

DOWNTOWN  
**CARY**

STRATEGIC  
PLAN



*Adopted June 15, 2021*

# Acknowledgments

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Mark Kownick, Mayor  
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Dale Collier, Village Trustee  
Ellen McAlpine, Village Trustee  
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GOODMAN WILLIAMS GROUP  
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*This project was funded through RTA's Community Planning Program.*



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# Introduction & Overview

## PLAN MISSION

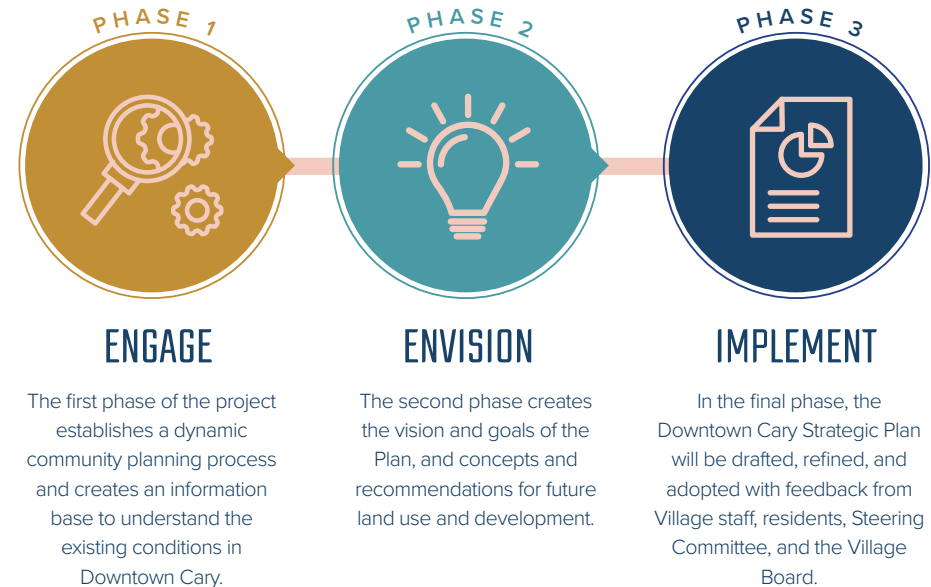
The goal of the Downtown Cary Strategic Plan is to serve as the guiding document for the improvement and development of Downtown Cary — a blueprint that positions the Downtown for reinvestment while maintaining the authentic character and charm that makes Downtown Cary unique. Through an extensive public input process, the Strategic Plan serves as a community-backed vision for the future of Downtown, enabling the Village to advance projects that align with Strategic Plan goals. The final Downtown Cary Strategic Plan identifies strategies and outlines the actions necessary to implement the plan.

## PLAN PROCESS

In 2020, the Village of Cary and the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) embarked on the creation of a new Downtown Strategic Plan, an important policy document that will guide future investment and development activity within the Downtown, near the Metra Station.

**The Lakota Group**, a Chicago-based planning and urban design firm, was engaged to lead the development of the plan, along with real estate market and economic development consultant, **Goodman Williams Group**, and transportation consultant, **Sam Schwartz LLC**. A Steering Committee of community volunteers, Village staff, agency representatives and area residents was assembled to help guide the planning process.

The Downtown Strategic Plan process was designed to maximize opportunities for community input, with various check points to gather ideas and feedback. The planning process was organized into three phases as illustrated below:



# OPPORTUNITIES & CHALLENGES

Preparation of the Strategic Plan has identified some opportunities and challenges for the future of Downtown Cary. Some of these relate to physical development and improvements which the Village may have some control, while others relate to changing social and employment behavior post pandemic, in which the Village may have little control.

***Development & Improvement at Maplewood Site*** - The site of the former Maplewood school presents the largest development opportunity in the Downtown area. The site is owned by Cary Consolidated School District 26 which has been marketing the property for sale to a private developer since the school closed in 2011. The site offers the chance to construct new residential development close to the Downtown and Metra Station. Development of multi-family residential development compatible with the existing neighborhood is recommended and will require a zoning amendment.

***Development & Improvement at Downtown Core Sites*** - There are some sites that could offer development infill opportunities in the Downtown Core area. A primary consideration for the Downtown is to maintain its charm and scale so any infill development must respect the existing development form, scale and character. There may be opportunities on some sites to increase the height or mass of buildings depending on the context of adjacent uses. The BMO bank site and drive-through is one such site where increased height and density may be appropriate.

***Development & Improvement at Other Sites*** - There are other vacant or underutilized that may be prone to development in the near term. Two vacant sites along US Route 14 include the former bank site at the southeast corner of Main Street and US Route 14, as well as a vacant site located on the northeast corner of North 2nd Street and US Route 14. Also, the open field between the Downtown Core and the True Value Manufacturing site presents a greenfield site just off Jandus Road. The site is adjacent to Cary Creek and may provide have access or other challenges, but nonetheless provides another opportunity for infill development.

***Changing Business and Social Dynamics*** – The pandemic years of 2020 and beyond has changed certain behaviors in the short-term with many believing there will be carry-over effects into the long-term. How and where people work, how they shop, and their overall daily travel

patterns have changed. There has been a greater focus on outdoor recreation. There is an opportunity to capture positive benefits from these changing trends. If more people leave Chicago and denser urban areas to live and work remotely from other locations close to transit, then the Downtown Cary could capitalize on this demand.

***Downtown Scale & Character*** – Small, compact and narrow parcel size and older building stock in the Downtown Core will make redevelopment challenging. It is important to retain the charm and small scale of Downtown Cary, but small infill development may be appropriate on select sites as well as a focus on building improvements, property investment and the streetscape.

***US Route 14*** - Accessibility and travel to Downtown from US Route 14 is challenging. This federal highway is a designated truck route and serves a primary purpose of serving regional traffic through the area. Its alignment jogs with a sharp curve, creating an awkward intersection at Main Street which is the gateway into Downtown. Westbound travelers have two independent lanes that require a sharp right-handed curve to stay on US Route 14 or the option of a “left-turn lane” to cross the railroad tracks and access the southern portion of Downtown Cary. The geometry of the intersection combined with limited signage and traffic speeds make this intersection challenging and intimidating to cross.

***TOD Post-Pandemic*** – Just as there is an opportunity to capture growth from an urban exodus, the pandemic has also shown that demand to and from Downtown Chicago or other areas is relying less on public transit. The long term effects of the pandemic on transportation are unknown and this condition may be temporary. However, even in the short term, the desire for more space and less demand for transportation into Chicago could benefit Cary with new investment, improvements, and development which will have a long-term positive impact.



# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The public visioning process of Downtown Cary included significant engagement with community residents, business owners, Village staff, and elected officials. From the beginning, stakeholders were engaged in a dialogue on their community’s Downtown—its key assets, areas for improvement, and vision for its future. The process was tailored to encourage participation through a number of different engagement activities, including a project website, social media posts, stakeholder interview sessions, online surveys, and outdoor community workshops held in Downtown.

## Stakeholder Interviews

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In July 2020, the planning team spent two full days in Cary meeting with a wide variety of Downtown stakeholders, including local elected officials, Village Mayor and staff, representatives from regional transportation organizations such as Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) and Metra, along with local civic institutions and local industries, and Downtown Cary businesses and property owners. Through these meetings, a number of key planning challenges and opportunities emerged. The following section summarizes stakeholder feedback.

### A PLACE TO GATHER

A place to gather in Downtown Cary is needed to bring the community together in a safe and bustling environment, complementing the large footprint of Metra commuter parking. The former train depot is an underutilized site that presents itself as a prime location for a community space, as noted by multiple stakeholders. Annual events held in Downtown Cary include the Cary Main Street Fest, Cruise Nights and the Merry Cary Holiday Parade, most of which are held on Main Street, in the absence of a community gathering space. While there is a need for additional events in Downtown, additional “activated spaces” are also key to ensure its prosperity. Over the summer of 2020, the Village temporarily closed traffic on Spring Street south of Main Street to create a safe pedestrian space dubbed “Al Fresco Alley,” which was well utilized by residents and visitors. Several stakeholders expressed a desire to close off Spring Street permanently. Unconventional gathering spaces are needed in every Downtown, now more than ever, to respond to the heightened need for community connections.

### DOWNTOWN BUSINESS MIX

The majority of businesses in Downtown Cary are food-service-industry focused. While new businesses have been established in Downtown, there is a lack in retail variety. Chasing retail trends, residents and visitors are interested in local breweries and experiential retail. Stakeholders mentioned that similar retail opportunities would position Downtown as a destination within the region. Pedestrian traffic to Downtown is needed and the lack of business mix limits the core’s vibrancy. Small businesses – especially micro-businesses – have shouldered the most adverse consequences of the 2020 health pandemic. This is largely because of the many downstream effects of job losses among those who patronized small, local businesses. Estimates suggest more than 150,000 small businesses have closed nationwide between March and September 2020. The task ahead for Downtown Cary, as for most Downtowns, is to reset the economic baseline and develop a strategy for recovery and beyond.

### DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Creating a vision for Downtown Cary with a focus on future land uses, will encourage private investment in and around the Village’s core. Stakeholders identified a number of sites for potential improvement opportunities, such as the BMO Harris Bank site, properties north of the Metra Station, former Maplewood School site, and other vacant Downtown sites. While new development is welcomed in Downtown Cary, long time residents expressed the need to maintain local character and preserve the urban fabric. Stakeholders also mentioned the need for pocket parks, community open spaces and, in some instances, building rehabilitations, to complement potential new larger scale developments. Most Downtowns rely on Tax Increment Financing (TIF) as a financial mechanism that offsets costs of private and public

developments, and attract more businesses. The Village of Cary has utilized TIF districts in the past. One district was created for an area to the east of downtown which expired in 2020. A second TIF is currently located within Downtown Cary to the north of the railroad tracks however the TIF has failed to produce significant reinvestment in the area to date.

## TRANSPORTATION

One of Cary’s strongest assets is its access to the Union Pacific Northwest line through the Downtown Metra Station, offering transit opportunities to residents and visitors. Stakeholders and business owners noted the importance of transit to the success and prosperity of Downtown since 17% of all Metra riders pass through Cary and 85% parking utilization at the Cary station (pre-pandemic). While Metra provides transit access for Downtown, residents mentioned that access to the station is limited due to the challenging road network at US Route 14 and Main Street – “this intersection is a notorious accident spot in Downtown.” Pedestrian circulation is further hindered in Downtown Cary due to missing sidewalks at some locations. Pedestrian safety in Downtown was a reoccurring concern to most stakeholders, expressing a need for urban design and streetscape improvements. Many stakeholders noted that free parking is important to the success of Downtown Cary. While there is free parking in Downtown, it is not in close proximity to the core. Recently the Village modified parking restrictions in commuter parking lots to allow free parking after 11:30 AM. Though perceptions of a parking issue vary, improved parking standards and requirements, as well as better signage and permitting in certain residential locations, are desired to address the issue.

## COMMUNICATION

Downtown business owners and Cary residents expressed that better advertising and promotion is needed from both the Cary-Grove Area Chamber of Commerce and the Village of Cary. It is important to acknowledge that the chamber hosts a number of annual events including the Cary Main Street Fest, Cary Cruise Nights, Merry Cary Parade, among others. While the chamber sponsors and promotes events through its website and other platforms, there is a need to focus on Downtown-specific events. Stakeholders expressed a need to better communicate Downtown’s identity and history, allowing future improvements to build off the Village’s heritage. There is a consensus

among community stakeholders in the need to amplify the community’s spirit and work towards providing more event opportunities for the community.



*Tracks Bar & Grill - 108 W. Main Street*



# Community Workshop & Survey Results

Approximately 100 people participated in the first community workshop, held on Saturday, September 19th, 2020 in Downtown Cary, on Spring Street. This workshop introduced the planning process to the community and provided a series of interactive exercises to engage stakeholders on what they considered to be the biggest issues and opportunities within the Downtown Core. Providing attendees with a touch-less engagement opportunity, an online survey echoing the workshop exercises was available via a QR code.

Workshop exercises included **Visual Preference Boards**, where participants were asked to rank imagery related to architecture, public art, signage and gateways, public spaces, and pedestrian safety initiatives, so the planning team could get a sense of the community's preference on potential improvements to Downtown's physical realm. A **Big Map Exercise** asked participants to mark the locations of issues and opportunities using color coded stickers. Attendees were also asked to describe the **future of Downtown Cary** in a few words.

Following the community workshop, the online survey was available for two weeks, allowing stakeholders and the community at large to share their thoughts.

## FUTURE OF DOWNTOWN CARY

Workshop and survey participants were asked to answer an open-ended question about Downtown Cary's future. **"In the next ten year's Downtown Cary will be?"** Collective themes emerged from participants' responses.



## VISUAL PREFERENCE SURVEY

The goal of the visual preference survey was to gauge the community's attitude towards Downtown's potential character through an interactive ranking exercise. Various types of improvements were featured on different exhibits and participants were provided with stickers to rank how much they liked or disliked each image. Numbers associated with the visual preference images, represents the participants' votes. Visual preference topics included:

1. **Architecture** - massing, height, styles, and materials
2. **Character** - public art, and signage and gateways
3. **Public Spaces** - types of public spaces, elements of public spaces, and temporary public spaces
4. **Transportation** - pedestrian safety, and types of bike lanes



Community Workshop #1



## Architecture

Preferred images are shown of various architecture styles that were presented in this exhibit. Traditional, masonry building styles and three story mixed-use buildings received the highest ranking, along with renovated commercial buildings and adaptive use.

106



112



93



## Public Art & Character

Interactive public art was most favored by the community, with multiple playful art installation ranking the highest. Wayfinding and signage images of traditional, yet colorful, signs and gateways were also ranked highly.

104



92



119





## Public Space

While the images presented below ranked the highest in public spaces, the majority of open spaces were favored by participants. Pocket parks, temporary pop-up shops, and small-scale open spaces were favored by the community at large.



## Transportation

Pedestrian safety is a topic of interest for Downtown Cary. Participants preferred bump outs and painted crosswalks as potential safety initiatives. Dedicated bike lanes were favored over marked bike lanes, yet multi-purpose paths ranked the highest.



## STRENGTHS & WEAKNESSES

Collective themes about Downtown's strengths and weaknesses emerged from workshop and survey respondents' open ended questions and comments. **Strengths of Downtown** include its small town charm, strategic location, and access to public transportation. **Weaknesses to Downtown** include lack of retail variety, pedestrian safety, and lack of community space.

*"I love the independent businesses and the community events hosted in Downtown"*

*"I am proud to see people from other communities dining in Downtown Cary!"*



*"Downtown is friendly, but there isn't much to do besides dining at a restaurant"*

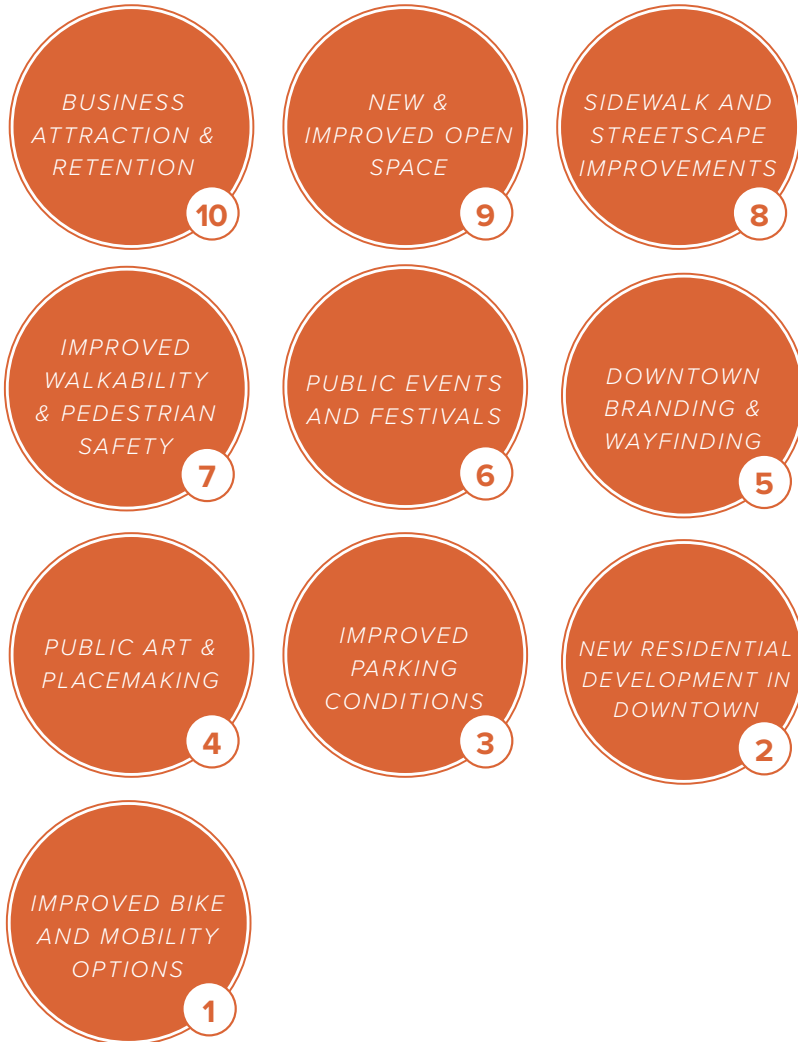


*"Downtown does not have a community gathering space"*



## DOWNTOWN CARY INITIATIVES

Survey participants prioritized Downtown Cary initiatives as follows (10 being the highest priority and 1 being the lowest):



## BIG MAP EXERCISE

Participants were asked to:



**1. Identify where in Downtown Cary they would like to see new public art installed.** While public art was indicated as a need throughout all of Downtown Cary, it was highly requested on Main Street, east of US 14 and along the train tracks.

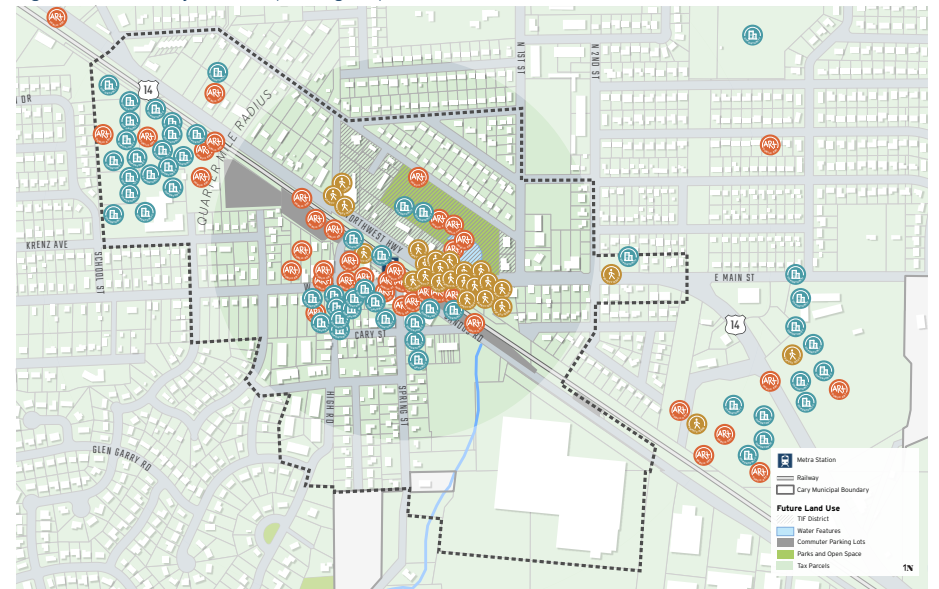


**2. Indicate where pedestrian safety improvements are a priority.** Participants overwhelmingly indicated that safety improvements were needed at the intersection of Main Street and US 14. Additional improvements were highlighted north of the train tracks, along Borden Avenue.



**3. Identify key locations for new development or other improvements.** The majority of responses identified the Maplewood School site as a development opportunity, along with parcels south of the train tracks, along Main, Spring, and High Streets. Additional key locations for development and/or improvement were highlighted east of the Downtown Core.

Figure 1: Community Workshop 1 - Big Map Exercise results



## Community Visioning & Design Webinar

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The Community Visioning and Design Webinar for the Downtown Cary Strategic Plan was held on February 10, 2021. The webinar included sixteen (16) panelists and fifty-five (55) registered participants. The consultant team facilitated a presentation primarily focused on existing conditions, a community engagement summary, and presentation of various development and improvement concepts for key opportunity sites in and around Downtown Cary. The participants and panelists engaged in a live question and answer session, idea-sharing, and thoughts and preferences on different development types, scales, and uses in Downtown Cary.

