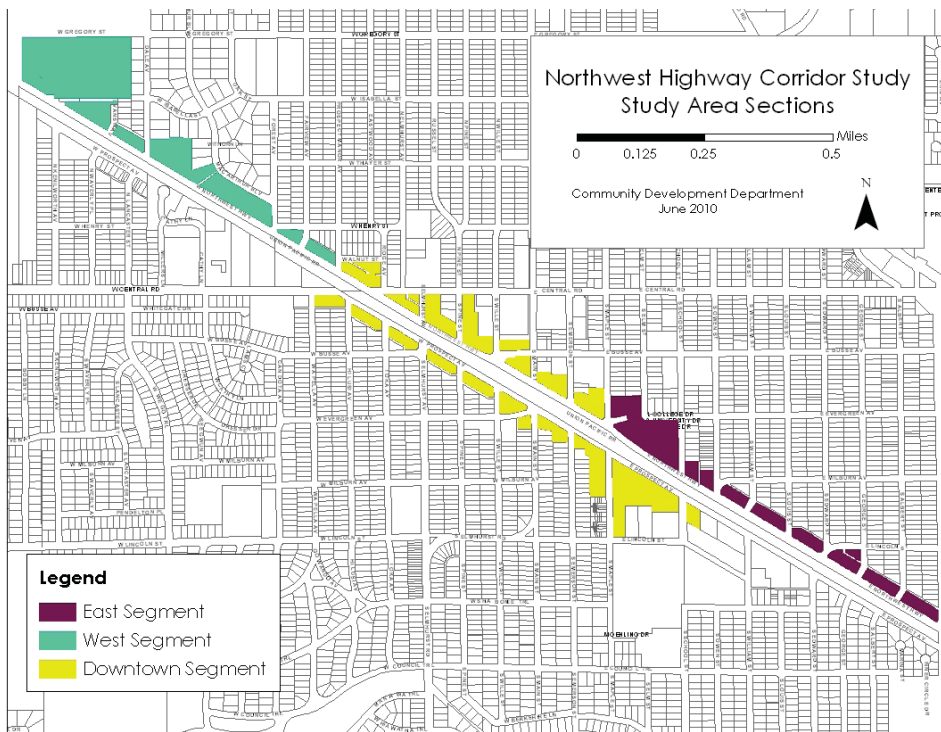
The Northwest Highway Corridor Study is broken up into the following sections:

- Study Area Definition: Discusses the boundaries and rationale for the study area.
- Background: Includes a description of the Village’s Comprehensive Plan and how it relates to the corridor study. Describes other corridor studies that have been completed by the Village.
- Planning Process: Describes the development of the Northwest Highway Corridor Study.
- Existing Conditions: Documents the conditions of the corridor in 2010.
- Issue Identification & Recommendations: Discusses the issues within the corridor as identified by the public and Village staff. Discusses strategies to mitigate issues or accentuate positive aspects of the corridor.
- Vision, Goals, and Objectives: Provides a vision for the corridor and goals and objectives to achieve the vision.
- Implementation Program: Contains an actionable plan for meeting the recommendations of the study.

STUDY AREA DEFINITION

The study area includes Northwest Highway from Mount Prospect Road (east Village boundary) to Waterman Ave (west Village boundary), and includes Prospect Avenue from Central Road to School Street. Part of Prospect Avenue was included in the study area because it is located within the Village's downtown area and includes comparable characteristics to Northwest Highway, including a mix of uses, compact development, and a variety of building types.

The study area is broken down into three distinct areas: East Northwest Highway, Downtown Northwest Highway, and West Northwest Highway. The three segments of the study area each have different attributes and characteristics. For purposes of discussion, the Prospect Avenue portion of the study will be included in the downtown area. The downtown segment of the study includes properties that border Northwest Highway or Prospect Avenue. The Downtown Strategic Plan addresses the larger footprint of the downtown for planning purposes.



BACKGROUND

In 2007, the Village of Mount Prospect updated its Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Plan is a land use and policy document that guides development for the entire Village over a period of 10 to 15 years. Included in the Comprehensive Plan is an implementation program, which addresses how the goals of the community will be met. One implementation strategy of the Comprehensive Plan recommended that the Village undertake a more detailed corridor study of Northwest Highway. Corridor studies and sub-area plans are similar in scope to a Comprehensive Plan but take a more detailed look at a specific geographic area and act as a sub-section of the Comprehensive Plan.

The Village of Mount Prospect has completed other sub-area plans or corridor studies based on Comprehensive Plan directives. Other completed plans or studies are the South Mount Prospect Sub-area Plan, Rand Road Corridor Study, Central Road Corridor Study, and the Downtown Strategic Plan.

The land use designations from the Comprehensive Plan guide the land use decisions throughout town. East Northwest Highway is designated as Neighborhood Commercial, which allows for office, retail and commercial service uses. The designation is typical for smaller properties along major Village thoroughfares. Neighborhood Commercial areas are often located in close proximity to residential neighborhoods. This designation is appropriate for the existing land uses and it preserves the commercial characteristic of the corridor.

The Comprehensive Plan designates the downtown area along Northwest Highway and Prospect Avenue as Central Commercial. The Central Commercial designation encourages dense development with a mix of retail, dining, commercial, and residential uses. The designation also encourages pedestrian, bicycle, and transit access to the area.

Finally, the Comprehensive Plan provides a range of land use designations for West Northwest Highway: Single-family, Multi-family, Institutional, and Neighborhood Commercial. The land uses are more varied along the west segment of Northwest Highway, but the uses are not as intensive or as dense as the mixed uses in the downtown district. Similarly, these land use designations are clustered within West Northwest Highway with commercial uses being located primarily adjacent to downtown, residential in the center, and institutional/offices to the west.

THE PLANNING PROCESS

Public involvement is an important component to all planning and land use documents for the Village. To produce this document, the public was consulted through several forums: interviews, public meetings and surveys. The Economic Development Commission dedicated their May 2010 Business Retention Program Visits to the Northwest Highway Corridor Study and interviewed thirteen businesses located within the study area. The purposes of the visits were to understand strengths of the area as a business location and to learn about opportunities for improvements. The next opportunity for input was a public meeting on May 25, 2010. The Village sent a mailing to all addresses located in the study area boundary notifying property owners of the meeting. The meeting included a presentation on the corridor study and an open discussion on attendees' perceptions of the corridor. From the meeting and the interviews, staff compiled a distribution list to keep interested parties involved in the process and to notify them of updates and upcoming meetings.

