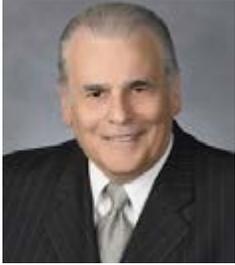




LEYDEN TOWNSHIP
LOOKING AHEAD
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

PUBLIC HEARING DRAFT - OCTOBER 2025





LETTER FROM
LEYDEN TOWNSHIP
SUPERVISOR

**ROCCO D.
BISCAGLIO**

Dear Leyden Township:

I am pleased to present the Leyden Township “Leyden Looking Ahead” draft Comprehensive Plan. This is the first comprehensive plan for Leyden Township and one of only a few township comprehensive plans in the state.

Townships have the authority in Illinois statute (60 ILCS Sec. 105-35) to appoint a township plan commission “which may prepare and recommend to the township board a comprehensive plan for the present and future development or redevelopment of the unincorporated areas of the township.”

This plan is the culmination of the work of the Leyden Township Plan Commission, which was appointed by the Leyden Township Board. The planning process included extensive

interviews with elected and appointed officials, local service organizations, community representatives and local businesses. A mobile-friendly project website, open house, two Township newsletter articles and an insert in water bills ensured that all residents and businesses had the opportunity to participate in the process.

We look forward to working with residents, businesses, local organizations and the ten municipalities that are located in whole or in part in Leyden Township. The Plan provides recommendations for cooperative efforts across Leyden Township in areas such as communications, intergovernmental cooperation, transportation, and infrastructure, as well as Township programs, including the new Senior Center that is opening in the Township.

The plan provides a future land use map for “Central Leyden,” the unincorporated area of the Township. The plan outlines efforts to guide reinvestment and redevelopment along Mannheim Road and Grand Avenue / Wolf Road. The plan also highlights ways to improve access to open spaces, such as along Silver Creek.

We look forward to working in partnership with you to improve quality-of-life for our residents, expand housing opportunities and enhance economic development efforts in the Township.

Sincerely,

Rocco D. Biscaglio
Township Supervisor



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The contributions of Leyden residents, Township staff, and the Plan Commission, were instrumental in guiding and developing this Comprehensive Plan.

ELECTED OFFICIALS

Rocco D. Biscaglio

Township Supervisor

Jamie Losurdo

Township Clerk

Vincent S. Fiorito

Trustee

Ronald Klinger

Trustee

William Otte

Trustee

Nicolas J. Pecora

Trustee

Al J. Biancalana, CIAO

Township Assessor

John E. "Bucky" Bjorvik

Township Highway Commissioner

TOWNSHIP STAFF

James "Jimmy" Caporusso

Township Administrator

Melissa A. Bukovatz

Director of Public & Community Relations

LEYDEN TOWNSHIP PLAN COMMISSION

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01 INTRODUCTION

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HOW TO USE THIS PLAN

This Comprehensive Plan is intended to serve as a statement of policy and future vision for the Town of Leyden. This Plan outlines Township goals relating to land use, continued intergovernmental cooperation, economic development, transportation, infrastructure, and quality-of-life, among other key themes, informed by community feedback and data analysis. Plan strategies and recommendations are the action-oriented steps related to achieving plan goals over the ten-year lifespan of the Comprehensive Plan.

In Illinois, townships may develop and approve Comprehensive Plans under Illinois statute (60 ILCS Sec. 105-35). In pursuing a comprehensive plan, Leyden Township is providing a vision for growth and development, focusing in particular on developing recommendations for land use, economic development, open space and transportation for the unincorporated areas of the township.

Plan recommendations may be efforts undertaken by the Township directly, undertaken by governmental partners such as municipalities with assistance from the Township, or private developer or landowner investments with collaboration from the Township. The Comprehensive Plan can be implemented in a variety of approaches including:

- **A reference for land use and development.** The Comprehensive Plan communicates the Township's vision for land use in its unincorporated areas, allowing it to work in an efficient manner with the County to create economically beneficial, well-designed, and compatible land uses and development patterns.
- **A tool for infrastructure development.** The Comprehensive Plan provides a deliberate and coordinated approach to infrastructure projects. The Township or its partner entities can utilize this document when seeking grants or allocating funding at yearly budgets.
- **A convening tool for municipalities.** The Comprehensive Plan sets forth a vision for unincorporated portions of the Township that is in accordance with local municipal plans. This document conveys land use and infrastructure goals to ensure a compatible land use pattern throughout the Township.
- **An engagement tool for residents and business owners.** Residents, business owners, and property owners within the Township are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the Comprehensive Plan and to take an active role in community engagement as portions of the Plan are implemented.

While this document is intended to present a future-oriented vision for the Township and its municipal partners, this is not a static document. The Leyden Township Plan Commission is encouraged to convene on an annual basis to assess the goals, recommendations, and policies of this document to ensure that progress and momentum remains consistent in its implementation, and that it continues to address the needs of residents and business owners in the Township. Through this consistent engagement with the Plan, it can remain a useful, practical document throughout its lifespan.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Comprehensive Plan outlines recommendations for the Township at large and for its primary unincorporated area (Central Leyden). A vision statement conveys the overarching goal for each focus area of the Plan and various strategies direct the actions (recommendations).

TOWNSHIP GOAL: COMMUNICATIONS

Vision: Provide transparent communications to engage all residents, businesses and other stakeholders to further a prosperous Township.

Seek opportunities for joint communications and events with the Township’s partners including municipalities, school districts and other government agencies. Outreach to businesses, conduct resident surveys, and coordination with local organizations, can assist in the improvement of services, policies, and resources to benefit residents and businesses.

TOWNSHIP GOAL: INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION

Vision: Coordinate programs and services with Cook County and the ten municipalities that comprise portions of Leyden Township. Coordinate efforts with municipalities to provide high-quality services, pursue joint grants, and infrastructure projects. Work with Township communities to improve gateways.

TOWNSHIP GOAL: INFRASTRUCTURE & TRANSPORT

Vision: Provide water and sewer services to customers served by Leyden Township and maintain and ensure safety for all users of roads.

Maintain and improve critical utilities within the Township including water main and lead service line replacement program within unincorporated areas. Continue to maintain and improve Township streets and make improvements based on capital planning needs. Coordinate with Cook County, IDOT and municipalities in the Township on roadway and streetscape improvements. Explore traffic diverters that limit truck traffic on local residential streets. Advance walkability and bikeability in Leyden Township through developing a trail network in Central Leyden and implementing a wayfinding system. Encourage transit use through collaborating with Pace, Metra and CTA.

TOWNSHIP GOAL: SERVICES

Vision: Provide excellent services and programs to serve the Township’s seniors and families. Explore opportunities to expand health service partnerships, continue to provide senior, food pantry and social services. Monitor and update facilities to meet the needs of residents, including ways to landscape and centralize services at the Township Campus.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CENTRAL LEYDEN GOAL: LAND USE

Vision: Promote well-planned development to promote economic investment, stable housing, and quality open spaces in unincorporated areas of the Township.

A key component of the Comprehensive Plan is the Future Land Use Map. This Map identifies opportunities for reinvestment for a more modern use of key commercial corridors while preserving the residential character of adjoining neighborhoods in Central Leyden. A Framework Concept is shown for Mannheim Road between Diversey Avenue and Fullerton Avenue that identifies redevelopment opportunities and future land uses. Strategies include the continued acquisition of troubled properties and the implementation of design guidelines in order to secure high-quality development. Utilizing best practices in design, like buffering and transition land uses, can ensure well-planned development.



A development concept along Mannheim Road shows a mixed-use development along a standard commercial block.

CENTRAL LEYDEN GOAL: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Vision: Revitalize commercial areas through thoughtful redevelopment efforts at key nodes and corridors, particularly along Mannheim Road, Grand Avenue and Fullerton Avenue.

Continue to advance redevelopment along key commercial corridors in Central Leyden. Development Concepts are provided for Mannheim Road redevelopment opportunities as well as for Grand and Wolf. A unified brand for Central Leyden can also be communicated



A mixed-use development concept at Grand Avenue and Wolf Road.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

through signage, print materials, and business recruitment efforts. Incubating existing and future local businesses can also be advanced through events and providing space for small businesses.

CENTRAL LEYDEN GOAL: QUALITY HOUSING

Vision: Support homeownership opportunities, quality rental housing, and new housing development that serves the demand for all residents.

Support improvements to existing housing stock through code enforcement, home repair programs, and working with local institutions to establish a homeownership program.

Support the development of critical housing needs including well-designed multi-family, attached single-family, and senior housing.

CENTRAL LEYDEN GOAL: OPEN SPACE, RECREATION & NATURAL RESOURCES

Vision: Maintain and improve parks, recreation and open spaces that serve local residents and visitors, while promoting sustainable practices to preserve natural resources.

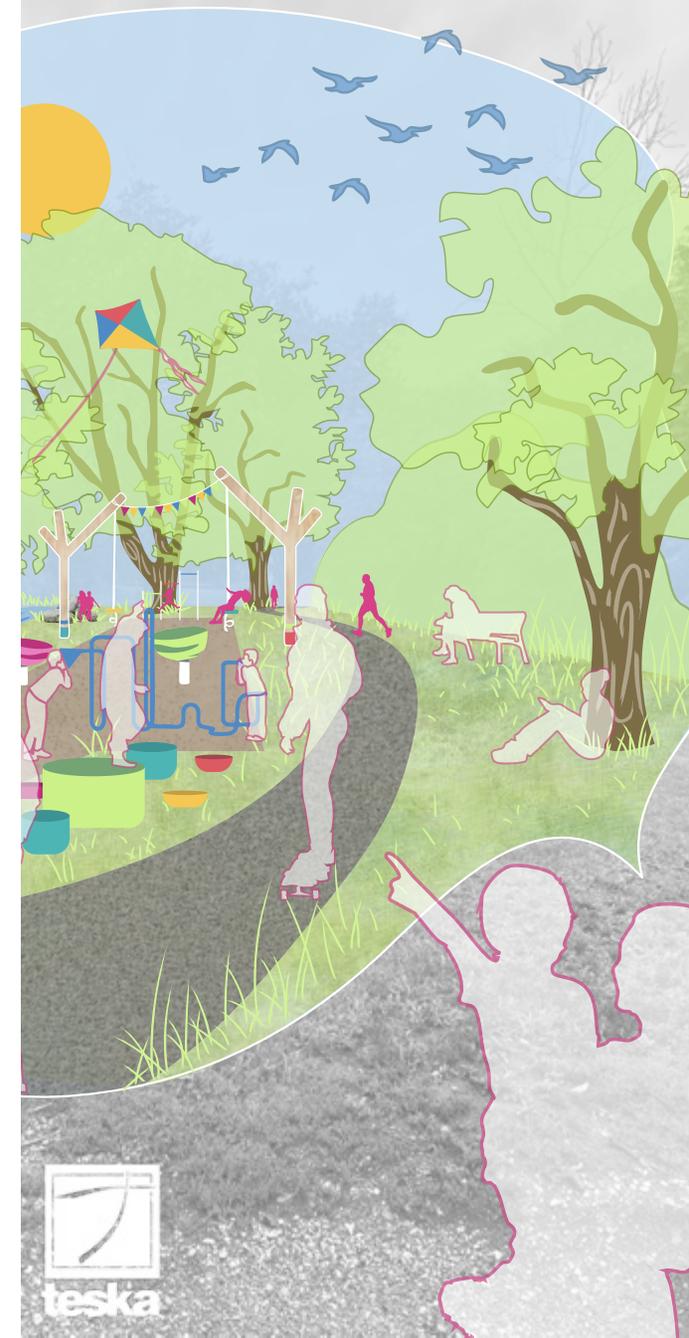
Leyden Township operates and maintains open space within Central Leyden, providing community green space and access to nature local residents. Maintaining these features through grant applications and partnerships with other open space agencies. Opportunities to rethink unimproved rights-of-way and work collaboratively with

developers to provide common open space in new development are strategies to expand the open space network in Central Leyden. Potential parks along Silver Creek can also be explored where vacant property exists. These natural areas can be bolstered by the strategic adoption of green infrastructure throughout Central Leyden, such as bioswales, rain gardens, and an expanded tree canopy.

CENTRAL LEYDEN GOAL: PLACEMAKING

Vision: Design and implement strategies to create central nodes for community use as well as urban design improvements to reinforce a sense of place and community for all residents and visitors.

Improving the quality of place within Central Leyden relies on a host of efforts, including wayfinding signage, trail crossings and improved transit stops. Developing plazas can also play a role in developing unique places within Central Leyden by encouraging residents to congregate, attend performances, and dine outside. Art and branding along major corridors can also be employed to convey a unique look and feel for Central Leyden, particularly along major corridors.



Open space vision along Silver Creek

LEYDEN TODAY

Leyden Township covers 20 square miles and is comprised of ten municipalities as well as unincorporated areas situated along Grand Avenue, Mannheim Road, and Wolf Road (referred to as Central Leyden in this Plan). There are also smaller collections of unincorporated land scattered throughout the Township. The Township is an inner-ring west-northwest suburb of Chicago with established communities, neighborhoods, business districts, entertainment districts, downtowns, and industrial areas. In all, over 90,000 residents live within the Township,

Leyden Township is at the center of major transportation facilities. Interstates 90 and 294 provide regional connectivity to Chicago and other suburban communities across the region; major roadways like Devon Avenue, Irving Park Road, Mannheim Road, and North Avenue are major arterials that link the Township to adjacent communities. The CTA Blue Line, two Metra lines, and an extensive network of Pace buses, further connect the Township to nearby destinations and provide diverse transportation options. Freight railroads bisect the Township and support its various industrial enterprises, and O'Hare International Airport, located just outside of Township boundaries, is one of the world's busiest passenger and cargo airports.

The current land use composition in the Township is generally consistent, characterized by single-family neighborhoods, industrial areas along key road and rail corridors, and

auto-oriented retail along its major arterials. Well-established downtowns are located in Elmwood Park, Franklin Park and Park Ridge. A linear network of Forest Preserves is located along the Des Plaines River. This land use distribution reflects the Township's overarching identity, characterized by traditional residential neighborhoods, local and national businesses, and a business-friendly environment that supports a wide range of uses and jobs.

Central Leyden (shown in Figure 1.1) refers to the contiguous unincorporated area that stretches from Rhodes Avenue to 25th Avenue and from Belmont Avenue to Armitage Avenue. Characterized by traditional residential neighborhoods and commercial-focused corridors, this area of roughly 9,000 residents will be a primary focus of this Plan.

Though individual municipalities oversee their own land use and planning decisions, Leyden Township serves as a convener for various government entities. The Township also provides a range of services to complement those provided by municipalities or other area taxing bodies. Further, the Township has responsibilities within unincorporated portions; most notably the Central Leyden area. The Township works with Cook County which has zoning jurisdiction in unincorporated areas.



FIGURE 1.1: REGIONAL LOCATION MAP



DEMOGRAPHICS AT A GLANCE

Leyden Township is comprised of a diverse array of middle-class, inner-ring suburbs. Like much of the Chicago region, population within the Township is stable and diversifying.

Across its ten municipalities, Leyden Township has a population of roughly 93,000, and about 10% of Leyden Township residents (9,250) live in the Central Leyden area. Of the 34,000 households in the Township, only about 8% are in Central Leyden.

Both the lower proportion of households relative to the Township total as well as the higher average household size signals that Central Leyden has a higher proportion of families. The higher rate of homeownership (76% as opposed to 66% across the Township) paints a picture of a traditional, family-friendly suburban community.

A wide variety of levels of educational and the relative affordability of the Township and Central Leyden indicate that Leyden Township is a unique and attainable community sought after by young, working families. The central location of the Township relative to employment centers, high-quality schools, and family-friendly nature of the community make Leyden Township and Central Leyden an ideal location to put down roots and pursue the American dream.

LEYDEN TOWNSHIP

93,096
2020 population

+0.2%
Population change
2010-2020

34,095
2020 households

2.63
Average household size

66%
Percentage of housing units
that are owner-occupied

38
Median age

85.4%
Percentage of 25+ residents
with a high school diploma
or higher

25.5%
Percentage of 25+ residents
with a bachelors degree or
higher

43%
Percent Hispanic origin

CENTRAL LEYDEN

9,250
2020 population

+0.39%
Population change
2010-2020

2,746
2020 households

3.24
Average household size

76%
Percentage of housing units
that are owner-occupied

41
Median age

80.2%
Percentage of 25+ residents
with a high school diploma
or higher

14.3%
Percentage of 25+ residents
with a bachelors degree or
higher

69%
Percent Hispanic origin

OPPORTUNITY, CENTRALLY LOCATED

Despite a relatively low level of educational attainment, Leyden residents are employed in a diverse range of industries, which exemplifies the social mobility present in the Township. With easy access to industrial, retail, office, and transportation employment, Leyden Township offers its residents the opportunity to climb the corporate ladder.

LEYDEN TOWNSHIP

52.3%
Percent white-collar workers

31.8%
Percent blue-collar workers

15.9%
Percent service workers

15.2%
Percentage of working
residents employed in the
manufacturing industry

11.8%
Percentage of working
residents employed in retail

CENTRAL LEYDEN

47.7%
Percent white-collar workers

38.1%
Percent blue-collar workers

14.3%
Percent service workers

21.3%
Percentage of working
residents employed in the
manufacturing industry

14.6%
Percentage of working
residents employed in retail

Sources include Esri Business Analyst, US Decennial Census, and American Community Survey data.

HISTORY

The land that now comprises Leyden Township was originally inhabited by the Miami, Sauk, Meskwaki, Ho-Chunk, Menominee, Ojibwe, Odawa, and Potawatomi nations. These groups lived, hunted, and farmed upon the land that is currently Leyden Township. The landscape at this time consisted largely of prairie, with a strip of forest along the Des Plaines River.

French explorers Pere Marquette and Louis Joliet first visited the Chicagoland area in 1673, among other locations in the Upper Midwest. The French presence in this era led to trading posts, forts, settlements, and is visible today in the French naming of geographical features, such as the Des Plaines River. The region remained sparsely populated through the 18th century; however, after the United States gained its independence in 1776, westward expansion soon began to creep west of the Allegheny Mountains and into what is now the Midwest. The Northwest Land Ordinance of 1787 was passed by the newly-formed United States to subdivide large expanses of land into counties, Townships, and sections to oversee governance and land ownership at a local level; many of these Townships are still present to this day.

Following Indian removal policies in the 1830s and the 1833 Treaty of Chicago, white settlement in the area that is now the Chicago region began to increase.

What is today the Township of Leyden was organized on April 2, 1850. Leyden was chosen as the Township's name, likely due to a presence of Dutch settlers in the area by 1850. The original extent of the Township was the Cook County line at its west, what is now Devon Avenue to its north, current-day North Avenue at its south, and Harlem Avenue to the east. Large reserves of land, like Potawatomi chieftain Alexander Robinson's reserve (which would become Schiller Park and Robinson Woods) and French-Potawatomi Claude Lafromboise's reserve (which would become River Grove and nearby forest preserves), were significant private land holdings in the early years of the Township.

Municipalities gradually incorporated within the Township, including the City of Franklin Park and Villages of Elmwood Park, River Grove, and Schiller Park, all founded between 1888 and 1914. Like many of Chicagoland's historic suburban communities, these communities formed around railroad stations that served commuters into the City of Chicago. Following the widespread adoption of the private automobile, communities incorporated near major roadways and interstates, like Northlake and Rosemont. As nearby communities expanded outward, the communities of Bensenville, Melrose Park, Norridge, and Park Ridge also incorporated portions of the Township, though the majority of these communities' lands were primarily located in other adjacent Townships. As the City of Chicago expanded its boundaries,

portions of Leyden Township east of the Des Plaines River and around O'Hare Airport were gradually turned over from Township jurisdiction to the City.

As suburban growth occurred in the early-to mid-twentieth century, the prairie and agricultural landscape of the Township gradually developed into the current land use pattern of residential neighborhoods, commercial corridors, business districts, and industrial areas.

Current-day Leyden Township includes a tapestry of unique communities, including ten municipalities, a large unincorporated area near Mannheim Road and Fullerton Avenue known as "Central Leyden," a network of Forest Preserves, and key cultural and economic generators. Connected by interstate highways, commuter rail, and regional arterials, the Township supports a number of businesses and is a destination for young families seeking attainable housing in a central location in the region.

PLANNING PROCESS

The Leyden Township Comprehensive Plan was developed through a year-long process involving the analysis of market and demographic data, consultation with Township staff and the Leyden Township Plan Commission, and engagement with the public.

The comprehensive planning process was comprised of three distinct phases: Existing Conditions, Goals & Objectives, and Plan Drafting. Community Engagement occurred throughout the planning process. The Community Engagement efforts are outlined in the following section of this document.

The **Existing Conditions Assessment** included an analysis of current demographics, transportation patterns, environmental assets, and previous planning efforts. This process also involved stakeholder interviews, which consisted of group and individual interviews with residents, business owners, government officials, and other leaders within Leyden Township. This quantitative and qualitative approach allowed for holistic feedback and a more complete understanding of the Township.

The existing conditions process revealed several important characteristics about the Township. The close-knit, diverse, single-family nature of Central Leyden was noted as an advantage, as was the central location of the Township relative to the region. Feedback also signaled support for the ongoing redevelopment of the Mannheim Road

corridor. Demographic analysis confirmed that the Township at large is stable in terms of population while it is becoming more diverse. Market analysis suggested that the Township's central location can help make it a destination for new restaurants, entertainment, housing and recreation.

The **Goals & Objectives** portion of the process formulated high-level goals and specific strategies from data analysis, Township priorities, and community feedback. This process included subarea design concepts in strategic locations in Central Leyden. These ideas were presented to the public at the July 16 Community Open House for feedback. These revised goals became the framework of this document.