Overall, the workshop offered the community a chance to review the team's analysis of the area, and engage in various development and improvement concepts for opportunity sites in and around Downtown. Development concepts were focused on the Downtown core along Main Street between Spring St and High Rd; the Maplewood School site; Metra parking area and Spring Street plaza; properties along US Route 14 north of the Metra station; the vacant Bank site and US Route 14/Main Street intersection; and the vacant Village owned site on the corner of US Route 14 and 2nd Avenue.

Participants shared questions, ideas, comments and concerns over the various concepts. Overall, participants were in favor of the Plan's recommendations, offering positive feedback in regards to development types, scale and proposed uses in the Downtown area. This engagement opportunity provided the consulting team with direction needed to move the Downtown Plan forward, with preferred development types in key locations throughout the study area. Feedback gathered during this webinar will help shape the vision for Downtown Cary, and prioritize development opportunities for the Village and its partners.

### POLL QUESTIONS

Webinar attendees were asked the following poll questions during the webinar:

#### 1. What type of Residential uses would you like to see in Downtown Cary? (select all that apply)

Approximately 80% of respondents would like to see Mixed-Use Buildings. Townhomes and Apartments also scored high at 55% and 50%.

#### 2. What commercial uses would you like to see in Downtown Cary? (select all that apply)

Overall respondents showed interest in seeing more commercial uses in Downtown Cary. 95% of respondents would like to see more Restaurants / Cafes / Pubs and Specialty Food Shops. Retail Shops (68%), Office & Co-working space (63%), and Recreation/Entertainment (63%) also were highly favored.

#### 3. Which of the following represent high priority initiatives? (Choose up to 5)

When asked to rank high priority initiatives, webinar attendees ranked priorities in the following order, with 'business attraction and retention' ranking highest priority at 82% and 'improved parking conditions' ranking last at 0%.

- *Business attraction and retention*
- *Sidewalk and streetscape improvements*
- *Improved walkability and pedestrian safety*
- *Public events and festivals*
- *New Residential Development in Downtown*
- *New improved public spaces*
- *Improved bike and mobility options*
- *Additional commercial uses*
- *Public art, placemaking and wayfinding*
- *Improved parking conditions*

# Final Community Workshop

Over 50 individuals attended the final Community Workshop held on Saturday, May 1st, 2021 from 9am-12pm in the parking lot behind the BMO Harris Bank off Main Street. This workshop introduced the Goals and Strategies for Downtown Cary's Strategic Plan as well as the Development Strategy Framework and concepts that have been developed. Providing attendees with a touch-less engagement opportunity, an online survey echoing the workshop exercises was available via a QR code.

A Goals and Strategy Priority exercise was available to allow attendees to use stickers to mark which strategies of the goals should be prioritized.

## GOALS & STRATEGIES EXERCISE

Participants were asked to mark with a sticker, strategies that should be prioritized within each goal. The following were the highest ranked for each goal (goal 1, goal 2, goal 3) which are presented in Section 2:



Community Workshop #3





# 1

## SETTING THE STAGE - DOWNTOWN CARY TODAY



# 1. Downtown Cary Today

## BACKGROUND & PLANNING PROCESS

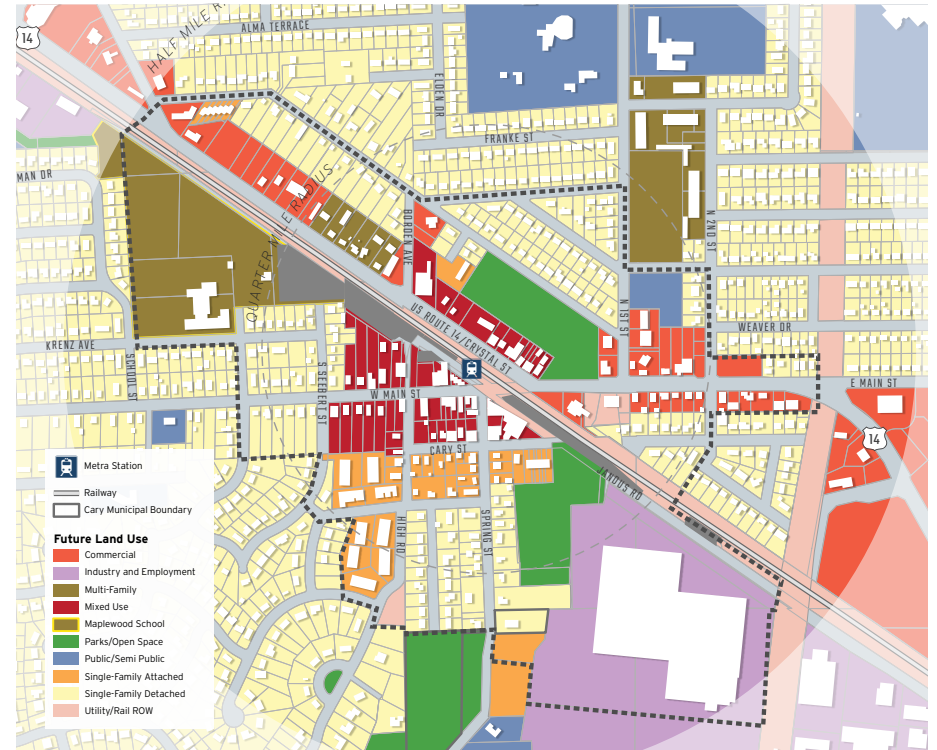
The Village of Cary has a population of 18,346. It is approximately 45 miles from Downtown Chicago and 30 miles from Chicago O'Hare International Airport. The City of Chicago is accessed by Metra which passes through the heart of Downtown Cary.

Downtown Cary is in the southeast portion of the Village and adjacent to US Route 14. It generally emanates out from the intersection of Main Street and Spring Street and is adjacent to the Cary Metra Station. It has a small, compact size consisting of one- and two-story buildings oriented to the street. Single-family residential neighborhoods are located to the west and south including the vacant former Maplewood School site. The area north of US Route 14 is disconnected from the Downtown core and consists of commercial uses oriented along the highway, Veteran's Park and single-family residential uses. True-Value Manufacturing, and other employment generating uses, are located just to the southeast of the Downtown core along Jandus Road.

## EXISTING CONDITIONS SUMMARY

### Land Use Assessment

Figure 2: Downtown Cary Land Use Map



Downtown Cary includes a variety of commercial and service based uses. The Metra Station and adjacent parking lots comprise a portion of Downtown as pavement and parking lots. Veteran's Park provides a large open space and water feature but limited public improvements for residents to enjoy. Cary Creek also flows through the southeast portion of the area. Employment uses are located further southeast along Jandus Road.

Downtown Cary is typical of suburban downtowns where commercial development occurred within walking distance to residential neighborhoods and transportation corridors. There are minimal civic or institutional uses in Downtown. Single-family neighborhoods constructed in the early to mid-20th century are located to the west and south. Multi-family development exists south of the Downtown core.

## Downtown Site Assessment

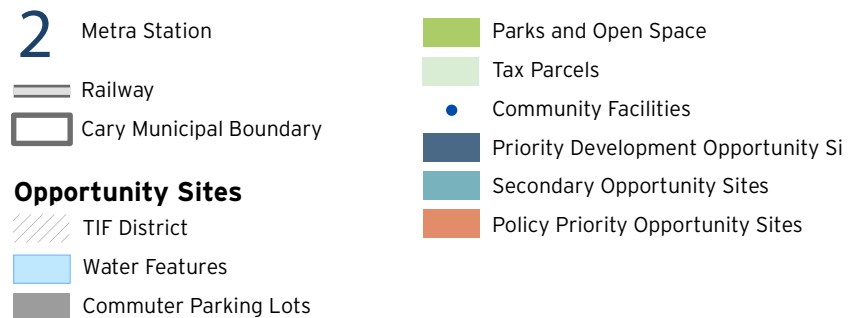
An analysis of sites that may be viable candidates for future development within the Downtown is shown above. The analysis organizes potential opportunity sites into three categories based on character, strategic value, and priority for development.

**Priority Development Opportunity Sites** - properties that are perceived to have a higher level of viability or importance for new development based on their size, location, or other strategic advantages. This category also includes sites that are vacant or have a lower barrier to development representing opportunities for near-term implementation.

**Secondary Opportunity Sites** - this category represents properties that have potential for future development or redevelopment, but also have constraints that could complicate implementation efforts. Examples include sites of limited size or those with existing uses that could raise the costs of development. The sites in this category are also generally viewed by the project team as having less strategic value for the district and community and therefore may not warrant as direct or concerted involvement by the Village in redevelopment efforts.

**Policy Priority Opportunity Sites** – This category represents sites that may have potential for higher use or increased density but are not considered to have high strategic value. As a result, new development would be better managed incrementally through zoning or other policy changes. Most of the sites in this category are located to the south and west of the central core, which were noted in the Comprehensive Plan as being part of a Downtown ‘expansion area’. Many of these properties have existing uses that lend unique character or value to the district which could be diminished if extensive redevelopment were to occur. An infill or reuse approach is generally recommended on these sites where additional density could be provided without diminishing existing character or value. In other cases, the existing zoning or land use policies are simply not aligned with the envisioned character or market potential of the site.

Figure 3: Downtown Cary Opportunity Sites Map



## Housing Assessment

Cary has a significantly low residential vacancy rate at 3.5%. Most of the Village's housing stock was constructed between the 1980s and early 2000s and includes predominantly detached single-family homes. There have been no new residential developments built in the Downtown area in recent years. The most recent development in Cary was the Senior Living LP at 880 Feiberg Court, an affordable housing development targeted for people over the age of 62. Key housing market indicators show strong potential for new residential development throughout the community.

The "For-Sale" housing market continues to remain strong in the Cary area. Detached single-family home median prices rebounded from the Great Recession and remain competitive with neighboring communities, such as Crystal Lake and Algonquin. The remarkably low turnaround time on sales, together with the low supply, highlights the area as a desirable and affordable community to own a single-family detached home.

The desirability for attached single-family homes in the Cary area is on the rise. While the median sale price has steadily increased over the last five years, attached single-family units are selling fast, averaging only 62 days on the market. Although outside the Downtown Core, the two planned townhome and duplex developments reflect the growing appeal for this housing segment in Cary. Foreclosures, which are another indicator of a housing market's health, continue to decline in Cary and remain lower than McHenry County's average.

The rental market continues to show signs of strength across different market segments. Most rental units are in the Study Area, primarily along First Street and in Downtown. Rent prices increased at a pace of 5.7% over the last five years, twice as fast as McHenry County as a whole. New units at Cary Senior Living LP became available in late 2019, bringing the occupancy to 87.5%; however, prior to the new units, occupancy rates were steady at 95% or higher – which is tight by industry standards - even as rental prices have risen. This trend suggests new units at appropriate rental prices could be absorbed in the Village.

The newest residential developments are located on the periphery of Downtown, typically on larger tracts of land. The Maplewood

School site is a unique opportunity to attract more households to the Downtown through transit-supported development. The site's large size could potentially provide a variety of housing types, from single-family attached and small-lot detached homes to three-to-four-story elevator rental buildings while creating new gathering space and community space in Downtown. Future development could accommodate a range of growing demands segments:

- Aging residents and senior citizens looking to remain in Cary;
- Downsizing empty-nesters seeking an active lifestyle with proximity to Downtown, and;
- Young professionals seeking proximity to transit.

Local stakeholders and Cary residents emphasized a desire for more housing types, particularly close to Downtown. Additional attached single-family homes and multi-family units in the Downtown area could attract new households to Cary that might not be able to afford a detached single-family home, including young families, educators and healthcare professionals. An infusion of new households to Downtown would generate more foot traffic and spending power, in turn generating support for local businesses.



232 W. Main Street



# Retail Assessment

The core of Downtown Cary is south of the Metra Station, where most of the storefronts exist. It has the character of a small, traditional Downtown and is accessible to residents and visitors traveling by foot, car, or public transit. It is visually and physically disconnected from the area north of the station across US 14. The business mix in Downtown Cary is primarily service based, which limits trips to Downtown, and time and money spent in the area. While newly opened food-and-beverage places in Downtown have been a welcomed addition, the lack of retail stores and community gathering space limits further activity in the area.

Recruitment of businesses that allow for people to stay longer and visit multiple destinations would have a positive impact on Downtown.

Examples of this would be an ice cream parlor, bakery, café, immersive retail stores, or an experience-based storefront such as a “painting with a twist,” or other types of stores with group event offerings.

Limitations on space are also an issue, with most of Downtown positioned between two blocks. The expansion of Downtown would provide more opportunity for added retail, though space options are limited with the proximity of residential homes. Nearby Algonquin has rezoned single-family homes located in their Downtown to allow for retail uses, expanding its Downtown and adding to its unique character. Similar to Algonquin, the Village of Cary has begun exploring ways to increase retail uses in Downtown. Multiple opportunity sites in Downtown Cary could bring added retail, through the infill of small-scale development parcels, such as the drive-through Bank site, the vacant Bank building on US Route 14, along with additional buildings to the north of the highway.

Traditional anchors typically found in Downtowns are not present in Downtown Cary. This includes local government or municipal buildings, a library, police and fire stations, schools, churches, post office, or a community center. The lack of such anchors limits trips to Downtown. Open space or a community gathering space is also limited in Downtown Core. Community gathering spaces, such as “Al Fresco Alley,” can be an inexpensive and effective way to bring foot traffic and dollars to Downtown, stimulating local economic growth.

Figure 4: Downtown Cary Business Inventory



- |                                      |                                |  |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------|--|
| 1. Cary Ale House & Brewery          | 9. Chamber of Commerce         | 17. HR Plumbing  |
| 2. BMO Harris Bank                   | 10. Cary Dental                | 18. Happy's Bar  |
| 3. Orchard Prime Meats & Wine        | 11. Cary-Grove Animal Hospital | 19. Cary Food & Liquors                                      |
| 4. Brush                             | 12. Cary-Grove KinderCare      | 20. Cleaners   |
| 5. The Tracks Bar & Grille           | 13. Fairway Golf Cars          | 21. Carniceria Y Taqueria / Maple Tree / Romanesco's Italian |
| 6. Conscious Cup                     | 14. Dairy Queen                | 22. Marathon Gas   |
| 7. 750 Cucina Rustica                | 15. Cary Tire & Auto           |  |
| 8. Cary-Grove Performing Arts Center | 16. Tippy Goat Tavern          |  |



# Transportation Assessment

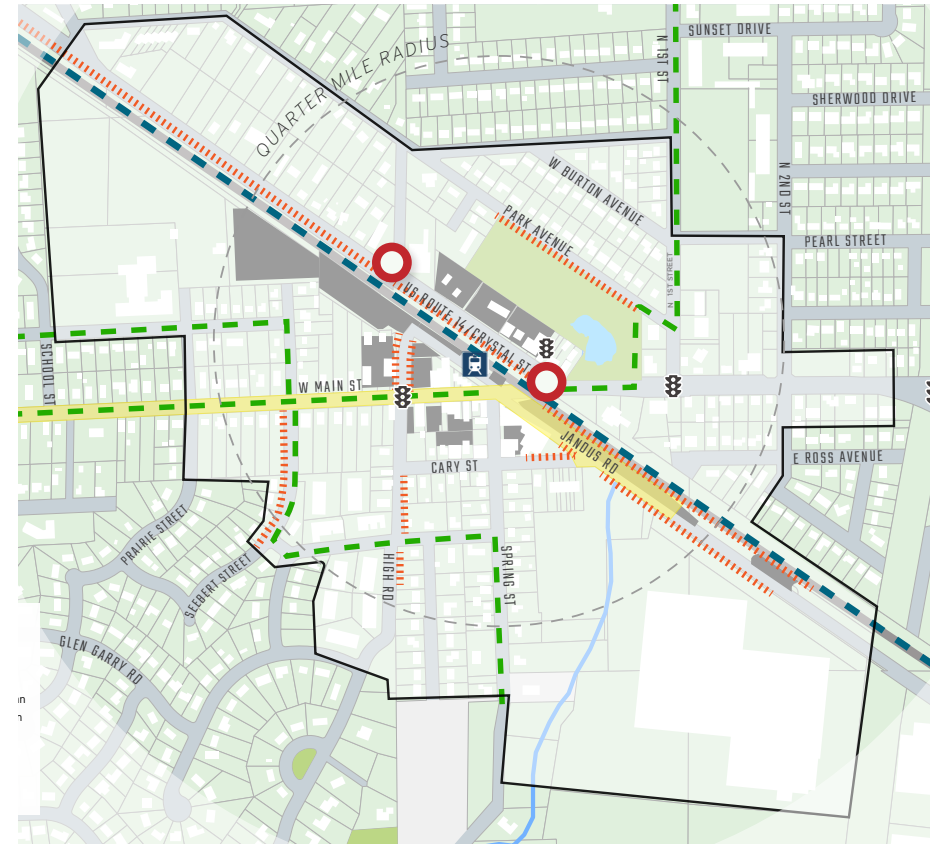
The Cary Metra Station serves as a valuable amenity to residents and businesses that benefit from commuters. There are many transportation improvements already being considered in and around Downtown, many of which will help improve access to Downtown Cary. The limited points of vehicular and pedestrian entry to Downtown is an issue and improved access will be a key component to the framework of Downtown.










Many residents and visitors of Cary are interested in connecting Downtown to nearby trails and the greater regional trail network. Additionally, the planned regional US Route 14 bikeway corridor presents an opportunity to vastly improve pedestrian and bicycle access to Downtown. Appealing to bicyclists throughout the region will be a key strategy to attract more people to Downtown.

There are opportunities to consolidate and share parking more efficiently throughout the Downtown including Metra parking and inefficient off-street parking lots.

The intersection at Main Street and US Route 14 is the primary connection and access point into Downtown Cary, but with high vehicle speeds and wide crossing lengths, pedestrians do not feel safe or comfortable at this intersection. Safety and urban design improvements at this intersection will improve pedestrian conditions, provide a sense of place and identity to Downtown Cary and help guide motorists to Downtown.

Figure 5: Sidewalk Gaps and Planned Bikeways Map



-  Intersection improvement opportunity
-  Traffic Signal
-  Planned Bikeways - Comp Plan
-  Proposed McHenry County 2040 Bike Ped Plan
-  Missing sidewalks; poor pedestrian connection
-  Lane configuration opportunity
-  Parking
-  Park
-  Study Area

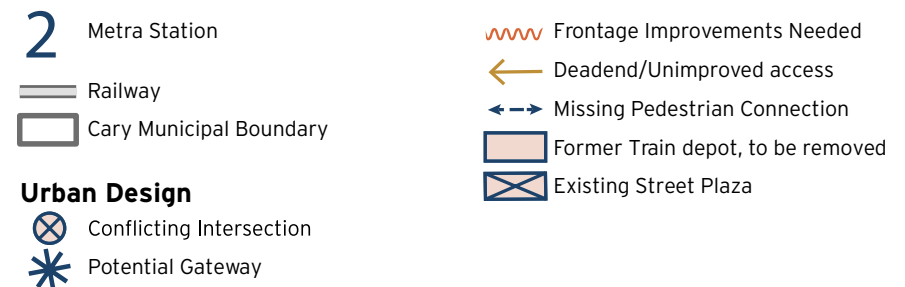
# Urban Design Assessment

The Village's Downtown Streetscape Plan is the guiding document for improvement to the public realm in the Downtown Core. The Plan recommends several improvements which are starting to be installed. The Downtown Strategic Plan is meant to complement ongoing streetscape improvements and focus on the built environment through building and site investment and improvements. It recommends developing an authentic historic streetscape design style that is representative of the community image. It also recommends using materials that reflect the history of the community, while incorporating environmentally sensitive, progressive materials into new building design.

The existing streetscape is functional and includes some amenities but could be improved to better accommodate pedestrians, community events, and reflect the history and community image. The Streetscape Plan recommends a variety of streetscape and urban design concepts for different areas of the Downtown. These include frontage improvements along US Route 14, and streetscape design improvements including landscaping, crosswalk and intersection enhancements and gateway signage in the Downtown Core. The visual preference surveys indicate a desire for public art elements, including murals and interactive art displays which could be incorporated into future streetscape design and/or signage.

The Downtown lacks a cohesive signage and identity program and because of this lacks a strong identifiable image and sense of place. Some initial elements exist to provide a foundation for a complete signage and identity plan for the Downtown. This includes the pump house shelter near the train station emblazoned with "CARY." The Streetscape Plan recommends gateway signage to provide an entrance statement to the Downtown Core. However, gateways to the Downtown should also be considered further afield in locations along US Route 14, Jandus Road and Main Street to the west of Downtown to evoke a sense of arrival. These gateway elements should work in concert with other placemaking elements within the Downtown and increase in intensity and prominence as one moves into Downtown. Elements with the highest visual impact are recommended near the primary intersection of US Route 14 and Main Street, which functions as the 'front door' to Downtown.