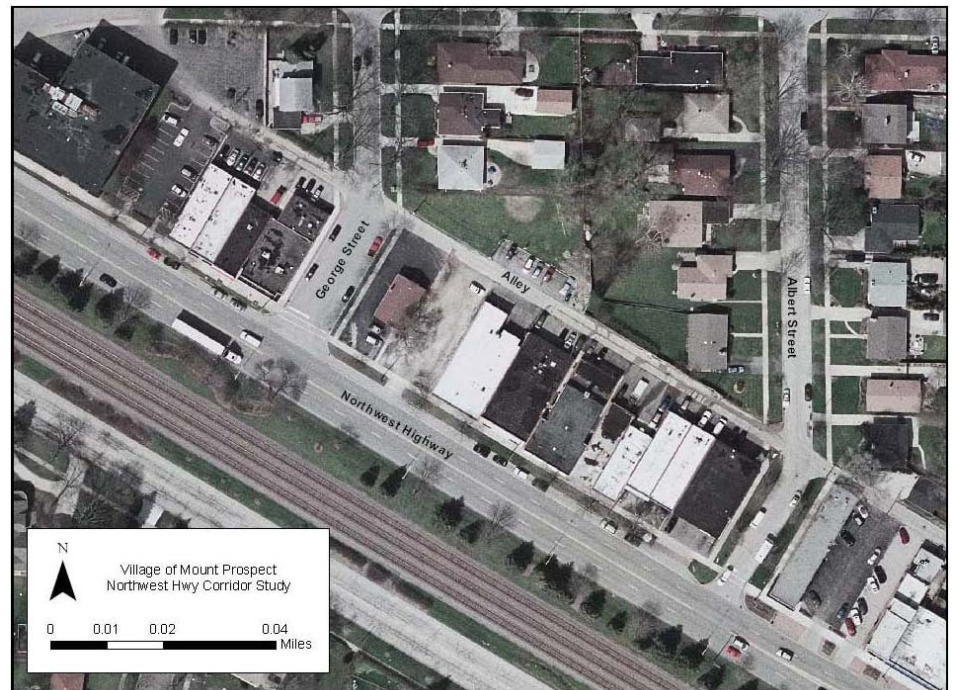
EXISTING CONDITIONS

Corridor Characteristics

East Northwest Highway has 1950s architectural style buildings with office and retail buildings set close to the front property line and alleyways behind the buildings for parking and access. A select number of properties in the east segment do not follow this lot configuration and primarily consist of small retail shopping centers or automotive uses with vehicle bays visible from the street. Because the service drives or private parking lots are situated to the sides or rears of buildings, curb cuts leading to parking lots and alleyways may be in close proximity to one another. East Northwest Highway has many examples of parking lots that break up the continuous storefront. The aerial image below demonstrates how parking areas located to the sides and rears of buildings on Northwest Highway are accessed. East Northwest Highway segment is comprised of very narrow lots. As redevelopment occurs, opportunities to consolidate lots and eliminate or combine curb cuts for parking and access should be explored to provide more cohesive development, lot access, and continuous storefronts.

Downtown Mount Prospect includes a mix of new and old buildings. The north side of the railroad tracks has experienced significant residential and retail redevelopment over the last two decades centered around the Metra Train Station. Most of the development follows the recommendations from the Downtown TIF District Strategic Plan. Since the mid 1990s, 442 condominiums or townhomes have been constructed in the downtown area to accommodate residents seeking to "down size" and commuters looking for a convenient way to live near the train. The area south of the tracks, along Prospect Avenue, consists primarily of single story commercial buildings in a boulevard setting. Several structures located throughout the corridor are aging structures and will need significant upgrades to meet current standards. Items such as water service upgrades, fire sprinklers and accessibility will need to be addressed when there is a change of use in any of these structures. The cost associated with the upgrades can be challenging to prospective new tenants.

West Northwest Highway area shares some similarities with the east segment. As in East Northwest Highway, several blocks in the west segment have buildings situated in front of parking lots and alleyways. However, the area west of the downtown has a greater mix of uses. The west segment has access to large public uses such as Meadows Park and Aquatic Center, commercial/office buildings, and residential townhomes and single family homes. The single-family homes do not have frontage onto Northwest Highway and are separated from the roadway with fencing and landscaping. Prior to the recent economic downturn, there was strong interest from the development community to convert the offices uses located at the western edge of the corridor to residential uses. This interest will likely resurface in the coming years.



DEMOGRAPHICS

The demographics within the Northwest Highway Corridor mirror those throughout the rest of the community, while household income and housing values averaging slightly higher than the rest of Mount Prospect. Within one mile of the downtown area, there are approximately 6,000 households with a median household income in the upper \$70,000 (see chart below). According to demographic projections through Costar, a commercial real estate information company, the number of households in all three of the segments studied is projected to slightly decline by 2015 primarily due to an aging population. Businesses and retailers continually target Mount Prospect for store locations because of Mount Prospect's favorable demographics.

	1-Mile	3-Mile	5-Mile
2010 Population (estimate)	15,189	125,757	299,002
2010 Households (est.)	5,952	49,549	114,946
Median HH Income	\$77,269	\$68,202	\$66,935
Median Housing Value	\$270,939	\$264,173	\$240,439

Costar Report, April 2010 (10-90 E. Northwest Hwy)

Occupancy Rate

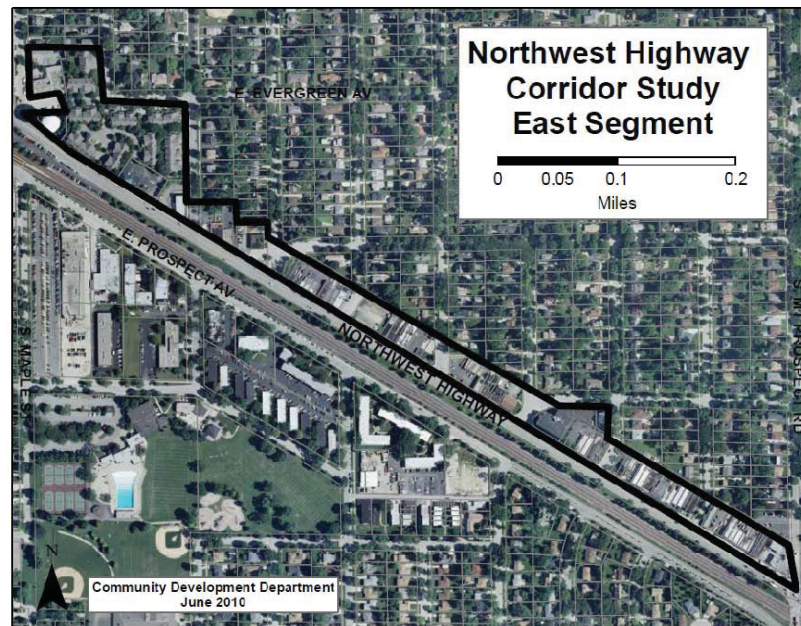
According to a Costar vacancy report for the fourth quarter of 2010, the regional retail and office markets are experiencing an 8.9% and 15.5% vacancy rate, respectfully. Within the corridor study area, approximately 17% of commercial, office, or retail space is for lease (Costar). The Northwest Highway Corridor is likely experiencing a slightly higher vacancy rate than the region due to the building stock's functional obsolescence and relatively low traffic counts for a commercial corridor. The vacancies are not limited to one area along the corridor study area, but are scattered throughout the study area. This study provides several recommendations to improve the commercial occupancy rate.

Land Uses & Compatibility

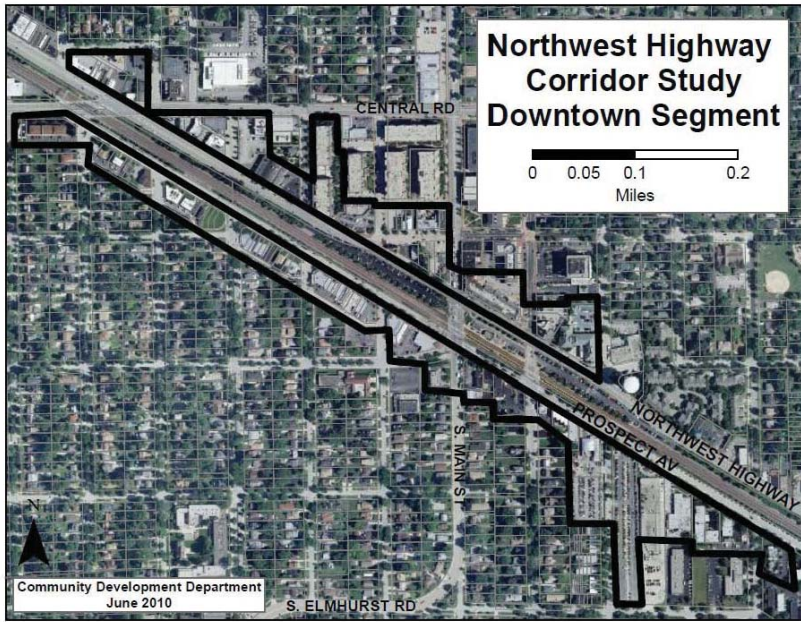
Comprehensive Plan land use designations identify land use patterns for future development. Existing land uses are not always consistent with the Comprehensive Plan category. In this section, the existing land uses for each section and their compatibility with the zoning or land use designation will be discussed.

