

# ***NORTHFIELD VISION PLAN***



***Adopted  
November 22, 1999***

*Village of Northfield*

**Comprehensive Plan  
For The Year 2020**

*Dedicated  
In Memory Of*

**Trustee John A. Wilke**

*“The Plan needs to reflect current thinking about the aspirations and concerns relative to Northfield. Why is this so important? It is important so that the Plan becomes the compelling resource in its recommendations for land use and development, community facilities and services, transportation, and many other aspects of the community. As Chair of this Committee, I made a personal commitment to them in the very beginning of our planning process, that their time, efforts, dedication and interest would not result in a shelved item. This Committee truly wants Northfield to ‘Soar to the Future.’ Through their hard work, with your support, and with the help of our dedicated Village staff, we can do just that. That future begins this very minute.”*

*- Introductory remarks from John A. Wilke’s presentation of the Plan to the Village Board of Trustees  
October 14, 1999*

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## Table of Contents

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Introduction And Background .....	1
<b>1. A Vision For Northfield .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>2. Action Goals And Objectives.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>3. The Long-Range Plan.....</b>	<b>9</b>
3.1 Land Use Plan.....	10
3.2 Community Subarea Plans .....	15
Subarea 1: Village Center .....	15
Subarea 2: The Missionary Sisters Site.....	21
Subarea 3: The Willow Road Corridor - A Community Street.....	22
3.3 Community Facilities Plan .....	26
3.4 Transportation Plan .....	28
<b>4. Realizing Our Future - Vision Plan Implementation.....</b>	<b>31</b>

## Table of Figures

1. Existing Community Conditions .....	11
2. Long Range Land Use Plan .....	12
3. Residential Land Use Area Recommendations .....	13
4. Commercial and Employment Land Use Area Recommendations .....	14
5. Subarea 1 Planning Influences.....	16
6. Subarea 1 Improvement and Development Guidelines.....	19
7. Subarea 1 Illustrative Plan.....	21
8. Subarea 2 - The Missionary Sisters' Site .....	22
9. Community Facilities Plan .....	27
10. Transportation Plan .....	29
11. Bicycle and Pedestrian Access System.....	30



**The Northfield Vision Plan**  
**Introduction and Background**

## **The Vision Plan**

# **Introduction and Background**

### **Community Context and Approach**

The Vision Plan sets forth our aspirations and defines the community we are to become over the next 20 years. While it fulfills an important purpose as the Village's Long-Range Comprehensive Land-Use Plan, it represents much more than that. The Plan embodies our collective values and the principles that sustain us as a community. Because we are small in physical scale and population, we have had the advantage of functioning as a "neighborhood," conducting our affairs on a very interpersonal level. This sense of community in Northfield is highly valued, has motivated community action in the past, and will undoubtedly serve as the nucleus for realizing the aspirations of our Plan in the future.

This working level of personal community interaction strongly influenced the manner in which the Plan was developed. Because the community had not undergone a planning exercise of this magnitude in over a decade, the planning process for the Vision Plan placed strong emphasis on participation. The planning process was structured around the completion of four major steps: 1) prepare an inventory of existing conditions in the community and identify community needs and assets; 2) prepare a concise vision of our needs and potentials in the future; 3) translate our vision into concrete physical and policy alternatives for community assessment and critique; and 4) based on community preferences, prepare our Vision Plan.

The Comprehensive Plan Review Committee, appointed by the Village Board of Trustees, led the planning process to help ensure that a range of perspectives would be brought to the table in developing the new Plan. A variety of workshops, interviews, community forums, a community survey, and other techniques were employed to "test" citizen views and reactions to ideas in each step of the process. Participation in the planning process was vital to developing the new Plan, and it is expected that this level of awareness and support has established the threshold for successful implementation of our new Plan. More detailed information concerning the planning process is included in the Appendix to the Plan.

### **The Fruit of Our Labor - The Vision Plan**

We have chosen to present our Plan in a concise, illustrative format to facilitate clarity of our policies as well as ease of use. The reader should bear in mind, however, that the process undertaken to develop the Plan has produced extensive and valuable information upon which our program has been prepared. This includes several reports on background data, community wide meetings and analyses. These materials are accessible through either the Northfield Department of Community Development or the Village Clerk's office.

Our Plan is not a "static" document. While it serves as an "official" program of the Village, it will be subject to regular review and refinement to ensure it is in tune with the needs of our community. In this regard, comments and suggestions are always welcome.



**The Northfield Vision Plan - Chapter One**  
**A Vision for Northfield**

## **The Vision Plan - Chapter One**

# **A Vision for Northfield**

### **Introduction**

Our Vision describes life in Northfield in the year 2020, desired change that has occurred, or conservation efforts which have been successful. *A Vision for Northfield* has been written as a retrospective from the year 2020 -- looking back at what has occurred within the community over a period of 20 years.

The Vision Plan's policies and projects and actions are organized around many of the basic values and aspirations reflected in our vision.

### **A Vision For Northfield**

The Village of Northfield is a safe, attractive and stable community offering a high quality living, working and leisure time environment. The Village is distinguishable from surrounding areas by its: small size; low density character; attractive and well-maintained residential neighborhoods; commercial development focused almost exclusively in the Village Center; and highly responsive and well coordinated community services.

### **A Strong and Diverse Residential Community**

Northfield continues to be a strong residential community. It is characterized by a number of neighborhoods offering a variety of housing styles. While some of the Village's residential dwellings have been replaced with new housing units over the last 15 to 20 years, it has occurred in a manner sensitive to the scale, qualities and characteristics unique to each of Northfield's neighborhood areas.

While Northfield has a well-maintained housing stock consisting primarily of single-family homes, it also includes well designed and compatibly situated townhomes and condominiums in select areas. The community has succeeded in encouraging diversity in its population.

New housing opportunities have been established for senior citizens. Neighborhood areas have been improved with small, but well designed "pocket parks", providing both functional and aesthetic neighborhood enhancement.

### **Village Center - the "Heart" of the Community**

Northfield successfully maintains a concentration of commercial land-uses within the Village Center while resisting commercial area expansion in other portions of the community.

The Village Center is a vibrant and economically viable area, offering a wide range of goods and services to local residents and the surrounding communities. In the last 20 years, substantial public improvements and new private development have occurred within the Village Center. The types of improvements completed include: streetscape and public

and private signage improvements; building facade renovations; vehicle and pedestrian circulation improvements; and clear defined “edges” to the Village Center area.

### **A Community of Physical Continuity**

Northfield has established a strong sense of physical “continuity” throughout all areas of the Village. The community’s residential, business, employment and institutional subareas are connected by a well developed bicycle and pedestrian system. Improvements to the system have maintained the “semi-rural” character of the Village’s neighborhood areas. The Village’s architectural and design characteristics have been developed “thematically” based upon community appearance preferences. While some improvements have been made to Willow Road over the last 15 to 20 years, the Village has successfully incorporated its preferences regarding: roadway appearance and design, protection of adjoining residential areas, and creation and enhancement of safe pedestrian and bicycle access in a number of locations.

Areas of the Village east of the Edens Expressway have benefited from safe and improved bicycle and pedestrian access to the west side of the Village. In a number of select locations along the Edens Expressway, the Village has successfully encouraged landscaping and screening improvements which have not only reduced the impacts of roadway noise and light pollution to adjoining residential areas, but have improved the appearance of the corridor.

The local street system, while well designed and maintained, has preserved the “rural feel” of the community. Improvements to street system design and traffic control over the last 20 years have helped to minimize through traffic on local streets. The variety and availability of public transportation services to all residents has improved. A notable improvement at all major street entrances to the community are the exceptional entryway features announcing arrival to the Village of Northfield.

### **A Vibrant Business Community**

Northfield’s office and employment areas, which have benefited from the Village’s superb location and good accessibility, are strong and viable. During the past 20 years, many older office and industrial properties have been either upgraded or modernized.

Substantial improvements have been made along both Frontage Road and Happ Road. These include street, parkway and landscaping improvements as well as site and building improvements to private properties. The overall scale of development along Frontage Road and Happ Road has been maintained.

### **Community Life**

Northfield continues to benefit from successes in highly valued intergovernmental relationships. A redeveloped joint library, post office and municipal meeting facility in the Village Center not only helps to create a sense of arrival to the Village’s Downtown, but also serves as another example of outstanding intergovernmental coordination and cooperation.

Northfield continues to be served by top-quality educational institutions. The presence of a number of facilities along the major street system serves as a key visual “focal point” for community life and activity. The Village maintains a rich variety of parks and recreational facilities, and a wide range of recreational programs is readily available to local residents. A portion of the Missionary Sisters’ site has been preserved as open space. The design of

open spaces at the corner of Waukegan and Willow Road creates a dramatic sense of arrival to the Village of Northfield.

Northfield is known for its outstanding, personalized, municipal services and programs. During the past 20 years, substantial improvements have been made to the public infrastructure, particularly with regard to storm water control, bicycle and pedestrian improvements, placement of overhead utilities underground, and street lighting systems. The needs of an aging population have been recognized, and senior citizen programming continues to be an integral element of coordinated local government services.

The improvements and developments that have occurred within Northfield during the past 20 years have been the result of significant citizen input and participation, strong intergovernmental cooperation, excellent Village leadership, and a strong partnership between the public and private sectors. Local residents continue to play an active role in formulating planning policies and strategies. Local officials have undertaken a number of public improvements projects, and have utilized a range of creative financing techniques to assist and support the private sector in the implementation of a number of innovative development and redevelopment efforts.

The Village has also taken full advantage of changes in communications and technology in an effort to provide a full complement of services enabling citizens to access and share information in a variety of ways.

### **A Clear Community Image and Identity**

Because of all these improvements, Northfield has become known as a close knit community of a manageable physical scale, open to new ideas and change, yet sensitive to its unique physical characteristics and resident needs. Most importantly, Northfield is well regarded in its skill to have directed and managed change that has resulted in a Village of strong physical continuity and social cohesiveness.



**The Northfield Vision Plan - Chapter Two**  
**Action Goals and Objectives**

## The Vision Plan - Chapter Two

# Action Goals and Objectives

### Introduction

To be effective, the Northfield Comprehensive Plan must respond to the special needs, values, and desires of local residents. Direction should be provided as a means of implementation of the Village's Vision Statement. Goals and objectives provide this specialized guidance. In essence, these transform collective community values into operational statements which can be used as guidelines for the planning program.

Goals and objectives each have a distinct meaning and purpose in the planning process:

- *Goals* describe desired end situations toward which planning efforts should be directed. They are broad and long-range. They represent an end to be sought, although some may never actually be fully attained.
- *Objectives* describe more specific purposes which should be sought in order to advance toward the overall goal. They provide more precise and measurable guidelines for planning action.

The goals and objectives presented below are based on a series of discussion sessions held within the community and reflect strong local consensus on the future of the Village as a whole. They articulate aspirations which cannot be shown on plan maps, and should be considered a key part of the Planning and Community Development Program. Goals and objectives are not prioritized in hierarchical order since one or more of these statements may be equally relevant to a particular project or action.

Implementation actions to realize our goals and objectives are included in Chapter 5, *Vision Plan Implementation*.

## VILLAGE IMAGE, DESIGN AND IDENTITY

### Goal

*A strong, positive community image based on a high quality environment and a convenient, attractive physical setting for living, working, and shopping.*

### Objectives

1. Protect and enhance the essentially single-family character of the Village.
2. Emphasize continued appearance and maintenance improvements in all business and residential areas of the Village.
3. Develop a thematic approach to the design image and appearance of new development in the community which emphasizes a "traditional" character.
4. Define and enhance the Village Center as a physical focal point and community gathering place that facilitates pedestrian and vehicular movement.

5. Continue to ensure that all local street system improvements preserve the “semi-rural” character of the Village.
6. Enhance the appearance of major arterial streets within the community through distinctive landscaping, signage and lighting treatments.
7. Establish community gateways through entryway signage and landscaping at all major entrances to the Village.

## **RESIDENTIAL AREAS**

### **Goal**

*A housing stock and living environment which supports the local population and maintains the overall quality and character of Northfield.*

### **Objectives**

1. Maintain the predominantly single-family character of the Village.
2. Promote a strong “neighborhood” concept where individual neighborhoods are well served by a sufficient number and variety of community facilities and services.
3. Maintain a housing stock that accommodates a variety of styles, sizes and needs.
4. Promote residential development and/or redevelopment that is complementary to and consistent with surrounding neighborhoods.
5. Preserve the character and scale of existing neighborhoods through the use of bulk, scale, and height controls.
6. Protect residential areas from the encroachment of incompatible land-uses and the adverse impacts of adjacent activities.
7. Preserve sound existing housing through efficient code enforcement and preventive maintenance.

## **COMMERCIAL, OFFICE AND INDUSTRIAL AREAS**

### **Goal**

*Commercial, office and light industrial land uses which enhance the tax base of the community, contribute to the aesthetic qualities of the Village, and are compatible with residential uses.*

### **Objectives**

1. Emphasize the Village Center as the community’s key mixed-use area.
2. Emphasize the improvement and revitalization of the Village Center in favor of expansion of any other existing commercial areas of the Village.
3. Encourage high quality building and site improvements and amenities in commercial and business areas with special emphasis on internal and perimeter landscaped areas.
4. Continue to implement regular and active code enforcement in commercial, office and industrial land use areas.
5. Require convenient access to and adequate parking within all commercial areas.
6. Encourage the maintenance and improvement of existing office areas while maintaining the overall scale and intensity of each area.
7. Encourage continued maintenance to the Village’s existing light industrial area.
8. Encourage pedestrian mobility to and from the Village Center through the development of safe and accessible sidewalk and bicycle improvements.

## **VILLAGE CENTER**

### **Goal**

*A physical “focal point” and community gathering place which provides local residents with needed goods and services and enhances the Village tax base.*

### **Objectives**

1. Reinforce the mixed-use character of the Village Center.
2. Prepare a detailed development and improvement “master plan” for the Village Center to implement Vision Plan recommendations including building, parking and circulation, access, streetscape design and related improvements. Emphasize a range of retail activities within the Village Center.
3. Emphasize a unified and complementary design and appearance of buildings throughout the Village Center.
4. Promote new commercial development and redevelopment under a unified master plan.
5. Initiate programs to encourage improvement of the condition of older existing commercial buildings.
6. Encourage a pedestrian oriented design to guide improvements and redevelopment in the Village Center.
7. Improve off-street parking, access and circulation conditions throughout the Village Center.

## **COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES**

### **Goal**

*A system of high quality community facilities which provides for the efficient and effective delivery of public services to all Village residents.*

### **Objectives**

1. Help foster the availability of high-quality public elementary and secondary educational facilities and programs through communication and cooperation with the school districts.
2. Encourage the protection of existing parks and open space, and support the acquisition of additional open space wherever possible.
3. In conjunction with the park districts, seek to provide “pocket parks” in neighborhood areas to enhance visual quality and realize recreation opportunities.
4. Continue to provide personalized, high quality, and responsive municipal services and facilities.
5. Maintain a high level of fire and police protection throughout the Village.
6. Ensure that all public buildings and sites are attractive and well maintained.
7. Ensure that new public sites and buildings are well designed and enhance the appearance and image of the Village.
8. Continue to encourage intergovernmental coordination to realize the value of joint facilities and services.
9. Ensure the provision of special facilities and services focusing on the needs of senior citizens and families within the community.
10. Work with the North Shore Senior Center to maintain a Northfield locale.
11. Maintain adequate sanitary sewer and storm sewer systems and provide a sufficient public water supply for potable water and fire suppression.

12. Continue to work with outside agencies and other communities in the region to alleviate flood-related problems.
13. Explore the costs and benefits of storm sewer system improvements which focus on overcoming watershed limitations.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

### **Goal**

*A balanced transportation system which provides for safe and efficient movement of vehicles and pedestrians, reinforces surrounding land development patterns, and enhances the "semi-rural" character of the Village.*

### **Objectives**

1. Continue to seek the least intensive roadway configuration for any planned improvements to Willow Road to preserve the safety and quiet character of Northfield's neighborhoods.
2. Maintain the "semi-rural" character of the local road system as defined by limited use of curbs and gutter, preferential use of shoulders and/or drainage swales and narrow street travel lanes.
3. Promote convenient public transportation to commercial areas, public facilities and other activity areas within the Village.
4. Minimize non-local traffic within residential neighborhoods, particularly on local, residential streets.
5. Monitor the condition of both public and private streets to ensure that all streets surfaces within the Village are in good repair.
6. Protect residential areas from the negative impacts of expressways and arterial roadways through extensive landscaping and screening wherever feasible.
7. Ensure adequate and non-intrusive street lighting in all portions of the Village.
8. Ensure that all major activity areas within the Village have adequate parking facilities.
9. Develop a safe and convenient system of bicycle and pedestrian routes within the Village, providing connections between the various neighborhood areas.

## **NATURAL ENVIRONMENT**

### **Goal**

*A system of natural resources which enhances the quality of life, preserves the character of the Village, and provides a balance between developed and natural areas.*

### **Objectives**

1. Special attention should be given to the conservation and protection of environmentally sensitive sites and areas characterized by the overlapping of several natural features such as the Middle Fork Branch of the Chicago River, Skokie River, flood plains, wetlands and wooded areas.
2. Undertake an examination of the Village's flood plains and verify the frequency and location of flood prone areas.
3. Continue to emphasize the importance of conservation and promote urban forestry.
4. Wherever possible, protect and preserve existing trees and vegetation in both the design and construction of any new development.



**The Northfield Vision Plan - Chapter Three**  
**The Long-Range Plan**

## The Vision Plan - Chapter Three

# The Long-Range Plan

### Introduction

The *Long-Range Plan* establishes the Village's intentions with respect to the type, location, scale, and design of the various future land-use areas within the Village. The Long-Range Plan is to be used in combination with the various strategies, policies and recommendations identified throughout the Vision Plan. There are strong interrelationships and dependencies among land-use, transportation, and community facility improvements, and these will be considered collectively in the day-to-day use and administration of the Vision Plan. The Long-Range Plan consists of the following sections:

- 3.1 *The Land-Use Plan***, which consists of four graphic panels addressing: Existing Land-Use and Community Conditions; Long-Range Land-Use Plan; Residential Area Recommendations; and Commercial and Employment Area Recommendations.
- 3.2 *The Community Subarea Plans*** which address three key subareas in the Village including: the Village Center; the Missionary Sisters' Site; and the Willow Road Corridor.
- 3.3 *The Community Facilities Plan***, which includes improvement guidelines and recommendations for Northfield schools, parks and open space, municipal facilities, and other community facilities.
- 3.4 *The Transportation Plan***, which includes transportation policies, improvement guidelines, and recommendations designed to protect and enhance the character of Northfield residential neighborhoods and the Village as a whole.
- 3.5 *The Bicycle and Pedestrian Access System***, which identifies the basic framework for a safe and connective bicycle and pedestrian system and identifies improvement and development recommendations for the implementation of this system.

The Long-Range Plan includes an introduction to our overall desired development pattern, recommended policies and actions for residential, commercial, industrial, and public land-use areas, and subarea plans. It is specific enough to guide day-to-day development decisions, yet is flexible enough to allow for modification and continuous refinement.