Figure 6: Streetscape and Urban Design Existing Conditions Map











# 2

## DOWNTOWN GOALS & STRATEGIES



## 2. Goals & Strategies

### OVERVIEW

These goals were selected to address the primary objectives of the project related to improving Downtown Cary by identifying market opportunities for growth and expansion, proving parking solutions and an approach for improvements to signage and wayfinding. Most importantly the goals and strategies seek to develop and improve key opportunity sites in the Downtown and surrounding neighborhoods. Progress will take time and factors may change, which can have an impact on how and when specific sites are redeveloped. Knowing that progress will rely on the combined efforts of the Village, residents, developers, property & business owners, and other essential stakeholders it is important to solidify the goals, strategies, and actions for implementing the plan. The Downtown Strategic Plan establishes a vision for Downtown Cary and includes three goals designed to guide the Village in it's efforts to achieve that vision.

## DOWNTOWN CARY VISION

*Downtown Cary is a thriving commercial and social hub of the community, featuring locally owned businesses and providing opportunities for a diverse spectrum of residents to work, live, and play. Downtown offers a sense of pride to its residents and is an ideal place to start and grow a business, invest in property, and gather with friends and family. It is walkable, well connected to nearby neighborhoods and within the surrounding region that accommodates and provides convenient access to a range of mobility options.*

The development strategy for Downtown Cary is embodied through three primary goals related to the core themes of this plan.

## DOWNTOWN CARY GOALS

The first goal considers Downtown Cary's long term market position and development potential.

### 1. STRENGTHEN DOWNTOWN CARY'S MARKET POSITION.

*Vision - Downtown Cary contains a mix of retail, food, commercial, and office uses, as well as a variety of new housing types. Infill development has provided residential options and has increased the population in and around the Downtown. The Maplewood School site has been redeveloped with a mix of residential uses and has been physically connected to the Downtown core. Business development and recruitment have been targeted to specific economic sectors, and new diversified housing types have been targeted to a mix of demographic sectors to maximize the potential for success.*



Main Street



The second goal considers Downtown Cary's physical condition, design, character, and appearance both in the public and private realms.

## 2. ENHANCE DOWNTOWN'S PHYSICAL APPEARANCE AND URBAN DESIGN CHARACTER.

*Vision - Downtown Cary's streetscape plan has been fully implemented and frontage improvements along the US Route 14 have also been completed. The Village has instituted a building improvement program to facilitate reinvestment in the Downtown building stock and new development has been designed to complement and strengthen the character of Downtown. A new community plaza has provided a Downtown public gathering space and can be expanded to Spring Street when needed for larger events. New gateway, directional and informational signage provides Downtown identity and helps strengthen its position in the region.*



Spring Street Closure

The third and final goal considers Downtown Cary's transportation, mobility and parking systems.

## 3. IMPROVE AND ENHANCE THE CONNECTIVITY, MOBILITY, AND PARKING SYSTEMS IN DOWNTOWN.

*Vision - Downtown Cary is a regional bicycling destination and visitors can bike to and throughout the Downtown. Its streets, bike lanes, trails and sidewalks are well designed and connected. Safety and design improvements have significantly enhanced the US Route 14/Main Street intersection. Visitors can easily find parking throughout Downtown in Metra parking lots, along the street and in a few strategically located parking lots. Signage is well thought and provides information and directions to motorists and bicyclists.*



Cary Metra Station Plaza



# GOAL 1: STRENGTHEN DOWNTOWN CARY'S MARKET POSITION

**A strong market position anchored by a mix of residential and commercial activity that creates a vibrant and active Downtown.**

Specific land use and character areas define Downtown Cary and its surrounding areas. The Maplewood School site and its neighborhood character differ from sites along the US Route 14, Main Street or in the Downtown Core. Some of these areas share common land uses and building type characteristics. These areas offer potential for new development and increased intensity that would enhance commercial activity and advance other objectives related to Downtown Cary's revitalization. The following strategies will help to achieve these objectives.

## Strategy 1 - Maximize land use efficiency and density within and near the Downtown Core.

An issue to overcome for Downtown Cary is its compact nature, spanning only a few blocks near the Metra station. The opportunity to maximize land use to allow for expansion of retail and residential uses would strengthen the Downtown and offer more places to live, shop, and gather.

**Action 1 - Increased Density and Intensity.** Allow higher density multi-family housing through density adjustments to the B-1 zoning district, consider density minimums and higher floor area ratios or zoning overlay that may allow for more intense uses in select locations.

*Increasing residential density near the Metra Station will have added benefits for Downtown Cary by providing support for established businesses Downtown, increasing demand for new businesses to locate Downtown, and increasing Metra ridership for residents commuting to Chicago for work, or elsewhere in the region. This would align with the 2015 Comprehensive Plan objective to encourage and support construction of new multifamily housing in and near Downtown to enliven and enhance its economic stability.*

*Higher density multi-family developments would need to fit the size, scale, and aesthetic of Downtown Cary, with appropriate parking and reasonable rental rates. More details on potential demand segments, unit types, and rental rates are detailed in Strategy 2.*

*To encourage higher density developments in the Downtown Core, the Village should identify parcels that could support a mixed-use development and begin a process of rezoning or allowing increased density or lot coverage if necessary. Removing policy constraints to prepare sites for desired development will reduce development costs and spur interest.*

**Action 2 - Focused Development Activity.** Focus development activity on primary Downtown opportunity sites, such as BMO Bank Site and other vacant and underutilized sites.

*Some sites in the Downtown Core are not currently developed with their highest and best use. There are opportunities to add building frontage in some locations which will make a more cohesive street wall along Main Street and can bring added residential density and new businesses Downtown. These include the BMO Harris Bank site and parking lot, and other core sites and underutilized land Downtown that can be better utilized. These sites could also accommodate new ground floor retail spaces.*

*The BMO Harris Bank Site has been identified in the Downtown Cary Strategic Plan as an opportunity site. To prepare this site for future development, conversations must commence with the landowner regarding their interest in selling the site to a developer. The current landowners could also consider partnering in a potential future development by occupying a ground floor retail space or contribute financing to a project. The bank currently occupies nearly 7,000 square feet of space Downtown, whereas a ground floor lease in a new building would be 2,000 – 4,000 square feet, shrinking their footprint significantly. Recent real estate trends indicate banks are beginning to require less space in brick-and-mortar buildings, as people conduct more banking online.*

**Action 3 - Policy Priority Sites.** Consider land use and policy changes to encourage additional density and units on other infill sites and underutilized land and buildings, identified as policy priority sites.

*Sites on the edges of the Downtown Core are currently underutilized, and with policy or land use changes, could accommodate additional residential or retail uses. These could include allowing accessory or secondary dwelling units or small infill residential projects. The Village should consider policy changes on appropriate large parcels in the Downtown Core to accommodate higher density residential development.*

**Action 4 - Shovel-Ready Sites and Storefronts.** Conduct due diligence and Village-initiated policy changes to prepare “shovel ready” sites and storefronts.

*Preparing available vacant or underutilized sites with appropriate zoning and development standards prior to developer involvement will make these more attractive and less costly to develop. The Village and Chamber of Commerce, as partners, can also provide additional marketing support to help attract businesses to fill vacant storefronts. Assisting building owners with improvements to prepare for new tenants can also prove effective.*

## Strategy 2 - Increase housing supply and types within and near the Downtown Core.

Cary’s housing stock is dominated by single-family homes, with more than 90% of the total housing stock in the community being single family homes (attached and detached). Housing diversification in Cary, especially Downtown, can help retain Cary residents looking to downsize, and attract new residents seeking other housing options. Most residential developments built in the last two decades have been single-family homes, with very few added multifamily residential units.

**Action 1. Rental Housing Options.** Focus on providing more rental housing options in the Downtown and surrounding area.

*Increasing rental options would also assist in diversifying the Cary housing stock and could be attractive to young professionals or families wanting to live in Cary. Only 12% of the occupied housing units in Cary are renter-occupied, with very few options for apartments in multifamily buildings. The rental market continues to show signs of strength across different market segments, as rental rates in the Study Area have grown by 6% over the last five years, twice as fast as McHenry County as a whole, and vacancy rates remain steady at ~5%. This trend suggests new units at appropriate rents would be absorbed in the Village.*

*Demand for single-family homes in Cary has remained incredibly strong. Single-family housing sales in 2020 were higher than any other year since 2007, with 437 detached housing unit sales, and 125 attached housing unit sales. Average days on the market have also remained low for both detached and attached single family homes averaging 74 and 64 days, respectively, and median sales prices increased slightly for detached homes and remained steady for attached homes. These recent numbers bolster the case for increasing the housing supply in Cary, as it has become a desirable place for homeowners looking for affordable housing options outside of Chicago.*

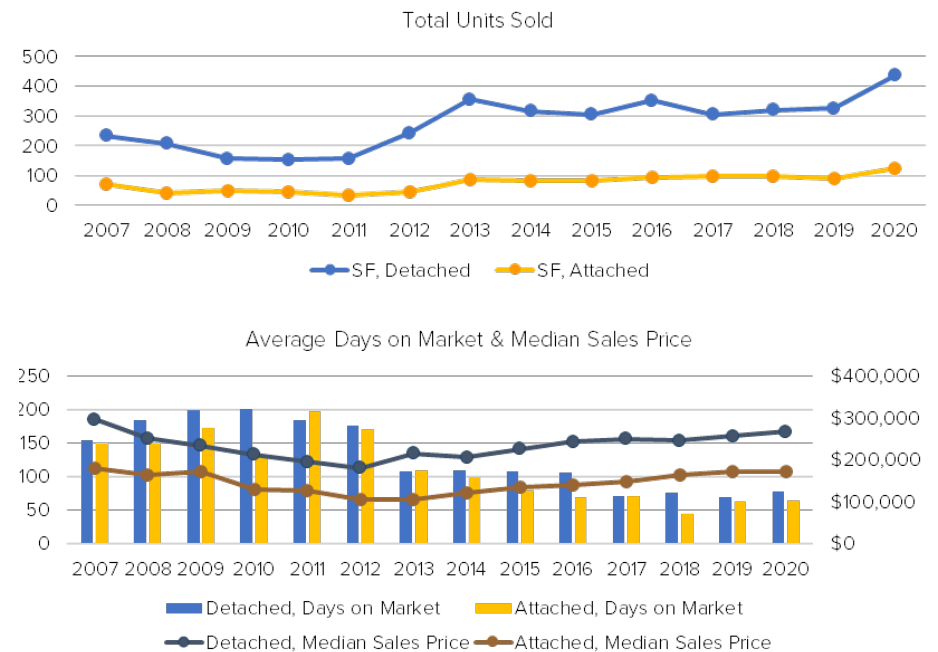


Figure 7: Housing Figures - source: MLS

**Action 2 - Maplewood Site.** Assist the School District as needed and promote the development of the Maplewood School site.

*Downtown Cary has multiple sites that could provide added housing and diversification in the Village, most notable is the 15-acre Maplewood School Site. This site presents a unique development opportunity to enhance Downtown, bring transit-supported development in the area, and added households to support businesses Downtown. The Maplewood development should include a mixture of housing types such as multifamily buildings, single-family attached town or row homes, or potentially small-lot single-family detached units, along with added open space and connections to the Metra Station, Downtown, and surrounding residential neighborhood.*

*The Village should continue to support the redevelopment of the Maplewood site while advocating for appropriate density, design, access, and open space requirements. This project will be catalytic for Downtown Cary and should be a prioritized development.*

**Action 3 - Transit Oriented Development (TOD).** Promote TOD in the Downtown Core.

*Sites in Downtown have the opportunity to add housing that can provide added density, boost Metra ridership, and help support businesses Downtown. Reduced parking standards in new multifamily residential buildings would calm traffic concerns from Cary residents. Most apartments in Downtown Cary are in smaller, older buildings above ground floor retail with limited amenities. Newer apartment options near the Metra would bring an infusion of new households to Downtown and would generate more foot traffic and spending power, in turn generating support for the local businesses.*

**Action 4 - Targeted Housing Types.** Target new housing types towards future demographics.

*Future developments could accommodate a range of growing demographic demand segments, including:*

- *Downsizing empty nesters seeking to remain in Cary, but who no longer want to maintain their larger single-family home and yard. Two-bedroom units would likely be attractive to this group, in a town or row home building type. Proximity to Downtown would be desirable to those seeking a more active and social lifestyle.*

- *Aging Cary residents seeking to remain in Cary, but no longer able to maintain their single-family home or yard. One- and two-bedroom units would likely be attractive to this group, in a ground floor unit, or building with elevator.*
- *Young professionals and students seeking to remain or relocate to Cary for work or school. One- and two-bedroom units would be attractive to this group, in a multifamily building proximate to Downtown to access eating and drinking places as well as the Metra.*
- *Young families seeking to remain or relocate to Cary prior to purchasing a single-family home. Two-to-three-bedroom units would be attractive to this group, in a town or row home, or multifamily building. Proximity to Downtown would be a plus, as well as access to ample open space, parks, and amenities.*



*Increased density near the downtown core supports transit use, while also satisfying demand for additional unit types.*



**Action 5 - Rental Rates, Affordability and Amenities.** Work with developers and owners to target affordable rental rates and inclusion of project amenities.

*The most recent additions to the Cary multifamily housing inventory include a 60-unit affordable housing development delivered in 2017 called “Garden Place Apartments” at 225 First Street, with rents ranging from \$800 for a one-bedroom to \$1,100 for a three-bedroom and Cary Senior Living at 880 Feinberg Court, which was delivered in 2020, adding 62-units for seniors at both affordable and market rates. To compete, the existing Oak Knoll Apartments rental property on First Street has begun renovating their existing units with new amenities.*

*A lack of comparable market-rate apartment developments (non-senior) in Cary and the surrounding communities makes rental rate estimates difficult to obtain. To achieve feasible and competitive market rate rents, any new development will need to include modern amenities, such as updated kitchens, hardwood floors, a balcony, vaulted ceilings, and in-unit washer and dryer. Additionally, shared amenities should be offered, such as a fitness center, sundeck, party and game room, covered parking, and space for pets.*

*One potential comparable was found in neighboring Downtown Algonquin, a three-story, 63 unit development with one and two bedrooms, ranging from \$1,645 to \$3,100 per unit, or \$1.66 - \$1.79 per square foot. This development was completed in 2011, and offers apartments with all of the amenities listed above. While this might not be the scale recommended for Downtown Cary, it is the only new development delivered since 2010 within ten-miles of the Cary Metra station of market rate rental, non-senior multifamily residences with fewer than 100 units. This demonstrates a demand in the market for new housing of this type.*

**Action 6 - Alternative Housing Types.** Consider the allowance of alternative housing types such as smaller accessory dwelling units (ADUs), tiny homes and smaller duplexes or triplexes.

*The compact nature and lotting patterns in the Downtown will not accommodate larger projects with a few exceptions. Allowing smaller infill units, multiple units on one lot and accessory units will help provide additional housing while maintaining the character and scale of Downtown and surrounding neighborhood. The policy priority are good candidates for these types of units.*



*Garden Place Apartments*



*Example of an Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADUs)*

### Strategy 3 – Maintain an active business development, recruitment, retention and expansion program.

The area south of the Metra station is the core of Downtown Cary, with the majority of storefronts on Main Street, Spring Street, and Jandus Road. Most storefronts are occupied in this area, with only two vacant storefronts as of June 2020 with spaces usually filled quickly by tenants.

The business mix analysis shows a very high number of professional service and office-based storefronts, which limits trips Downtown, and time and money spent in the area, and generate low activity Downtown. Professional service and office include financial, insurance, and real estate offices, banks, lawyers, and other small office spaces. While these businesses are keeping vacancy rates low Downtown, the high number of this business type limits activity in the core.

The chart below displays the business mix in the Study Area, with 25 professional service storefronts, making up 32% of the total inventory, while more active storefront uses, such as retail and arts/culture/religion only make up 6% of the total inventory.

Figure 8: Business Mix in Downtown Cary - source: Goodman Williams Group, June 2020





**Action 1 - Prioritize Active Commercial Uses.** Prioritize active commercial uses through zoning modifications and outreach to help ensure the right mix of uses in Downtown that facilitate pedestrian activity.

*The addition of active businesses that allow for people to linger longer both during the day and in the evening would have a positive impact on the Downtown. These types of storefronts include food service and drinking places, including both full service and fast casual restaurants, as well as specialty food stores such as an ice cream parlor, bakery, or café. Retail storefronts with general merchandise, clothing/accessory, or home and garden, and other types of experienced based store with group events would also attract people to Downtown. Lastly, arts, culture, and health/wellness storefronts would add other destinations Downtown.*

*Due to the proximity of ample large shopping centers with national retailers, Downtown businesses would likely be smaller scale, specialty or locally owned businesses. To maintain the small-town aesthetic of Downtown Cary, smaller, local businesses are recommended for this area.*

**Action 2 - Targeted Economic Sectors.** Targeting certain sectors that are missing from Downtown or in high demand will help achieve a diverse land use mix.

*Recruitment of businesses Downtown should be targeted to certain economic sectors focused on food service and drinking places, retail, and arts, culture, and health or wellness establishments. New retail could include niche or specialty stores. Additionally, health/medical and wellness sectors could bring both added foot traffic and employment to Downtown. Often referred to as “medtail”, healthcare, medical or wellness uses in a typical retail storefront makes for a convenient patient experience but also brings added foot traffic and trips Downtown. Examples include a dentist/orthodontist, optometry, physical therapy, or yoga studio.*

**Action 3 - Small Business Incubators.** Business mix curation, small business incubator, flex office spaces could also add to a diverse mix of uses in the Downtown.

*Downtown storefronts will consist of small and local businesses, which might require additional assistance and opportunities to grow and gain exposure. Small business incubators could assist in recruiting small, locally owned businesses that might not be able to afford or fill larger*

*store footprints. Encouraging start-up businesses could improve chances of storefront success in Downtown and communicate to residents and potential investors that Cary is open and welcome to entrepreneurs.*

*Focusing on both startups and recruitment of more established businesses would position Downtown Cary with a steady stream of new businesses to fill storefronts, fill unmet demand for goods and services, generate additional tax revenue, and bring added foot traffic for existing businesses Downtown.*

*Lastly, small format flex office or co-working space Downtown could be met with support by sole proprietor businesses, work-from-home employees, students, and entrepreneurs looking for work and meeting space outside of their home. While major co-working space companies such as We Work would not likely locate here, a more locally owned, small-format flex office building could be more aligned with Village goals and Downtown character. Preparing the appropriate zoning prior to marketing the site would help attract an office developer or tenant.*

**Action 4 - Active Marketing of Priority Development Sites.** Actively market and explore ways to assist in the future reuse or redevelopment of priority sites.

*The Village should consider a more aggressive marketing strategy on sites that offer significant opportunities for improvement or have important strategic value to revitalization efforts. For commercial sites along Route 14 and Main Street, this may include actively targeting development companies that work with restaurant groups or commercial tenants that the Village is looking to attract. Other means of support that could improve the value of key sites and make them more ‘shovel-ready’ include preparing conceptual site plans, securing zoning changes prior to a sale, coordinating and facilitating off-site parking arrangements, and addressing access points with IDOT and other appropriate parties.*



## Strategy 4 - Expand organizational capacity and partnerships with other agencies and entities that can help facilitate Downtown development and improvements.

A more formal organizational structure for the Downtown Cary business district would be beneficial in unifying stakeholders Downtown by motivating and guiding business owners to align and implement the goals of the Downtown Cary Strategic Plan.