Overall, the Northwest Highway Corridor consists of a mix of land uses, including commercial, residential, institutional, and industrial. Each distinct area (east, downtown, and west) of Northwest Highway has some or all of these uses. However, each area differs from one another in land use composition and housing density.

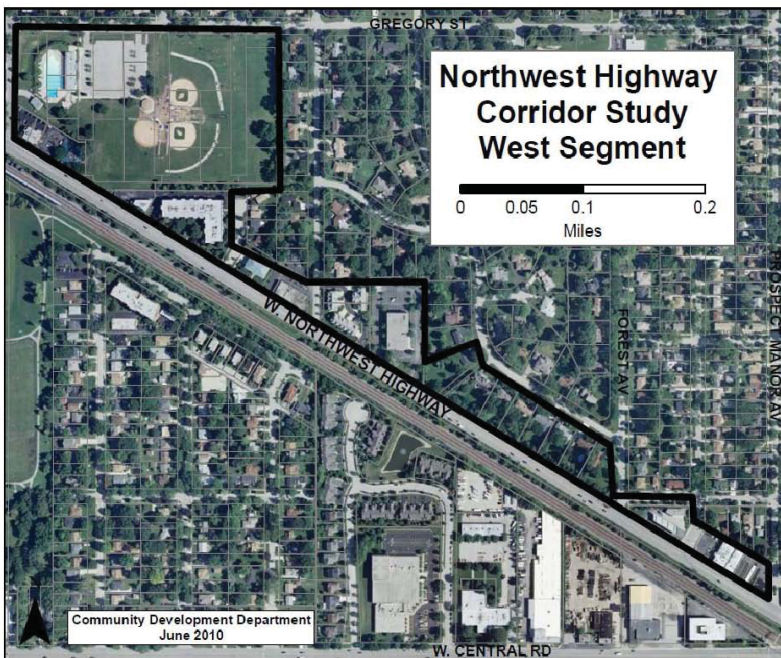
The East Northwest Highway segment includes the Village water tower, commercial, offices, and residential uses. Offices and commercial uses occupy sixty five percent (65%) of the segment's land area, and typically back up to residential. Commercial uses include personal service, merchandise sales, a financial institution, and restaurants. Personal service uses consist of hair salons, child care, and computer and auto repair. Merchandise sales include jewelry, bikes, luggage, flooring, and appliances stores. Future commercial land uses should be evaluated to ensure compatibility with adjacent land uses. Residential uses make up thirty three percent (33%) of the land area and include a fifty four (54) unit townhouse development, which backs to Northwest Highway, and rentals units located above commercial spaces. The remaining land area is occupied by the Village water tower (2%). The aerial image below illustrates the east segment.



The downtown area of the Northwest Highway Corridor has a wider range of land uses and increased density. The downtown segment includes office, retail, personal service facilities, institutional uses, Metra Train Station, eating establishments, financial institutions and residential uses. Institutional uses include the fire and police station and public parking lots, which combined occupy fifteen percent (15%) of the downtown land area. Other institutional uses, such as the Village Hall, parking deck and Mount Prospect Public Library, are located a block from the study area boundaries. Commercial and office uses take up the largest land area in the downtown area with sixty two percent (62%). The residential uses make up twelve percent (12%) and include a five unit (5) townhouse development on Prospect Avenue, eighteen (18) unit condominium building on Central Road, thirty-four (34) unit condominium building on Northwest Highway, and two condominium buildings with ninety (90) units. Additionally, Prospect Avenue has parking, commercial, light manufacturing, and some auto oriented uses, which include a repair shop and a car wash. Industrial uses make up eleven percent (11%) of the downtown land area of Northwest Highway.



West Northwest Highway includes a park and aquatic center, office buildings, and residential. Meadows Park and Aquatic Center occupies fifty four percent (54%) of the land in West Northwest Highway. The residential uses take up twenty-six percent (26%) and consist of a fifty-four (54) unit condominium building, seven (7) unit townhome development, and eight (8) detached single-family homes, which back up to Northwest Highway. The remaining office and commercial uses are limited in density and dispersal throughout the West Northwest Highway segment. Office and commercial uses occupy twenty percent (20%) of the land area in this segment. The aerial image below illustrates the west area.

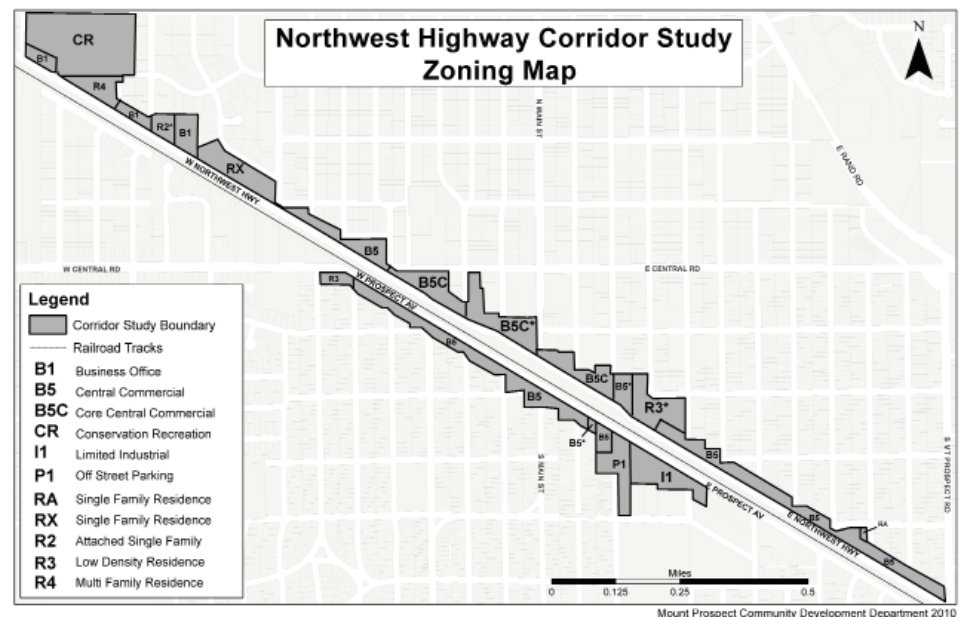


Zoning

The Northwest Highway Corridor study area is made up of several zoning districts. The largest land area within the study area is zoned CR Conservation Recreation due to the Meadows Park and Aquatic Center. Half of the land area within the study area is zoned for commercial and office uses. Thirty percent (30%) is zoned B5, and fourteen percent (14%) is zoned B5C. Six percent (6%) of the land area is zoned B1 Business Office. The area zoned for residential makes up nineteen percent (19%) of the total land area within the study area. This includes single family and multi-family residential. Finally, six percent (6%) of the study area is zoned for industrial. The table below provides a breakdown of the land area by zoning classification.

Zoning District	Description	Acres	Percent
I1	Limited Industrial	3.7	6%
B5C	Core Central Commercial	9.4	14%
B5	Central Commercial	20.1	30%
B1	Business Office	3.9	6%
P1	Off Street Parking	2.2	3%
R4	Multi Family	2	3%
R3	Low Density Residence	5.1	8%
R2	Attached Single Family Residence	1.1	2%
RA	Single Family	.2	0%
RX	Single Family	4.2	6%
CR	Conversion Recreation	14.6	22%
	TOTAL	66.5	100%

The Zoning Map below illustrates current zoning designation for the parcels within the Northwest Highway Corridor Study Area.