## Chapter Three - Section One

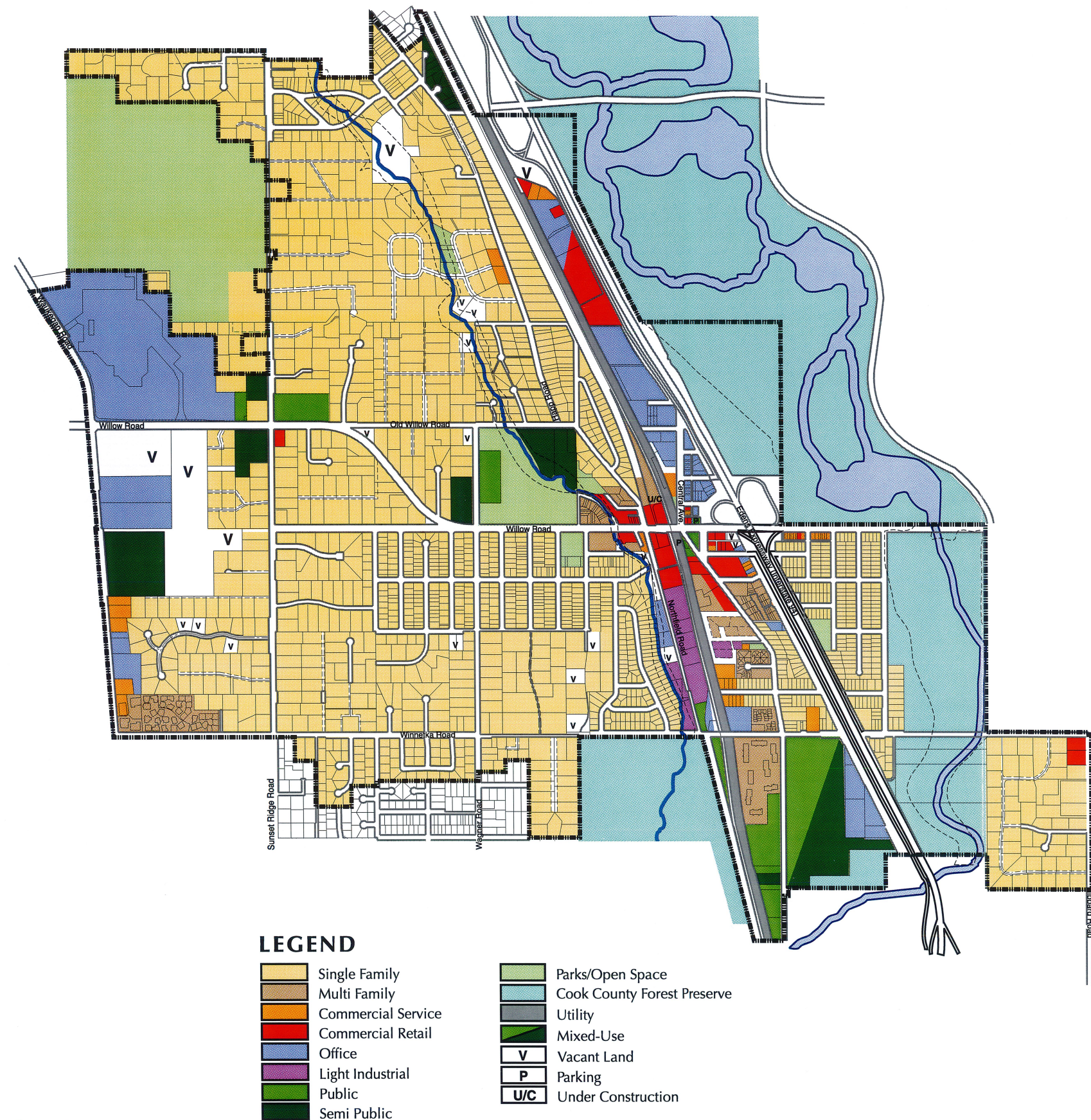
### The Land-Use Plan

This section presents the recommended Land-Use Plan for the Village of Northfield. It is presented in graphic format and includes:

- **Existing Community Conditions** (Figure 1) which illustrates the overall pattern of development in the Village and highlights important community features, influences and needs.
- **The Long Range Land-Use Plan** (Figure 2) which illustrates the general recommendations for the type and location of various land uses within the Village.
- **Residential Land Use Area Recommendations** (Figure 3) highlights improvements and principles intended to preserve the neighborhood quality and guide future development throughout Northfield's residential areas.
- **Commercial & Employment Land Use Area Recommendations** (Figure 4) identifies improvements and presents the principles which should guide future conservation, development or redevelopment efforts for these areas in the future.

# Existing Community Conditions

Northfield is a residential community composed of a number of distinctive neighborhoods. Neighborhood areas vary in physical characteristics such as street configuration, lot size, and housing styles. Commercial, office and employment uses are grouped in related concentrations near the center of the Village and along major arterial routes. Parks and open space represent a small percentage of Village land use, but are enhanced by the presence of the extensive Cook County Forest Preserve property on the eastern edge of the Village. Because Northfield is a mature community with much of the community already developed, the existing land use pattern was an important component in the development of the new Vision Plan. Figure 1 depicts existing land use



**LEGEND**

Single Family	Parks/Open Space
Multi Family	Cook County Forest Preserve
Commercial Service	Utility
Commercial Retail	Mixed-Use
Office	Vacant Land
Light Industrial	Parking
Public	Under Construction
Semi Public	

### Identifying Important Features

From the secluded nature of many of its residential neighborhoods to its compact shopping areas, Northfield has retained a quiet, small town character despite tremendous pressure for growth and development. It is this commitment, by the Village and its residents, that sets Northfield apart from many of its North Shore neighbors. Northfield counts among its many assets: an excellent school system, transportation accessibility; high standards for development; and a variety of attractive and quality residential areas.

### Community Influences

For much of the last decade, the north shore area and the Village of Northfield has been pressured for growth and change. These pressures have intensified the Illinois Department of Transportation's desire to widen Willow Road. This has raised concerns for pedestrian safety and poses an overall threat to the character and cohesiveness that embody the Northfield community. Similarly the Village has experienced pressures for "tear down" residential redevelopment, and expanded commercial and employment land-use areas.

The anticipated development of the nearby Techny site and Glenview Naval Air Station will have a significant impact on the Village of Northfield in terms of traffic generation, land use patterns, and overall activity in the area. Amidst these pressures, the Village of Northfield seeks to maintain its small town atmosphere and cohesiveness – characteristics highly valued by the community.

### The Need to Plan

Through the comprehensive planning process, many issues have been raised and addressed in detail. Others, such as Willow Road, will require flexible policies, but specific enough to establish the desired function and appearance of the street.

The need to improve and enhance the Village Center has been identified as a priority objective for the Vision Plan. The Village Center is envisioned to become a vibrant and economically viable pedestrian oriented shopping area, and community focal point in the Village.

Existing senior citizen housing developments have been received positively, and the demand for additional dwellings still remains. A potential opportunity site for senior citizen housing could include the Missionary Sisters Property.

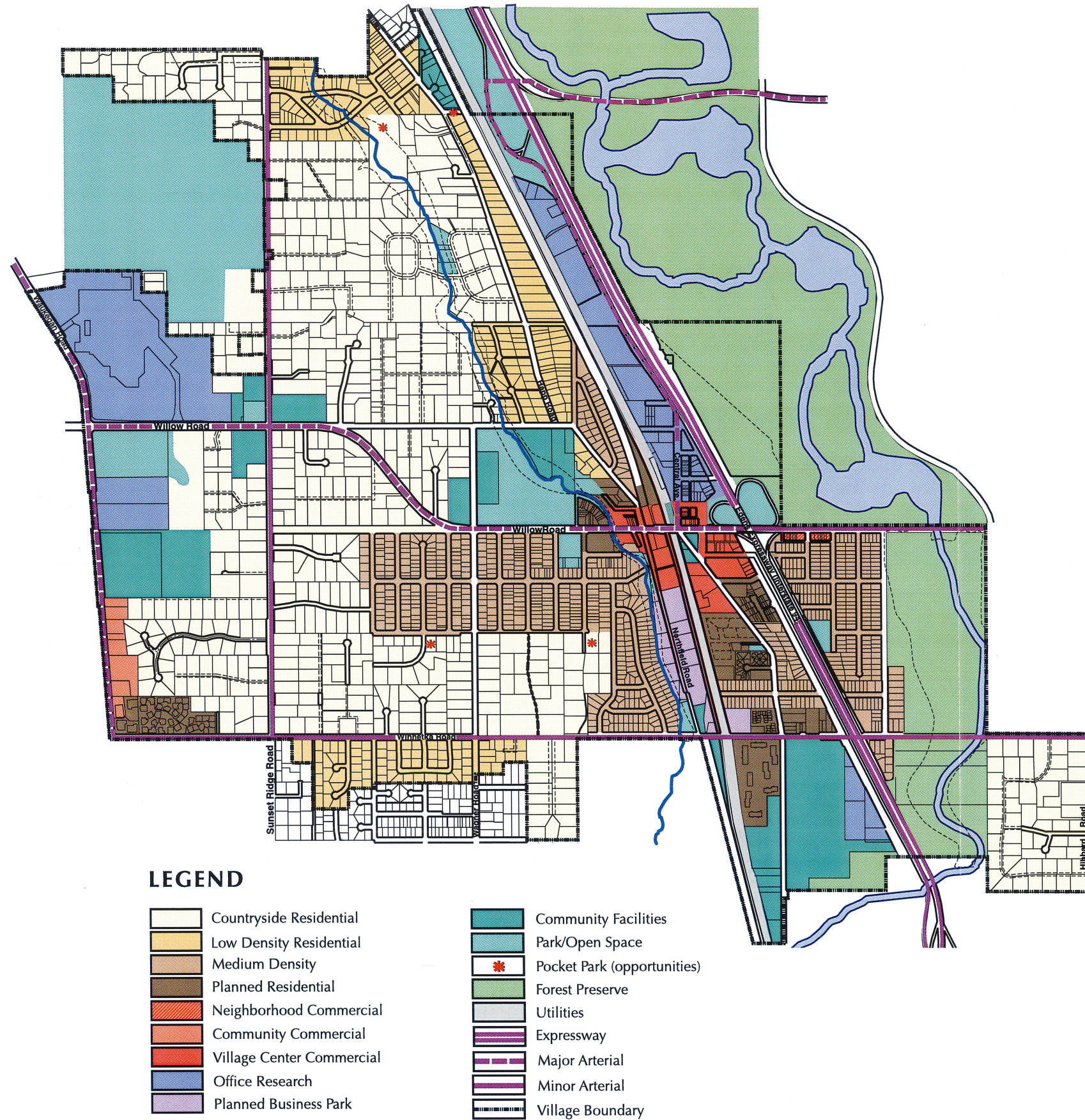
A safe and logical bicycle and pedestrian system is an integral component in quality residential communities such as Northfield. Through the comprehensive plan process, the issues of sidewalks, pedestrian safety, traffic calming, and bicycle paths and facilities have been raised as important improvements which would serve residents needs and facilitate community cohesiveness.

Many other issues were raised in the planning process which relate to quality of life considerations for residents of Northfield. These include: pocket parks; noise abatement treatment along the residential portions of the Edens Expressway; public transportation improvements; storm water drainage improvements; and technological improvements in communication.

Figure 1  
**Existing Community Conditions**

# The Long Range Land-Use Plan

The Long Range Plan provides land-use, community facilities and transportation recommendations for the Village as a whole. The Plan builds upon the existing pattern of land uses addressing future land use, the street and roadway framework and public transportation. The Land-Use Plan strives to promote a compatible arrangement of uses that make efficient use of land resources and transportation routes. The Plan places special emphasis on protection and enhancement of the Village's residential areas and presents the rationale and general recommendations for commercial, light industrial, and other land use areas. Figure 2 represents the Village's Long-Range Land-Use Plan Map.



## The Long Range Land-Use Plan

The Long Range Land-Use Plan has special importance in the Vision Plan. It provides for the type and location of future land-uses, and describes what the community seeks within each area. Below is a description of the Land-Use categories proposed under the new plan.

### Proposed Land-Use

#### Residential

- *Countryside Residential* - a residential area occupied by detached single-family residential dwellings on larger residential lots. (1 dwelling unit per acre).
- *Low Density Residential* - a residential area occupied by detached single-family residential dwellings (up to 3 dwelling units per acre).
- *Medium Density Residential* - a residential area occupied by detached single-family residential dwellings (up to 7 dwelling units per acre).
- *Planned Residential* - a residential area occupied by attached or multiple-family dwellings including apartments and condominiums, or a mix of these uses (including single family) often 2-3 story buildings (up to 8 dwelling units per acre). Development and redevelopment in these areas are subject to approval of an overall unified development plan.

#### Commercial

- *Neighborhood Commercial* - a commercial area which provides products and services to meet daily living needs serving residents in nearby neighborhoods. These areas are developed in a relatively low intensity and are small in scale to ensure neighborhood compatibility.
- *Community Commercial* - a commercial area which provides a wide range of commercial and retail products and services on a community-wide scale, including larger shopping and office locations. Community commercial areas tend to concentrate on retail activity and may include some comparison shopping goods.
- *Village Center Commercial* - is the main civic business mixed-use "core" of the Village. It includes a range of retail service, office and institutional uses within a geographically compact setting near the center of the Village. The Village Center area is intended to be the emphasis of the community's retail activity.

#### Employment

- *Office Research* - a commercial area in which office, professional business, and research related uses predominate.
- *Planned Business Park* - includes areas used for light manufacturing, assembly, production, storage, distribution and warehousing as part of an overall coordinated development.

#### Public and Quasi-Public

- *Park/Open Space* - an area intended to be maintained as a park, recreation site or open space.
- *Community Facilities* - an area containing community facilities or public buildings such as schools, colleges, hospitals, churches, municipal buildings, and cultural facilities.

The Land Use component of the Long Range Plan provides a guide for future development and redevelopment decisions within the Village of Northfield. Because Northfield is a mature developed community, the Plan does not envision major changes in land use. Rather, it contains policies and guidelines for protecting and enhancing the Village's various neighborhood areas while seeking improvements and enhancements in other locations. The Land Use Plan identifies future land-use patterns, describes the interrelationships between various land use areas, and addresses the types of projects and improvements desirable within each. This section includes Plan recommendations for each residential commercial and industrial land-uses. Recommendations for community facilities and recreation and open space are including in Section 4.3. Further, Section 4.2 includes detailed recommendations for the following planning sub areas: 1) the Village Center; 2) the Willow Road corridor; and 3) the Missionary Sisters property.

Figure 2

Long Range Land-Use Plan

# Residential Land-Use Area Recommendations

Northfield's residential neighborhoods are recognized as one of the community's most valuable assets. Residential land uses represent the vast majority of land use in the Village. Existing neighborhoods offer a variety of styles and sizes of dwelling units. The Village Center area maintains the highest concentration of multi-family housing including townhomes, condominiums, and single family attached housing. The Vision Plan strongly recommends the preservation and maintenance of existing residential neighborhoods and to promote compatible and high quality new residential developments where appropriate.

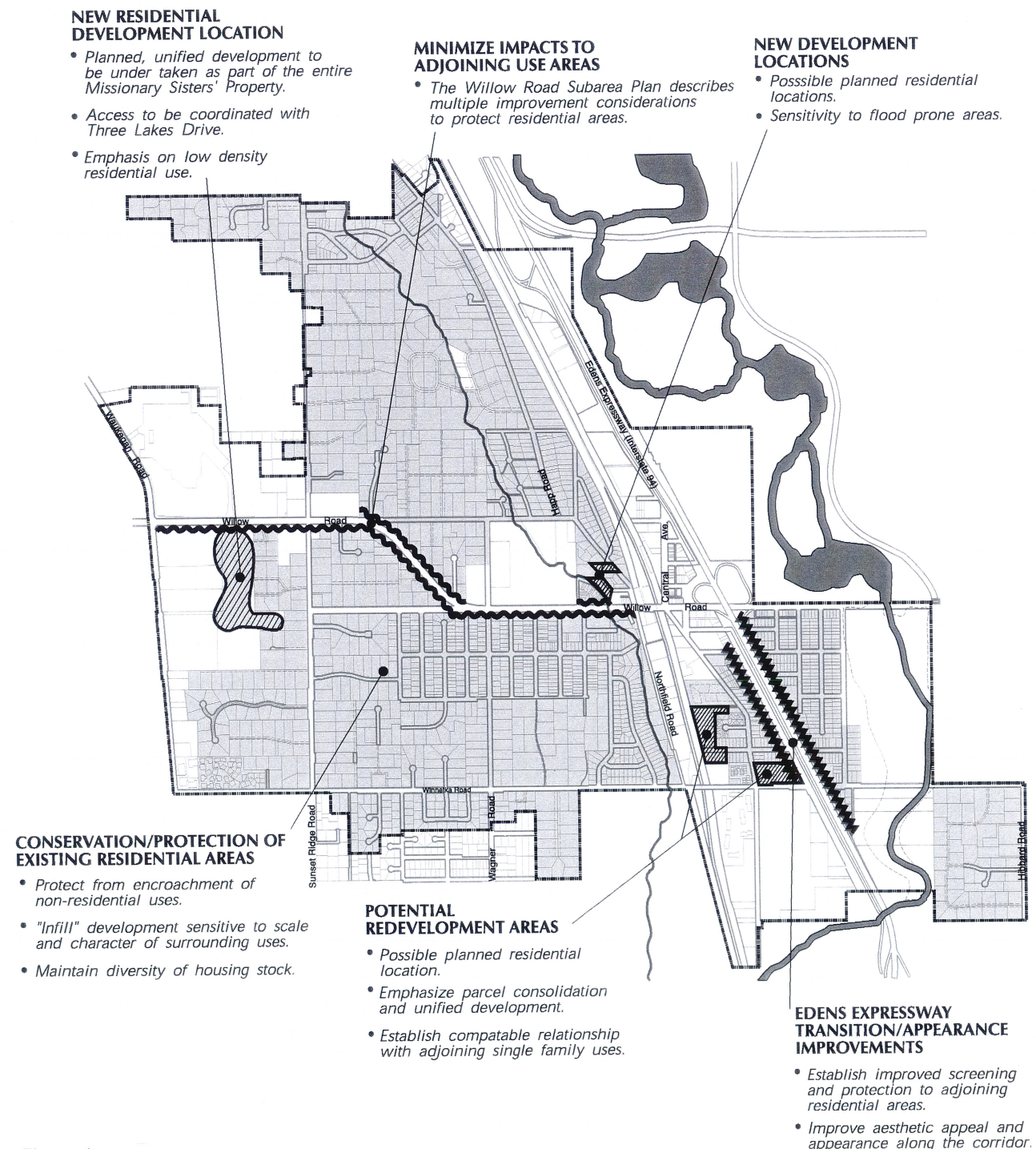


Figure 3

Residential Land-Use Area Recommendations

## VISION PLAN

### Residential Improvement and Conservation Guidelines

Several principles should guide neighborhood improvement and development within Northfield. These are described below:

**1. Preserve neighborhood integrity and tranquillity.** Through traffic should be monitored and routed around neighborhoods. Safe, pedestrian walkway systems should connect homes to local schools, neighborhood facilities and the Village Center. Non-residential uses not recommended as part of the Long Range Land-Use Plan Map should not be permitted to encroach into residential neighborhoods.

**2. Northfield should seek to maintain its diverse housing stock as a way of attracting and retaining long-time residents.** While single-family homes should continue to predominate, the Village should seek to accommodate the changing housing needs of Village residents including senior housing developments. All infill development and redevelopment should be consistent with the character and scale of the surrounding neighborhood. The Village should continue to insist on high quality materials, design, and construction.

**3. Maintain adequate facilities and services to Northfield neighborhoods.** The Village should undertake infrastructure improvements to alleviate flooding in residential areas and improve the storm water drainage system. In addition, several areas would benefit from water system improvements.

**4. Provide adequate transitional screening between residential uses and other uses.** In many instances, business uses and employment areas, and major street corridors such as the Edens Expressway immediately adjoin residential area. In these situations, residential uses could be better protected.

**5. To maintain the quality of existing neighborhoods, the Village should continue ongoing code enforcement and encourage private property maintenance.** Codes should be reviewed regularly to ensure that codes are efficiently and consistently enforced as well as to streamline the code enforcement process.

**6. Encourage the preservation and enhancement of distinguishing features.** Northfield's residential neighborhoods include a variety of distinguishing features to be preserved and enhanced. These include: large lots; extensive presence of trees, vegetation and landscaping; natural drainage; narrow street widths; and the private street system.

**7. Ensure that new residential development is compatible in scale and character with existing surrounding residential land use.** Because the Village is experiencing redevelopment within its neighborhood areas, special attention should be given to identifying ways in which new development remains in scale and character with the greater neighborhood area.