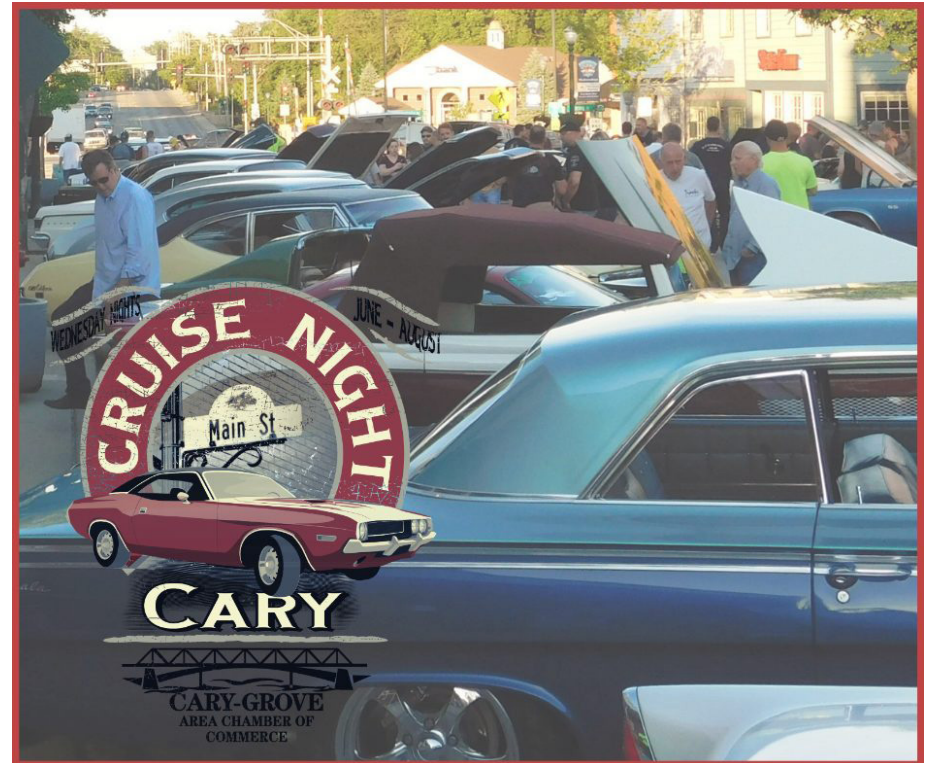
This would require consensus from building owners, as well as the Village, which might require phasing of organization and implementation. Starting with a more informal approach, such as a local business association that funds projects or initiatives through dues or fundraising, would begin to build consensus amongst building owners and Village leadership. Successful implementation of the association’s goals could encourage wary building or business owners and Village leadership to support more formal structures of Downtown organization and management, such as a Special Service Area or Business Improvement District.

Commitment to the revitalization of Downtown Cary will require clear leadership and management, which should include a full-time or part-time employee, which could be filled by a Village or Chamber of Commerce employee who is able to devote time to support, lead, and implement projects and initiatives Downtown.

**Action 1 - Partnerships.** Partner with the Chamber of Commerce and potential creation of a Special Service Area (SSA) or Business Improvement District (BID) to achieve Downtown goals.

*Downtown Cary currently has an active Chamber of Commerce (Cary-Grove Area Chamber of Commerce) dedicated to providing support to the business community in the area, as well as foster growth and economic development through marketing, technical assistance to small businesses, workforce development, event management, amongst other initiatives. A dedicated employee to focus on Downtown Cary business development could be beneficial.*

*While efforts of the Cary-Grove Chamber of Commerce have helped bolster commerce throughout Cary, a designated business district in Downtown Cary could be beneficial in advancing private development Downtown. Special Service Areas, or SSA (known as Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) in other cities) define areas where projects or activities are provided to a greater extent than throughout the whole Village. With approval of Village Council, a SSA or BID can establish a set of criteria that provides Cary greater precision in determining projects that best align with the Strategic Plan for Downtown Cary. SSA’s are used to generate funds to encourage maintenance and development Downtown. Added taxes on businesses within the SSA provides supplementary programs and services to businesses within the district such as beautification and safety, marketing and festival/events, as well as business attraction and retention.*



*Cary-Grove Area Chamber of Commerce’s Cruise Night, dedicated to supporting the business community.*

**Action 2 - Marketing Campaign.** Create a Downtown marketing, public relations and/or outreach campaign.

*Strengthening Downtown by branding and marketing can be a useful way to attract visitors to Downtown, spread news to residents, and to promote festivals, events, or community gatherings, as well as recruiting potential investors. Utilization of a Downtown website, as well as social media, can provide a powerful link between Downtown and target audiences. This would require organization and participation of local business owners Downtown, as well as marketing support to keep information and targeted messaging current. Print, digital, and video advertising could also increase awareness of amenities in Cary, attracting visitors and investors Downtown. Additional campaigns to ‘shop local’ could also benefit retention of local businesses, and increase retail sales tax in Cary.*

*Enhancing the image of Downtown Cary as an exciting and lively place through special events and festivals would better connect residents and visitors to Cary as a place, bolster recognition and support for local businesses, as well as strengthen networks between Cary leaders, residents and business owners.*



Clark Street Mural, Rogers Park, Chicago. The mural incorporated the “Clark” Brand.



Clark Street Brand Guide

## MARKETING CAMPAIGN - CASE STUDY

The development and implementation of a clear ‘brand guide’ was one of the first actions taken by the Rogers Park Business Alliance (RPBA) following the completion of the Vision Clark Street Corridor Master Plan – a planning policy and strategy guide for the corridor located on the far north side of Chicago, Illinois.

The RPBA worked with consultants to codify brand standards that celebrate the vibrancy and authenticity of the Clark Street corridor in a down-to-earth aesthetic. Exercises were designed to help stakeholders find common ground around the essential elements of the corridor, and to capture the words that describe it in a way that is both honest and aspirational. The final brand tells the story of Clark Street—encompassing thousands of different people, places, and stories that make it whole. The brand guide is a visual representation of the corridor, highlighting the vibrant colors, hand drawn elements, and multilingual messaging that keeps it true to place.



## GOAL 2: ENHANCE DOWNTOWN CARY'S PHYSICAL APPEARANCE AND URBAN DESIGN CHARACTER

A well-designed Downtown exhibiting strong urban design character and a maintained physical appearance and proper integration and design of private and public spaces.

Downtown Cary's physical design and character provides identity to those who visit or pass through. Care should be taken to preserve this charm and character while also encouraging reinvestment in the building stock and implementation of the streetscape plan. Investments that strengthen the character will also modernize Downtown and make it more attractive to residents and visitors alike. The following strategies aim to improve the design and physical character of the Downtown.

**Strategy 1 – Ensure new development is compatible with its surroundings, respects the context and scale of adjacent uses, and achieves multiple objectives.**

**Action 1 - Development Principles.** Employ a set of development principles to help ensure compatibility between new and existing development.

*When evaluating development proposals for important sites the Village should consider how a proposed plan would enable progress toward strategic goals – in addition to assessing typical factors such as zoning conformance and fiscal impacts. These determinations should be based on a set of clear and consistent principles. See page 48 of Section 3. In select instances, greater design flexibility or other benefits to property owners may be warranted if a proposal can be shown to advance Downtown's overall revitalization efforts.*

**Action 2 - Design Guidelines.** Employ a set of design guidelines that illustrate and help define the desired design, scale and architectural character of Downtown.

*The guidelines may range in focus and specificity, but provide property/business owners, developers, and design professionals with suitable direction on design considerations and ensure a compatible, high quality aesthetic character. Strict adherence to guidelines may not be warranted in all cases, however a demonstrated commitment to the guidelines should be taken considered as part of the Village's development review process. Design guidelines are provided in this Plan. See page 70 of Section 3.*



Downtown Cary



## Strategy 2 – Design and develop one or more plazas and outdoor spaces for gathering and community events.

Community support was overwhelming for community event space, both in terms of larger community events and smaller plazas and outdoor seating areas. The 2020 Covid-19 Pandemic exacerbated this already strong desire. Downtown Cary contains numerous opportunities for a mix of both public and private spaces. A variety of spaces allows flexibility and can help define formal and informal space. Some may be programmed and have activities or be supportive of nearby businesses and uses.

Community spaces should also include physical activities, design elements and art and graphics for visual interest, all to promote the design and use of the space. The combination of art and design into the public spaces will expand interest of the space, create destination points and involving artists as partners can be a successful approach to Downtown improvements.

### Action 1 - Public Plazas and Spaces.

**Train Depot Plaza** – The former train depot building on the south side of the train tracks will be removed and, in its place, exists the opportunity for a new public plaza and community space. The Village has begun the preliminary design work related to a new community plaza and seating area in this location. This Strategic Plan recommends this project completion as a space for community gathering was one of the most discussed items during the engagement process. Design of the plaza should take into consideration potential redevelopment of adjacent parcels and encourage their future use of the space.

**Spring Street Plaza** – The success of the Spring Street Plaza, during the summer of 2020, was an indication of the increased community desire for outdoor space and community gathering. The Village could provide a permanent or semi-permanent/seasonal closure of Spring Street, just south of Main Street for outdoor seating and community events.

If properly designed, there may be occasions for larger community and regional events that warrant closure of Main Street, thereby connecting the two plaza spaces for an even larger event space in the core of Downtown. If a permanent closure of Spring Street is not feasible, alternate sites may exist on private property to create a gathering space such as the existing parking lot on the east side of Spring Street.



Existing Train Depot Plaza



Existing Spring Street Plaza





**SPRING STREET PLAZA - PLAN DATA**

- 1 Spring Street Plaza North
- 2 Improved intersection with pedestrian safety enhancements and branding elements
- 3 Use of consistent design elements/materials
- 4 Shared street - streetscape improvements
- 5 Movable bollards to allow flexibility and scalability
- 6 Partial or phased expansion of streetscape character to the south
- 7 Continued use/access to parking lot
- 8 Redevelopment opportunity site



**Action 2 - Private Plazas and Spaces.** There may be opportunities for plazas and community spaces on private property in the Downtown. This would require the effort and determination of Downtown property owners, through partnership and cooperation with the Village.

*“Brewery Plaza” at Main Street & High Road – A parking lot exists on the northwest corner of Main Street and High Road. This is an underutilization of space from a design and land use perspective. The building that currently occupies this property is a brewery and tasting room. There may be an expanded business opportunity for outdoor seating, landscaping and design treatment that would convert this otherwise unattractive parking lot into a vibrant community space. There is also a small parking lot on the southeast corner of Main Street and High Road that offers the potential to serve as outdoor seating for the adjacent deli/restaurant.*

*East Side Hub – Depending on future uses and design concepts for the properties along the US Route 14 across from the train station, an internal courtyard community hub may be possible to provide gathering spaces for different businesses that would shares this space. See page 60 of Section 3 for more information.*



*Parking Lot at Intersection of Main Street and High Road*



*Main Street and High Road Visual Simulation*



## Strategy 3 - Prioritize streetscape and landscape improvements and enhancements on East and West Main Street, High Road, US Route 14 and other Downtown Streets.

**Action 1 - Implement the 2016 Streetscape Plan.** The Village adopted the Downtown Streetscape Plan in May, 2016. This plan provides a detailed analysis and recommendations for streetscape improvements throughout the Downtown Core including portions of Jandus Road, High Road, and Main, Spring and Cary Streets. This Strategic Plan supports the full implementation of the streetscape and landscape improvements recommended in this Plan.

**Action 2 - Coordination with IDOT.** The Village should work with IDOT to prioritize widening the sidewalk on the east side of US Route 14 and East Main Street and filling in sidewalks along the west side, adjacent to the Metra station. The Village should communicate safety issues along US Route 14 to IDOT, identify a preferred concept, and then work with IDOT to incorporate those elements into any upcoming scheduled projects. Identifying and utilizing scheduled projects is crucial to advocating for multi-modal improvements.

## Strategy 4 – Incorporate design improvements and frontage enhancements along public streets to properly integrate the public and private realm.

**Action 1 - Sidewalk Improvements.** As part of ongoing streetscape improvements, property improvements should ensure that sidewalks exist along all streets, are in good condition, walkable, free from hazards and wide enough to ensure safety and accessibility to all who use them. Where feasible, sidewalks should be buffered or setback from high traffic roadways such as US Route 14 with landscaping elements.

**Action 2 - Stormwater Conveyance.** Ensure proper engineering and design of streetscapes and improvements that convey stormwater. Incorporate green infrastructure, such as bio-swales and natural drainage, into projects when possible. Ensure the protection of “Cary Creek” with any property improvements proposed in its vicinity.

**Action 3 - Integrating the Public and Private Realm.** An important concept to the character and design sense of Downtown Cary is to ensure the proper integration of public and private property. An example where this can be improved is the corner of Main Street and High Road where parking lots occupy three of the four corners. A corner location ideally contains a building to provide a streetwall and sense of scale to the pedestrian. Where buildings do not exist, a well-designed plaza or outdoor space can achieve the same objective. Parking lots are obtrusive and focus on the automobile rather than the pedestrian which can be detrimental to a small Downtown. Streetscape improvements in the public right-of-way can help, however the integration of improvements into the private property area, and coordination with the property owner is crucial for this to be successful.

**Action 4 - Public and Private Art.** Design improvements in the form of public or private art installations should be considered by the Village as an effective method to improve the design of Downtown while adding focal points and promoting local or regional artists. Design competitions and public announcements calling for art projects can assist with implementing this action.



*Interactive public art was favored during the Cary Community Survey.*

## Strategy 5 – Encourage and coordinate with building owners to facilitate façade improvements and building reinvestment.

**Action 1 - Building Reinvestment.** Downtown Cary's building stock is older than average and in some cases in need of some reinvestment or improvement. The Village can help spur this investment through Village sponsored grants, low interest loans, or tax rebate programs. Façade rehabilitation and improvement are a convenient method to help improve the condition, design and signage of Downtown. The Village should make it a priority to find a funding source to finance a program to encourage reinvestment in the Downtown building stock.

**Action 2 - Building Signage.** Signage is also an important component to building design and offers character and charm to an area. Similar to building facades, signage repair and reinvestment can also have a positive affect on the image of Downtown. A signage inventory, confirming compliance of applicable sign ordinances, outreach and signage design guidelines can all help achieve this objective.

**Action 3 - Outreach Program.** Successful building and sign improvements will be much more possible through collective collaboration and partnerships between the Village and property owners. Property and business owner outreach and working as partners can help achieve multiple benefits as discussed in the plan and is a key strategic action in helping to achieve the goals of this plan.

**Action 4 - Building Murals and Art.** Building murals and art are an effective tool to increase design and visual interest of an area while also showcasing local artists and area history. The Village sign ordinance prohibits signs painted on buildings, but the Village should consider allowing or commissioning murals for Downtown art projects.

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## Strategy 6 – Identify locations, design, and install Downtown gateway, directional and informational signage.

**Action 1 - Downtown Gateways.** Gateway locations have been identified and could serve as locations for monuments, signs or other decorative elements to give a sense of arrival into Downtown Cary. These elements contribute to the character and identity and can help prepare motorists for turning movements into Downtown.

**Action 2 - Signage Program.** An overall Downtown signage program, design guidelines and standards can also help achieve consistent design quality and character throughout the Downtown area. Such a program can be managed by the Community Development Department with assistance from outside agencies such as the Chamber of Commerce.

**Action 3 - Downtown Brand and Logo.** Creating and maintaining an official Downtown brand and logo will also help create a unique identifier for Downtown Cary. This brand and logo can serve as the basis for all marketing, outreach and public relations for Downtown. It can be reinforced through signage and at community events and any sponsored Downtown event.



*Branded banners can bring identity to a downtown.*

# GOAL 3: IMPROVE AND ENHANCE DOWNTOWN CARY'S CONNECTIVITY, MOBILITY AND PARKING SYSTEMS

A well connected and accessible Downtown mobility system focused on pedestrian and bicyclists with a strategically located and sufficient parking supply to accommodate Metra and Downtown businesses.

The Village of Cary is one partner in the effort to provide transportation and parking infrastructure in the Downtown. Metra, Pace Suburban Bus, McHenry County and the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) all contribute to Downtown Cary's transportation infrastructure and services. Improved connections and accessibility and other transportation investments will have a positive impact on social mobility and improved quality of life. Strategies aimed at solidifying Cary as a bicycle destination and improving the walkability throughout the Downtown are also a priority. The following strategies help to achieve these objectives.

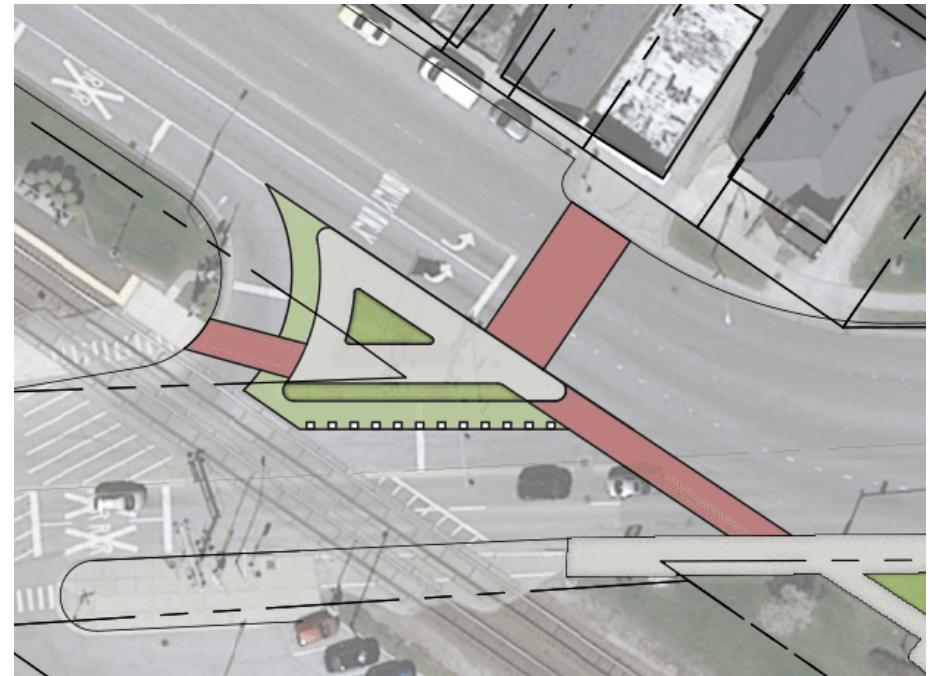
## Strategy 1 – Improve the overall Downtown mobility system for all users with a focus on connectivity and accessibility.

Improvements to Downtown Cary should be targeted by improving connections to adjacent development sites, residential neighborhoods, and intersections.

**Action 1 - US Route 14/Main Street Intersection.** This intersection is a primary access point into Downtown Cary and is critical to its future success. Safety has been a concern at this intersection due to its awkward geometry. The Village is actively pursuing grants for improvements and will continue to collaborate with IDOT at this location to clarify vehicular patterns and driver safety, as well as to create safer, more comfortable pedestrian crossings.

Key elements include:

- Highly visible and colorfully painted crossings
- Expand island using paint and flexible delineators
- Additional lane signage
- Wider sidewalks
- Landscaping
- Pedestrian-scale lighting
- A new pedestrian crosswalk on the west leg



US Route 14/Main Street Intersection Improvements



**Action 2 - Street Extensions.** Extending Industrial Drive across Cary-Algonquin Road and/or creating a new street into the Maplewood School site from Cary-Algonquin Road would improve access to Downtown, the Metra station, and the future Maplewood development. New streets should always include pedestrian and/or bicycle pathway connections. Improvements along the Cary-Algonquin corridor will also be required, which would be determined as part of the entitlement process for the development of Maplewood. Alternatively, the Village could lead a corridor study that identifies conceptual design and cost estimates in advance of the entitlement process. In addition to a potential developer, partners would include the Village, McHenry County, and Metra.

*Key tasks include:*

- *Potential Development Agreement between the Village and Developer*
- *Identification of other partners and responsibility*
- *Conceptual design and cost estimation*
- *Identify funding responsibilities*

**Action 3 - Jandus Road Linkage.** Jandus Road can function as an important connection to Downtown from the employment areas to the southeast and from the at-grade railroad crossing at Jandus Cut Off Road. Streetscape and sidewalk improvements at the crossing and along the Jandus corridor should be installed. A direct pedestrian link from the Metra Station to Jandus Cut Off Road should be established and maintained.

**Action 4 - Wayfinding.** Wayfinding can be a powerful tool to orient new and infrequent visitors to Downtown Cary, while signage design can provide community identity. Accordingly, we recommend developing a wayfinding plan that establishes clear and consistent signage along Cary's periphery to inform travelers of location and distance of key destinations. Clear, consistent, and predictable signage, particularly at Main Street and US Route 14, will be a key element of attracting and navigating pedestrians, bicyclists and motorists to and within Downtown.



*Downtown Cary Existing Streetscape Conditions*



*Jandus Road intersection at Main Street*

## Strategy 2 – Facilitate completion of all bike lanes, trails and pedestrian improvements through and around Downtown and promote it as a regional biking destination.

From a transportation perspective, walkability is a key component of any thriving Downtown. Having comfortable and convenient sidewalk amenities and safe crossing locations is essential in a Downtown. It also fosters a “Park Once” environment. Feedback from the public open house indicated a clear interest from residents and visitors alike in walking to, from, and within Downtown Cary. Many of these concepts could be tested using short-term, low-cost implementation strategies.

**Action 1 - Partner with IDOT** - The Village should work with IDOT to prioritize widening the sidewalk on the east side of US Route 14 and East Main Street and filling in sidewalks along the west side, adjacent to the Metra station. The Village should communicate safety issues along the highway to IDOT, identify a preferred concept, and then work with IDOT to incorporate those elements into any upcoming scheduled projects. Identifying and utilizing scheduled projects is crucial to advocating for multimodal improvements.