Utilities

The Village of Mount Prospect provides municipal public utilities in the study area. The Village owns and maintains the water mains, which have sufficient capacity to meet the water supply demands of the corridor, and the combined sewers, which provide adequate capacity to meet the sanitary and storm water drainage needs of the corridor. The Village recently upgraded the water mains within the corridor study area through the replacement of an aging water main located between Maple Street and Elmhurst Avenue. Overall, storm water drainage operates efficiently throughout the study area. While the storm water drainage is generally adequate, portions of Northwest Highway in the west segment experience slow drainage. These areas, located primarily to the west of Forest Avenue, may require improvements to the drainage systems as part of any future improvements to the roadway.

The water service to private properties has been identified as a barrier to development in the study area. A change of use or occupancy classification for a space or building may trigger a property to comply with current fire code requirements (automatic fire sprinkler systems and/or fire detection systems). In some cases, it might also require a fire pump and water service upgrade depending on the use and size of the space. The cost to new businesses opening in the Northwest Highway Corridor will likely be impacted if these improvements are required to be installed. These are costs that the business may not have to incur if they were to locate to a new building elsewhere in the community.

Circulation

The study area is bifurcated by the railroad tracks and Northwest Highway. There are four streets that provide the primary means of vehicular and pedestrian circulation: Central Road, Main Street/Elmhurst Road, Emerson Street, and Mt. Prospect Road. The Northwest Highway intersections at Central Road and Main Street, in particular, experience heavier traffic and make pedestrian crossing more difficult. Combined, these intersections experience approximately 64,900 vehicles a day. The adjacency of the Union Pacific Rail Line causes additional delay for motorists during peak time periods to accommodate commuter rail traffic.

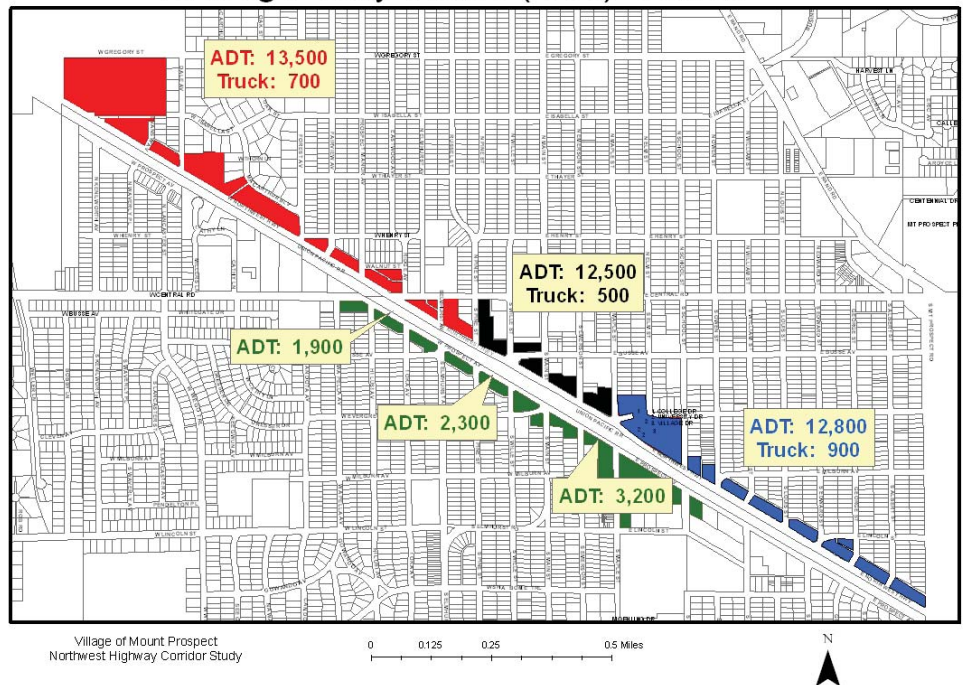
Several residents at the public meeting stated they would like to see safer crossings throughout the corridor. While crosswalks with pedestrian signals exist at Northwest Highway, the perception of traffic along Main Street/Elmhurst Road acts as an inhibitor for people to cross this roadway.

Traffic - Average Daily Traffic (ADT) Counts

Northwest Highway (U.S. Route 14) is a federal route, which is maintained by the State of Illinois. The Village of Mount Prospect Comprehensive Plan designates Northwest Highway as one of ten major arterial roads in the Village. Northwest Highway experiences higher traffic volumes and congestion delays because of train service and number of street intersections located along the corridor in close proximity to one another. Traffic delays are most prevalent during the morning and evening peak hours when demand and train services are increased.

Because Northwest Highway is an arterial road, traffic counts are higher than on the surrounding local roads. The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) provides Average Daily Traffic counts for Northwest Highway. Average Daily Traffic (ADT) counts are measurements of traffic volume on a roadway, which indicate the average number of vehicles that travel on the roadway daily. The current ADT counts for Northwest Highway are 12,800 in the east segment, 12,500 in the downtown segment, and 13,500 in the west segment. Approximately 5% of the ADT Counts are truck traffic which is typical of a roadway of this type.

Average Daily Traffic (ADT) Counts

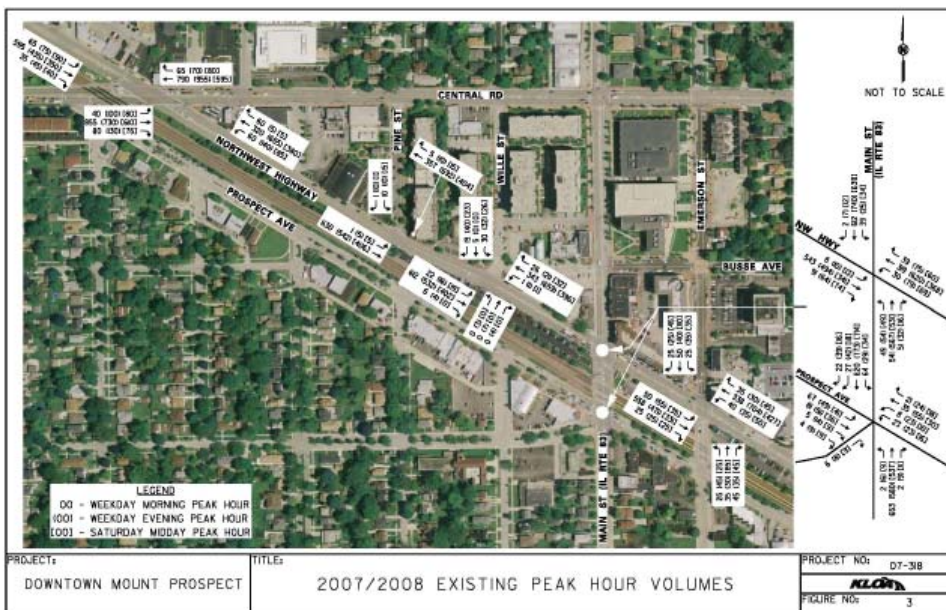


Prospect Avenue is a local road maintained by the Village of Mount Prospect. Traffic on Prospect Avenue is not as intense as the traffic on Northwest Highway because it primarily serves local properties versus a larger region. The ADT counts for Prospect Avenue range from 1,900 to 3,200 vehicles per day. The map below illustrates the ADT for Northwest Highway and parts of Prospect Avenue within the study area:

Peak Hour Turing Movement Counts along Northwest Highway

The map below illustrates 2007/2008 peak hour traffic counts for Northwest Highway and Prospect Avenue. The traffic counts were conducted in September and October 2007 and April 2008 during weekday morning (7:00 A.M. to 9:00 A.M), weekday evening (4:00 P.M. to 6:00 P.M.) and Saturday midday (Noon to 2:00 P.M.) peak periods. The results of the traffic counts show that the weekday morning peak hour of traffic occurs from 7:35 to 8:35 A.M., the weekday evening peak hour of traffic occurs from 5:00 to 6:00 P.M. and the Saturday midday peak hour of traffic occurs from 12:45 to 1:45 P.M.