The **Draft Plan** combines information, public input, and recommendations into one document with additional context, narrative, graphics, and maps. This plan will be presented to the public online and via a public hearing at a Plan Commission meeting. The document will then be revised based on direction from the Plan Commission and presented for adoption by the Leyden Township Board.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community engagement was central to developing a vision for Leyden Township and the Central Leyden area's future. Public outreach was conducted in various formats in attempt to hear from as many residents and community members as possible.

Key themes that emerged from public input included:

- Better pedestrian and bike connectivity to access destinations (more sidewalks and bike paths)
- Continue redevelopment along Mannheim and other key corridors
- More greenery, open space, and natural areas
- Wider variety of restaurants and event venues
- Reduce vehicle speeds and truck traffic in residential neighborhoods
- Continue to manage stormwater and flooding
- Beautification and public art
- Farmers market

Marketing & Promotion

Getting the word out about the planning process included articles in the Township newsletter, social media posts, printed project cards distributed at the Township and community events, and messages posted on the Township office electronic sign.

Stakeholder Interviews

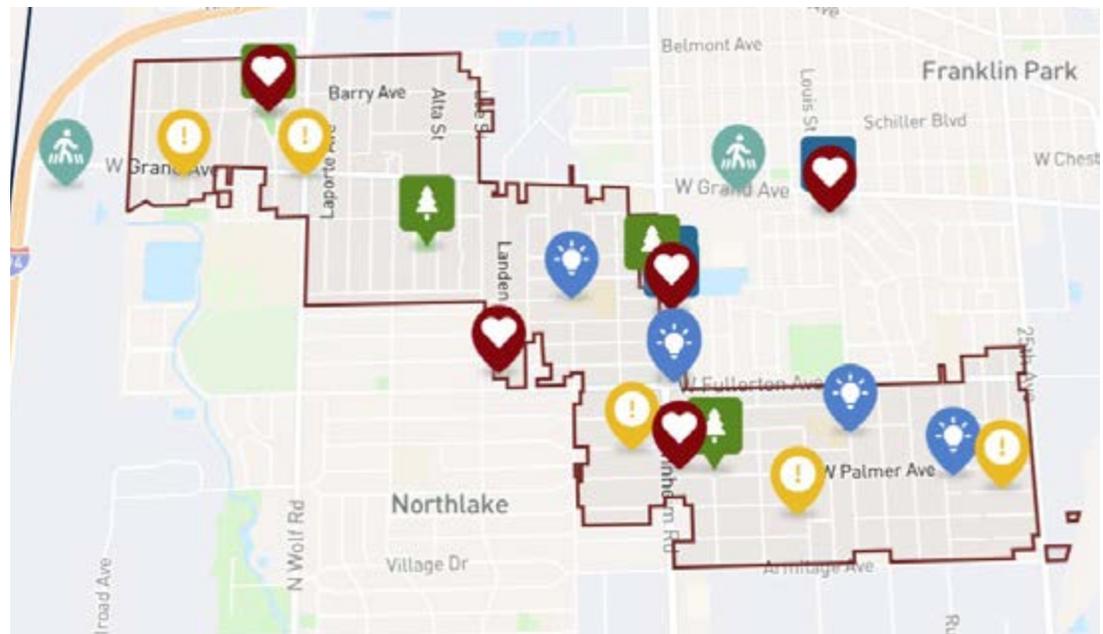
Group and one-on-one interviews were held with 15 local stakeholders representing

Online Engagement

An online interactive comment map was available for 24/7 idea sharing. The map focused on the Central Leyden area and people were encouraged to add comments about places they love, big ideas, areas for improvement, and specific transportation-related issues.



Printed project cards were distributed to get the word out and encourage participation in the plan



The online comment map collected place-based ideas



Pop-Up Event at the Township's 175th Anniversary Celebration

In the Spring, the planning team attended the Township's 175th Anniversary Celebration at Westdale Park. Alongside the food, live music, and carnival games, community members stopped by the Leyden Looking Ahead tent to share ideas about what makes the Township great today, and what might help improve it for the future.

Common answers included: bike paths/trails, coffee shops/restaurants, traffic safety, and activities for kids and teens.





Draft Plan Community Workshop

A community-wide workshop was held on July 16th at the Township Hall to present and collect input on the draft plan recommendations. Each plan topic had a station and exhibit boards arranged around the room, with room to “vote” on preferred plan recommendations or offer sticky-note comments. Staff and the planning team were also available to answer any questions or provide more context.

Input received at the workshop revealed excitement around the following plan ideas:

Open Space & Natural Resources

- Silver Creek trail enhancements
- Community gardens

Placemaking

- Outdoor dining
- Public plazas / outdoor gathering / pop-up markets

Transportation & Infrastructure

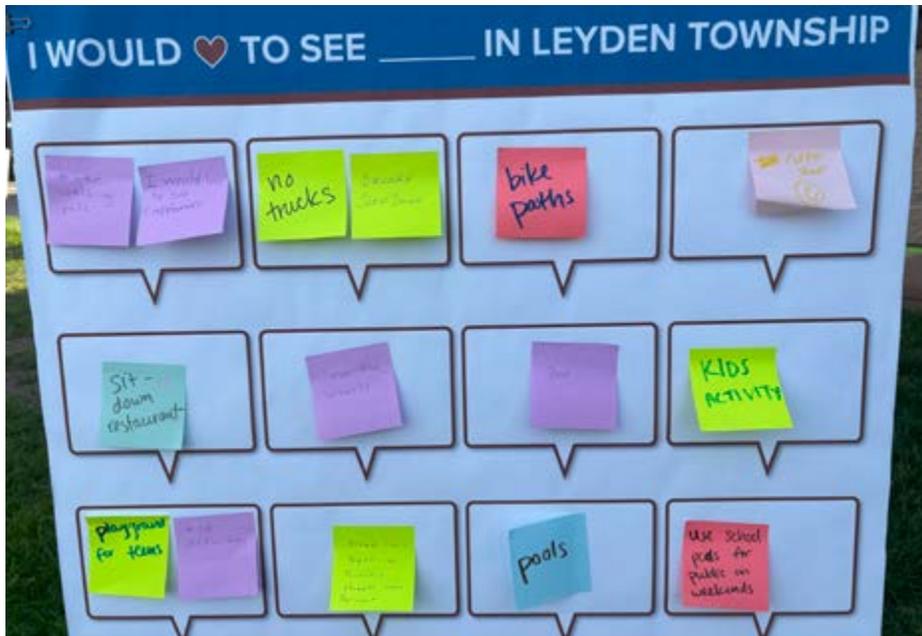
- Roadway improvements
- Improved crosswalks
- Medians and beautification
- Trails
- Enhanced transit facilities

Housing

- Senior housing
- Mixed-use development
- Single-family housing

Economic Development

- Pedestrian-oriented commercial
- Commercial destinations
- Retail development
- Mixed-use (residential over retail)





02 TOWNSHIP GOALS

COMMUNICATIONS
INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION
INFRASTRUCTURE & TRANSPORT
SERVICES

TOWNSHIP GOALS

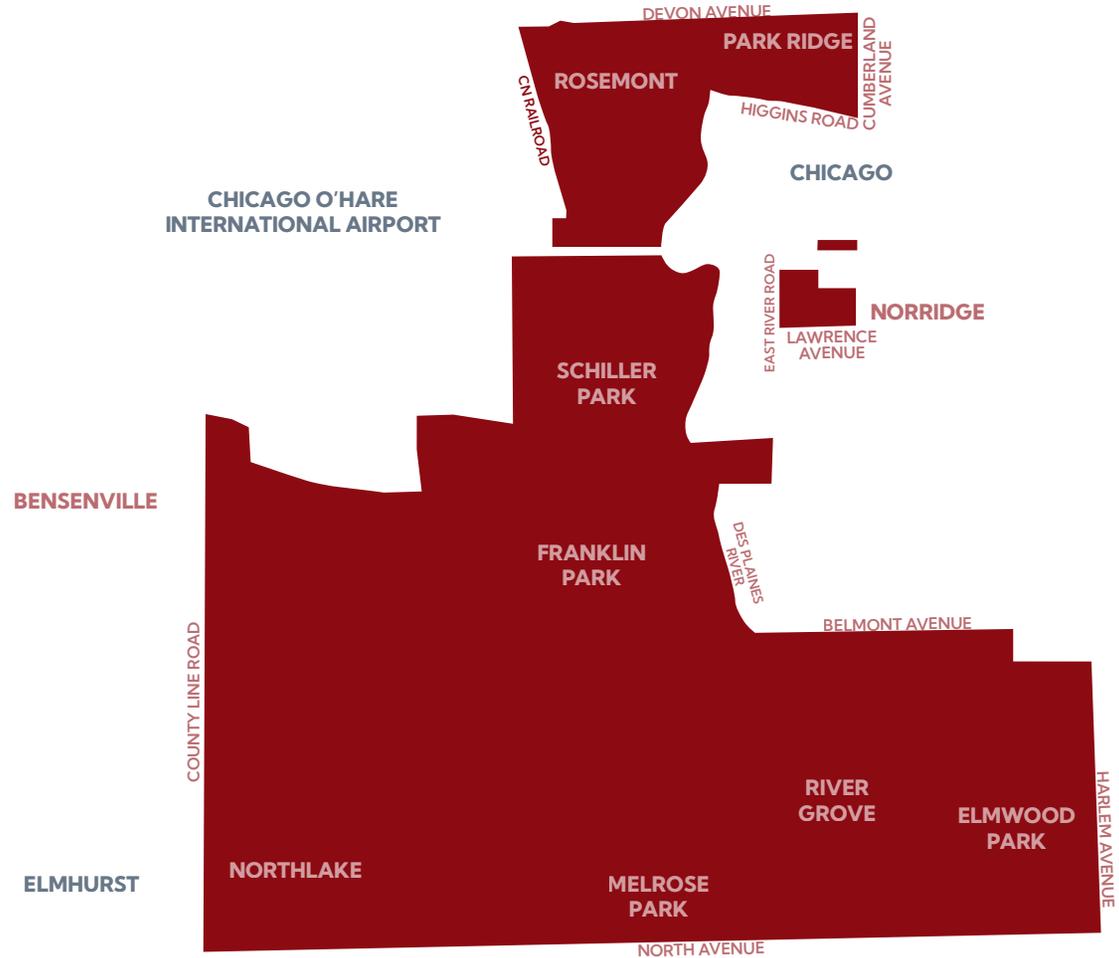
As a comprehensive plan for all of Leyden Township, this document includes goals that are to be advanced throughout the Township as opposed to land use, economic development and open space goals that are focused on Central Leyden in Section 3 of the plan. With much of the Township incorporated into one of its ten different municipalities, Leyden Township itself has limited authority to make planning decisions within incorporated boundaries. Therefore, this section of the Plan focuses on intergovernmental cooperation, communications, and the opportunities for partnerships and efficiencies with municipalities and other government entities.

The four themes of this Comprehensive Plan that apply for the entire Township are:

COMMUNICATIONS refers to the strategies employed by the Township to engage residents, market the Township, and establish and build relationships.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION is an essential and ongoing task for the Township as it coordinates and allocates resources among its many municipalities, other taxing bodies, Cook County, and the State.

INFRASTRUCTURE & TRANSPORT in the Township are composed of a network of roadways, rail and utilities. The goals relate to continuing to maintain and update these facilities alongside municipalities, the County, and the State.



SERVICES provided by the Township are extensive from senior services to a bustling food bank. Maintaining, expanding, and finding efficiencies in service delivery remains key to serving residents, business owners, visitors, and other stakeholders.

TOWNSHIP GOAL: COMMUNICATIONS

Vision: Provide transparent communications to engage all residents, businesses and other stakeholders to further a prosperous Township.

Leyden Township utilizes various channels of communications to engage residents, businesses and organizations. The purpose of these communications is to transmit information and resources, including Township or municipal services, programs, and other grants or aid opportunities from external agencies and organizations.

The Township currently maintains a broad range of communications tools, including printed communications through newsletters and water bill inserts, as well as online communications through various social media channels and other high-tech opportunities for engagement with residents, like a 311 app for residents to report issues to the Township. The Township is present at community events, allowing residents to interact with officials and staff. Further, the Township regularly partners on joint communications with governmental partners like municipalities, school districts, the County, and the State.

The overarching purpose of these various levels of engagement is to establish, strengthen, and maintain open lines of communication between the Township and its partners, residents, and business owners. This communication can be used for urgent needs, such as emergencies or instances of inclement weather, as well as less time-sensitive matters, like grants, programs, and community events.

Strategy 1: Continue to seek opportunities for joint communications.

Through partnerships with Leyden Township's municipalities, school districts, and other government agencies, the Township will continue to extend the reach of its communications. The Township currently publishes a quarterly Township-wide newsletter for direct communications to residents and oftentimes partners with municipalities, organizations, and nonprofits to reach wider audiences. Continuing these efforts will ensure effective messaging and intergovernmental cooperation.

Action: Work to incorporate Township-wide communications in municipal communications. Continue to work with municipal partners to communicate Township services, events, and other communications as part of each municipality's communications (such as newsletters or e-blasts) can provide an additional avenue of messaging for the Township. Such efforts can better convey the broad range of services and opportunities offered by the Township to residents in incorporated communities that may have little interaction with Leyden Township otherwise.

COMMUNICATIONS

Action: Seek opportunities for joint events and programming. Leyden Township staff or representatives are mainstays at community events organized by municipalities throughout the Township. The Township can continue to work with partners to program new events and jointly sponsor community activities ranging from farmers' markets to festivals.



Strategy 2: Enhance Strategic Communications.

The Township manages a wide array of communication channels and can build on this foundation to assess where communications can be strengthened and improved.

Action: Formalize business outreach programs. The Township, its municipal partners, and economic development agencies in the region are involved in engaging businesses and addressing their needs and concerns. Formalizing these efforts at the Township level can maintain and strengthen this line of communication and better inform efforts from its partner agencies. This can include visits to local businesses within Central Leyden, surveys and regular check-ins with chambers.

Action: Continue to work with the Chambers of Commerce and service organizations. As a large and diverse area, various chambers of commerce and organizations serve different portions of the Township. Providing support as needed to these organizations in branding, marketing, and business outreach can expand the influence of these organizations and benefit the businesses within the Township. The Township can also explore working with service organizations to expand communications to a broader group of residents and assist in coordinating service efforts and activities.

Action: Continue to conduct periodic surveys of residents. The Township's existing communications via newsletters and water bill inserts can be used to solicit input and feedback from residents via periodic surveys. Such surveys can gauge interest for new programs, projects, and investments, as well as identify areas for improvement in existing service delivery or infrastructure. Regarding residents within incorporated areas, such surveys can also identify opportunities to pool Township and municipal resources.

TOWNSHIP GOAL: INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION

Vision: Coordinate programs and services with Cook County and the ten municipalities that comprise portions of Leyden Township.

Effective governance at the Township level requires close collaboration with other governmental partners, such as municipalities, the County, school districts, and other taxing districts. Leyden Township has built and continues to maintain good relationships with the other governmental entities within its boundaries, allowing the Township to serve its role as a partner in service delivery, grant application, and policy.

Continued intergovernmental cooperation will allow the Township to advance shared goals with its communities. This Comprehensive Plan catalogs existing intergovernmental cooperation in Leyden Township and highlights opportunities to expand and formalize these efforts.

Strategy 1: Coordinate efforts with municipalities to provide high quality services, pursue joint grants, and infrastructure projects.

Leyden Township has built excellent relationships with the ten municipalities that are partially or fully located within its boundaries. Continuing and expanding relationships, agreements, and service delivery efforts can continue to provide the high level of services and amenities that Leyden Township residents expect while streamlining processes and creating a broader impact while potentially requiring fewer resources.

Action: Engage municipalities to determine opportunities for partnerships for service delivery. The Township currently shares resources with nearby entities in an ad-hoc manner, including loaning equipment and personnel to nearby communities and townships. One example of this is the Township's lending of handyman services to nearby Norwood Park Township. Determining other opportunities for such partnerships can support high resident quality of life with potential cost savings to the Township and municipalities alike. Intergovernmental agreements regarding infrastructure maintenance, sanitation, forestry, and human services may be explored.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION

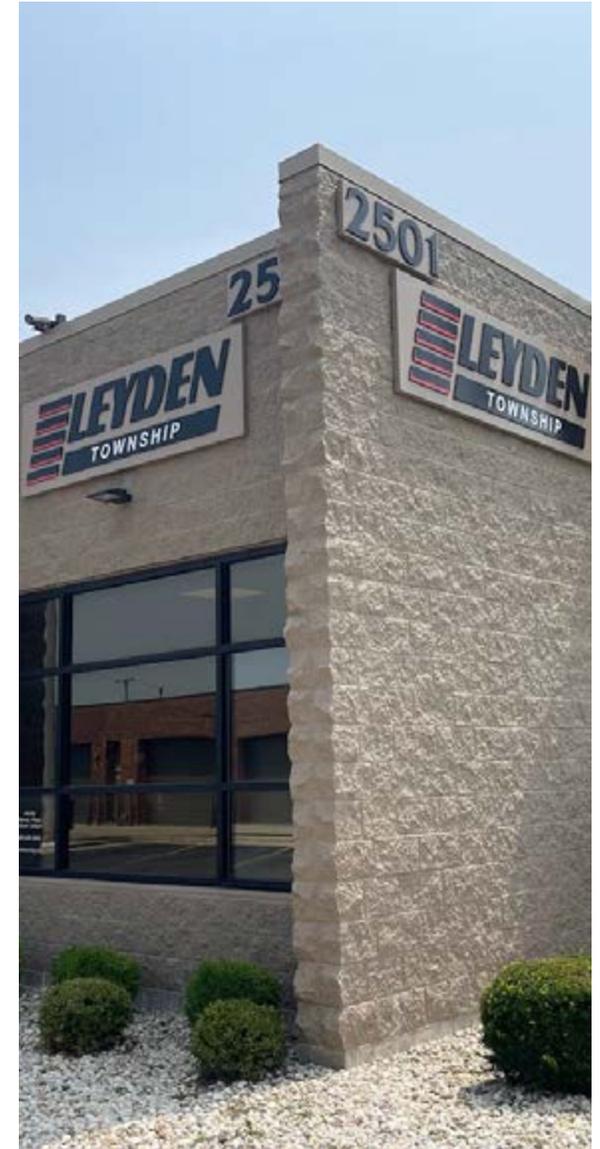
Action: Identify overlapping services to determine efficiencies. Overlapping or redundant services are a logical starting point for determining the feasibility of intergovernmental agreements. For example, coordinating Township-wide services may be more effective and efficient in certain instances than stand-alone municipal services that each community must provide and that may end at municipal boundaries.

Action: Pursue joint economic development, transportation and recreation grants and resources. The Township can continue to support its municipalities and other governmental entities in the efforts to obtain funding through grants and other external sources. The support of the Township may signal an element of intergovernmental cooperation in applications, which can make certain applications more competitive. The Township might also lend grant-writing resources to communities which may not have adequate capacity.

Strategy 2: Work with Township communities to improve gateways.

Municipalities often highlight their boundaries along major corridors with gateway signage, landscaping, and other entrance features. Townships, however, are less likely to identify their boundaries. This may lead to less clarity for the public as to the extent of the Township and its presence at large. Leyden Township can explore opportunities to develop gateways at its boundaries along major roadways and corridors.

Action: Work with communities to identify the Township boundary through signage landscaping, and gateways. Identifying major entry points to the Township along arterials, such as Mannheim Road and North Avenue, for signage or landscaping can better define the Township to residents, visitors, and passersby. Installing signage or planters at these gateways can be a joint effort between the Township and its municipalities and may allow for opportunities to co-brand. The Township can consider intergovernmental partnerships to enhance and maintain plantings where such signage may be placed.



TOWNSHIP GOAL: INFRASTRUCTURE & TRANSPORT

Vision: Provide water and sewer services to customers served by Leyden Township and maintain and ensure safety for all users of roads.

Leyden Township plays a large role in the provision and maintenance of essential water and transportation infrastructure. The Township not only maintains water pipes, water mains, and roadways within its unincorporated areas, but also coordinates these efforts with partner communities and agencies. Continuing to maintain safe and reliable water and transportation infrastructure is a major focus of the Comprehensive Plan.

Opportunities to enhance stormwater management practices, improve the efficiency of infrastructure, and promote transportation modes other than private automobiles should also be pursued. Such efforts can reduce risk to property owners and residents, streamline delivery, and create a more well-rounded transportation network, respectively. To ensure accordance with larger planning and infrastructure efforts, collaboration with regional and State partners, such as the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District (MWRD) and the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) as well as others, should be continued in all processes.

Strategy 1: Maintain and improve critical utilities within the Township.

While the Township provides water and sanitary sewer to properties in unincorporated areas, it also assists governmental and private partners in the provision of electricity, gas, internet, and communications. Ensuring this utility infrastructure remains current, resilient, coordinating the use of rights-of-way and ensure there is reliable service.