**Action 2 - Partner with Metra** - The Village should also coordinate with Metra to prioritize station area improvements, including parking, sidewalks and access, and signage or wayfinding. Private property owners will also be needed as partners for completion of improvements in locations with both private and public property interests.

**Action 3 - Partner with McHenry County** - The Village should partner with McHenry County and neighboring communities to determine the preferred alignment of a regional bikeway corridor along the UP-NW corridor connecting the Village of Cary to the McHenry County Prairie Trail as well as Lake and Cook County. A new Cary-Algonquin connection should consider the potential to accommodate the alignment of this facility. As the trail is developed, Cary can orient land use and services to recreational trail users.

**Action 4 - Bicycle Parking** - Additional bike parking in Downtown should be prioritized. Bicycle parking and end-of-trip facilities are an essential piece of infrastructure and the need for additional bike parking has been identified historically. In addition to the Village installing bike parking, a bike parking ordinance could require that bike parking be made available with new developments. Stronger ordinances incorporate good design standards by accommodating short- and long-term use and incentivizing the replacement of vehicle spaces with bike parking spaces.

**Action 5 - Bicycle and Pedestrian Mobility Plan** - The Village should continue to reference its Bicycle and Pedestrian Mobility Plan to implement bike improvements for identified Downtown connections, including future on-street bike lanes that have been identified on Main Street. On-street facilities reinforce the position of Downtown and the Village overall as a bike-friendly community. On-street or shared bike facilities are appropriate for Seebert Street, Charlotte Place, and Spring Street which are low-volume neighborhood streets. While feedback from the public indicated a preference towards off-street or separated bicycle facilities, this preference was attributed to an aversion of high-speed vehicles, indicating that facilities that reduce speed may increase cyclists’ level of comfort with on-street bikeway facilities.

**Action 6 - Industrial Drive** - Extending Industrial Drive across Cary-Algonquin Road would allow for a new off-street pedestrian and bicycle pathway connection to Cary-Algonquin Road which will ultimately be a continuous bikeway and path from the Metra Station and Downtown. Another partnering opportunity exists with McHenry County for this future project.



### Strategy 3 – Facilitate improved Metra Station access and connections for Pace Bus, pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders and private vehicles.

Cary's Metra Station is a critical component of Downtown, regularly seeing a high volume of pedestrian activity. The public sidewalk should fully connect the station with Downtown and the community overall. Accessibility for all people and abilities is important for sidewalk design. And while sidewalks are the basic starting point to ensure pedestrian access to transit, it may take more to make accessing transit appealing.

**Action 1 - Sidewalk Gaps.** Sidewalk gaps along High Road, Jandus Road and Main Street should be filled to create continuous path and that they include lighting, landscaping, and signage/wayfinding enhancements consistent with the streetscape plan.

**Action 2 - Metra Multi-Modal Access.** Feedback from steering committee meetings and public engagement revealed that the demand for pick-up/drop-off often exceeds the spaces currently provided for it. Accordingly, it is recommended that the kiss-n-ride/pick-up drop-off area be expanded and reconfigured to improve circulation and traffic flow within the Metra parking facility.

*Key tasks include:*

- *Design/install a new plaza space at the existing kiss-n-ride location.*
- *Relocate the kiss-n-ride area further north along the tracks adjacent to the at-grade pedestrian crossing.*
- *Expand transit area to accommodate additional kiss-n-ride spaces and/or bus/MCRide shuttle, as future Pace demand deems appropriate.*
- *Additional space should be considered to accommodate a shelter and other amenities such as trash receptacles, benches, etc. Pace's Transit Supportive Guidelines describe ways to increase passenger comfort and convenience at transit facilities.*



*Transit Supportive Guidelines for the Chicagoland Area, 2013*





## Strategy 4 – Ensure an adequate Metra and Downtown parking supply and a long-term management program.

Metra’s parking demand in Cary is traditionally determined by the number of people commuting to Downtown Chicago. While the COVID-19 pandemic has dramatically reduced Metra ridership in the short-term, and long-term effects are unknown. This situation has provided Metra the opportunity to re-examine parking needs at some stations.

**Action 1 - Metra Parking Locations.** The current location of Metra’s parking facilities does not attract commuters to stop or linger in Downtown Cary. Repositioning portions of Metra’s existing supply would create opportunities for a denser and more walkable environment surrounding the station, which would subsequently increase station access. Seeking new locations for Metra’s parking could also result in a more centralized facility that enhances the user experience. A potential facility to house existing parking required by Metra could be the development site immediately east of the train tracks, south of US Route 14.

**Action 2 - Metra Parking Rates.** The Village has implemented new parking rates with preferred, standard, and value pricing. Daily rates and demand-based pricing, making spaces closest to the station the highest rate, while facilities located along the periphery lower/free can effectively balance demand throughout Metra’s facilities.

**Action 3 - Shared Downtown Parking.** Beyond Metra’s parking, Cary should invest in shared parking between businesses within the Downtown area. Most parking within the Downtown Core is privately owned, much of which has individual signs that deter or prevent other users from accessing them. To optimize the existing parking footprint, shared parking should be encouraged between business for short-term customers and employees should be required to park along peripheral locations. Parking should be consolidated and centralized between the Downtown core businesses and Metra parking assets, particularly during off-peak commuter times, such as evenings and weekends.

**Action 4 - Parking Requirements.** One of the core elements of establishing a walkable environment is eliminating minimum parking requirements to allow for denser, more compact development to take place. Minimum parking requirements force developers to construct a specific number of spaces based on land use, and those minimums are often higher than necessary. Zoning codes seldom impose equivalent requirements for bus, bicycle, or pedestrian facilities (which are at a lower investment level). When minimum parking requirements are implemented, even those who do not drive share in paying the cost of parking through higher retail prices, lower workplace salaries, higher rents, and other taxes. Deregulating off-street parking allows the market to determine appropriate parking supply levels, create more walkable development patterns opens opportunity to provide facilities and amenities for walking/biking.



*Downtown Cary Angled Parking*



# 3

## DEVELOPMENT & DESIGN FRAMEWORK

# 3. Strategy Framework

## OVERVIEW

Section 3 illustrates the connections between the wide array of strategies and action items established in the previous section, and how they work together to form a comprehensive vision for Downtown. These ideas are first outlined at a district-wide level, then examined in further detail as potential development scenarios on key opportunity sites.

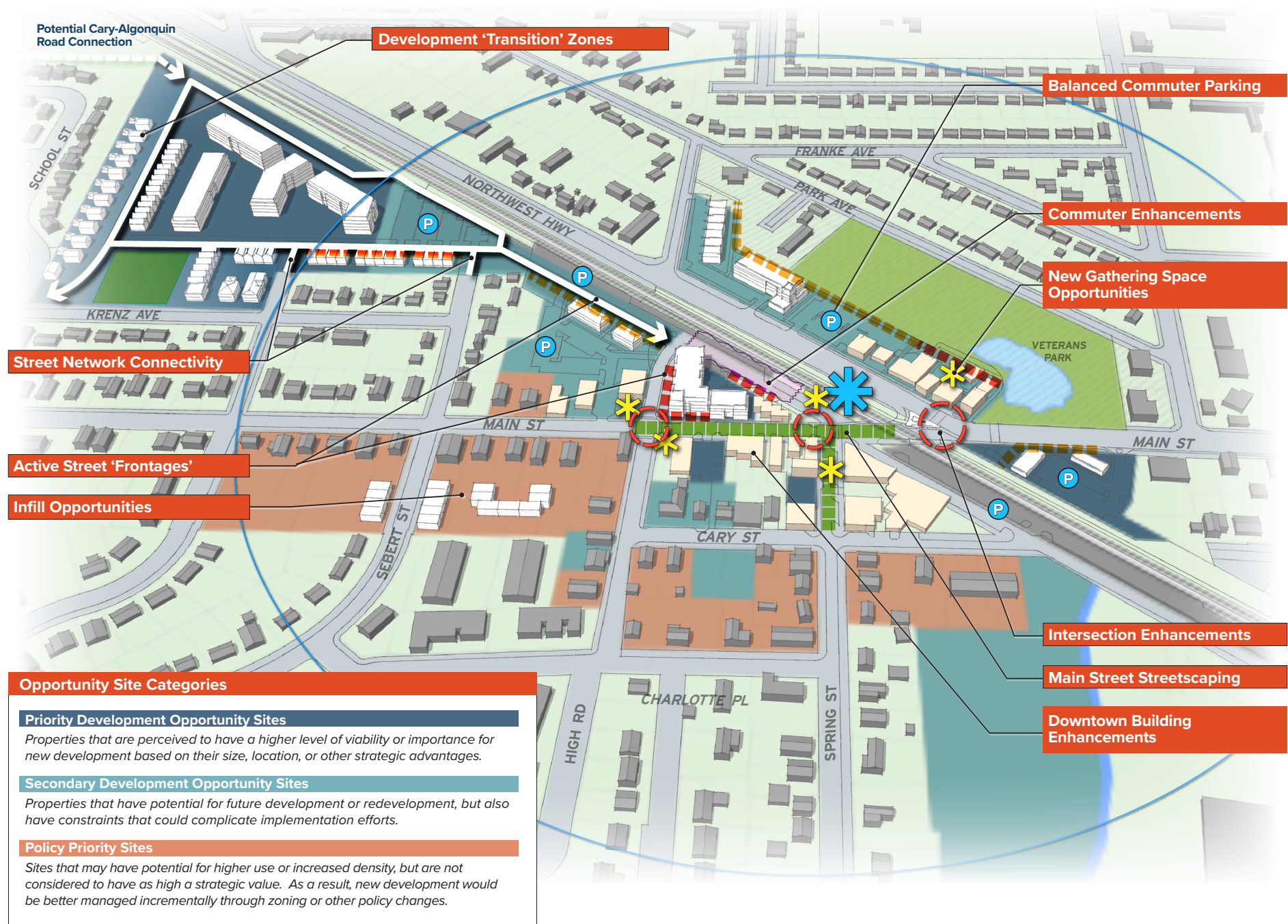
## PLANNING STRATEGY FRAMEWORK

The Planning Strategy Framework Diagram shown on the facing page was developed to help illustrate the relationships and interconnectivity between the planning strategies and design interventions identified in this report. The diagram builds off of the Opportunity Site analysis presented earlier in this report and integrates policy ideas with site specific design concepts explored in further detail on the following pages. Key recommendations are outlined to the right and identified in the accompanying diagram.

- **Development ‘Transition’ Zones.** Incorporate open spaces, and small and mid-size building types around the edges of major development sites to help provide a transition of density and respect existing neighborhood character.
- **Infill Opportunities.** Potential opportunities for additional housing, live/work units, studios and ‘flex’ uses, or parking to support Downtown businesses.
- **Downtown Building Enhancements.** Encourage and incentivize reinvestment in commercial buildings and businesses within the Downtown core.
- **Active Street ‘Frontages’.** Encourage new development to face streets and paths to create a safer and more active pedestrian environment. Also include storefronts and additional building embellishments along core commercial frontages.
- **New Gathering Space Opportunities.** Establish a dynamic network of plazas and gathering spaces within the core – on both public and private land. The spaces do not need to be highly developed, but should be actively programmed and support adjacent businesses.
- **Main Street Streetscaping.** Implement proposed enhancements to Downtown streetscapes, prioritizing Main Street and Spring Street.
- **Intersection Enhancements.** Prioritize safety, branding, and other urban design enhancements at critical intersections within the core. Promoting ‘walkability’ is an essential goal.
- **Street Network Connectivity.** Better integrate Downtown opportunity sites with the local street network to improve connectivity and distribute traffic more evenly.
- **Balanced Commuter Parking.** More formally integrate commuter parking within the Downtown and promote synergy with businesses and other uses during off-peak transit periods. Explore opportunities to distribute parking on both sides of the tracks.
- **Commuter Enhancements.** Provide amenities and facilities adjacent to the Metra Station that enhance transit ridership and support multi-modal connectivity. Examples include improved bus loading areas and bike parking, convenient drop-off lanes, and furnishings, such as seating, lighting, and info kiosks.



Figure 9: Downtown Cary Planning Strategy Framework Diagram



# OPPORTUNITY SITE SCENARIOS

The opportunity sites identified by this planning effort present the Village with unique, once-in-a-generation opportunities to advance the overall vision for Downtown Cary and build momentum. Due to the strategic importance of these sites it is critical that future development plans are thoughtfully prepared with the interests of both the private sector stakeholders and the broader community in mind.

To help support revitalization efforts, the planning team has prepared a series of conceptual plans for several of the above mentioned sites. These concepts (presented on the following pages) are not meant to represent the sole options for future development or to result in any one preferred alternative, but instead illustrate likely outcomes based on site and real estate market conditions.

## Development Principles

The following *Development Principles* were created to help support the Village in evaluating future development plans on key sites to ensure the individual projects are able to contribute to the broader goals for the district.

### DOWNTOWN PRINCIPLES

- Respect the form and character of existing and surrounding uses.
- Include transitional building types, such as smaller multi-unit buildings and attached single-family units at the edges of the core.
- Encourage increased density and a more diverse mix of building and residential unit types within and around the Downtown core.
- Prioritize active commercial uses within the Downtown core.
- Increase connectivity to the surrounding street and trail network.
- Integrate commuter parking areas to the street and circulation network, and increase connectivity to key development sites.
- Mandate a high-quality character and enhanced frontage conditions along Main Street and other primary corridors within the Downtown area such as Spring Street, Cary Street, High Road, and Jandus Road.

- Distribute commuter parking on both sides of US Route 14, encouraging synergy between commuter parking and adjacent uses.
- Introduce or expand on opportunities for outdoor dining and gathering spaces in both the public and private realm.
- Encourage a network of formal and informal public and private community spaces.

## West Side Opportunity Sites

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A major focus of this plan is on enhancing the core Downtown blocks along Main Street—west of the railroad tracks and US Route 14. Opportunities to attract new development on underutilized parcels in this area should be a top priority – ideally including a new landmark, mixed-use development along Main Street. The creation of a new ‘Spring Street’ plaza space with accompanying commuter enhancements on the east side of the block will help to establish Downtown as a local destination.

Beyond High Road, the plan explores increased connectivity between the Metra Station, Main Street businesses, commuter parking lots, and residential neighborhoods to the west and northwest, including the former Maplewood school site. Infill development—and potentially some additional parking—on underutilized sites would ideally front the edges around the Metra station and commuter parking areas, which could be updated to look and feel more like complete streets. This design approach will allow for new physical connections that also feel safe and comfortable for pedestrians and area residents. Concepts and development principles for the former Maplewood School site are provided on page 54.



## WEST OPPORTUNITY SITES



1 *Maplewood Site*

2 *Main Street Site*

## MAIN STREET OPPORTUNITY SITE SCENARIOS

The Main Street opportunity site scenarios presented on the following pages explore the areas located immediately north of Main Street and west of the Metra station and Union Pacific Northwest (UP-NW) tracks. A primary goal of these concepts is to encourage greater utilization and efficiency of some of the most valuable land within the community. This includes modest expansions in the amount of commercial storefronts on/near Main Street, and addition of residential units and/or office space.

A new street connection is established to the northwest in all of the Main Street concepts, which helps to support additional infill development; and a series of gathering spaces on both public and private sites is established. Another important idea explored in these concepts is how to better utilize the deep parcels located just west of High Street, without dramatically affecting the existing character along Main Street. The scenarios explored in this area present potential alternatives for a mix of new residential development and expanded or relocated parking for commuters and other Downtown core uses.



*Main Street Opportunity Site*

### *Main Street Site Concept 1*

The first scenario includes a new mixed-use infill development on the bank and Village parking lots and expansion of Downtown core parking, which could help offset impacts due to new development or other impacts. The concept includes 26 to 39 new units, 4,800 square feet of new commercial space, and up to 84 additional, shared parking spaces.

### *Main Street Site Concept 2*

Concept 2 shows increased development activity and intensity, including a full redevelopment of the bank owned property on Main Street. The concept includes roughly 40 to 60 new units, 10,000 square feet of commercial space, and up to 50 additional, shared spaces.

### *Main Street Site Concept 3*

Concept 3 maintains a similar approach on east of High Road, while ‘maxing out’ residential infill development on other under-utilized sites. The third concept includes 56 to 68 new units, 12,000 to 14,000 square feet of commercial space and/or office-flex space, but no substantial increase of shared/commuter parking.

### CHARACTER EXAMPLES







## CONCEPT 1 - PLAN DATA

- 1** *New Plaza on Former Station Site*
- 2** *3 to 4-Story Mixed-Use Development*
  - 20-30 upper-story residential units
  - 4,800 SF ground floor commercial space
  - 30 internal parking spaces (1 - 1.5/unit)
- 3** *New Corner Plaza/Outdoor Seating Area*
  - 3,100 SF
- 4** *2 to 3-Story Residential Infill*
  - 6-9 residential units total
  - 12 surface parking spaces (1.33 – 2/unit)
- 5** *Shared/Commuter Parking Lot*
  - 84 surface parking spaces
- 6** *Improved Pedestrian Connectivity & Integration With Local Street Network*
  - Angled 'on-street' spaces for commuters & flex use





## CONCEPT 2 - PLAN DATA

- 1** *New Plaza on Former Station Site*
- 2** *3-Story Mixed-Use*
  - 8 upper-story residential units
  - 4,500 SF ground floor commercial space
- 3** *Shared Parking Lot*
  - 27 surface parking spaces
- 4** *1-Story Commercial Infill*
  - 2,500 SF commercial space
- 5** *3 to 4-Story Mixed-Use Development*
  - 24-36 upper-story residential units
  - 3,000 SF ground floor commercial space
  - 25 internal parking spaces (0.7 - 1/unit)
- 6** *New Plaza Spaces*
- 7** *2 to 3-Story Residential Infill*
  - 10-15 residential units total
  - 25 surface parking spaces (1.7-2.5/unit)
- 8** *Shared/Commuter Parking Lot*
  - 50 surface parking spaces
- 9** *Improved Pedestrian Connectivity & Integration With Local Street Network*
  - Angled 'on-street' spaces for commuters & flex use





### CONCEPT 3 - PLAN DATA

- 1** *New Plaza on Former Station Site*
- 2** *3-story Mixed-Use*
  - 8 upper-story residential units
  - 4,500 SF ground floor commercial space
- 3** *Shared Parking Lot*
  - 27 surface parking spaces
- 4** *1-Story Commercial Infill*
  - 2,500 SF commercial space
- 5** *3 to 4-Story Mixed-Use Development*
  - 24-36 upper-story residential units
  - 3,000 SF ground floor commercial space
  - 25 internal parking spaces (0.7 - 1/unit)
- 6** *New Plaza Spaces*
- 7** *1 To 2-story office infill*
  - 2,000 - 4,000 SF office space
- 8** *3-Story Residential Development*
  - 24 residential units total
  - 36 surface parking spaces (1.5/unit) + 14 flex spaces
- 9** *Improved Pedestrian Connectivity & Integration With Local Street Network*
  - Angled 'on-street' spaces for commuters & flex use



## MAPLEWOOD OPPORTUNITY SITE SCENARIOS

Located just northwest of the Metra commuter lots, the former Maplewood School site represents an excellent opportunity to create transit-supportive development within the community. The property's size and location allows for increased density and the introduction of a mix of residential unit types, though care will need to be taken in planning the site to ensure a balance between real estate market expectations and concerns over potential neighborhood impacts.

The planning scenarios prepared for this site examined ways to achieve the unit mixes and densities anticipated for future development proposals, while also establishing an appropriate transition towards the single-family neighborhood to the west. In doing so, the site's denser uses would generally be located away from existing homes and buffered by open space and lower-density, attached housing types along the edges of the site.

Increasing connectivity with the Downtown core is another important consideration, which could be achieved by continuing the existing street and block network into the site, while also creating a new street connection through the Metra commuter lots to High Road. This new connection would have an impact on the amount of commuter parking available, which would need to be addressed by expanding or reconfiguring the existing lot, or providing additional parking elsewhere.

### Maplewood Development Principles

- Provide new multi-family housing options near Metra and Downtown.
- Ensure land use compatibility with existing the neighborhood streetscape, scale and character and include attached single-family residential buildings adjacent to existing single-family uses then transition to higher density further into the site.
- Provide parks strategically located and available for public use.
- Enhance and respect the existing streetscape scale and character along the site perimeter and o new street extensions into the site.
- Increase and enhance pedestrian, bicycle and vehicular connectivity between existing neighborhoods, the Metra station and Downtown Cary.

### Maplewood Site Concept 1

Concept 1 offers the lightest approach with roughly 160 multi-family units and roughly 50 single-family units, achieved through a mix of building types. The existing commuter parking lot would be expanded to the west to make up for any losses of parking from the proposed street connection to the southeast.