Based on the traffic counts, there are no significant traffic movements that are over capacity that would require additional improvements to increase traffic flow, such as additional turn lanes. The existing roadway configuration is adequate to meet the current traffic demands. Improvements to increase the efficiency therefore would be limited to traffic signal optimization to reduce delays. The presence of the Union Pacific Northwest Line makes signal optimization difficult but should still remain a priority in order to improve access to the corridor and downtown area.



Parking

The Northwest Highway Corridor provides both public and private parking options. Public parking spaces are located within and outside the study area, and include the Village parking garage, on-street parking, and surface parking lots. There are approximately six hundred fifty (650) off-street public parking spaces available at no cost to the public. In addition, there are over two-hundred (200) on-street parking spaces provided along Northwest Highway and Prospect Avenue.



The Village parking garage and two of the surface parking lots are located approximately one block north of Northwest Highway. Although the parking garage and two surface parking lots are not located within the study area, they are located in close proximity and serve the uses within the study area. Visitors to downtown Mount Prospect generally utilize the free on-street parking and parking garage.

The public off-street pay parking lots available are primarily used by Metra commuters. The largest of the pay parking lots is located on Maple Street, just south of Prospect Avenue. This pay parking lot provides two hundred eighty-four (284) parking spaces intended for Mount Prospect residents. There are also approximately three hundred (300) parking spaces located on Northwest Highway, just north of the railroad tracks. Busse Car Wash also offers their private parking lot for commuter and overnight parking.

The number of private parking spaces for commercial buildings within the study area is limited. Generally, businesses located within the study area provide little to no parking spaces on their lot. Those businesses with private parking spaces usually provide less than ten (10) parking spaces on the side or rear of the building. Private parking lots are commonly accessed off the existing alley system.

Overall, there appears to be sufficient parking in the downtown area to meet demand. Parking is available to all business locations within a short walking distance. The map below illustrates the parking available within the study area and the surrounding Downtown area.

Parking Code Analysis

The Village's parking requirements vary depending on the type of use. For example, a professional office space requires four (4) parking spaces per one thousand (1,000) square feet of gross floor area. Similarly, a retail store up to 30,000 square feet requires four (4) parking spaces per one thousand (1,000) square feet of gross floor area. The parking requirement for food establishments differs from that of an office or retail use. Depending if the food establishment is a sit down or fast food restaurant, the required parking spaces can be based on the number of seats, employees, or gross floor area. A complete list of parking requirements for uses is provided in Section 14.2224 of the Village Code.

The Village Code acknowledges that there are existing properties in the downtown with little or no off-street parking spaces for their property. For this reason, the parking requirements are less stringent in the B5 Central Commercial and the B5C Core Central Commercial District. To allow existing conditions to continue, additional off-street parking is not required at locations within the B5 and B5C Districts where limited or no off-street parking is currently provided. New uses which are similar to those previously in operation at a property are not required to add additional parking. There are parking spaces available to support downtown businesses, such as the Village parking deck. However, when there is new construction or major rehabilitation (50% or more), or a change in use which warrants additional parking, the Village Code requires additional parking to be provided on-site or through off-site parking agreements.

Streetscape

In 1997, the Village implemented a streetscape program for the downtown district. In 2000, the Village of Mount Prospect adopted the Corridor Design Guidelines to develop a consistent streetscape throughout the Village. Some of the study area in the Northwest Highway Corridor Study area benefitted from the recommendations of the study. As indicated through the planning process, the public would like to see more aesthetic improvements throughout the corridor.



East Northwest Highway was identified as a “gateway” opportunity in the Corridor Design Guidelines. At Mount Prospect Road, there is a “Welcome to Mount Prospect” Gateway sign and landscaping. The sign is located on the south side of Northwest Highway adjacent to the railroad tracks. The Village has worked very closely with the Union Pacific to improve the appearance of the area and, as a result, has placed more landscaping along the railroad easement. The future recommendations from the Corridor Design Guidelines are to continue urban forestry efforts, enforce regulatory controls (i.e. setbacks, screening), and to strengthen edges with walls, fences, trees, lights, signs, and/or buildings. Depending on the capital improvements budget, all of East Northwest Highway will eventually have streetscape improvements performed from downtown to Mount Prospect Road.

The Corridor Design Guidelines specifically identified downtown Mount Prospect as an area to show the distinction of the district and to improve accessibility to the train station. The streetscape in Downtown Mount Prospect has been implemented by installing decorative brick paver sidewalks, landscape areas, banners, gateway signs, and improved street and pedestrian lighting. The improvements have been implemented on Prospect Avenue and Northwest Highway. The streetscape is consistent throughout the downtown section of the corridor study.

The western boundary of the Village currently has a gateway sign; however, there is an opportunity for a more prominent gateway sign. The landscaping along the railroad easement continues along the corridor and frames the street. The Corridor Design Guidelines recommend taking advantage of gateway signage, enforcing regulatory controls and continuing urban forestry efforts. The Village of Mount Prospect does not have plans to continue the streetscape design of brick sidewalk and planter boxes west of Fairview Avenue because the land uses in this area are not consistent when compared with the downtown and east corridor areas. The area west of Fairview Avenue currently has a considerable amount of landscaping behind the residential properties that adds to the aesthetic appeal of the corridor and screens uses from Northwest Highway.

Pedestrian & Bicycle considerations

Generally, the downtown area is pedestrian friendly because of streetscape improvements, wide walkways, curbed streets, and push buttons at signalized intersections to cross the streets. Further away from downtown, the area begins to lose some of the pedestrian friendly elements. Sidewalks and service walks are showing signs of aging and some of the sidewalks are narrow and close to the street. Traffic signals do not exist at intersections or pedestrian push buttons have not been installed. The pictures below illustrate some of the areas which could benefit from additional improvements as the streetscape program is implemented.

The Northwest Municipal Conference (NWMC) updated their regional bike plan in 2010 and identified Northwest Highway as a regional bike corridor. Bicyclists identified the corridor as a direct route from the city to the suburbs; however, improvements to the corridor should be made to allow for safer travel. One suggestion is to utilize the Union Pacific railroad right-of-way to enlarge the area where bicyclists ride.



North side of Northwest Highway between George and Albert St.



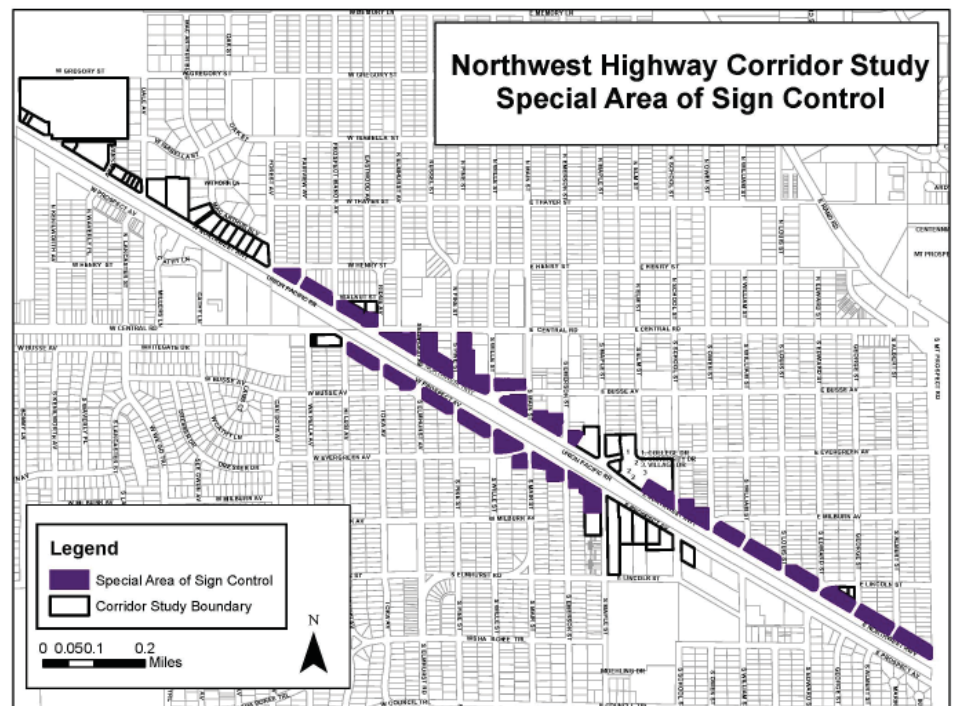
Northeast Corner of William St. and Northwest Hwy.