### Residential Areas

**Countryside Residential.** This type of land use accounts for the vast majority of land uses in the Village. Large lots combined with private narrow street systems create the "secluded", spaciousness of these areas. This character contributes significantly to the overall quality of community. To enhance the connections between these neighborhoods and village activity areas, pedestrian walkways and bicycle paths should be considered along public right-of-ways. Pocket parks, providing valuable neighborhood serving park and/or playground facilities, should be considered as opportunities arise. New Countryside Residential areas may include a portion of the Missionary Sisters Property at Willow Road and Waukegan Road. This area is discussed in greater detail in the discussion of the Missionary Sisters Property Subarea Plan.

**Low Density Residential.** Low density residential areas reflect neighborhoods located along the Happ Road corridor and along the western Winnetka Road corridor. Because these neighborhoods are situated along the community's major street system, the Vision Plan recommends the Village provide special landscaping treatment along the corridors to soften the effects of higher traffic volumes. Housing stock should continue to be well maintained and landscaped.

**Medium Density Residential.** Medium density residential neighborhoods generally surround the Village Center area. Neighborhoods are served by a grid pattern of public streets, fully improved with curb, gutter and sidewalks. Housing in these neighborhoods is more moderate in scale but generally well maintained. Because these areas are served with public streets, many of which have access to Willow Road, street system improvements should be considered to minimize cut through-traffic movements within the neighborhoods.

**Multiple Family/Planned Residential Areas.** The Village of Northfield provides a varied mix of multiple family housing areas from moderately priced apartments to luxury townhomes. This mix of housing is desirable, and serves to meet a range of housing needs in the Village.

Four new possible locations for multiple family housing exist. The first location could include the commercial service area at the west end of Harding Road. Although currently functioning as a light industrial/commercial service area, the area is accessed by a residential street and provides minimal or no screening treatments between the uses. Where opportunities exist in the future, the Village should encourage the relocation of non-residential uses to a more appropriate area. The second potential redevelopment area includes the northeast corner of Happ Road and Winnetka Road. This site would involve the redevelopment of existing older single family structures. Careful site planning and design must be undertaken to minimize traffic conflicts on nearby neighborhood streets, and to ensure compatible relationships with adjoining residential areas. A third potential redevelopment area includes the river front property on the west side of Willow View Drive. Though currently part of the property used for Bess Hardware, this unimproved area would be an appropriate site for a planned residential development. The fourth area, located immediately north of the Willow Green development at Happ Road and Eden Lane, may also be redeveloped for planned multi family development.

Future multiple family developments should be approved only as planned developments to ensure high quality design, sound relationships with adjoining use area, and appropriate development amenities.

# Commercial & Employment Land-Use Area Recommendations

Commercial land uses, consisting of retail, service and office uses, are concentrated by functional use in select locations in the Village. Based on the existing pattern of commercial land use, the Plan recommends the use of three commercial classifications: 1) Neighborhood Commercial; 2) Community Commercial; and 3) Village Center Commercial.

## KRAFT CAMPUS

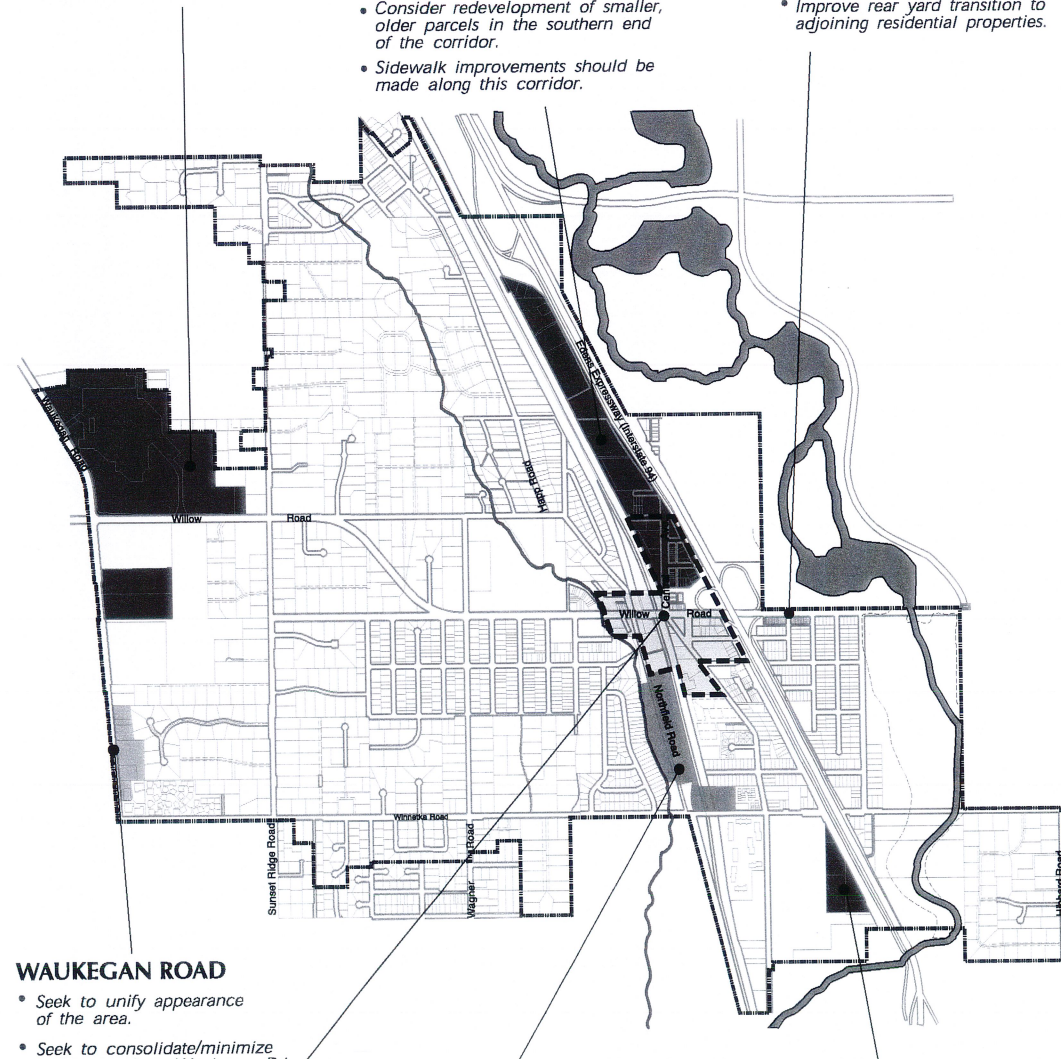
- Continue to maintain "campus" environment and atmosphere.
- Maintain extensive "entryway" landscaping features along Willow Road and Waukegan Road.

## NORTH FRONTAGE ROAD

- Continue to emphasize large scale high quality office uses.
- Improve and enhance street and parkway areas through reconstruction and landscaping.
- Consider redevelopment of smaller, older parcels in the southern end of the corridor.
- Sidewalk improvements should be made along this corridor.

## EAST WILLOW ROAD

- Revitalize/redevelop to more contemporary design.
- Consolidate access, improve parking and unify the appearance of the street frontage.
- Improve rear yard transition to adjoining residential properties.



## WAUKEGAN ROAD

- Seek to unify appearance of the area.
- Seek to consolidate/minimize curb cuts along Waukegan Rd.
- Sidewalk improvements should be made along this corridor.

## VILLAGE CENTER

- Improve in accord with the Village Center subarea plan.

## NORTHFIELD ROAD

- Reinforce strong mix of light industrial and distribution uses.
- Continue to encourage improved off-street parking and truck circulation and access.

## SOUTH FRONTAGE ROAD

- Maintain and enhance existing office research uses.

## Commercial Area Improvement and Conservation Guidelines

Several principles should guide commercial area improvement and development within Northfield. These are described below.

**1. Continue to improve and develop the Village Center as the Northfield's mixed-use and multipurpose center.** The historic importance of the Village Center will remain relevant through continued development and revitalization of the Downtown. The area is planned to provide a mix of land-uses supportive of business, civic and residential activities.

**2. Ensure that the design of commercial development reinforces the function and does not conflict with the adjoining street system.** Since most commercial areas are located along the Village's major thoroughfares, access to commercial properties should be carefully designed to minimize conflicts with through traffic movement. The consolidation of access drives should be encouraged. Commercial areas should be designed so that limited vehicular access is provided between them and abutting residential areas.

**3. Integrate open space opportunities for visual and activity "relief" in commercial development.** Open space features should be incorporated into major new commercial and office development projects. These should include the preservation and enhancement of natural environmental features, as well as the provision of landscaped areas, squares, plazas and courtyards.

**4. Encourage the continued maintenance and improvement of existing commercial areas.** Existing commercial areas should be improved and upgraded as required. Overall access, parking and environmental improvements should be undertaken where necessary. The negative impact of commercial areas on other land uses should be minimized.

**5. Improve and upgrade the image and appeal of commercial areas along commercial street corridors.** The overall image and appearance of existing commercial and office areas should continue to be upgraded and improved. Much could be done to improve commercial area lighting, landscaping, signage, and pedestrian conveniences which would not only help upgrade property, but also unify the overall appearance of the Village's commercial and office locations.

**6. Ensure the highest quality of new construction and design.** The design and appearance of buildings, site development, landscaping, signage and graphics, and street furniture should all be of special concern. New commercial construction should promote a distinct image and identity for individual development areas.

**7. Commercial areas should not adversely impact adjacent residential areas.** Screening and buffering should be provided, including landscaped setbacks and open space areas, as appropriate. Commercial operations, including traffic and parking, should not be allowed to affect neighborhood quality. Noise, safety, and overall maintenance of commercial properties should also be carefully controlled.

**8. Assist and facilitate the expansion and development plans of local businesses.** Encourage Northfield's retailers and property owners to better organize and identify ways which they can strengthen their competitive position within the larger market in which the community competes. The organizational effort would also serve to establish stronger working relationships in "partnership"

with the Village. Organizational identity among all retailers and increased visibility within the area will foster a more positive identity in the community and encourage spending and investment.

## Commercial Areas

**Neighborhood Commercial.** Neighborhood Commercial areas are small in physical scale and provide neighborhood serving retail uses. Existing Neighborhood Commercial areas include the commercial area on Willow Road east of the Edens Expressway. Future improvement of the east Willow Road area should focus on improved parking and circulation patterns, building facade enhancements, and additional screening treatments between residential and non-residential uses. Public streetscape improvements, including lighting, signage, pavement, sidewalk and landscaping treatments would further enhance the appearance and identity of the area. This area may be subject to complete redevelopment in the future.

**Community Commercial.** Community Commercial use is limited to one location in the Village. The Waukegan Road corridor is an auto-oriented, commercial area consisting of commercial service and office uses. Commercial uses in this area are in good condition but the Vision Plan encourages additional landscaping and site improvements throughout the area.

**Village Center Commercial.** The Village Center presently functions as the Village's a mixed use district with a strong pedestrian-oriented, commercial focus. The Plan encourages a stronger integration of residential and commercial uses in any future redevelopment of the area. Detailed recommendations for the Village Center can be found in the Subarea plans.

## Employment Land-Use

Employment land-uses play an important role in the Northfield community. The Village maintains three distinct employment areas: 1) the Frontage Road/Central Avenue office corridor; 2) the Northfield Road Business Park area; and 3) the Kraft Corporate Office campus. The Village's plans for these areas are described below.

## Employment Area Improvement and Conservation Guidelines

Several principles should guide employment area improvement and development within Northfield. These are described below.

**1. Define functional roles for employment land-use areas.** Each light industrial or business areas of the Village should have a clear and distinctive role which takes advantage of the area assets and limitations. Each area should also be characterized by a dominant land use such as assembly, light manufacturing, office or distribution. Plans for development should relate how this role is to be fulfilled under the Land-Use Plan and Plan Map.

**2. Office, business park, and office research areas should have adequate off-street parking and loading facilities.** Adequately screened off-street parking and loading facilities should be provided in all light industrial and business sites, and the consolidation of parking areas and driveways serving

two or more uses should be encouraged. The Village can help facilitate correcting off-street parking and loading deficiencies in areas which experience congestion.

**3. Encourage coordinated site and urban design improvements sensitive to surrounding land-use and development.** Site improvements within business and industrial areas such as lighting, signage and landscaping should be designed to help create a positive identity and visual image for each development area.

**4. Emphasize aesthetic and landscape improvements at the perimeter of new and existing developments.** As required under current ordinances of the Village particular attention should be given to screening and visual separation between business and industrial uses and residential land uses.

**5. Development design should consider the needs of pedestrians and cyclists and other employee amenities.** Development and improvements in these areas should consider the bicycle and pedestrian access systems recommended as part of the Transportation Plan.

**6. Encourage property owners to maintain and enhance the overall condition of existing industrial, business and office developments.** As existing developments continue to age, it will become important for the Village to maintain relationships with property owners and tenants to keep these areas viable and stable in the future.

## Employment Areas

**Office Research.** Northfield is well represented by office uses with a substantial concentration along Central Avenue/Frontage Road and a smaller number of large scale office uses along Waukegan Road. The Plan emphasizes continued high quality construction and extraordinary site design at these highly visible locations. Public improvements should be undertaken, particularly along Frontage Road to further enhance the appearance and function of these areas.

A smaller concentration of office buildings, situated between Central Avenue and Frontage Road, are located within the boundaries of the Village Center area. Recommendations and improvement guidelines for this area is included as part of the Village Center Subarea Plan.

The Kraft Corporate Office site, located at the northwest corner of the intersection of Willow and Waukegan Roads is exemplary of office "campus" development, designed in a sensitive manner to surrounding land-uses. The Vision Plan encourages the protection and long-term enhancement of this use.

**Planned Business Park.** This classification includes properties along the Northfield Road corridor which includes a variety of office, light manufacturing and distribution land-uses. The area is stable and well maintained. Northfield Road should receive landscape improvements in the future to enhance its aesthetic appearance.

Figure 4

Commercial and Employment Land-Use Area Recommendations

## Chapter Three - Section Two

# Community Subarea Plans

The Subarea Plans of the Vision Plan provide special focus on key geographic areas of the Village requiring careful attention to planning detail. The Subarea Plans address the specific development, policy and community design needs for select areas that were identified as a part of the planning process. The subareas include three key locations which have potential for change in the future. They include:

- The Northfield Village Center
- The Missionary Sisters of the Holy Spirit Site
- The Willow Road Corridor

Recommendations for these areas focus on: land use and development; community facilities; access and circulation; pedestrian and bicycle facilities; and appearance and design. Each of the three subareas is discussed below.

### **SUBAREA 1: VILLAGE CENTER**

Subarea 1 consists of the Northfield Village Center, which is generally bounded by Oak Street on the north, the Edens Expressway on the east, the Village Center shopping center on the south, and Northfield Road and the Middle Fork of the North Branch of the Chicago River on the west. The Village Center Subarea includes a diverse mix of commercial, office, public and residential uses, and is the shopping and service focal point for the Northfield community. The Village Center “planning area” extends beyond the area currently zoned as Village Center to consider the relationships among the adjoining land-use areas.

While the Village Center is fully developed and a number of improvements have been undertaken in recent years, much could be done to further upgrade and enhance the operational and appearance aspects of this mixed-use area, and to promote compatible and high-quality redevelopment in the future.

#### **Planning Influences**

Future improvement and development potentials within the Village Center Subarea will be impacted by a range of planning influences, including: a) existing land-use, b) building conditions, c) the 1986 Comprehensive Plan, d) current zoning, e) access and circulation, f) parking, and g) design and appearance.

Village Center planning influences and their implications for future improvement and development are described in Figure 5.

#### **Improvement And Development Recommendations**

Improvement and development recommendations for the Village Center Subarea are highlighted in Figure 6 and summarized below. They include: a) an overall improvement and development concept for the Village Center, b) specific guidelines for improving and developing various aspects of the Village Center Subarea, and c) an indication of potential redevelopment sites.

## SUBAREA 1: PLANNING INFLUENCES

**Existing Land use.** The Northfield Village Center consists of a diverse mix of land uses located in a relatively compact geographic area. While office and retail uses predominate, the area also includes commercial services, public uses and light industrial facilities.

In general, most retail uses are located in the southern portion of Subarea 1, along or near Happ Road. Office uses are located along the east and west sides of Central Avenue, north of Willow Road. Industrial uses are located along Northfield Road south of Willow Road. The Village Center is bordered on three sides by mature residential neighborhoods.

Even though the Village Center is fully developed, several redevelopment projects have been undertaken in recent years, whereby older, marginal uses have been replaced by contemporary commercial, office and residential development.

**Building conditions.** The structural condition of buildings is generally good. Very few structures are characterized by major deficiencies, although some buildings would benefit from minor maintenance and repair.

Even though they are structurally sound, a few of the older, smaller buildings may represent an underutilization of prime Village Center land. Among these are several converted residential structures.

**1986 Comprehensive Plan.** The 1986 Comprehensive Plan generally reflected existing land use at that point in time. Retail and service uses were recommended along Willow Road in the central portion of the area, with office and residential development around the periphery.

However, the Plan also recommended a few notable changes: a) mixed commercial/office development in the blocks north of Willow and east of Central; b) office development along the west side of Happ Road south of Willow; and c) new two-family residential developments along the east side of the railroad north of Willow.

**Zoning.** The major portion of Subarea 1 is zoned V/C: Village Center. The V/C District is intended to provide a variety of retail and service uses to serve local residents. The maximum building height is 35 feet; the minimum front yard is 10 feet; the minimum rear yard is 20 feet; and the maximum lot coverage is 50 percent. According to the ordinance, these regulations are intended to ensure high quality architectural and site design and to promote a planned, pedestrian-oriented shopping environment. All projects within the V/C District are subject to review by the Architectural Commission.

The O/R District is intended to accommodate limited intensity offices which are compatible with adjacent residential areas. Building height, yard, lot coverage and design review requirements are similar to those of the V/C District.

**Access and circulation.** The Village Center has relatively good accessibility from the surrounding community and the regional highway system. The Edens Expressway (I-94) has a partial interchange at Willow Road. Willow Road carries relatively heavy traffic within the Village Center. Willow is being considered for improvement, as discussed elsewhere in this report. Happ Road, Central Avenue and Northfield Road provide connections to the surrounding community.

While the major street system is well defined, internal traffic circulation is somewhat more difficult due to the presence of the railroad and the expressway. Most local streets are very narrow and have limited continuity.

**Parking.** Parking within the Village Center is provided by a series of off-street parking lots and on-street parking along most local streets. In addition to a number of private parking lots that serve specific businesses, the Village operates three municipal parking lots.

Because the Village Center is intensely developed, virtually all available land is used for parking. As a result, the pattern of on-street and off-street parking has become rather disorganized in several locations.

**Design and appearance.** While some improvements have been undertaken in recent years, much could be done to further upgrade the image and appearance of the Village Center.

Most commercial uses are located in separate shopping centers and free-standing buildings. While several of these are notable in and of themselves, the developments are not interconnected or strongly related. Architectural styles are quite diverse, and there are no common design features that unite buildings or groups of buildings. There are few pedestrian amenities. Parking lots are not well screened or landscaped, and some have surfaces in poor condition. Curb parking is disorganized and poorly defined, particularly in blocks without curbs. Some buildings have a tired and dated appearance that tends to detract from the overall image of the Village Center. Except for a few improvements along Willow Road, there are no distinctive design treatments along the roadways that pass through the Village Center.