### Maplewood Site Concept 2

The second scenario offers a slight increase in unit count up to nearly 180 multi-family units and 50 single-family units, but attempts to balance the increased density through smaller 'walk-up' style buildings. A reconfiguration of the Metra lot would generally balance out any potential impacts, though some additional commuter spaces may be needed in the form of on-street parking or in other locations.

### Maplewood Site Concept 3

Concept 3 capitalizes on the site's ideal location for transit supportive development and increased density, which would provide a substantial boost for Downtown revitalization efforts. This concept proposes 210 to 260 new multi-family units and just over 50 single-family units. The extents of the Metra lot would be maintained, however new commuter parking would be required off site to make up for any losses associated with the new road connection.

### CHARACTER EXAMPLES







## CONCEPT 1 - PLAN DATA

- |  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| <p><b>1</b> <b>4-Story Residential Development</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 150 total upper-story residential units (~40-60 each)</li> <li>• 140 internal floor-1 parking spaces (0.93/unit)</li> <li>• 84 surface parking spaces (0.56/unit) + on-street</li> </ul> | <p><b>3</b> <b>2-Story Duplex Units</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 6 total units with 2 spaces/unit</li> </ul>                             | <p><b>6</b> <b>Cary Algonquin Road Connection</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bike trail</li> </ul>  |
| <p><b>2</b> <b>Townhomes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 35 total units</li> <li>• 2 garage spaces plus aprons</li> </ul>   | <p><b>4</b> <b>2-Story QuadPlex</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1, 4-unit building</li> <li>• 12 surface parking spaces (shared)</li> </ul> | <p><b>7</b> <b>New Community Open Space (1 Acre)</b></p>  |
|  | <p><b>5</b> <b>Small Lot Single-Family Residential</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 12 total lots (~6,000 SF)</li> </ul>                     | <p><b>8</b> <b>Metra Commuter Lot Extension</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ~216 spaces + 32 on-street spaces for commuter/flex use</li> </ul> |





**CONCEPT 2 - PLAN DATA**

- 1 3-Story Residential 'Walk-ups'**
  - 140 total upper-story residential units (~18-24 each)
  - 204 surface parking spaces (1.5/unit) + on-street
- 2 3.5-Story Residential 'Walk-up'**
  - 30 total upper-story residential units
  - 20 tuck under spaces + 20 surface (1.33/unit)
- 3 Townhomes**
  - 35 total units
  - 2 garage spaces plus aprons
- 4 2-Story Duplex Units**
  - 4 total units with 2 spaces/unit
- 5 2-Story QuadPlex**
  - 1, 4-unit building
  - 12 surface parking spaces (shared)
- 6 Small Lot Single-Family Residential**
  - 12 total lots (~6,000 SF)
- 7 Cary Algonquin Road Connection**
  - Bike trail
- 8 New Community Open Space (1 Acre)**
- 9 Metra Commuter Lot Reorganization**
  - ~137 parking spaces + ~22 on-street





### CONCEPT 3 - PLAN DATA

- 1** **4 to 5-Story Residential Development**
  - 200 to 250 total residential units (~48-60 each)
  - 200 internal floor-1 parking spaces (0.8 -1/unit)
  - 147 surface parking spaces (0.6/unit) + on-street
- 2** **Townhomes**
  - 53 total units
  - 2 garage spaces plus aprons
- 3** **2-Story Duplex Units**
  - 6 total units with 2 spaces/unit
- 4** **2-Story QuadPlex**
  - 1, 4-unit building
  - 12 surface parking spaces (shared)
- 5** **Cary Algonquin Road Connection**
  - Bike trail
- 6** **New Community Open Space (1 Acre)**
- 7** **Metra Commuter Lot**
  - ~150 spaces + on-street spaces for commuter/flex use



## East Side Opportunity Sites

Revitalization of the commercial properties east of the UP-NW tracks will remain a challenge in the future due to the high speeds and volume of traffic along US Route 14, awkward intersection geometry and limited building setbacks and block depths. Though there has been consideration of widespread redevelopment in the past, this plan advocates a more organic approach that builds on the block's proximity to Veterans Park as an important, but overlooked asset. As envisioned, the rear portions of the block—which overlook the park—could be reexamined to create more comfortable pedestrian access and ultimately feed into a new, privately operated gathering space that would serve as a hub for activity on the east side of Downtown. This approach relies on the rehabilitation and reprogramming of existing buildings near the US Route 14 and Main Street junction, which could collectively utilize the imagined gathering space. Other properties to the north could eventually be redeveloped with a more diverse mix of uses and incorporate a shared parking lot.

Improvements to the Main Street intersection that target pedestrian safety and convenience are another critical component of the proposed approach to revitalization east of tracks. With cost and spatial constraints serving as major challenges to any new crossings over or under the road and tracks, the Village will need to utilize a range of enhancements to the existing intersection instead. These would include decorative and wider crosswalk markings, an expanded pedestrian refuge, and additional signage and wayfinding for vehicles negotiating the curve along US Route 14.

Finally, the vacant bank site on the south side of US Route 14 could be reprogrammed with a new use or redeveloped with a modest amount of commercial uses that benefit from the pedestrian-oriented improvements noted above. Should utilization of the site for commercial use remain a challenge, the site's proximity to the Metra station suggests it could potentially be an option for commuter parking if additional capacity is needed by future demand or to make for spaces lost elsewhere in the district.



*Character of East Side of the UP-NW Tracks*



*Character of East Side of the UP-NW Tracks*



# EAST OPPORTUNITY SITES

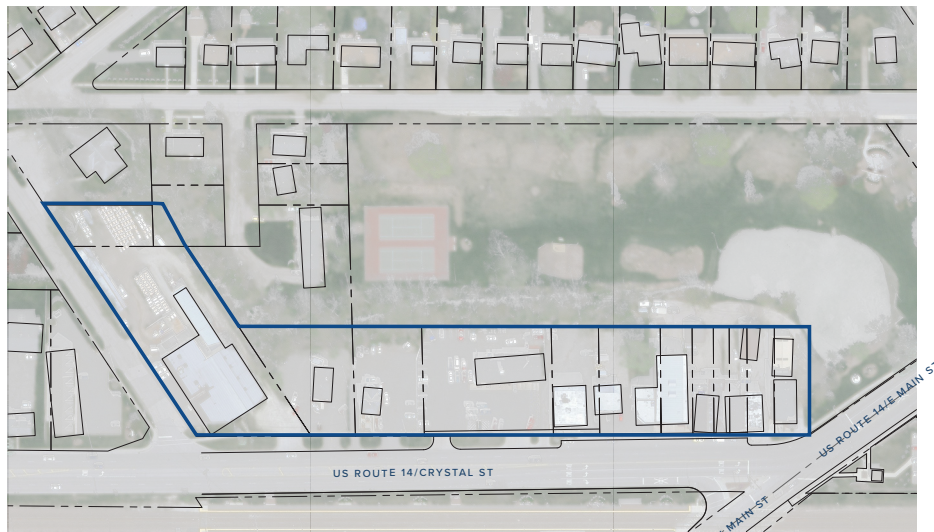


- 1 US Route 14 Site
- 2 Vacant Bank Site
- 3 US Route 14/2nd Street Site

## US ROUTE 14 OPPORTUNITY SITE SCENARIOS

Establishment of a new activity hub east of the tracks is the core idea explored in the US Route 14 opportunity site concepts. The plans show the existing buildings on the southern end of the block being retained, refurbished, and reprogrammed as a mix of active commercial uses anchored by a common open space. The plan envisions a more organic or informal programming of the space, which coupled with the reuse of existing buildings, would allow for a more ‘grass roots’ approach that supports local business development. In all concepts a new mid block parking lot is shown to help support the adjacent businesses and potentially provide commuter parking as well. Though not requiring comprehensive redevelopment, the approach explored in these concepts will require coordination amongst business and property owners to address access and parking issues.

While a consistent approach is shown on the southern half of the block, the concepts explore a range of alternatives on the northern end, where a transition away from commercial use could be appropriate if it allowed for better quality development in the form of residential use or limited mixed-use development. These new uses would also be linked by a new “Cary Creek Promenade” along the east edge of the site that would provide pedestrians with a pleasant alternative to the exposed sidewalks along US Route 14.



US Route 14 Opportunity Site

### US Route 14 Site Concept 1

Concept 1 introduces the new active use cluster concept on the southern end of the block, centered around a large common open space. A new shared use parking lot with roughly 85 spaces would allow for the consolidation of existing curb cuts and removal of on-street parking, enabling better buffering and pedestrian safety and streetscaping enhancements along US Route 14.

### US Route 14 Site Concept 2

Concept 2 explores potential redevelopment of the northern portions of the block with residential use. The roughly 20 units shown in this scenario would face the rear of the block, supported by the extension of a new pedestrian promenade. Parking and internal circulation would run along US Route 14 and Borden Avenue, but would be well buffered to ensure higher quality conditions along the corridor.

### US Route 14 Site Concept 3

The third concept increases residential density allowing for roughly 54 to 66 new multi-family units. The mid block parking lot would also be anchored on the north by a 5,000 square foot commercial space at the base of one of the residential buildings.

### CHARACTER EXAMPLES







## CONCEPT 1 - PLAN DATA

### 1 Revitalized 'Active Use' Cluster

- Reuse/Revitalization of existing buildings with additional spaces for informal vendors (i.e. food trucks, pop-up shops, etc.)
- 18,500 SF gathering space / combined outdoor use area

### 2 New Shared Parking lot

- 85 spaces for commuters & businesses
- Consolidated curbs and improved landscaping along US Route 14



**CONCEPT 2 - PLAN DATA**

- 1 Revitalized 'Active Use' Cluster**
  - 18,700 SF open space combined outdoor use area
  - Reuse of existing buildings and opportunities for informal uses (i.e. food trucks, pop-up shops, etc)
- 2 New Shared Parking Lot**
  - 85 spaces for commuters & businesses
  - Consolidated curbs and improved landscaping along US Route 14
- 3 New Cary Creek Promenade**
- 4 2 to 3-Story Rear-Loaded Rowhomes**
  - 7 units total (2,400 - 3,600 SF/unit)
  - 2 car garage and apron
- 5 3-Story Stacked Rowhomes**
  - 14 units total (1 floor flats over rowhomes)
  - 2 parking spaces/unit total





**CONCEPT 3 - PLAN DATA**

- 1 Revitalized 'Active Use' Cluster**

  - 18,700 SF open space combined outdoor use area
  - Reuse of existing buildings and opportunities for informal uses (i.e. food trucks, pop-up shops, etc)
- 2 New Shared Parking Lot**

  - 85 spaces for commuters & businesses
  - Consolidated curbs and improved landscaping along US Route 14
- 3 New Cary Creek Promenade**
- 4 4-Story Mixed-Use Development**

  - 30 upper-story residential units
  - 5,000 SF ground floor commercial space
  - 24 internal parking spaces (0.8/unit)
  - 23 surface parking spaces (0.8/unit)
- 5 2 to 3-Story Residential Development**

  - 24 - 36 residential units total
  - 48 surface parking spaces (1.3 - 2/unit)

## VACANT BANK OPPORTUNITY SITE SCENARIOS

The 1.2-acre site with a now vacant bank at 25 W Main Street has also been identified as an opportunity site. This property offers high visibility and proximity to Downtown and the Metra station. However, it is also irregularly shaped and has limited vehicular access, which diminish its commercial value. Noise concerns on multiple sides of the site are also likely to diminish its viability for other uses.

While scenarios that reuse the existing building or site redeveloped for commercial use would be welcome, it may not be feasible over the long-term. In this case, the Village could also explore a hybrid approach where the site could feature a small amount of commercial space and also serve as a commuter parking lot. Although there is no current need or demand for additional Metra parking, it could be an option if needed as other site scenarios are implemented.

### *Vacant Bank Site - Adaptive Use*

Maintain the existing building, but assume it is able to be re-purposed for another commercial use.



*Vacant Bank Opportunity Site*

### *Vacant Bank Site Concept 1*

The first concept redevelops the site with two small commercial buildings equaling roughly 5,500 square feet (combined). These buildings help to frame the remainder of the site, which would be used for a new commuter or shared use parking lot with roughly 66 spaces.

### *Vacant Bank Site Concept 2*

Concept 2 considers a longer-term scenario where an expansion of Downtown parking is needed to satisfy demand from reinvigorated commercial uses and increased residential density. In this scenario a simple two-level parking deck with roughly 120 spaces is considered, with a small commercial space. This approach also takes advantage of the grade changes on the east edge of the site – potentially enabling a full service access point at the 1st & Main Street intersection through the property to the east.

### *Vacant Bank Site Concept 3*

Concept 3 shows another longer-term parking deck scenario, however the design also for circulation and access wholly within the opportunity site. The deck shown is two-levels and offers just under 140 parking spaces, along with a small commercial space lining its eastern edge.

## CHARACTER EXAMPLES







**CONCEPT 1 - PLAN DATA**

- 1** *1-Story Commercial*
  - 3,200 SF commercial space
- 2** *1-Story Commercial*
  - 2,300 SF commercial space

- 3** *Surface Parking Lot*
  - 66 surface parking spaces (12 spaces / 1,000 SF)
  - Commuter/shared parking opportunity

- 4** *Plaza / Open space*
  - 2,000 SF commercial space
- 5** *Pedestrian Crosswalk Enhancements*
- 6** *Intersection Enhancements*





**CONCEPT 2 - PLAN DATA**

- 1** *1-Story Commercial*
  - 3,000 SF commercial space
- 2** *2-Level Public Parking Structure*
  - 122 parking spaces for nearby businesses/commuters
- 3** *Plaza / Open space*
  - 2,400 SF commercial space
- 4** *Potential Full Access Point At 1st Street (Controlled Intersection)*
- 5** *Pedestrian Crosswalk Enhancements*
- 6** *Intersection Enhancements*





**CONCEPT 3 - PLAN DATA**

- 1** *1-Story Commercial*
  - 3,000 SF commercial space
- 2** *2-Level Public Parking Structure*
  - 137 parking spaces for nearby businesses/commuters
- 3** *Plaza / Open Space*
  - 1,700 SF commercial space
- 4** *Pedestrian Crosswalk Enhancements*
- 5** *Intersection Enhancements*



## US ROUTE 14/2ND STREET OPPORTUNITY SITE SCENARIOS

This site includes a vacant Village-owned property located in a highly-visible and prominent location. This site also serves as a gateway into the Downtown. An important consideration of this site is to encourage and emphasize access off of N. 2nd Street since US Route 14 is a designated highway and new driveway or access point will be difficult. Other considerations include ensuring acceptable frontage streetscape conditions and respecting the surrounding neighborhood scale and character.

### *US Route 14/2nd St Site Concept 1*

The first concept envisions the site with a restaurant and drive-thru equaling roughly 4,000 square feet (combined). The building is located in the eastern half of the lot, and helps to frame the remainder of the site, which would be used for a new parking lot with roughly 34 spaces. This concept includes two new access drives on US Route 14 which will be challenging.



*Route 14 Opportunity Site*

### *US Route 14/2nd St Site Concept 2*

The second concept envisions the site with two single-story commercial buildings equaling roughly 4,500 square feet each for a total of 9,000 square feet. These buildings are located along US Route 14 with a parking lot behind the buildings with 48 spaces.

### *US Route 14/2nd St Site Concept 3*

The third concept envisions the site with two or three story, rear-loaded townhomes. There is a total of nine units each with a two-car garage.

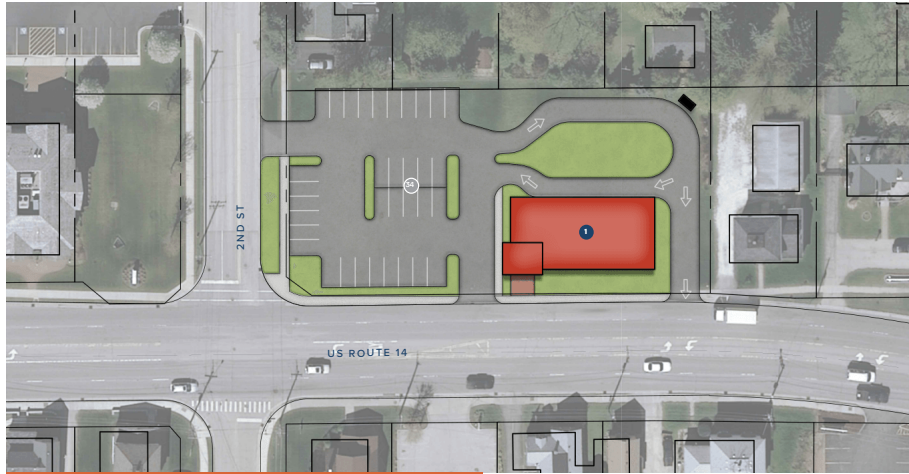
### *US Route 14/2nd St Site Concept 4*

The last concept for this site includes a two story residential building located along US Route 14. This building could contain 14 units, each approximately 1,000 square feet. There is parking lot behind the building with 26 spaces.

### CHARACTER EXAMPLES







**CONCEPT 1 - PLAN DATA**

- 1 **1-Story Commercial**
  - 4,000 SF commercial space + drive - thru
  - 34 surface parking spaces (8.5 spaces / 1,000 SF)



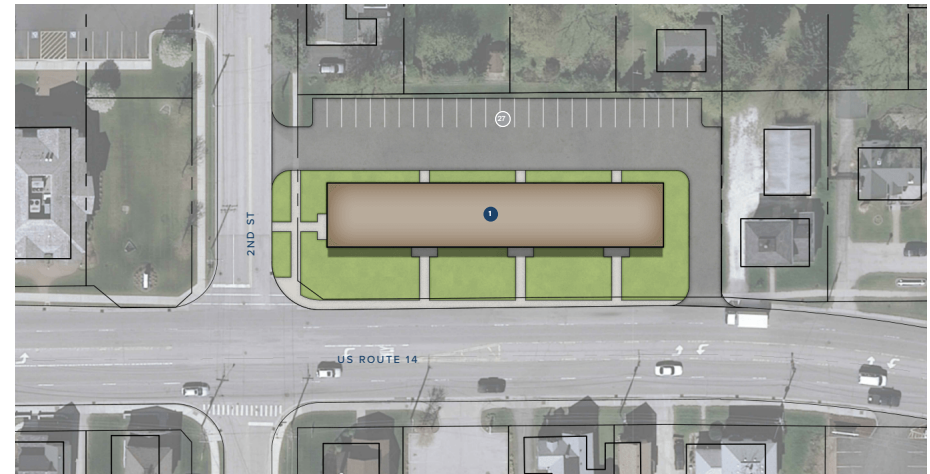
**CONCEPT 2 - PLAN DATA**

- 1 **1-Story Commercial**
  - 4,500 SF commercial space
- 2 **1-Story Commercial**
  - 4,500 SF commercial space
- 3 **Surface Parking Lot**
  - 48 surface parking spaces (5.3 spaces / 1,000 SF)



**CONCEPT 3 - PLAN DATA**

- 1 **2 to 3-Story Rear-Loaded Rowhomes**
  - 9 residential units total (2,000 - 3,000 SF/unit)
  - 2 car garage and apron



**CONCEPT 4 - PLAN DATA**

- 1 **2-Story Residential**
  - 14 residential units total ( ~ 1000 SF/unit)
  - 26 surface parking spaces (1.86 spaces/unit)

# DESIGN GUIDELINES

The following design guidelines were developed to help define the desired character of future development and guide the Village’s development review and decision-making process. While the application of design guidelines can – and should be – subjective to allow for flexibility; general compliance with the overall intent of the guidelines is recommended. The design guidelines are organized into three main categories:

- **Urban Form** – focusing on the general scale, massing, disposition, and articulation of buildings.
- **Architecture** – focusing on the design elements specific to individual buildings, such as materials, fenestration, and facades.
- **Site & Landscape** – focusing on the external, unifying attributes of both the private and public realms, including landscaping and buffering, furnishings, open spaces, and sustainability.

## Urban Form

Urban Form guidelines focus on building mass, scale, and articulation guiding the size and form of individual buildings to encourage the appropriate placement in relation to their context. Proper site and building design will help to avoid potential complications and ensure that individual parcels, developed by independent owners over time will still contribute to a common vision for the area.

### URBAN FORM DESIGN GUIDELINES

- **Consistent Street Frontages.** Infill buildings along Main Street and other high impact street frontages to create consistent “street walls” that support pedestrian activity and comfort.
- **Building Heights.** Downtown buildings should have a typical height range of two to three stories, however additional stories may be warranted on high priority sites and in strategic locations. In these instances, try to locate taller structures away from neighboring residential buildings.