Signs

Signage within the Northwest Highway corridor is either public or private. Public signs are located within the public right-of-way and identify the Village of Mount Prospect, streets or a bus stop. Village public signs within the Northwest Corridor are generally freestanding and act as gateway signs for the Village.

Private signs are located on private property and identify a business. The majority of private signs are wall signs that are either attached to the building façade or to an architectural building component, such as an awning. In some cases, a business on a large lot and building setbacks has a freestanding sign. Since most of the buildings within the corridor have little to no setback between the building and property line, it is uncommon for a business to have a freestanding sign. However, a few do exist within the corridor.

Recognizing the unique characteristic of the corridor, the Village has implemented a Special Area of Control for signs within the Central Business District. A majority of the properties within the Northwest Highway Corridor Study Area fall within the Village of Mount Prospect's Special Area of Control for signs. The map below illustrates the properties designated as "Special Area of Control".



The Special Area of Control is defined by the Village Sign Code as an area in which special sign standards are applicable. Areas of special control permit projecting signs and awnings/canopy signs that extend over the public right-of-way by four to five feet or within two feet of the curb line, whichever is less. This is a special provision that allows businesses along Northwest Highway to have wall signage that is better viewed from the sidewalk and the street based on the orientation of the buildings on the lot. Projecting signs and awnings/canopy signs that extend over the Northwest Highway public right-of-way will be subject to compliance with applicable regulations from IDOT because the right-of-way is under IDOT's jurisdiction.

ISSUE IDENTIFICATION & RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

Through the public input process, residents and businesses identified key issues that currently exist in the study area. The following is a summary of the issues and recommendations, broken down into categories, identified by Village staff members and the public.

Visibility/Public Awareness

Businesses and residents reported a lack of public awareness about businesses located on Emerson Street, Busse Avenue, and Prospect Avenue. Automobile and pedestrian traffic may only see the businesses that front the corridor and not the businesses located off of Northwest Highway. In addition to the lack of Northwest Highway street frontage, canopies of mature trees were also mentioned as contributing to the poor visibility. Some trees along Prospect Avenue, in particular, were mentioned as blocking business signage.

Lack of public awareness of public transportation and public parking was also expressed. Most people who participated in the meetings and interviews were unaware of existing Pace bus routes along the corridor and throughout the Village. Additionally, residents were not aware of the public parking facilities, including free parking spaces, available for people shopping and dining in downtown Mount Prospect. Visitors to downtown Mount Prospect stated that street parking can be difficult or unavailable.

Proposed Actions:

- 1. *Way-finding signage program:*** The Village received several comments about the lack of visibility or awareness about local shopping areas on Prospect Avenue, Emerson Street, and Busse Avenue. A way finding sign system would help to notify visitors and residents about these areas. The system would have a directory at a public, high traffic location such as the Library or train station. This directory would highlight the areas for shopping, public parking lots, and local destinations. As a complement, signs throughout the downtown area would direct people to businesses, parking and shopping areas.
- 2. *Off premise tenant signs:*** Off premise signs are not permitted by the sign code; however, the public stated that an off-premise tenant board would benefit businesses located off of Northwest Highway. Staff will review this option to understand the impact of the request, but the way finding sign program may accomplish the same goal of notifying the public that there are more businesses throughout downtown.
- 3. *Temporary Signs:*** Businesses indicated that they would like to have more opportunities for temporary signs on their building, but the Village's temporary sign regulations are too strict. Staff will review the regulations and research other communities' sign regulations to evaluate options that may increase local business visibility.

4. *Newsletter:* The Village will investigate the option of promoting areas of the Village through the Village Newsletter, such as focusing on Prospect Avenue or sections of the corridor study area
5. *Wall Signs:* Businesses may not be aware of sign options permissible within the Village Sign Code. Staff will continue to work with business owners to explore permissible sign options. The Village should also continue its parkway tree maintenance program to ensure that adequate visibility to business locations is maintained as landscaping matures.

Land Uses

The public stated they would like a wider variety of commercial uses than what currently exists within the corridor. Specifically, the public expressed their desire for a grocery store, retail and entertainment uses. Entertainment uses that are kid/family friendly are currently lacking and could generate downtown activity and revenue. The public stated that these uses would complement existing businesses and bring more people into downtown Mount Prospect.

Retailers outside of the downtown district would like to see more traffic generating uses. One retailer indicated that beauty salons create synergy because people will shop in the local retail stores before or after their salon appointment. The businesses would also like to see more consignment stores, specifically those that re-sell clothing and household goods. A year-round farmers market would also be a destination in Mount Prospect.

Proposed Actions:

1. Residents and businesses would like to see a wider range of land uses in the study area because they believe that more people would patronize Mount Prospect stores if there were more reasons to visit the study area. The Village will continue to work with brokers and local entrepreneurs to establish desired uses in the corridor. Some of the desired uses include consignment stores, year round farmers market, grocery store, restaurants, retail, entertainment uses, and family friendly uses.
1. Residents indicated a positive attribute of Mount Prospect was having “something for everyone” with respect to housing, commercial, retail, and restaurant options. The Village should continue to attract a range of housing and commercial uses to the corridor.
1. The public was pleased with the open public areas, such as the Village Green outside of Village Hall, and are supportive of more open space opportunities, both public and private.

Aesthetics & Occupancy

The public identified a lack of visual interest in some areas of the corridor as an issue. Building and site conditions could be improved to make the corridor more aesthetically pleasing. For example, some areas of the corridor have not been improved with streetscape. Suggested improvements include installing streetscape and making improvements consistent throughout the corridor.

Vacant storefronts and lots are other contributing factors to the lack of visual interest. The corridor lacks a continuous storefront in some areas due to vacant spaces, vacant lots, or parking lots. The public mentioned an art incubation program where a store front is utilized by emerging artists as one idea to address vacant storefronts. An incubation program is a tool to cultivate small businesses through business support resources and services. Examples of support services include marketing assistance, help with financial and accounting management, access to loans and financing, networking activities, and links to strategic partners. In Mount Prospect's case, the art sector would receive assistance in business start-up and administration through a program where an organization shares the risk and responsibilities of opening a business.

The age and appearance of the buildings is another concern of the public. The Village has a retail grant program in the Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District, which is limited to downtown Mount Prospect, north of the railroad tracks. The program provides assistance to sales tax generating businesses to upgrade their appearance or ease the financial burden of renovating a space.

The vacant storefronts in the study area are not unique to Mount Prospect. Other towns have adopted a "vacant storefront decorative code" to help manage the appearance of vacant storefronts. This code requires merchandise and colorful displays in the windows of the vacant storefronts. While Mount Prospect is not considering formally adopting such a code, the vacant storefronts could be an opportunity for landlords to improve the appearance of their investments and for other businesses in town wishing to advertise in an off-site location.