### Current Zoning:

- V/C Village Center
- O/R Office Research
- M-1 Light Manufacturing
- R-6 Multiple Family
- R-4 Single Family

### Existing Land-Use:

- Retail
- Commercial Service
- Office
- Industrial
- Public
- Parks/Open Space
- Forest Preserve
- Parking
- Multiple Family Residential
- Single-Family Residential

### Selected Existing Uses:

- 1 Village Hall/Police Station
- 2 Library/Post Office
- 3 Northfield Village Square
- 4 Northfield Village Center
- 5 Dominick's
- 6 Walgreen's
- 7 Starbuck's/Crost Antiques

### 1986 Comprehensive Plan:

- Commercial
- Office/Research
- Public
- Park
- Forest Preserve
- Light Industrial
- Multiple Family Residential
- Single Family Residential

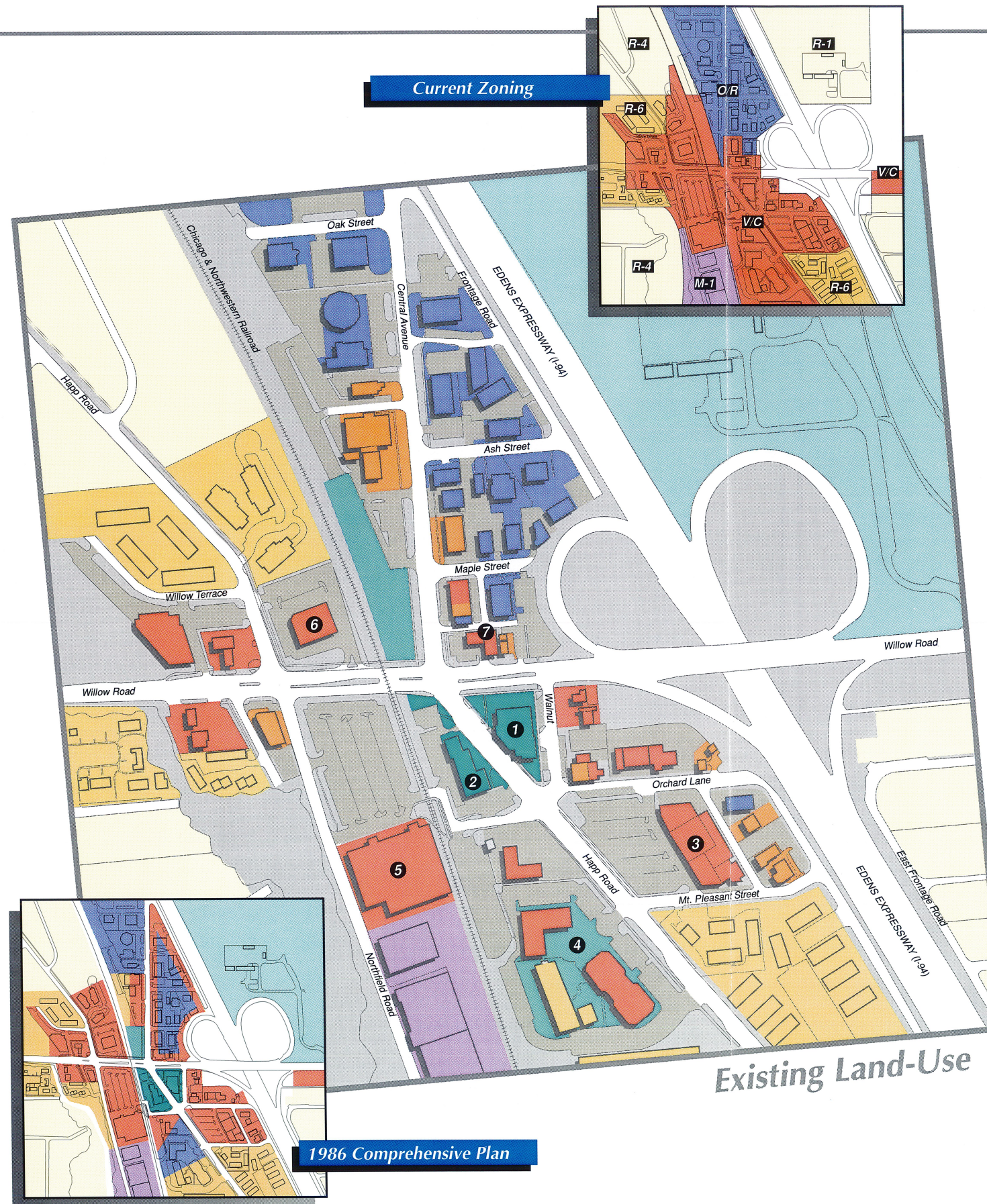


Figure 5

### Subarea 1: Planning Influences

### **Overall Improvement & Development Concept**

The Village Center should continue to be improved and upgraded as the pedestrian-oriented shopping and service focal point for the Village of Northfield. Existing uses should be upgraded. Marginal and underutilized properties should be redeveloped. Public improvements should be undertaken to enhance the image and appearance of the area.

The Village Center should be characterized by an exciting mix of retail, service, office and public uses, as well as housing units. It should continue to be oriented primarily to the needs of the Northfield community. It should continue to be relatively small and compact, and its present size and scale should be essentially maintained.

It is recommended that the entire area delineated in the Land Use Plan included in Figure 6 be considered a part of Northfield's "Village Center". Streetscape and other public improvements should be consistent throughout this larger area. For example, the area between Willow Road and Oak Street should clearly "read" as an integral part of the Village Center, even though it may include a different mix of uses than the area south of Willow.

Commercial development should be located primarily along and near Willow Road. New retail establishments, service uses and restaurants that accommodate the day-to-day needs of nearby residents should be promoted. Office uses should continue to be located along Central Avenue north of Willow Road. Existing industrial uses should be allowed to remain along Northfield Road south of Willow. However, if industrial properties become available in the future, they should be redeveloped for office or commercial uses more closely related to the remainder of the Village Center. Residential uses should continue to border the commercial area and neighborhood improvements should be undertaken as required.

Zoning actions taken within the area should be consistent with the Plan. This does not necessarily mean that the Village Center zoning district should be extended throughout the entire Subarea. Rather, a range of zoning changes may be made over time to support Plan recommendations

### **Improvement and Development Guidelines**

A range of projects and improvements should be considered to upgrade and enhance the existing development pattern in the Village Center. These include improvements related to sites and buildings, parking facilities and the public rights-of-way. Recommended improvement and development guidelines are described below; several are also highlighted in Figure 6.

#### **Sites and Buildings:**

- Existing buildings and storefronts should be improved to enhance the image and appearance of the Village Center, and to help visually unify adjacent stores and businesses. Storefront improvements might include special facade treatment, the coordination of colors and materials, signage, awnings and canopies, and related design features.
- Retail commercial uses should occupy first floor space with commercial service and office uses located above.
- Marginal and underutilized properties within the Village Center should be redeveloped for more appropriate commercial, office or residential uses.
- New buildings should be located at or very near the sidewalk line within the commercial portions of the Village Center. If buildings are set back from the sidewalk, landscaping and/or decorative fencing should be provided to maintain the street.

- All new buildings should be characterized by high-quality design and construction, and should be compatible with the existing character of the street. In general, new buildings should be no more than three stories in height and of masonry construction.
- Where possible, parking lots should be located behind buildings or in mid-block locations. Parking lots along major streets should be attractively edged with landscaping and decorative fencing.
- All development along the Edens Expressway should be attractive, well maintained and extensively landscaped. Many visitors and passing motorists get their first impression of Northfield via views from the expressway.

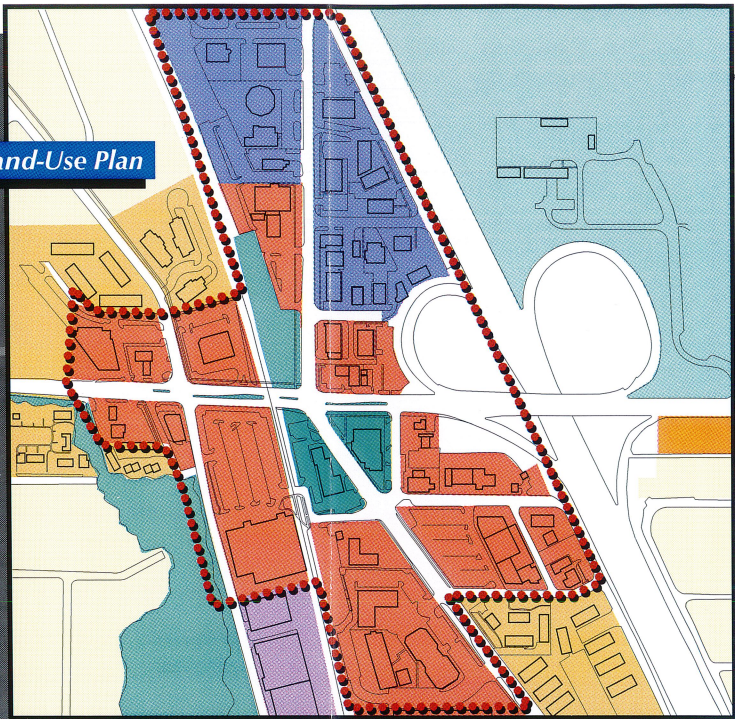
***Parking:***

- The overall appearance of parking areas should be improved through landscaping strips and decorative fencing. Because of development patterns within the Village Center, parking lots are among the most prominent visual features.
- Existing parking lots that are characterized by cracked or gravel surfaces, holes or depressions, poor drainage, etc., should be repaired.
- Small, separate parking lots within the same block should be combined and redesigned to improve access and internal circulation and to provide additional spaces.
- Vehicular access drives should be combined and consolidated wherever possible. In general, the number of curbs cuts within a block should be minimized.
- All new development within the Village Center should be accompanied by adequate, convenient and attractively designed off-street parking lots.
- Curb parking should be maintained along most local streets, but it should be more clearly delineated and better striped. It should be noted that parallel parking is more “pedestrian-friendly” than angle parking.

***Public Rights-of-Way:***

- Street trees should be provided along both sides of the major streets that pass through the Village Center. Perhaps more than any other single improvement, a consistent system of street trees will help unify the appearance of the Village Center.
- The overall level of illumination within the Village Center should be improved. New street lights should be considered along the major streets; new decorative pedestrian light fixtures should be considered along commercial blocks.
- Banners and graphics should be attached to street light fixtures along the major streets. Banners could be seasonal, or could signify special community events, celebrations or promotional activities. Village businesses and institutions might participate in the banner program.
- Public and directional signage should be improved. New signage should better direct motorists and visitors to the Village Center, parking lots and other key destinations.
- New pedestrian amenities such as benches, bike racks, trash receptacles and other pedestrian conveniences should be provided within the commercial area where space permits.
- Curbs, gutters, sidewalks and grass parkways should be provided and well maintained throughout the Village Center. Special paving materials might be considered along blocks with high pedestrian traffic.

Village Center Land-Use Plan



**SUBAREA 1: IMPROVEMENT GUIDELINES**

The Village Center should continue to be improved and upgraded as the pedestrian-oriented shopping and service focal point for the Village of Northfield. Existing uses should be upgraded. Marginal and underutilized properties should be redeveloped. Public improvements should be undertaken to enhance the image and appearance of the area.

The Village Center should be characterized by an exciting mix of retail, service, office and public uses, as well as housing units. It should continue to be oriented primarily to the needs of the Northfield community. It should continue to be relatively small and compact, and its present size and scale should be maintained.

The entire area delineated in the Land Use Plan should be considered a part of the Village Center. Streetscape and other design improvements should be consistent throughout this larger area. For example, the office area along Central Avenue north of Willow Road should clearly "read" as an integral part of the Village Center, even though it may include a different mix of uses than the shopping area south of Willow.

A range of improvements related to land use, traffic, parking and urban design should be considered to upgrade and enhance existing development within the Village Center. Recommended improvements are described in the accompanying text; several are highlighted in the map at left.

Even though the commercial properties along the south side of Willow Road east of the expressway are not shown as part of the Village Center, they should be improved and upgraded, as described elsewhere in this report.

**POTENTIAL REDEVELOPMENT SITES:**

Even though most buildings and properties within the Village Center are sound and viable, there are several potential opportunities for new commercial, office or mixed-use development. Potential redevelopment sites are highlighted in the map at left and are described below.

**Site 1** includes the commercial and office properties at the northeast corner of Willow Road and Central Avenue. While existing uses are viable, several buildings are old and small and their design and appearance is unrelated. This site would be suitable for small-scale commercial redevelopment, focused around the Village Center's primary intersection. Many of the existing uses might be relocated in the new development. However, this redevelopment site will be quite small unless the newer office building at the northeast corner is included.

**Site 2** includes the commercial properties at the southeast corner of Willow Road and Walnut Street. While several existing uses are viable, the buildings are old and small and their design and appearance is unrelated. Many of the properties are under parked. This site would be suitable for small-scale commercial redevelopment. New buildings should be located near the sidewalk along both Walnut and Orchard Lane, with parking located to the rear. Redevelopment of this site should consider its prime "gateway" location.

**Site 3** includes the Northfield Village Square shopping center and the office buildings along West Frontage Road south of Orchard Lane. While the shopping center includes a number of viable uses, it has been added to and remodeled a number of times over the years. The center now has a "tired" and "dated" appearance. Ideally, this site should eventually be redeveloped for a new, contemporary commercial center. If possible, redevelopment should encompass the office properties along West Frontage Road to create a larger development site. If redeveloped, new commercial buildings should be oriented to Happ Road and Orchard Lane, with parking located in the center of the site.

**Site 4** includes east side of Central Avenue between Maple and Ash Streets. This block should be retained for office and service use, although existing development should either be substantially improved and upgraded or replaced with new construction. New buildings should be similar in quality and character to the recent office development at the northwest corner of this block.

**Site 5** includes the west side of Northfield Road south of Willow Road. To the extent possible, this flood-prone area should be improved and enhanced as an attractive open space feature. Improvement should include the bicycle and pedestrian connections discussed elsewhere in this report.

**Site 6** includes the gas station and dry cleaners at southwest corner of Willow Road and Northfield Road. While this site is small and existing uses are sound and viable, this property might be suitable for small-scale commercial redevelopment in the future.

**Site 7** includes the gas station and hardware property at the northwest corner of Willow Road and Happ Road. While the existing uses are viable, this site might be appropriate for commercial redevelopment in the future, perhaps anchored by new and improved space for the hardware store.

**Land-Use Plan:**

- Commercial
- Office/Research
- Neighborhood Commercial
- Public
- Park
- Forest Preserve
- Light Industrial
- Multiple Family Residential
- Single Family Residential
- Village Center Boundary

**Improvement Guidelines:**

- Potential redevelopment sites (see text for a description).
- Streetscape improvements should be considered along Willow Road and Happ Road, including street trees, lighting, signage, banners, etc.
- Sidewalk, decorative lighting, building facade and other pedestrian-oriented improvements should be considered within the primary commercial areas.
- Pedestrian connections should be improved between the primary commercial blocks.
- Gateway improvements, including signage and landscaping, should be provided at the main entrances to the Village Center.
- New public art should be considered at the Village Center's key intersection.
- Landscaping, bike and pedestrian trails, and other enhancements could be considered along the railroad right-of-way.
- Landscaping, screening and front yard improvements should be encouraged along the edge of the Edens Expressway.

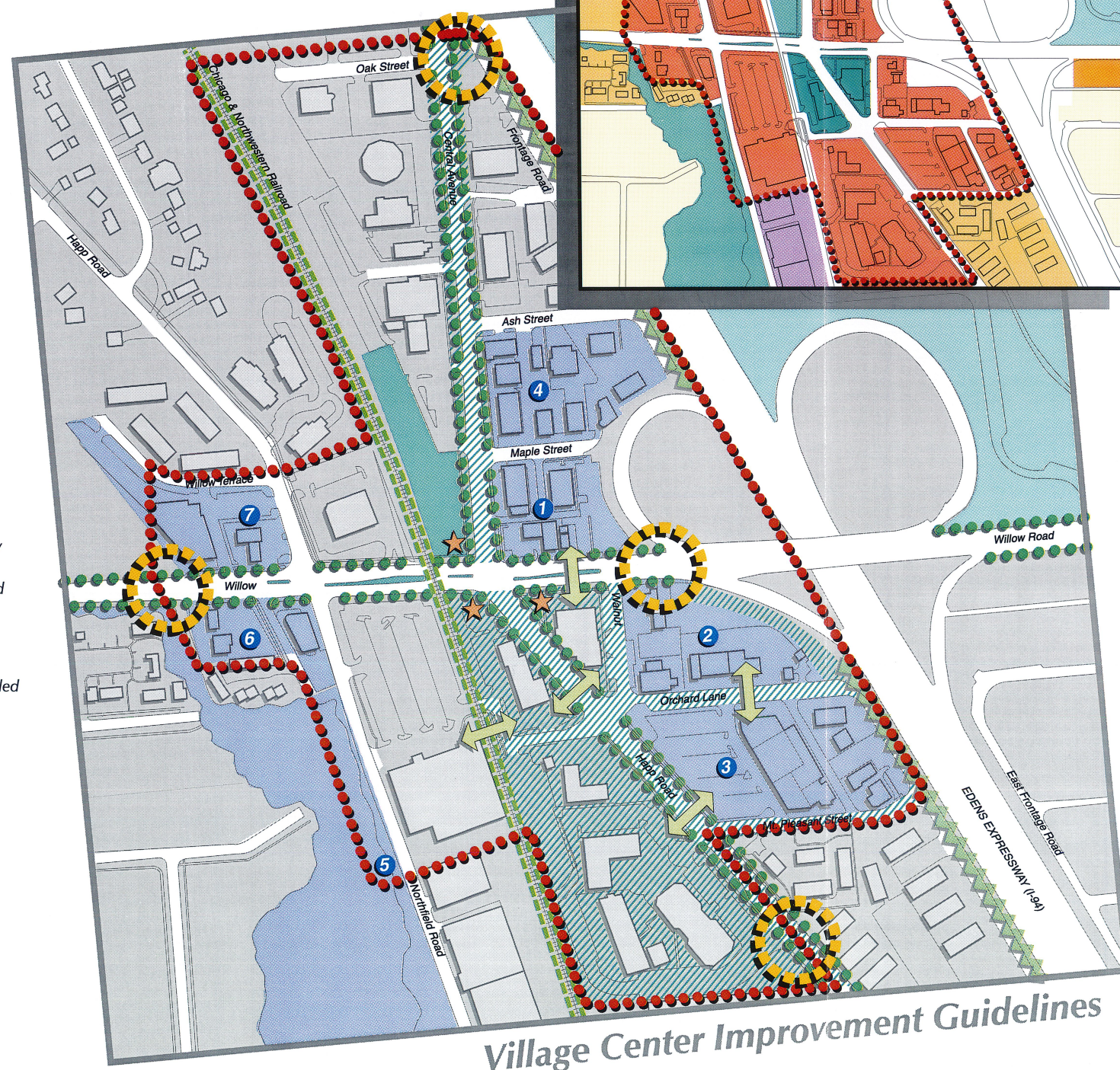


Figure 6  
**Subarea 1:  
Village Center Improvement Guidelines**

Prepared By: Trkla, Pettigrew, Allen & Payne, Inc.

- Street surfaces in poor condition should be repaired. While these conditions do not necessarily affect traffic circulation or safety, they do detract from the overall image and appearance of the Village Center. The replacement of older traffic signals with more distinctive new fixtures should also be considered.
- Crosswalks and sidewalks should be improved along Willow Road and Happ Road. Crosswalks are important not only for the convenience of shoppers and business patrons, but also for the safety of children and other residents moving between different parts of the Village.
- Village Center “gateway” design features should be provided at several key locations. Gateways might include distinctive signage, landscaping and/or lighting. In many ways, the most important “gateway” is at the Edens on-ramp, and special design treatments should be considered at this location.
- The Village should work with IDOT to intensify landscaping along the expressway in order to help screen and buffer the roadway from the adjacent community.
- The appearance of the railroad right-of-way should be further improved and enhanced through the use of landscaping and other screening devices. Improvements should include bike and pedestrian paths as discussed later in this report.

### Potential Redevelopment Sites

In addition to the improvement of existing development, the Village should continue to promote the redevelopment of older, marginal properties for new commercial, employment and residential uses.

Even though most buildings and properties within the Village Center are sound and viable, there appear to be several opportunities for redevelopment. These include marginal and underutilized properties, older and obsolete buildings, and similar properties.