- **Building Orientation.** Orient new development towards primary street frontages with defined first floor entries, windows, and architectural detailing facing the public right-of-way.
  - » *Include active, ground-floor commercial uses along Main Street.*
- **Upper Floor Stepbacks.** Utilize a terraced or ‘stepped’ approach to building design in order to help transition between surrounding buildings at a smaller scale. Stepbacks should typically occur at the third story or in context to neighboring buildings. The step back distance may vary, but should be pronounced enough to soften the building’s overall mass.
  - » *In other locations, building setbacks should be consistent with existing development patterns*
- **Building Setbacks.** Minimize building setbacks along Main Street within the Downtown core, with some exceptions given to help create architectural interest and to create opportunities for seating and street-side dining.
  - » *In other locations, building setbacks should be consistent with existing development patterns*
- **Facade Articulation.** Use architectural details - such as variations in depth, building materials, additional transparency, or other focal point elements - to help break up long facades and create interest.
- **Off-Street Parking & Loading.** Whenever possible, locate off-street parking, loading, and service behind buildings or block interiors.
- **Street & Block Networks.** Incorporate new street and path networks into large development sites to help break up the large tracts of land and connect different uses. These new streets should line up with or include extensions of the Village’s existing street and block network.



*Upper-story building ‘stepbacks’ can help reduce the overall mass and scale of a building.*



## DESIGN GUIDELINES - URBAN FORM

**Off Street Parking & Loading:** ○ .....  
Locate parking and servicing facilities behind buildings or block interiors.

○ **Consistent Frontage Conditions:**  
Establish more consistent building 'street walls' and streetscape frontage conditions.

○ **Façade Articulation:**  
Use details and transparency to create interest.

○ .....  
**Building Setbacks & Setbacks:**  
Reduce the visual impact of larger-scaled developments through building setbacks and step-backs at designated heights.

○ .....  
**Building Orientation:**  
Locate and clearly identify main entrances along primary frontages and include active ground-floor commercial uses along Main Street.

# Architecture

Architecture guidelines focus on the attention to detail in design elements and architectural features, and the use of proper and relevant materials depending on desired building character and style.

## ARCHITECTURE DESIGN GUIDELINES

- **High Quality Design.** Encourage high quality architecture and materials that contribute to creating a destination downtown.
  - » *A building's features should be located to maximize visual effect along public rights-of-way and across from different zoning uses.*
  - » *Though not a requirement, any large or 'landmark' buildings should incorporate at least four (4) of the following features in the building design: six (6) external corners to create relief, horizontal reveals, parapet offsets, changes in color or texture every 200 feet (max), accent colors, custom architectural features or furnishings, or increased ground floor windows or storefront glazing.*
- **Unified Design.** Colors, patterns, and quality of materials shall create a unified, though not static, building form and convey a sense of human scale. Scale materials and patterns in context with their use on the building.
  - » *Use finely-grained materials and patterns to provide greater texture and visual interest nearer the ground level, especially when adjacent to the pedestrian right-of-way.*
- **Monotony.** Buildings with continuous facades that are 50 feet or longer should incorporate a variety of materials, windows or relief in the facade to avoid monotony and reduce visual impacts of the development.
- **Ground Floor Definition.** For buildings with multiple stories, use materials and features to define the ground floor and add visual interest. Windows, display areas, canopies, awnings, wall art, and other architectural features integral to the building are encouraged.
  - » *Active retail uses (i.e. storefronts) should be highly prioritized within the core along key commercial blocks, such as Main Street east of High Road.*

- **Primary Entrances.** Incorporate distinct architectural features at the main entrance to a building – especially when located near a downtown gateway or at the terminus of notable views.
  - » *Where possible, include entrances on both primary and secondary facades when located at important cross streets.*



The images above show how thoughtful architectural design can allow for interest and variety, while also achieving a unified character. Increased detailing at the ground level improves the pedestrian experience and helps to identify main entrances.



## DESIGN GUIDELINES - ARCHITECTURE

### **Building / Material Articulation:**

Avoid monotony by incorporating building relief and/or changes in material.

### **Corner & Main Entrance Details:**

Incorporate architectural features and distinction at primary entrances and important corner locations.

### **Ground Floor Definition:**

Include additional detailing, texture, and transparency along the ground floor to add interest and create a more welcoming presence.

### **Storefronts:**

Prioritize active commercial uses and storefronts along key blocks within the core.

### **Signage:**

Encourage well designed, pedestrian-scaled signage within the Downtown core.



- **Corner Elements.** Include additional architectural detailing or massing when a building is located at highly visible intersections. Examples include tower elements, rounded or chamfered corners, open corners with balconies, or other unique placemaking elements.
- **Materials.** Include traditional materials, such as brick or wood siding, to complement the historic buildings on Main Street.
  - » *Neo-traditional Architecture was identified as a popular style by community members during the planning process and provides an example of contemporary architecture that respects traditional materials and patterns.*
  - » *Deviations from the dominant architectural style are not prohibited – and could even be welcomed as opportunities to add visual interest and character if employed thoughtfully.*
- **Windows.** Locate and space windows to express individual modules of space, establish scale, and create rhythm along a block.
  - » *Design windows so as to create depth and shadow on the facade.*
- **Roof Style.** Use roof styles that are appropriate to the associated building's architectural style and make use of roof lines and articulation to create ties between new and existing buildings.
  - » *Though not a requirement, flat roofs are the dominant style amongst commercial and mixed-use buildings in Downtown Cary.*
- **Building Signage.** Encourage the use of pedestrian-scaled blade, canopy, and wall signs to create a more unified appearance that does not detract from the overall character of the district.
  - » *Avoid the use of free-standing monument signs, large neon display signs, or over-sized building wall signs along Main Street within the Downtown core.*



*Unique corner elements anchor the ends of a block and can serve as landmarks.*



*Facade features can create interest and help to bridge multiple architectural styles.*



*Roof and facade articulation and detailing can help to reduce the perceived mass of a building while also reinforcing a desired visual character.*





## Site / Landscape

Site and Landscape guidelines focus on the common elements of both the public and private realms and emphasize the value of landscaping in private and public spaces. The guidelines encourage a variety of open spaces and highlight the need for streetscape improvements. Sustainable best practices are highly encouraged in the proposed development, including green roofs, permeable pavers, and other creative stormwater management solutions.

### SITE/LANDSCAPE GUIDELINES

- **High Quality Streetscape Character.** Using the Village's Streetscape Master Plan as a guide, develop a high-quality streetscape character and pedestrian experience throughout the downtown station area.
  - » *Consistent, wide sidewalks are essential along all streets, with additional paths providing access from parking lots and through large blocks.*
  - » *Standard streetscape elements include street trees in grates, pedestrian-scaled lighting, and furnishings, as well as decorative elements such as large scale movable planters and decorative bollards.*
  - » *Streetscape elements should generally be located near the back of curb, allowing for a suitably wide and unobstructed travel way for pedestrians. This arrangement also helps to support local businesses by enabling window shopping and strolling.*
- **Unified Public & Private Realm Character.** Ensure that amenities and enhancements provided in the setback areas in front of buildings are compatible with and supportive of streetscape conditions within the public right-of-way.
  - » *Encourage private land owners and developers to coordinate external elements such as pavers, light posts, planters, trash receptacles and tree grates with the Village's public realm palette.*
  - » *Exterior light standards, tree grates, seating, etc. shall include durable dark finished metal, wood, or other similar materials.*

- **Pedestrian Safety & Comfort.** Facilitating a safe and enjoyable pedestrian experience is essential to Downtown's success. Both the Village and Downtown property owners should take responsibility for advancing this high priority goal.
  - » *Building façade conditions should be attractive and allow for a degree of visual interaction between the inside and outside of commercial buildings within the core.*
  - » *Sidewalks and pedestrian pathways must be well maintained and include safe, clear travel ways throughout the entire year.*
  - » *Highly-visible crosswalks are recommended at all intersections.*
- **Reduce Curb Cuts.** Whenever possible, curb cuts should be removed or consolidated to minimize impacts on pedestrians and other public realm users.
  - » *In general, access to parking lots and other loading areas should not occur off primary streets within the core.*



Corner 'bumpouts' improve pedestrian safety and allow for additional landscaping



Coordinated design allows for a unified public and private realm

## DESIGN GUIDELINES - SITE/LANDSCAPE

### **Pedestrian Safety & Comfort:**

Boost pedestrian activity through public realm accommodations and clearly marked crosswalks at all intersections.

### **Landscaping Buffers:**

Include landscape buffers around the edges of parking lots, loading areas, and other visually unattractive elements.

### **Streetscape Character:**

Implement a high-quality streetscape character throughout the Downtown station area that is consistent between both public and private realms.

### **Sustainability:**

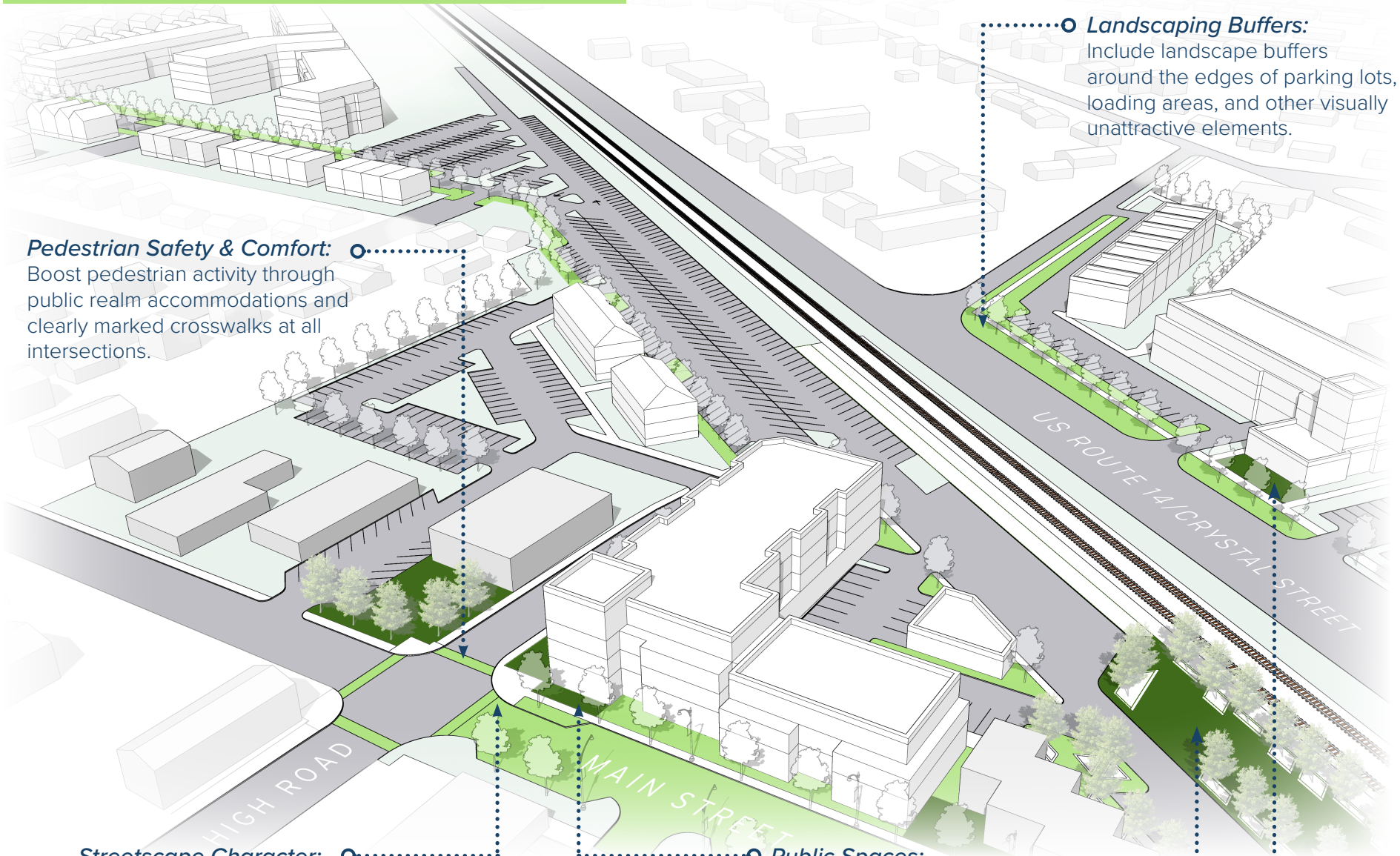
Incorporate and incentivize the use of a range of sustainable elements and best practices.

### **Public Spaces:**

Incorporate a diverse network of well-designed and programmed plazas and open spaces throughout Downtown.

### **Placemaking:**

Reinforce Downtown's brand with a thoughtfully curated mix of streetscape elements and unique installations.





- **Public Space Network.** Incorporate a variety of gathering spaces on both public and private land throughout the Downtown area.
  - » *These spaces should vary in size, program, and function, but also work collectively to foster pedestrian activity and establish Downtown as a destination.*
  - » *Employ setbacks and thoughtful building arrangements on larger sites to create new plazas and open space opportunities.*
- **Outdoor Dining.** Within the core, encourage use of building setback areas for outdoor dining and seating.
  - » *Where adequate space exists, also allow and encourage street side dining opportunities within the public right-of-way. In these instances a clear path of at least four feet should be maintained at all times for pedestrians.*
- **Landscape Buffers.** Parking lots located near the public right of way should be buffered by landscape areas or ornamental metal fencing.
  - » *Loading areas and functional elements of sites and buildings (i.e. receptacles, HVAC equipment, etc) should also be screened to minimize visual impacts and other nuisances. Use consistent screening design throughout Downtown for unified appearance.*
- **Site Landscaping.** Incorporate landscape areas at main entrances, and around public spaces and amenity areas.
  - » *Landscaping areas should be used to enhance the public realm. Plantings should be incorporated to define edges, enhance and direct views, and promote pedestrian use and enjoyment.*
  - » *Use plant materials and palettes appropriate for high-traffic areas, and avoid unruly growth habits or species with messy fruit or foliage.*
- **Placemaking.** Reinforce Downtown’s brand with a thoughtfully curated mix of streetscape elements, public art installations, banners, gateway elements, wayfinding and identity signage.
  - » *In some instances, include unique elements or installations – such as murals, sculptures, interactive displays, etc. – to help to create variety and intrigue.*

- **Sustainability.** When and where possible, introduce or incentivize elements and best practice measures that promote sustainability.
  - » *Encourage continuous street trees to provide a lush streetscape environment, as well as the use of native plants in planting beds, planters, and open spaces.*
  - » *Decrease the amount of impermeable surfaces throughout the area by introducing landscape islands and beds in/around parking lots and permeable or porous pavers instead of asphalt.*
  - » *Incentivize local property owners to explore a combination of stormwater best management practices. Strategies include bioswales, green roof systems, rainwater harvesting and permeable/porous paving.*



Screened surface parking



Sustainable infrastructure can be attractive, functional, and informational







# 4

# IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

# 4: Implementation Plan

## OVERVIEW

Achieving the vision for an improved and vibrant Downtown Cary requires a sustained commitment by the Village in an ongoing Strategic Plan implementation process. An integral part of the commitment will be consistent and ongoing collaboration between the Village and key implementation partners including other Village departments, business and property owners, outside agencies and organizations and residents. Moving forward, important Strategic Plan implementation actions will need to consider priorities and policies, timing, costs and funding sources. Zoning amendments to facilitate improvements and continued implementation of the 2016 Streetscape Plan are two specific actions the Village can initially focus on as funding allows.

## ZONING STRATEGY

The Village's Unified Development Ordinance was updated in 2019 and does an excellent job of considering all aspects of site use and development, and graphically displaying standards and guidelines. Going forward, the Downtown Cary zoning strategy should define and reflect Downtown's character areas and recommended development patterns with a focus on the Downtown Core area. However, other components of Cary's Unified Development Ordinance are also relevant including parking, signs and the Planned Development ordinance.

The Strategic Plan defines four-character areas – first identified in the State of the Downtown report – as Downtown Core, Downtown West, Downtown South/Jandus Road and North of Northwest of Highway. The character areas are largely contained within the Village's B-1, Central Business District. The east Main Street corridor portion of the Study Area contains both the B3 and B3R Fringe Business Districts. The Maplewood site is zoned R2 and warrants its own recommendation.

As a general zoning strategy, the Village should consider minor refinements to Downtown Cary's B-1 District based on the existing character areas and Strategic Plan goals. The surrounding adjacent B-3 and B-3R Districts also warrant refinement if necessary. A new zoning framework for Downtown Cary would include the following actions:

### B-1 District Amendments

Single-family attached uses such as townhomes or row homes are conditionally allowed in B1 zoning. While there may be areas in Downtown Cary that these uses are appropriate, they should be prohibited within the Downtown Core where a more commercial or retail street frontage is desired. Single-family attached uses would be more appropriate along portions of Cary Street and High Road south of Main Street.

Recreational uses such as athletic fields, large parks, playgrounds, swimming pools are currently allowed in the B-1 District. While some open space areas such as plazas and small pocket parks are appropriate in the Downtown, larger athletic fields and swimming pools should not be permitted to maximize the use of available land both for development and recreational activities.



Some accessory uses allowed in B-1 include attached garages as an accessory to a residential dwelling, and parking areas in front of residential units. The Zoning Ordinance should focus less on residential parking areas and garages in the Downtown Core.

The B1 District includes some existing residential uses. Portions of West Main Street, Cary Street, High Road, and Spring Street contain residential structures but are zoned B1. The sites were identified as Policy Priority Sites as part of the Downtown analysis. These sites may have potential for increased density or alternative compatible uses. These policy directives are better managed through incremental zoning changes to density, use or home occupation requirements. An infill and adaptive use approach is recommended where additional density could be provided without diminishing the value or character of these areas. For example, allowing accessory dwelling units (ADUs) could provide an effective approach to increase Downtown residents without compromising the existing character.

The existing density allowed in the Downtown is 18 units per acre which can be increased through the zoning entitlement process with a planned development, senior housing, assisted living, or other institutional uses when approved as part of a conditional use permit. While senior housing or assisted living is not necessarily appropriate in the Downtown Core given the large sites needed for these uses, but density higher than 18 units/acre is appropriate. Given the generally small and compact sites in the Downtown, it may be difficult to achieve higher densities. However, higher allowances should be granted to mixed-use, transit-oriented projects as well as larger residential projects that also help achieve the goals of this plan. Consideration should also be given to include minimum Floor Area Ratios (FARs) for the B-1 District.

## B3 and B3R District

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The Village's B-3 Districts are intended for highly traveled corridors, and as transition areas between the Central Business District and residential areas. The properties along the US Route 14 corridor from Downtown contain both the B-3 and B-3R District. In particular, the area around the North 1st Street/East Main intersection is zoned B3R and warrants a closer examination of permitted uses, design improvements and zoning standards. The character clearly changes from the Downtown along this corridor, so B-1 District zoning is not appropriate. The B-3R

also recognizes the potential for adaptive use of the existing residential structures into commercial, service or other uses and the potential for that to occur along US Route 14. Given the fringe nature of these districts and general commercial intent, expansion of these districts near the Downtown Core is not recommended.

## Parking

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Parking requirements do not differentiate the B1 District. Given the ample supply of Metra parking and potential for expanded or repositioned parking in the Downtown, the Village should consider revisions to parking standards in the Downtown Core or boundaries of the B1 District. Accordingly, it is recommended that the Village consider the following zoning changes as they relate to minimum parking requirements:

- *Eliminate minimum parking requirements within Downtown Cary. The boundaries with zero parking requirements should include the area immediately adjacent to the Cary Metra Station and within the Downtown Core, as construction in this area would be considered Transit Oriented Development (TOD).*
- *Implement parking maximums within the same zone, allowing developers to exceed the stipulated maximum on a case-by-case basis. Set parking maximums as the current minimum requirements.*
- *Require a shared parking study be completed for new development in the Downtown Core to ensure that parking is not overbuilt. There is not currently a parking supply problem in Downtown Cary.*

## Signs

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All types of decorative signage are permitted in the Downtown Core which can allow creativity and artistic expression adding to the vitality of the Downtown. Signs and signage design can help provide identity, strengthen character and increase visual interest in a Downtown.

A specific *Planned Sign Program* can be a useful tool to achieve signage consistency and design character for a district or area, and in this case, a Downtown. Sign programs provide specific details on the types of signs allowed, sign content and design, sign size and



*Downtown Cary Parking Conditions*

## REDUCTION OF PARKING MINIMUM - CASE STUDIES

The planning blog, Strong Towns, has mapped all cities within the US that have eliminated or reduced their parking requirements. The following are examples of cities that have reduced parking requirements:

- *Chicago eliminated minimum parking requirements for certain parts of the City within 1,320 feet (1/4 mile) of a Chicago Transit Authority or Metra train station, and 2,640 feet if that building is on a zoned "Pedestrian Street".*
- *Watertown, WI does not have adopted parking requirements for their Central Business District.*
- *Peoria, IL eliminated minimum parking standards for commercial development.*
- *Berrien Springs, MI adopted form based code recently which does not require parking for new development.*

See the cities across the country who have removed parking minimums at <https://www.strongtowns.org/parking>.

placement, lighting, materials and hardware and other factors integral to signage design, placement and installation.