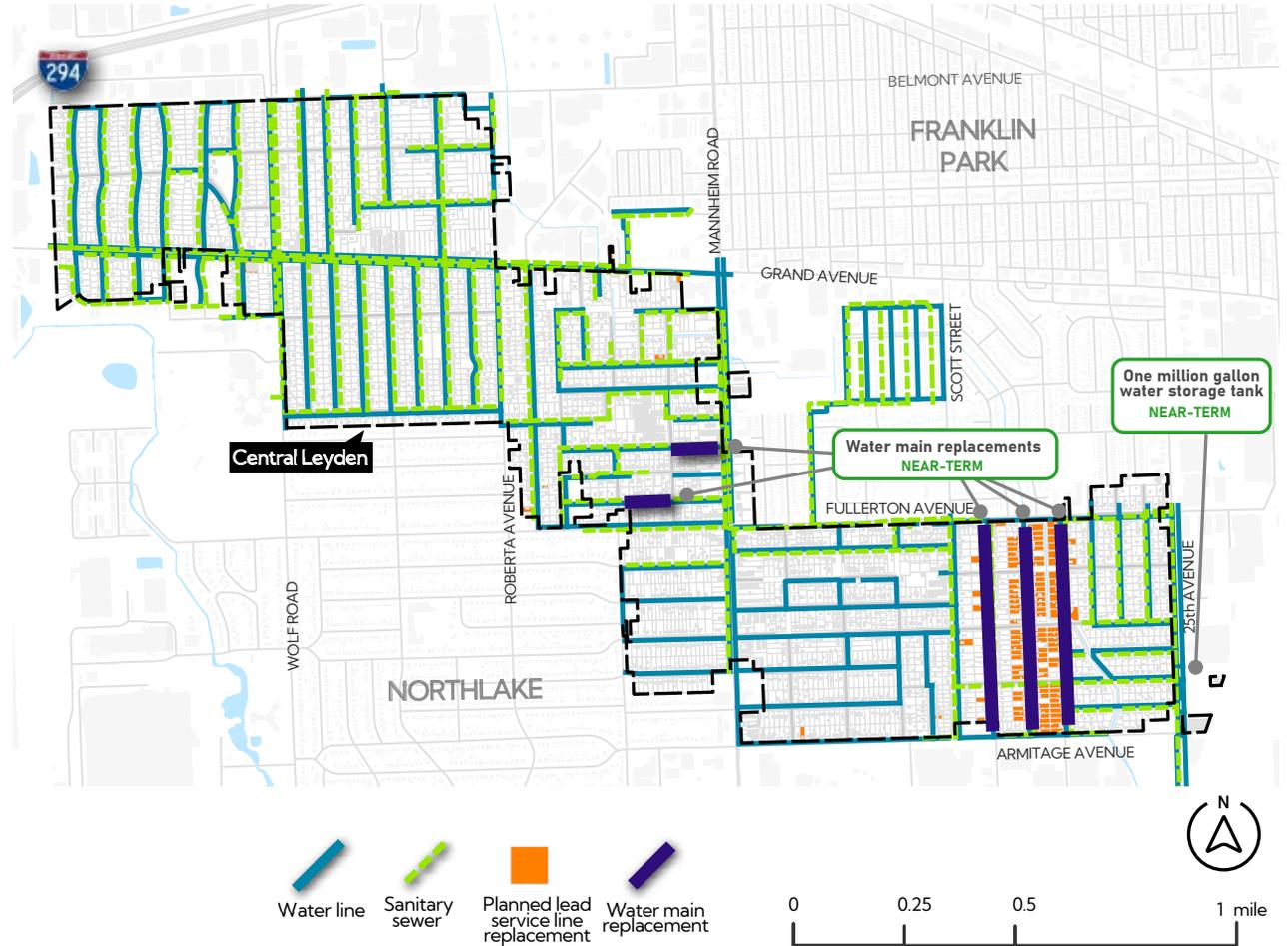
Action: Continue to monitor and maintain utilities in the Township in collaboration with partner agencies. Leyden Township is currently engaged in a large-scale water main and lead service line replacement program within its unincorporated residential neighborhoods. Continuing to monitor the status and quality of utilities allows for proactive repair and maintenance of infrastructure, resulting in fewer service interruptions due to deferred maintenance. The Township can leverage its role as a convener between various governments and agencies to pool resources and ensure that water, electricity, communications, and other utilities are equipped for existing and future needs. (Figure 2.1)

Action: Support residents, governments, and partner organizations in grant applications and other incentives. The Township can partner with municipalities or other government agencies in applying for and securing grants to improve or strengthen utilities. The Township can also continue to communicate incentives for

INFRASTRUCTURE & TRANSPORT

property owners, like energy-efficiency and weatherization tax credits which can produce or better conserve energy. These incentives can result in renovations that reduce strain on the power grid and/or reduce water usage. Other property-owner focused efforts to reduce strain on utility infrastructure can include rain barrel programs, which the Township can explore with municipalities or the MWRD.

FIGURE 2.1: UTILITY INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS



INFRASTRUCTURE & TRANSPORT

Strategy 2: Maintain and improve Township streets.

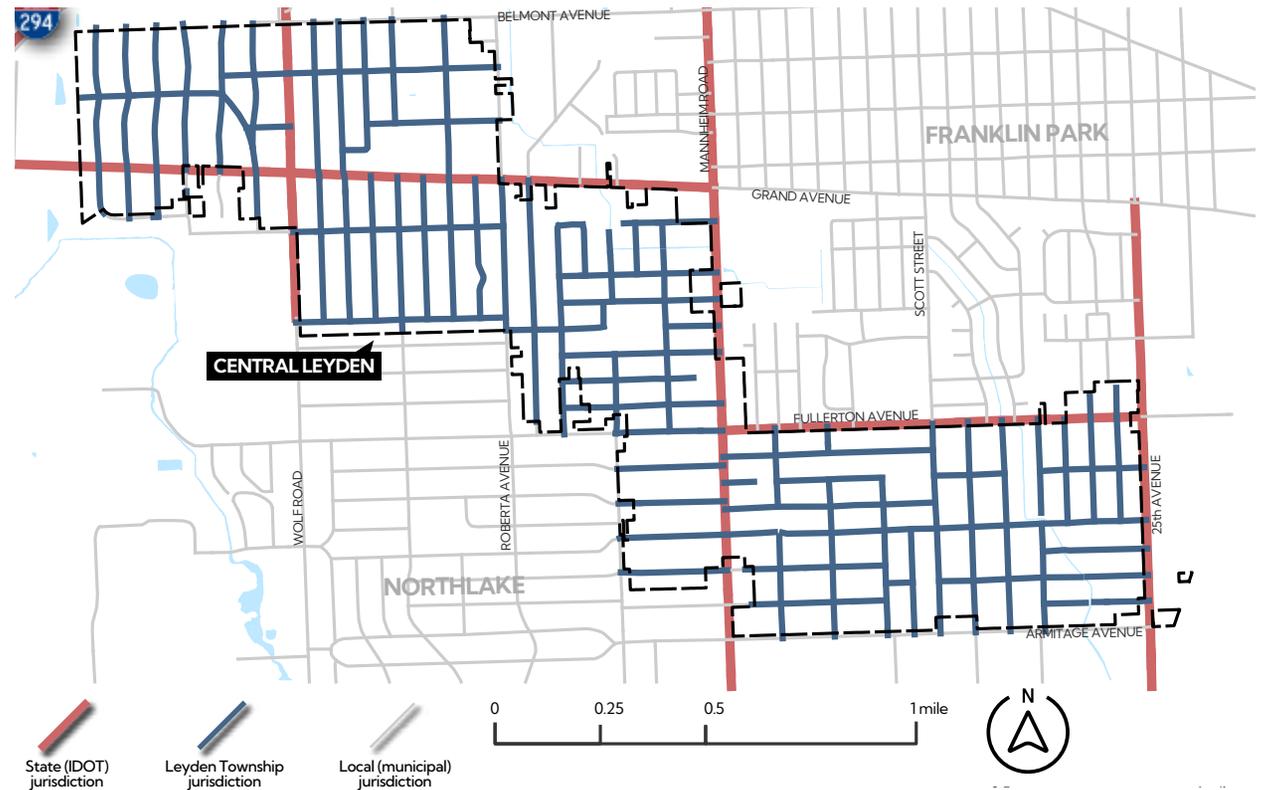
Leyden Township oversees the maintenance of local streets within its unincorporated areas, most of which within the “Central Leyden” area and within Forest Preserves. Local streets within incorporated municipalities generally fall under the jurisdiction of the respective municipality (Figure 2.2).

The local streets under Township jurisdiction are generally in good condition, but the Township can explore additional street treatments that improve pedestrian and motorist safety and reduce/maintain low traffic volumes and speeds. Such improvements can create a more accessible community for the young, elderly, and those who do not drive. This can also allow the Township to maintain tranquil local streets that are accessible to all users while directing through-traffic to higher-capacity arterial and collector roadways.

Action: Continue to monitor and maintain Township-controlled streets.

Leyden Township’s continued maintenance of its local streets will ensure that its roadways remain safe and usable for its residents. A consistent program of monitoring allows the Township to identify the highest priority stretches of roadways for repaving, redesign, or patching potholes. The Township’s new 311 application will also provide opportunities for residents, visitors,

FIGURE 2.2: ROADWAY JURISDICTION



and other roadway users to report issues, creating a more comprehensive monitoring system by engaging the community.

Leyden Township can continue to build on this system of roadway monitoring by engaging its Cook County Forest Preserve partners, as many internal drives within these protected areas fall under the jurisdiction of the Township. The Township

can continue to leverage its partnership with the Forest Preserve District to pursue joint maintenance projects and grants together.

INFRASTRUCTURE & TRANSPORT

Action: Explore traffic diverters that limit truck traffic on local residential streets.

Leyden Township's location at the logistical crossroads of the region results in a high volume of truck traffic along its major arterial roadways. This truck traffic can sometimes spill over onto local streets, creating a safety hazard for residents as well as emissions and noise within residential areas. To remedy this, the Township has undertaken efforts to limit points of ingress and egress into residential neighborhoods from arterials.

Existing traffic diversion infrastructure can be enhanced to provide more effective and visually appealing infrastructure that continues to discourage through-traffic. "Modal filters," which filter certain transportation modes, such as automobiles, but allow for the passage of pedestrians and cyclists, can be explored where local streets meet arterials.

Other infrastructure, like bumpouts, chicanes, and neighborhood traffic circles can be explored to further discourage truck traffic on local streets and reduce instances of speeding near key community destinations like parks and schools.

Action: Explore roadway enhancement projects in tandem with nearby municipalities to pool resources to improve safety for all users. Though the Township's roadway jurisdiction is almost entirely limited to roadways within the unincorporated portion of the Township, the roadway network is far more interconnected, and does not fundamentally change at municipal boundaries. Larger efforts across the Township can engage multiple partners, like municipalities and the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) to pursue holistic and impactful roadway projects. Furthermore, intergovernmental transportation efforts can potentially be more competitive for grant funding.

Action: Support roadway improvements throughout the Township. Infrastructure projects like the under-construction Interstate 490 (the O'Hare Western Bypass Project) and the Grand Avenue grade separation can potentially improve traffic and reduce congestion on interstates and arterials through the Township. Leyden Township can continue to support these projects and remain a partner by maintaining open lines of communication with the Illinois Department of Transportation. The Township can also assist these entities in facilitating public engagement.



Leyden Township has installed traffic diverters to discourage through-traffic on many local streets along Mannheim Road. These informal diverters can be replaced with formal, landscaped modal filters, shown below.



Image: Mississippi Watershed Management Organization

INFRASTRUCTURE & TRANSPORT

Strategy 3: Advance walkability and bikeability in Leyden Township.

Promoting walking and biking in Leyden Township requires infrastructure that improves the safety, comfort, and ease of these transportation modes. By prioritizing this type of infrastructure the transportation network can become more accessible to residents of different ages and abilities. Walking and biking more can also help reduce noise and air pollution, improving the quality of life for residents.

Though sidewalks are largely present within the incorporated portions of the Township, there are gaps in the network in the Central Leyden unincorporated area. Similarly, trail infrastructure in the Township is largely concentrated along the Des Plaines River. These existing sections of infrastructure offer a framework for building an expanded and connected network of sidewalks, bike facilities, and trails. Leyden Township and the Village of Melrose Park, for example, are currently working together to expand the trail network within the Township along Armitage Avenue through an intergovernmental partnership.

Action: Develop a trail network throughout Central Leyden. The Central Leyden area can become an important link as the trail network is expanded throughout the incorporated and unincorporated portions of the Township. By coordinating with adjacent municipalities and other governmental partners, Leyden Township can jointly pursue trail, bike, and pedestrian projects with its adjacent municipalities. Such an approach ensures that a trail network is laid out logically and connects to destinations, encouraging walking and biking as a viable transportation mode for the whole Township.

Development of a multi-use trail along Armitage Avenue is currently underway through a partnership between Leyden Township and Melrose Park. Other opportunities to expand the trail network within Central Leyden include the expansion of the existing Silver Creek Trail, which can provide a cross-neighborhood connection. Other trail corridors that may be studied include Grand Avenue, Roberta Avenue, and Fullerton Avenue. The Township can also work with developers to upgrade pedestrian infrastructure as development occurs along Grand Avenue and Mannheim Road to incrementally develop its trail network.

Action: Improve sidewalk infrastructure and expand pedestrian infrastructure within Central Leyden. Sidewalk infrastructure within Central Leyden is almost solely concentrated along major arterials and connectors. Along these major corridors, high traffic volumes oftentimes create an unpleasant environment for pedestrians due to the close proximity of the sidewalks to the road. Improving sidewalk infrastructure as development occurs can gradually improve the pedestrian environment and thus encourage pedestrian activity.

While the installation of sidewalks along all local streets within Central Leyden is currently not feasible, focused sidewalk installation near schools, parks, and other community facilities can improve the pedestrian environment at high-activity locations. The Township can also consider signage, roadway markings, decorative crosswalks, or other infrastructure in strategic locations to encourage motorists to drive more cautiously and share the road with pedestrians.

Action: Implement wayfinding in unincorporated areas. Wayfinding signage consists of small informational signs and maps that identify local destinations, like parks and schools, for residents and visitors. This kind of signage can use the Township's branding and other distinctive features to reinforce a sense of place.

INFRASTRUCTURE & TRANSPORT

The Township can consider placing wayfinding signage in strategic locations, such as parks, commercial areas, and near transit stops. Signage in these areas can improve the visitor experience and offer an opportunity to advance community branding.

Action: Work with the Forest Preserve to improve pedestrian and bike access to natural areas. Much of the Forest Preserve area in Leyden Township is unincorporated, allowing the Township to work with the Forest Preserve District directly to jointly improve infrastructure. The Township can continue to engage the Forest Preserve District of Cook County to add roadway markings, improved pedestrian infrastructure, and other facilities to expand access to nature via walking and biking.



Wayfinding signage communicates the identity of a community and encourages residents and visitors to explore.

FIGURE 2.3: TRAIL OPPORTUNITIES



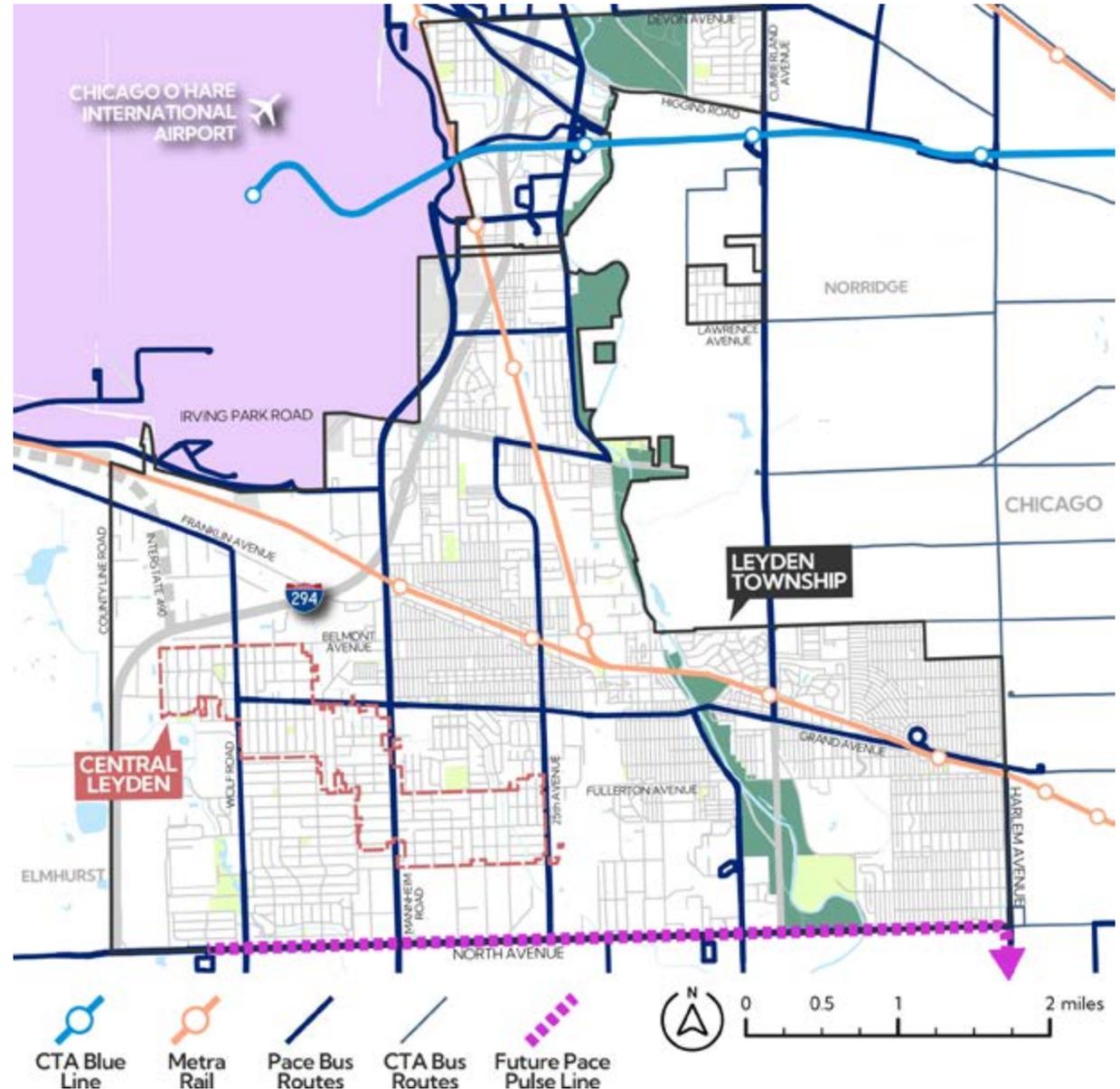
INFRASTRUCTURE & TRANSPORT

Strategy 4: Encourage transit use and improve access to transit.

Leyden Township is served by existing transit, including two Metra Lines, the CTA Blue Line, fifteen Pace bus routes, and two CTA bus routes. The wide range of transportation needs, high level of economic activity, and central location of the Township make transit a key transportation asset to provide access for residents and workers, as well as relieve traffic congestion. Further, the presence of Chicago–O’Hare International Airport near the Township boundaries creates a transit hub and can potentially improve transit access to Leyden Township as new or optimized transit routes are contemplated.

The continued development of Pace Pulse, a limited-stop bus service with dedicated stations and transit signal priority, is an opportunity to encourage transit ridership and improve service in the Township. The Harlem and North Avenue Pace Pulse corridor, stretching from Northlake to Oak Lawn, is a near-term priority for Pace. The Township can also engage Pace to investigate the feasibility of future Pulse service along Mannheim Road that would provide fast and frequent access to O’Hare.

FIGURE 2.4: TRANSIT NETWORK



INFRASTRUCTURE & TRANSPORT

Action: Work with Pace, Metra, and the CTA to maintain and improve transit facilities in the Township. Continuing to maintain the transit assets within Leyden Township will continue to encourage transit ridership with modern, well-kept, and accessible facilities. The Township can play a role alongside municipalities to help plan and advocate for the continued quality of transit assets.

Action: Proactively plan for Pace Pulse service within the Township. Working proactively with Pace to plan for and deliver Pulse arterial rapid transit services along the planned North Avenue/Harlem Avenue corridor, the Township can assist in community engagement, site selection, and other key portions of the rollout of this service and infrastructure. Within Central Leyden, the Township could install branding and placemaking (such as public art or decorative lighting) at improved station/stops. The Township can also engage in long-term planning for Pulse service on Mannheim Road.

Action: Continue to promote transit. The Township can work with businesses, municipalities, and other organizations to distribute information about various transit benefit programs. The Township can also partner with aligned governmental entities for improved transit in the community, such as new transit lines, circulator service, and other infrastructure improvements.



TOWNSHIP GOAL: SERVICES

Vision: Provide excellent services and programs to serve the Township's seniors and families.

Leyden Township provides a broad array of services to residents across the Township, such as health services, food pantries, handyman services, and senior services and programming; additionally, the Township serves additional functions in unincorporated areas, such as recreation, transportation, and water. These services contribute to the high quality of life experienced by Township residents and are often lent to communities and nearby Townships.

Continuing to provide these services to residents is a central goal of Leyden Township's day-to-day operations and a major consideration within the Comprehensive Plan. Potential opportunities to expand, streamline, and integrate Township services with its adjacent communities and agencies are also identified within this section.

Strategy 1: Continue to provide and improve access to services.

Maintaining the high quality of life enjoyed by Township residents through the provision of services advances community health, economic development, and other goals shared by Leyden Township and municipalities alike.

Action: Continue health programs in coordination with partners, including screening, health fairs, mosquito abatement, and others. Continuing Leyden Township's extensive health programming and service promotes public health and maintains high quality of life within the community. Leyden Township can also explore opportunities to provide health services jointly with other governmental or private partners; future development of a Township campus or other Township health facility can potentially encourage non-profit health organizations to co-locate.

SERVICES

Action: Conduct periodic surveys to assess resident needs, level of awareness of services available, and potential areas for improvement. A key component of maintaining high-quality services is the continued refinement and adjustment of those services to meet ever-changing resident needs. By conducting periodic surveys, the Township can remain apprised of the need for new services, contemplate changes in service delivery, and identify opportunities to better communicate available services. The Township can potentially include surveys in its quarterly newsletter.

Action: Continue joint education, senior, job training, food pantry, and other social services in tandem with partners. Social services provide an additional layer of resources to residents in need in the Township. Continuing these programs will continue to provide support to residents that may require higher levels of social programs. Into the future, the Township can leverage existing and future facilities, such as the under-construction senior center and renovated food pantry, to provide a setting for periodic or regular services and programming. Other opportunities for the future include coordinating homeless social services with adjacent municipalities, the County, and nonprofit organizations.



