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Establishing the basis for Comprehensive Plan implementation is essential to realizing the community aspirations envisioned by the Plan. This chapter identifies the support activities and responsibilities that are required to implement the Plan and the necessary City actions to maintain and update the Plan, ensuring it remains a useful and relevant policy tool over time. It also identifies several ongoing and new initiatives drawn from the Plan Policies (as described in more detail throughout the document) that can be monitored as “benchmarks” to track the City’s implementation progress over time.

ADMINISTRATION OF THE PLAN

Successful administration of the Comprehensive Plan requires collaboration among a variety of public and private stakeholders. The Community Development Department will undertake the following administrative tasks related to the Plan:

- Day to day coordination of Plan implementation actions;
- Providing technical information and staff support to the City Council and Planning and Zoning Commission;
- Assisting other departments and private interests in land use and development activities; and
- Maintaining copies of the Plan and providing Plan information to the public.

The Planning and Zoning Commission, with support from Community Development staff, will make policy and implementation recommendations to the City Council. The City Council, in turn, will make policy and implementation decisions, and will allocate funds to Plan initiatives.





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The Community Development Department will work cooperatively with the following entities to move Plan initiatives forward, as appropriate:

- City departments and other government agencies, including (but not limited to): Public Works, the Police and Fire Departments, the Park District, School Districts, Cook County and the State of Illinois.
- The business community, including (but not limited to): the Oak Forest Chamber of Commerce, the South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association, business owners, property owners, developers and financial institutions.
- Public and civic groups, including (but not limited to): homeowners associations, neighborhood organizations, community service organizations and special interest groups.

Development Regulations

The Future Land Use Framework represents the community's desired development pattern for the future. A key implementation mechanism used to achieve the desired development pattern is the mapping of zoning districts that regulate use of property and development densities anticipated by the Framework. Several existing development regulations should be evaluated, as they may not fully support the Plan:

- Single family residential district regulations: As discussed in more detail under separate cover in the *Housing Policy Plan*, current single family zoning district regulations do not facilitate a variety of home sizes and price points, limiting the City's ability to create an increased variety of housing options. Additionally, in some well established areas the zoning district currently mapped results in significant numbers of non-conforming structures. Both the district structure and mapping of single family residential zoning districts should be studied for potential future modification to address both of these conditions.
- Multi-family residential district regulations: As with single family zoning districts, the two existing multi-family zoning districts should be revisited to identify appropriate text amendments to better achieve the policy objectives of the City. At present the R5 District allows only a maximum of 6 dwelling units per acre, and the R6 a maximum of 12 dwelling units per acre and a





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maximum building height of 35 feet. Consideration should be given to the creation of a new multi-family district for use in the Metra Station area to support the development pattern anticipated in the Sub-Area Plan. As proposals are received, re-zoning should be undertaken to facilitate development in compliance with the Future Land Use Framework.

- B1 Commercial district regulations: It is beneficial that the allowable uses in the B1 district applied near the Metra Station do not include auto-oriented uses such as gas stations, and auto repair facilities. These uses are allowed as special uses, but are not encouraged. While flexibility with regard to building height and density already exists, the B1 bulk and area regulations should be revisited to ensure that setbacks, parking and other requirements will result in the pedestrian-friendly environment desired by the City.
- B3 Planned Commercial district regulations: Both text and map amendments should be undertaken for the B3 district, re-zoning properties along Cicero Avenue as appropriate to conform to the intent of the Future Land Use Framework. This is an issue in particular for properties located between Cicero Avenue and Lamont Avenue where residential properties are currently zoned for commercial use. Residential zoning should be reapplied to these properties, with clearly delineated standards developed for potential future zoning of the rear (eastern portion) of the properties to B3.
- PMU Planned Mixed Use district regulations: The PMU district has been created, and should be applied to properties designated in the Future Land Use Framework and Sub-Area Plan for mixed use development, where adequate access and visibility are present for ground-floor commercial uses to be successful. The development standards for the district should be revisited to ensure that they support the objectives of the Plan.