Seven potential development sites are described in Figure 6, including.

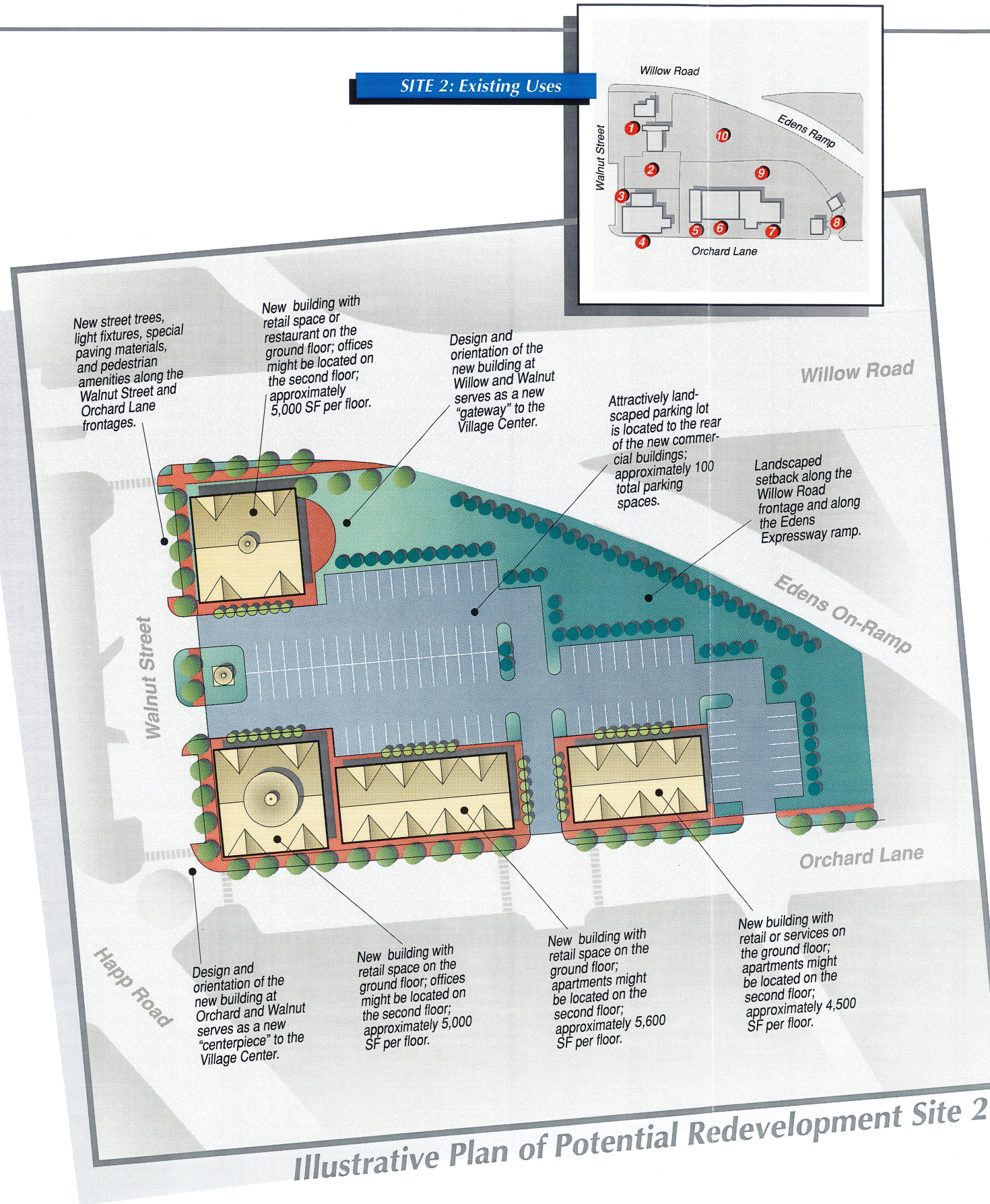
- *Site 1*, which includes the commercial and office properties at the northeast corner of Willow Road and Central Avenue;
- *Site 2*, which includes the commercial properties at the southeast corner of Willow Road and Walnut Street;
- *Site 3*, which includes the Northfield Village Square shopping center and the office buildings along West Frontage Road south of Orchard Lane;
- *Site 4*, which includes the east side of Central Road from Ash Street to Maple Street;
- *Site 5*, which includes the west side of Northfield Road south of Willow Road;
- *Site 6*, which includes the gas station and dry cleaners at the southwest corner of Willow Road and Northfield Road; and
- *Site 7*, which includes the gas station and hardware store property at the northwest corner of Willow Road and Old Willow Road.

Based on our analysis of conditions and potentials within the Village Center, we believe that **Site 2** should be considered a “priority” redevelopment site due to its size, condition and locational characteristics. Figure 7 illustrates how commercial redevelopment might occur, consistent with the improvement guidelines presented above.

**SITE 2: Existing Uses**

**SITE 2: Existing Uses**

- 1 Citgo gas station, with canopy and pumps located along Willow Road frontage.
- 2 Parking and storage yard for Citgo gas station.
- 3 Two-story wood frame structure, with Bleachers Sports Memorabilia on the ground floor.
- 4 Two-story wood frame structure with three ground floor spaces: a) Meta Morphosis beauty salon; b) Margot Passas gifts and home furnishings; and c) a vacant storefront. Four office tenants are located on the second floor.
- 5 Two-story masonry structure with minor historic interest, housing Canvasback Needlepoint on the ground floor.
- 6 One-story masonry structure with three tenants: a) North Shore Soccer sporting goods; b) Hunan Chef restaurant; and c) Fit to Be Tied shoes.
- 7 One-story wood frame structure housing Seul's Tavern & Grill.
- 8 One-story converted residential structure housing Northfield Dental Office.
- 9 Surface parking lot.
- 10 Unused right-of-way; a portion of this land might conceivably be made available for landscaping or surface parking.



**Illustrative Plan of Potential Redevelopment Site 2**

Figure 7  
**Subarea 1:  
Illustrative Plan**

**SUBAREA 1: ILLUSTRATIVE PLAN**

Figure 7 presents an "illustrative plan" for the redevelopment of Potential Redevelopment Site 2. The illustrative plan is intended to better suggest how redevelopment might occur within Northfield's Village Center, consistent with the improvement guidelines presented in this Plan report.

As previously described in Figure 6, Site 2 encompasses the commercial properties at the southeast corner of Willow Road and Walnut Street. While several of the existing uses are viable, the existing buildings are old and small and their design and appearance are unrelated. Existing uses are shown in the inset map at left.

The illustrative plan suggests how Site 2 might be redeveloped for a mix of commercial and residential uses. It suggests a series of new one- and/or two-story buildings located along the Walnut Street and Orchard Lane frontages, totaling approximately 21,000 square feet of space per floor. Retail shops, restaurants and service uses would be located on the ground floor of all buildings, with offices and/or apartments located on the second floors. A consolidated parking lot, totaling approximately 100 parking spaces, would be located behind the new commercial buildings, screened by extensive peripheral landscaping. Access to the parking lot would be provided from both Walnut and Orchard Lane.

The existing gas station at Willow and Walnut would be removed, cleaned up and redeveloped to greatly enhance this highly visible gateway location. Certain of the other existing commercial uses might become tenants in the new development.

The plan for Site 2 illustrates a number of Village Center improvement and development guidelines, as highlighted below.

**Buildings:**

- New buildings are located near the sidewalk line, creating an attractive, pedestrian-oriented streetwall along both Walnut and Orchard Lane.
- The new buildings are characterized by masonry construction and coordinated facade treatment, colors, signage and other design features.

- The ground floor of all buildings is devoted to retail and service uses; office and residential uses are located on the second floors.

**Access and Parking:**

- Parking lots serving the various buildings are combined and interconnected to enhance access and internal circulation.
- Vehicular access drives are also combined and consolidated, and the number of curbs cuts is minimized.
- Parking lots are located behind the commercial buildings; parking lots are attractively edged with landscaping and decorative fencing.
- Parallel curb parking, which is more pedestrian-friendly than angle parking, is provided along both Walnut Street and Orchard Lane.

**Public Rights-of-Way:**

- New street trees, light fixtures, special paving materials and pedestrian amenities are provided along Walnut Street and Orchard Lane.
- Curbs, gutters, sidewalks and grass parkways are provided throughout the block.
- Pedestrian crosswalks are provided at key locations.
- The land along the Edens Expressway is extensively landscaped; the Village would work with the appropriate agency to allow a portion of the right-of-way to be used for landscaping and perhaps surface parking.

It should be emphasized that this plan has been prepared for illustrative purposes only. It indicates one way that the recommended improvement and development guidelines might be applied within the Village Center. It is intended to illustrate possibilities, not restrict architectural design or limit final development solutions.

However, the plan does show the overall scale and character of development to be promoted within Northfield's Village Center, and basic guidelines for the location and arrangement of new buildings, parking areas and open spaces.

Prepared By: Trkla, Pettigrew, Allen & Payne, Inc.

## Subarea 2: The Missionary Sisters' Site

The Missionary Sisters' property consists of approximately 42.5 acres of undeveloped property at the southeast corner of Willow and Waukegan Roads. Owned by the Missionary Sisters of the Holy Spirit, the site represents one of the last major development opportunities in the Village. Approximately 12.3 acres of land in the south portion of the site will be retained and developed by the Sisters for their new convent and church facility. The remainder of the property may be sold for development.

Through the planning process, consensus was reached on a mix of land uses for this subarea. The subarea plan for the Missionary Sisters' site is intended to serve as a guide for development of the property in terms of land use, circulation and access, community facilities and environmental resource protection.

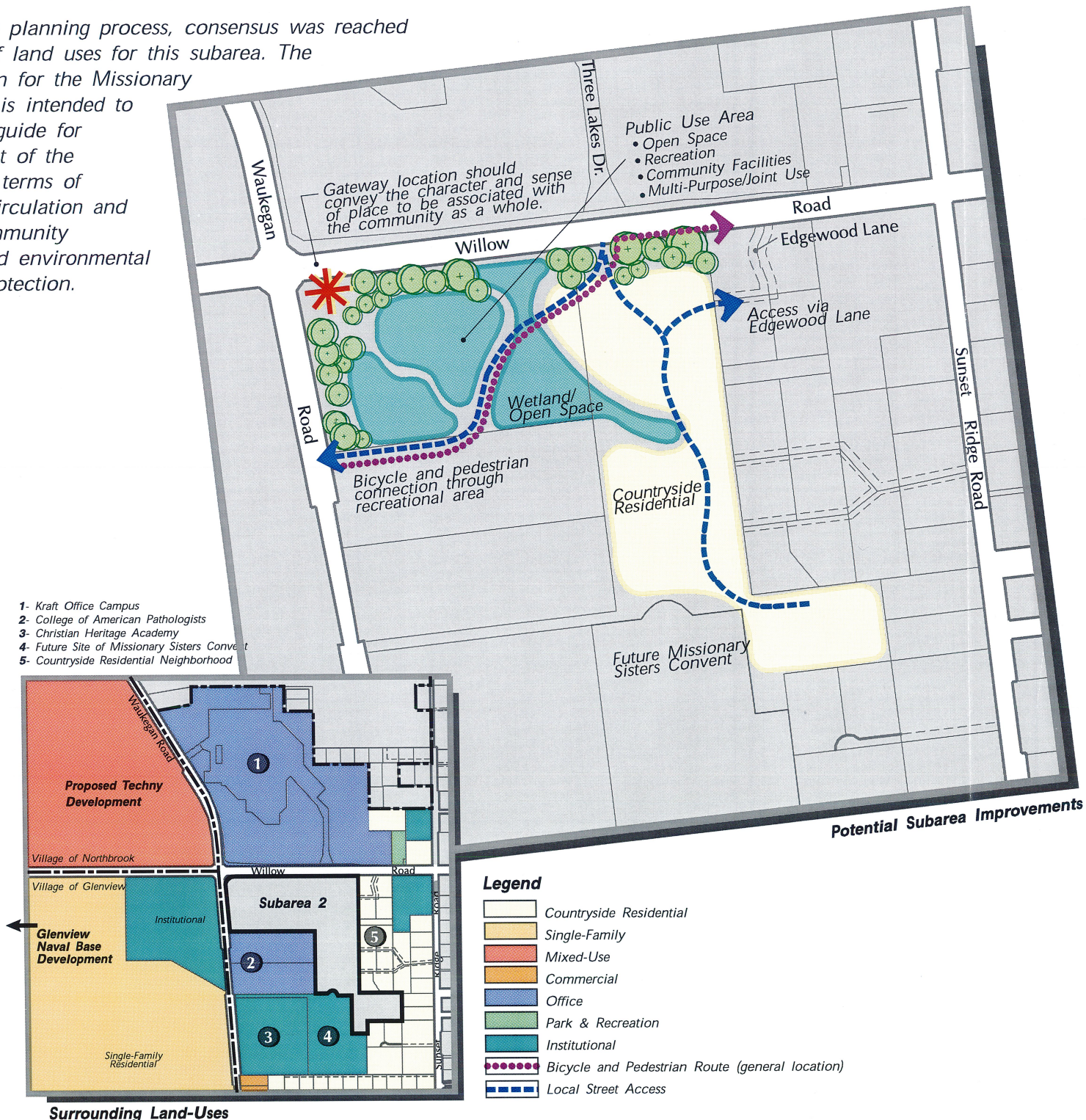


Figure 8

Subarea 2: The Missionary Sisters' Site

### Overall Development Concept

The Missionary Sisters' site is situated to take advantage of a prime gateway location and establish a distinctive identity for the site and the Village as a whole. In keeping with the quiet and family oriented focus of the community as a whole, this site provides an opportunity to introduce Northfield as a distinctively different community than its adjacent neighbors. Through the introduction of low density development, open space, and special design elements, the character of Northfield presents itself at this key gateway location.

### Subarea Recommendations

Improvement and development recommendations for the Missionary Sisters Site Subarea are highlighted in the figure to the left and summarized below. They address: a) land use and development; b) building and site design; and c) access and circulation improvements.

### Land Use and Development

The Plan recommends a mix of public and residential uses for the subarea. The most visible portion of the site, on Waukegan and Willow Roads is designated for public uses. A potential community facility site and active recreational uses are planned within this area. Both the local park and high school districts have expressed interest in this area for potential recreational facility development. Intergovernmental cooperation for the development and use of this portion of the subarea is strongly encouraged.

The extensive wetland should be preserved as an ecological and aesthetic asset of the site. This area could be used for passive recreational use while providing a natural buffer and transition area between the recreational and residential uses.

Along the eastern portion of the site, Countryside Residential uses are recommended consistent with the existing development further east of the subarea and complementary to the intensity of surrounding uses. This portion of the site would also be appropriate for a planned senior housing development.

### Building and Site Design

The northwest corner of the subarea represents a gateway location and prime opportunity to establish a distinctive entryway feature that identifies and distinguishes the Village of Northfield from adjacent communities. Design of the entryway feature should convey a sense of place consistent with the overall character of the community. Design elements could include landscaping, lighting, and signage complementary with the development of the public use areas.

Any proposed structures within the public use area might

be oriented toward Waukegan Road consistent with the other uses along the roadway. Conversely, open space areas could be concentrated along Willow Road maintaining introducing the spacious character of the Village as a whole.

Residential uses should be oriented away from Willow and Waukegan Roads and heavily screened from the roadway through setbacks, landscaping, and possibly berming.

### Access and Circulation

Curb cuts along the arterial streets should be minimized and consolidated where possible. Access to the site, particularly on Waukegan Road, should be limited to a right-in, right-out restriction. The existing signalized intersection at Three Lakes Drive should be the primary access to the site off of Willow Road.

The interior street configuration should consider the extension of Edgewood Lane through the residential portion of the site. Because access to the southernmost portion of the site is constrained by a narrow pass, development may require the use of a narrow street or private drives. Development of the street system should avoid causing double frontage and irregularly sized lots, wherever possible.

Bicycle and pedestrian access connections should be considered in conjunction with the development of new public and private streets.

### **SUBAREA 3: THE WILLOW ROAD CORRIDOR - A COMMUNITY STREET**

Willow Road in Northfield is planned to remain a “community” street. While our Vision Plan acknowledges that the jurisdiction and control of the street is the responsibility of the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), Northfield’s preferences for the corridor are to preserve the existing character and width of the roadway. Willow Road provides access to local streets, is the site of a number of community facilities, and adjoins several residential neighborhoods.

A proposed widening of Willow Road by IDOT, however, has been the subject of extensive discussion over the last decade. IDOT has sought to increase capacity along the corridor through the provision of new travel lanes (one additional lane in each direction for a total of four lanes) throughout the community. The widening of Willow Road is a major threat to the character of the Village, as well as to public safety. As a busy two lane arterial, Willow Road physically separates the northern and southern portions of the community creating hazardous and inconvenient crossings for school children, pedestrians, and local traffic. Widening Willow Road would likely exacerbate these conditions.

The Vision Plan advocates the “status quo” in regard to roadway width and lane configuration. Yet, there are a number of other improvements which the Village should advocate, regardless of any future roadway width issues. These include: improved roadway surface conditions, enhanced pedestrian safety at bicycle and pedestrian crossings, improved storm water drainage conditions, enhanced community signage, and additional landscaping. While the Plan recognizes that the Village of Northfield does not maintain exclusive jurisdiction over Willow Road, nonetheless, it establishes a number of *Improvement Principles* which collectively set forth a policy framework for review and evaluation of any change along the corridor in the future. These principles reflect the Village’s basic improvement preferences, and should guide the evaluation of any improvement projects made along the corridor.

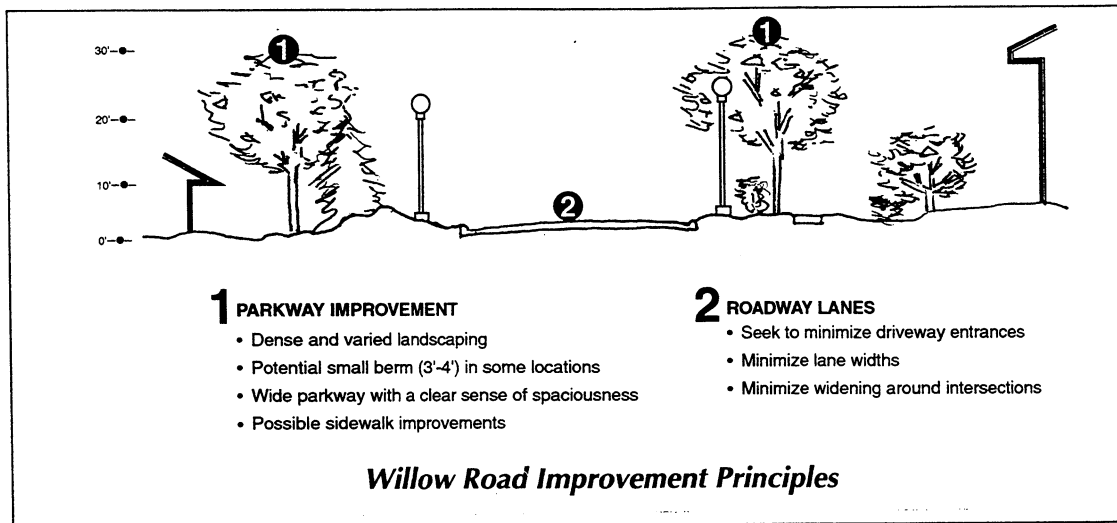
#### **Willow Road Improvement Principles**

Because of the complexity of issues surrounding the improvement of Willow Road, Northfield’s Vision Plan will be most useful to the community by establishing a policy framework for Willow Road that will serve as a guide for more detailed improvement decisions to be made in the future. A number of design and improvement principles are described below.

##### ***Street Improvements and Lane Capacity***

- *To the greatest extent practical, any pavement widening should be minimized.* The Village should continue to seek ways to maintain the current number of traveled lanes and the overall pavement width of the roadway to minimize impacts to adjoining land-use areas. A critical safety issue for both motorists and pedestrians would be any proposal to widen the Sunset Ridge Road and Wagner Road intersections to accommodate left turns. Special care should be undertaken to ensure *improved* pedestrian and bicycle safety at these intersections in the future.