SERVICES

Strategy 2: Monitor and update facilities to meet the need of residents.

Leyden Township recently expanded its food pantry and is currently developing a new senior center along Mannheim Road. This continued effort to meet the evolving needs of the Township residents through modern, updated facilities enables a more streamlined delivery of services for residents.

Action: Explore the creation of a Central Leyden campus to consolidate Township offices, community facilities, and social services. Near-term plans for the Township campus focus on improving landscaping and its outward appearance. In the long-term, there may be an opportunity for the Township to explore a new location for its Public Works facility that could create space for a new, consolidated public and community-facing Township campus facility.

Action: Continue to explore locations for senior housing in the community. Leyden Township is currently in the process of developing a new senior center and accompanying senior housing on the southwest corner of Mannheim Road and Nevada Avenue. This will provide much-needed housing diversity for seniors who no longer want to live in a single-family home but wish to remain in the community.

The Township can continue to look for opportunities to partner with developers and property owners to develop more senior housing within incorporated areas or along major corridors in Central Leyden.



A new senior center and senior housing complex (rendering shown above) is under construction, replacing a dilapidated motel on Mannheim Road (demolition shown below).



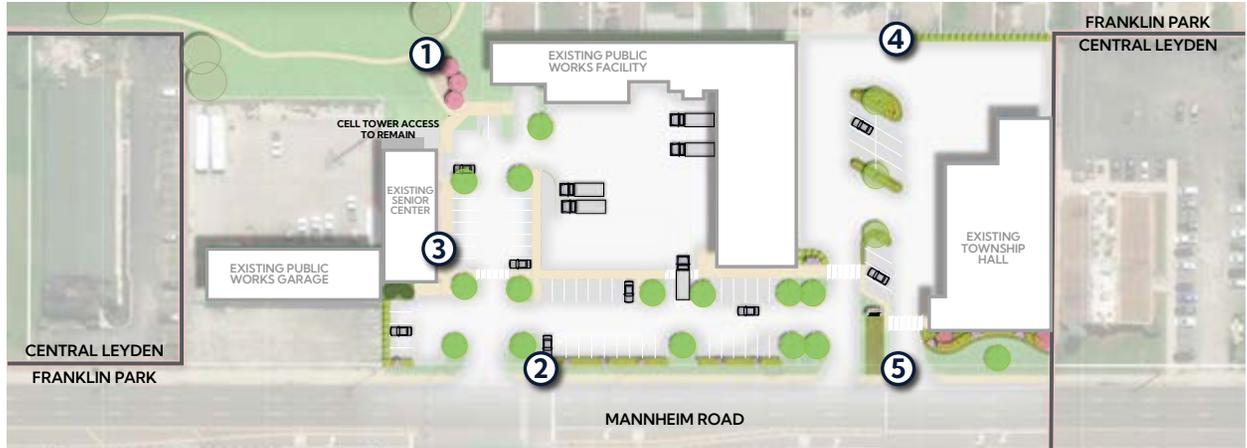
SERVICES

Township Campus Concept

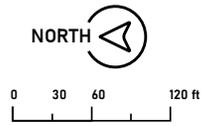
Near-term improvements to the Township Campus can improve landscaping and aesthetic enhancements for the outward appearance of the Township properties. Landscaping can help screen the Campus from the properties behind it, and improve pedestrian access to the facilities while allowing for the continued operations of public works, food bank, and governmental offices. A future connection to a potential walkway around the retention area to the northeast of the Campus is also proposed.

Longer-term improvements may be realized if Township Public Works relocates elsewhere within the Township. This can include reusing the large Public Works Facility for a health or community service use and the development of a plaza on the existing Public Works yard. These improvements can facilitate the consolidation and centralization of Township services while providing a central gathering space in the Campus area that can be used for events and smaller festivals.

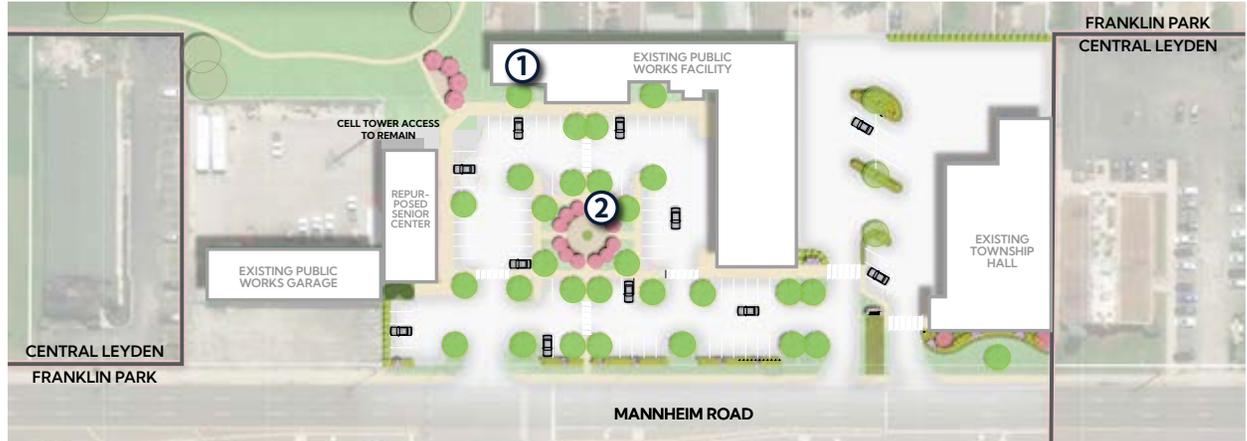
TOWNSHIP CAMPUS IMPROVEMENTS: NEAR-TERM



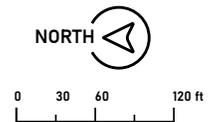
- ① Walking path and gateway around detention basin
- ② Improved sidewalk and landscaping
- ③ Repurpose existing Senior Center
- ④ Landscaped buffer to adjacent neighborhood
- ⑤ Improved entrance and Town Hall



TOWNSHIP CAMPUS IMPROVEMENTS: LONG-TERM



- ① Public services, such as a health center and/or Human and Family Services (if Township Public Works relocates)
- ② Township Plaza (if Township Public Works relocates)



03 CENTRAL LEYDEN GOALS

LAND USE
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
QUALITY HOUSING
OPEN SPACE, RECREATION & NATURAL RESOURCES
PLACEMAKING



CENTRAL LEYDEN GOALS

Central Leyden is composed of the contiguous unincorporated area bounded by Rhodes Avenue on the western edge to 25th Street on the east and from Belmont Avenue on the north to Armitage Avenue on the south. This area is home to approximately 9,000 residents, a variety of businesses, schools, and parks. As an unincorporated area, Leyden Township assumes many of the traditional roles that a municipality would undertake, aside from zoning, which is administered by Cook County. This means that the Township can undertake infrastructure, economic development, land assemblage and environmental efforts that would typically be administered by a municipality.

Central Leyden goals are more detailed and action-oriented, as they rely less on outside entities and may oftentimes be conducted solely by the Township.

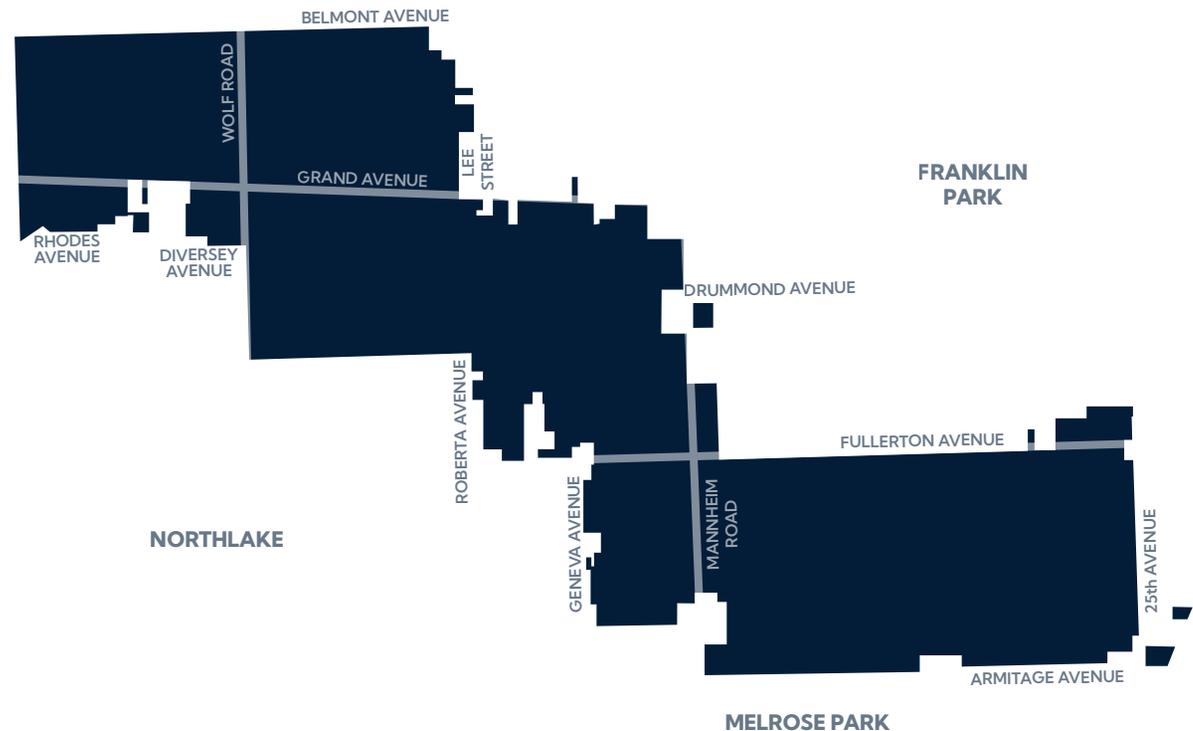
LAND USE is the core component of any comprehensive plan. This refers to the use of land for residential, commercial, open space, or institutional uses, and also highlights potential opportunities for redevelopment.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT refers to policies and programs that can support the tax base and continue to enhance quality of life in the Township by attracting jobs, retail, and services.

QUALITY HOUSING goals encompass the continued maintenance and improvement of housing stock within Central Leyden. The overarching objective of this goal is to provide new housing options while maintaining the area's relative affordability and family-oriented nature.

OPEN SPACE, RECREATION, AND NATURAL RESOURCES encompasses Township-owned parks, natural features such as Silver Creek, privately-owned open space within Central Leyden, and efforts related to sustainability and green infrastructure.

PLACEMAKING is the art and science of creating "quality of place." This includes opportunities to create places for gathering, public art, and urban design features to differentiate Central Leyden from its peer communities.



CENTRAL LEYDEN GOAL: LAND USE

Vision: Promote well-planned development to promote economic investment, stable housing, and quality open spaces in unincorporated areas of the Township.

Land use is the primary focus of any comprehensive plan. Land use in Central Leyden refers to collaboration with Cook County, which oversees zoning, to encourage economically beneficial, compatible, and attractive land uses in the community.

Characteristic of a suburban community, Central Leyden is primarily comprised of traditional single-family detached residential neighborhoods with parks and community institutions (such as schools and churches) interspersed throughout. Commercial land uses are generally confined to major corridors, primarily Mannheim Road and Grand Avenue. Land uses in Central Leyden are characterized as:

Single-family detached residential. This land use consists of traditional single-family houses and is the most common land use within Central Leyden.



Multifamily Residential. Multifamily residential in Central Leyden is generally located within self-contained apartment complexes. These are generally low-rise (two stories) buildings that match the single-family character of the surrounding neighborhoods. Multifamily development is generally situated near or along major arterial corridors.



LAND USE

Commercial. These uses are traditional retail and service businesses, ranging from restaurants to automotive uses. Commercial uses are concentrated along Mannheim Road and, to a lesser extent, Grand Avenue and Wolf Road.



Institutional. These land uses include governmental, religious, and school properties. These uses are generally spread out throughout Central Leyden, often in residential areas. There is also a cluster of institutional uses along Mannheim Road including the Township Campus, fire station, community center, and the forthcoming senior center.



Open Space. Open space is defined as parks or natural areas within Central Leyden. Examples include Fleck, Wagner, and Westdale Parks, all of which are controlled by the Township.



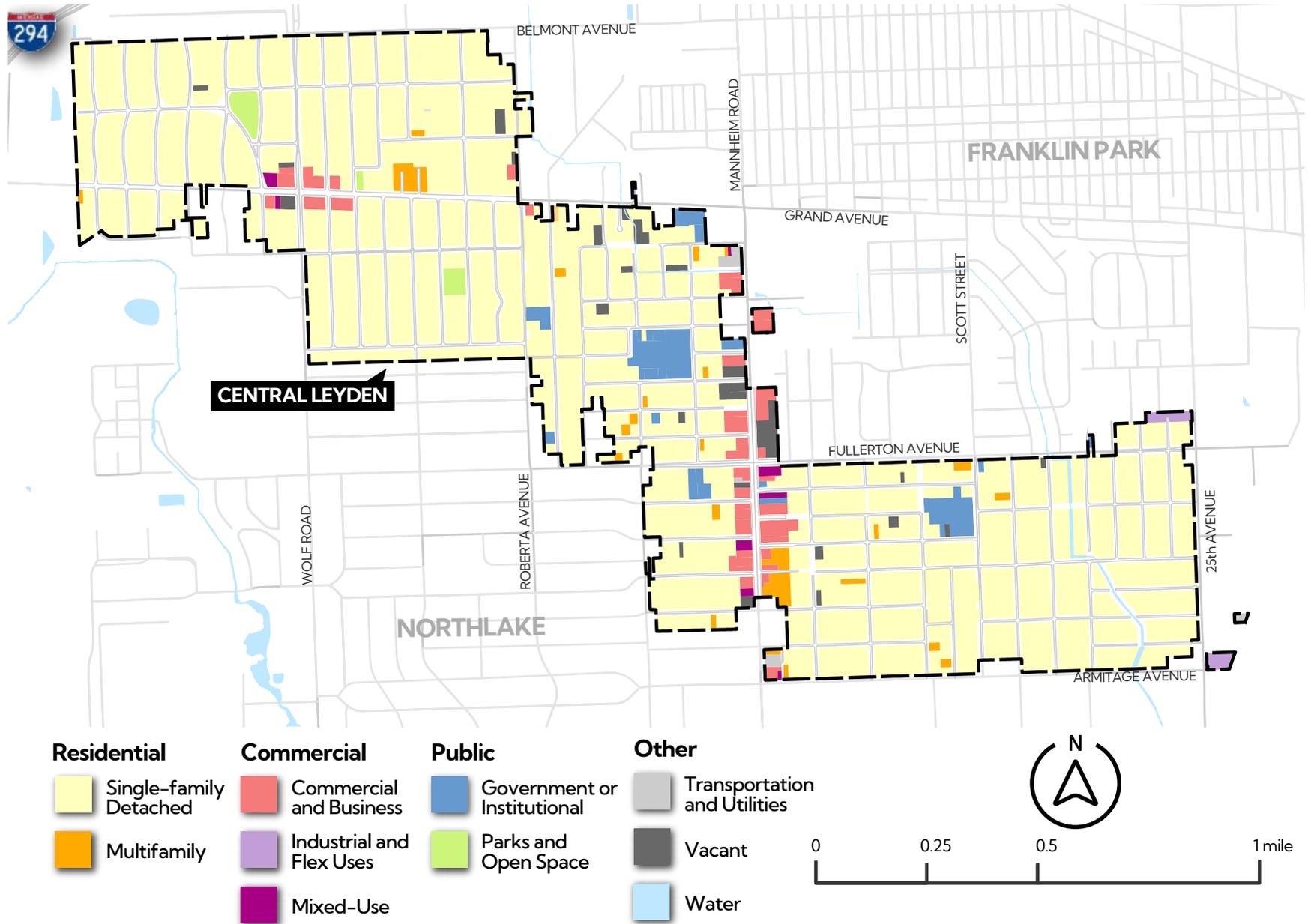
As a largely single-family detached residential community, Central Leyden is similar to its neighbor communities, Franklin Park and Northlake. Small pockets of multifamily residential are interspersed throughout these neighborhoods of primarily single-family homes.

Commercial land uses are mostly concentrated along Mannheim Road and the Wolf Road/Grand Avenue intersection. These include traditional commercial uses, like restaurants, as well as automotive-based uses like car dealerships and gas stations. The presence of high-intensity automotive uses (some of which include outdoor automobile storage) can sometimes feel incompatible with adjacent single-family residential neighborhoods.

Public buildings are concentrated along Mannheim Road, primarily in Leyden Township buildings. Two other public buildings, Scott Elementary and Mannheim Middle Schools, are nestled within single-family residential neighborhoods. Open space within Central Leyden is found in various parks. The Existing Land Use map (Figure 3.1) shows land use patterns in Central Leyden.

LAND USE

**FIGURE 3.1:
EXISTING
LAND USE**



LAND USE

Strategy 1: Continue to pursue high-quality development within Central Leyden.

Though Leyden Township does not have zoning authority, its longstanding relationship with Cook County (which oversees zoning) allows the Township to leverage its position to ensure high-quality development. Further, the Township has been acquiring properties within Central Leyden to assemble viable redevelopment sites. This is an important and effective way to attract high-quality development.

Action: Continue to acquire dilapidated or abandoned properties and/or deleterious land uses. Consider assembling adjacent properties and recruiting developers through requests for proposals and incentives. The Township's should continue its current efforts to revitalize its Mannheim Road commercial corridor through strategic acquisition and redevelopment of properties to attract new development that meets the commercial and residential needs of the Township. Maintaining open lines of communication with property owners along Mannheim Road can also advance efforts to create property assemblages to make more development viable.

The Township may consider expanding property acquisition efforts to areas that experience chronic flooding, are abandoned, or consistently violate property maintenance standards. These properties can be repurposed as residential or commercial development, or as open space for flood control.



Deteriorated buildings can be good candidates for redevelopment. The V-Inn (pictured above) has since been demolished and redevelopment is in progress.

Action: Draft design guidelines for properties along commercial corridors. Design guidelines are an effective tool for communicating Township expectations to property owners and developers. While these guidelines do not provide zoning power to the Township, guidelines provide an objective tool by which the quality of a development is judged. Design guidelines can specify expectations for commercial and multifamily residential development along key corridors, like Mannheim Road, and near key intersections, such as the Wolf Road and Grand Avenue intersection.

Design guidelines provide examples of best practices in design. These best practices may involve the articulation of façades, rooflines, site layout, window coverage, internal circulation, and internal paths. Accordance with these design guidelines can help inform the Township's recommendations to the County for any given development or zoning proposal.

LAND USE

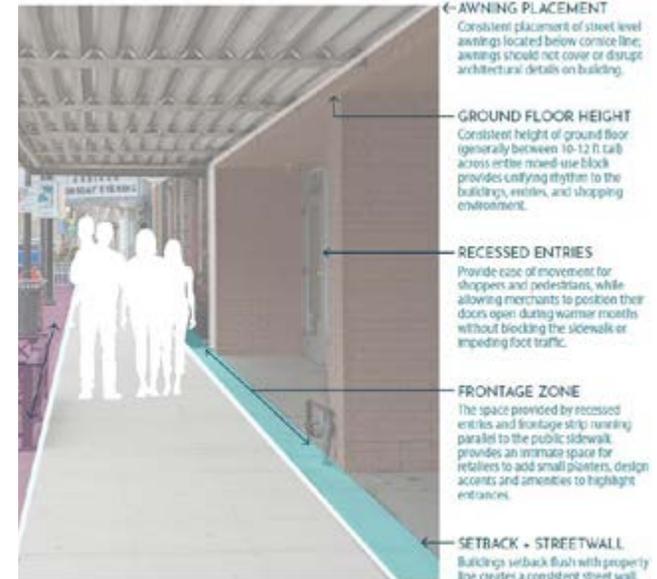
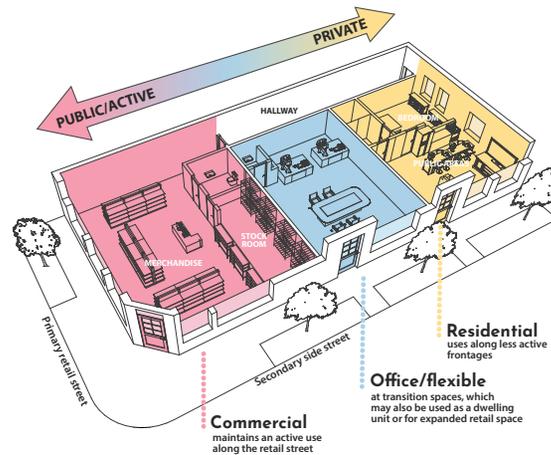
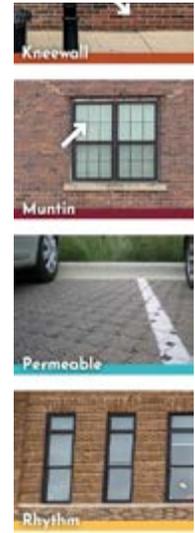
Action: Coordinate with Cook County on zoning and development approvals to align with Leyden Township’s Future Land Use Plan. Leyden Township maintains a close relationship with Cook County, the entity that oversees zoning in unincorporated portions of the County, like Central Leyden. As development proposals are brought forward in Central Leyden or other unincorporated areas, the Township is able to submit comments to the County to better inform development and communicate Township feedback. The Township should continue this relationship and can work with the County to bring zoning into alignment with this plan’s Future Land Use Map (Figure 3.2).

Action: Work proactively with developers to secure master plans for larger development sites to ensure adequate infrastructure and open space. A master planning process can allow for collaboration between the Township, property owner, and developers, particularly when larger sites are targeted for development. This can create opportunities for public benefits like open space, infrastructure improvements, and other community uses.