Design Standards and Guidelines

Detailed standards and/or guidelines will be needed to ensure that property owners and developers have a clear understanding of the City's expectations with regard to development and redevelopment. While some standards can be embodied in the basic bulk and area regulations by zoning district, an "overlay" district applied to Sub-Area and corridor properties should be created to more explicitly describe the City's expectations for these high profile areas. For some other development-related issues, City-wide standards should





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potentially be created or modified. Though not an exhaustive list, the following issues should be addressed:

- Potential density and/or building height bonuses in exchange for achieving other City objectives, such as publicly accessible open space or affordable residential dwelling units;
- Open space and buffering requirements, in particular when adjacent to single family residential areas;
- Requirements for significant landscaping and high quality fencing, signage and other site features;
- Requirements that “green” technologies be used in building and site design and construction (LEED certification);
- Mitigation of traffic and/or other external impacts of development, with the developer contributing an appropriate portion of the associated costs;
- Reduction of curb cuts on arterials;
- Protection of trees, waterways and other natural features; and
- Environmentally sensitive strategies for site improvements such as storm water detention, landscaping and site lighting.

Capital Improvement Program

The City’s Capital Improvement Program (CIP) is also an important implementation mechanism for programming and funding public projects and infrastructure improvements. Public dollars will always be limited, so the City should balance its priorities with available resources and other funding source options to effectively leverage public expenditures. When updating its annual CIP, the City should consider the Goals and Policies contained in the Plan.

Funding Source Options

A variety of other funding sources may be available to the City for implementing projects recommended by the Plan. The City will need to stay abreast of changes in funding programs to determine applicability requirements, deadlines, and matching funds needed. Potential funding sources include the following:

- Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Districts in additional areas of the City
- Business Improvement District (BID) designation(s)
- Special Services Area (SSA) designation(s)





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- Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) programs, including ITEP grants, CMAQ grants and the Safe Routes to School program (www.dot.state.il.us)
- Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) programs, including bicycle path and open space acquisition grants (www.dnr.state.il.us)
- Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) programs, including brownfield remediation grants (www.epa.state.il.us)
- Illinois Housing Development Authority (IHDA) programs, including low income housing tax credits (www.ihda.org)
- Federal Highway Administration programs, including planning and implementation grants (www.fhwa.dot.gov)
- Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) programs, including CDBG and brownfield remediation grants (www.hud.gov)

The City should strive to maximize the impact of local funds by seeking out grants and/or other government sources that may be combined with them, strategically matching available funds with initiatives to maximize the impact of limited local funds. The City should also pursue public/private partnerships with developers to maximize the benefits gained from public incentives as opportunities arise.

REVIEW AND UPDATE

The Comprehensive Plan is not a static document, and the planning process must be continuous. Monitoring and updating should occur on a regular basis.

Plan Maintenance

The City's Community Development Department should maintain and update the Comprehensive Plan in a timely manner. In order to maintain the Plan's applicability, City staff should undertake the following:

- Make the Plan available for public purchase and review at City offices, the public library, and the municipal website;
- Develop and continually update a list of possible issues or needs that may need to be addressed through Plan amendments; and,
- Assist the Planning and Zoning Commission and City Council in administration, interpretation, and application of the Plan.





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Plan Review

The City should review the Plan annually to coincide with the budget process and capital improvement program update. This will allow Plan recommendations to be considered as part of upcoming fiscal year commitments. Regular review of the Plan will ensure that its recommendations remain relevant to community needs.

Plan Update

The City should undertake a systematic review and update of the Comprehensive Plan at least every ten years. This process should include input provided by local stakeholder organizations and residents. The need for Plan amendments is the result of many influences, such as changes in community preferences, external influences or emerging needs not foreseen at the time of Plan adoption. Any proposed amendment to the Comprehensive Plan should be subject to the following process:

- The Plan amendment request and supporting documentation must be submitted in writing in a form acceptable to the Community Development Department.
- A public hearing must be held before the Planning and Zoning Commission. Upon close of the public hearing, the Commission may recommend approval or disapproval of the Plan amendment, or approval with modifications. The Commission may seek information, advice or technical support from the Community Development Department or other advisors it deems appropriate, to draw reasonable conclusions regarding the proposed amendment.
- The Planning and Zoning Commission's recommendation is forwarded to the City Council. In accordance with state law, the City Council must take formal action on the Commission's recommendation within ninety (90) days of the close of the public hearing, or no action may be taken without a new public hearing.