The Downtown's logo and branding effort is also an important component that can be used as the basis for signage design, as well as the theme for gateway, directional and other public Downtown signage. A sign program would include business signage but could also include public signage as well to further integrate the private and public realms.

## Non-Conforming Uses

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Banks with drive-in are not allowed in the Downtown, which qualifies the existing BMO Harris Bank as an existing non-conforming use. The bank along with its drive-through and adjacent parking area is located directly adjacent to the train station. This site is considerably underutilized and offers a prime redevelopment site that could serve as a catalyst to Downtown redevelopment and reinvestment. There may be other situations or occurrences that create non-conforming uses. Creating short-term nonconformities should be carefully reviewed and not necessarily avoided but rather used as a method to achieve longer term goals.

## Maplewood Approach

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The former Maplewood School site is currently zoned R2, Single-Family Residential. Any future project site on this is expected to contain a mix of single-family attached and/or multi-family housing as well as park or open space use. Given the current uncertainty of any future project on this site, a Planned Development approach and rezoning is recommended to facilitate site redevelopment, as well as, adherence to the Maplewood Development Principles in this Plan.



## ORGANIZATIONAL LEADERSHIP

The Village of Cary, its Boards, Commissions, Committees, and other partners, including the Economic Development Task Force and the Cary-Grove Chamber of Commerce, have a role in enhancing economic development. But an entity solely focused on Downtown Cary would be beneficial, particularly as it relates to marketing and offering financial incentives to stimulate investment. There are various jurisdictional and tax implications for these types of organizations so further examination of each should be conducted to determine the best fit for the Village if implemented. Some possibilities that are also consistent with the Comprehensive Plan include the following:

- **Business District Designation (BID).** *A municipality may designate an area as a Business District and create a Business District Development and Redevelopment Commission to act as an agent for the municipality to acquire, manage, help fund, or otherwise work on development and redevelopment projects within the District.*
- **A Special Service Area (SSA).** *SSA's authorize local governments to add a small additional tax to properties within a defined geographic area and deliver special services or physical improvements within that area. These services could include marketing efforts, infrastructure improvements, or funds to redevelop specific buildings or sites.*
- **A Community Development Corporation.** *Typically, an independent, not-for profit organization governed by a board that brings expertise in real estate, businesses development, and community-building. CDCs often bring financial commitments from local financial institutions or public funding sources.*
- **Illinois Main Street/National Main Street Program.** *The potential exists for Cary to participate in Illinois Main Street, an affiliated program of Main Street America, more familiarly known as the National Main Street Center. Illinois Main Street provides a comprehensive framework of technical assistance and guidance to communities seeking to implement the Main Street Approach to traditional commercial district revitalization. Joining the Illinois Main Street program will provide opportunities to connect with other downtown and commercial revitalization professionals from across the country.*



Wildrose Floral Design - 27 E. Main Street

# PARTNERS

The implementation of the Downtown Cary Strategic Plan will depend on partnerships between the Village, McHenry County, Metra, Pace, IDOT, other public agencies, as well as the Chamber of Commerce, Downtown business and property owners, developers, investors, local institutions, and residents.

## VILLAGE OF CARY

The Village will need to take the key leadership roles in implementing the Strategic Plan going forward. Sample Village roles and responsibilities should include:

- *Formally approving the Downtown Strategic Plan.*
- *Revising zoning and other relevant development codes to support Strategic Plan implementation comprehensive revitalization.*
- *Coordinating station area plans with transit agencies, including RTA, Metra, and Pace, on the placement, access and configuration of potential transit service amenities and support facilities.*
- *Participating in the preparation and underwriting of detailed design and construction documents for recommended public community spaces, plazas, streetscape, signage, transportation, and physical improvements, working closely with McHenry County, Metra and the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT).*
- *Assisting the Chamber of Commerce and other entities in promoting and implementing business development and building improvement initiatives.*
- *Participating in efforts to recruit developers and engaging owners of key opportunity sites to gain support and involvement in redevelopment activities, particularly reaching out to the owners of the BMO Harris Bank Site.*
- *Encouraging the Village Board to allocate local resources for multimodal planning and engineering to best position projects for outside agency funding, such as a regional bikeway connection or significant sidewalk gaps.*

- *Assisting with the assembly and acquisition of key parcels to facilitate redevelopment projects.*
- *Considering developer and business targeted RFP(s) for Village-owned sites.*

## ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (IDOT)

The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) has jurisdiction over the portion of US Route 14 that travels through Downtown. IDOT has been involved in the preparation of this plan and will be an important partner to help facilitate pedestrian and safety improvements to Route 14.

## METRA

Metra is a project partner in the preparation of this plan. They operate the train station and manage the parking lots that are adjacent. Metra is a willing partner regarding property redevelopment, parking strategies and design improvements to increase multi-modal access to the station.

## REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY (RTA)

RTA is Chicagoland's regional transportation planning organization and is a project partner. They provided the funding and assisted in the preparation of this plan. They also can provide project level funding for specific projects through their Community Planning and Access to Transit programs.

## PACE SUBURBAN BUS

Pace suburban bus service provides access to the Cary Metra Station. Accommodation for Pace vehicles at the Metra station, implementation of their *Transit Supportive Guidelines* and coordination with "first and last mile" connections provide important opportunities for partnering.

## MCHENRY COUNTY

McHenry County and specifically the Department of Transportation is an important partner to facilitate regional trail improvements as well as some street improvements. In particular, McHenry County has



jurisdiction over Cary-Algonquin Road and any future connections or improvements will require their cooperation and partnership.

## REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

- *The Northwest Municipal Conference and its Bike and Pedestrian Committee, with the breadth of its membership and its focus on regional cooperation, could play an active role in advancing implementation of a regional bikeway along the US 14 corridor which is identified as a priority corridor in its Multimodal Plan.*
- *Coordination with the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, and its regional ONTO 2050 Plan CMAP is critical for gaining funding and implementing projects that improve walking, biking and accessing transit.*

## CARY GROVE AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

The Cary Grove Area Chamber of Commerce is an important project partner and have been involved in the process to create this plan from the start. The Chamber can assist with actions related to business recruitment and retention and providing support to the business community in the area, as well as foster growth and economic development through marketing, technical assistance to small businesses, workforce development and event management.

## BUSINESS/PROPERTY OWNERS

Downtown business and property owners are critical stakeholders in Strategic Plan implementation. Local owners can initiate signage, storefront, building, bike racks, parking lot and property improvements, and participate in Village-sponsored facade and building improvement incentive programs. Businesses can also partake in area marketing activities and business/developer recruitment.

## PRIVATE DEVELOPERS

Facilitating redevelopment of key opportunity sites with the recruitment of experienced developers and investors from the Chicagoland region and nationally.

## FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS

With involvement from the local financial community, the Village and other stakeholders could facilitate implementation with financing for projects or participating in new incentive programs that support local business and development initiatives, such as facade/building/site improvement projects.



Tracks & BMO Harris Drive-Thru - 108 W. Main Street

# COSTS & FUNDING SOURCES

## FINANCIAL SUBSIDIES AND FUNDING PROGRAMS

Financial incentives are likely to continue to be needed over the near-term to attract developers and businesses into Downtown Cary. In addition to lowering the purchase price of a parcel, on-going financial incentives may be necessary to facilitate reinvestment and redevelopment in the Downtown.

- *A Tax Increment Financing (TIF) district could be considered that includes the Maplewood School Site, and portions of Downtown Cary. In a TIF district, the incremental property taxes over the base year amount can be used to pay for incentives or infrastructure improvements. If a TIF District generates new residential units, taxing districts such as School and Library can request additional funding generated by the TIF to help offset the cost of serving new residents within the district.*
- *Consideration of tax abatements or lowering taxes to encourage investment in the TOD area and can be a significant incentive to attract new development. A property tax abatement program can reduce property tax payments on property for a specific duration. Some municipalities offer tax abatements on designated areas or to low-to-middle-income property owners, but many programs have no income restrictions.*
- *Façade Improvement Programs can help revitalize Downtown Cary's commercial district by improving the appearance of buildings and storefronts. These financial incentives are usually in the form of a matching grant or loan, tax incentive, or design assistance.*
- *Revolving Loan Funds (RLF) are a gap financing measure used for the development and expansion of small businesses. RLF funds are self-replenishing, utilizing interest and principal payments on old loans to issue new loans to support local businesses.*
- *Other financial subsidies could include:*
  - *Low-Interest loans or grants to help fund façade and site improvements*

- *Property tax rebates or abatements, which could come in a variety of forms over a specific period of time for various types of developments.*
- *Municipal paid infrastructure improvements*
- *Waiving of fees or other costs*
- *Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) programs*
- *Municipal support for projects seeking tax credits*
- *Village improvements or offering of controlled sites*
- *Zoning updates as needed to further support TOD style development.*

A comprehensive directory of funding programs that serve TOD initiatives in Northeastern Illinois is available from the RTA. These include programs for municipalities, government agencies, and non-profit organizations, amongst others.

The RTA also funds projects through their *Community Planning* and *Access to Transit* programs.

## FUNDING FOR LOCAL TRANSPORTATION STRATEGIES

The Village Board could consider allocating local resources for planning, engineering studies, and specific projects. Outside agencies are often more willing to fund projects that are already underway with local initiative and backing, while also using local resources.

- *General revenues*
- *Bike registration fees*
- *Advanced Transportation Districts*
- *Development impact fees*
- *Setting aside a portion of vehicle registration fees*



## TRANSPORTATION FUNDING SOURCES

Federal, state, regional, county, and private organizations provide funding for sidewalk, bike facilities, and access to transit projects and programs. The table below summarizes the applicability of various funding sources to projects proposed in the plan.

[Y=yes, M=maybe, N=no]

Funding Source	Administrator	Bike Facilities	Sidewalk	Access to Transit	Planning
Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ)	CMAP	Y	M	Y	N
Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities (5310)	RTA	N	Y	Y	N
Urbanized Area Formula Program (5307/5311)	IDOT	Y	M	Y	N
Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP)	IDOT	Y	M	M	N
Illinois Bicycle Path Grant Program (IBP)	IDNR	Y	M	M	N
Community Planning Program (CP)	RTA	N	N	Y	Y

Funding Source	Administrator	Bike Facilities	Sidewalk	Access to Transit	Planning	
Access to Transit (AtT)	RTA	Y	Y	Y	N	
Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program (ITEP)	IDOT	Y	Y	Y	Y	
Motor Fuel Tax (MFT)	IDOT, RTA, Village	Y	Y	Y	Y	
Recreational Trails Program (RTP)	IDNR	Y	N	N	N	
Safe Routes to School (SRTS)	IDOT	Y	Y	M	Y	
Surface Transportation Program - Local (STP-L)	Council of Mayors	M	N	M	N	
Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP-L)	CMAP	Y	Y	Y	N	
Private	Grants	Projects for Public Space	M	M	M	Y
	People for Bikes	Bikes Belong	Y	N	M	M
	Made to Move	Blue Moves LLC.	Y	Y	Y	Y
	Various Grants	Rails to Trails Conservancy	Y	M	N	M

# IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY MATRIX

The matrix on the following pages organizes the strategic plan goals, strategies and actions and further identifies partners, funding sources and time frame.

The Village should initially lead all efforts while building relationships and partnerships to see the plan to fruition. Partners include other governmental agencies, Village departments or other local and regional organizations and entities when appropriate. Some key partners will be more involved for specific actions.

Key Partners include, among others:

- *IDOT - Illinois Department of Transportation*
- *RTA - Regional Transportation Agency*
- *Metra*
- *Pace Suburban Bus*
- *McHenry County*
- *Cary Grove Chamber of Commerce*
- *Business and Property Owners*
- *Housing and Community Groups*
- *Local Residents*

As previously identified, funding sources for projects and actions related to the Strategic Plan include a range of financial incentives, tax strategies, infrastructure programs, grants, developer contributions, local funding programs and general revenues. There are a number of sources identified for transportation focused projects as well as state and regional programs for a variety of development and design improvements.

Potential funding sources for transportation, access, and mobility related improvements include a wide range of grant and funding opportunities as identified in the table on page 87.

Time frames range from short-term (0-3 years), mid-term (3-5 years) and long-term (5+ years). It should be noted that general policy and administrative actions could occur right away and be accomplished in a short-term time frame. Property development or redevelopment, on the other hand, will fall into the mid and long-term time frames. Some activity such as application submittal and plan reviews, may occur in the short-term but project construction and completion will require more time.

Time Frame	
<b>Short Term</b>	0-3 years
<b>Mid Term</b>	3-5 years
<b>Long Term</b>	5+ years



# GOAL 1: STRENGTHEN DOWNTOWN CARY'S MARKET POSITION

A strong market position anchored by a mix of residential and commercial activity that creates a vibrant and active Downtown.

Strategy	Actions	Key Partners	Potential Funding	Time Frame
<b>1: Maximize land use efficiency and density within and near the Downtown Core.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased Density and Intensity</li> <li>Focused Development Activity</li> <li>Policy Priority Sites</li> <li>Shovel-Ready Sites and Storefronts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Real Estate and Development Community</li> <li>Business &amp; Property Owners</li> <li>Housing &amp; Community Groups</li> </ul>	Revolving Loan Funds (RLF), Façade Improvement Programs, Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) Programs, Local, State, and Federal Loans, such as the Illinois Rebuild Illinois Shovel Ready Sites Program (RISRS) or the USDA Rural Development Funds, TIF	Short to Long-Term
<b>2: Increase housing supply and types within and near the Downtown Core.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rental Housing Options</li> <li>Maplewood Site Development</li> <li>TOD in the Downtown Core.</li> <li>Targeted Housing Types</li> <li>Rental Rates, Affordability and Amenities</li> <li>Alternative Housing Types</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Real Estate and Development Community</li> <li>Property Owners</li> <li>Housing and Community Groups</li> </ul>	Revolving Loan Funds (RLF), Façade Improvement Programs, Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) Programs, Local, State, and Federal Loans, such as the Illinois Rebuild Illinois Shovel Ready Sites Program (RISRS) or the USDA Rural Development Funds, TIF	Short to Long-Term
<b>3: Maintain an active business development, recruitment, retention and expansion program.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prioritize Active Commercial Uses</li> <li>Targeted Economic Sectors</li> <li>Small Business Incubators</li> <li>Route 14 Priority Development Sites</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chamber of Commerce</li> <li>Illinois Department Commerce</li> <li>McHenry County Economic Development Corporation</li> </ul>	Business Improvement District, Local, State and Federal Grants, Downtown Development Groups, i.e. <i>Main Street America</i>	Short to Mid-Term
<b>4: Expand organizational capacity and partnerships with other agencies and entities that can help facilitate Downtown development and improvements.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partnerships</li> <li>Marketing Campaign</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chamber of Commerce</li> <li>Illinois Department Commerce</li> <li>McHenry County Economic Development Corporation</li> </ul>	Business Improvement District, Local, State and Federal Grants, Downtown Development Groups, i.e. <i>Main Street America</i>	Short to Mid-Term

## GOAL 2: ENHANCE DOWNTOWN CARY'S PHYSICAL APPEARANCE AND URBAN DESIGN CHARACTER

A well-designed Downtown exhibiting strong urban design character and a maintained physical appearance and proper integration and design of private and public spaces.

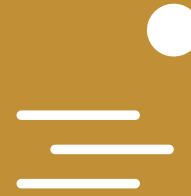
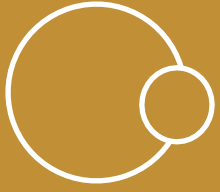
Strategy	Actions	Key Partners	Potential Funding	Time Frame
<b>1: Ensure new development is compatible with its surroundings, respects the context and scale of adjacent uses, and achieves multiple objectives.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development Principles</li> <li>• Design Guidelines</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community Development Department</li> <li>• Business &amp; Property Owners</li> <li>• Residents</li> <li>• Real Estate and Development Community</li> </ul>	General Revenues, Grants, Developer Contributions.	Short Term
<b>2: Design and develop one or more plazas and outdoor spaces for gathering and community events.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public Plazas and Spaces</li> <li>• Private Plazas and Spaces</li> <li>• Use and Design of Community Spaces</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public Works &amp; Community Development Departments</li> <li>• Metra</li> <li>• Business &amp; Property Owners</li> </ul>	General Revenues, Grants, Developer Contributions.	Short to Long-Term
<b>3: Prioritize streetscape and landscape improvements and enhancements on East and West Main Street, High Road, US Route 14.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement the 2016 Streetscape Plan</li> <li>• Coordination with IDOT</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public Works &amp; Community Development Departments</li> <li>• Metra &amp; Pace</li> <li>• IDOT</li> </ul>	General Revenues, Grants. ITEP	Short to Long-Term
<b>4: Incorporate design improvements and frontage enhancements along public streets to properly integrate the public and private realm.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sidewalk Improvements</li> <li>• Stormwater conveyance</li> <li>• Integrating the Public &amp; Private Realm</li> <li>• Public and Private Art</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public Works Department</li> <li>• Business &amp; Property Owners</li> </ul>	General Revenues, Tax Programs, Grants.	Short to Mid-Term
<b>5: Encourage and coordinate with building owners to facilitate facade improvements and building reinvestment.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building Reinvestment</li> <li>• Building Signage</li> <li>• Outreach Program</li> <li>• Building Murals and Art</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business &amp; Property Owners</li> <li>• Real Estate and Development Community</li> </ul>	General Revenues, Facade Improvement Programs, Grants.	Short to Long-Term
<b>6: Design, identify locations, and install Downtown gateway, directional and informational signage.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Downtown Gateways</li> <li>• Signage Program</li> <li>• Downtown Brand and Logo</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public Works &amp; Community Development Departments</li> <li>• Business &amp; Property Owners</li> </ul>	General Revenues, Facade Improvement Programs, Grants.	Short to Mid-Term



# GOAL 3: IMPROVE AND ENHANCE DOWNTOWN CARY'S CONNECTIVITY, MOBILITY AND PARKING SYSTEMS

A well connected and accessible Downtown mobility system focused on pedestrian and bicyclists with a strategically located and sufficient parking supply to accommodate Metra and Downtown businesses.

Strategy	Actions	Key Partners	Potential Funding	Time Frame
<b>1: Improve the overall Downtown mobility system for all users with a focus on connectivity and accessibility.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• US-14/Main Street Intersection</li> <li>• Street Extensions</li> <li>• Jandus Road Linkage</li> <li>• Wayfinding</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IDOT/Metra/Pace/RTA</li> <li>• Public Works Department</li> <li>• Community Development</li> </ul>	CMAQ, 5310, 5307/5311 HSIP, IBP, ITEP, MFT, RTP, TAP-L, CP	Short to Long-Term
<b>2: Facilitate completion of all bike lanes, trails and pedestrian improvements through and around Downtown and promote it as a regional biking destination.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partner with IDOT</li> <li>• Partner with Metra</li> <li>• Partner with McHenry County</li> <li>• Bicycle Parking</li> <li>• Bicycle and Pedestrian Mobility Plan</li> <li>• Industrial Drive Intersection</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IDOT</li> <li>• RTA</li> <li>• Metra</li> <li>• McHenry County</li> <li>• Pace Bus</li> <li>• Public Works Department</li> </ul>	CMAQ, 5307/5311, HISP, IBP, ITEP, MFT, RTP, SRTS, TAP-L, CP, AtT	Short to Long-Term
<b>3: Facilitate improved Metra Station access and connections for pedestrians, bicyclists, transit and private vehicles.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sidewalk Gaps</li> <li>• Metra Multi-Modal Access</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IDOT</li> <li>• Metra</li> <li>• Pace Bus</li> <li>• Public Work Department</li> <li>• Private Property Owners</li> </ul>	CMAQ, 5310, 5307/5311, ITEP, MFT, TAP-L, AtT	Short to Long-Term
<b>4: Ensure an adequate Metra and Downtown parking supply and a long-term management program.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Metra Parking Locations -</li> <li>• Daily Parking Rates</li> <li>• Shared Downtown Parking</li> <li>• Parking Requirements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Metra</li> <li>• Public Works Department</li> </ul>	General Revenues, Grants, Developer Contributions	Short to Long-Term



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**DOWNTOWN**  
≡ **CARY** ≡  
STRATEGIC  
PLAN