Proposed Actions:

1. Streetscape improvements have not been made in some areas of the corridor and are not planned for areas west of Fairview Avenue. The areas in need of streetscape improvements will be identified and an expected time table for completion will be publicized.
2. The Village will continue to maintain areas of the right-of-way that have been improved with streetscape or landscaping.
3. The Village will continue to work with Union Pacific Railroad on landscaping and maintenance of their railroad property.
4. The existing façade program is funded with Tax Increment Financing (TIF) funding and is only available to businesses located within the TIF boundaries. The Village and business organizations will research developing a façade improvement

program and potential funding sources to improve the aesthetic appearance of buildings located outside of the TIF district.

5. The east and downtown segments of the corridor have similar development trends, which creates a consistent streetscape. To ensure continuity of the storefronts, staff will work with developers to encourage infill development without front yard setbacks and with parking behind the buildings to provide a continuous row of storefronts.
6. The Village will work with local organizations to identify an interested party to explore an incubator program for new businesses or artists using vacant storefronts.
7. The Village and business organizations will explore the possibility of working with property owners to encourage them to decorate vacant storefronts or use them to advertise or market the downtown area.

Building Conditions/Utilities

The public stated that some of the buildings in the study area need to be updated. Most of these comments were directed at the visual appearance of the buildings, but Village Staff Members addressed the functionality of the buildings. Many of the buildings were built over 50 years ago and may not have the capacity or functionality of newer or updated buildings.

The financial burden for upgrading the buildings is another issue identified due to aging infrastructure and new system demands. The buildings located along Prospect Avenue may require upgrading the water service from the building to the water main. Potential tenants and small business owners may find this issue to be an obstacle to opening a business in Mount Prospect.

Proposed Actions:

1. An obstacle for new businesses moving into some of the older properties is the substandard water service. The improvement is an investment in the building so it should be a responsibility of the property owner. The Village will work with property owners of older buildings, such as those on Prospect Avenue, to proactively upgrade the water service to help attract new tenants.
1. In the cases where the water service upgrades have not been made to the building, the Village will work with prospective businesses to understand the costs of retrofitting older buildings.
1. Property maintenance must be consistent throughout the corridor including for the vacant storefronts and lots. The Village will continue property maintenance enforcement of abandoned buildings and properties.

Traffic

The availability of the train was identified as a positive part of Mount Prospect, not only for today's businesses, but in the establishment of the Village. However, the multi-modal transportation near the train station does create negative externalities for the study area. The public identified several traffic and transportation related issues. During peak commuting hours, traffic congestion near the train station creates back-ups and jams. As traffic travels further out to either end of Northwest Highway, traffic moves very quickly and is perceived as dangerous. Parking issues were identified by the public who would like to have more parking on street level, outside of restaurants or businesses in the study area.

Proposed Actions:

1. The Village will work with Pace to market their bus routes and services and advertise bus stop locations.
2. The Village will publicize the conclusions from previous Route 83 and Northwest Highway intersection studies to help the public understand the issues and how the Village has implemented options available to improve circulation.
3. The downtown area has a variety of commercial uses with different hours of operation. The Village should encourage shared parking agreements between private parking lot owners to open their parking lots to the public after business hours (5 p.m. to 10 p.m.).
4. The Village will work with IDOT regarding signal coordination on Northwest Highway, Central and Route 83.

Circulation

The public stated that the study area and Village are divided by the railroad tracks, Northwest Highway, and Elmhurst Road/Main Street/Route 83. Neighborhoods are disconnected from each other and other areas of town.

Proposed Actions:

1. Resident indicated that Northwest Highway and the railroad tracks divide the Village and disconnects neighborhoods. The Village will explore grant funding for a proposed bridge at west end of corridor and/or will investigate the feasibility of an underpass or bridge in downtown Mount Prospect to improve non-motorized connectivity in these areas.
1. Access within downtown can be challenging for pedestrians because of several high traffic areas. The Village will work to enhance the pedestrian environment in downtown with countdown pedestrian signals, areas of refuge, or other improvements to increase crossing safety.

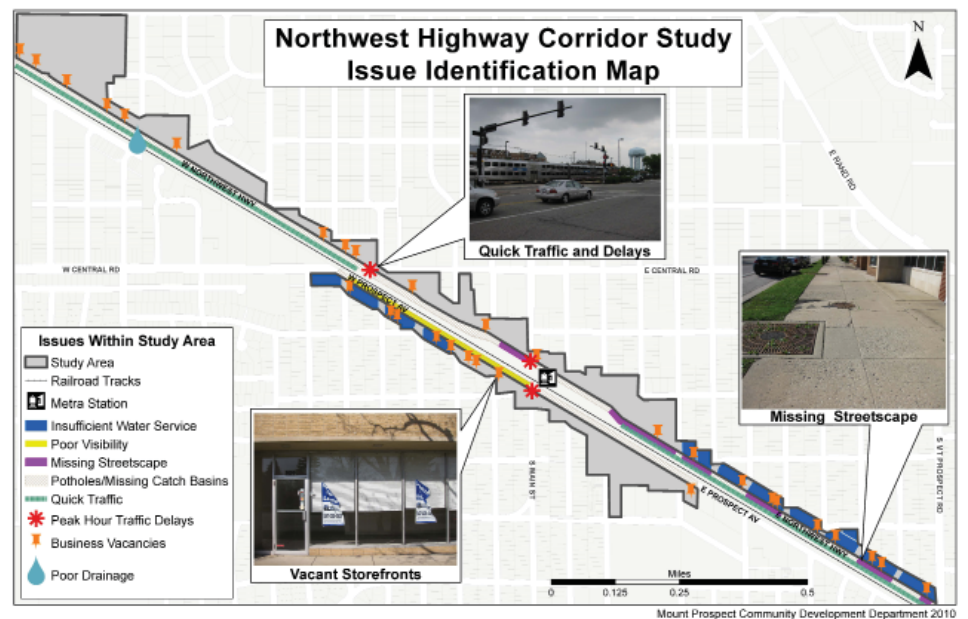
Infrastructure

At the public meeting, residents mentioned drainage problems along the west side of Northwest Highway. Additionally, the public stated there are potholes in the corridor study area streets and sidewalk deterioration.

Proposed Actions:

1. Northwest Highway is under the jurisdiction of IDOT, which means any large scale improvements will have to be initiated by IDOT. However, the Village will proactively work with IDOT on long-range improvement plans for Northwest Highway that will affect the road condition and drainage.
2. The Village will work with IDOT to address maintenance issues through a maintenance schedule.

The following map illustrates some of the issues identified above.



VISION, GOALS, AND OBJECTIVES

The visions, goals, and objectives of this study outline the basic purpose and intent of the Northwest Highway Corridor Study. They have been prepared based on community input acquired in the planning process.

Vision:

Enhance the economic viability of the Northwest Highway Corridor by making it more attractive and accessible place for conducting business and living.

The Village of Mount Prospect Comprehensive Plan categorizes recommendations based on land use. To maintain consistency throughout the Village's planning documents, the recommendations in the Northwest Highway Corridor Study are also grouped according to land use. However, the categories differ slightly based on the areas the public identified as issues.

The following section presents the goals and objectives broken down into the following elements of the study:

- Economic Development
- Transportation
- Infrastructure
- Housing and Community Facilities

A. Economic Development

Goal: To create a viable commercial Northwest Highway Corridor with a mix of desired uses and services.

Objectives:

1. Maintain Village services and facilities which assure the long-term economic strength of the corridor.
2. Maintain current businesses and attract new commercial businesses, such as a kid-friendly uses and a grocery store, to the corridor.
3. Educate the public about the condition of older buildings and compliance with municipal code requirements.
4. Ensure that the appearance of all buildings, grounds, and parking areas within the corridor is maintained.
5. Maintain a progressive business climate with an understandable development process.
6. Design and implement strategies for attracting commercial opportunities to Mount Prospect in order to further strengthen and expand the Village's tax and economic base.
7. Continue reinvestment and redevelopment efforts within the downtown area to provide an attractive core for the community.

B. Transportation

Goal: To provide a balanced transportation system which provides for safe and efficient movement of vehicles and pedestrians, supports surrounding land development, and enhances regional transportation facilities.