Finally, the Village will resist attempts to secure additional right-of-way for street improvements, except where it can be clearly demonstrated that an acquisition at the intersection will result in improved, safer, pedestrian access.



- Consider the possibility of minor street and driveway closures along Willow Road. Should any type of roadway reconstruction occur, closure of minor residential streets can provide benefits to adjoining neighborhoods along Willow Road. The possibility of relocating driveway access of those residential properties fronting Willow Road should be explored to further minimize hazard potential.

### **Appearance and Design**

- Eliminate “visual clutter” along the corridor. Future improvements on Willow Road may create an opportunity to eliminate or minimize visual clutter. A key objective would be to underground overhead utility lines to enhance the natural appearance along the street. Unique lighting and signage could be considered along Willow Road to further convey a sense of place and enhance its character as a community street.
- Establish effective screening between the roadway and adjoining residential land-uses. To help alleviate impacts from noise, air, and light pollution associated with traffic on Willow Road, a combination of extensive landscaping and ornamental fencing might be considered regardless of any other possible changes to the roadway in the future. The Village should resist the use of structures such as retaining walls and other features which detract from the natural “feel” of the corridor. If a major redesign of the roadway occurs, grass or landscaped medians should be strongly considered at appropriate locations along the corridor.
- Insist on low level, high quality ornamental lighting along Willow Road. Proper lighting of the corridor is a key element to maintaining a “local character” of the street. To the greatest extent possible, fixtures should be set at a low height, preferably around 20 feet, and be designed with ornamental fixtures which direct light away from adjoining residential areas. IDOT will be concerned that lighting meet state specifications, which may require taller lighting standards. The Village may need to work with IDOT to find common ground. Some communities have placed pedestrian scale lighting fixtures on the taller IDOT standards.

### ***Bicycle and Pedestrian Crossing Improvements***

- *Ensure safe bicycle and pedestrian crossings at Wagner and Sunset Ridge Roads.* Any redesign of intersection improvements should consider the possibility of pedestrian safety zones within parkways and medians, as well as pedestrian activated crosswalk signalization controls. Wagner Road and Sunset Ridge Road should continue the use of safety crossing guards during peak pedestrian periods.

### ***Utilities and Storm Water Drainage***

- *Any reconstruction of Willow Road would permit the completion of several important facilities improvements.* Street reconstruction would enable the installation of new storm sewers and a water main within the roadway. Storm sewer improvements, coupled with improvement to the Middle Fork North Branch crossing at Willow Road, could help alleviate flooding conditions in the Village. Potential improvements should be discussed with IDOT.
- *The undergrounding of overhead utility lines within the corridor is an improvement project of great importance to the community.* In addition to enhancing the natural appearance of the corridors, this improvement would provide an opportunity to take advantage of technological advancements in communication and utility placement. A roadway reconstruction project presents the ideal opportunity to accomplish this highly desirable improvement.

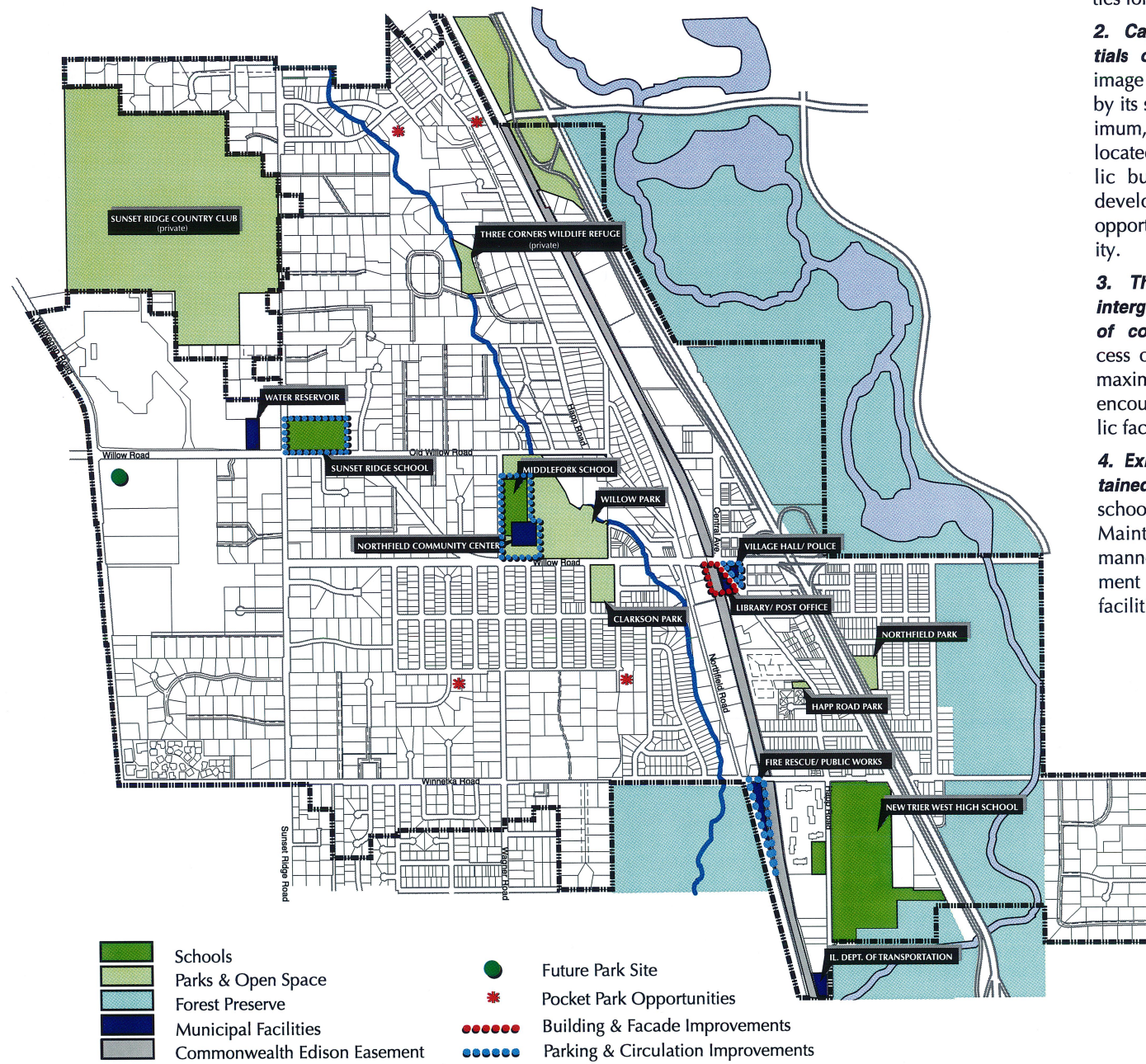
## **Community Facilities Plan**

### **Introduction**

Northfield community facilities and services have special emphasis in the Plan. They provide for the day-to day needs of residents and businesses, and help define the quality of community life. Community facilities are particularly important in a traditionally strong residential community such as Northfield. The Northfield Vision Plan includes guidelines for maintaining and enhancing schools, parks and open space, municipal facilities, police and fire protection, and other community facilities. The Village should recognize and market public facilities as important assets that attract new families and businesses and enhance the value of the community as a whole.

# Community Facilities Plan

Quality community facilities and services are the hallmark of strong residential communities such as Northfield. Community facilities create important focal points and activity centers for neighborhood life, and contribute significantly to the overall sense of community. The Northfield Vision Plan emphasizes the importance of parks, schools, municipal and other community facilities and identifies guidelines and recommendations for their improvement and enhancement.



## Community Facilities Improvement Guidelines

The following principles should guide community facility improvements within Northfield:

**1. Continue to seek the highest quality public services and facilities.** The Village supports the efforts of the school, park and library districts and other governmental service agencies which provide necessary and highly desirable services and facilities for Northfield residents.

**2. Capitalize on the visual and image potentials of community facilities.** Northfield's overall image and identity can be significantly enhanced by its system of public sites and buildings. At a minimum, all facilities should be in good repair and located on attractively landscaped sites. New public buildings represent unique opportunities to develop new civic landmarks and focal points, opportunities which are rare within any community.

**3. The Village should continue to promote intergovernmental cooperation and coordination of community facilities.** In keeping with the success of the Northfield Community Center, and to maximize use of limited land resources, the Plan encourages the joint use and development of public facilities for community-wide use.

**4. Existing community facilities should be maintained and upgraded as required.** These include schools, municipal buildings and other institutions. Maintenance should be undertaken in a timely manner before significant problems arise. Replacement facilities should be constructed for existing facilities which become inadequate or obsolete.

**5. Maintain the integrity of the Village storm water system while exploring options to enhance its efficiency.** The Village should strive to protect the natural surface drainage system in place along many of the community's private streets. At the same time, continued efforts should be explored by the Village to alleviate flooding and improve stormwater facilities and infrastructure.

**6. Strive to eliminate the visual clutter of overhead utility lines and street lighting systems that conflict with the open character of the community.** The Village should work developers, property owners, IDOT and the Cook County Highway Department to locate utility lines underground and establish safe and appropriate lighting systems.

## Community Facility Recommendations

### Park and Recreation Improvements

The most significant addition to the Northfield park and recreation system has been targeted for a portion of the Missionary Sisters Property at the southeast corner of Willow and Waukegan Roads. A sizable portion of the property has been suggested as a future community facility. This site is described in greater detail in the Subarea Section of the Plan.

"Pocket parks" are recommended in various areas of the community adding both functional and aesthetic enhancement to residential neighborhoods. The Village should identify neighborhood areas that might benefit from these park sites and work with the park district, taking a proactive approach to acquire sites where possible. All sites should have public street access.

### Public Schools

Schools are among the most important assets in the Village. Continued excellence and availability of these facilities and services is essential to the value and desirability of the community. Northfield is served by two elementary school districts, one high school district and one consolidated school district. The need for new or expanded facilities is not anticipated for either of the elementary schools in the Village.

### School Facility Improvements

Although all school facilities are in good condition and operating under capacity, parking and circulation deficiencies exist at both Northfield elementary schools. Additional study is encouraged to improve parking and circulation conditions at these attendance centers.

The New Trier West Facility (NTWF), located on south Happ Road, will be reopened for the 1999/2000 school year as the freshman-only campus of New Trier High School. To facilitate this positive change for the community, the Village should work with New Trier HS District 203 regarding issues of traffic, safety, and public transportation as they affect the nearby neighborhoods and community as a whole.

### Municipal Facilities

The Village of Northfield provides comprehensive municipal facilities and services. Existing municipal facilities include the Village Hall/Police Station and Fire-Rescue/Public Works buildings. Both facilities have been renovated/constructed recently and are

capable of accommodating future growth and development. No new building improvements are anticipated in the future. Other municipally owned facilities include the newly established Northfield Community Center, former public works garage, and the Village's water reservoir.

### Municipal Facility Improvements

A parking assessment for both the Village Hall/Police facility and the Fire-Rescue/Public Works facility should be undertaken in the near future. Village Hall/Police facility parking improvements could be considered in the context of the Village Center redevelopment efforts. These and other Village Center improvements are discussed in greater detail in the subarea section of the Plan.

### Other Public Facilities and Services

Library services are provided by the Winnetka-Northfield Library District. A branch library is located in the former public works building at the corner of Willow and Happ Roads. The library shares a majority of the building with the U.S. Post Office although a small portion is still used for public works storage. At the southernmost edge of the Village, the Illinois Department of Transportation maintains a storage yard. No improvements have been identified, although the site would benefit from improved site maintenance and screening treatments.

The former public works building, occupied largely by library and post office uses, has outlived its functional use and is planned for major redevelopment in the near future. The renovated facility will provide much larger space for existing uses as well as community meeting room space. Because the library/post office facility occupies a prominent gateway location, site design should be carefully reviewed by the Village. Design guidelines addressing this site are presented in the Village Center sub-area discussion.

### Public Utilities

The Vision Plan recognizes the need to address problems associated with flooding and storm water drainage. However, due to the limited ability of the Village to convey water beyond the limits of the Middle Fork Creek watershed, potential solutions are complex and costly. Further discussion and exploration of the subject is recommended to determine the appropriate improvements to take.

Figure 9

Community Facilities Plan

## Chapter Three - Section Four

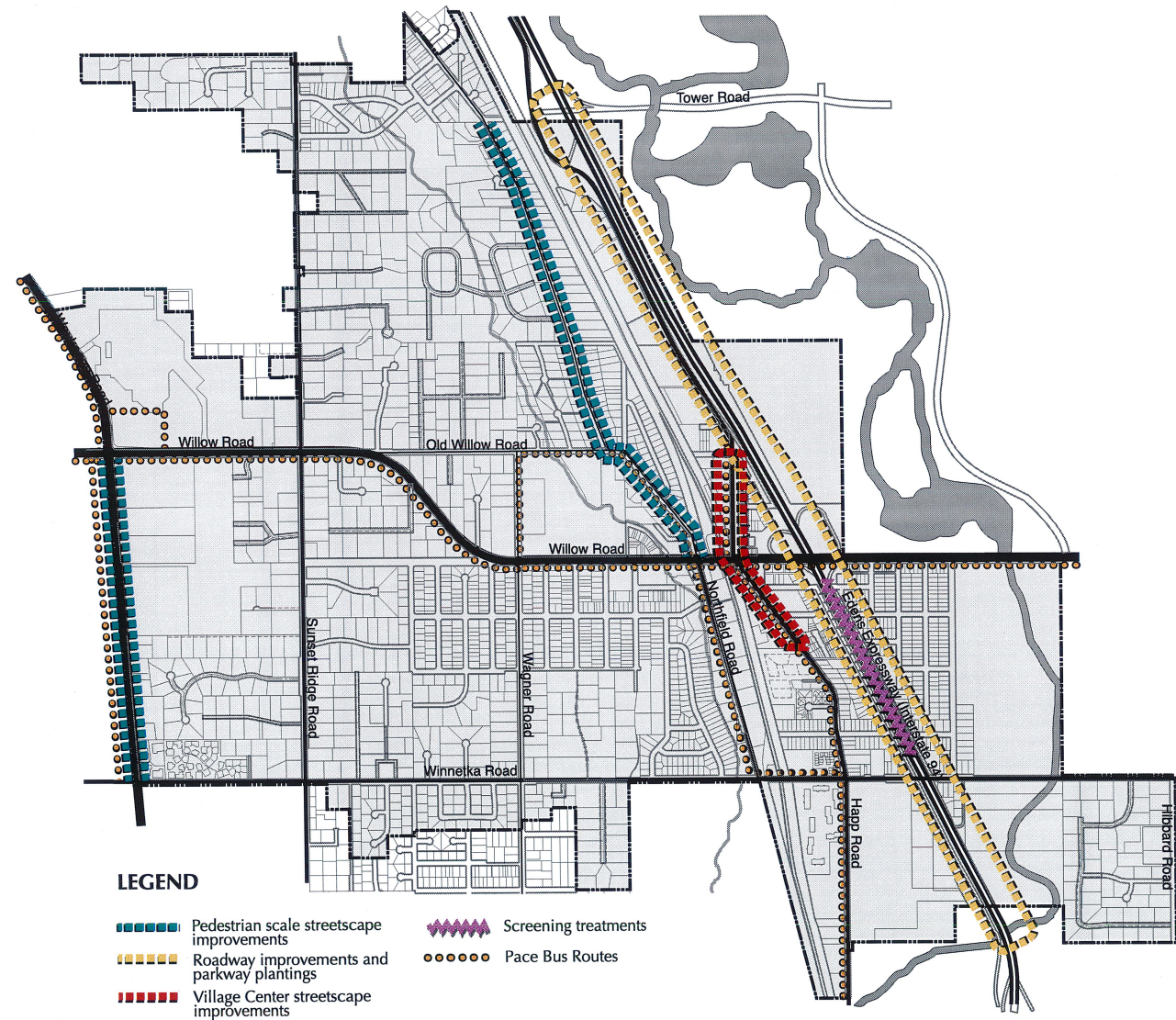
# Transportation Plan

### Introduction

The Transportation component of the Long Range Plan provides a guide for future development and redevelopment decisions within the Village of Northfield. Because Northfield is a mature and largely developed community, the Plan does not envision major changes in transportation. Rather, it contains transportation policies and guidelines designed to protect and enhance the Village's various neighborhood areas. The Plan also identifies improvements and enhancements intended to emphasize and convey a positive community image and identity. Plan recommendations are given for each street classification and are intended to provide Northfield with a transportation system that will meet the needs of the community today and in the future. This section includes: a) transportation policies; b) functional street hierarchy; c) bicycle and pedestrian system; and d) public transportation. Detailed recommendations for the Willow Road corridor are addressed as a separate subarea in Section Two of this section.

# Transportation Plan

The transportation system in the Village of Northfield is essentially established. The Transportation Plan is designed to maintain the function of the existing street system for the protection of the community's residential neighborhoods. Future improvements have been identified to facilitate movement efficiently through the Village and to enhance Northfield's identity and image along the corridors. Improvement guidelines and recommendations are intended to provide Northfield with a transportation system that will meet the needs of the community today and in the future.



## Transportation Improvement Guidelines

The following principles should guide transportation improvements within Northfield.

- 1. Preserve the "semi-rural" quality of the Village's local street system.** The Northfield Vision Plan emphasizes the character of the community's overall physical environment through the maintenance and improvement of the Village's local street system.
- 2. Promote design and appearance improvements along Willow Road that preserve the community character and pedestrian safety.** While preserving the existing capacity of Willow Road, the Vision Plan encourages corridor improvements that enhance the image and identity of the Village as a quiet residential community.
- 3. The design of the overall street system should continue to discourage through traffic in residential areas.** The existing street hierarchy should be preserved to protect the residential neighborhoods surrounding these roadways.
- 4. Seek to maximize the contributions by state, federal and other agencies toward the costs of the major roadway system of the Village.** Wherever possible, local improvement projects should be pursued and coordinated with county and state agencies to maximize the development of the Village's transportation system, consistent with Village improvement objectives.
- 5. Develop bicycle and pedestrian access system.** To link neighborhood areas with community facilities and activity areas, the Vision Plan emphasizes the importance of developing a safe and connective bicycle and pedestrian system.

### Functional Street Hierarchy

Identifying the desired functional street classification for the Northfield street system is an important component of the Vision Plan. Determining the future function of a street, whether a local street to serve adjoining properties, or an expressway to make connections well beyond the region, is integral in defining the future improvements which may be needed for the street. Five functional street classifications are described and illustrated in the figure to the left. The classifications describe the desired use of the street and are intended to be consistent with current regional and community transportation plans.

### Future Street Improvements

#### Expressways

Interstate 94 (Edens Expressway) crosses the eastern portion of the Village on a north-south axis. A limited access interchange at Willow Road allows southbound access to, and northbound exits from, the expressway. Northbound access and southbound exits can be made at Tower Road just beyond the northern limits of the Village.

Because the Edens Expressway is under the jurisdiction of IDOT, any recommended improvements are subject to IDOT review and approval. The Village is encouraged to strongly lobby for additional screening treatments, particularly where residential neighborhoods face the expressway. Recommended screening treatments could range from dense landscaping to noise attenuation barriers or could include a combination of both.

#### Principal Arterial Streets

Principal arterial roads within the planning area include Willow Road and Waukegan Road, both of which are under the jurisdiction of IDOT. Willow Road has been the subject of much discussion and is addressed in greater detail in the subarea section of the Plan.

Waukegan Road is as a regional arterial and any future improvements should be designed to facilitate this function. Curb cuts and access points should be consolidated where possible and access points should be located away from intersections to avoid conflicting movements. Uncontrolled access points should be limited to right in/right out movements.