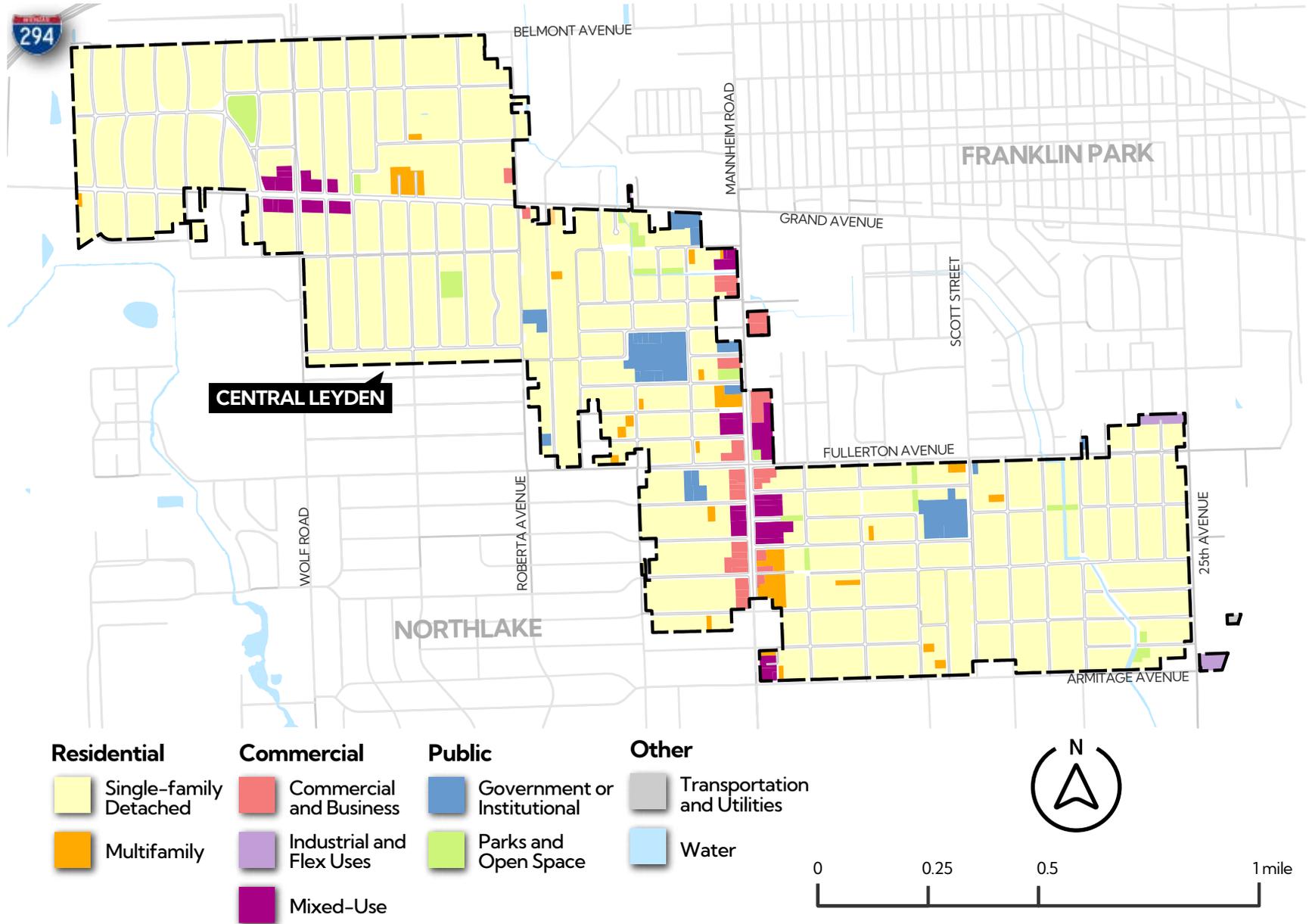
Design guidelines can communicate the Township’s expectations to developers and property owners to advance high-quality design in Central Leyden.

- A Gooseneck Lighting
- B Remove Shingle-Roof Awning, Replace with Sign Panel or Transom Windows, Flat or Blade Signs are appropriate
- C New Awning
- D New Decorative Wood Door
- E Paint Unpainted Aluminum-Frame Windows and Trim to Match (Use Natural colors for walls and trim and reverse lighter colors for accents such as doors, signs, and awnings)
- F Decorative Barber Pole
- G Blade Sign (min 7” height clearance)



LAND USE

**FIGURE 3.2:
FUTURE
LAND USE**



LAND USE

Strategy 2: Promote future development to meet the needs of the Township expressed on the Future Land Use Map.

The Future Land Use Map (Figure 3.2) outlines a long-term vision for land use in Central Leyden.

Future land use follows from existing land uses while capitalizing on redevelopment potential along Mannheim Road and the Wolf Road/Grand Avenue intersection. The Future Land Use map envisions a mixed-use area at Grand Avenue and Wolf Road and revitalized commercial and mixed-use developments along the Mannheim Road corridor. Nodes of density at major intersections, particularly ones served by transit, can create walkable neighborhood centers.

Action: Apply the Future Land Use map.

While the Future Land Use map itself does not change zoning or other land use regulations, it can be utilized for future zoning decisions and development review. The Township can pursue rezoning efforts at high-priority redevelopment sites, such as the parcel on the northeast corner of Mannheim Road and Fullerton Avenue with Cook County.

Action: Establish buffers and screening between residential and non-residential land uses. As the Township reviews development, buffers and screening can be emphasized in commercial and mixed-

use developments that abut single-family residential uses. Additionally, spatial buffers between residential buildings and arterial roadways on mixed-use properties can also be employed to mitigate adverse impacts of noise, light, and glare.

Buffers and screening between the commercial and residential uses can take various forms. Spatial buffers featuring green space and trees can be used to shield residents from noise; where space is limited, vegetative screening in the form of shrubbery or opaque fencing can also protect adjacent residential properties from light and glare. The use of spatial buffers, fencing, or vegetative screening can be defined in future design guidelines.

Action: Consider allowing for “transition” land uses, like small-scale business services, to create a gradient between high-intensity commercial areas and low-density residential areas. The Township can remain open to allowing low-intensity business services, like offices, to serve as a buffer between high-traffic commercial corridors and quiet residential areas. These uses may also include smaller, “missing middle” housing types, which allow for a gradient of density and intensity without adversely impacting existing single-family neighborhood character.

Action: Pursue high-quality multi-family and mixed-use development.

As discussed in the housing element of the plan, there is demand for new multi-family housing that can be accommodated either in purely residential buildings, or as part of mixed-use developments. These buildings are most appropriate for Mannheim Road as shown in Figures 3.3 and 3.4.

Action: Plan for new residential development to preserve space for common open areas, green space, and potential natural areas. Green space is an important amenity within residential development for both existing and new residents. Within multifamily developments, allocating spaces for community greens and plazas grows the open space network and provides spaces for gathering.

For development in sensitive areas, such as properties near Silver Creek, clustered development should be explored that groups buildings together and allows for more green space, natural areas, and floodwater detention. These features can serve as a resiliency tool and open space amenity for residents. This framework can be applied if flood issues persist along creek-adjacent properties.

LAND USE

Mannheim Framework Concept

Maintaining a commercial presence along the Mannheim Road corridor is a central component in the future vision of the corridor, as these uses maintain community vitality, provide amenities to residents, and support a diverse tax base.

The improvement of existing commercial properties along the corridor can enhance the appearance of the corridor without displacing existing businesses. The Township can explore piloting property improvement grants to assist local businesses in this effort.

One such opportunity for redevelopment exists at the former Lido Hotel property, which is a high-visibility parcel that is largely under the control of the Township.

Redevelopment can also be encouraged where Mannheim Road meets Silver Creek, which can allow for the creation of a pedestrian connection to the neighborhood to the west.

**FIGURE 3.3:
MANNHEIM
ROAD
FRAMEWORK,
NORTH**

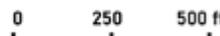


Land Use • Urban Design

- Existing property enhancement opportunity
- Commercial land use or redevelopment
- Multifamily residential land use or redevelopment
- Townhome residential redevelopment
- Mixed-use development opportunity
- Existing open space or future park opportunity
- Planned or improved public building
- Gateway feature opportunity

Transportation • Streetscape

- Intersection improvements and/or realignments
- Mannheim Road streetscape improvement
- Fullerton Avenue pedestrian improvements
- Potential trail
- Potential Pace Pulse stations
- Local street streetscaping opportunity

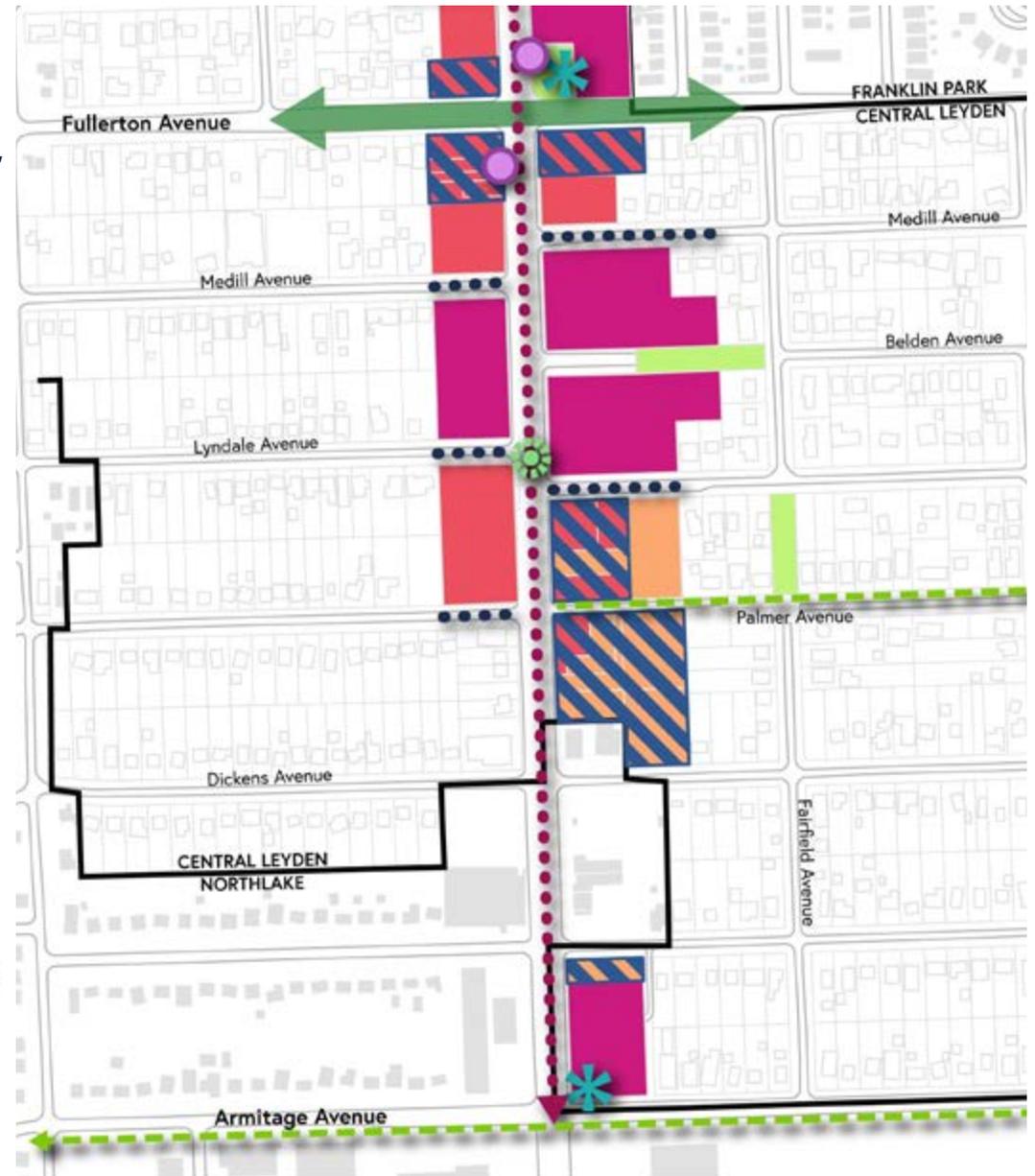


LAND USE

As redevelopment occurs, the Township can work with developers to improve local streets with sidewalks, landscaping, and modal filters to create an attractive transition between residential neighborhoods and a dynamic commercial and mixed-use corridor.

Mixed-use and commercial redevelopment and improvements to existing property can improve the southern gateway to Central Leyden. Certain redevelopment opportunities, like the commercial sites between Medill and Lyndale Avenues on the east side of Mannheim Road can be prioritized to spur further investment along the corridor. This redevelopment can also utilize the Belden Avenue right-of-way to create another pocket park to serve new residents and businesses, provide community benefit to existing residents, and create a promenade between the residential area to the east and the higher-density, more active Mannheim Road corridor.

**FIGURE 3.4:
MANNHEIM
ROAD
FRAMEWORK,
SOUTH**

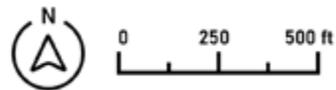


Land Use • Urban Design

- Existing property enhancement opportunity
- Commercial land use or redevelopment
- Multifamily residential land use or redevelopment
- Townhome residential redevelopment
- Mixed-use development opportunity
- Existing open space or future park opportunity
- Planned or improved public building
- Gateway feature opportunity

Transportation • Streetscape

- Intersection improvements and/or realignments
- Mannheim Road streetscape improvement
- Fullerton Avenue pedestrian improvements
- Potential trail
- Potential Pace Pulse stations
- Local street streetscaping



LAND USE



Mannheim today is largely characterized by automobile-oriented retail and high traffic volumes, creating a challenging pedestrian environment. At present, the Township is actively involved in acquiring and redeveloping problem properties.



Mannheim tomorrow will be characterized by revitalized retail with opportunities for housing interspersed throughout. As redevelopment occurs, streetscaping will be gradually improved, culminating in a multimodal environment that accommodates pedestrians and cyclists.



Renderings of the forthcoming senior center and senior housing on Mannheim Road. (Images: Weese Langley Klein Architects)



CENTRAL LEYDEN GOAL: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Vision: Revitalize commercial areas through thoughtful redevelopment efforts at key nodes and corridors, particularly along Mannheim Road, Grand Avenue and Fullerton Avenue.

Economic development is an ongoing priority in Central Leyden. The Township's goals of attracting quality retail, services, and employment are supported by Central Leyden's central location within the region and diverse labor pool. Alongside efforts for commercial properties, residential development can also be pursued along key corridors to increase housing diversity and provide housing options for those not seeking a traditional single-family home. Additional housing units and population growth is one of the best economic development strategies by providing more consumers in a concentrated area.

The Township has focused redevelopment efforts in the unincorporated area, most notably along Mannheim Road. The Township has played an active role in acquiring dilapidated properties, attracting developers, and supporting new investment including redevelopment at Mannheim Road and Nevada Avenue. As Central Leyden continues to evolve, the continued development and enhancement of the community's commercial corridors will allow Central Leyden to capitalize on its location and talent base.

Within Leyden Township at large, significant consumer spending increases are anticipated in grocery, entertainment, dining, and apparel categories. While many businesses may choose to locate within a traditional commercial center in the Township, Mannheim Road and other commercial corridors within

Central Leyden may present an opportunity to capture some of this retail growth. Further, the high level of regional accessibility of Central Leyden can potentially capture spending from outside areas.

Potential target retail development types can include new cultural restaurants that are not currently present in the area (Asian, Mediterranean, etc.), private indoor recreation (fieldhouses, rinks), specialty grocers to cater to the diverse population of the area, and cultural apparel, such as formal or bridal attire with a cultural twist.



MARKET ASSESSMENT AT A GLANCE

A market assessment was prepared for the Plan during the initial existing conditions phase. Demographics, regional and national trends, drive time analysis, and spending potential were considered in developing a market-driven framework to inform Plan recommendations.

The market assessment identified various economic development opportunities within Central Leyden.

- High traffic counts along Mannheim Road can help attract a broader array of cuisines to existing and new commercial spaces.
- A growing diverse population creates opportunities for new cultural apparel and grocery stores.
- Proximity to regional transportation links can attract destination uses, like recreation facilities.
- Chicago O'Hare International Airport's role as a major employer and global travel hub can attract new commercial and residential development to Central Leyden.
- Proximity to distribution facilities makes Central Leyden an advantageous location for new food service or retail businesses.
- Newer retail stock may help draw in new businesses.

LEYDEN TOWNSHIP

93,096
2020 population

34,095
2020 households

2.63
Average household size

38
Median age

85.4%
Percentage of 25+ residents with a high school diploma or equivalent

\$76,542
Median household income

\$282,898
Median home price

\$59,488
Median disposable income

CENTRAL LEYDEN

9,250
2020 population

2,746
2020 households

3.24
Average household size

41
Median age

38.1%
Percentage of 25+ residents with a high school diploma or equivalent

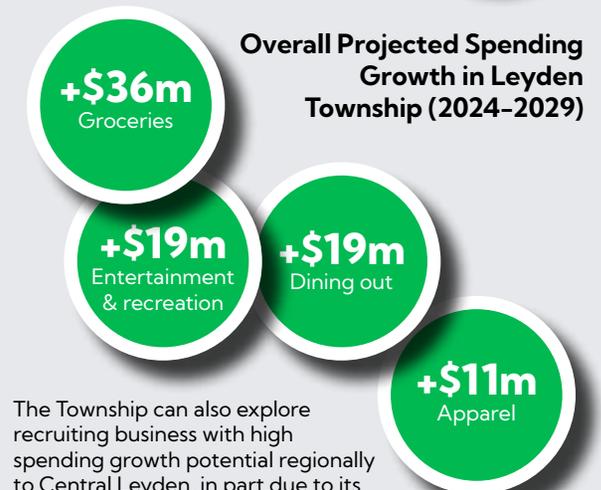
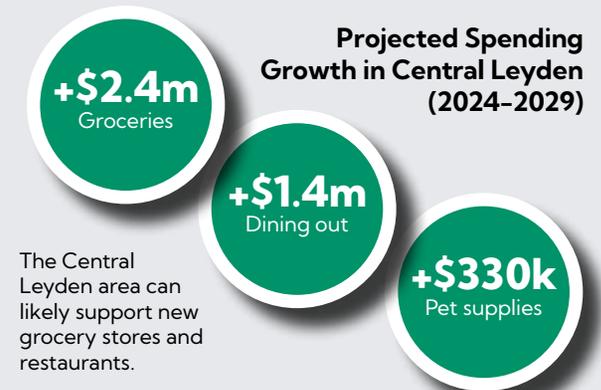
\$72,134
Median household income

\$241,241
Median home price

\$57,208
Median home price

PROJECTED CONSUMER SPENDING

Projected increase in consumer spending, based on product types, from 2024-2029 within Central Leyden and within the Township at large. Opportunities for new businesses can be seized where there are high projected levels of spending increases.



Sources include Esri Business Analyst, US Decennial Census, and American Community Survey data.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Strategy 1: Encourage redevelopment along commercial corridors in the Township.

Continuing to improve and update the commercial stock of Central Leyden is a key step in attracting the desired retail and services to the community. Redevelopment can also improve the aesthetics of Central Leyden's commercial corridors, in turn creating a more welcoming and pleasant environment. These redevelopment opportunities can also advance land use goals of compatible development, mixed land uses, and buffering.

Action: Encourage mixed-use development at the Grand/Wolf intersection and along Mannheim Road. Mixed-use development plays a role in both modernizing housing and commercial stock. The residential component of this development type can help grow the customer and labor pool for local businesses, while the commercial component can advance efforts to attract target businesses.

Major intersections are a natural choice for higher-density development, as the increased traffic counts and visibility can better support retail in these areas and transit connectivity provides more transportation options for residents. Over time, these intersections can serve as "neighborhood centers," and can attract staple businesses to serve the adjacent community of existing and future residents.

A residential component at these mixed-use, high-visibility intersections can further reinforce the feeling of a neighborhood center and provide housing diversity at amenity-rich, transit-served nodes.

Action: Work with property owners to create land assemblages for redevelopment.

The Township can continue and expand its active role in redevelopment along its commercial corridors. By continuing to engage property owners and developers, the Township can create development sites that are suitable for a wide range of opportunities. This is an alternative to parcel-based development along commercial corridors allows for a broader range of uses (as opposed to uses that may not be feasible at a smaller parcel level), which can create a mix of land uses, improved site circulation, and enhanced aesthetics.

Where Township-owned property exists next to a development opportunity, the Township can seek to voluntarily acquire adjacent properties or coordinate a sale or development with the current property owner. This approach creates development sites that are more feasible for a variety of development types and scales and can allow private property owners to receive more when selling property.

Action: Solicit requests for qualifications and/or proposals for Township-owned property on commercial corridors.

Recruiting high quality development should be a process of casting a wide net among developers. A request for qualifications (RFQ) or request for proposals (RFP) can allow various development teams to submit creative proposals for developable land and can allow the Township to contemplate proposals based on alignment with Township goals and public benefit. Such proposals can also allow the Township to negotiate with developers regarding incentives, infrastructure, and partnerships.