KEY IMPLEMENTATION INITIATIVES

The Goals and Policies in each chapter of the Plan identify many actions that are ongoing or will be initiated during the time frame of the Plan. The initiatives described below reflect the general courses of action required by the City to achieve the more specific and





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focused actions described throughout the Plan. The On-Going Initiatives listed below are those that are already underway and should be continued; New Initiatives are those that should be initiated within one to three years of Plan adoption (i.e. by 2010). While these lists will evolve over time, they should be used as “benchmarks” to gauge City progress in implementing the Comprehensive Plan until such time as it is updated again.

On-Going Initiatives

- Continue and potentially expand or alter programs to encourage improvements to commercial properties in highly visible locations.
- Continue and potentially expand the Business Retention Program to support existing businesses, potentially to include additional loan and/or grant programs.
- Maintain and implement the city’s Economic Development Strategy.
- Continue and expand efforts to “market” Oak Forest to local residents and the broader region, in conjunction with the Oak Forest Chamber of Commerce and major property owners/managers.
- Consistently pursue code enforcement, in particular in commercial, industrial and multi-family residential areas.
- Expand streetscape and pedestrian improvements along 159th Street and Cicero Avenue, building upon improvements already in progress.
- Continue efforts to complete the sidewalk network throughout the City, building upon recent installations near the Metra Station.
- Implement the comprehensive community gateway signage program, to establish a consistent identity visually related to signage at the Gateway development.
- Continue and expand cooperative efforts with other agencies and service providers to provide improved facilities and services to City residents. Though not an exhaustive list, such efforts should include:





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- Monitoring and addressing the impacts of roadway improvements both within and near Oak Forest, in conjunction with the County and IDOT;
- Coordinating with IDOT regarding speed limits on City arterials, curb cut modifications and the potential need for additional and modified traffic controls as redevelopment occurs;
- Working with Metra to ensure successful replacement of the existing Oak Forest Metra Station, with associated facility improvements and connections;
- Working with regional partners to address issues of regional significance, such as watershed planning;
- Cooperate with the Park District and area School Districts to assess evolving needs with regard to community services, facilities and programs to ensure that resident needs are being met; and
- Work with the CCFPD to ensure adequate maintenance of natural areas and trails, controlling vegetation to facilitate natural drainage patterns and ensure adequate visibility at trail intersections and crossings.

New Initiatives

- Pursue the updates to development regulations and the zoning map outlined previously in this chapter.
- Pursue the development of appropriate overlay and/or community-wide development standards, as discussed previously in this chapter.
- Assess policies with regard to cost sharing for infrastructure improvements, to ensure that private sector developers are bearing their fair share of costs necessitated by development projects. Consider the creation of more Special Service Areas (SSAs) to fund costs associated with commercial area upkeep and maintenance, in particular in the Metra Station area.
- Pursue land assembly through voluntary sales in areas targeted for Sub-Area and corridor redevelopment efforts, to facilitate projects and public improvements that are compatible with the Plan.





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- Pursue boundary agreements to ensure that development of adjacent unincorporated areas occurs in compliance with the Plan.
- As development and redevelopment occurs, protect existing natural areas and features, potentially through the use of conservation easements or public land acquisition. As opportunities arise, work with the Park District to increase park land opportunities in conjunction with these conservation efforts.
- In addition to efforts to diversify the City’s housing stock detailed elsewhere, consider a loan and/or grant program to support rehabilitation and enhancement of existing single family homes, to preserve the stock of moderate income housing in the community.
- Monitor commuter parking demand and develop a strategy to both provide interim commuter parking capacity as redevelopment efforts continue and to increase capacity over time, focusing on shared parking strategies and potential options for structured parking.
- Pursue peak hour shuttle service and/or demand-responsive service to improve access to the Metra Station and surrounding commercial areas from all neighborhoods in the City. In particular, study the feasibility of providing this access from Fieldcrest and neighborhoods south of 167th Street. A peak hour shuttle service could also potentially provide a connection to “remote” commuter parking locations, whether temporary or permanent.
- Pursue implementation of the trail system described in the Mobility Plan, with the following preliminary priority locations. The overall priority will be complete a basic trail system, followed by installations of enhancements such as lighting and plantings.
 - Highest priority- Central Avenue, 151st Street, and minor improvements at existing trailheads and crossing to ensure connections (for example, at 159th and Ridgeland where trail connection to intersection needs to be extended)
 - Second priority- 155th Street, 147th Street, Cicero Avenue south of 159th Street

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