Waukegan Road has developed as an auto oriented, commercial corridor. The corridor would benefit from beautification improvements and pedestrian amenities. Sidewalk improvements are planned for portions of both Willow and Waukegan Roads. Landscaping elements such as

parkway trees would create a boulevard effect and bring a pedestrian scale to the corridor. Additional landscaping is encouraged in and around the parking lot areas to visually reduce the amount of pavement and enhance the appearance of the corridor.

#### Minor Arterial Streets

Minor arterial streets within the Village include Winnetka Road, West Frontage Road, Sunset Ridge Road and Happ Road and Central Avenue. All of these streets, with the exceptions of Central Avenue and sections of Happ Road, are controlled by the Cook County Highway Department. Central Avenue is under the jurisdiction of the Village of Northfield.

Central Avenue is scheduled to undergo roadway and streetscape improvements as part of the Central Business District Plans. These improvements should be coordinated with any Village Center improvements to maintain a consistent appearance throughout the Village Center area. Sidewalk improvements will be instrumental in establishing a pedestrian oriented character consistent with the commercial core south of Willow Road.

Frontage Road is a highly visible street running parallel with the Edens Expressway. Because of its proximity to the expressway, Frontage Road should be well maintained and landscaped to convey a more attractive image of the Village. As a commercial corridor north of Willow Road, future improvements should include reconstruction of the roadway with paved shoulders, and curbs and gutter. Landscaping improvements along the eastern parkway will do much to diminish the barren character of the corridor and enhance its appearance, both from the street and the expressway.

Happ Road, north of Willow Road, functions primarily as a residential street and carries only a moderate amount of traffic. South of Willow Road, Happ Road carries significantly more traffic and serves many of the Village's most visible commercial and public uses. Because the roadway is fully improved and in good condition, future improvements should focus on establishing an identity for the Happ Road corridor, particularly through the Village Center area. Special streetscape improvements through the Village Center are discussed in greater detail in the subarea section of the Plan. Improvements should bring a stronger pedestrian scale to the roadway and could include shared on-road bicycle facilities, parkway trees and landscaping, and decorative light fixtures.

Winnetka Road and Sunset Ridge Road share a similar roadway design and function. Because both streets are almost exclusively residential in character, the Vision Plan supports the semi-rural character of the roadway design - narrow lanes, roll-type shoulders, no curb or gutter, and open swale drainage. The Village should resist pressures to widen these corridors to enhance capacity.

#### Collector Streets

The collector street system is entirely controlled by the Cook County Highway Department. It includes: Wagner Road; Northfield Road; and Old Willow Road. These roadways provide important neighborhood connections and should be well maintained in the future. Any future improvements should maintain the current lane widths.

#### Local Streets

The local street system consists of both public and private streets. Private streets are characterized by narrow single lane roadways, dead end streets, and natural drainage. Village owned streets include streets similar in character to private lanes but also include many improved to suburban standards with curbs, gutters, shoulders, sewers and sidewalks. Because the local street system is a unique and identifying feature of the Northfield community, the Plan emphasizes the preservation of this system. Any improvements should reinforce the existing character of these streets.

### Public Transportation

Public transportation within Northfield is provided by Pace Bus which connects the community to commuter train stations in neighboring Northbrook, Wilmette and Winnetka. Public transportation should be encouraged on Willow Road and the Edens Expressway. Further, the possibility of extending the Skokie Swift electric line should continue to be monitored. Continued exploration of this improvement in conjunction with other affected communities is supported by the Vision Plan.

**Expressways**  
Expressways are limited access facilities which extend far beyond the limits of the Village of Northfield and provide transportation network continuity throughout the Chicago metropolitan area. Expressways are high-speed arterials, carrying large volumes of traffic and accessible only from select arterial street interchanges.

**Principal Arterial**  
Principal arterials serve all types of trips, particularly those with destinations beyond the boundaries of the community. This type of street has regional importance because of its alignment, continuity, capacity, and connections with other regional traffic carriers.

**Minor Arterial**  
A minor arterial serves all types of trips with more emphasis on trips with destinations within the community and to areas adjacent to the community. This type of street is not intended to serve trips longer than five miles.

**Collector Streets**  
Collector streets serve vehicle trips generated to and from neighborhoods within the community. The function of these streets is to collect traffic from the local street system and distribute traffic to the arterial street system and between neighborhoods within the community. Neighborhood collector streets generally do not have continuity beyond one mile.

**Local Streets**  
All other streets in the Village are classified as local, including both public and private streets. Local streets serve only those vehicle trips generated by land uses abutting the street. The function of this type of street is to provide access to and from individual properties within the neighborhood. Local streets should be designed to discourage through traffic.

Figure 10  
Transportation Plan

# VISION PLAN

Prepared By: Trkla, Pettigrew, Allen, Payne, Inc.

# NORTHFIELD, ILLINOIS

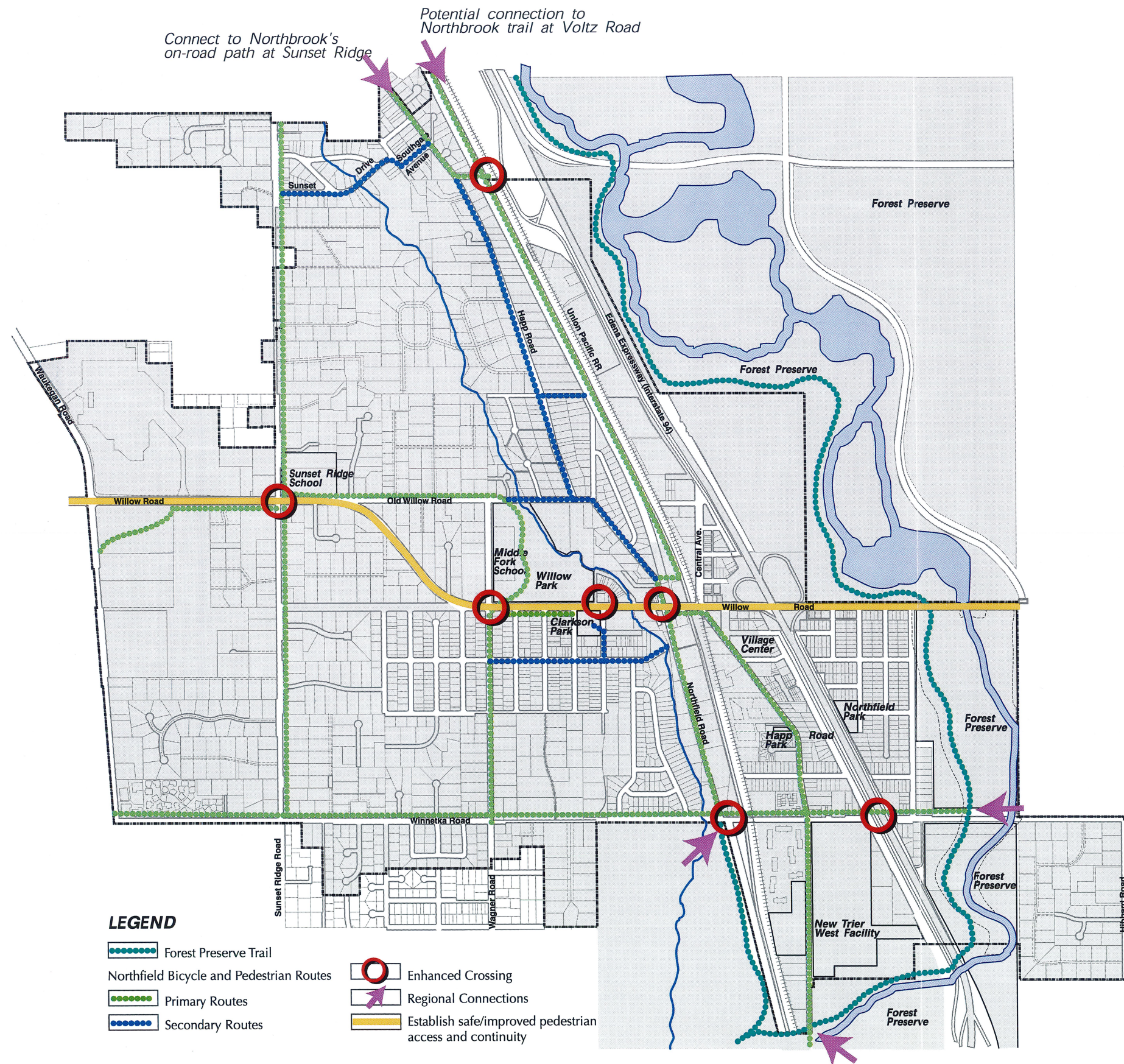


Figure 11  
**Bicycle and Pedestrian Access Plan**

## Bicycle and Pedestrian Access System

As a strong residential and family oriented community, Northfield residents have expressed enthusiasm for establishing a safe and well connected bicycle and pedestrian system. The bicycle and pedestrian access system incorporates sidewalks and bicycle paths as a means to link neighborhoods to each other and to major activity areas in the Village.

### Bicycle and Pedestrian System Framework

The framework for the Bicycle and Pedestrian System is driven by the locations of bicycle and pedestrian traffic generators. The Plan is intended to provide continuity between these generators which include parks, schools, neighborhood areas, shopping areas and regional trails.

Bicycle and pedestrian paths are classified as primary and secondary routes. Primary routes form the basic spine of the system and should be clearly identifiable through pavement markings and/or materials and signage. Primary route improvements are "first order" priority in establishing a basic framework for the Village. Secondary routes provide local access to the main spine which, while they should be safely marked and formally developed, would not be advertised through signage to discourage regional traffic.

### Primary Route Improvements

The Plan recommends the development of an off road path along the west side of the Union Pacific railroad right-of-way. Further study will be required to realize the development of this route which should include at a minimum: 1) gathering community input and support for path design; 2) exploring any environmental impacts of this route; and 3) identifying funding sources. Access to the rail road path could be made through the development just north of Willow Road and via the unimproved Tower Road right-of-way.

Shared sidewalk/bicycle improvements are recommended along Sunset Ridge Road and Winnetka Road to safely accommodate travel without changing the character or width of the roadway. Similar recommendations should be considered for Old Willow Road and portions of Willow Road.

An on-street path is recommended along South Happ Road that would provide key local and regional connections. Appropriate striping and/or special paving materials should be used to demarcate the bicycle path from the vehicular portion of the roadway.

### Secondary Route Improvements

Secondary routes include a number of on street paths through along the Village's local street system. They provide important connections to primary routes and enhance system continuity. These include Bosworth Road, Southgate Avenue/Sunset Drive, and North Happ Road. Of these, Bosworth Road and Happ Road have roadway widths wide enough to accommodate an on street path. The Southgate Avenue/Sunset Drive path, although an important east-west connection on the northern edge of the Village, may require more substantial effort to develop.

### Sidewalk Improvements

Sidewalk improvements are currently planned near the intersection of Willow and Waukegan Roads and along portions of Northfield Road. Additional improvements are recommended as part of the Village Center Subarea improvements presented earlier in the Plan. Any future roadway improvement should consider sidewalk development as an integral component of the bicycle and pedestrian system.

### Crossings

Bicycle and pedestrian travel can be particularly hazardous across arterial streets and should be made at signalized intersections wherever possible. Enhanced bicycle and pedestrian crossings are recommended as shown in this figure.

Enhancements could include simple improvements such as signage and cross walk striping or may require a more significant undertaking such as pedestrian safety islands, pedestrian signalization, or special pavement materials.

Because the Edens Expressway presents a significant barrier to Village continuity, it is particularly important that the bicycle and pedestrian system have a clear and identifiable crossing within the Village. Winnetka Road, presents the safest and most viable crossing for bicycle and pedestrian traffic. Directional signage and markings should clearly direct east bound bicycle and pedestrian traffic to this location.

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The Northfield Vision Plan - Chapter Four  
**Realizing Our Future - Vision Plan Implementation**

## The Vision Plan - Chapter Four

# Realizing Our Future - Vision Plan Implementation

Formal adoption of the *Northfield Vision Plan* is only the first step, not the last step in the planning process. Without action to implement and update the Plan, Village efforts up to this point will have little lasting impact.

The *Vision Plan* sets forth an agreed-upon action plan for the next ten to fifteen years. It is the product of considerable effort on the part of the Comprehensive Plan Review Committee, Village staff, Plan and Zoning Commission and Village Board. The final Plan represents the consensus of all involved.

This chapter describes the *Implementation Tools* and *Action Agenda* components of the Plan that will assist Northfield in realizing the plans and potentials envisioned for the future of the community.

### **A - Implementation Tools**

There are several requirements for effective implementation of the *Vision Plan*. These basic components are highlighted below:

- **Administrative Actions.** The Village should be guided by an agenda of administrative actions which will help establish a policy framework unique to the community. These include high-priority, early-action projects which largely represent public policy or administrative decisions. They do not require a significant new allocation of funds and they should all be undertaken within a relatively short time frame.
- **Regulatory Actions.** Adoption of the *Vision Plan* should be followed by a review and update of the Village's various development controls including zoning, planned development regulations, and other related codes and ordinances. It is essential that all development controls be consistent with and complement the new *Vision Plan*.
- **Capital Improvements.** The Village should utilize project scheduling devices, such as its Capital Improvements Program, which allow implementation of the most important public improvements on a priority system, while staying within budgetary constraints. Streetscape improvements, signage, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and other projects identified in the Plan can be accommodated by the Capital Improvements Program.
- **Fiscal and Economic Development.** The Village should continue and strengthen its economic development activities to ensure the financial resources, municipal services, and community vitality for the future.
- **Review and Update.** The *Vision Plan* is not a static document; the planning process must be continuous. It should be monitored and updated, if needed, on a regular basis. The need for Plan amendments are the result of many community influences. Most frequently these are brought about by changes in attitudes or emerging needs not foreseen at the time of Plan adoption.

## **1. Administrative Actions**

The following projects entail a public policy or administrative action. They do not require a significant new allocation of funds and they should be undertaken as a matter of normal business in community affairs.

### ***Program Related***

- Use the Plan for guidance in the review of development projects, improvements, proposals, or regulatory actions affecting land-use and development.
- Meet with citizens, local interest groups and commercial and business interests for input into Plan programs. In this process, seek willing participants who will provide assistance in Plan implementation.
- Inform surrounding communities of the Village's conservation and development intentions under the Plan and continue to seek mutually compatible adjoining land-use area designations.
- Over time, seek to ensure that changes in land-use conform with the Land-Use Plan.
- Continue to work with the Missionary Sisters in planning the ultimate use of the property at the southeast corner of Waukegan and Willow Roads.

### ***Development Related***

- Utilize the zoning ordinance to prevent commercial area encroachment into residential neighborhoods.
- Utilize the Land-Use Plan Map and zoning ordinance to establish sound boundaries between residential and non-residential areas through the use of transitional yards.
- Review and revise the zoning ordinance to support the overall land-use policies and recommendations.
- Continue to carefully monitor development proposals and projects to ensure they "fit" the overall character of the Village.

## **2. Regulatory Actions**

The Village should undertake routine amendments to its development control regulations which include, but are not limited to, zoning, subdivision, building, and other regulations. The new *Vision Plan* has resulted in a need to generally review and update the Village's system of development controls. Regulatory actions include:

- Review and enforce the sign regulations in commercial areas.
- Review the transitional yard requirements of the zoning ordinance relating to the boundaries between residential and non-residential locations.
- Review the Village Center zoning district to ensure its compatibility with the *Vision Plan*.
- Review and update the Village's regulation related to traffic and access regulations to ensure they support the transportation policies and recommendations of the Plan.
- Explore the potential impacts of tear down development, and consider possible regulatory controls, if deemed appropriate.
- Develop a thematic approach to the design image and appearance of new development in the community which emphasizes a "traditional" character.

### **3. Capital Improvements Program**

A Capital Improvements Program (CIP) is a critically important mechanism for implementing key aspects of the Plan. Northfield's fiscal resources will always be limited and public dollars must be spent wisely. An important component of the *Vision Plan* is to integrate planning projects as part of the CIP.

A variety of capital improvement possibilities which have been identified in the Plan should be considered in the Village's capital improvement programming. The following improvements represent key needs identified as part of the *Vision Plan* but are by no means exhaustive.

#### ***Community Streets***

It is essential that the Village continue to improve and upgrade the existing street network to local subdivision improvement standards. This includes the continued maintenance of local streets in a more rural cross-section. The Village should continue to work with county, state and federal agencies to ensure appropriate maintenance and improvement of routes under their control in accord with the recommendations of the *Vision Plan*.

#### ***Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities***

The *Vision Plan* recommends extensive development of a bicycle and pedestrian system connecting major generators and destinations throughout the Village. Working with park district and school districts, the Village should facilitate the realization of these improvements. State and federal funding assistance should be sought for these purposes wherever possible.

#### ***Corridor Improvement Program***

The *Vision Plan* recommends the development and implementation of a *Corridor Improvement Program* to establish functional street and appearance improvements for each the Edens Expressway, Frontage Road and Waukegan Road. The Village should continue to work with IDOT to realize improvements the Village desires along Willow Road. The Village should seek to schedule improvements related to these recommended programs as part of the CIP.

#### ***Utilities and Community Facilities***

The *Vision Plan* recommends the development of a master stormwater management plan. Recommendations contained within this Plan should be included as part of the CIP.

### **4. Fiscal and Economic Development**

Economic development will continue to be an important activity in the Village of Northfield. Even though the Village's basic land-use pattern is largely set, opportunity exists for limited new development and redevelopment in a manner which can meet both the appearance and development objectives of the Village as well as provided enhanced revenue sources for the Village.

The community realizes the importance of economic development. It is this principal approach that generate financial resources for the continued provision of existing municipal services and facilities, as well as creates capacity for new facilities and programs. Many new facilities and services are recommended as part of the *Vision Plan*.

Given the strong service orientation of Northfield and the plans the community has made for physical change and improvement, it is critical that the Village continue to realize economic potentials which meet the requirements of the Plan.

A number of strategies can be used in combination to realize improved economic and fiscal conditions for the Village of Northfield, consistent with the Long-Range Plan. These include:

### ***Marketing***

The Village could take a proactive position toward redevelopment and improvement within the Village Center area, and the portion of Willow Road east of the Eden Expressway. Providing up-to-date site inventories on properties available for development and participating in economic development organizations in the area, including the Chamber of Commerce, can be useful in making business contacts.

### ***Redevelopment and Finance Tools***

Northfield should consider the use of economic and redevelopment finance tools to encourage appropriate and desirable redevelopment. Within the Village's key redevelopment and improvement areas identified in the Land-Use Plan, focusing on the Village Center, these might include: property tax and sales tax abatements, the creation of business districts, or the use of tax increment financing. The use of these tools can assist in both attracting the strongest mix of uses, as well as provide additional control over the scale and physical design of development. Overall coordination of redevelopment activities within the Village Center will be especially important in this regard. The Village will need to carefully assess the appropriateness of the use of any of these tools.

### ***Business Retention***

The Village is keenly aware of the importance of maintaining contact with retail and employment businesses in the community to stay informed of business needs. This is a critically important strategy in Northfield. Much of the Village's future economic development will result from improved performance of local retailers and manufacturers, as well as the expansion of these businesses in the community.

### ***Business Community Involvement***

It will be important to continue to build a strong relationship with the business community. A business organization should be identified or created which would serve as the principal point of contact with the business community. Establishing a strong business community relationship is vital to Plan implementation. Many recommendations of the Plan involve business interests, and strong partnerships between the Village and business community will greatly help to facilitate success in these efforts in the future.

## ***5. Review and Update***

The *Vision Plan* is not a static document; the planning process must be continuous. The Plan should be monitored and updated on a regular basis. The need for Plan amendments is the result of many community influences. Most frequently these are brought about by changes in attitudes, or emerging needs not foreseen at the time of Plan adoption. The following paragraphs describe the procedures which apply to any amendment of the *Vision Plan*.