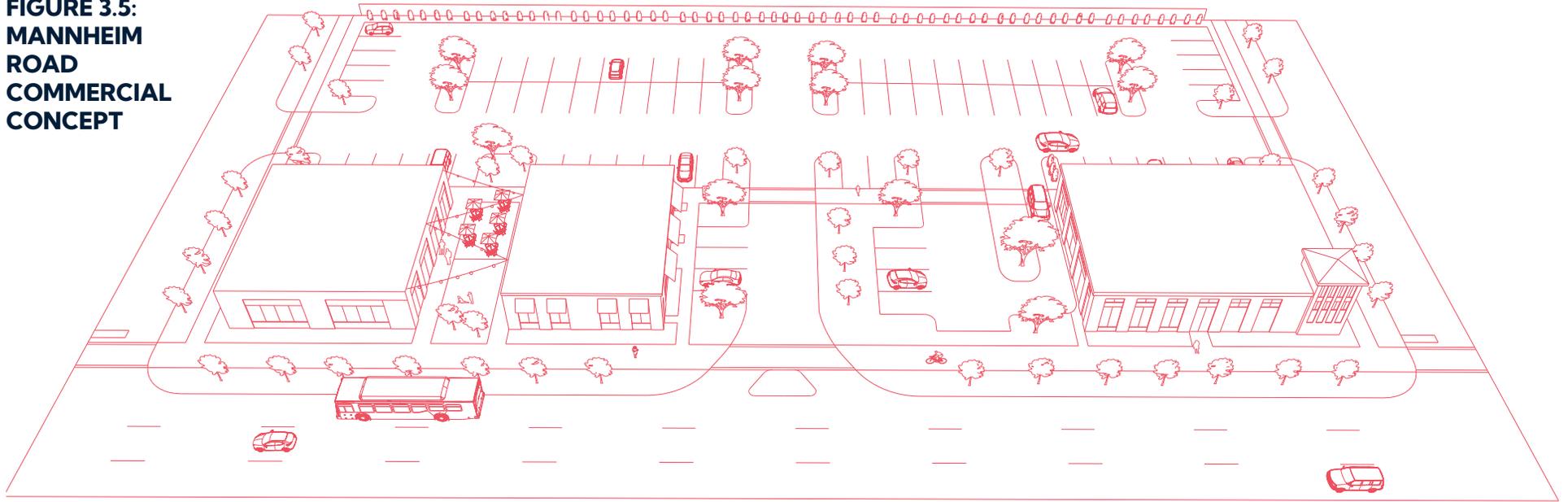
Action: Consider expanding the Franklin Park Enterprise Zone to include Central Leyden or creating a new enterprise zone.

The Illinois Enterprise Zone Program designates areas within the state for economic growth and revitalization. Properties within these zones are afforded numerous incentives to stimulate development, including tax reductions and/or exemptions on construction materials and state gas and electricity taxes.

Exploring the expansion of the Franklin Park Enterprise Zone or the development of a new Enterprise Zone that would include Central Leyden can further catalyze redevelopment on key commercial corridors. Pursuing such a designation would add an additional layer of financial support and incentive to prospective developers.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

**FIGURE 3.5:
MANNHEIM
ROAD
COMMERCIAL
CONCEPT**



Mannheim Road Commercial Redevelopment Concept

Mannheim Road offers high traffic volumes that are attractive to commercial development. The following three pages show three alternative development scenarios. The above concept, depicting a typical block along Mannheim Road, exemplifies a single-story commercial development layout.

Land Planning & Circulation

This concept shows new commercial development facing Mannheim in a walkable

environment with parking behind the stores. The concept shows wider sidewalks along Mannheim to create a safer environment. Reducing curb cuts onto Mannheim can also improve the pedestrian environment, and consolidating multiple curb cuts into a single right-in/right-out access can achieve this. Allocating parking to the rear of commercial buildings will further improve the streetscape and allow for access for both motorists and pedestrians. An internal sidewalk network should would allow visitors to park and visit multiple establishments within a given development. Lastly, landscaping can both facilitate a comfortable pedestrian

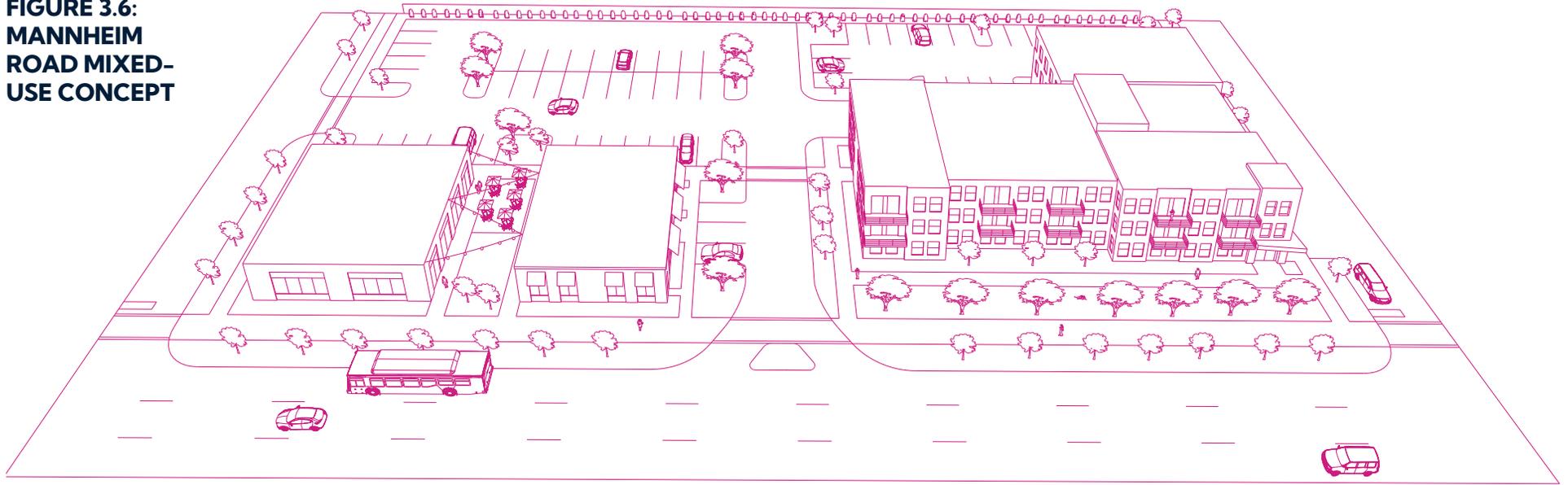
experience and screen nearby properties from development.

Architecture & Open Space

When feasible, the clustering of buildings should be encouraged to create a plaza framed by commercial buildings that allows for outdoor dining and public enjoyment; awnings and overhead lighting can further enhance visitor experience. When development abuts a corner, architectural features (like clocks, belfries, or cupolas) can create memorable vantage points and distinguish commercial centers.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

**FIGURE 3.6:
MANNHEIM
ROAD MIXED-
USE CONCEPT**



Mannheim Road Mixed-Use Redevelopment Concept

Mixed-use development can leverage Mannheim Road's high traffic volumes for commercial development and provide needed housing diversity. The above concept, illustrates two single-story retail buildings along with a three-story residential building.

Land Planning & Circulation

The block is design for both the commercial buildings and the residential building to face Mannheim Road. Wider sidewalks

are provided to improve the pedestrian experience. The residential building is set back further to allow for green space and to serve as a buffer to Mannheim Road. The buildings are scaled to minimize impacts on residential neighborhoods behind Mannheim.

Architecture & Open Space

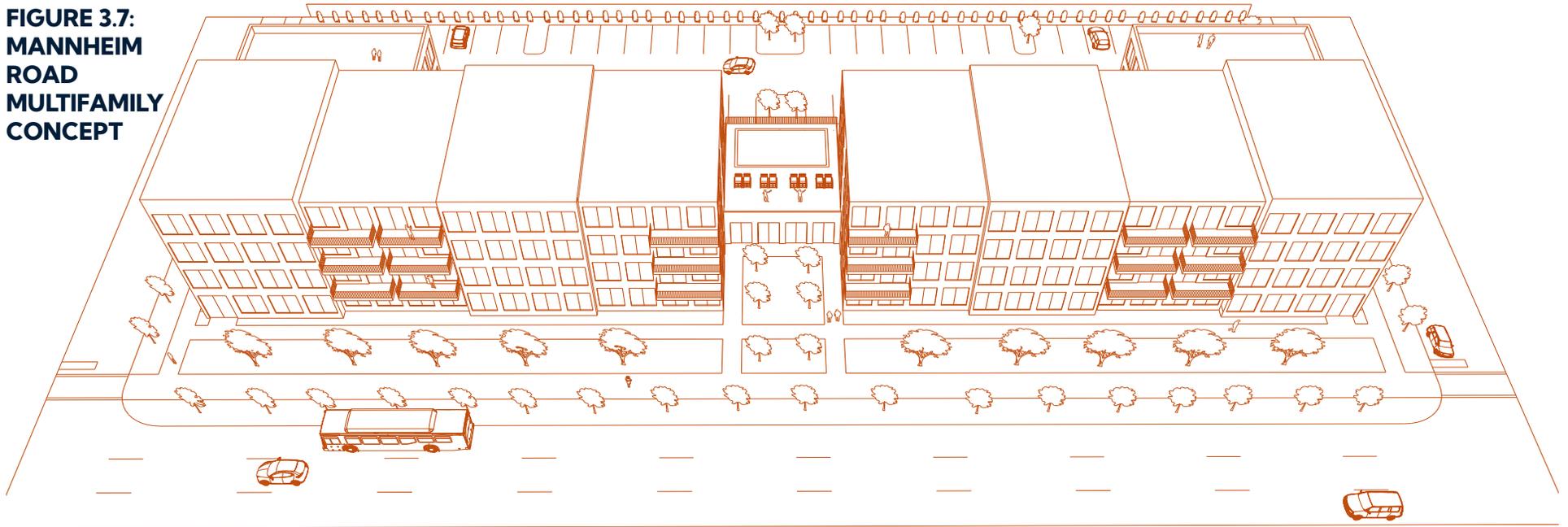
The architectural design should improve the character and desirability of development along Mannheim Road through doors and windows facing Mannheim and increased landscaping and open spaces both between buildings and along the road.

Parking lots can be designed with landscaping and non-obtrusive lighting to minimize sound and light impacts on residential areas behind the development.

Residential development should be set back from Mannheim Road and utilize its corners for entryways, awnings, or other welcoming and distinctive features.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

**FIGURE 3.7:
MANNHEIM
ROAD
MULTIFAMILY
CONCEPT**



Mannheim Road Multifamily Residential Redevelopment Concept

Mannheim Road's high level of connectivity and services allows the corridor to accommodate multifamily residential, which can help diversify Central Leyden's housing stock. The above concept, depicting a standard block along Mannheim Road, illustrates a four-story residential building.

Land Planning & Circulation

The existing sidewalk can be widened to accommodate a multi-use path and open space to buffer noise from Mannheim Road. Allocating parking in the rear of the structure and positioning vehicular access along local streets will further improve the pedestrian environment along Mannheim Road. Rear parking should be screened with fences, trees, and shrubbery to mitigate impact on nearby residential properties.

Architecture and Open Space

Architectural variety including balconies, extrusions, and set backs should be used to break up the massing of the building. When a building extends for the entire block, an amenity area, terrace, or open space should be used to break up the facade. To reduce impact on adjacent property, stepbacks are encouraged in the rear of the structure. Plentiful landscaping along Mannheim and the sidestreets will reduce heat island and create a more pleasing environment.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Strategy 2: Market the Township to businesses and visitors.

The notion of Central Leyden as a “place” refers the concept that Central Leyden should be referred to by what it is (as Central Leyden or another name), rather than by what it is not (as “Unincorporated Leyden Township”).

Through a defined identity, Central Leyden can begin to market itself as a destination for businesses and residents. While the majority of Mannheim Road is likely to remain a suburban commercial corridor, mixed-use centers at the Fullerton/Mannheim and Grand/Wolf intersections can become local destinations for dining and events. To create a successful marketing strategy for the Central Leyden, a unified identity should be maintained, but messaging should differentiate between consumers and prospective business owners and entrepreneurs.

Action: Develop a Central Leyden brand.

As a community along the Mannheim Road commercial corridor, there is an opportunity for Central Leyden to identify and distinguish itself from peer communities. A brand can be utilized both for marketing materials and physical infrastructure. A

Central Leyden brand can be employed in gateway signage, banners, benches, and other public amenities in the community.

Action: Identify opportunities to utilize the brand through banners, signage, and social media. Physical features can distinguish Central Leyden from its counterparts. Banners along commercial corridors can be employed as lighting or other streetscape enhancements are introduced. Conversely, signage should be selectively applied at high visibility locations, such as monument signage at prominent intersections. Consistent use of the brand through social media can reach a wide range of users.

Action: Utilize the brand in business recruitment efforts. The Central Leyden brand can be useful in recruitment efforts, particularly through print and digital media. Marketing should vary depending on the audience, such as entrepreneurs, prospective visitors, and residents.



Potential branding can convey a modern image of Central Leyden and can be easily translated to signage, web, and print materials.

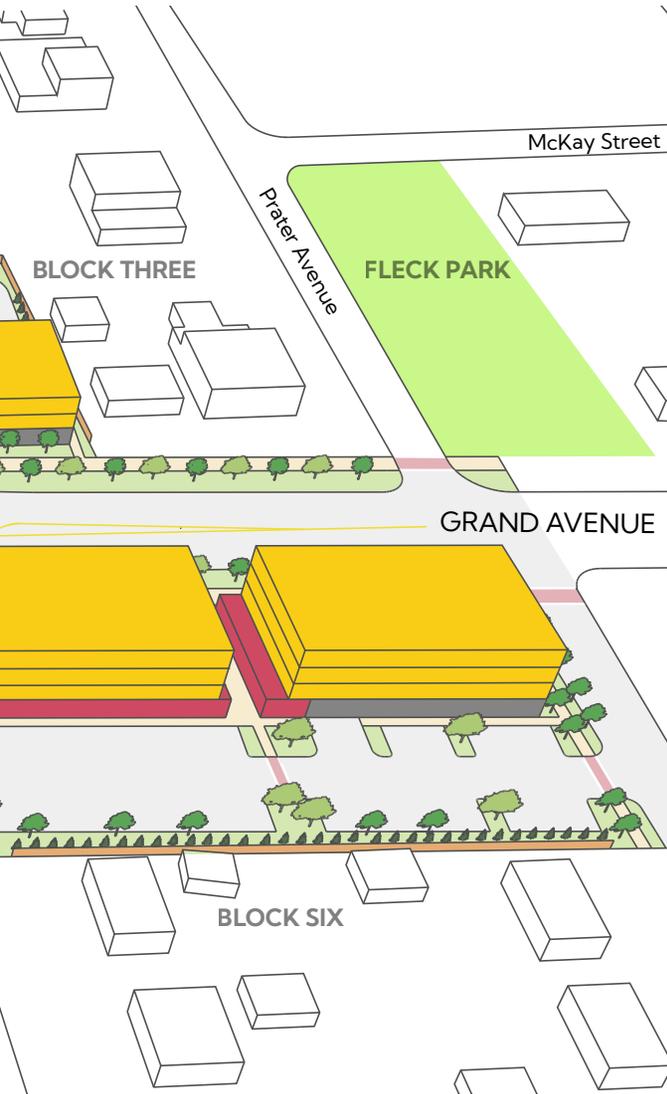
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



FIGURE 3.8: GRAND AVENUE & WOLF ROAD MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT

 COMMERCIAL/ RETAIL	 RESIDENTIAL	 EXISTING BUILDING	 OPEN SPACE/ PARKS	 GARAGE PARKING
---	--	---	--	---

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



Grand Avenue & Wolf Road Mixed-Use Development Concept

The commercial area surrounding the intersection of Wolf Road and Grand Avenue can potentially serve as a mixed-use neighborhood center for its surrounding neighborhood. While traffic volumes along Grand Avenue are high enough to support retail and commercial businesses (24,200 vehicles per day), it is low enough to not preclude residential development due to traffic volume or noise with the appropriate design and scale.

This area offers an opportunity to diversify Central Leyden's housing stock with newer multifamily and townhome options and to develop modern retail spaces to attract desired stores, restaurants, and services. As development occurs, improvements to the public realm, such as open space, improved sidewalks, and streetscaping can be undertaken.

Transportation & Circulation

A multimodal transportation network to serve the neighborhood through vehicular, cycling, transit, and pedestrian connections can better develop the Grand/Wolf area as a mixed-use neighborhood center. As redevelopment occurs, the improvement or addition of sidewalks along major roads and local streets can better facilitate pedestrian movement; developing a multi-use path on both sides of

Grand Avenue can further improve pedestrian and cycling connectivity. With adequate right-of-way along much of Grand Avenue for off-street trails, the segment in the Grand/Wolf area can serve as first segment for a future trail.

Where feasible, roadway improvements such as landscaping, curb and gutter, high-visibility crosswalks, and intersection alignment can improve safety and comfort for all road users. The reduction of curb cuts along major roads, like Grand Avenue and Wolf Road can reduce vehicular conflicts and improve the bicycle and pedestrian experience.

Architecture & Land Planning

Architecture that engages the street is an important aspect of creating a memorable mixed-use center. Maintaining a retail presence along Grand Avenue will allow for intrigue for pedestrians and passersby. Where ground floor space is used for lobby areas, parking, or other non-active use, the provision of street facing windows is encouraged so as not to create a monolithic facade.

Ground floor retail should be accessible by the sidewalk and rear parking, allowing ease of access for all visitors. Opportunities to create plazas or other open spaces can be seized near buildings and retail spaces. Rear parking should be screened from adjacent residential areas with fencing, trees, and/or shrubbery to reduce glare on existing adjacent homes.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Block One

The western portion of this block offers an opportunity for a larger commercial building or mixed-use development. A new development can help provide a gateway to the Grand/Wolf district. A small pocket park along Marion Avenue can reduce impacts on adjacent properties.

Block Two

The preservation of Ozzie's Deli, an existing and successful business, should be prioritized as development occurs. New development can assist in formalizing and beautifying its existing parking area. The property to the north (2921 Wolf Road) can take the form of townhomes of other "missing middle" housing to create an urban gradient between the intersection and single-family neighborhood to the north. Owing to the small size of the parcel east of Ozzie's, freestanding retail is best suited for this site and a realigned Laporte Avenue can accommodate open space.

Block Three

A smaller-scale mixed-use development (maximum three stories) can provide housing diversity, updated retail space, and improved streetscaping without overwhelming existing single-family homes to its east. To provide adequate resident and retail parking, only the corner portion of the ground floor can be used for retail space. A realigned Laporte Avenue can provide a new pocket park green space that can be utilized by residents or the retail tenant for outdoor dining.

Block Four

The high-visibility block, featuring corner frontage on Wolf Road and Grand Avenue, offers retail and mixed-use development opportunities. Due to high traffic counts, freestanding retail is best suited for the eastern portion of the block to both capture passersby as customers and to shield residential from traffic noise; architecture of these buildings should engage the corner. There is an opportunity to create an outdoor dining space or a plaza near this retail area if designed well and buffered from the street. To the west, mixed-use development can provide a gateway to the area and utilize shared parking with the retail use to the east.



Pocket parks in new development can instill a sense of place and support businesses.



A mixed-use building engages the street with storefronts while providing parking and separate entrances for patrons in the rear.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



Minor improvements, like landscaping and outdoor seating, can reinvigorate older retail centers.

Block Five

The current retail center can be preserved and improved. Such opportunities include improving parking lot landscaping and the repositioning of part of the westernmost retail space to allow for a pocket park and to improve truck maneuverability in the rear alley.



Plazas framed by buildings create intimate and memorable spaces for gathering and enjoyment.

Block Six

Block Six offers an opportunity for the redevelopment of the Grand Avenue frontage. The articulation of building facades can reduce the monolithic facade of the mixed-use buildings. A central plaza between buildings can improve access between the street, retail, and rear parking areas while also providing outdoor space for public enjoyment. Due to the depth of the lots, a building height of up to four stories is suitable, as the building's distance from existing single-family homes reduces shadows and incompatible scale.



Small renovations to public parks can help support temporary or seasonal activation.

Fleck Park

Fleck Park is a small neighborhood park featuring a pavilion, planters, and walking path. The Township is investing in park improvements such as lighting, improved parking areas, and other functional improvements. Continuing improvements and exploring activation of this park (such as for farmers markets) will allow Fleck Park to integrate into the activity within the Grand/Wolf mixed-use center.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Strategy 3: Incubate local businesses.

Leyden Township is an entrepreneurial community, and Central Leyden exemplifies this spirit through its high number of home businesses and small businesses. As these businesses mature, an economic priority of the Township is to keep these operations within the community and formalize their location into a suitable commercial or industrial space.

The Township can play an active role in transitioning new businesses from home-based operations to traditional commercial operations. Maintaining an active line of communication with businesses and communicating programs, grants, and other business development incentives can continue help maintain the robust business ecosystem present in Central Leyden. Such efforts advance economic development goals of expanding the range of goods and services available to Central Leyden residents, adding commercial uses to the community to attract visitors, and increasing employment opportunities within the Township.

Action: Attract additional restaurants

Central Leyden's location along major arterials and thoroughfares creates an opportunity for the community to attract cultural restaurants that are less common in Central Leyden and surrounding communities. The central location of the community and its proximity to various food distribution warehouses can also be an asset in attracting food-based industries.

In addition to public-facing restaurants, other operations, such as catering or food preparation, can also take advantage of the strategic logistical location of Central Leyden. These uses can potentially be housed in flex space or other commercial spaces not prominently situated along commercial corridors.

Action: Explore a regular farmers market in the community. The introduction of a farmers market to the community can both support nascent food industries within Central Leyden and provide an amenity for residents and visitors. By identifying a public property suitable for this occasional use, the Township can introduce fresh food options, attract visitors, and support local businesses.

Action: Encourage live/work housing types to offer formal space for home business owners. Live/work housing is a housing type that is suited to the operations of home businesses. These properties are often developed like townhomes, with the first floor remaining a flexible space that can be used as an office, light commercial use, or expanded living space. This housing type is well suited to cater to those who work from home.

Live/work housing can support existing business districts and could be explored near the Mannheim Road corridor or along Grand Avenue. Because of the scale of these housing types, the development of live/

work housing should not occur in traditional single-family residential neighborhoods but could serve as a transitional use between high-intensity commercial uses and single-family housing.

Action: Consider allowing storefront to open pop-ups or host rotating food vendors.