Objectives:

1. Improve pedestrian and automobile traffic movements within the corridor, reducing congestion where possible.
2. Encourage convenient and adequate employee and patron parking.
3. Promote and encourage safe and convenient alternative modes of transportation (walking, biking and public transportation) within the corridor.
4. Ensure that new and existing developments are served by a safe and convenient circulation system with streets and roadways relating to and connecting with existing streets in adjacent areas.
5. Improve/increase availability of convenient public transportation throughout the corridor.
6. Install pedestrian crossings in downtown to address safety concerns (pedestrian islands, etc).

C. Infrastructure

Goal: To maintain a public infrastructure system that efficiently provides utilities, public improvements and flood control required by the Community.

Objectives:

1. Maintain excellent public water, sanitary and storm sewer systems.
2. Maintain the Village's ability to plan and program public improvements as needed.
3. Protect natural water retention and drainage where possible and ensure development does not have adverse impact on flood control.
4. Promote sustainable development.

D. Housing & Community Facilities

Goal: To provide housing and amenities that supports the population and enhances the quality of life within the corridor.

Objectives:

1. Ensure that adequate open space is set aside as a part of new residential developments.
2. Encourage the linking of greenways, parks, and recreational facilities in neighborhoods, Village wide and regional levels.
3. Promote the improvement and rehabilitation of deteriorating residential properties.
4. Encourage “infill” residential development which will provide a range of housing types, while maintaining appropriate density and character with surrounding existing development.

IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM

The Implementation Program is the section of the corridor study that ties the issues, recommendations, goals and objectives together. The following charts include the recommended strategy, related objective, type of strategy, timeframe, and responsible party.

The type of strategy refers to the following:

Action	Can be acted upon to produce a result
Study	Additional study to determine best course of action
Coordination	Requires ongoing coordination with other parties outside Village Staff

Related objective indicates with goal and objective relate to the strategy. The letter refers to the goal and the number refers to the objective within that goal.

The timing indicates if the strategy will be implemented within 5 years (short-term), 5-15 years (long-term), or is an ongoing strategy of the Village of Mount Prospect.

The responsible party column lists the Village department or other agency/group that will lead the implementation of the strategy.

Economic Development

<i>Issue Identified</i>	<i>Strategy</i>	<i>Type of Strategy</i>	<i>Related Objective A.x*</i>	<i>Timing</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>
<i>Lack of public awareness about businesses not located on Northwest Hwy.</i>	<i>Create a way finding sign program with directories at public gathering spaces (Library or Train Station).</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>A.1</i>	<i>Short-term</i>	<i>Community Development</i>
<i>Lack of public awareness about businesses not located on Northwest Hwy.</i>	<i>Investigate alternative ways of promoting public awareness for business through off premise signs, temp signs, or the newsletter.</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>A.7</i>	<i>Short-term</i>	<i>Community Development</i>
<i>Lack of desired land uses, such as grocery store, entertainment, and family-friendly uses</i>	<i>Work with brokers to bring a variety of uses to the corridor.</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>A.2</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>Community Development</i>
<i>Vacant storefronts, lack of traffic generating land uses</i>	<i>Collaborate with businesses and business organizations on special projects, such as incubator programs and year-round farmers markets, to bring people downtown.</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>A.2, A.6</i>	<i>Short-term</i>	<i>Community Development, Business Organizations</i>
<i>Outdated buildings with substandard utilities</i>	<i>Encourage building owners to make capital improvements to older buildings.</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>A.5</i>	<i>Short-term</i>	<i>Community Development, Property Owners</i>
<i>Outdated buildings with substandard utilities</i>	<i>Utilize façade program within TIF boundaries and investigate non-TIF funded programs outside of the TIF area.</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>A.5</i>	<i>Short-term</i>	<i>Community Development, Property Owners</i>
<i>Poor building/property conditions</i>	<i>Continue to enforce property maintenance standards for all properties.</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>A.3, A.4, A.5</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>Community Development</i>

* Indicates which goals and objectives the strategy originated. This should be read as "Strategy 1 derives from Goal A, Objective 1.

Transportation

<i>Issue Identified</i>	<i>Strategy</i>	<i>Type of Strategy</i>	<i>Related Objective A.x*</i>	<i>Timing</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>
<i>Lack of public awareness of public transportation</i>	<i>Work with Pace to publicize their routes and services.</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>B.3, B.5</i>	<i>Long-term</i>	<i>Community Development, Pace</i>
<i>Lack of public awareness of parking</i>	<i>Publicize the location of public parking lots and investigate improved wayfinding signage for parking facilities.</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>B.2</i>	<i>Short-term</i>	<i>Community Development</i>
<i>Unavailable surface level parking spaces</i>	<i>Encourage shared parking agreements with private property owners.</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>B.2</i>	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Community Development, private property owners</i>
<i>Traffic congestion at major intersections</i>	<i>Work with IDOT on signal coordination at Northwest Hwy, Central Rd, and Elmhurst Road/ Rte 83.</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>B.1, B.4</i>	<i>Long-term</i>	<i>Community Development, Public Works</i>
<i>Poor vehicular circulation</i>	<i>Publicize the bike planning strategies and studies as an alternative transportation mode.</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>B.1, B.3</i>	<i>Short-term</i>	<i>Community Development</i>
<i>Disconnection caused by railroad tracks</i>	<i>Investigate funding sources to fund a bridge connecting Melas and Meadows Parks.</i>	<i>Study</i>	<i>B.3, B.6, D.2</i>	<i>Long-term</i>	<i>Community Development, Public Works</i>
<i>Disconnection caused by railroad tracks and major roadways</i>	<i>Investigate the feasibility of pedestrian crossings (underpass, refugee islands, etc.) throughout the corridor.</i>	<i>Study</i>	<i>B.3, B.6</i>	<i>Long-term</i>	<i>Community Development, Public Works</i>

** Indicates which goals and objectives the strategy originated. This should be read as "Strategy 1 derives from Goal A, Objective 1.*

Infrastructure

<i>Issue Identified</i>	<i>Strategy</i>	<i>Type of Strategy</i>	<i>Related Objective A.x*</i>	<i>Timing</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>
<i>Missing streetscape improvements and sidewalk deterioration</i>	<i>Publicize the scheduled streetscape improvements included in the Village's Capital Improvement Plan to the study area.</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>C.2, C.4, D.2</i>	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Community Development, P Information, Pub Works</i>
<i>Consistent streetscape throughout corridor</i>	<i>Continue to work with UPRR on the maintenance of their right-of-way.</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>D.2</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>Public Works</i>
<i>Areas of road in disrepair and drainage problems</i>	<i>Work with IDOT on maintenance and long-term improvement plans for Northwest Highway.</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>C.1, C.3</i>	<i>Short- and Long-term</i>	<i>Public Works</i>

* Indicates which goals and objectives the strategy originated. This should be read as "Strategy 1 derives from Goal A, Objective 1."

Housing & Community Facilities

<i>Issue Identified</i>	<i>Strategy</i>	<i>Type of Strategy</i>	<i>Related Objective A.x*</i>	<i>Timing</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>
<i>Few public open spaces</i>	<i>Continue to plan for public open space and to require private developers to include open space in their plans.</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>D.1</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>Community Development, Public Works</i>
<i>Maintain the mix of housing for the varying needs of the diverse population.</i>	<i>Work with developers to provide a variety of housing tenures and types in downtown.</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>D.3, D.4</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>Community Development, Private Developers</i>
<i>Maintain the mix of housing for the varying needs of the diverse population.</i>	<i>Encourage mixed-use development to complement existing uses.</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>D.4</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>Community Development, Private Developers</i>

* Indicates which goals and objectives the strategy originated. This should be read as "Strategy 1 derives from Goal A, Objective 1."