### ***Day-to-Day Monitoring and Administration***

In order for the Plan to be "maintained" and updated in a timely manner, the designation of an agency responsible for coordinating planning activities, receiving community input and comments, and providing and disseminating information regarding the *Vision Plan* is required. While the Plan Commission and Village Board are ultimately responsible for implementing the updated Plan, the Village's Community Development Department is the

most appropriate agency to carry out the day-to-day activities of Plan administration. The Department shall:

- Make available copies of the Plan document for public purchase.
- Provide assistance to the public in explaining the Plan and its relationship to private and public development projects and other proposals, as appropriate.
- Assist the Plan Commission and Village Board in the day-to-day administration, interpretation and application of the Plan.
- Maintain a list of current possible amendments, issues or needs which may be a subject of change, addition or deletion from the Vision Plan.
- Coordinate and assist the Plan Commission and Village Board in the Plan amendment process.
- Undertake any studies or activities requested by the Plan Commission and Village Board in relation to Vision Plan policies and recommendations.

### ***Plan Review and Progress Report***

Although a proposal to amend the Plan can be brought forth by petition at any time, the Village should regularly undertake a systematic review of the Plan. The Village should initiate review of the Plan at least every three years. Ideally, this review should coincide with the preparation of the annual budget and capital improvement program. In this manner, recommendations or changes relating to capital improvements or other programs can be considered as part of the upcoming commitments for the fiscal year. Routine examination of the Plan will help ensure that the planning program remains relevant to community needs and aspirations.

A systematic review should include an evaluation of the collective observations of the Community Development Department, Plan Commission, and Village Board. Invitation to discuss and evaluate the Plan should be extended to appropriate public agencies, business and citizens groups, and the community in general.

### ***Plan Amendment Procedures***

The *Vision Plan* amendment procedures have been prepared to provide a consistent approach to the evaluation of proposed *Vision Plan* amendments. They provide a framework for the review of proposed amendments by the Plan Commission and action by the Village Board in accordance with state law. Any proposed amendment to the *Vision Plan* shall be subject to the following procedures.

- Plan amendments shall be submitted in writing in a form provided by the Department of Community Development and shall include all proposed text and map amendments. The petition shall document and demonstrate the need for the proposed amendments.
- A public hearing on the proposed amendments shall be held before the Plan Commission, in accordance with state law and local ordinances.
- The Plan Commission shall consider the proposed amendments and recommend approval or denial on the proposed amendment, or recommend approval on an alternative amendment to the Village Board of Trustees. At its discretion, the Plan Commission may seek information, advice or technical support from the Department of Community Development or other advisors it deems appropriate, to draw reasonable conclusions regarding the proposed amendments. The approval of Land-Use Plan Map Amendments shall be subject to the criteria outlined below.

- In accordance with state law, local ordinances, and within 90 days of the close of the public hearing, the Village Board shall receive the report of the Plan Commission and shall approve or deny any or all recommendations of the Plan Commission. Should no formal action be taken within the 90 day period, the proposed amendment may not be acted upon. Any further consideration of the proposed amendment(s) shall comply with the notice and hearing requirements of this section and state law.

### ***Land-Use Plan Map Amendment Criteria***

Although the *Vision Plan* includes a variety of policies and maps, the standards and criteria set forth in this section apply to the Land-Use Plan Map. Because the *Long-Range Land-Use Plan Map* culminates many policies, recommendations and programs of the Village, any amendment shall be based upon findings that each of the following criteria are met.

- The proposed change is consistent with the Goals, Objectives and Policies and the overall Comprehensive Plan.
- The proposed amendment does not affect the adequacy of existing or planned facilities and services of the Village or planning area generally.
- The proposed change results in reasonably compatible land-use relationships.

## ***B - Action Agenda***

The *Vision Plan* provides a comprehensive, long-range program for conservation and improvement of the Village. The Plan cannot be accomplished all at once; projects and actions are to be scheduled over a period of years.

Consequently, the *Vision Plan* suggests a 10-15 year “horizon” but strongly encourages that the listing of projects and priorities be reviewed and updated frequently to keep abreast of local conditions and changing needs.

The *Action Agenda*, which is presented in Appendix A, highlights the implementation aspects of all major recommended improvement and redevelopment projects. The *Action Agenda* consists of several components:

- ***Projects and Actions.*** A listing of individual projects and actions that should be undertaken to improve and enhance the community as a whole.
- ***Action Responsibilities.*** An indication of the public and private sector responsibilities for initiating and participating in each project.
- ***Funding Sources and Programs.*** A preliminary suggestion of the funding sources and assistance programs that might be available for implementing each project.

These *Action Agenda* components are briefly described below.

### ***1. Projects & Actions***

The *Action Agenda* provides a listing of major projects and actions to be undertaken within the community. The *Action Agenda* suggests three priority phases for project implementation, as described below. However, the implementation schedule should be flexible, and should be modified and updated to reflect changing needs, conditions and preferences.

***Priority 1*** projects should be undertaken immediately. Most of these are projects which entail a public policy or administrative action, and will not require a significant new

allocation of funds. Others may require significant investment, but are necessary actions to help ensure successful revitalization. Key *Priority 1* projects include:

- Prepare a detailed plan for the Village Center.
- Undertake improvement activities in the Village Center area.
- Review parking policies for the Village Center.
- Implement recommended zoning ordinance studies and revisions.
- Work proactively with the Missionary Sisters in the ultimate disposition of the site.
- Monitor plans for Willow Road.
- Establish signalized pedestrian crosswalks along Willow Road.
- Undertake a stormwater master plan for the Village and implement recommendations.
- Maintain and improve business retention and development efforts.

***Priority 2*** projects should be undertaken during the next five years, although many should actually begin immediately. While these projects are considered just as important as the *Priority 1* projects, they will likely require more time or effort to implement. These include projects which appear to have strong local support and would have a dramatic impact on the image and character of the community. Key *Priority 2* projects include:

- Encourage improvement and/or redevelopment of commercial areas along the east end of Willow Road.
- Undertake corridor image and enhancement improvements.
- Establish enhanced gateway areas.
- Resurface/improve the Frontage Road/Central Road corridor.
- Implement bicycle recommendations.
- Continue the use and/or complete the system of “wayfinding” signage in the Village.
- Identify and develop locations as “pocket parks”.
- Underground overhead utility lines.
- Promote economic development and physical improvement of the Village’s commercial and employment areas.

***Priority 3*** projects should be undertaken during the next 10- to 15-year period. These include projects which appear to be more difficult or costly to achieve, represent on-going initiatives, or have received less initial local support. However, it should be emphasized that some of these projects could “move forward” if market conditions or local priorities change during the next few years. Examples of *Priority 3* projects include:

- Continue to encourage property maintenance.
- Continue to maintain and enhance the special character of the Village’s neighborhoods.
- Protect and enhance environmentally sensitive areas.
- Continue to explore the possibility of commuter rail service to the Village.
- Continue to rehab and improve the local street system.
- Implement a streetscape program for the Village’s major street corridors.

- Consider establishing a facade improvement program for the Village's commercial areas.

## **2. Action Responsibilities**

In order for the *Vision Plan* to be successful, it must be based on a strong partnership between the Village of Northfield, public service agencies and organizations, citizens groups and the local business community.

Participants in the Plan implementation program should include the following:

### ***Village of Northfield***

The Village should play a key role in managing and coordinating the overall Plan implementation program. In addition to implementing many of the public improvement projects called for in the Plan, the Village can administer other financial and technical assistance programs to make assistance available to businesses and property owners. The Village can also cooperate with and support local citizen-based organizations, and ensure that all codes, ordinances and enforcement procedures support and complement the Plan.

### ***Community and Public Agency Participants***

Even though the Village will assume a central role in the planning program, other agencies, organizations and institutions will also participate in many projects. For example, these might include:

- *Governmental organizations*. Certain projects and actions require the active participation of various governmental agencies other public and quasi-public organizations. These include park and school districts, townships, the Cook County Forest Preserve District, IDOT, Pace Bus, Metra, and others.
- *Neighborhood Involvement*. Neighborhood interests represent strong and influential participants in the planning process. Their participation in and support for Plan implementation, as appropriate, will be important.
- *Local lending institutions*. Local lenders can provide active and direct assistance to redevelopment efforts and other improvement initiatives. With Village cooperation, lenders can offer special programs for building and site improvements, and can also help finance new development projects, especially within the Village's commercial areas.

### ***Business Community***

Individual businesses must assume responsibility for maintaining and upgrading their own properties while conforming to the overall objectives of the Plan. Redevelopment and development initiatives should be supportive of the Plan's land-use and design principles.

A strong unified business organization, representing business can play an important role in organizing, marketing and promoting Plan recommendations, and in mobilizing the development and improvement efforts recommended in the Plan. A strong and unified business organization provides a common voice to the Village, creating an environment for more efficient policy and decision making. It can also offer financial and technical assistance for certain types of projects. In addition, the organization can help ensure that business needs and desires are brought to the attention of the Village and other governmental agencies.

### **3. Funding Sources and Programs**

The implementation of the Plan and many of its recommendations will require substantial resources on the part of the Village. The *Action Agenda* identifies a number of different funding sources and implementation techniques for each of the Plan's recommended projects or actions. Some of these sources include:

- Transportation Equity Act for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (TEA-21)
- Community Development Block Grants
- Tax Increment Financing (TIF)
- Motor Fuel Tax (MFT)
- Municipal general revenue funds, transfer funds, and enhancement funds
- Government obligation bonds (GO bonds)
- Land dedication
- Donations

The *Action Agenda* includes recommendations cited elsewhere in the *Comprehensive Plan*. To remain relevant, it must be flexible to adjust to unforeseen and changing conditions in the future. Therefore, changes to the *Action Agenda* are anticipated and will not require formal amendment to the *Comprehensive Plan*. The *Action Agenda* should be reviewed by the Plan Commission and Village Board at least once annually.

Table 1  
**Action Agenda**  
*Northfield Vision Plan*

<b>Project or Action</b>	<b>Priority Level</b>	<b>Role of the Village</b>	<b>Role of the Business Community</b>	<b>Other Possible Participants</b>	<b>Potential Funding Sources &amp; Implementation Techniques</b>
<b>LAND-USE AND DEVELOPMENT:</b>					
<b>Prepare a detailed "Downtown" plan for the Village Center</b>	<b>1</b>	<i>Initiate a study which focuses on the use, development, redevelopment, design, and improvement projects to be undertaken, consistent with the Vision Plan</i>	<i>Involve business community in the study and enlist support -- organization and financial -- in the implementation of the plan</i>	<i>Property owners; developers; real estate brokers</i>	<i>Community general funds, transfer funds, business community participation</i>
<b>Explore the use of redevelopment tools in the Village Center such as a local business district or tax increment financing</b>	<b>1</b>	<i>Undertake investigative study; provide technical, assistance to business community in understanding the implications of alternatives</i>	<i>Participate in the study</i>	<i>Property owners; merchants; developers; real estate brokers</i>	<i>Community general funds, transfer funds, business community participation</i>
<b>Proactively work toward the development of the Missionary Sisters site in accord with the recommendations of the Vision Plan</b>	<b>1</b>	<i>Adopt the Vision Plan; enforce appropriate land use and zoning policies; undertake other projects listed below</i>	<i>Support Plan policies; recruit cooperation of property owners, merchants, developers and real estate brokers</i>	<i>IDOT, Missionary Sisters, and school and park districts</i>	<i>Staff resources, school and park land dedication and other resources as identified</i>
<b>Undertake corridor image and enhancements improvement programs</b>	<b>2</b>	<i>Develop corridor image and enhancement improvement program</i>	<i>Support Plan policies and improvement efforts.</i>	<i>IDOT, Cook County, school and park districts, Cook County Forest Preserve</i>	<i>ISTEA, MFT, T-21, Enhancement Funds, Village general funds</i>
<b>Continue to encourage property maintenance in select areas, utilizing consistent enforcement of building and zoning codes</b>	<b>3</b>	<i>Adopt the Vision Plan; enforce appropriate land use and zoning policies, and building codes; undertake other projects listed below</i>	<i>Recruit property owner participation; provide technical and administrative assistance</i>	<i>Property owners; merchants; developers; real estate brokers</i>	<i>Consistent code enforcement by the Village of Northfield</i>
<b>Protect and enhance environmentally sensitive areas</b>	<b>3</b>	<i>Continue to control naturally sensitive areas</i>	<i>Support Plan policies</i>	<i>Property owners and developers</i>	<i>Administrative actions and policy decisions</i>

<b>Project or Action</b>	<b>Priority Level</b>	<b>Role of the Village</b>	<b>Role of the Business Community</b>	<b>Other Possible Participants</b>	<b>Potential Funding Sources &amp; Implementation Techniques</b>
<b>TRANSPORTATION:</b>					
<b>Monitor plans for Willow Road and continue to press for Village improvement preferences</b>	<b>1</b>	<i>Remain in contact with IDOT and continue to press for improvements the Village desires within the corridor area</i>	<i>Work with and support recommended Village improvements</i>	<i>IDOT; Cook County, Property owners, citizens</i>	<i>Administrative and policy actions , IDOT ISTE A, MFT, T-21, Enhancement Funds,</i>
<b>Undertake a storm water master plan for the Village and implement recommendations</b>	<b>1</b>	<i>Undertake the analysis's and prioritize and complete improvements</i>	<i>Work with and support the Village and in improvement actions</i>	<i>IDOT, Cook County, others</i>	<i>IDOT, Cook County, MFT; General Fund; GO Bonds; other local sources</i>
<b>Review parking policies for the Village Center area to ensure they are supportive of the recommendations of the Vision Plan</b>	<b>1</b>	<i>Adopt the Vision Plan; review parking and loading requirements and amend ordinances as appropriate</i>	<i>Participate in the review and study of Village Center area parking policies</i>	<i>Property owners; merchants; developers; real estate brokers</i>	<i>Community staff resources, consulting services, general revenue funds</i>
<b>Establish signalized pedestrian crosswalks along the Willow Road corridor</b>	<b>1</b>	<i>Determine crossing locations; provide technical assistance</i>	<i>Work with Village in establishing crosswalks</i>	<i>IDOT; Cook County; Park and School Districts</i>	<i>ISTEA; TIF; MFT; other local sources</i>
<b>Resurface and improve the Frontage Road/Central Avenue corridor</b>	<b>2</b>	<i>Define and undertake roadway improvements</i>	<i>Work with and support Village in improvement actions</i>	<i>IDOT, Cook County and property owners</i>	<i>ISTEA, MFT, T-21, Enhancement Funds</i>
<b>Implement bicycle improvement recommendations</b>	<b>2</b>	<i>Pursue Bicycle Plan recommendations - incorporate into CIP</i>	<i>Work with Village; recruit property owner and merchant support; assist in identifying improvements and locations</i>	<i>Park District, property owners; merchants</i>	<i>TEA-21; other grants, local sources</i>
<b>Continue the use of special local "wayfinding" signage for the identification of key community facilities and institutions</b>	<b>2</b>	<i>Inventory and review current sign program for comprehensiveness and appearance - adjust accordingly</i>	<i>Support the Village's efforts</i>	<i>Schools, parks and other community institutions</i>	<i>Administrative actions and local funding sources</i>
<b>Continue to explore the possibility commuter rail service to the Village</b>	<b>3</b>	<i>Explore options, including ideas mentioned in Vision Plan; undertake actions as appropriate</i>	<i>Work with and support Village in developing polices and actions</i>	<i>Property Owners; merchants; residents</i>	<i>Administrative actions</i>

<b>Project or Action</b>	<b>Priority Level</b>	<b>Role of the Village</b>	<b>Role of the Business Community</b>	<b>Other Possible Participants</b>	<b>Potential Funding Sources &amp; Implementation Techniques</b>
<b>Continue the improvement and rehabilitation of the local street system</b>	<b>3</b>	Continue to identify and fund local street system improvements	Support Village improvement program	IDOT, Cook County, other local units of government	IDOT, Cook County, ISTEAs; MFT; General Fund; GO Bonds; other local sources
<b>Continue to maximize the use of intergovernmental transfers for transportation improvements</b>	<b>3</b>	Continue prepare detailed improvement plans and apply for funding sources	Work with Village; recruit property owner and merchant support	IDOT; Cook County, Property owners, citizens	TEA-21; other grants

**COMMUNITY FACILITIES:**

<b>Work with the property owner, and school and park districts to maximize the public facilities potential of the Missionary Sisters Property for a combination of recreational uses</b>	<b>1</b>	Continue to work the owners and park and school districts to realize the Village's preferences for the property	Support the Village in improvement actions	Property owner; developers; real estate brokers; school and park districts	General funds; GO bonds; other local sources; funds from other public agencies/service providers; CDBG funds
<b>Undertake a storm water master plan for the Village and implement recommendations</b>	<b>1</b>	Undertake the analysis's and prioritize and complete improvements	Work with and support the Village in improvement actions	IDOT, Cook County, others	IDOT, Cook County, MFT; General Fund; GO Bonds; other local sources
<b>Emphasize the Village Center as the "hub" of community facilities and services</b>	<b>2</b>	Ensure careful and deliberate facilities planning which results in the high quality, well designed public facilities	Work with and support the Village in improvement actions	Other agencies involved in joint projects	General funds; GO bonds; other local sources; funds from other public agencies/service providers; CDBG funds
<b>Identify and develop locations for "pocket parks throughout the community</b>	<b>2</b>	Identify opportunities for pocket park development and help facilitate securing land	Work with and support the Village in improvement actions	Park districts; property owners; neighborhood residents	Land dedication, gifts, General Funds, GO bonds, other local sources, park district

**DESIGN AND APPEARANCE:**

<b>Create a unique pedestrian oriented character for the "Village Center" area</b>	<b>1</b>	Undertake master plan for the Village Center	Work with Village; recruit property owner and merchant support	Property owners; merchants; neighborhood residents	Administrative actions and policy decisions
<b>Review codes and ordinances to ensure proper techniques are in place for screening and landscaping</b>	<b>2</b>	Undertake an evaluation of existing ordinances and prepare appropriate amendments	Participate in review of any changes or requirements	Developers, businesses property owners	Administrative actions and policy decisions

<b>Project or Action</b>	<b>Priority Level</b>	<b>Role of the Village</b>	<b>Role of the Business Community</b>	<b>Other Possible Participants</b>	<b>Potential Funding Sources &amp; Implementation Techniques</b>
<b>Underground overhead electrical utilities</b>	<b>2</b>	Work with utilities to identify the most cost effective ways of undergrounding utilities	Work with Village; recruit property owner and merchant support	IDOT; Cook County; Property owners; merchants	Genera funds; MFT funds, ISTE A
<b>Implement a Streetscape Improvement Program for the Village's major streets</b>	<b>3</b>	Undertake streetscape improvements where necessary	Work with Village; recruit property owner and merchant support	Property owners; merchants; neighborhood residents	CDBG; TIF; revolving loans, local grants
<b>Consider establishing a Facade Improvement program/incentives for the Village's commercial areas</b>	<b>3</b>	Create facade improvement program; provide financial and technical assistance	Work with Village; recruit property owner and merchant support	Property owners; merchants	TIF; revolving loans, local grants

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:**

<b>Maintain and improve business retention and development efforts</b>	<b>1</b>	Support and provide assistance to the business community	Undertake the creation of a "formal" business association; establish and maintain good communications with the Village	Property owners; merchants; Chamber of Commerce	Administrative actions and policy decisions
<b>Promote economic development and physical improvement of the Village's commercial and industrial areas</b>	<b>2</b>	Adopt the Vision Plan; enforce appropriate land use and zoning policies; undertake other projects listed below	Support Plan policies; recruit cooperation of property owners, merchants, developers and real estate brokers		Administrative actions and policy decisions; no major new funding required
<b>Establish and implement programs to encourage redevelopment and attract new business to the Village Center area</b>	<b>2</b>	Support and provide assistance to the business community	Undertake marketing efforts targeted toward area residents; diversify the retail tenant mix	Public relations consultant; Chamber of Commerce; property owners; merchants	Organization donations
<b>Create a targeted marketing strategy to advocate Northfield as a preferred business location</b>	<b>3</b>	Develop approach, media and programming	Work with Village to identify effective marketing strategies	Chamber of Commerce; business community	Business community donations, Village general funds