While retail space in Central Leyden remains well-tenanted, identifying a commercial space that supports rotating start-up retail for a fixed period of time can assist prospective business owners in transitioning to formal commercial spaces. The Township can consider allocating space for rotating food vendors or retail pop-ups in new redevelopment that occurs along Mannheim Road or Grand Avenue by coordinating with the developer and future property owner(s), particularly in instances when the Township assists in land acquisition or assemblage.



An example of live/work housing.

CENTRAL LEYDEN GOAL: QUALITY HOUSING

Vision: Support homeownership opportunities, quality rental housing, and new housing development that serves the demand for all residents.



Housing is an essential consideration in all planning efforts. Central Leyden's attainable housing stock remains a key factor in the community's ability to draw in new families. However, like most inner-ring suburban communities, Central Leyden's housing stock is primarily single-family detached housing and largely consists of homes over 50 years in age. Exploring opportunities to update the community's housing stock can include the renovation and updating of existing homes, the development of new housing units, and the diversification of housing units to meet changing demands. Diversifying housing units in Central Leyden can better meet the broader housing demand in the region, which seeks townhome, multifamily, and rental options in addition to traditional single-family detached residential.

Per 2024 US Census Bureau estimates, Central Leyden has 2,894 occupied housing units, of which 76% are owner-occupied and 24% are rental units. Central Leyden has a housing vacancy rate of 6.1%, which is considered low for the region and lower than the overall vacancy rate in Leyden Township at large (2.7%, which is considered very tight). The average household size is 3.24 in Central Leyden, signaling a high proportion of families. There are opportunities for housing types for seniors, empty-nesters, and young professionals. Maintaining a quality, primarily single-family character in Central Leyden while expanding housing choices is a focus of this chapter.

QUALITY HOUSING

Strategy 1: Support improvements to existing housing stock.

Central Leyden’s single-family and limited multifamily housing stock is an essential characteristic of the community that promotes a family-friendly environment and affordability. By supporting improvements to existing homes, the Township can continue to ensure high-quality appearance and safe building standards in a manner that maintains the attainability of the community. The Township can both work with property owners directly in improving the condition of housing within Central Leyden, and act as a conduit to communicate outside resources to property owners within the community.



Action: Seek Township enforcement of property standards and code violations. Zoning and property standards within Central Leyden are administered and enforced by Cook County. As a larger entity, the County is not always able to promptly discover and address property standards and code violations in a timely manner. To better address local issues relating to property standards, the Township can seek to administer and enforce these efforts in-house by being delegated this authority from the County.

Locally-led enforcement of building codes through the Township can better identify and enforce property standards. Further, the Township’s visible role within the community can allow for cooperative communication between property owners and the Township, potentially allowing quicker resolutions to code violation issues.

Action: Continue to communicate information about public and private subsidies and grants to property owners. The Township works with its partner municipalities to communicate resources for property improvement, as well as within Central Leyden. Communicating these programs will provide Central Leyden property owners with a range of options for assistance in property maintenance and improvement. These programs can include weatherization and energy efficiency.



While street and driveway parking are legal, property maintenance issues, like parking in front yards, are concerns in Central Leyden.



QUALITY HOUSING

Action: Work with local institutions to establish a homeownership program. The high presence of homeowners creates economic stability within Central Leyden. As a community that attracts young families through its affordability, a homeownership down payment assistance and counseling program can provide support and resources to families and individuals living in the community or aspiring to live in the community, allowing opportunities for economic advancement.

Leyden Township can engage local institutions, such as West Cook Homeownership Center, to provide homeownership counseling to interested individuals and families.

Action: Explore the feasibility of Township-led improvement grants and programs, such as roof repair, accessibility improvements, and emergency repairs. The Township currently maintains a “handyman program” to assist elderly and disabled Leyden Township residents in minor home repair and maintenance programs. To maintain a high-quality housing stock, the Township can explore further programs for residents living in the unincorporated area, such as grants that provide relief to homeowners seeking repairs for structural integrity, accessibility, and code compliance.

Leyden Township can also seek funding from the Illinois Housing Development Authority (IHDA) through its Home Repair and Accessibility Program (HRAP) to provide income-eligible homeowners with financial assistance in limited home repairs (roofs, accessibility, porches, stairs). Such a program can both promote Township-based contractors and improve the quality of Central Leyden’s existing housing stock.



QUALITY HOUSING

Strategy 2: Support the development of new multifamily housing.

Housing in Central Leyden consists overwhelmingly of single-family detached housing built in the 1950s and 1960s. While this housing stock provides an affordable option for families seeking traditional homes, there are relatively few options for households seeking other forms of housing; these groups include young professionals, seniors, singles, and those seeking higher-end housing options.

Central Leyden should remain primarily a single-family community into the future; however, opportunities for diverse housing types, like townhomes, duplexes, and multifamily residential, can be seized on or near Central Leyden's major commercial corridors. The siting of these development types on or near commercial areas allows the community's established neighborhoods to maintain a single-family character while providing new residents close proximity to stores, services, and transportation amenities along major roads.

Action: Identify opportunities for mixed-use development at key nodes. "Nodes" in Leyden Township refer to areas where transportation options, service-based amenities, and/or open space converge in Central Leyden. These key nodes are situated along the primary roadways within the Township: Grand Avenue, Mannheim Road, and Wolf Road. These nodes include areas around existing and planned transit facilities and locations where major streets intersect, like the corner of Fullerton Avenue and Mannheim Road.

Mixed-use redevelopment of strategic properties along these corridors provides an opportunity to diversify housing options by adding townhome, apartment, and condominium options, as well as an opportunity to update the community's commercial stock in order to attract high-quality retail, dining, and service-based businesses. Where space allows, commercial and residential options can coexist on the same property or within the same building as mixed-use development. Such development can create walkable clusters within Central Leyden, providing an area for community and commerce that benefits current and future residents. Where feasible, the Township can work with the developer to introduce open space, plazas, and other small community-focused elements in mixed-use developments to provide additional community benefits. (See Figure 3.6)

Action: Continue to assemble sites for new housing development. New housing construction in Central Leyden will provide needed housing diversity in the community.

By supporting new housing development and the continued improvement of the existing housing stock, Leyden Township can add newer, potentially higher-end housing options to the community in order to better accommodate a broad range of housing demands. The Township may also seek to support other housing types, such as townhomes, multifamily residential, and senior housing in key locations near transportation and services. (See Figure 3.7)

Action: Identify locations for townhome development. Townhome and small multi-family housing can provide housing diversity at a visual scale that does not overwhelm nearby single-family residential neighborhoods. While such housing developments should not be situated directly within residential neighborhoods, they can serve as a transition between traditional suburban residential neighborhoods and high-intensity commercial corridors.

QUALITY HOUSING

Action: Continue the acquisition of vacant or dilapidated properties for the development of new housing. Leyden Township has an active partnership with both Cook County and the Cook County Land Bank to acquire abandoned properties in the community. This allows the Township to proactively acquire properties that are property tax delinquent, usually due to abandonment, and assess opportunities for their return to productive use. The Township has employed these tactics to address problem buildings and create open space and development opportunities.

Continuing to remain active in monitoring and acquiring these properties advances efforts to maintain a quality and updated housing stock. The Township can consider leveraging the Land Bank's partnerships with developers and contractors to improve these properties or, in certain instances, develop new homes.



Dilapidated or abandoned housing in Central Leyden offers an opportunity for the Township's continued collaboration with the County and Land Bank to acquire property for future housing. By acquiring these properties, the Township, Land Bank, and/or County can assess the viability of rehabilitating the property or choose to redevelop the site as a productive residential use.

QUALITY HOUSING



A pair of newly-renovated homes in Central Leyden exhibit the various exterior treatments that can be considered when updating aging housing stock.

CENTRAL LEYDEN GOAL: OPEN SPACE, RECREATION & NATURAL RESOURCES

Vision: Maintain and improve parks, recreation and open spaces that serve local residents and visitors, while promoting sustainable practices to preserve natural resources.

The Township maintains a public parks within Central Leyden, allowing Leyden Township to directly improve, and expand its open space network. Central Leyden also falls within the Veterans Park District boundaries. Alongside a network of open spaces utilized both for environmental and recreational purposes, natural features in Central Leyden include two stretches of Silver Creek, which flows through seven communities before meeting the Des Plaines River. Other natural and environmental features within the community include its tree canopy and other natural and built infrastructure related to sustainability and resilience.

As a highly-developed community, open space and natural areas are important amenities for resident health and quality of life. Continuing to improve and grow this network will allow more opportunities for the community to gather, recreate, and connect with nature. Open spaces can also include green infrastructure, such as rain gardens and wetlands that reduce the community's vulnerability to adverse weather events. Additional sustainability initiatives and policies can further improve quality of life, health, and recreational opportunities within the Central Leyden area in concert with nearby communities.



“The area needs some inspiring structure and space where people can feel more free.”

-Public Comment



Unimproved Diversey Avenue right-of-way

OPEN SPACE, RECREATION & NATURAL RESOURCES

Strategy 1: Maintain and improve existing Township parks.

Leyden Township maintains six parks within the Central Leyden community: Coach Jim Wagner Park, Fleck Park, Landen Street Park, Lee Street Park, Westdale Park, and a newly-built pocket park along the Fairfield Avenue right-of-way. Another park is planned for the former V-Inn Motel property at the intersection of Nevada Avenue and Mannheim Road. At the time of plan writing, Westdale Park, Lee Street Park, and Fleck Park have seen improvements to equipment and other infrastructure.

Continuing to actively assess and monitor the condition of Township parks and periodically adjusting infrastructure and programming to better suit community needs will ensure Township-maintained parks remain a valuable asset for residents. Continued upgrades may be undertaken by the Township and larger projects may be pursued in tandem with outside entities, like the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, Cook County, neighboring municipalities, schools, or nonprofit organizations.

Action: Seek grants for open space improvements and modernization.

Remaining appraised of available resources and opportunities to improve and modernize open space will allow Leyden Township to efficiently pool resources to maintain vital community features.

Programs through the State and non-profit organizations can offer opportunities to improve open space features while minimizing costs to the Township. Potential opportunities within Central Leyden include sidewalks, ballfield improvements, and new seating and shelters.

Action: Explore additional programming opportunities at parks. Parks in Central Leyden today are programmed with equipment and facilities such as playgrounds, grassy fields, pavilions, and ballfields. As the Township continues to improve, grow, additional offerings can be explored to provide a broader range of open space amenities to local residents.

The Township can explore emerging trends in recreation, such as “nature play” facilities, wherein playgrounds are re-imagined as flexible nature-based areas that encourage children to build and explore. Pickleball is another recreation trend that can be explored; however, due to the noise generated by such activities, this should be situated away from residential buildings.

As the Township explores new open spaces along Silver Creek or within unimproved rights-of-way, more passive, natural open space amenities can be explored as well. Nature-forward open spaces should employ native landscaping like prairie grasses or wetland features that provide both aesthetic enhancements and increased resiliency for

extreme weather. One such opportunity for a passive natural open space exists at the future floodwater detention area at McLean Avenue east of Silver Creek.



Nature play areas allow children to participate in unstructured play with natural elements, which can foster a deeper connection with nature and can improve cognitive development.

OPEN SPACE, RECREATION & NATURAL RESOURCES

Strategy 2: Grow the open space network.

Central Leyden currently has about 7.25 acres of publicly-accessible open space per 10,000 residents, which will increase to about 8.25 acres upon the completion of the forthcoming park at Nevada Avenue and Mannheim Road. The Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) recommends ten acres of open space per 10,000 residents in less dense or suburban communities, and adjacent municipalities like Chicago have a citywide average 41 acres of existing open space per 10,000 residents. Ten to twenty acres per 10,000 residents is considered adequate in urban areas.

While Central Leyden is largely built out, opportunities to gradually grow its network of open space can be taken as opportunities arise. Future open space opportunities can better distribute the quantity of open space in the community, which today is largely situated on the west side of Mannheim Road.

Action: Explore Township-owned rights-of-way as potential open space areas.

Numerous unimproved rights-of-way that are controlled by the Township exist within Central Leyden. These are areas in which unimproved right-of-way refers to publicly-owned land intended for streets whereupon a roadway has not been constructed. The unimproved Fairfield Avenue right-of-way between Lyndale and Palmer Avenues was converted to a small pocket park in early

2024, providing a trail to connect the two blocks and discouraging through-traffic within the residential neighborhood. The construction of this park became the first Township-operated open space east of Mannheim Road.

The Township can continue to assess its landholdings within Central Leyden to determine the need and potential utility for open space. Such rights-of-way can provide pedestrian connectivity, small recreational areas, and potential opportunities for stormwater management and natural features. Potential rights-of-way that can be considered for open space include:

- Belden Avenue between Emerson and Ruby Streets.
- Diversey Avenue between Geneva and Granville Avenues.
- Kirschoff Avenue between Fullerton and Medill Avenues.



An unimproved portion of the Fairfield Avenue right-of-way was recently converted into a pocket park with a trail, pavilion, and small play features. This open space injects the neighborhood with public green space and creates a convenient pedestrian and bike connection.

OPEN SPACE, RECREATION & NATURAL RESOURCES

Action: Work with developers to incorporate open space into new development. As new development occurs within Central Leyden, continued communication between the Township, County, property owner, and developer can secure high-quality development with neighborhood benefits. Including open space, such as courtyards, plazas, or other greenery can create amenities for residents and visitors. Where space allows, public space can be used for events and/or outdoor dining, creating a more attractive and unique development to entice prospective tenants to choose Central Leyden.

Action: Work with intergovernmental partners to identify opportunities for open space as infrastructure projects occur. As infrastructure projects are undertaken by State and regional partners, like the Illinois Department of Transportation, transit agencies, and the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District, the Township can identify and take opportunities to grow its open space network through the incorporation of public spaces within new infrastructure. One example of this may include the incorporation of benches, natural features, and other passive recreation infrastructure at flood control facilities. These opportunities can be prioritized along Silver Creek, which includes areas that experience chronic flooding, contain vacant or delinquent properties and unimproved rights-of-way near its course, and are part of a nascent trail network.



A mixed-use development contains a public green space.



Construction of a stormwater management basin and public park in Robbins. (Image: MWRD)

OPEN SPACE, RECREATION & NATURAL RESOURCES



Strategy 3: Improve public access to Silver Creek.

Silver Creek is a unique feature within Central Leyden and the Township at large. Originally a meandering prairie creek, its course became channelized and rigid as land within Central Leyden became parceled out and sold for development.

Like many small creeks throughout suburban Chicagoland, much of Silver Creek has been buried or obscured behind private property. In recent years, however, small creeks have increasingly become public amenities as communities pursue opportunities to create open space along these water features.

Within Illinois, communities like Champaign, Crystal Lake, and North Chicago have worked with conservation and State agencies to “daylight” portions of creeks that have been buried and conveyed through culverts. This process can improve the ecological health of the waterway, assist in flood mitigation, and provide visual enhancement and passive recreation options for residents.

With significant progress being made into turning Silver Creek into a public amenity, like Melrose Park’s new canoe launch near the Des Plaines River, the Township can leverage its creek-adjacent areas as an ecological- and recreation-focused corridor for public enjoyment.

Action: Advance initiatives identified the Silver Creek Watershed-based Plan.

Published by the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in 2016, the Silver Creek Watershed-based Plan identified strategies to improve water quality, habitat, green infrastructure, and environmental education in and around Silver Creek. Continuing to work with adjacent communities and regional organizations to emphasize the health of Silver Creek can be an effective and transformative effort that addresses the entire length of the creek, rather than a piecemeal approach within respective governmental boundaries.

OPEN SPACE, RECREATION & NATURAL RESOURCES

Action: Acquire vacant or delinquent properties along Silver Creek. A number of vacant or tax delinquent properties exist on or near Silver Creek. Acquiring these properties will allow the Township to perform regular maintenance (such as mowing grass, invasive species removal, and garbage clean-up) and can be strategic in the long-term creation of public space. This strategy will allow the Township to bring properties under public ownership without displacing existing residents; further, this strategy can offload currently undevelopable, flood-prone properties.

Action: Develop open space and trails on newly acquired properties and unimproved rights-of-way. Vacant or underutilized land can play a central role in continuing to develop and expand the open space network in Central Leyden. Developing open space on these properties can provide needed park, gathering, and natural spaces to nearby residents while also providing opportunities to address stormwater issues to relieve properties along Silver Creek. The development of a complete trail network along Silver Creek can further diversify the transportation choices available to residents by creating a comfortable walking and cycling route through neighborhoods.

The Township can explore multiple opportunities to utilize vacant parcels and underutilized rights-of-way within Central Leyden. Where space allows, certain

properties can be utilized for small play areas, pavilions, and other recreation features. Other features, such as rain gardens or natural wetland features, can be deployed where chronic flooding poses a hazard to nearby properties; this can create a more passive amenity for residents to enjoy nature.

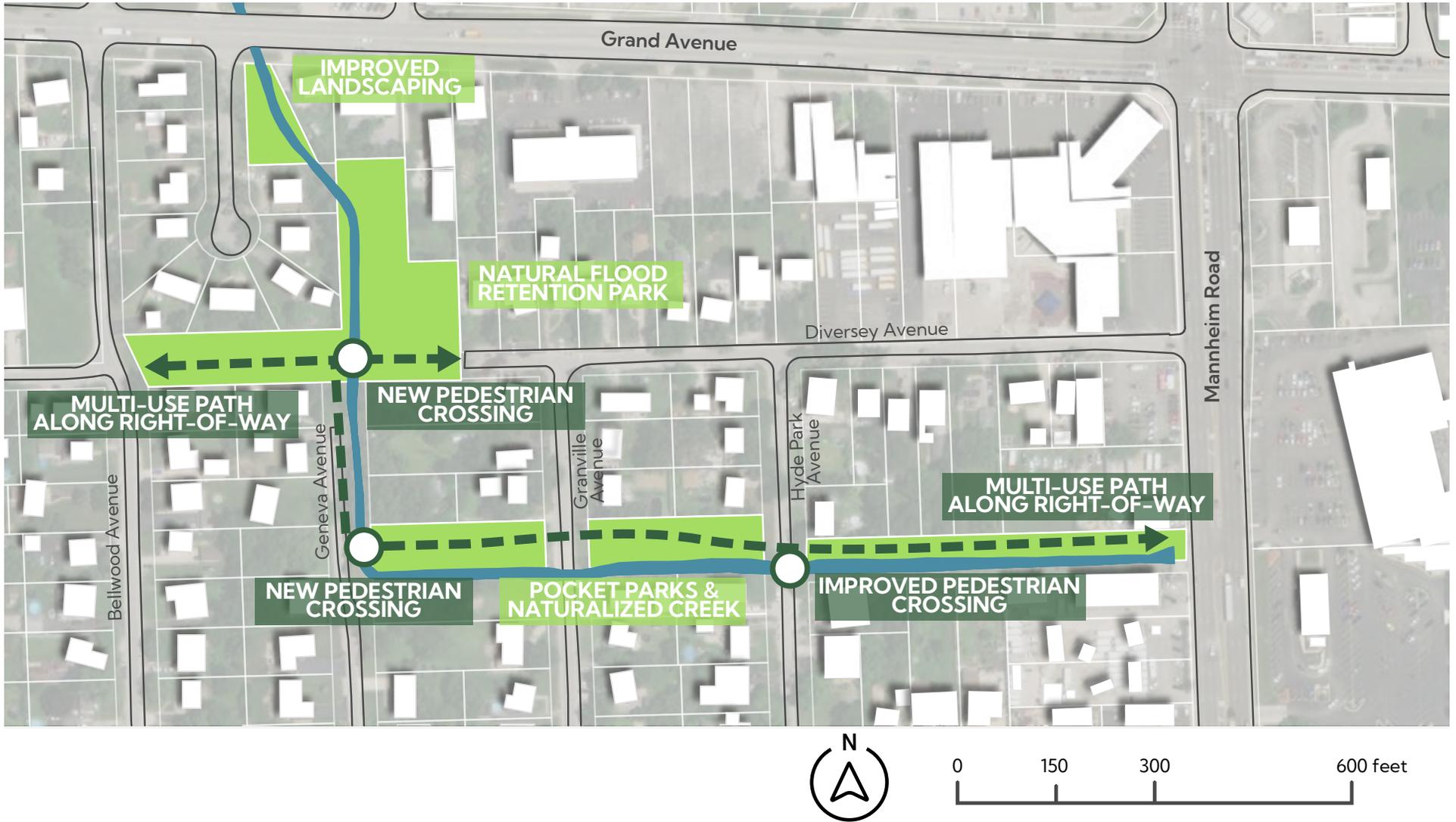
Smaller tracts of land that may not have adequate space for play areas can be utilized for a trail feature and improved landscaping. Such landscaping should focus on improving habitat and providing opportunities for stormwater detention or filtration. Naturalizing Silver Creek where possible can help create a healthy stream ecosystem and draw residents to the natural amenity within Central Leyden.



Pocket parks along Silver Creek between Hyde Park and Geneva Avenues can employ play and natural features to create an attractive and functional public space. Natural features can improve water quality and help mitigate flooding.

OPEN SPACE, RECREATION & NATURAL RESOURCES

FIGURE 3.9: SILVER CREEK WEST SIDE OPEN SPACE & TRAIL CONCEPT



OPEN SPACE, RECREATION & NATURAL RESOURCES

Action: Work with utilities and property owners to create a continuous trail. Though most trail opportunities exist on public right-of-way or vacant parcels that can be acquired by the Township, coordination with adjacent property owners and utilities will be important. The segment between Mannheim Road and Hyde Park Avenue will follow a current utility corridor, requiring coordination between the Township and electric and/or communications utilities.

Action: Assess additional properties near Silver Creek for open space or rehabilitation. While many vacant properties along Silver Creek may be best suited for open space, other properties near the Creek may be explored for improvements. Vacant, dilapidated, or tax delinquent properties can be explored for productive use through the County and the Cook County Land Bank Authority. Potential uses for vacant land can include home rehabilitation, the development of new housing, or additional land for naturalized flood mitigation.

**FIGURE 3.10:
SILVER CREEK
EAST SIDE
OPEN SPACE
& TRAIL
CONCEPT**



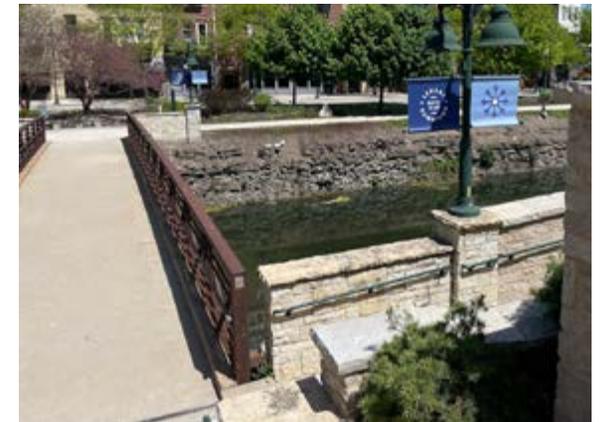
OPEN SPACE, RECREATION & NATURAL RESOURCES



Pocket parks along Silver Creek can provide public access to the waterway while retaining the privacy of properties that directly abut the Creek. Through a network of pocket parks, open space can be gradually feathered into a community, providing new places to gather, play, and connect with nature.



Naturalized stream banks promote a healthy ecosystem.



A small scale pedestrian bridge can facilitate movement while reinforcing neighborhood character.

OPEN SPACE, RECREATION & NATURAL RESOURCES

Strategy 4: Support tree planting and rain garden efforts across Central Leyden.

Green infrastructure, such as a complete tree canopy and rain gardens, can have aesthetic and functional benefits for Central Leyden. Tree canopies are associated with lower ambient temperatures, reducing the urban heat island effect (the phenomenon in which heat is stored in paved surfaces and buildings) in communities during the hot summer months. In the event of heavy rain, rain gardens can capture and retain water, reducing strain on storm sewers and creeks and allowing the stormwater to be absorbed into the ground over time.

Action: Explore the establishment of a Township-assisted tree planting program. Tree planting is encouraged in many communities throughout the region via cost-sharing programs that target tree planting in the public right-of-way or on private property. These programs reduce the costs associated with acquiring and installing trees for property owners with the goal of increasing community tree canopy. The Township can consider piloting such a program in Central Leyden to gauge interest, assess capacity of public works, and determine financial viability.

Action: Evaluate Township-owned property for opportunities to add trees and/or rain gardens. Continuing to assess Township property for landscaping enhancements, such as tree planting and rain gardens, can advance beautification efforts while expanding natural features of Township properties. The Township can evaluate its publicly-owned property to identify land that may be lightly-used (like unusable grass areas) and consider the placement of trees or rain gardens on those areas.

Action: Identify locations for new street trees, rain gardens, and swales as Township streets are resurfaced in locations with chronic ponding issues. Repaving local streets in the Township presents an opportunity to undertake design improvements. As repaving occurs, the Township can explore opportunities to add green infrastructure to combat flooding issues, where presents. These may include bioswales, street trees, or rain gardens, sometimes within existing gutters.

Action: Support tree planting as part of streetscaping efforts on commercial corridors. Though Central Leyden's commercial corridors are maintained by IDOT, the Township can collaborate with the agency to improve landscaping as well as work with private landowners and developers to improve tree canopy on adjacent private property.



Rain gardens and bioswales help manage stormwater and create unique green features.



CENTRAL LEYDEN GOAL: PLACEMAKING

Vision: Design and implement strategies to create central nodes for community use as well as urban design improvements to reinforce a sense of place and community for all residents and visitors.

Placemaking refers to the improvement of an existing space into a memorable “place” for people. Placemaking efforts can be large or small, in existing places or new development. Placemaking initiatives often include public seating, landscaping, lighting, activity areas, and/or art. In certain cases, “tactical urbanism” can be deployed as a form of placemaking, which offers an opportunity to pilot placemaking in a cost-effective manner before investing in a more permanent treatment.

Placemaking can also take the form of public events that activate public space. Leyden Township currently maintains a full slate of public events at its parks and public spaces. Westdale Park serves as the location for the Township’s Party in the Park, National Night Out, Craft Fair, Wild Wild Westdale, and its 175th Anniversary events. Other venues, like the Senior Center, remain actively programmed throughout the year; these senior events are anticipated to continue as the new Senior Center comes online.

Within Central Leyden, placemaking opportunities are present at existing parks and at businesses along commercial corridors. As redevelopment occurs, placemaking features should be considered as a public benefit for residents, visitors, and/or customers.



PLACEMAKING

Strategy 1: Develop Central Leyden wayfinding.

Wayfinding refers to pedestrian-scale signage that helps orient residents and visitors to their surroundings. The deployment of wayfinding signage encourages residents and visitors to take full advantage of a community's businesses, parks, and other amenities. Further, wayfinding presents an opportunity to display unique a community's character through branding, sign styles, and other materials.

Today, Township branding is deployed on street signs within Central Leyden, which showcase the Township logo and color scheme. As the Township continues to emphasize its commercial corridors, parks, and community facilities, wayfinding can complement street signage and further develop a cohesive community feel in Central Leyden. As nearby municipalities implement wayfinding, the Township can also explore cross-promoting destinations.

Action: Create a wayfinding plan. A wayfinding plan can be developed for Central Leyden that directs both motorists and pedestrians to key sites such as the Senior Center, parks and other key destinations.

Wayfinding signage is also useful at trails and transit stations, such as bus stops along Mannheim Road, Wolf Road, or Grand Avenue, as disembarking riders may not be familiar with the area. Signage or comprehensive community maps can be useful installations to help visitors know where they are going and take full advantage of the commercial and community amenities in Central Leyden.



Wayfinding signage promotes commercial areas and recreational amenities. (Image: Town of Estes Park, Colorado)

Left: Wayfinding at the Elgin Transportation Center points riders to community amenities and landmarks. (Image: Regional Transportation Authority)

PLACEMAKING

Strategy 2: Continue to develop plazas and gathering spaces.

Leyden Township has been active in identifying areas to expand, enhance, or activate community spaces. These efforts include the new Fairfield Pocket Park, the creation of a community meeting room at 2424 Landen Drive, and the new senior center on Mannheim Road.

Continuing to identify and implement the development of gathering spaces across Central Leyden can further improve community cohesion. These opportunities can include small-scale construction or “tactical urbanism” projects on existing Township property, or as parts of larger redevelopment and new construction efforts.



A former religious building, the 2424 Landen Drive property was acquired by the Township after its abandonment and adapted into a community meeting place.

Action: Continue senior center and community room development efforts. At the time of plan writing, Leyden Township is constructing a new senior center along Mannheim Road and continuing to renovate the 2424 Landen Drive property as a community meeting room. These buildings offer the opportunity to continue programming, build community, and improve the quality of facilities in Central Leyden. Continuing to implement placemaking through the development and renovation of these facilities will improve the quality of place enjoyed by residents.

Action: Identify a “community lawn” for events. Westdale Park currently serves as the primary venue for larger outdoor events led by the Township. In addition to Westdale, another location for regular outdoor programming can advance placemaking in Central Leyden.

Fleck Park, situated at Grand and Prater Avenues can be a “community lawn” for smaller, more regular events. These events may include farmers’ markets, a summer concert series, and/or community fitness or yoga.

Action: Explore locations for neighborhood based art and garden installations. Small art installations and gardens can create intrigue within residential portions of Central Leyden and can serve as community spaces that foster neighborhood pride. Opportunities for art and gardens can be seized along the public right-of-way, such as within the parkway or on bridges. The Township can consider conducting surveys with the community to determine which locations would be most beneficial for the community.



Installing murals in areas currently plagued by graffiti can create community ownership of a space and encourage community vigilance.

PLACEMAKING

Action: Encourage outdoor dining at local restaurants. Though the permitting of outdoor dining is the County's jurisdiction within Central Leyden, the Township can remain a partner in assisting local businesses in piloting outdoor dining and securing permits.



A mixed-use development contains a public plaza that supports outdoor dining.

PLACEMAKING



Banners can help communicate the area's character to passersby, even on busy roads.

Strategy 3: Improve streetscape and incorporate branding.

Conveying a unique Central Leyden look and feel along its major corridors is a key component of placemaking. Branding that differentiates Central Leyden from other communities along Mannheim Road and Grand Avenue can help market Central Leyden as a destination for business, services, and experiences. Further, this unique feel can reinforce a sense of community to residents of Central Leyden, serving as a source of community pride.



Branding is carried forward on street furniture and through unique lighting.

Action: Work with IDOT to introduce unique lighting, banners, and landscaping along Mannheim Road. As a major regional arterial, Mannheim Road offers an opportunity for Central Leyden to differentiate itself from other Mannheim Road communities. Public infrastructure, such as roadway lighting, banners, and streetscaping can help convey the Central Leyden look and feel to passersby, visitors, and residents. This can be implemented as roadway improvements occur or piecemeal through new development along Mannheim Road.



Community branding is displayed in a transit station as part of the Pace Pulse in Morton Grove.

Action: Work with Pace to introduce art and Central Leyden branding at bus stations. As bus shelters are constructed or improved, Leyden Township can work collaboratively with Pace Suburban Bus to deploy unique art and/or branding on bus shelters. Such improvements will reinforce sense of place and arrival for transit users and passing motorists.

PLACEMAKING

Action: Introduce public art and murals where feasible along major corridors.

Public art can distinguish Central Leyden from its peer communities along major corridors. Art and murals can be introduced at existing buildings or properties, or as new development occurs.

The Township can work with residents and community stakeholders to determine what art, if any, is appropriate for buildings along the Mannheim Road and Grand Avenue corridors. For private properties, the Township can support business owners seeking to install public art on their properties; such public art can be related to the business, creating a unique and memorable appearance for commercial properties. The Township can consider engaging local artists and creating a program to assist businesses in installing art, where feasible.



Public art, including murals, signage, and sculptures, can be explored at public buildings. The Township can also pilot art projects temporarily to determine whether art is appropriate at certain locations.

04 IMPLEMENTATION

IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX



IMPLEMENTATION

The implementation chapter sets forth a roadmap for realizing plan actions and recommendations. Plan recommendations may be unified, single efforts or ongoing programs. This implementation chapter should be periodically revisited by Township staff and the Plan Commission to assess progress and adjust priorities based on current needs.

The implementation matrix, included in the subsequent pages, details the recommendations that were included in this Plan document. Each recommendation includes:

Resources. Based on a scale of low (\$) to high (\$\$\$), this column estimates the Township resources required to implement each recommendation. Both staff time and cost are considered in the level of resources. Higher-resource recommendations may require outside funding, grants, or partnerships.

Lead Group(s). This will be the likely group(s) to initiate and lead implementation efforts for each recommendation. In most cases, the Township will be the lead organization; however, other organizations may lead collaboratively.

Partner Organization(s). Nearly every recommendation requires the assistance of outside partners. This includes organizations whose concurrence or cooperation may be required to realize a recommendation; these may also be groups that can provide funding or technical support.



TOWNSHIP GOAL: COMMUNICATIONS

Recommendation	Resources	Lead Group(s)	Partner Organization(s)
Work to incorporate Township-wide communications in municipal communications.	\$	Leyden Township, municipalities	-
Seek opportunities for joint events and programming.	\$	Leyden Township	School districts, municipalities, local nonprofits
Formalize business outreach programs.	\$	Leyden Township	Local businesses, area chambers of commerce
Continue to work with the Chambers of Commerce and service organizations.	\$	Leyden Township	Neighborhood groups, service organizations, municipalities, area chambers of commerce
Continue to conduct periodic surveys of residents.	\$	Leyden Township	Municipalities

TOWNSHIP GOAL: INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION

Recommendation	Resources	Lead Group	Partner Organization(s)
Engage municipalities to determine opportunities for partnerships for service delivery.	\$	Leyden Township	Municipalities, park district(s)
Identify overlapping services to determine efficiencies.	\$	Leyden Township	Municipalities, Cook County
Pursue joint economic development, transportation and recreation grants and resources.	\$\$	Leyden Township	Municipalities, park district(s)
Work with communities to identify the Township boundary through signage landscaping, and gateways.	\$	Leyden Township	Municipalities, property owner(s), Illinois Department of Transportation, Cook County Division of Transportation

TOWNSHIP GOAL: TRANSPORT & INFRASTRUCTURE

Recommendation	Resources	Lead Group	Partner Organization(s)
Continue to monitor and maintain utilities in the Township in collaboration with partner agencies.	\$\$\$	Leyden Township	Metropolitan Water Reclamation District, ComEd, Municipalities, telecommunications providers
Support residents, governments, and partner organizations in grant applications and other incentives.	\$	Leyden Township	Municipalities, school districts, residents, businesses
Continue to monitor and maintain Township-controlled streets.	\$	Leyden Township	Illinois Department of Transportation
Explore traffic diverters that limit truck traffic on local residential streets.	\$\$	Leyden Township	-
Explore roadway enhancement projects in tandem with nearby municipalities to pool and share resources to improve safety for all users.	\$\$\$	Leyden Township, municipalities	-
Support roadway improvements throughout the Township.	\$\$\$	Illinois Department of Transportation, Cook County	Leyden Township
Develop a trail network throughout Central Leyden.	\$\$\$	Leyden Township	Property owner(s), Illinois Department of Transportation
Improve sidewalk infrastructure and expand pedestrian infrastructure within Central Leyden.	\$\$	Leyden Township	Property owner(s)
Implement wayfinding in unincorporated areas.	\$	Leyden Township	Property owner(s), Illinois Department of Transportation
Work with the Forest Preserve to improve pedestrian and bike access to natural areas.	\$\$	Leyden Township	Cook County Forest Preserves
Work with Pace, Metra, and the CTA to maintain and improve transit facilities in the Township.	\$\$	Leyden Township, Regional Transportation Authority	Property owner(s)
Proactively plan for Pace Pulse service within the Township.	\$	Leyden Township, Pace	Illinois Department of Transportation
Continue to promote transit.	\$	Leyden Township	Regional Transportation Authority

TOWNSHIP GOAL: SERVICES

Recommendation	Resources	Lead Group	Partner Organization(s)
Continue health programs in coordination with partners, including screening, health fairs, mosquito abatement, and others.	\$\$	Leyden Township	Municipalities, school districts, Cook County, Illinois Department of Public Health, Illinois Department of Human Services
Conduct periodic surveys to assess resident needs, level of awareness of services available, and potential areas for improvement.	\$	Leyden Township	Municipalities, school district(s)
Continue joint education, senior, job training, food pantry, and other social services in tandem with partners.	\$\$	Leyden Township	Cook County, Morton College, Illinois Department of Human Services
Explore the creation of a Central Leyden campus to concentrate Township offices, community facilities, and social services.	\$\$\$	Leyden Township	-
Continue to explore locations for senior housing in the community.	\$\$\$	Leyden Township	Property owner(s), developer(s)

CENTRAL LEYDEN GOAL: LAND USE

Recommendation	Resources	Lead Group	Partner Organization(s)
Continue to acquire dilapidated or abandoned properties and/or deleterious land uses. Consider assembling adjacent properties and recruiting developers through requests for proposals and incentives.	\$\$\$	Leyden Township	Property owner(s), Cook County, Cook County Land Bank Authority, Developer(s)
Draft design guidelines for properties along commercial corridors.	\$	Leyden Township	-
Coordinate with Cook County on zoning and development approvals to align with Leyden Township's Future Land Use Plan.	\$	Leyden Township	Cook County
Work proactively with developers to secure master plans for larger development sites to ensure adequate infrastructure and open space.	\$	Leyden Township, developer(s)	-
Apply the Future Land Use map.	\$	Leyden Township, Cook County	-
Establish buffers and screening between residential and non-residential land uses.	\$	Leyden Township	Developer(s), property owner(s), Cook County
Consider allowing for "transition" land uses, like small-scale business services, to create a gradient between high-intensity commercial areas and low-density residential areas.	\$	Leyden Township	Cook County
Plan for new residential development to preserve space for common open areas, green space, and potential natural areas.	\$\$	Leyden Township, developer(s)	Cook County, Metropolitan Water Reclamation District

CENTRAL LEYDEN GOAL: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Recommendation	Resources	Lead Group	Partner Organization(s)
Encourage mixed-use development at the Grand/Wolf intersection and along Mannheim Road.	\$\$	Leyden Township, developer(s)	Cook County, Illinois Department of Transportation, property owner(s)
Work with property owners to create land assemblages for redevelopment.	\$\$\$	Leyden Township	Property owner(s), Cook County
Solicit requests for proposals for Township-owned property on commercial corridors.	\$\$	Leyden Township	Developer(s)
Consider expanding the Franklin Park Enterprise Zone to include Central Leyden or creating a new enterprise zone.	\$	Leyden Township, Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity	-
Develop a Central Leyden brand.	\$	Leyden Township	-
Utilize the brand in business recruitment efforts.	\$	Leyden Township	Chambers of commerce
Attract additional restaurants.	\$\$	Leyden Township	Chambers of commerce, property owner(s), developer(s)
Explore a regular farmers market in the community.	\$\$	Leyden Township	-
Encourage live/work housing types to offer formal space for home business owners.	\$	Leyden Township	Cook County, developer(s)
Consider allowing storefront to open pop-ups or host rotating food vendors	\$	Leyden Township, developer(s)	-

CENTRAL LEYDEN GOAL: QUALITY HOUSING

Recommendation	Resources	Lead Group	Partner Organization(s)
Seek Township enforcement of property standards and code violations.	\$\$	Leyden Township	Cook County
Continue to communicate information about public and private subsidies and grants to property owners.	\$	Leyden Township	-
Work with local institutions to establish a homeownership program.	\$\$	Leyden Township	Cook County, Morton College, Illinois Department of Economic Opportunity
Explore the feasibility of Township-led improvement grants and programs, such as roof repair, accessibility improvements, and emergency repairs.	\$\$\$	Leyden Township	Property owner(s)
Explore mixed-use development at key nodes.	\$\$	Leyden Township	Developer(s), property owner(s), Cook County
Continue to assemble sites for new housing development.	\$\$	Leyden Township, developer(s)	Cook County Land Bank Authority, property owner(s)
Identify locations for townhome development.	\$	Leyden Township	Developer(s), property owner(s), Cook County
Continue the acquisition of vacant or dilapidated properties for the development of new housing.	\$\$\$	Leyden Township	Cook County, Cook County Land Bank Authority, property owner(s)

CENTRAL LEYDEN GOAL: OPEN SPACE, RECREATION & NATURAL RESOURCES

Recommendation	Resources	Lead Group	Partner Organization(s)
Continue to seek grants for open space improvements and modernization.	\$\$	Leyden Township	Illinois Department of Natural Resources
Explore additional programming opportunities at parks.	\$	-	School district(s)
Explore Township-owned rights-of-way as potential open space areas.	\$\$	Leyden Township	-
Work with developers to incorporate open space into new development.	\$	Leyden Township	Developer(s), property owner(s)
Work with intergovernmental partners to identify opportunities for open space as infrastructure projects occur.	\$\$	Leyden Township	Metropolitan Water Reclamation District
Work to implement the Silver Creek Watershed-based Plan.	\$\$	Leyden Township	Municipalities, Metropolitan Water Reclamation District
Acquire vacant or delinquent properties along Silver Creek.	\$\$\$	Leyden Township	Property owner(s), Illinois Department of Natural Resources
Develop open space and trails on newly acquired properties and unimproved rights-of-way along Silver Creek.	\$\$\$	Leyden Township	Property owner(s), Illinois Department of Natural Resources
Work with utilities and property owners to create a continuous trail along Silver Creek.	\$\$	Leyden Township	Utility providers
Assess additional properties near Silver Creek for open space or rehabilitation.	\$\$	Leyden Township	Property owner(s), Cook County Land Bank Authority
Explore the establishment of a Township-assisted tree planting program.	\$	Leyden Township	Property owner(s)
Evaluate Township-owned property for opportunities to add trees and/or rain gardens.	\$	Leyden Township	Property owner(s)
Identify locations for new street trees, rain gardens, and swales as Township streets are resurfaces in locations with chronic ponding issues.	\$\$	Leyden Township	Property owner(s)
Work to support tree planting as part of streetscaping efforts on commercial corridors and nodes.	\$\$	Leyden Township	Illinois Department of Transportation, Property owner(s), developer(s)

CENTRAL LEYDEN GOAL: PLACEMAKING

Recommendation	Resources	Lead Group	Partner Organization(s)
Create a wayfinding plan.	\$\$	Leyden Township	Illinois Department of Transportation, Pace, Property owner(s)
Continue senior center and community room development efforts.	\$\$\$	Leyden Township	-
Identify a "community lawn" for events.	\$\$	Leyden Township	-
Explore locations for neighborhood level art and garden installations.	\$\$	Leyden Township	School districts, Metropolitan Water Reclamation District
Encourage outdoor dining at local restaurants.	\$	Leyden Township, businesses	Property owner(s), Cook County
Continuing events and programming in public spaces.	\$\$	Leyden Township	School districts, local institution
Work with developers to include placemaking elements, like pocket parks, plazas, and seating in new development.	\$\$	Leyden Township	Developer(s), property owner(s)
Work with IDOT to introduce unique lighting, banners, and landscaping along Mannheim Road.	\$\$\$	Leyden Township	Illinois Department of Transportation, property owner(s), developer(s)
Work with Pace to introduce art and Central Leyden branding at bus shelters.	\$	Leyden Township	Pace, Illinois Department of Transportation, property owner(s)
Introduce public art and murals where feasible along major corridors.	\$\$\$	Leyden Township	Developer(s), property owner(s)



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